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for the Lesser Motivated = Better Outcomes



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This data was included in a peer-reviewed research paper presented by STEP at the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology's J-WEL's LINC conference in Boston.

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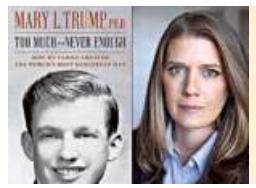
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J&K IPS officer Basant Rath, who complained against DGP, suspended
page 9



Cabinet clears rental housing scheme for urban migrants
page 10



Trump shaped by bullying father, says niece Mary in new book
page 12



Gabriel strikes early for West Indies on rain-affected day
page 14

NEARBY



Maharashtra crosses 2.2 lakh COVID-19 cases

PUNE
Maharashtra on Wednesday recorded 6,603 new COVID-19 cases, its second highest single-day surge yet, taking its tally to 2,23,723. The State also recorded 198 more fatalities, pushing its death toll to 9,448.

Mumbai's total case tally rose to 87,856, with 1,347 new cases being reported. The city also recorded 62 more deaths, taking its toll to 5,064. Just three new cases were recorded in Dharavion on Wednesday, compared to one on Tuesday. The State Surveillance Officer said the State's recovery rate stands at 55.06%, while its case fatality rate is 4.22%.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

Loyalties shift as five councillors rejoin Sena

MUMBAI
Five councillors from Parner in Ahmednagar district, who switched over from the Shiv Sena to the NCP last week, rejoined the Uddhav Thackeray-led party on Wednesday. The move comes two days after NCP chief Sharad Pawar held a meeting with Mr. Thackeray. The five councillors met Mr. Thackeray at his residence, Matoshree, in Mumbai and rejoined the party.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

Three NGOs linked to Congress under Home Ministry scanner

Committee will probe alleged violations of money laundering Act and the FCRA

VIIJITA SINGH
NEW DELHI
The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted an inter-ministerial committee to probe alleged violation of various legal provisions by three NGOs – the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF), the Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT) and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust (IGMT).

All the three non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are linked to the Congress, and party president Sonia Gandhi is the chairperson of the RGF and the RGCT.

A senior official of the Enforcement Directorate will head the committee.

'Cannot be intimidated'
Reacting to the MHA's decision, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "Mr. Modi believes the world is like him. He thinks every one has a price or can be intimidated. He will never understand that those who fight for the truth have no price and cannot be intimidated."

An MHA spokesperson tweeted on Wednesday, "MHA sets up inter-ministerial committee to coordinate investigations into violation of various legal provisions of PMLA, Income Tax Act, FCRA, etc. by Rajiv Gandhi

Mr. Modi believes the world is like him. He thinks every one has a price or can be intimidated. He will never understand that those who fight for the truth have no price and cannot be intimidated

RAHUL GANDHI, CONGRESS LEADER

Rahul ji, Those whose whole family is out on Bail on corruption charges should not talk about "TRUTH" & why do you feel intimidated if you & your Mother haven't errred? & Yes While Modi because of his Honesty is "Priceless"...every member of your family has a price tag & is Pliable

SAMBIT PATRA, BJP SPOKESPERSON

Foundation, Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust & Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust. Spl. Dir of ED will head the committee." The composition of the committee is not known yet nor are its terms of reference.

The violations mentioned in the spokesperson's tweet pertain to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Income Tax Act and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).

As per the MHA website, both the RGF and the RGCT are registered FCRA associations, a pre-requisite for NGOs and other associations to receive foreign donations. The Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust is not a FCRA registered association.

According to the latest annual returns filed by the RGF in December 2019, the NGO received zero foreign donations in 2018-19 but the total foreign contribution in its account carried forward from previous years is ₹4,03,64,727.

The annual returns filed by the RGCT show that it received ₹23,24,35,975 from foreign donors in 2018-19, and the total donations in its FCRA account stood at ₹85,13,65,166. A sizeable part of the RGCT's foreign donation in 2018-19 – ₹23,06,03,400 – came from the U.S.-based Bill Melinda Gates Foundation.

The RGCT website says that it is a "registered, not-for-profit organisation" and was "established in 2002 to address the development needs of the underprivileged of the country, especially the rural poor."

● **Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT):** Congress president Sonia Gandhi is chairperson, and son Rahul is a board member. In 2018-19, it had around ₹85 crore in foreign donations

● **Rajiv Gandhi Foundation:** Sonia Gandhi is chairperson and board members include Dr. Manmohan Singh, P. Chidambaram, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Total foreign donations: ₹14 crore

● **Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust:** It manages the museum set up in the former Prime Minister's memory. Not registered under FCRA, so not eligible to receive foreign donations

BJP's charge

Recently, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party had alleged that the RGF continuously received donations from the Chinese embassy between 2006 and 2009.

The allegations came in the middle of a build-up of Chinese troops along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh and the June 15 incident at the Galwan Valley, during which 20 Indian soldiers were killed.

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 9

Trump starts withdrawal of U.S. from WHO

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Tuesday formally started the withdrawal of the U.S. from the World Health Organization (WHO), making good on threats to deprive the UN body of its top funding source over its response to the coronavirus.

Public health advocates and Mr. Trump's political opponents voiced outrage at the exit from the Geneva-based body, which leads the global fight on maladies from polio to COVID-19. After threatening to suspend the \$400 million in annual U.S. contributions and then announcing a withdrawal, the Trump administration formally sent a notice to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, a State Department spokesperson said. The withdrawal is effective in one year – July 6, 2021.

Joe Biden, Mr. Trump's presumptive Democratic opponent in the November elections, vowed he would end the pullout if he won. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus responded to the news with a one-word tweet – "Together!" – as he linked to a discussion by U.S. health experts on how the move could impede efforts to prevent future pandemics.

CHINA SLAMS U.S. ▶ PAGE 12

Two U.P. policemen held for tipping off Dubey on raid

Aide killed, six others arrested



Amar Dubey, who was killed on Wednesday. ■ ANI

Dubey, said Additional Director General-Law and Order Prashant Kumar. A constable was shot and injured in the encounter, in which Amar allegedly fired at the policemen despite being asked to surrender, the U.P. police said in a statement.

Mr. Kumar also said that an absconding accused, Prabhakar, and two others, Ankur Mishra and Shravan Mishra, who allegedly provided him shelter, were arrested from a house in Faridabad in Haryana. Two 9 mm pistols looted from the police on the night of July 2-3, along with two other pistols and 44 live cartridges, were recovered from them, said Mr. Kumar.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 4

Chinese troops move out of PP15 area in eastern Ladakh

Consul General acknowledges casualties on their side

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Chinese troops have fully moved out of the Patrolling Point (PP) 15 of the Hot Springs area in eastern Ladakh as part of the disengagement underway to reduce tensions on the border, a defence source said on Wednesday.

Separately, on Tuesday, Chinese Consul General in Mumbai Tang Guocai acknowledged Chinese casualties, without revealing any numbers, during the Galwan clash on June 15, which resulted in the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers.

"At PP15, they have fully gone back. The disengagement is complete there. At PP17, the pullback is under-

way. It is expected to be over by Thursday or Friday," the defence source stated.

At the Finger 4 area of Pangong Tso, some more people and vehicles have gone back but there is no pull back as yet, the source stated, adding that it is purely temporary.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

No clarity on rations for returning migrants

Many labourers coming back to cities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The trains are full of migrants returning to their workplaces in cities, but the Centre is still considering how to ensure that those without ration cards do not go hungry.

On Wednesday, the Union Cabinet approved the five-month extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana to give free grain and chana to 81 crore ration card holders.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar seemed to indicate that migrant workers would also benefit. "Even migrant labourers were also included at a later stage, and they have also got free rations. Now those who have returned will also continue to

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



Army trucks on their way to Ladakh. ■ PTI

way. It is expected to be over by Thursday or Friday," the defence source stated.

At the Finger 4 area of Pangong Tso, some more people and vehicles have gone back but there is no pull back as yet, the source stated, adding that it is purely temporary.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Viral tracker

With 24,810 new COVID-19 cases recorded on Wednesday, India's tally rose to 7,68,259 infections

NEW CASES AND DEATHS

CASES 24,810

DEATHS 491

7 DAY-CHANGE

+15.8%

7 DAY-CHANGE

+29.6%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases/deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases/deaths are rising ■; if they are lower, then dropping ■; if they are similar, then flattening ■■■■■

MAHARASHTRA

CASES 6,603

DEATHS 198

C

D

KARNATAKA

C 2,062

D 54

C

D

TAMIL NADU

C 3,756

D 64

TELANGANA

C 1,924

D 11

WEST BENGAL

C 986

D 23

GUJARAT

C 783

D 16

UTTAR PRADESH

C 1,188

D 18

C

D

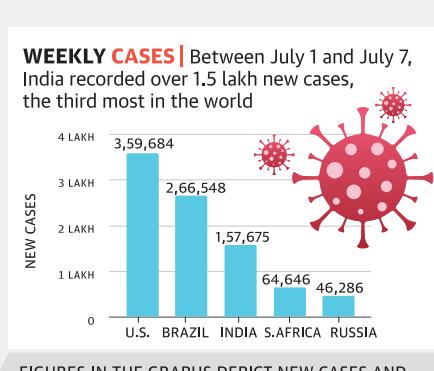
DELHI

C 2,033

D 48



Battle ready: A view of the COVID-19 care centre, a 10,000 bed facility, at the Radha Soami Satsang Beas at Chattarpur in New Delhi. ■ R. V. MOORTHY



FIGURES IN THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE STATE ON WEDNESDAY

India says Jadhav was coerced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday said former naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, sentenced to death by a Pakistan Army court, had "clearly been coerced" into not appealing against his April 2017 conviction.

The response came after Pakistan claimed earlier in the day that Mr. Jadhav, arrested on charges of espionage and terrorism in 2016, had refused to file an appeal in the Islamabad High Court. "Pakistan has obviously coerced Shri Jadhav to forego his rights to seek an implementation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice," an External Affairs Ministry statement said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'Mask' parottas create an appetite for safety

Restaurant in Madurai came up with design to highlight COVID-19 prevention

SANJANA GANESH
MADRAS

A restaurant in Madurai has turned the city's love for the parotta into a symbol of safety in COVID-19 times. It has come out with a signature dish shaped like a face mask.</

Despite its high price point, the new Honda City offers enough subtle changes and ride quality to give it an edge over its predecessor



:: SERGIUS BARRETO

The City is Honda's most important model in India, and the new fifth-gen model, like its predecessor, boasts an evolutionary design. A lot has changed under the skin. The body shell packs in more tensile strength steel and a stiffer roof section resulting in a 20% increase in torsional rigidity. The petrol engine, while still a 1.5-litre, is a new DOHC unit.

Honda's signature front chrome bar is now thicker while the sharp-looking head and tail lights seem brilliant and offers the new City a contemporary look. At 4,549mm, the car has grown in length but with no corresponding increase in wheelbase. The shoulder line has been moved higher up and it runs the length of the car. Along with the sharp crease across the bottom of the doors, these changes give a nice tension to the body.

Touch of class

Inside you are greeted by a premium-looking, light brown and black interior. There is generous use of leather in the cabin; the dash and centre console trim are beautifully styled with neat stitching and the well-sculpted front and rear seats



Better by far: Honda has done a great job with the new City, and it looks set to leapfrog over its rivals.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

bility allows you to drive right from 15kph all the way past 150kph in third gear!

Compared to the older car, the gear ratios are a bit taller too, letting you hit higher speeds in each gear. The taller gearing, though, means in-gear acceleration is slower, but the CVT offers quicker in-gear times in kickdown. Talking of the CVT, the rubberband effect is very well managed. For regular driving, the rise in revs matches the rise in speed. Honda says it has calibrated the control unit's software so that the CVT 'box performs stepped upshifts during acceleration to try to match the vehicle speed with the engine speed and sound. Upon hard braking, the unit is said to shift to lower ratios thus providing engine braking.

As for the diesel engine, Honda has improved its NVH levels and it is noticeably quieter. The unit is pretty tractable from low revs and turbo lag is minimal too. Power is muted below 1,500rpm but you don't really struggle with a lack of response. The diesel posts a 0-100kph time of 12.9sec, compared to the petrol's 10.2 sec.

Ride quality has improved owing to a softer suspension set-up. The City soaks up potholes without crashing through them. The ride is flat and composed at highway speeds. Handling is benign and predictable, which makes the City an easy car to drive. The steering is nicely weighted and the grip from the low-rolling tyres is surprisingly good. Braking performance is good, however, an earlier bite point would have helped. All in all, this is a car that will reward most, except the keenest drivers.

Honda has done a tremendous job with the new City; it looks set to leapfrog its rivals but a spoiler could be its price. For the first time in its history, Honda Car India will have two generations of the same car on sale. The current model, with a starting price of ₹ 9.91 lakh, is already pricier than its rivals. Honda may need to position and price the new model smartly to ensure it does not leap out of the segment and contention.

Nothing skin deep about it



look very inviting..

What is nice is that all three rear passengers get three-point seat belts and head restraints, but headroom may be an issue for tall people. Honda has also packed quite a bit of equipment into the new City including a sunroof, a lane-watch camera, rear-view camera, tyre pressure monitor, six airbags, and auto climate control.

The instrument panel is a 7.0-inch display with an analogue speedometer needle. The tachometer is all-digital; the screen can also be set-up to display a G-force meter or other trip-related information. The graphics are quite simple and the clarity is brilliant and not distracting like the Hyundai Verna. While the bright and sharp instrument cluster is easy to read, the same cannot be said of the 8.0-inch touchscreen. The use of an optical bonding application to reduce reflection has reduced the screen brightness. There is Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity alongside a new version of Honda's connectivity tech with additions like remote engine start and pre-cooling. There is also Alexa voice assistant integration.

Pulling power

Coming to the engines, Honda's

2020 HONDA CITY SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH 4549mm

WIDTH 1748mm

HEIGHT 1489mm

WHEELBASE 2600mm

KERB WEIGHT 1153 - 1217kg

TYRE SIZE 185/55 R16

FUEL TANK CAPACITY 40 litres

BOOT CAPACITY 506 litres

ENGINE 1498cc, 4 cyls, petrol | 1498cc, 4 cyls, turbo-diesel

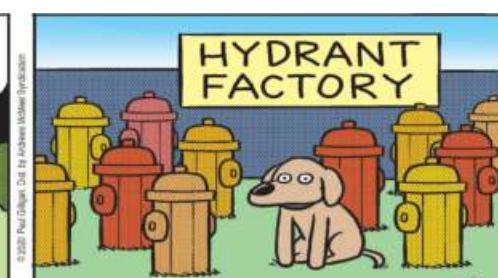
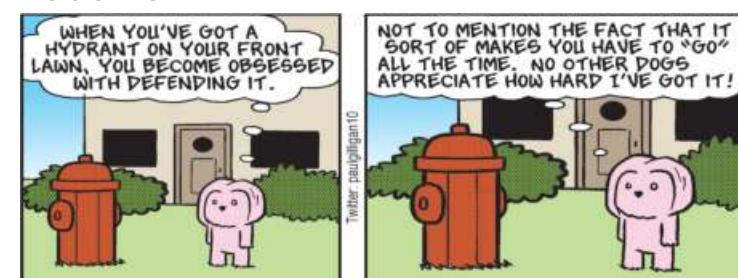
POWER 121hp at 6600rpm | 100hp at 3600rpm

TORQUE 145Nm at 4300rpm | 200Nm at 1750rpm

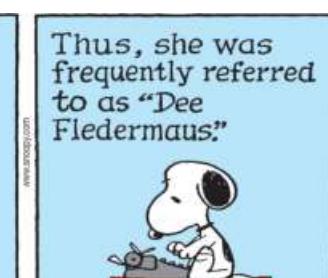
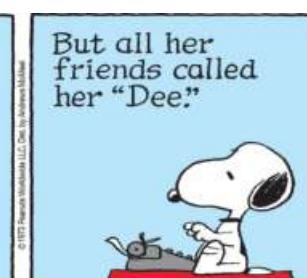
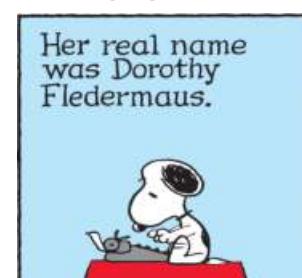
GEARBOX 6-speed MT/CVT | 6-speed MT

new 1.5-litre DOHC petrol is a real delight. It is not punchy like a turbocharged unit but it is very strong, tractable, and works well at both ends of the rev range. It pulls cleanly from low rpms even in higher gears, and it revs freely until the 7,000rpm redline. This tracta-

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



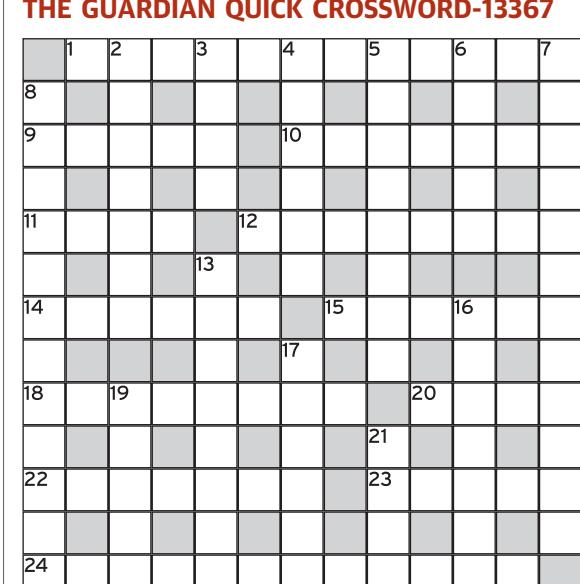
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13367



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

6 Hillock (5)

7 Repeatedly (4,3,5)

8 Emotionally uplifting (5-7)

13 Windsor princess, b.

1988 (8)

16 Penitence (7)

17 Hungarian (6)

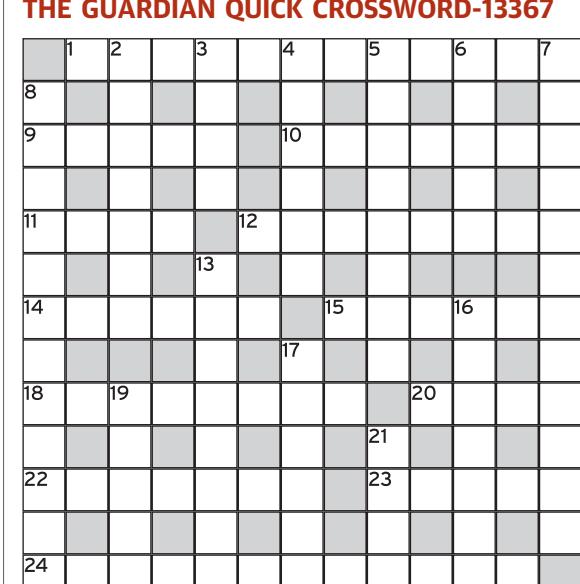
19 Well done! (5)

21 Eg Aberdonian (4)

WUMO



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13367



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

6 Hillock (5)

7 Repeatedly (4,3,5)

8 Emotionally uplifting (5-7)

13 Windsor princess, b.

1988 (8)

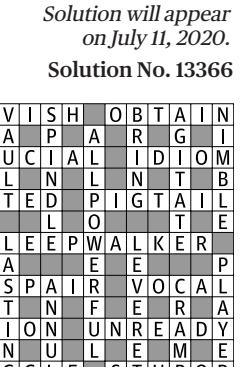
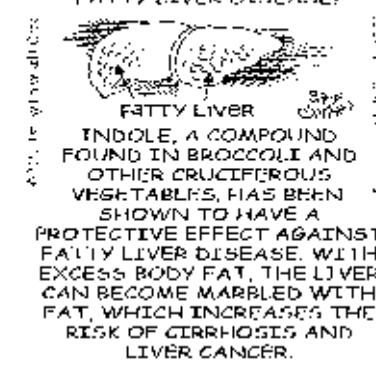
16 Penitence (7)

17 Hungarian (6)

19 Well done! (5)

21 Eg Aberdonian (4)

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Solution will appear on July 11, 2020.

