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## NEARBY



**CM calls for doctors' task force in every district**

**MUMBAI**  
Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday asked the administration to set up doctors' task forces in every district and division on the lines of those in Mumbai, to control the growing number of COVID-19 cases.

**REGION** ▶ PAGE 3

**Appeal by MPs over Varavara Rao's health**

**MUMBAI**  
Fourteen MPs wrote a letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray requesting urgent attention to poet Varavara Rao's health and transfer him from jail to a hospital.

**NEWS** ▶ PAGE 10

**State makes final-year varsity exams optional**

**MUMBAI**  
The State government on Friday announced that no final-year exams will be held for university students, but those interested in giving the exam can submit a written application to authorities.

**REGION** ▶ PAGE 5

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# No outsiders on Indian territory: PM

No border post was occupied, Modi tells all-party meet; Sonia asks if there was an intelligence failure

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday told an all-party meet called by him that no outsider was inside Indian territory in Ladakh nor had any border post of the Indian Army been captured by outside forces.

Mr. Modi said the 20 Indian soldiers who had died in the violent face-off between Indian and Chinese troops had "taught a lesson to those who had cast an eye on our Motherland before laying down their life".

He said this in his closing remarks in a meeting attended by presidents of over 15 political parties, who while expressing support to the country, the armed forces and Prime Minister Modi's government on tackling the situation at the east Ladakh border said status quo ante on the borders must be restored.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman were also present at the meeting as well as Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla.

Sources told *The Hindu* that while Dr. Jaishankar made a presentation over the diplomatic issues surrounding the event, Mr. Singh responded to direct questions by party leaders



**Taking note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the all-party meeting to discuss the situation along the India-China border on Friday. ■ PIB

and denied that any intelligence failure had taken place.

"The meeting was to take party leaders through the sequence of events and what has been done to deal with the issue, but apart from the Foreign Minister's presentation it was not a hugely detailed briefing," said one opposition leader.

Rajnath Singh answered some questions, especially the ones put by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, but denied that any intelligence failure had taken place," said the source.

In fact, Mr. Modi's closing

remarks at the meeting (telecast on Doordarshan) made the point that intensive patrolling due to improved infrastructure and supply lines had raised the frequency of such clashes.

### Better infrastructure

"For the last few years we have prioritised developing infrastructure, easing supply lines and equipment. Because of the new infrastructure especially at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) our capacity for patrolling has increased and because of that we are able to monitor and respond to things. Till now,

the movement of those which used to take place without disruption, is now checked by our jawans," Mr. Modi said.

"The national interest is our highest priority, whether it is trade or connectivity or counter terrorism, India has never accepted outside pressure and done whatever is necessary for the benefit of the country and will be done in future," he said, adding that the armed forces are capable of defending the borders, and have been given a free hand.

The statement suggests Beijing is making a new claim to the LAC in this area, in the view of Indian officials.

This area was the site of a clash on June 15 that claimed the lives of at least 20 Indian soldiers in the worst violence on the border since 1967. In the valley, the LAC runs east of the confluence of the Galwan and Shyok rivers.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**

**China lays claim to entire Galwan Valley**

**ANANTH KRISHNAN**  
CHENNAI

China's government on Friday said it claimed the entire Galwan Valley, the site of the June 15 clash on the border, including areas that are currently on India's side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

In a statement, the Foreign Ministry accused India of "unilaterally building roads, bridges and other facilities in the Galwan Valley region" and said "the Galwan Valley is located on the Chinese side of the LAC in the western section of the Sino-Indian border".

The statement suggests Beijing is making a new claim to the LAC in this area, in the view of Indian officials.

This area was the site of a clash on June 15 that claimed the lives of at least 20 Indian soldiers in the worst violence on the border since 1967. In the valley, the LAC runs east of the confluence of the Galwan and Shyok rivers.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**

**Scindia, Digvijaya post easy RS poll victories**

YSRCP wins all four seats in A.P.



**Sweet win:** Former M.P. CM Kamal Nath offering sweets to Congress leader Digvijaya Singh in Bhopal. ■ A.M. FARUQI

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress MP Jyoti-ridita Scindia, who joined the BJP earlier this year, Congress leader Digvijaya Singh and former Jharkhand Chief Minister Shibu Soren were among those elected to 19 Rajya Sabha seats on Friday. These included 18 seats for which elections were due in March but were deferred due to the lockdown.

Of the three seats that went to the polls in Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Scindia and Sumer Singh Solanki, both of the BJP, won with 56 and 55 votes, respectively, according to an official of the Vidhan Sabha. Mr. Singh was re-elected to the Upper House with 57 votes.

The second preference candidate of the Congress,

Phool Singh Baraiya, secured 36 votes, falling short of the 52-mark to be elected. Two votes were declared invalid.

All four seats up for grabs in Andhra Pradesh were won by the ruling YSRCP, taking the party's strength in the Upper House from two to six.

Legislature Secretary and Returning Officer P. Balakrishnamacharyulu said the four victorious candidates, Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla, Nathwani Parimal, Pilli Subhaschandra Bose and Venkataramana Rao Mopidevi polled 38 votes each.

The Opposition Telugu Desam Party candidate, Varla Ramaiah, secured 17 votes, he said.

**RAJASTHAN SEATS** ▶ PAGE 8

## Virus tracker

The graphs depict the number of new COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days. If average cases in the latest seven days is much higher than the previous seven days, then the cases are rising; if it is lower, then dropping; if it is similar, then flattening



## Maharashtra records highest single-day surge

3,827 new cases; 142 more fatalities

**SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE**  
PUNE

Maharashtra recorded its highest single-day surge yet on Friday, with 3,827 new cases being reported, taking its tally to 1,24,331.