Solution No. 13366

L	A	V	I	S	O	B	T	A	I	N
O	A	P	A	R	G	I	D	I	O	M
C	R	U	C	I	I	I	O	I	O	M
U	L	N	L	N	T	B				
S	I	D	E	P	I	G	T	A	I	L
T	S	L	E	P	W	A	L	K	E	R
A	A	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	P
D	E	S	P	A	R	V	O	C	A	P
J	T	N	F	E	R	A				
U	N	N	U	N	R	E	A			
S	U	N	U	L	E	M	E			
T	O	G	G	L	E	S	T	U	P	O

	Timings
THURSDAY, JUL. 10	
	RISE 06:08 SET 19:20
	RISE 22:44 SET 09:44
	RISE 06:08 SET 19:20
	RISE 23:20 SET 10:34
	RISE 06:08 SET 19:20
	RISE 23:54 SET 11:23

Mumbai Weather	max min
Mumbai Airport	32 26
Pune	29 22
Mumbai City	32 26

Mumbai Today
31°C A comfortable morning. Moderate rain will effect over the city. The sky will remain cloudy over the city.

Mumbai Tomorrow
31°C Moderate rain may occur. A comfortable morning. A mostly cloudy sky is expected over the city.

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Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	51	Gurugram	54
Ghaziabad	44	Faridabad	54
Noida	62	Greater Noida	44
■ Good 0-50	■ Satisfactory 51-100	■ Moderate 101-200	
■ Poor 201-300	■ Very poor 301-400	■ Severe >401	
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE IN PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]			

IN BRIEF

CM, Baijal inaugurate COVID Care Centre

NEW DELHI Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday inaugurated a 500-bed COVID Care Centre via video call at the Commonwealth Games Stadium in east Delhi. It was set up by the Delhi government in just six days and has been attached to Lok Nayak Hospital.

JNU seeks official report on virus cases on campus
NEW DELHI The JNU Teachers' Association on Wednesday said that it was concerned as COVID-19 infection was reported on the campus but the JNU administration has not come out with any official communication. It added that silence of the administration is "dangerous as well as damning" and demanded that a proper report or bulletin must be issued.

Initial results of survey show 'high' seroprevalence in Delhi: officials

It is a good sign as it means more people have developed antibodies against virus'

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

After blood samples of over 22,000 people were randomly collected from the city to test for antibodies formed against COVID-19, the initial results of the serological survey showed at least 15% of them have developed antibodies against the virus, according to officials.

The data from the survey is still being analysed and a report is yet to be released by the government.

"Currently, the positivity rate of COVID-19 in Delhi is about 9%-10%, but the initial results from the sero-survey is higher and is showing a seroprevalence of about 15%. Also, in one district [of the total 11], which was showing less positivity using other tests, the sero-survey is showing an initial trend of more than 25%," an official source told *The Hindu*.



A doctor talking to patients at Guru Gobind Singh Hospital on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Most of the 22,000 samples have been processed.

Low risk

The source said that a higher seroprevalence is a good sign as it means a larger part of the population has developed antibodies against the virus and chances of them again contracting the virus are very low. Thus, they can break the chain of transmission.

of the virus and reduce the spread of the disease.

The positive results or seroprevalence of some districts are higher and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Delhi government are analysing the data, another official confirmed. "At least in four districts, the seroprevalence is more than 15%," the official added.

The serological survey is part of a 'Revised COVID Response Plan' by the Delhi government based on the directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Bodies swapped: one fired, another suspended

AIIMS forms inquiry committee

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An employee working at the AIIMS Trauma Centre was terminated on Wednesday and suspended another, after two dead bodies got allegedly swapped, according to officials. The hospital has also formed an inquiry committee to look into the issue.

On Wednesday, *The Hindu* had reported that family members of a 35-year-old woman who died of complications related to COVID-19 were shocked on Tuesday when they saw someone else's body at the graveyard. The family then lodged a complaint at Safdarjung Enclave police station, alleging negligence on the part of the hospital.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday released a modified COVID response plan under which drivers, domestic workers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, mechanics among others have been termed as Special Surveillance Groups (SSGs) and will be enlisted and screened.

"Districts shall screen SSGs wherever possible. Major points of conglomeration of SSGs in the districts to be compulsorily covered.

HC concerned over 'corona warriors' not getting paid

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The High Court on Wednesday asked the Delhi government to respond to North Delhi Municipal Corporation's contention that it has not released entire funds for the first quarter of this financial year for paying salary to employees, including resident doctors.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan expressed concern over 'corona warriors' not getting their salary or remuneration on time.

The North body stated that around ₹162 crore was due to the corporation in the first quarter of financial year 2020-21 and of that, only ₹27 crore has been sanctioned.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain, appearing for the Delhi government, disputed the contention saying that in its report filed on July 7, the amounts released to the corporation by various departments have been indicated. The ASG said all dues have been cleared by the Delhi government.

The court also clarified that in this particular case, it was only dealing with the non-payment of salaries of the resident doctors of hospitals run by the North body and not all of its doctors and other employees. It had initiated the case on its own based on news reports that doctors of Kasturba Gandhi Hospital have threatened to resign as they have not been paid salaries since March this year.

Mr. Jain told the High Court during the hearing that the Delhi government has released ₹8 crore to the corporation for payment to help journalists in distress who are frontline COVID-19 warriors," Mr. Kumar said.

Minister trying to confuse people over free ration: BJP
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly, Ranvir Singh Bidhuri, on Wednesday accused Food & Civil Supplies Minister Imran Hussain of deliberately trying to confuse the people of Delhi in regard to his statement regarding the distribution period of free ration under the Food Security Act being extended till November.

"It is wrong to say that the [free ration] scheme has been extended because only the Government of India or Parliament can make changes in the scheme," he said.

Virus spread fast due to inaction of State, Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress on Wednesday said that from just one COVID-19 case in Delhi on March 2 to becoming the city with most number of cases, the fast spread of the virus here was due to inaction and incompetence of the Arvind Kejriwal-led government in Delhi and the BJP government at the Centre.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that had strong steps been taken from the outset, the pandemic would not have taken such a vicious hold on Delhi. "Kejriwal and Modi governments wasted precious time and resources in creating COVID-19 beds outside hospitals because had that mo-

ney been spent on improving the infrastructure and facilities in government hospitals, Delhi would have been in a better position to negotiate the virus," Mr. Kumar said. He reiterated the demand that ₹10,000 be given to those persons who were living in containment zones.

The party also announced that it would be launching a fund-raising campaign to help the family of a journalist, who died on July 6, and demanded a time-bound probe to find out the reasons leading to his death. "Delhi government should create a fund to help journalists in distress who are frontline COVID-19 warriors," Mr. Kumar said.

Mr. Jain told the High Court during the hearing that the Delhi government has released ₹8 crore to the corporation for payment to help journalists in distress who are frontline COVID-19 warriors," Mr. Kumar said.

Court tells govt. to clear ambiguity on time taken for testing pregnant women

HC says guidelines silent on the issue of priority testing



Reacting to the submission, the Bench said, "There is also the concern with rapid antigen test that a negative result may be a false negative result. Therefore, everyone has to go for RT-PCR test anyway."

The court also highlighted that the government's guidelines was also silent on the issue of giving priority testing to asymptomatic pregnant women.

It asked the Delhi government's counsel to seek instruction on the issue and posted the case for further hearing on July 9. The court was hearing a petition seeking that test results of pregnant women be given priority.

The Delhi government's counsel argued that the rapid antigen test (RAT) takes only one hour for the result to come.

The North body stated that around ₹162 crore was due to the corporation in the first quarter of financial year 2020-21 and of that, only ₹27 crore has been sanctioned.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain, appearing for the Delhi government, disputed the contention saying that in its report filed on July 7, the amounts released to the corporation by various departments have been indicated. The ASG said all dues have been cleared by the Delhi government.

The court also clarified that in this particular case, it was only dealing with the non-payment of salaries of the resident doctors of hospitals run by the North body and not all of its doctors and other employees. It had initiated the case on its own based on news reports that doctors of Kasturba Gandhi Hospital have threatened to resign as they have not been paid salaries since March this year.

Mr. Jain told the High Court during the hearing that the Delhi government has released ₹8 crore to the corporation for payment to help journalists in distress who are frontline COVID-19 warriors," Mr. Kumar said.

Kejriwal seeks analysis of COVID-19 deaths in city

Principal Health Secretary to file report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday sought a detailed analysis of COVID-19 deaths in the Capital from Principal Health Secretary Vikram Dev Dutt.

Mr. Dutt has been directed to submit a detailed analysis on the factors behind such deaths and further measures to reduce the death rate.

The Delhi government will devise concrete steps to reduce deaths in the Capital after receiving this report.

Delhi had recorded as many as 120 deaths in a single day in the first week of June which had, till Tuesday, gone down to 50, with the government claiming a sharp decline since the last month.

'Stringent measures'
"The detailed analytical report on COVID-19-related deaths in Delhi will aid the implementation of more

stringent measures to reduce deaths. It will also help mitigate the other causes that have added to the casualties, such as co-morbidities, age and health condition. This will ascertain the cause of the deaths," the statement also said.

COVID-19

The measures taken by the Delhi government, the statement said, such as the increase in the number of ICU beds in hospitals, installation of more oxygen beds, a plasma bank, had reduced the death rate and the positivity ratio.

To bring the death rate to zero, the statement said, the Delhi government will chalk out steps to be taken after obtaining a detailed analysis from the Health Secretary.

The Principal Health Secretary assured Mr. Kejriwal that he would soon prepare and submit the analysis.

Constable succumbs to deadly virus

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old police constable, who was undergoing treatment for liver related complications at a hospital here, passed away 12 days after he was tested positive for COVID-19, officials said on Wednesday.

Constable Yogender Yadav, who was posted in Paschim Vihar West police station, was admitted in Park Hospital on June 12 due to liver-related ailment. He was then tested positive for COVID-19 on June 25 and passed away on Tuesday, a senior police officer said.

He hailed from Balaha Kalan village, Narnaul in Haryana and lived with his family in police colony, Paschim Vihar, he said. He is survived by wife - Rekha (32) and two children - Lakshay Yadav (14) and daughter Akshu Yadav (3), the police said.

Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal took to Twitter and offered condolences to the family.

At least 11 police personnel have died due to the virus so far, the police said.

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Beware of the Bite

Fight against Dengue

Prevention of dengue is everyone's responsibility and everyone's participation

TAKE PRECAUTIONS AGAINST DENGUE



Trivendra Singh Rawat

Chief Minister, Uttarakhand

Do not leave stagnant water lying anywhere in or around the house

Always place a tight lid on containers used for water storage like water tanks etc

Once a week, empty and scrub, turn over items that hold water, such as coolers or buckets

Dress yourself in clothing that covers arms and legs

Visit your healthcare provider right away if you develop a fever, headache, rash, muscle or joint pain. Never start self-medication

Maharashtra's COVID-19 tally nears 2.25 lakh, with 6,603 more cases

198 new fatalities take death toll to 9,448; recovery rate up to 55.06%

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Maharashtra on Wednesday recorded 6,603 new COVID-19 cases, the second highest increase in cases within a day, taking its total cases in the pandemic to 2,23,723.

A hundred and ninety-eight more deaths were recorded, taking the death toll in the State to 9,448. Delete However, from next line, and use State health department officials said that 91,065 of the 2.23 lakh cases are currently active.

The number of recovered cases in the State rose to 1,23,192 as 4,634 patients were discharged on Wednesday.

62 deaths in Mumbai
Mumbai's case tally rose to 87,856 with 1,347 new cases being reported, of which 23,543 are active. The city recorded 62 more deaths on Wednesday, pushing its total fatalities to 5,064.

Pune district reported 36 deaths, while 10 fatalities were reported from Jalgaon in north Maharashtra. Aurangabad in Marathwada re-



Now open: Staff sanitise a guest's luggage after hotels reopened with restrictions as next phase of unlock begins, in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ PTI

ported eight deaths, as did Kalyan-Dombivli in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

As per State Health Department data, Pune's total death toll has now surged to 962.

Jalgaon's total death count has risen to 312, while Aurangabad's stands at 314 and that of Kalyan-Dombivli has risen to 161.

State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said that the State's recovery rate had risen to 55.06% while its fatality rate stands at 4.22%.

After Mumbai, Pune reported the highest case

surge in the State, with 1,016 cases as its total tally reached 31,704, of which 15,932 are active as per the State Health Department.

Along with Mumbai and Pune, massive surges continued unabated across the MMR. Thane reported 746 new cases, taking its tally to 20,077, while Kalyan-Dombivli reported 512 new cases, pushing their total cases to 11,755. Navi Mumbai added 212 fresh cases taking its total case tally to 9,638. Mirاث-Bhayander and Vasai-Virar recorded a sharp increase in infections as well, reporting

3 new cases in Dharavi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Three new cases of COVID-19 were recorded in Dharavi, taking the tally to 2,338 on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, just one COVID-19 patient was found in Dharavi. Once a hotspot, the slum area has seen a dramatic improvement in terms of cases.

157 and 207 new cases, respectively, to take their total case tallies to 5,152 and 6,681.

Nashik piled on 201 fresh cases, taking its total case tally to 6,017 of whom 2,414 were active.

Aurangabad district, a virus hotspot in Marathwada, saw a rise of 195 new cases as its case tally touched 7,197, of which 3,598 are active cases.

"Till date, of a total 11,91,549 laboratory samples, 2,23,724 (18.77%) have tested positive with more than 30,000 samples being tested across the State today," Dr. Awate said.

The episode, however,

had created an atmosphere of distrust between the allies in the Maha Vikas Agha-

Week after joining NCP, 5 councillors return to Shiv Sena

Move follows meetings between allies

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Five Shiv Sena councillors of Parner municipal council in Ahmednagar district, who had switched sides to ally with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), leading to discontent between the two parties and evoking a strong reaction from the Chief Minister office, returned to their original party on Wednesday.

The move comes two days after NCP chief Sharad Pawar held a meeting with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, and a late Tuesday night meeting between Deputy CM Ajit Pawar and Sena ministers.

The five councillors, who on Wednesday morning met Mr. Ajit Pawar, later visited the CM's residence Matsoshi to again join the Sena. They conveyed to Mr. Thackeray that their decision to defect was resulted from the local Sena leadership's failure.

The episode, however, had created an atmosphere of distrust between the allies in the Maha Vikas Agha-

di government.

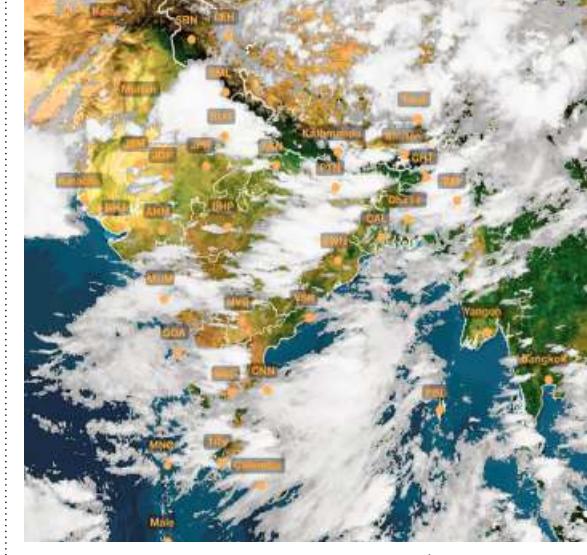
Last week, the five Sena councillors joined the NCP, in the presence of local NCP MLA Niles Lanke. Mr. Lanke, who was originally with the Sena, had switched his allegiance to the NCP before the 2019 Assembly polls, due to his differences with the then sitting Sena MLA Vijay Auti.

According to sources within the NCP, the five councillors from Mr. Lanke's camp were to join the NCP along with him. "But the decision was then kept on hold. They later thought that joining the party of the local MLA would be beneficial to them, and therefore they chose the NCP," an NCP leader said.

In the meeting with the NCP chief, Mr. Thackeray made clear his displeasure over poaching councillors of allies. "It was conveyed to those five that being an alliance government, all their grievances would be resolved, and hence, they decided to join the Sena again," the leader said.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan & Muzaffarabad. Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, west Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Konkan & Goa, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala 0.2 34.1 26.2 Kozhikode 33 30.4 23.4

Ahmedabad 0.6 32.4 26.4 Kurnool 0.6 36.1 25.3

Aizawl 0.6 23.8 - Lucknow 0.6 35.2 27.0

Allahabad 5.4 35.9 27.6 Madurai 0.7 37.0 26.0

Bengaluru 7.4 29.4 20.6 Mangaluru 62.3 27.9 22.9

Bhopal 1.2 33.0 25.0 Mumbai 58.3 32.1 25.8

Hubballi - 34.6 25.6 Mysuru 4 27.9 21.5

Chandigarh 77.4 30.4 24.8 New Delhi 36.0 26.9

Chennai - 37.4 26.2 Patna 3.3 34.6 27.2

Coimbatore - 32.0 22.4 Port Blair 7 30.3 25.2

Dehradun - 33.5 24.0 Puducherry 6.9 33.2 24.4

Gangtok 6.6 23.7 18.7 Pune 10.7 29.8 23.0

Goa 36.4 27.8 25.5 Raipur - 34.0 27.0

Guwahati 0.3 34.9 26.4 Ranchi 4.8 30.8 24.0

Hubballi - 27.0 22.0 Shillong 0.4 25.8 19.6

Hyderabad - 33.2 23.5 Shimla 54.3 24.8 19.5

Imphal 3.6 30.4 22.2 Srinagar - 32.0 17.6

Jaipur 0.6 36.0 26.3 Thiruvananthapuram - 31.8 24.4

Kochi 3 29.8 24.2 Tiruchi - 37.5 26.9

Kohima 20.8 24.2 18.2 Vijayawada 1.6 36.2 26.0

Visakhapatnam 7.7 35.6 27.9 Visakhapatnam - 32.3 28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM_{2.5} PM₁₀ CODE

Ahmedabad 21 24 34 37 60 ■■■■■

Bengaluru8 15 5898 - ■■■■■

Chennai - 22 78 - ■■■■■

Delhi 12 15 34 171 - ■■■■■

Hyderabad6 48 14 6 17 ■■■■■

Kolkata9 52 2080 - ■■■■■

Lucknow1 21 8590 - ■■■■■

Mumbai 59 14 7 20 38 ■■■■■

Pune 24 9 632223 ■■■■■

Visakhapatnam 10 48 2862120 ■■■■■

In observation made at 4 p.m., Ahmedabad, Gujarat recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 172 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

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

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

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

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

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

All healthcare workers given life insurance cover: HC told

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

Life insurance cover has been provided to all healthcare workers in private and government hospitals, Mumbai's Commissioner of Health Services, Mumbai, in an affidavit filed in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) by former journalist Ketan Tirodkar.

The PIL had sought that medical fraternity members succumbing to COVID-19 in the line of duty be pronounced martyrs, and awarded a worthy compensation package.

Nigerian national held with drugs worth ₹2 cr.

He was trying to flee after pulling chain

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The Nigerian national for allegedly possessing drugs worth ₹2 crore. The accused, who identified himself as Sunny Oche Iyke (41), was nabbed between Nalje and Taloja stations in Navi Mumbai on Tuesday, when alighted from the New Delhi-Ernakulam Mangala Lakshadweep Express after pulling the alarm chain.

A statement issued by the Central Railway's chief PRO Shivaji Sutar on Wednesday said that after Mr. Iyke was apprehended by RPF head constable K. N. Shelar and Shivaji Pawar of the Maharashtra Security Force, he was brought to the RPF station in Diva.

The same river, which has the warning level at 539 metre at Sangli and Kolhapur, is 10 metre away from the warning level of 371.61 metre at Purna bridge in Parbhani, the report said. In

Council of India, so the Council should be added as a respondent to the plea.

With respect to declaring medical practitioners as martyrs, it said the issue does not come under the purview of the State Government.

The affidavit also said, "Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package Insurance Scheme for Health Workers fighting COVID-19, was launched on March 30 for a

period of 90 days by the Central government through the department of Health and Family Welfare."

Dr. Tayde said the Centre had informed that the scheme would be extended for another 90 days, in a letter dated June 26 marked to all additional chief secretaries, principal secretaries, and secretaries from the health department of every State and Union Territory.

COVID-19: Pune rural region braces itself to combat surge

More than 1,000 fresh cases reported across Pune district

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Pune district administration has embarked on a multi-pronged strategy to tackle the spread of novel coronavirus in the city, Pimpri-Chinchwad and in the rural areas of the district, have been witnessing an increase of an average 100 COVID-19 cases daily since the beginning of the month.

Ayush Prasad, chief executive officer (CEO), Pune Zilla Parishad, told *The Hindu* that the ZP was going to hire an additional 1,385 medical and paramedical personnel to strengthen the 600 staff already engaged by them.

This new hiring is to prepare ourselves for the next wave of spikes. For the better part of the last four months, the spread of the disease in rural areas was kept in check, until the last three weeks. One must bear in mind that this surge is also because more people in the rural areas are getting themselves tested in private facilities," Mr. Prasad said.

He said in the third week of May, when the total case tally in the rural areas of the district had touched 100, a directive had been issued to map villages and their primary health centres (PHCs) with COVID-19 care centres (CCCs), dedicated COVID health centres (DCHC) and COVID-19 hospitals throughout the district.

"Patients from the gram panchayats are supposed to go to CCCs, as a first point of admission. Depending on severity of symptoms, patients would be admitted there or sent to the mapped DCHC or the identified COVID hospital in the district. This has been working well, except in some cases where patients have got themselves tested at a private lab and then attempted to get admitted to a hospital even if they were 'asymptomatic'. We have

toll has shot to 924.

In Pimpri-Chinchwad, 27 police personnel were among those who tested positive, said sources.

Meanwhile, the death toll in Solapur district – the worst affected after Pune in the division – has climbed to 309 with five new fatalities reported on Wednesday.



On top

A combination of circumstances is helping Nitish Kumar stay ahead in the race for Bihar

In the last 15 years, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been on the winning side in all elections, barring one to the Lok Sabha in 2014. In 2005 and 2010 he led the NDA to power in the State. In 2014 he parted with the BJP, refusing to accept Narendra Modi as the candidate for Prime Minister. After his party, the Janata Dal (United), fared badly electorally, he vacated the CM's post for Jitan Ram Manjhi, a Dalit leader, in political manoeuvring that went out of his control soon. He reclaimed the chair and went on to fight and win the 2015 Assembly election in alliance with the RJD, the Congress and other small parties on the social justice plank. He had bitterly fought RJD founder Lalu Prasad since his exit in 1993 from the Janata Dal mother ship in which they both had cohabited for long. On July 26, 2017, he snapped ties with the new partners and returned to the BJP's embrace. Helped by an amoral agility and elastic ideological moorings, Mr. Kumar has outperformed expectations of political survival that his thin social base could yield in the normal course.

Mr. Kumar's claims of being a changemaker in governance were always exaggerated, though he did manage to pick up the shredded pieces of governance in the State in the initial years. Marginal improvements in education, health and local bodies allowed him some self-congratulatory indulgence, but the State's halting response to the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed glaring failures of governance. Bihar singularly failed in managing the return of nearly 25 lakh migrants from other States in the wake of the outbreak and abrupt lockdown of the economy. Testing levels are very low in Bihar, and Mr. Kumar has remained aloof. But the crisis has only reinforced him politically as things stand now. The widespread mobilisation against the CAA forced the BJP to announce in January that he would continue to lead the NDA and the alliance remained intact. The fate of many regional partners of the BJP in the past – for instance, from leadership to secondary status as with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, or even to extinction as it happened with Janata rumps in Gujarat – could have befallen the JD(U) too. A succession of one crisis after another, including the Chinese aggression now, has forced the BJP to abandon any plans it may have had to relegate Mr. Kumar to a subsidiary role in the State. With the BJP and the JD(U) clinging to each other, the social combination of large sections of the upper and middle castes and Dalits that propels them appears to be formidable. The opposition is in chaos. His father in jail, siblings playing spoilers and party seniors sulking, Tejaswi Yadav is struggling to steer the RJD. The Congress lacks vision, strategy and leadership. Mr. Kumar may not even need to use all his manipulative skills this time. Friends or foes, he is one step ahead of them all.

A case for extension

MGNREGS is important in the rescue of the poor during a time of distress

The finding that 8.4 lakh poor households have completed at least 80 days of the 100-day limit for work under the MGNREGS and 1.4 lakh among those have completed the full quota, should come as no surprise. While these numbers are a fraction of the 4.6 crore households which have benefited from MGNREGS this year, the fact that many poor households have nearly completed their full quota of employment under the scheme in just the last two months (May-June 2020) is a reflection of the distress that has driven them to take recourse to it. With the economy reeling after extended lockdowns following the COVID-19 pandemic and migrant labourers losing jobs in urban areas and returning to their rural homes to avoid destitution, the scheme has come as a huge relief to poor families. The government's decision to extend it into the monsoon season has also benefited households. Data from this year show that in nearly two-thirds of the States, demand for MGNREGS work has doubled or even tripled in a number of districts compared to the previous year. Only in States where kharif crop was sown, the demand was relatively lower. But with some States resorting to their own shutdowns to curtail the spread of COVID-19, the prospects of a robust economic recovery that would benefit those engaged in casual labour and daily wage-labour remain dim. The fairly good monsoon this season should help with providing for more agricultural jobs beyond the MGNREGS works as well, but the surging rate of demand for work under the scheme suggests that it is time the government thought about extending the limit, at least on a State-by-State basis. The swell in agrarian employment in the monsoon season notwithstanding, the excess supply of labour owing to reverse migration from the cities could depress wages. This makes an extension of the limit of work days under the MGNREGS even more imperative.

Since its implementation over a decade ago, the scheme has acted as insurance for rural dwellers during crop failures and agrarian crises. But the Centre's outlook towards it continues to limit it only as a "fall-back" option for the poor. Even before the COVID-19-induced crisis, a lack of demand and falling consumption among the poor were constraining the economy. The MGNREGS, if utilised as more than just an insurance scheme and as a vehicle for rural development, could potentially address that problem. The lessons from its successes and failures could be used for a more comprehensive job guarantee plan that covers urban India too. Besides alleviating distress, this could also boost consumption and aid economic recovery. An extension of the 100-day limit and comprehensive implementation of the scheme in rural areas can be the first step.

The social contract needs to be rewritten

The pandemic crisis can be overcome only when a state is sensitive, has decentralised steps and ensures empowerment



SRINATH SRIVDEVAN & AADIL CURRIMBHLOY

The novel coronavirus pandemic has affected the lives of many and its catastrophic impact goes far beyond the disease itself. Governments across the world have dealt with the problem in different ways. We do not intend to criticise the lockdown or any governmental actions or inactions in this piece. Posterior will judge how good or how bad any government performed in 2020 on this count.

Finding cause

The world does not seem to have answers to many of the problems thrown up by the epidemic, especially those faced by the poorest of the poor. No doubt, some small countries have claimed victory in containing the impact of the disease, but their claim appears to be hollow and even myopic; the fact is that these countries are affluent, and have sealed their boundaries.

So, is the pandemic's impact the result of the failure of individual governments? Or is it due to the failure of the bipolar ruler-and-ruled dynamic of governance structures across the world?

There is a view that mankind's ancestors, in the course of evolution, formed the concept of social groups and resultant rules they would abide by. This is the most rudimentary form of what is known as the 'social contract theory'. When monarchies and empires prevailed, it was easy to understand a social contract – to obey an identifiable sovereign, who in turn was deemed to be

god's representative on earth.

But democratically elected governments have found it more difficult to derive the same legitimacy. With the growth of fundamental freedoms, such as those of speech and expression, unquestioning obedience to governmental authority began to fade. Unquestioned obedience is the holy grail of every autocrat. Some governments yearn for it. Modern society and modern governments also use the social contract theory to claim legitimacy for their actions, but rely more on the theory as expounded by Hobbes and Rousseau. While Hobbes believed that man, in Nature, was "solitary, nasty and brutish", for Rousseau, man, in Nature was "born free".

However, both agreed that the social contract comprises two distinct agreements: first, people agreed to establish society by collectively and reciprocally renouncing the rights they had against one another in unbridled nature and second, they agreed to confer upon one (or more) among them, the authority and power to enforce the initial contract. Thus, the social contract comprises people agreeing to live as one under common laws and in enforcing those common laws justly. Modern day governments take this further.

Their fundamental credo is that society is best-served if a government or other type of institution takes on executive or sovereign power, with the consent of the people.

Consolidating power

We have seen governments go still further and use the power democratically invested in them to decide what is in the best interest of the people. Thus, there is a bending of individual free will towards the collective will. Ironically most such leaders constantly invoke



"the will of the people" when consolidating executive power. So, the social contract is being used by modern governments to justify greater aggrandisement of power in the hands of the sovereign, under the garb of "public good". In fact, if the world events that occurred in 2018-19 were to be examined later by future historians, they would be excused for having an image that people across the world had voluntarily surrendered their individual rights to their governments, who exercised these powers with discipline and benevolence.

The case of two Indias

The novel coronavirus pandemic has laid bare the falsity of this image. For example, access to information about this pandemic has not been equal. The access to resources to avoid the disease has not been equal. And, of course, access to treatment has not been equal.

There are two Indias. The first is an India that observes social distancing, buys its groceries and provisions by observing all precautions and largely obeys governmental directives about COVID-19 prevention. The second is an India that crowds railway terminals to travel long distances, sometimes for days, to get back to native towns, and when that fails, decides to resort to the drastic step of even walking those hundreds of kilometres, defying all government

directives. It is for the second India that the impact of COVID-19 has hit hardest and the impact has nearly nothing to do with the disease.

"Social distancing" was a stirring phrase and call that those of us who are privileged responded to with gusto. We wore our face masks and went about our actions, taking the changed world in our stride.

But there were the others: lakhs of Indians less privileged and living cheek by jowl in hovels and slums, for whom the mandated distance of separation of "6 feet" was and still is an impossibility; an abstract concept.

It is often said that "we are all in this together". But hardly so. We are not sharing the brunt of the pandemic with the poorest of India, the voiceless millions. Professor H.L.A. Hart once said, "freedom (the absence of coercion) can be valueless to those victims of unrestricted competition too poor to make use of it; so it will be pedestrian to point out to them that though starving they are free".

The pandemic-caused crisis has shone a light on how governmental methods to deal with a crisis largely come to the aid of only those with a voice. All societies have some measure of inequality. However, in deeply unequal societies (where the Gini Coefficient exceeds 0.4, for instance) different strata of society will have very different needs to deal with a crisis of this nature. We have seen societies with lower Gini Coefficients deal with the crisis far better, because a uniform approach works perfectly when society is perfectly equal.

For those in governance

In moments of crisis, people look to the state for guidance and taking them to safety. This has led to some sections of society seeking a strong response from a strong

leader. Unfortunately, when the source of power in an unequal society is centralised, the response to the crisis will result in unequal relief to different strata of society. The more unequal the society, the more decentralised the response should be.

The social contract which imbues a centralised sovereign with overreaching powers has clearly failed on this occasion, and will continue to fail every time a similar challenge is posed. The centralised sovereign will work well against a mighty external aggressor, but not against a microscopic pathogen.

What is required is not just a decentralised approach but also a state which is sensitive and responds not only to the needs of those who cry out for help but also meets the requirements of those who are voiceless. Thomas Hobbes described the mighty state as a "Leviathan" which would rule by the will of the majority. He argued that once a ruler is chosen, citizens lose all rights except those the ruler may find it expedient to grant. While no elected government would publicly espouse such a position, it is the unwritten premise underlying every rule and diktat which is issued.

As seen above, a Leviathan has its uses, as for example, in times of war or in a fight against terrorism. The novel coronavirus cannot be defeated by a Leviathan. COVID-19 can only be defeated by an empowered populace. The social contract requires to be rewritten. It does not require anything drastic such as a revolution or anarchy. Rather, it only needs fundamental introspection and rethinking by the governing classes including bureaucrats.

Srinath Srivdevan and Aadil Currimbhoy are advocates practising at the Madras High Court, and work with HSB Partners

The pandemic is about eyes shut

There is a resonance between Saramago's literary world and the migrant labour distress in contemporary India



RAJENDRAN NARAYANAN

The novel, *Blindness*, by Portuguese Nobel Laureate José Saramago, is strikingly prescient about a sweeping illness. The plot revolves around a mysterious epidemic because of which people suddenly turn blind.

The thread

It starts with a person driving his car who turns blind while waiting at a traffic signal. He pleads to be taken home and a man, on the pretext of helping, takes him home but soon after runs away with his car. The contagion spreads rapidly and all those affected by the epidemic are quarantined in an asylum. The novel follows seven people, who do not have names but only descriptions: the doctor, the doctor's wife, the girl with the dark glasses, etc. Lack of equitable delivery of food, inhospitable and unhygienic living conditions, police brutality and apathy of power structures lead to panic among the blind. They are on the brink of starvation. Seven characters escape the asylum and enter the city where they came from only to find that everybody in the city has become blind. Lacking any support, the country plunges into utter despair before resurrection happens quite magically.

Apart from the obvious connections with the pandemic, there are other, numerous and allegorical

ways in which Saramago's world resonates with contemporary India.

Data and worker anonymity

Consider for example, the case of blindness regarding the number of migrant workers. The government's own data sources are inconsistent and are a massive underestimate. The office of the Chief Labour Commissioner stated that there are 26 lakh migrants while various estimates, including the Economic Survey, put this number above 8 crore people. The anonymity of the workers has been reinforced as governments have not kept records of who they are and where they are working. This lack of accountability has given a free rein to the complex web of contractors and sub-contractors to exert various forms of exploitation. The migrant workers, like the characters in *Blindness*, have been rendered nameless in this unequal power gambit.

Then, there is the blindness about hunger and deaths. On June 30, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced free food grains for National Food Security Act (NFS) beneficiaries till November. While it is a welcome move, it yet again excludes those without ration cards. As per estimates of Meghna Munigkar, Jean Drèze, and Reetika Khera, roughly 10 crore eligible beneficiaries continue to be excluded under the NFS. This is because the central government is still using 2011 Census data and hence underestimates NFSA coverage. Moreover, migrants and many self-employed workers do not have ration cards. At a time when the warehouses of the Food Cor-



poration of India have 2.5 times the buffer stock norms, not universalising rationing is inexplicable.

Two petitions concerning food and income support for migrants were summarily dismissed by the Supreme Court of India during lockdown. The Court finally took *suo motu* cognisance of the crisis after 20 senior lawyers wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of India to intervene. The Solicitor General, Tushar Mehta, representing the Union of India, has submitted that there has been no death in the Shramik trains because of lack of water and food, and all deaths took place due to "earlier illnesses". On May 15, Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal at Bennett University said, "We have gone through the entire three months without a single person starving." In reality, there have been at least 850 non-COVID deaths due to an unplanned lockdown. Indian Railway Protection Force Service data show that there have been 80 deaths in Shramik trains alone between May 9 and May 27; most of these are due to starvation and financial distress. Numerous ground reports indicated the extent of hunger. As in Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN) reports covering more than 34,000 workers, 50% had just one

day of rations left and 64% had less than ₹100 when they reached out during the lockdown. In such light, the combination of falsehoods and measured silence by the governing institutions and the judiciary indicate that they have been afflicted by Saramago's imaginary epidemic of blindness that refused to see the gravity of the crisis.

Museum of misery

As rising cases of COVID-19 suggest, the lockdown did not curb the spread of the virus. It was a unilateral decision taken, apparently, to buy time to create health-care facilities. However, the government's hubris backfired. The resilience and the perseverance of the migrants exerting their fundamental right to return pushed the government to respond this time. The SWAN report says: "While a part of the government's slow response is due to the lack of empathy towards workers, a part is also the result of inefficiencies resulting from unilateral decision-making. Consequently, the government has created an archive of distress and a museum of misery." The maze of obfuscating travel orders and the opacity surrounding train schedules was as if the migrants were made to play a cruel game of snakes and ladders. The lucky ones took the metaphorical ladder to the train only to find themselves hungry and fighting with fellow migrant travellers to get food. Even among them, most had to pay for travel forms, pay bribes and face police brutality. The resemblances with the plight of those in Saramago's novel are uncanny. The unlucky

ones stayed back, some evicted from their rented spaces, waiting anxiously for their illusory chance to come. As a character says in the Saramago novel, "... you have to wait, give it time, it's time that rules, time is our gambling partner on the other side of the table and it holds all the cards of the deck in its hand, we have to guess the winning cards of life, our lives."

Some advice

Unlike Saramago's fictional world, such systemic and structural blindness has no magical cure. After continued hostility that workers were forced to endure, it is difficult to pin down the precise analytical reasons for the diverse expressions from migrants. Some have been resolute about returning immediately while some are unable to return home without earnings. Surveys cannot do full justice to understanding these amalgam of expressions and would at best create reductive categories. We definitely do not need piecemeal platitudes coming from the central government. We need many corrections such as stronger adherence to constitutional values, transparency and accountability from the government and the judiciary. And, not just those in power but also those who elect them need to collectively treat the epidemic of blindness that has eroded our moral core where we do not feel uneasy in seeing the hardships of marginalised communities.

Rajendran Narayanan teaches at Azim Premji University and has been a SWAN volunteer

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.

Moving back

While there are numerous reports about China's PLA pulling back from occupied positions in the eastern Ladakh following the call between the Special Representatives from India and China, there is still an absolute lack of clarity on what actually has been mutually agreed upon between the parties towards disengagement and de-escalation. Despite the vague explanation, why should Indian troops too withdraw from their present positions which are well within our side of the LAC? Are we making a concession to buy

temporary peace with a most untrustworthy neighbour? If so, it would amount to compromising our territorial integrity.

How will the "buffer zone" be defined and marked on the ground? What happens to the structures put up by the Chinese well within our side? There is no reason why the media should not be briefed jointly by representatives from the Indian Army and the Ministry of External Affairs on such vital issues of national security. This was done every day during the Kargil war.

S.K. CHOURDHY,
Bengaluru

On policing

It is common knowledge that the services of the police are beyond the reach of the common man. The root cause can be attributed to the apprehension of getting entangled in unnecessary and unexpected turn of events should one approach the police. Most people would rather suffer silent indignation and endure pain than approach the police for justice (Editorial page, "Police terror and the theatre of law", July 8). The situation is quite complex and unless the government, at the Centre and in States,

initiate reforms that would ease work stress and ubiquitous pressure from the higher-ups and people with political influence on the police, atrocities of the kind seen in Sattankulam, are bound to recur.

G.B. SIVANANDAM,
Coimbatore

■ The manner in which Jayaraj and Benicks had their lives snuffed out is a reminder of how torture is a biggest concern of human rights in India. The police are not the only party responsible. It is also the apathy and stoic response from society. Most States are silent on the Prevention of Torture Bill. All is not well with the state of policing. A pandemic can never be an excuse to harass people.

JASPREET SINGH,
Patiala, Punjab

■ Police training centres and academies should impart interpersonal skills to trainee police. Many of them in their line of duty act cruelly with no remorse of any sort. Their acrimony towards the accused and suspects appears to prevail over their bonhomie towards them. How sad! A generational change is needed in the police system. Amity is as important as uprightness. Strangely, the police in India

are oblivious to this.

K. PRADEEP,
Chennai

Body cams

The report (Chennai, July 8) that traffic policemen will now wear body cameras appears to be the result of some 'soul searching' after the spate of media exposés showing the protectors having turned perpetrators. It would be unfair to tar the entire police force with the same brush due to some bad apples. But this move to modernise is welcome.

Joblessness and opportunity in Tamil Nadu

The longer-term decline in the labour participation rate can be attributed to a host of factors

P.G. BABU, VIKAS KUMAR & POONAM SINGH

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted economies across the world and presented policymakers with the unenviable task of sustaining employment amidst lockdowns. However, the academic and political debates in India on unemployment, which is widely attributed to jobless growth amidst stagnation in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors, predate the pandemic. It will be useful to locate the disruption caused by the pandemic on a larger canvas so as to enable a comparative assessment vis-à-vis other recent economic shocks such as demonetisation and the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

It would also be instructive to compare Tamil Nadu, one of India's most industrialised States and also one of the worst pandemic-hit States, with other States that have a large manufacturing sector and are net recipients of migrants. In the absence of government data on employment for recent years, we rely on the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) even though its employment data series is relatively new. Further, the reach of CMIE's surveys was restricted by the lockdown, which affects comparison of the data for the recent months with the pre-COVID-19 period.

Trends in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu's unemployment rate, which is computed as the number of unemployed persons "who are willing to work and are actively looking for a job expressed as a percent of the labour force", increased sharply during the strict lockdown in late March and April 2020 but registered a large turnaround in May when the lockdown was eased to some extent. However, the labour participation rate (LPR) continued to decline, even though at a slower rate in May. While the easing of lockdown restrictions has allowed workers to return to work, they are either still hesitant due to the fear of disease or are unable to return due to transport and communications bottlenecks and lack of information.

The CMIE data do not reveal any clear trend vis-à-vis caste and religion. However, the drop in unemployment rate in May was faster in



"The longer-term decline in LPR in Tamil Nadu could be attributed to general economic shocks, on the one hand, and a combination of industry-specific issues, on the other." A firecracker factory in Sivakasi district, Tamil Nadu. • PTI

urban areas and among males. Likewise, the decline in LPR was less in urban areas, among males and among those with higher education. Persons with intermediate levels of schooling were affected more than college graduates as their LPR continued to drop in May. If the level of education can be treated as a proxy for skill, the data seem to suggest that the lockdown has affected the semi-skilled workforce more than the skilled and unskilled workforce.

The CMIE data also suggest that at least since January 2016 there has been a steady decline in Tamil Nadu's LPR, where the labour force used as the base to calculate employment indicators includes persons aged 15 years and above and falling into either of the two categories: (a) employed and (b) unemployed and willing to work and actively looking for a job. Demonetisation did not significantly impact either the rural or the urban LPR. On the other hand, GST had a significant negative effect on urban LPR. The immediate effect of COVID-19 and the lockdown is visible through a significant decline in LPR in both the rural and urban sector.

Comparing industrialised States
Tamil Nadu differs from other south Indian and industrialised States with regard to the trend of LPR. Urban Ta-

mil Nadu compares with urban Gujarat and Maharashtra insofar as its LPR continued to fall in May. Not coincidentally, like Gujarat and Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu boasts of a large manufacturing sector and these States are among the top four COVID-19-affected States. It is noteworthy, though, that while the urban unemployment rate dropped sharply in May in Tamil Nadu, it continued to rise in Gujarat and Maharashtra. It bears emphasising that the States with low unemployment rates are not necessarily better off if their LPR has dropped sharply. Software/new economy hubs such as Karnataka and Telangana have not seen a very sharp decline in LPR; in fact, Karnataka has seen an increase. In most States, rural labour participation picked up probably due to harvest-related activities, the lower incidence of COVID-19 and the return of urban migrants. However, rural Tamil Nadu saw a decline in labour participation in both April and May.

Challenges facing TN industries
The longer-term decline in LPR in Tamil Nadu could be attributed to general economic shocks such as demonetisation and the introduction of GST, on the one hand, and a combination of industry-specific issues such as changing tastes, a tightening regulatory environment, and grow-

ing international competition, on the other.

The firecracker industry in Sivakasi exemplifies the multidimensional character of challenges, which transcend sporadic shocks. The town that accounts for 90% of the fireworks production in the country faces at least three challenges. First, it has been hit by campaigns calling for the boycott of polluting industries and products. Second, it faces major challenges due to the change in the regulatory environment such as a ban on barium nitrate in the manufacture of firecrackers. Third, the fireworks industry also faces competition from illegal import of cheaper fireworks from China. Other industrial clusters in the Tirupur, Erode and Karur belt as well as the Ranipet and Vellore belts face similar challenges.

The answer to environmental challenges is not a complete shutdown of MSMEs, which is counter-productive. The governments and courts ought to keep unpleasant but unavoidable trade-offs and inter-linkages in mind. The closure of tanneries in Dindigul is a case in point. The impact of the ban on the local economy and environment is illustrative of one-sided solutions: a double whammy of lost employment and unresolved environmental damage. The government could have explored possible mitigation strategies, much before the point of no return, to save both.

While the overall economic scenario is bleak, the present crisis perhaps has a silver lining. The pandemic has exposed India's unsustainable dependence on other countries for a variety of goods and nudged the government to help build supply chains for critical products that are less dependent on foreign countries. Furthermore, the unfortunate border clash in Ladakh has hardened the popular resolve to boycott Chinese goods. These developments may as well offer the much-needed breathing space to domestic industries battered by a series of economic shocks. States that can adapt quickly to shifting economic currents will recover faster.

P.G. Babu is Director, Madras Institute of Development Studies; Vikas Kumar is Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University; and Poonam Singh is Assistant Professor, National Institute of Industrial Engineering

Green-lighting ecological decimation amidst a pandemic

Projects in critical forest habitats are being considered or have been given clearance by the Environment Ministry



CHITRANGADA CHOWDHURY & ANIKET AGA

Few countries are witnessing such severe direct and indirect devastation on account of the COVID-19 pandemic as India. Yet, there is little attention on the roots of our vulnerability. It would be a mistake to approach the pandemic as a bolt from the blue, or an aberration that will eventually pass for 'normality' to return. Our vulnerabilities lie not just in the absence of equitable access to food, healthcare and housing but go to the heart of global development models that sacrifice environmental resilience for limitless economic growth and wealth accumulation.

The 21st century has seen multiple lethal epidemics. Two were serious enough for the World Health Organization to designate as pandemics. The accelerating destruction of wild habitats, forests and diversified food systems for urbanisation, mining, and industry means pathogens which were once largely confined to animals and plants in the wild are now better positioned to infect humans. The expansion of monoculture cropping and livestock farming systems, coupled with dense human settlements dependent on narrow diets of global commodity crops and meat, are eliminating the biodiversity and distance barriers that lent resilience to the human species and domesticated plants and animals. A virulent pathogen can then trigger an epidemic that much more easily. As long as we do not address this march to unsustainability, we will remain vulnerable to pandemic outbreaks.

Drawing the wrong lesson

It is troubling then that our governments are drawing the opposite lesson from the COVID-19 challenge. Through the lockdown, 'expert' bodies of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) have considered, and in many cases cleared, multiple industrial, mining and infrastructure proposals in critical wildlife habitats, and life and livelihood-sustaining forests. These include the Etalin Hydropower Project in the biodiversity-rich Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh; a coal mine in Assam's Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve; diamond mining in the Panna forested belt; a coal mine to be operated by Adani Enterprises with a coal-fired power plant in Odisha's Ta-

labira forests; a limestone mine in the Gir National Park; and a geo-technical investigation in the Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary in Karnataka. As the environment site Mongabay reported last month, authorities considered these projects via video-conferencing in contravention of environmental laws, and without all necessary documents or site inspections, in many cases spending just 10 minutes on a proposal.

Draft Environment Impact Assessment

No meaningful public consultation can take place amidst a pandemic and repeated lockdowns. Yet this did not stop the MoEFCC from pressing ahead with a June 30 deadline for feedback on its draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification. The Delhi High Court later extended the deadline to August 11. As per the draft, starting a project before obtaining environmental approvals will no longer be a violation, and it can be regularised post-facto. Public hearings are riddled with problems and their content routinely ignored while awarding clearances, but they remain the only opportunity of voice for project-affected peoples and environmental and social experts. Instead of strengthening them, the notification proposes to exempt a wider range of projects from hearings, including those which authorities can arbitrarily designate as 'strategic'. The draft even allows for a class of projects to secure clearance without putting out any information in the public domain.

Despite demands from environmentalists, the draft notification says virtually nothing on improving monitoring, and compliance with clearance conditions and safeguards. Safeguarding the environment and front-line communities seems nowhere on the government's agenda. Rather, its priorities are "unleashing coal", as tweeted by the Coal Minister, and green clearances for "seamless economic growth", as tweeted by the Environment Ministry in the lockdown weeks.

The sum effect of all the above moves will be further environmental degradation. It takes a steadfast commitment to ecological illiteracy to argue that wanton environmental destruction will deliver never-ending, seamless growth. These giant leaps backward will not make us *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant). Rather, they will further endanger habitats and lives, and intensify our vulnerability to infectious diseases and related socio-economic shocks.

Chitrangada Choudhury is an independent journalist working on issues of the environment; Aniket Aga teaches Environmental Studies at Ashoka University

COVID-19 has no religion

No single person, event or community can be blamed for the spread of the virus

SHAIKH MUJIBUR REHMAN

India has the third highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world. Since the first reported case in Kerala on January 30, the virus has spread to every State in the country. While cities such as Mumbai and Chennai are continuing to bear the brunt of the cases, COVID-19 cases are also rapidly rising in Tier-II and Tier-III districts. Given this, no single person, event or community can be blamed for the spread of the virus.

Though leaders such as the Chief Ministers of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra appealed to the people not to communalise the virus or blame any religion for it, in the initial days of its spread there was a sustained campaign against Muslims, especially on social media, following the Tablighi Jamaat event in Delhi in March. The Jamaat congregation emerged as India's first largest hotspot. This is not to suggest that the Tablighi Jamaat and its organisers were not at fault. But failures at multiple levels, including at the level of the government and the police, were ignored and only the Markaz's decision to hold the gathering, also a major failure, became the focus.

Rising communal polarisation
The intensity of that communal campaign, though deeply disturbing, was not entirely surprising, especially given the rise of the Hindu Right and its electoral dominance. It is a fact that many Muslim leaders and organisations unequivocally condemned the Jamaat episode. Many from the community, including well-known industrialists, donated money to the government to tackle the unprecedented health crisis caused by the pandemic. Sadly, while the good deeds of Muslims are seen as exceptions or are ignored, a mistake or fault of any Muslim invariably leads to a backlash against the entire community. Why is this the case?

This is partly because of the rising communal polarisation in India since the late 1980s. Furthermore, the propaganda machinery of organisations of the Hindu Right has become more efficient and sophisticated in recent years. Prejudices against the community are so deeply ingrained that

no amount of reasoning can help differentiate fact from myth. Just as Jews were the targets in Europe in the 1930s, Muslims are the favourite targets of bigots in India today. We saw how the Delhi riots of 2020 and the preceding anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests were handled by the state. We heard the statement, "Those indulging in arson can be identified by their clothes". From the lynching of Muslims by 'cow-protection' vigilantes to the anti-CAA protests, a climate has been created which has caused a massive trust deficit between some sections of Muslims and the Indian state, particularly the police. This was seen, for instance, when some Tablighi Jamaat members wrongly refused to cooperate with the state after the congregation. Consequently, a completely well-intentioned request by the state that they should identify themselves so that they can be quarantined was understood as a hidden agenda.

While the government came out with an advisory stating that the pandemic should not be linked to any religion, it would have been more useful if this advisory was more specific in its citation of Muslims and the Markaz. Muslims have been victims of the virus as much as people of other religions.

A backward community
Muslims comprise not only India's largest religious minority but also one of the poorest in the modern world. They remain educationally backward. The Indian state, both in its secular and nationalist avatar, has played its part in perpetuating this backwardness. The community has produced some fine talent in different walks of life, whether in sports, music, art, cinema, or governance, from Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to M.F. Husain, Bismillah Khan and Sania Mirza. Those who participated in the Tablighi Jamaat event are also part of the community, but they are not the only representatives of Islam. Today, as cases continue to rise in India, it is crucial to be objective and reasonable before we single out Muslims for the challenges we face.

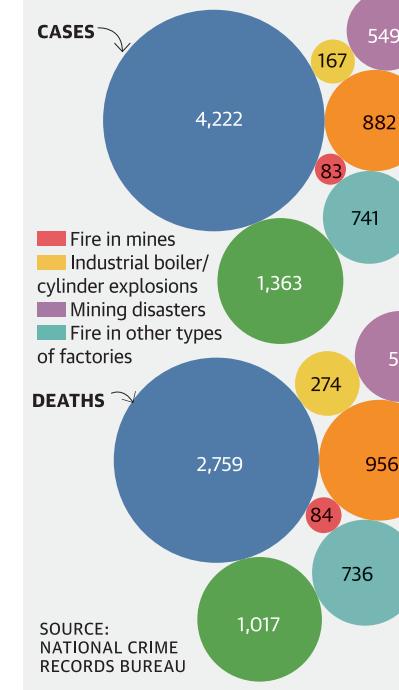
Shaikh Mujibur Rehman teaches at Jamia Millia Central University, New Delhi



DATA POINT

Accident summary

DISASTER TYPE | The graph plots the no. of industrial accidents and related deaths from 2014 to 2017. Most mishaps occurred while operating machinery followed by general industrial accidents. Fire in cracker/matchbox-manufacturing factories also led to many deaths



Since May 2020, there have been 30 industrial accidents in India, killing at least 75 workers, according to IndustriALL, a global union of workers. From 2014 to 2017, 8,004 such incidents occurred in Indian workplaces killing 6,368 employees. Most such incidents took place in Delhi, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. By The Hindu Data Team

STATE-WISE SPLIT | While Delhi (1,529), Maharashtra (1,239) and Rajasthan (946) recorded most such industrial accidents in the period, Rajasthan (948), Gujarat (629) and Maharashtra (557) witnessed the highest number of deaths. The tables list the States with the highest number of cases and deaths in each category

GENERAL INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS:

State	Cases	Deaths
Delhi	493	295
Maharashtra	218	51
Gujarat	91	91
Haryana	91	98
U.P.	69	76

FIRE IN CRACKER/MATCHBOX FACTORIES:

State	Cases	Deaths
Rajasthan	485	485
A.P.	105	106
M.P.	45	61
T.N.	45	69
Assam	32	29

FIRE IN OTHER FACTORIES

State	Cases	Deaths
Maharashtra	126	122
Gujarat	116	120
M.P.	71	71
Haryana	70	69
Rajasthan	68	69

SELECT EVENTS IN 2020
May 7, 2020: At least 12 people died and over 350 were hospitalised after styrene monomer gas leaked from a chemical plant in Visakhapatnam

May 7 & July 1, 2020: In two boiler explosions, at least 13 employees were killed and 17 injured in NLC India Ltd. in Neyveli

WHILE OPERATING MACHINERY

State	Cases	Deaths
Delhi	984	221
Maharashtra	837	318
Gujarat	376	377
Rajasthan	333	336
M.P.	275	272

INDUSTRIAL BOILER/CYLINDER EXPLOSION

State	Cases	Deaths

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FROM PAGE ONE

SHO, another cop held for tipping off Dubey

In Kanpur, police said it arrested three other accused – Shyam Baijai, Jahan Yadav and Sanjeev Dubey. Shyamu was injured in an alleged encounter on Wednesday. However, his family claimed that he had already been picked up by police hours after the killing of eight policemen on the morning of July 3.

Shyamu was listed as one of the 18 accused persons absconding from the site after the incident and a bounty of ₹50,000 was placed on his head. He was shot in his left leg during the alleged encounter, said police.

However, on Monday, his mother Ram Lakshmi Baijai while talking to *The Hindu* claimed that on the morning of July 3, hours after the killing of eight policemen in an ambush, policemen came to her house, located behind the now demolished man-

sion-like house of Vikas.

She claimed her son was sleeping in his room when he was picked up by police between 5.45 a.m. and 6 a.m. "I asked the police many times but they didn't inform me about his [Shyamu's] whereabouts," she alleged. "He was sleeping and was wearing a towel and a vest [when they took him]. His wife, who is ill [and pregnant], was with him," said Ms. Ram Lakshmi. Shyamu, around 33, worked as a labourer in a nearby detergent factory, his family said.

Talking to the media on Wednesday while being taken to a hospital, an injured Shyamu claimed he was at home on the night of the incident.

He said he had returned home at 9 p.m. after work and had nothing to do with the encounter or Vikas.

Chinese troops move out of PP15 area in Ladakh

As reported by *The Hindu*, the disengagement and pullback at PP15 in the Galwan Valley has already been completed and verified on the ground and a buffer zone of 3.5-4 km was created, which will be out of bounds for foot patrols from both sides for the next 30 days.

The disengagement began after the telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yijun on Sunday, where it was agreed that both sides should complete the ongoing disengagement process along the LAC expeditiously.

While the Indian Army had said that there were casualties on both sides during the Galwan clash, China has so far not formally acknowledged any deaths. Writing on India-China relations in the *Free Press Journal* on Tuesday, Mr. Tang said, "Although the Chinese side also suffered casualties, the Chinese media and self-media by and large have maintained a calmer stance and refrained from hyping it up." When asked, the Chinese Embassy declined to give further details, or clarify whether the term casualties referred to deaths or injuries.

In the first acknowledgment by China of casualties on their side, the Chinese Ambassador to India, Sun Weidong, had told news agency Press Trust of India in an interview on June 25 about "fierce physical conflicts and casualties between the two sides".

Welcoming the disengagement and pullback of Chinese troops, former Union Minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram sought clarity from the government on the issue.

India says Kulbhushan Jadhav was coerced

Speaking at a special briefing arranged by the Pakistani Foreign Office in Islamabad, Pakistan's Additional Attorney-General Ahmed Irfan stated that an ordinance had been issued in May that allowed Mr. Jadhav, his legal representative, or a representative of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad to file a review petition in line with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) verdict of July 2019.

"India sought unimpeded access to Shri Jadhav to discuss his remedies under the ordinance. In a brazen attempt to scuttle even the inadequate remedy under the ordinance, Pakistan has obviously coerced Shri Jadhav to forego his rights to seek an implementation of the judgment of the ICJ," an External Affairs Ministry state-

ment said.

It's interesting that Mr. Jadhav, whose sentence was handed down by a Pakistani Army field general court martial, has now been extended the right to appeal in a civilian court – the Islamabad High Court. (Pakistani Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa had confirmed the court martial verdict).

Mr. Irfan claimed that on June 17 Mr. Jadhav was "invited" to file a review petition in the Islamabad High Court against his sentence, but chose not to do so. Mr. Jadhav, instead, "preferred to follow-up" on his pending "mercy" petition.

The Pakistani legal officer also claimed that they had written repeatedly to the Indian High Commission to file a review petition on behalf of Mr. Jadhav.

No clarity on rations for returning migrants

However, the Atmanirbhar ration scheme meant for migrants in shelter homes has been ended, while the portability scheme is not in effect across the country.

Asked for a clarification, a Food Ministry spokesperson confirmed that free rations to migrant workers without ration cards was only being given under the Atmanirbhar scheme which has ended. "Migrant workers' problems continue to be under the consideration of the government," said the Ministry.

Asked about the number of returning migrants, Mr. Javadekar only said: "All the returning trains are full. Pe-

ople have their own arrangement with the owner, contractor or employment provider, and companies, and they are returning."

LPG scheme The Cabinet also approved a three-month extension of its scheme to give free LPG cylinder refills to Ujjwala beneficiaries, as a number of them are yet to avail benefits. They can now take delivery of the refill until the end of September.

In another decision, the Cabinet approved the ₹1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund promised by the Finance Minister in May.

Local spread in Kerala widens with 107 cases

For third day, Andhra Pradesh adds over 1,000 cases to tally, records 12 deaths; Karnataka has biggest spike of 2,062 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's cumulative burden of COVID-19 cases crossed the 6,000 mark with 301 cases reported on Wednesday. The State's case tally now stands at 6,195 cases, a jump of 1,000 cases over the last few days.

In the past one week, there was a big increase in local transmission of cases. On Wednesday, local transmission accounted for 107 cases, with imported cases put at

COVID-19

194. Moreover, 60 out of 107 "contact" cases or cases in the community were reported in the capital district, where COVID-19 was spreading among the fisherfolk in coastal Poonthura.

Thiruvananthapuram also accounted for the maximum number of new cases reported at 64, of which 60 were traced to contact with

asymptomatic infective persons. A chunk of these cases were in Poonthura and the neighbouring coastal villages, densely populated by fisherfolk.

While it was speculated that in Poonthura it could be an isolated event of mass spread, public health experts felt that the situation would be no different across the entire coastal line of the State and that only intensive testing in the local community would reveal the full extent of disease transmission.

Those who contracted cases from the community included three health-care workers, nine jawans of the BSF in Thirissur; a CISF jawan, a member of the Defence Security Corps in Kannur and three personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

The number of persons currently under quarantine and surveillance was 1,85,546, of whom 3,137 with mild COVID-like symptoms

Entry restricted

Hospitals have a tough task at hand as COVID-19 cases are on the rise. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Crossing a hurdle: A security personnel regulating people visiting the Government General Hospital, Ernakulam, on Wednesday. — THULASI KAKKAT

were in hospitals.

Malappuram, with 389 patients, had the maximum number of patients currently undergoing treatment in hospitals followed by Kannur (324) and Thiruvananthapuram (238).

KERALA	TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES	ACTIVE CASES	DISCHARGED CASES	DEATHS
6,191	2,605	3,559	27	
ANDHRA PRADESH	22,259	10,894	11,101	264
KARNATAKA	28,877	16,527	11,876	474
TELANGANA	29,536	11,933	17,279	324
TAMIL NADU	12,347	46,480	74,167	1,700

number of new cases. The total number of active cases was 10,894 and recovered cases at 11,101 putting the recovery rate at 50%.

Three new deaths occurred in Kurnool where the toll went up to 88. Anantapur, Krishna and West Godavari witnessed two deaths each and Chittoor, Guntur and Visakhapatnam one death each.

Karnataka reported a biggest single day spike of 2,062 new COVID-19 cases and a record 54 related fatalities, taking the total number of infections to 28,877 and the death toll to 474, the health department said. The day also saw 778 patients getting discharged after recovery. The overall mortality rate is at 1.19%. State Medical Education K Sudhakar said the managements of private hospitals have agreed to provide 3,500 beds for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

(With inputs from Vijayawada bureau and PTI)

UAE diplomat gives statement to Customs

Officials verifying whether his signature was forged to clear consignment

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A key official at the consulate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) here has voluntarily talked to Customs officers investigating the illegal import of gold from Dubai via an air-shipment addressed to the office of the diplomatic mission in Kerala.

Commissioner of Customs, Sumit Kumar, who is heading the sensitive inquiry, told *The Hindu* that enforcers had moved the Union Ministry of External Affairs for permission from the UAE to imbue the diplomat's statement with a measure of legality under Section 108 of the Customs Act. "Otherwise, it would be a simple statement without any legal value," he said.

Such an inclusion would empower the Customs investi-

BJP demands resignation of Kerala Chief Minister

KOZHIKODE

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan should step down and face investigation in the gold smuggling case that has national security ramifications, BJP State president K. Surendran has said. He alleged that the case was heading from M. Sivasankar, who was removed from the post of IT Secretary, to the Chief Minister.

tigators to identify and prosecute the people who financed, organised and implemented the complex operation using diplomatic goodwill and international covenants as a cover.

Mr. Kumar said diplomats had legal immunity under Article 36 of the Vienna Convention. Hence, investigat-

CPI(M) reiterates demand for Central probe

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is reiterating its demand for a comprehensive Central agency probe into the gold smuggling case for tracing the conduit and the destination to where the contraband was bound. The party leadership is insisting on the probe considering the political dimension of the case.

ing agencies had no power to summon them, seek evidence or conduct searches on person and premises. However, such persons could voluntarily give statements.

A letter purportedly written by the official was used by the suspect to clear the freight imported in the name of the UAE consulate from

the air cargo complex here. Investigators said the diplomat had categorically stated that he did not import the shipment, authorise its clearance and his signature on the document was forged.

The Customs would send the official paper to the government examiner for questioned documents to verify it.

CM writes to PM

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday petitioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an "effective and coordinated" investigation into the case by "all central agencies concerned."

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala demanded Mr. Vijayan's resignation. He said the woman suspect in the case had free run of the CM's office.

A.P. poll panel chief case: SC decision in 2-3 weeks

Chief Justice Bobde says the court does not intend to pass any interim orders, will hear it on merits

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Wednesday said the Supreme Court would hear and decide in "two or three weeks" separate appeals filed by the Andhra State Election Commission and BJP leader Atluri Ramakrishna challenging an Andhra Pradesh High Court order reinstating N. Ramesh Kumar as the State poll panel chief.

Mr. Irfan claimed that on June 17 Mr. Jadhav was "invited" to file a review petition in the Islamabad High Court against his sentence, but chose not to do so. Mr. Jadhav, instead, "preferred to follow-up" on his pending "mercy" petition.

The Pakistani legal officer also claimed that they had written repeatedly to the Indian High Commission to file a review petition on behalf of Mr. Jadhav.

not intend to pass any interim orders in the case, but would hear it on merits after three weeks.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi for Andhra Pradesh suggested the court to allow the appointment of an interim State Election Commissioner to avoid any delay in election work.

CJI's observation

"We will not talk about the conduct of elections. Elections should take place," Chief Justice Bobde said.

On June 10, the court had

declined the State government's interim plea to stay the High Court order setting aside the ordinance which amended the Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act of 1994. Now all three appeals on the issue would be heard together.

The amendments had included restricting the State Election Commissioner post to only retired High Court judges.

Prior to the amendment, retired bureaucrats were also in the zone of consideration. The curtailment of the

tenure of the Election Commissioner to three years had compelled the then incumbent to step down. Subsequently, a new Commissioner was appointed.

The High Court, on May 29, had set aside the amendments as retrospective legislation. It said the State did not have the power to appoint State Election Commissioners under Articles 243K and 243ZA.

Right to equality

The power to make the appointments lies with the Governor. It had found the re-

duction of the tenure from five to three years arbitrary and in violation of the right to equality under Article 14, the High Court had said.

The High Court had delivered the judgment on a batch of writ petitions, including the one by Mr. Ramesh Kumar against the amendments and the subsequent appointment of a new SEC.

The YSR Congress government had on April 10 abruptly removed Mr. Ramesh Kumar from the post following the amendments to the 1994 Act.

Focus on K.P. Kesava Menon's accounts of Malabar rebellion

They reveal the multifarious nature of the movement

K.S. SUDHI
KOCCHI

As the controversy over the 1921 Malabar rebellion is raging, the accounts of the turbulent times chronicled by freedom fighter K.P. Kesava Menon in *The Hindu* a century ago bring to light the multifarious nature of the movement.

While Menon praised Mohals for their enthusiasm to join the Khilafat movement and Congress committees during the pre-rebellion days, he also provided a critical account of the forced conversion of a Thiyya woman of Nilambur in the note, 'Forced Conversion,' the Calicut Case, published on June 1922.

His notes and an interview published in *The Hindu* were recently retrieved from the archives of the newspaper.

rebellion. Later, she was provided rice and money and offered a house at Calicut by some Mohals of Nilambur. The woman told Menon, the then secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee, that she and her kids were taken to Edavanna, where she was called Rabia twice and made to "repeat Kilema".

The heads of the children of the woman, who wanted to go back to Hinduism, were shaved by Mappila barber on the night they reached Calicut and "on the next day they were given mappila caps."

She also recounted that during all the 14 days of her staying in the Pattanam house in Calicut, she was compelled "to repeat Kilema".

Telangana firm ties up with CSIR for drug trials

Trial on 300 patients for 17 to 21 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

City-based Laxmi Life Sciences Private Limited, in association with the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), on Wednesday sought regulatory approval to undertake a four-arm randomised

IN BRIEF



Govt. to pay EPF share for another three months

NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved an extension of the support being given to establishments with up to 100 workers in the form of the government making the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contribution instead of the employees and the employers. The government had announced that it would pay both the employees' and employers' 12% share each under EPF from March till May. The Cabinet extended the scheme for three months, from June to August.

Former Assam CM calls for Akhil Gogoi's release

GUWAHATI

Former Assam Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Tarun Gogoi has called for the release of peasant leader Akhil Gogoi and others of his organisation. The founder-advisor of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, has been in captivity since December 2019 on several charges, including sedition and instigation of violence during the Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests. "Detention of Akhil Gogoi and others is undemocratic, unlawful, and a violation of democratic rights. We are urging the government to release them immediately," said the former Chief Minister, also expressing concern over the peasant leader's deteriorating health.

CBI books Ahmedabad firm for bank fraud

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked Ahmedabad-based Chem Edge International Private Limited (CEIPL) and its directors for allegedly cheating the Bank of India (BoI) of ₹98.88 crore. This is the fourth case registered against the main accused persons in the past few days. In the latest case, among those named are Bharat R. Shah, Fenil B. Shah, Geetaben B. Shah, Ashish Tawalekar and Rajesh Sanghvi, besides unknown public servants.

No political vendetta in RGF probe, says BJP

It is a natural outcome of information recently disclosed'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday refuted allegations of political vendetta against the Congress after the Union government instituted an inter-ministerial group to go into any irregularities in the funding of the Congress-linked Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF).

At a press conference, BJP general secretary P. Muralidhar Rao said orders for the probe were a "natural outcome" of the information recently brought out into the public domain.

"The government would not have waited for six years to order a probe if it had been at all politically motivated," Mr. Rao said.

He also accused the party of not behaving in a "responsible manner" as an Opposition. "During 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 wars, we've been

C The government would not have waited for six years to order a probe if it had been at all politically motivated

P. MURALIDHAR RAO,
BJP GENERAL SECRETARY

haved as Opposition, not as enemy to the government. We in no way have given any kind of direct/indirect strength to enemy countries. Today, Modi govt. is taking care of the poor, economy, growth while giving a model leadership to the world," he said.

While nobody is denying the crisis posed by COVID-19, Mr. Rao said the government had identified

challenges and begun addressing them in a "360 degree manner".

"To help farmers, 70.32 lakh kisan credit cards have been sanctioned with a credit limit of ₹62,870 crore out of ₹2 lakh crore concessional credit under the 'Amanirbhav' package, he said. This will benefit 2.5 crore farmers, including fishermen and dairy farmers," he said.

Mr. Rao said free ration scheme for over 80 crore poor people had been extended till November, while over ₹64.5 thousand crore has been distributed among 40 crore people under various welfare measures.

"As many as 20 States have already come on board for one nation one ration care scheme, which will ensure that beneficiaries can get their share of free grains in any part of the country" he said.

BJP leader killed in attack in J&K

Two family members also dead in suspected militant attack in Bandipora

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

A BJP leader and his two family members were killed in a suspected militant attack in north Kashmir's Bandipora on Wednesday evening, even as security was beefed up across the Valley on the fourth death anniversary of Hizbul Mujahideen 'commander' Burhan Wani.

"Terrorists fired upon BJP worker Wasim Bari at Bandipora. During indiscriminate firing, Bari, his father Bashir Ahmad and his brother Umer Bashir were injured and were shifted to a hospital. Unfortunately, all the three succumbed to their injuries," a police spokesman told *The Hindu*.

All 10 personal security officials (PSOs) guarding the BJP leader were arrested after the attack," Inspector



Deserted streets: A shutdown was observed in parts of the Valley on the death anniversary of Burhan Wani. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar told *The Hindu*. The move has come as part of the investigation "into any security lapse".

A police official said the suspected militants opened fire from a close range on the BJP leader and his family near their shop. Security forces have launched an operation to nab the attackers. So far, no militant outfit has

claimed responsibility for the attack.

"I am shocked and saddened by the killing of young BJP leader Wasim Bari and his brother by terrorists in Bandipora. Bari's father is also a senior leader. This despite 10 security commandos. My condolences to the family," said BJP general secretary Ram Madhav.

"Sorry to hear about the

murderous terror attack on the BJP functionaries and their father. I condemn the attack," said National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah.

Mobile Internet was snapped in parts of the Kashmir Valley "as a precautionary measure". Security was also beefed up in south Kashmir's Tral, the hometown of Wani. A shutdown was observed in parts of Kashmir.

Civilian killed, 3 injured

In Pir Panjal's Poonch district, a civilian was killed and three were injured in fresh ceasefire violations along the Line of Control. The civilian, identified as Rashim Bi, 65, from Lanjoote Balakote, was killed in shelling and firing by Pakistan. Another person, Hakam Bi, 60, was injured in the shelling.

CWC may have to extend Sonia's tenure

She had taken charge in August 2019

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC) may soon have to meet to decide on extending the tenure of party president Sonia Gandhi as she will be completing one year on August 10 in her present role.

Though the party planned a Congress session around April after the Budget session of Parliament to have a full-time president, all plans were put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With no clarity on the process to appoint a full-time president, the CWC, the party's highest decision-making body, is left with limited options. At the last CWC on June 23, Rajas-

J&K police officer suspended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Days after he filed a police complaint against the Jammu and Kashmir Director-General of Police (DGP), a 2000-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was suspended by the Union Home Ministry on Tuesday.

Basanti Rath, posted as Inspector-General, Civil Defence, Jammu, had on June 25 given a written police complaint against Dilbag Singh, alleging apprehension about his life and liberty.

An order issued by the Ministry stated that disciplinary proceedings against Mr. Rath are contemplated in connection with "repeated instances of gross misconduct and misbehaviour".

BMS to protest against 'anti-labour' laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), a workers' union affiliated to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), on Wednesday announced that it would observe 'Sarkar Jago Saptah' from July 24 in protest against the anti-worker policies of the Centre and the State governments.

The BMS had supported the three-day strike observed by coal workers last week against the government's decision to allow commercial mining. BMS general secretary Virjesh Upadhyay said the union would organise protests from July 24 to 30, but the agitation would end only when the governments withdraw their anti-worker decisions. It was time for an "aggressive movement, a social movement," he said during a virtual press conference.

In a statement, the BMS said it would be raising the issues of the unorganised sector workers, especially migrant workers, non-payment of wages and massive job losses during the COVID-19 crisis. It will also focus on the suspension of labour laws in several States and the "unbridled privatisation" of public sector and corporatisation of defence and railway production units. Mr. Upadhyay said the BMS had reached out to 73 MPs, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, to submit its memorandum on labour issues during the lockdown.

Probe ordered into picture with tiger cub

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

An inquiry was ordered on Wednesday into an incident involving a picture of a senior forest officer's son at the Ranthambore tiger reserve that showed him sitting in a jeep near a tiger cub. The photograph has gone viral on social media.

The tiger reserve was closed for three months on July 1 for the monsoon. The photograph showed the young man sitting in the driver's seat in a government jeep, with the cub hiding behind bushes near the front wheels. Minister of State for Forest and Environment Sukhram Bishnoi said that he had ordered an inquiry into the incident. "I will take appropriate action after getting the report of the inquiry," he said.

UN makes public third communication on J&K

Raises human rights violations, minority issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

United Nations Special Rapporteurs have made public their third communication forwarded to India since the August 5, 2019, decision to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status, expressing "grave concern over alleged excessive use of force, ill-treatment during arrests and detentions".

Four rapporteurs had forwarded a joint communication to India on May 4, 2020 – on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; on extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary executions; on minority issues; and on freedom of religion or belief – and made it public recently, after 60 days of response time.

"We would like to bring to the attention of Your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the continued deterioration of human rights conditions in J&K following severe restrictions imposed after August 5, 2019, in particular, citing arbitrary detentions, vi-



The joint communication was forwarded to India on May 4.

lations to the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and rights of persons belonging to minorities," it reads. The first communication was forwarded on August 16, 2019, on "restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly". The second was communicated on February 27, 2020, on alleged "mass crackdown targeting those expressing dissent against the decision taken".

"We regret that no response has been received to either communication, in particular, the former," it added.

NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS
(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar,
New Delhi – 110029

FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATE EXAMINATION (FMGE)
NOTICE

National Board of Examinations shall conduct the next FMGE on the 31st of August 2020.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBE website www.nbe.edu.in for eligibility criteria, fee structure, course curriculum, scheme of examination and other details.

Important Dates for FMGE June 2020 Session

Availability of Information Bulletin	7th July 2020 Onwards
Online Submission of Application Form	8th July – 22nd July 2020
Examination Date	31st August 2020
Declaration of Result	20th September 2020

Candidate Care Support: 022 – 61087595; E-mail: helpdesknbexam@gmail.com

Vicious and vengeful, says Congress

Party calls the probe a 'blind witch hunt', questions Chinese donations to PM's fund

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress called the Narendra Modi government's decision to set up an inter-ministerial committee to investigate donations to three organisations associated with it – Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust and Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust – "wholly vicious and vengeful".

R A desperate Modi-Shah government has fallen back on a devious hounding of those exposing its ineptitude by ordering a wholly vicious and vengeful investigation of the Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust

RANDEEP SURJEWALA,
CONGRESS LEADER

and into the source of funding for the "Overseas Friends of BJP". The Congress pointed out that there has been nearly 500% increase in income and donations to the BJP, from ₹570.86 crores (in 2015-2016) to ₹2,410 crores (in 2018-2019).

"Our determination to hold the government accountable to the people and speak for the deprived, the underprivileged and the downtrodden will only get strengthened by these desperate actions of a government too petrified to answer its own people," Mr. Surjewala said.

Congress treasurer Ahmed Patel said the BJP government is filled with hatred for the Gandhi family. "Entire focus of this government machinery is to humiliate & threaten the Congress president. But these things don't deter us. History is witness – such tricks were tried even by the mighty Kauravas. The nation is watching" Mr. Patel tweeted.

The Congress also pointed out that a similar inquiry must be ordered into the donations and the amounts received by right-leaning organisations, such as the Vivekananda Foundation and the India Foundation,

to

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Mr.

Surjewala

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AIIMS starts tele-consulting sessions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Aimed at reducing the COVID-19 mortality rate, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (Delhi) has started tele-consultation guidance for State doctors on COVID-19 clinical management.

Ten hospitals with more than 1,000 beds participated in the first session. The sessions will be held twice every week. "Specialist doctors from AIIMS, Delhi will provide expert guidance and knowledge support to doctors manning ICUs in State hospitals," noted the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday. Ten hospitals have been selected, including nine from Mumbai and one from Goa, for the sessions that started on Wednesday. The Ministry has noted that this exercise will be extended to 61 more hospitals.

Rental housing scheme for migrants cleared

3 lakh urban workers to benefit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A scheme for providing affordable rental housing to about 3 lakh urban migrants was approved by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday.

The creation of affordable rental housing complexes was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on May 14 as a part of the package to address the COVID-19 crisis.

At a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Cabinet approved the scheme, which will be a sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban that is implemented by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry. About 1.03 lakh

'Trace contacts within 72 hours'

States must ensure contacts of 80% of new cases are traced by this time: Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Some relief: COVID-19 patients playing a board game in an isolation ward in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ PTI

ties, pregnant women and small children. The involvement of the community, ASHAs and ANMs at the local government has led to effective surveillance in the community," noted the Ministry.

The Ministry on Wednesday said the number of samples being tested had substantially grown with 2,62,679 samples having been tested in the past 24 hours. Of these, more than 53,000 samples had been

tested in private labs. It said the cumulative number of samples tested so far stood at 1,04,73,771.

"The ramped up healthcare infrastructure in the States has resulted in distribution of the positive cases in different healthcare facilities, including dedicated COVID Hospitals, COVID health care centres and COVID care centres. This, coupled with effective treatment, has ensured in keeping the case

mortality low. Ramping up of dedicated COVID facilities within the public and private sectors has ensured timely triaging and treatment of the patients," the Ministry noted.

Pulse oximeter

Meanwhile, stating that measuring of oxygen saturation level is one of the most important parameters for monitoring the health of COVID-19 patients, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare, on Wednesday announced that it will reimburse the cost of pulse oximeter purchased by the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) beneficiaries.

"The ECHS beneficiaries who have been tested positive for COVID-19 infection are permitted to purchase one pulse oximeter per family," noted the order.

UAE in support of open skies agreement with India

There are 1,068 flights a week between the two countries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The UAE is keen to have an open sky agreement with India, its Ambassador to India A.R. Albanna said on Wednesday.

"You need to have an open sky policy. You cannot be protective and at the same time say you want to become a hub. Open sky policy and fifth and sixth freedoms are two separate issues," Mr. Albanna said at a webinar organised by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Bilateral agreement

There are about 1,068 flights a week between India and the UAE operated by the airlines of the two countries under the bilateral Air Service Agreement.

India has an open skies pol-



A file photo of Terminal 3 in Delhi. India has an open skies policy with SAARC nations.

ween the two countries.

It is this policy that the Ambassador wants India to revisit.

Interest threatened

Mr. Albanna sought to underline that this would not bestow the capability to operate flights from one country and fly them to a third country, which is also referred to as fifth and six freedoms of air, and where the interest of Indian airlines will be threatened by carriers like Emirates and Etihad.

Addressing the webinar, Usha Padhee, Joint Secretary at Ministry of Civil Aviation, said that although 2.7 million passengers have been flown on domestic airlines since May 25, there have only been 800 COVID-19 positive cases.

'Quorum not needed for routine panel meetings'

Essential only when they take decisions: RS Secretariat

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI



Venkaiah Naidu

Contradicting the Opposition's argument for virtual meetings of standing committees to ensure quorum during deliberations, officials at the Rajya Sabha Secretariat have said that quorum is essential only when the committees take decisions or adopt reports and not during routine deliberations.

Sources said this issue came up at a meeting on Wednesday chaired by Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu. Congress leader and Chairman of the Standing Committee on Science and Technology Jairam Ramesh had written to Mr. Naidu demanding a virtual meeting citing lack of quorum. Quorum for these meetings is generally 11 out of 30 members.

The officials, sources said, told Mr. Naidu that out of 281

meetings of the eight department-related Standing Committees that are headed by Rajya Sabha members, 16% were held without quorum. "The committee on Science and Technology & Environment and Forests held 32 meetings during the past three years, of which 22% were without quorum. In respect of the 38 meetings of the committee on Home Affairs, 21% were without quorum," a senior RS official said.

Mr. Ramesh has been heading the committee only since September last year.

He said that during his tenure, 11 meetings were held and quorum was complete in each one of them.

According to sources, eight of the 30 members of the standing committee on Science and Technology which is to deliberate on "Preparedness for COVID-19" have confirmed attendance.

Of them, other than Mr. Ramesh himself, one member from the Samajwadi Party and one from Bahujan Samaj Party, the remaining are from the BJP. All the members who have confirmed are either from Delhi or Uttar Pradesh, their constituencies within driving distance to Parliament.

"Point isn't about quorum alone. It's about facilitating those MPs who want to attend and are unable to because of containment zones and quarantine restrictions in their home states," Mr. Ramesh said.

Mr. Ramesh was heading the committee only since September last year.

'Deliberate attempt to aggravate social tensions'

RYM condemns attack on Dr. Ambedkar's house

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE



Keeping guard: Policemen outside Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's house at Dadar in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

The Republican Yuva Morcha (RYM), an Ambedkarite outfit based in Pune, said the attack on Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's house in Mumbai was a deliberate attempt by right-wing forces to aggravate social and casteist tensions in the State.

RYM president Rahul Dambale said the act follows a pattern of atrocities and insults against the Dalit community in recent times, starting with clashes at Bhima-Koregaon on January 1, 2018. "We strongly condemn the attack on Dr. Ambedkar's house, Rajgruha, in Dadar. We urge the Maha Vikas Aghadi government to swiftly nab the masterminds. It is especially essential at this volatile moment for the police to get to the bottom of this affair," he said.

Mr. Dambale said the vandalism was an attempt to inflame the Ambedkarite com-

munity's sentiments and get them to protest on the streets in large numbers. "I appeal to all members of our community to show restraint and not to be provoked by this act. An FIR has been registered and the police have begun investigations," he said.

Mr. Dambale said the lack of concrete progress in the Bhima-Koregaon violence case, and a string of caste atrocities against Ambedkarite youths, had fostered mistrust against authorities. The Dalit community keenly feels a sense of injustice towards them, he said.

"The bicentenary celebrations of the Koregaon-Bhima battle witnessed orchestrated violence on the Ambedkarite community on an unprecedented scale. But since then, Hindutva leader Milind Ekbote, a prime accused, is out on bail. Now, this act of vandalism on Babasaheb's residence is yet another provocation by anti-social elements to break the peace," he said.

Panel for criminal law reforms lacks diversity'

Include more outside experts: letter

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court and High Court judges, senior lawyers and academicians said a committee constituted by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to introduce reforms in criminal law lacks diversity and it needs to ensure transparency.

A letter from them to the Committee chairperson and National Law University-Delhi's Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Ranbir Singh, said the line-up of its members "lacks diversity, both in terms of the social identity of the members, as well as their professional background and ex-

perience". The signatories include former apex court judges like Aftab Alam, Madan B. Lokur and Gopala Gowda, senior advocates Dinesh Mathur, Indira Jaising, Navroz Seervai, C.U. Singh, Rebecca John, Dayan Krishnan, Sanjay R. Hegde and Sanjay Parikh.

Create sub-committees with outside experts and other consultants with established track records in the field of criminal justice who can redress the lack of diversity and experience," they advised. The committee has invited expert opinions and has begun an online consultation exercise from July 4.

The Andhra Pradesh Power Finance Corporation Limited Invites Global tenders in online bidding through tender.apeprocurement.gov.in for the following consultancy services:

Sl. No.	Spec. No.	Name of work	Date & time of availability of tenders on tender.apeprocurement.gov.in From 09.07.2020 to 24.07.2020
1	APPFCL-01/2020	Planning and Implementing Initiatives for Power Supply Efficiency and Consumer Service Improvement Models in APDISCOMS	From 09.07.2020 to 24.07.2020

Note:
i) Name and address of the officer inviting bids - Managing Director / APPFCL, Vijayawada, Vidyan Soudha, Gunadala, Vijayawada-520004. Office Landline: 0866-2429226.
ii) The contractors/firms are requested to kindly upload your bids through online in AP e-procurement platform.
iii) Further details can be seen in website(s): www.appfcl.com
DPR 167/PP/CL, Dt: 08-07-2020

Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR/APPFCL

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Name of the Item: Metal Sorter (Hand Held EDXRF Spectrometer)

Tender No.: C-MET/HD/SP-41/MS/14/2019-20

Last Date for Receipt of Tenders : 30.07.2020 up to 17:00 Hrs IST

For Details and Tender Document, please visit our website <http://www.cmet.gov.in> & also CPPortal.

Sd/- DIRECTOR

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TSSPDCL intends to float tenders are invited from various contractors having experiences for (01) Prov. of 11KV Cable joint Kits at near Film Chamber from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan fdr and various locations for the month of June & July-2019 in CBD B'ills. (03 to 09) Prov. of 11KV Cable joint of various sizes & locations for the month of August-2019 to February-2020 in B'ills B'ills (10) Supply of Stationery, Printing and Computer Stationery items in B'ills Circle, Hyd. For further details, please visit www.tsspdclpower.com.

DPR R.O.No.2945-PPCLADVT/1/2020-21 DL. 08.07.2020

Sd/- SE Operation, Banjara Hills Circle

Principal Chief Materials Manager

Information on the EOI can be obtained from the BIAL website www.bengaluruairport.com (<https://www.bengaluruairport.com/corporate/engage-with-us/tenders.html>). Bidding for this Project is through e-tendering. Applicants shall register on <https://www.bialtenders.com/> as per the e-Tendering instructions provided with the information document.

Applicants shall view/ download the EOI document from <https://www.bialtenders.com/> from 0900 hrs IST on July 9, 2020 to 2000 hrs IST on July, 20th, 2020. Response to EOI must be submitted by uploading supporting documents online at <https://www.bialtenders.com/> on or before 1600 hrs IST on July, 23rd, 2020. Consortium/ joint venture participation is not permitted.

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www.bengaluruairport.com

NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

S. No.

Title of package

Short description of scope of work

1

Construction of internal roads, associated, enabling works for Bangalore Airport City at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru.

Information on the EOI can be obtained from the BIAL website www.bengaluruairport.com (<https://www.bengaluruairport.com/corporate/engage-with-us/tenders.html>). Bidding for this Project is through e-tendering. Applicants shall register on <https://www.bialtenders.com/> as per the e-Tendering instructions provided with the information document.

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BANGALORE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LTD.

Alpha2, Administrative Office

INTERVIEW | ASHISH JHA

'Policymakers must realise that pandemic is still in early stage in India'

Masks, testing and getting rid of large gatherings for a year will keep the virus from getting into exponential growth, says global health expert

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

While nations across the world struggle to contain the fallout of the human toll and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, public health experts such as Dr. Ashish Jha, K.T. Li Professor of Global Health at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, have been at the forefront of research and public policy guidance to public and private institutions dealing with the crisis. He shared insights into the epidemiological basis of the pandemic and what policy solutions hold out hope for the future in India.

You have argued that to measure the true impact of the coronavirus in India, we need to look beyond the official fatalities record of the government. Why do you believe this?

■ First of all, the key metrics that we want to sort relate to how many people have been infected and how many people have died. Both of those are driven a lot by how carefully you look. If you have a lot of mild infections happening, and you are not testing extensively, you are going to miss those. Therefore, you might find that you have a very high case fatality rate because you are only testing the sick patients and finding very sick people.

Alternatively, if you do not

have a very good surveillance system for deaths, if every death is not thoroughly investigated, you might find that a lot of people die. You do not know why they are dying. You may think that your case fatality rate is really low, because you are missing a lot of deaths due to COVID-19. Understanding both how many people have been infected with and have died of this virus in India is a tricky business. You cannot just look at the official statistics.

Is there any chance in India that the accuracy of recording deaths and causes of deaths is reasonably high and the estimated fatality rate is in the correct ballpark?

■ The global fatality rate is about 1%, maybe a little less. When all is said and done, that will be the fatality rate in India. I actually expect that in India it will be lower than 1%, because India has a relatively younger population. But I am not particularly interested in fatality rate – I am interested in fatalities.

Right now, the statistics suggest that around 20,000 people have died of this virus in India. That, to me, is very low. It is possible that we are doing a good job in India of ascertaining all the deaths, but I would not be surprised if we are missing a lot. The reason is that when I look at the U.S., U.K. and Western Europe, all of those countries have a lot more deaths than they have officially recorded. If high-income countries with very good surveillance systems are missing anywhere from 30%-70% of deaths from the coronavirus, why would I not expect that India would also be missing a similar proportion of deaths? I also think that the current estimate of 7,00,000 people having been infected is almost surely a very substantial underestimate.



I think that the current estimate of 7,00,000 people having been infected is almost surely a very substantial underestimate

Is the government justified in conserving test kits and surveillance system resources over time, hence limiting testing to the numbers that we see?

■ There is no limit to how much testing a country can do if it makes investments in reagents and other supplies.

It can do very large numbers of tests. India has done about ten million tests so far. The U.S. has done about 40 million, Russia has done about 20 million. Why is India's capacity less than Russia's in terms of the ability to do testing? I just think it is a priority issue. If India decided tomorrow that it was going to invest substantial financial and intellectual resources into ramping up testing, I know nothing about India that makes me think it cannot do it, that it does not have the capacity.

Is the theory of herd immunity our only hope until a vaccine arrives? Could either or both of these halt the pandemic in its tracks? Please explain how they work.

■ The purpose of herd immunity is that once you have 60%-70% of the population immune to the disease, then the virus cannot spread anymore, it slows down, and it does not completely extinguish but it becomes a much smaller problem. How do you get to 60%-70% immunity? The best way to do it is

through a vaccine. If you do not have a vaccine – and this is what people usually refer to as herd immunity – what if you just let the infection run? 60%-70% of India's population will have to get infected – the idea of nearly a billion people getting infected. If you take a 1% fatality rate, that is 10 million people dying, and tens of millions of people getting very sick, hospitals completely overwhelmed over the next year. That is a disaster. So, herd immunity is the policy of complete and utter failure. With millions of people dying and hundreds of people getting very sick, the economy will be completely destroyed.

India has had among the most stringent lockdowns across the world. Would you argue that that has had a substantial impact?

■ Remember, the entire strategy here is to protect people until a vaccine becomes available. I believe a vaccine will be available for India sometime in 2021 and my hope is that it will be in the first half of 2021. But there is a lot

of uncertainty. Let us assume that it is in July 2021. We have about a year to go until that vaccine becomes available. But lockdowns only buy you time. You cannot be locked down for a year, it is just not possible economically and socially. The key is to use that lockdown to substantially ramp up testing, communicate to the people of India what will happen when the lockdown ends, how our behaviour must change, put in those policies, and ramp up hospital capacity. Then, when you unlock, you will be better able to handle what will surely be a surge of cases, as we are seeing in India right now.

When do you see the viral spread peaking in India and then coming down, and, accordingly, what advice would you give to the Indian government?

■ What policymakers in India must understand is that the pandemic is still quite early in India. What will cause the peak and the decreasing of cases? Right now, less than 1% of the Indian population has been infected.

ed. What we have seen in other places is that left unchecked, that number will grow exponentially until we hit 60%-70% infection, which is a billion people.

Of course, it is not going to be left unchecked, and I do not expect that that is going to happen. There are things that India can do to really reduce the spread of this virus and slow down that growth. Increasingly, we have good evidence around mask-wearing. People should be wearing masks outside, and indoors in any public space. Second, we have got to go after hotspots. Every time you detect an outbreak, you need to follow the testing, tracing, isolation strategy. That has worked in lots of places in India – in Kerala, and in Dharavi in Mumbai. There is no reason for me to think that that cannot be a really critical public health strategy. Third, for the next year ahead, no large gatherings.

If India does all of that – the masks, the testing, getting rid of large gatherings – then I think India has a pretty good shot at keeping the virus from getting into exponential growth.

Syllabus reduction only a one-time measure: CBSE

'Schools can follow NCERT calendar'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Deleted sections of the syllabus have been covered under an alternative academic calendar provided to schools, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) said on Wednesday. However, no question from these topics will be asked in the board exams for 2020-21, it clarified.

CBSE was responding to the public and political furor that has erupted over its plan to remove topics such as federalism, citizenship and secularism from the Higher Secondary syllabus this year.

The objective of the 30% syllabus rationalisation for 190 subjects for Classes 9 to 12 was "to reduce the exam

stress of students due to the prevailing health emergency situation and prevent learning gaps," said a statement from CBSE Secretary Anurag Tripathi. He emphasised that this was a one-time measure only for 2020-21, and added that schools have been directed to follow the National Council of Educational Research and Training's alternative academic calendar while teaching the curriculum.

Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said on Tuesday that the syllabus revision was to "reduce course load", with the Ministry adding that teachers can explain deleted portions "to the extent required to connect different topics".

Dhaka 'diverges' from India on Rohingya issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh on Wednesday claimed that India supports "fast" repatriation of the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. A press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh said the message was contained in a letter written by Exter-

nal Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen.

However, in his letter, Dr. Jaishankar had said that India understands the "urgency of this issue and an early, safe and sustainable repatriation of the displaced persons from Rakhine is in the collective interest of all".

HRD Ministry sends guidelines to NTA, UGC and AICTE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Two metres space between examination desks; disinfection of walls, floors and doors; thermometers and sanitisers at all entry and exit points are some of the measures the Centre wants universities to take to safeguard students taking examinations physically.

Students having symptoms such as fever, cough and cold should "either be made to sit in a separate room or given a chance to appear on another day", according to guidelines framed by the Human Resource Development Ministry and sent to the National Testing Agency, University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education, Engineering and medical entrance examinations, as well as final year university examinations are scheduled to be held by the end of September, leaving many students apprehensive about health risks.

While insisting that examinations are necessary to ensure "merit and lifelong credibility", the guidelines directed institutions to address student concerns, including "anxiety and stress developed during the lock-



Ensuring safety: The guidelines recommend 2 m space between desks and disinfection of walls, floors and doors.

down period and fear of COVID-19 after opening of campuses". Apart from students, staff also face the risk of serious illness, it said.

Staff advisory

Staff conducting exams must self-certify their health status and submit to temperature screening.

If they fail to meet health criteria, they will be requested to leave the centre immediately. For students showing symptoms, the guidelines are more circumspect, offering the choice of a separate room or an alternative examination date without stipulating who will get to make that decision.

"The downloading of Aar-

gya Setu app may be advised for every staff and student," the guidelines said.

The standard operating procedures, which have been vetted by the Health Ministry, call for the floors, walls, doors, gates, staircase railings and lift buttons at all examination centres to be sprayed with disinfectant.

Desks and chairs in the can-

didate seating area should be sanitised after every ses-

sion, it said.

Social distancing of two metres must be ensured at entry and exit as well as during the examination. All students must wear face masks and clean their hands, while staff must wear masks and gloves, it added.

'Curb black marketing of remdesivir'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Weeks after a copycat version of Gilead Sciences remdesivir was launched in the country, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has written to the authorities concerned in the States and Union Territories to ensure that the COVID-19 drug is not sold above its MRP (maximum retail price).

"You are requested to instruct your enforcement officials to keep strict vigil on the matter to prevent black marketing and sale of drug remdesivir injection above MRP," the DCGI has said in a communication to Drug Controllers in the States and UTs.

This follows community social media platform Local Circle writing to the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority, Department of Consumer Affairs, and the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on the black marketing and overpricing of remdesivir by unscrupulous persons.

In the letter, Local Circle, citing comments received from citizens, said,

"The MRP of remdesivir marketed by Hetero Healthcare is ₹5,400 (per vial), but consumers have reported it being sold at a price anywhere between ₹15,000 to ₹60,000..."

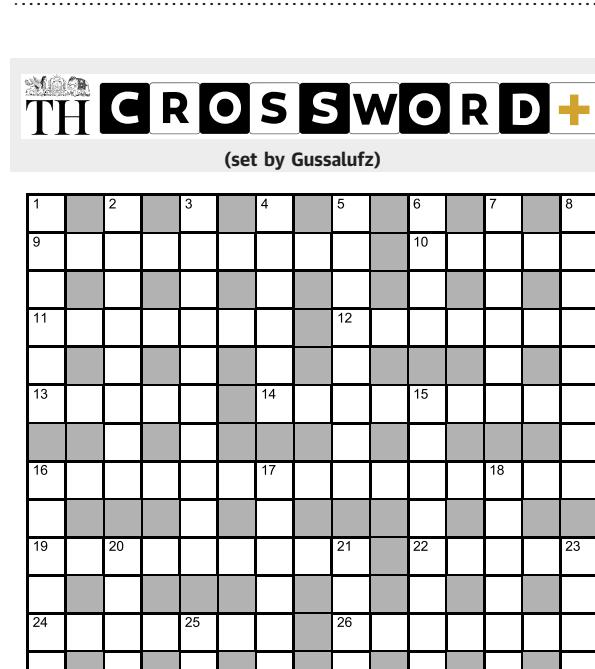


The returnees disembarked at Kochi, Thoothukudi and Porbandar. ■ PTI

operation were specially provisioned and the sick bay or the clinic on board was especially equipped with COVID-19 related equipment and facilities, the Navy said. "Women officers and military nursing staff were also embarked for the women passengers."

Basic amenities and medical facilities were provided to all evacuees during sea passage on these ships. One of the expectant mothers who undertook passage on INS Jalashwa, Sonia Jacob, gave birth to a baby boy within a few hours of reaching Kochi on International Mother's Day, the Navy said.

The Navy has previously undertaken similar evacuation operations as part of Operation Sukoon in 2006 (Beirut) and Operation Rahat in 2015 (Yemen).



■ ACROSS
9 Gourmet rice, pan-fried after adding slices of unripe eggplant (9)
10 Cat, in no uncertain... (5)
11 ... terms, gets all excited about a ball. Genius! (7)
12 Posh bureaucrats going around smoking pot? Heavens! (7)
13 Kenya's aquifer borders a lake in Tanzania (5)
14 Who gets this famous piece of self-indulgence not long after the onset of 16! Lucky! (9)

Are you a cryptic lover or a quick solver? Find out Now!

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SCAN TO PLAY



SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12982 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

B	R	O	M	I	N	E	A	F	F	A	B	L	E
U	V	O	P	I	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
S	H	E	N	A	T	U	R	I	L	E	M	T	T
T	R	E	A	C	H	E	R	Y	A	B	A	T	E
O	G	P	L	T	R	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
P	A	G	A	N	O	P	E	R	O	T	R	O	T
A	P	E	O	R	E	A	R	A	R	A	R	A	R
G	A	N	O	P	E	T	O	A	R	A	R	A	R
A	R	E	R	O	T	R	O	T	R	R	R	R	R
E	R	O	T	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
R	E	R	O	T	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
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S	I	O	W	A	G	E	M	A	W	K	I	S	H
T	W	T	T	O	E	N	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T	W	T	T	O	E	N	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Y	A	N	K	E	E	S	R	E	L	I	E	E	E

No. SS/770 Date/Time: www.mgntfeathers.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

FAITH

Vignettes of behaviour

A synoptic overview of the Mahabharata story is narrated in the Devi Bhagavata by the Suta Pauranika. Though brief, it is told in such a way that much care is taken to highlight the important and salient aspects of dharma. For instance, after the victory in the Mahabharata war, Yudhishtira insists that Dhritarashtra should be the ruler while he rules under his guidance. Being a dharma, Yudhishtira hon

U.S., China trade visa curbs over Tibet

Pompeo accuses Beijing of obstructing travel by U.S. diplomats, journalists to Tibetan region

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING

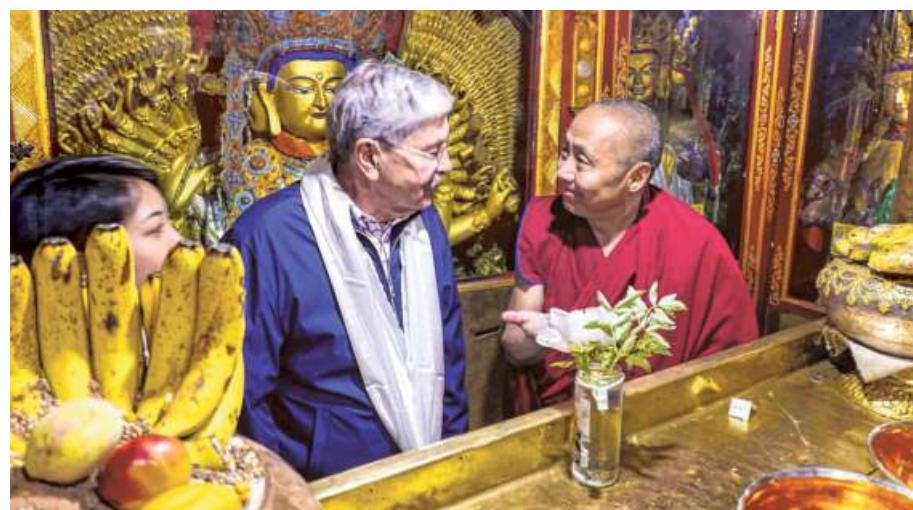
The U.S. and China imposed visa restrictions on each other in tit-for-tat moves over their disagreement on Tibet, adding fuel to the diplomatic fire between the superpowers.

China announced on Wednesday its curbs on people from the U.S. who "behave badly" on Tibet-related issues, in retaliation for American curbs unveiled a day before.

Officials not named

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Tuesday that he was taking action against an unspecified number of officials under a new U.S. law that presses China to let Americans visit the far west region, renewing a call for "meaningful autonomy" in the predominantly Buddhist area.

"Unfortunately, Beijing has continued systematically to obstruct travel to the Tibetan Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas by U.S. diplomats and other offi-



Access restricted: U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad speaking with a monk at the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Tibet, in May 2019. ■ AP

cials, journalists and tourists, while PRC officials and other citizens enjoy far greater access to the United States," said Mr. Pompeo. He restricted visas to Chinese officials determined to be "substantially involved" in the exclusion of foreigners from Tibetan areas.

The State Department declined to name the officials or say how many people were affected, citing U.S. confidentiality laws.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian expressed China's "firm opposition" to the move and urged the U.S. to "immediately stop interfering in China's internal affairs through Tibet-related issues". "In response to the wrong actions of the U.S., China has decided to impose

visa restrictions on U.S. personnel who behave badly on Tibet-related issues," he said.

Amid high tension with China, the U.S. has increasingly been issuing such visa sanctions, earlier taking action over Beijing's clampdown on free expression in Hong Kong and its incarceration of some one million Uighurs. The Tibet action

comes under a 2018 law passed by Congress that aims to pressure China over its tight restrictions in the Himalayan region.

No journalist allowed

Beijing has largely barred foreign journalists from visiting Tibet since 2008, when the region experienced a wave of self-immolations as protests, and has not responded to U.S. requests to set up a consulate in the regional capital Lhasa.

The International Campaign for Tibet, a rights advocacy group close to the Dalai Lama, welcomed the implementation of the law.

The campaign said it saw momentum, pointing to a recent joint call by 57 European parliamentarians from 19 countries to set up their own version of the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act.

A British MP has also introduced similar legislation.

The U.S. action comes one day after the 85th birthday of the Dalai Lama, who has spent most of his life in exile in India.

The MacLaurin Building on the MIT campus. ■ AFP

ties, where they often pay full tuition. Such changes could put foreign students' visas, known as F-1 visas, at risk under the new rules. International students whose universities are not planning in-person classes – which is currently the case at schools including Harvard and the University of Southern California – would be required to return to their home countries if they are already in the United States.

Those overseas would not be granted permission to enter the country to take online coursework here.

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, said in an interview to CNN that the administration was providing more flexibility for international students than in the past, when they could take only one online course to qualify for visas. Now they can take more, as long as at least some of their instruction is in person. ■ NY TIMES

Beijing opens Hong Kong office

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

HONG KONG

China opened a new office on Wednesday for its intelligence agents to operate openly in Hong Kong for the first time under a tough new security law, in a public display of its tightening control over the finance hub.

The new base is located in a rapidly converted hotel overlooking the city's Victoria Park, a location that has hosted pro-democracy protests for years, including an annual vigil marking Beijing's deadly Tiananmen crackdown. A plaque bear-

ing the security agency's name was unveiled early on Wednesday in front of Hong Kong government and mainland officials – including Beijing's top envoy to the city and the commander of the Chinese army barracks in Hong Kong.

Police blocked roads around the former Metropark Hotel and surrounded it with water-filled barriers. A Chinese flag was unfurled on a pole erected outside the building while a plaque with the national emblem went up overnight.

City leader Carrie Lam

hailed the opening as "a historic moment" and said China's intelligence apparatus would be an "important partner" in helping to safeguard national security.

Luo Huining, Beijing's top envoy to Hong Kong, said the city had "bade farewell to the days when it was defenceless in national security".

Beijing imposed the new law on Hong Kong last week targeting acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion, in response to protests that erupted last year.

WHO is "the most authoritative and professional inter-

China defends WHO, lashes out at U.S. move to withdraw

Washington's decision undermines anti-epidemic efforts, has serious impact on developing countries'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China on Wednesday defended the World Health Organization (WHO) and lashed out at the U.S. decision to withdraw from the UN body.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said the move was "another demonstration of the U.S. pursuing unilateralism, withdrawing from groups and breaking contracts".

WHO is "the most authoritative and professional inter-

national institution in the field of global public health security," Mr. Zhao said at a daily briefing.

The U.S. departure from the organisation "undermines the international anti-epidemic efforts, and in particular has a serious negative impact on developing countries in urgent need of international support," Mr. Zhao said.

The Trump administration formally notified the UN on Monday of its withdrawal from WHO, although the pull-out won't take effect until next year. That means it could be reversed by a new administration or if circumstances change.

from WHO, although the pull-out won't take effect until next year. That means it could be reversed by a new administration or if circumstances change.

U.S. President's criticism
President Donald Trump has harshly criticised WHO over its response to the pandemic and accused it of bowing to Chinese influence. Mr. Trump said in a White House announcement that Chinese officials "ignored" their re-

porting obligations to WHO and pressured the organisation to mislead the public about an outbreak that has now killed more than 1,30,000 Americans.

The move was immediately assailed by health officials and critics of the administration, including numerous Democrats who said it would cost the U.S. influence in the global arena while undermining an important institution that is leading vaccine development efforts and drug trials to address the pandemic.

The withdrawal notice was sent to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Monday and will take effect in a year, on July 6, 2021.

The U.S. is WHO's largest donor and provides it with more than \$450 million per year, but owes about \$200 million in current and past dues. Those financial obligations must be met before a U.S. withdrawal can be finalised.

Trump is a child in an adult's body: niece

Tell-all book by Mary presents U.S. President as a transactional narcissist

MAGGIE HABERMAN
ALAN FEUER

U.S. President Donald Trump's niece describes him in a much-awaited tell-all book as a child in an adult's body, someone psychologically brutalised and damaged by his "sociopath" father and who developed defences of anger and distrust to mask his own chronic insecurities.

Too Much and Never Enough: How My Family Created the World's Most Dangerous Man, by Mary L. Trump, presents a portrait of the President familiar to readers of other books as a transactional narcissist and accidental commander in chief. But Mary Trump, a clinical psychologist, offers a particularly dark picture of Donald Trump's father and her grandfather, Fred Trump Sr. "From the beginning, Fred's self-interest

skewed his priorities," Mary Trump writes. "His care of his children, such as it was, reflected his own needs, not theirs. Love meant nothing to him, and he could not empathize with their plight, one of the defining characteristics of a sociopath; he expected obedience, that was

all." Fred Trump Sr. wanted his eldest son, Fred Jr. – Mary's father – to be a "killer," a high form of praise that the President himself has often used to describe people he respects. Fred Trump Sr. helped establish a competition between his elder son and the future President that is scheduled for Friday.

Among the new disclosures in the book is Mary Trump's claim that Donald Trump paid someone to take his college entrance examination.

went on for decades, Mary Trump writes, until Donald Trump ultimately prevailed and her father died an alcoholic at age 42.

The book was scheduled for release next Tuesday by its publisher, Simon & Schuster, after a New York State judge ruled that it was not bound by a confidentiality agreement that Mary Trump signed as part of a settlement over a legal battle over a grandfather's estate. The President's brother, Robert Trump, had gone to court in an attempt to block publication of the book on the grounds that his niece had violated terms of the agreement in writing it. A hearing is scheduled for Friday.

The dead, who were mostly from the Fulani and Peul ethnic groups – communities targeted by the insurgents for recruitment – were buried by residents of the northern town of Djibo between April and May.

'Burkina Faso killings were extrajudicial'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
OUAGADOUGOU

The bodies of at least 180 men found in northern Burkina Faso suggest they were extrajudicially executed by the army, Human Rights Watch said in a report. The authorities have previously faced accusations of extrajudicial killings in the war against a jihadist insurgency that they have been waging since 2015.

The dead, who were mostly from the Fulani and Peul ethnic groups – communities targeted by the insurgents for recruitment – were buried by residents of the northern town of Djibo between April and May.

HRW's Sahel director Corinne Dufka called for an urgent investigation into the deaths.

U.S. civil rights groups, including the Anti-Defamation League and the NAACP, to pressure Facebook to take concrete steps to block hate speech.

"Many in the civil rights community have become disheartened, frustrated and angry after years of engagement where they implored the company to do more to advance equality and fight discrimination, while also safeguarding free expression," the auditors wrote.

Indian trawlers are back, say Sri Lanka's fishermen

Navy might be reluctant to arrest them because of COVID-19 risks, they say; their nets were found damaged



Livelihoods threatened: Fishermen from the northern part of Sri Lanka, in a file photo.

of 210 arrests were made in 2019, while 34 have been made so far in 2020.

"But now, they [Indian trawlers] are back again and many fishermen in our area have lost their nets worth lakhs of rupees," said Vythillai Arulthas, a fisherman based in Point Pedro, who was part of bilateral

fisher leaders' talks.

Fisheries authorities have received at least 10 complaints of damaged nets in the last few days, according to Jayarajasingham Sudharan, Assistant Director at the Fisheries Department in Jaffna. "There is an increase in the number of such complaints," the official said.

Fisher leader K. Rajachandran, based in Jaffna's Karai Nagar, said fishermen in his area usually left the shores around 2.30 p.m. and ventured into the sea. "We spread out nets, then have our meals and take a little nap in our boats. Then we pull back the nets with the catch and head back to the shore around 4 a.m. But in the past few days, our fishermen are rushing back before 2 a.m., after sighting Indian trawlers in the vicinity," he said.

'Visible' from the shores
Pointing to more Indian trawlers – known to originate from Tamil Nadu – "visible" from their shores, fishermen in the Tamil-majority Northern Province wonder if the Sri Lankan Navy is reluctant to arrest the trespassing fishermen from Tamil Nadu now, due to the COVID-19

prevalence in India. "We don't know, but many of us feel the Navy might hesitate to arrest the Tamil Nadu fishermen fearing they might be carriers of the coronavirus that is raging in India," Mr. Arulthas told *The Hindu*.

Navy personnel make up for the largest cluster in the total 2,081 COVID-19 cases so far reported in Sri Lanka. As many as 892 patients within the Navy have recovered so far, while 13 are undergoing treatment in hospitals, according to Navy Spokesman Lt. Commander Isuru Sooriyabandara. "We continue to be very vigilant along our borders not just to monitor illegal fishing, but also to take action on any illicit activity such as narcotics trade. Coronavirus is not specific to India alone, it could enter our borders from anywhere, so there is no connection to it," he told *The Hindu*.

The man, whose identity was not immediately known, came from New Delhi on July 3, it added. He will be charged and now face up to a six-month jail sentence or a \$4,000 fine, the report added.

Returnee from India tests positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

A 32-year-old man, who recently returned from India and tested positive for COVID-19 on Wednesday, will be charged with absconding from a managed isolation facility in Auckland to go to a supermarket, according to media reports.

The man escaped through a fenced area from an isolation facility about 6.50 p.m. on Tuesday, the *New Zealand Herald* reported. He has been sent to a quarantine facility after he was confirmed to have the SARS-CoV-2 virus on Wednesday.

The man, whose identity was not immediately known, came from New Delhi on July 3, it added.

He will be charged and now face up to a six-month jail sentence or a \$4,000 fine, the report added.

Sri Lanka, Maldives are now measles-free: WHO

COLOMBO

Measles and rubella have been eradicated from Sri Lanka and the Maldives after decades of immunisation programmes, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday. "[T]his success is encouraging and demonstrates the importance of joint efforts," said regional director Khetrapal Singh. ■ AFP

Russia rebukes U.S. over remarks on press freedom

MOSCOW

Moscow has told the U.S. Embassy to "mind your own business" after Washington's diplomatic mission raised concern about curbs on media freedom in Russia. Rebecca Ross, the spokeswoman for the U.S. Embassy, on Tuesday expressed concern about a clampdown on journalists in Russia. ■ AFP

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	36,329	-0.94
US Dollar	75.02	-0.12
Gold	49,898	1.15
Brent oil	43.07	-0.49

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	340.60	-5.35
Asian Paints	1686.25	-59.50
Axis Bank	444.15	-3.20
Bajaj Auto	2852.45	5.30
Bajaj Finserv	6405.40	-184.20
Bajaj Finance	3208.05	-143.90
Bharti Airtel	561.30	-5.85
BPCL	378.15	-1.70
Britannia Ind	3685.00	6.55
Cipla	634.40	-2.15
Coal India	132.85	0.00
Dr Reddys Lab	3886.70	63.20
Eicher Motors	19391.70	-538.95
GAIL (India)	102.70	-0.15
Grasim Ind	608.50	-15.15
HCL Tech	574.90	-17.15
HDPC	1886.05	-0.70
HDFC Bank	1110.35	5.20
Hero MotoCorp	2719.20	-30.10
Hindalco	155.00	2.70
Hind Unilever	2186.05	31.90
ICICI Bank	368.95	-7.10
IndusInd Bank	552.60	26.30
Bharti Infralet	219.35	-3.55
Infosys	774.70	-19.45
Indian Oil Corp	86.95	0.80
ITC	196.30	2.05
JSW Steel	195.35	4.50
Kotak Bank	1352.75	-15.50
L&T	941.25	-2.35
M&M	551.25	-8.75
Maruti Suzuki	6044.40	-182.35
Nestle India Ltd.	16802.05	-110.35
NTPC	91.00	-1.55
ONGC	81.30	-0.65
PowerGrid Corp	169.75	-3.35
Reliance Ind	1798.00	-25.45
State Bank	191.90	3.30
Shree Cement	22439.80	-384.30
Sun Pharma	482.50	3.25
Tata Motors	105.35	-3.70
Tata Steel	334.20	3.90
TCS	2218.90	-51.00
Tech Mahindra	583.45	-3.40
Titan	991.15	-25.10
UltraTech Cement	3786.65	-75.35
UPL	444.00	-6.95
Vedanta	110.40	2.80
Wipro	223.10	-1.80
Zee Entertainment	172.15	-8.15

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.82	75.14
Euro	84.32	84.71
British Pound	93.62	94.05
Japanese Yen (100)	69.53	69.85
Chinese Yuan	10.66	10.71
Swiss Franc	79.41	79.76
Singapore Dollar	53.57	53.81
Canadian Dollar	54.96	55.19
Malaysian Ringgit	17.49	17.59
Australian Dollar	51.85	52.08

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



SBI cuts MCLR by 5-10 bps for shorter tenors

MUMBAI State Bank of India (SBI) on Wednesday said it had reduced its marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) by 5-10 basis points (bps) for shorter tenors from July 10. The reduction in MCLR for shorter tenors – up to three months – is aimed at boosting the credit off-take and to revive demand, according to a statement from SBI. PTI

ICICI Bank plans to raise ₹15,000-crore capital

MUMBAI ICICI Bank Ltd. plans to raise ₹15,000 crore in capital through issuance of securities to shore up its capital base. "The board has approved raising of funds for an amount aggregating up to ₹15,000 crore in one or more tranches by way of issuance of securities," the bank said in a filing with the stock exchanges. Deven Choksey, MD & CEO, K.R. Choksey Shares & Securities, said, "With this capital raising, the tier 1 capital of the bank will increase by 198 basis points to 16.69%. There will be an equity dilution of 6.3% and its net worth will rise 12.9%."

Tata Motors unveils zero down payment scheme

MUMBAI Tata Motors has announced a financing scheme for its Tiago, Nexon and Altroz models, whereby customers can make nil down payment, avail a 6-month EMI holiday (with only interest needing to be serviced monthly), and have access up to 100% on-road funding for a loan tenure of five years. This offer has been facilitated through a tie-up with Karur Vysya Bank to eligible salaried and self-employed persons. Tata Motors has also offered step-up EMIs on long tenure loans of up to 8 years, alongside multiple financing partners. For a ₹5,555 EMI, one can own an Altroz, Nexon and Tiago are also available for EMIs starting at ₹7,499 and ₹4,999, the firm said in a statement.

Equity MF inflows tumble 95% in June on profit booking: AMFI

Inflows decline for 3rd month in row; AUM rise to ₹25.5 lakh crore at end June

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI Inflows into equity mutual funds (MFs) slumped 95% to a little more than ₹240 crore in June as investors pulled out from large and multi-cap funds due to profit booking.

This is the third consecutive monthly decline in inflows into equity MFs, Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) data showed on Wednesday.

Overall, the MF industry witnessed a net inflow of ₹7,265 crore across all segments last month, much lower than the ₹70,813 crore in May, primarily due to outflow from liquid funds.

Inflow into equity and equity-linked open ended schemes was at ₹240.55 crore in June as against ₹5,256 crore in May, translating into a decline of 95%.

Union AMC CEO G. Pradeepkumar said the drop in net flows into equity funds



Silver lining: Despite the drop in equity fund inflows, equity-linked savings schemes got ₹587 crore. ■ GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

could be attributed partly to profit booking on the back of the rally witnessed in equity markets in June.

Multi-cap, large-cap and value funds saw outflows to the tune of ₹777 crore, ₹213 crore and ₹136 crore, respectively, during the month under review. However, equity linked saving schemes (ELSS) attracted ₹587 crore.

"The flows into ELSS category were the highest during the month," said Morning-

star India associate director - manager research Himanshu Srivastava. "The reason could be twofold. With the date for making tax-saving investments extended due to COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing disruptions, investors got more time on hand to plan their tax saving investments and are now investing."

"Additionally, with markets at attractive levels, many investors would have al-

ready started their tax-saving investments for the current financial year, which is a positive trend," he added.

Inflow through systematic investment plans (SIP) dropped below ₹8,000 crore for the first time since November 2018. Net SIP investments stood at ₹7,927 crore against ₹8,123 crore in May.

"The monthly SIP contribution slowing down is worrying, but it is not completely unexpected, given the strain on cash flows and incomes experienced by many investors on account of the COVID-19 situation."

Once the economic situation improves, the flows should also pick up," Mr. Pradeepkumar said. Debt funds saw an inflow of ₹2,862 crore in June.

Assets under management at the industry rose to ₹25.5 lakh crore, from ₹24.55 lakh crore at the end of May.

Insurers get IRDAI nod to extend loan moratorium

Interest will continue to accrue, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has allowed insurers to provide a three-month moratorium on repayment of term loans issued by them.

"In respect of term loans, insurers are permitted to grant a moratorium of three months towards payment of instalments falling due between June 1 and August 31. The repayment schedule for such loans and also the residual tenor will be shifted across the board by three months subsequent to the moratorium period," IRDAI said in a communication to CEOs of all insurers.

It is the second such moratorium the regulator is permitting since the COVID-19 outbreak and consequent lockdown. In April, it had allowed the insurers to grant a moratorium of three months on payment of in-



stalments falling due between March 1 and May 31.

The decision had followed representations in this regard from industry associations to the regulator.

Permitting moratorium for three more months, IRDAI said the interest will, however, continue to accrue on the outstanding portion of the term loans during the period. The rescheduling of payments, including interest, will not qualify as a default for reporting of non-performing assets (NPAs), IRDAI said in a circular.

Govt. to infuse ₹12,450 cr. in 3 state insurers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Cabinet on Wednesday approved a capital infusion of ₹12,450 crore into three public sector general insurance companies to make them more financially stable and able to raise further resources.

Oriental Insurance Co., National Insurance Co. (NIC), and United India Insurance Co. will get an initial tranche of ₹3,475 crore in the current financial year, while the balance ₹6,475 crore will be infused later in one or more tranches, the government said. A sum of ₹2,500 crore was infused in 2019-20.

The Cabinet also approved an increase in authorised share capital of NIC to ₹7,500 crore and that of the other two to ₹5,000 crore each.

"The process of merger has been ceased... in view of the current scenario," the government added.

As per the proposed borrowing calendar, State governments are set to raise an additional ₹1.65 lakh crore by the end of September.

LALATENDU MISHRA

MUMBAI

In an indication of liquidity issues, 13 States are found to have raised ₹12,750 crore through auction of State Government securities or State Development Loans (SDLs) on July 7. This is ₹1,250 crore more than the notified amount since Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Telangana exercised the green shoe option, Care Ratings said in a note.

So far in the current fiscal (April 7-July 7), 23 States and one UT have cumulatively raised ₹1.8 lakh crore via market borrowings, which is an increase of 75% from the borrowings in the corresponding period of 2019-20, Care Ratings said.

The analysis showed that market borrowings of Tamil Nadu have been, so far, the highest in 2020-21 at ₹30,500 crore (17% of total), followed by Maharashtra ₹25,500 crore (14%), Andhra Pradesh ₹17,000 crore (9%).

Amazon boosts India unit with \$308 million infusion

Singapore arm contributes to capital

REUTERS

BENGALURU

Amazon.com Inc. has invested \$308.02 million in Amazon Seller Services, an Indian unit, strengthening the business at a time when more people shop online in a bid to avoid crowded public places.

Amazon Singapore made a significant portion of financing, data from business intelligence firm Tolfer showed.

The company's Indian arm in May said it would hire 50,000 temporary workers to meet a surge in online shopping in the country.

Amazon encouraged small shops to join as sellers on its platform in a bid to boost local businesses and expand its reach.

Indian laws allow foreign e-commerce companies to operate as "market places," connecting buyers with sellers online.

As India went into a na-



tionwide lockdown to keep COVID-19 under control, Amazon had earlier said it would invest \$1 bn in India to bring 10 mn small businesses online by 2025.

Amazon Singapore made a significant portion of financing, data from business intelligence firm Tolfer showed.

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SBI to invest ₹1,760 cr. in Yes Bank FPO

REUTERS

BENGALURU

The executive committee of State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, has approved a further investment of up to ₹1,760 crore in the public offering announced by Yes Bank, according to a regulatory filing.

In March this year, the board of the State Bank of India had approved an investment of ₹7,250 crore into the troubled private sector lender.

Earlier this year, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had taken control of Yes Bank, after the bad-debt laden lender had failed to raise the capital it needed to stay above the mandated regulatory requirements.

Since then, SBI had stepped in to acquire a stake in the private lender and to keep it afloat.

Rain dampens cricket's return

England loses an early wicket; players take a knee in support of BLM campaign

REUTERS
SOUTHAMPTON

After a 116-day absence, international cricket returned in familiar fashion on Wednesday as rain delayed the first Test between England and West Indies before the host lost Dom Sibley for 0 and then reached 35 for one as bad light brought an early tea.

Players from both teams "took a knee" for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign before the match started, having observed a minute's silence to mark the victims of the novel coronavirus and also former West Indies batsman Everton Weekes, who died last week.

Stand-in England captain Ben Stokes opted to bat under overcast skies.

Only three overs were possible before the rain returned, but that was enough for Shannon Gabriel to take the first wicket of the three-match series as Sibley was bowled by a ball he left but which cut back to clip the off-stump.

After further rain delays, England eventually settled to its task. Burns was not out on 20 and Joe Denly on 14 when

bad light brought them off half-hour before the scheduled tea break.

Kemar Roach was the pick of the West Indies bowlers, giving up two runs from his six overs.

No place for Broad

England's top end batting remains something of a work in progress but the strength in depth of its bowling options was illustrated by the decision to leave seamer Stuart Broad out of a home Test match for the first time since 2012.

Pace duo Jofra Archer and Mark Wood will spearhead the attack.

Variations

This series will feature many variations from a regular Test due to the virus restrictions. There are home umpires, first time in England since 2002, and each team will have three referrals instead of two per innings.

Players are not allowed to use saliva to polish the ball and umpires will not take jumpers and caps from bowlers.

The playing XIs: England: Ben Stokes (Capt.), Rory Burns, Dom



Oh, no! Dom Sibley's error in judging a Shannon Gabriel delivery proves fatal. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Sibley, Joe Denly, Jos Buttler (wk), Zak Crawley, Ollie Pope, James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, and Dominic Bess.

West Indies: Jason Holder (Capt.), Kraigg Brathwaite, John Campbell, Shai Hope, Shimar Brooks, Jermaine Blackwood, Shane Dowrich (wk), Roston Chase, Kemar Roach, Shannon Gabriel, and Alzarri Joseph.

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings: Rory Burns (batting) 20, Dom Sibley 2 b Gabriel O, Joe Denly (batting) 14; Extras (nb-1); Total (for one wkt. in 17.4 overs): 35.

Fall of wicket: 1-0.

West Indies bowling: Roach 6-4-2-0, Gabriel 5-1-19-1, Joseph 3-4-1-11-0, Holder 3-1-3-0.

Toss: England.

black race negatively and refused to acknowledge its contribution to humanity's advancement.

Pace legend Holding delivers stirring message against racism

'Not just black people, white people are being brainwashed'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SOUTHAMPTON

An emotional Michael Holding didn't hold back as he delivered a powerful message against racism on Wednesday, asserting that the black race has been dehumanised and its accomplishments wiped off from a history "written by people who do the harm".

Holding, who will retire from commentary at the end of next year, talked about racism as cricket waited to restart after the pandemic-enforced break with the first England-West Indies Test.

Dehumanisation

It's a match in which players from both the sides will sport 'Black Lives Matter' logos on their jerseys to make a statement against racism following global protests triggered by African-American George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer.

"...when I say education I mean going back in history. What people need to understand, these things stem from hundred years ago,"



Solidarity: England and West Indies' players took a knee along with the umpires, in support of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement against racism. ■ GETTY IMAGES

the pace great said on Sky Sports.

"The dehumanisation of black race is where it started and people will tell you that's a long time ago, get over it. No, you don't get over things like that and the society has not gotten over something like that," he said.

The 66-year-old said over the years, people have been brainwashed by an education system that portrayed

black race negatively and refused to acknowledge its contribution to humanity's advancement.

"History is written by the conqueror not by those who are conquered, history is written by people who do the harm not by those who get harmed... We are being brainwashed, not just black people, white people are being brainwashed in different ways," he said.

Asia Cup cancelled, says Ganguly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday announced cancellation of the Asia Cup T20, scheduled to be held in September, because of the pandemic.

"Asia Cup cancel ho chuka hai, jo September me tha (Asia Cup, which was to be held in September, has been cancelled)," Ganguly told 'Sports Tak' in an Instagram live session.

The Pakistan Cricket Board, which has the hosting rights, confirmed it has agreed to host the event in 2022 and Sri Lanka is now expected to hold it next year.

No decision on IPL

Taking about the IPL, Ganguly said: "I don't know about it as getting a window is important. The T20 World Cup is there and the ICC is trying to make it happen as it generates a lot of revenue for them. Unless we get clear cut directions from the ICC, we can't say anything about the IPL."

CAG's appeal to apex court

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) has filed an Interlocutory Application in the Supreme Court, requesting to not be included in the Apex Council of the BCCI and its affiliates as per the apex court-directed administrative reforms of the Board.

In its application filed on July 3, CAG has requested the apex court to "modify" its earlier order considering "CAG's specialisation is audit" and instead utilise CAG for auditing various cricket bodies.

Alonso to return to F1



Fernando Alonso ■ REUTERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
AUSTRIA

Two-time world champion Fernando Alonso will return to Formula One with Renault for the 2021 season, the team announced on Wednesday.

"Renault DP World F1 Team is pleased to confirm Fernando Alonso alongside Esteban Ocon in its driver line-up for the 2021 season," Renault said in a statement.

Alonso, who has notched up 32 wins and 97 podiums in 314 Grand Prix starts, will replace Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo, who is McLaren-bound at the end of this season.

Holder is an underrated all-rounder: Tendulkar



Jason Holder. ■ GETTY IMAGES

**ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON**
Sachin Tendulkar thinks Windies skipper Jason Holder is probably the most underrated all-rounder currently in the world.

"Jason Holder is the most underrated all-rounder, because on the field, maybe you will look at Kemar Roach or Shannon Gabriel, but Jason Holder only when you look at the scoreboard, you realise that he has come in and taken three wickets," Tendulkar told Brian Lara during a chat on his app *100 MB*.

"He has scored those crucial 50-55 runs when it mattered. He contributes on a regular basis and is a terrific player to have in your team," added Tendulkar.

Chelsea edges a thriller against Palace

Juventus blows away a two-goal lead, goes down to a resurgent AC Milan

card in the 75th minute.

Jamie Vardy equalised nine minutes later to seal a 1-1 draw, dealing a huge setback to Arsenal's improbable hopes of climbing into the top five.

The two results left Chelsea in third place and a point

Chelsea's 3-2 win at Crystal Palace was only secured thanks to a remarkable last-ditch challenge by centre back Kurt Zouma, who somehow made up ground to divert the ball away as Christian Benteke was about to shoot late in stoppage time.

Then, hours later at a rain-soaked Emirates Stadium, Arsenal was leading 1-0 against Leicester and on course for a win when substitute striker Eddie Nketiah was handed a straight red

Holder is only the second

West Indies player, after Sir Garfield Sobers, to hold the No. 1 ranking among Test all-rounders and has a career-best 473 points.

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