The State also reported 142 new fatalities, pushing the death toll to 5,893.

Of the total cases, 55,651 are active ones. As many as 1,935 patients were discharged on Friday, taking the total number of recoveries to 62,773, according to State Health Department authorities. State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said the State's recovery rate now stands at 50.49%, while its case fatality rate is 4.74%.

With 1,264 new cases, Mumbai city's total case load has reached 64,139. Of

these, only 28,442 are active cases. As many as 114 new fatalities were reported from Mumbai, pushing its death toll to 3,425.

Eight deaths from Aurangabad district in Marathwada took the district's death count to 176. Deaths were also reported from Thane, Vasai-Virar and Raigad.

Pune district's total tally, as per State Health department figures, has reached 14,704, with the district reporting a staggering surge of more than 600 cases. Of these, 6,074 were active cases, while as many as 8,020 people have been discharged so far.

The district's death toll, as per State health officials, has surged to 610.

**MORE REPORTS** ▶ PAGE 3

## Chennai stops, again



**Renewed fight:** A 12-day lockdown kicked in on Friday in Chennai and parts of three nearby districts as Tamil Nadu reported more than 2,000 COVID-19 cases for the third consecutive day. A view of a deserted Poonamallee High Road in Chennai. ■ M. VEDHAN

# 8 militants killed in two gunfights in J&K

Two militants hiding inside a mosque gunned down in Pampore, say police



**In the cross hairs:** Security personnel taking cover during the shoot-out in Shopian district of Kashmir on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

on Thursday morning after a tip-off, one militant was killed; two others hid inside a mosque. The security forces continued the operation throughout the day and night, he said.

An Army spokesman said, "One AK-47 and one pistol

killed on Thursday.

The police said the bodies of the slain militants were sent to Baramulla for conducting medico-legal formalities, including collection of their DNA, followed by their last rites.

"In case, any family claims the killed terrorists to be their kith or kin, they can come forward for the identification and participation in the last rites at Baramulla," the police said.

According to the villagers, most of the slain militants were locals.

Around 27 militants have been killed in security operations in south Kashmir this month, including 22 in Shopian district.

102 KILLED ▶ PAGE 8

## Aaditya gives call to expand Sena beyond State

Took up CM post to quell BJP's attempts to embroil Sena in party politics: Uddhav

**ALOK DESHPANDE**  
MUMBAI

Yuva Sena chief and State Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray on Friday exhorted leaders of the Shiv Sena to expand the party's presence beyond Maharashtra and work towards setting up units in all States.

He was addressing leaders and elected representatives of the party on the 54th Foundation Day of the party. Mr. Thackeray said, "Since the Sena's birth, it has followed the principle of 80% social service and 20% politics. Since taking on the reins of the State, we are doing 100% social service by fulfilling our promises. The Sena's shakhas should be opened beyond Maharashtra, in every State. Our efforts must



**Going national:** Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray (left) and Aaditya aim to set up a unit of the party in all States. ■ FILE PHOTO

be concentrated on making each shakha powerful."

Earlier, party president Uddhav Thackeray said he chose to take up the Chief Minister's post just to quell attempts by the Bharatiya Janata Party to embroil it in party politics. He said, "I de-

cided to challenge and stop the politics played on us.

That is the reason I chose to become Chief Minister. I am carrying forward the legacy of my father Balasaheb Thackeray. The Sena was born to challenge injustice and to fight it."

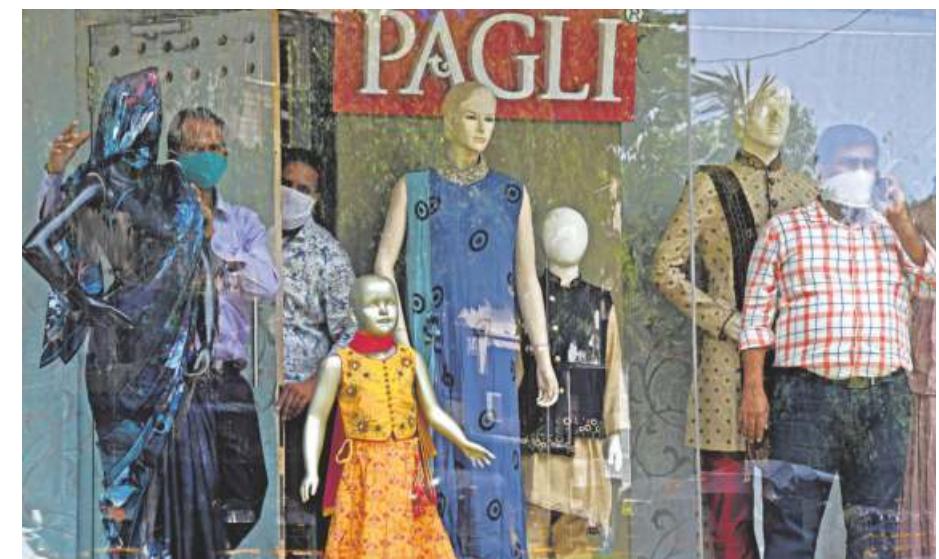
The Chief Minister said neither he nor his party will be dependent on anyone in future. He said, "We trust someone not out of weakness but because of our culture. We never break our word. The Shiv Sena is not helpless. You all are with me and Shiv sainiks stand strong in any difficulty."

**Ideology intact?** The Sena chief said the party had not compromised on its ideology by joining hands with the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party. "I took the soil of Shivneri [birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj] to Ram Janmabhoomi and the court verdict was announced. I also became Chief Minister. It is the magic of the soil."



## THE WEEK IN FOCUS

The stories that mattered over the last seven days



|   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | 4 |
| 2 | 5 |
| 3 | 6 |

**1 JUNE 14 | GOVANDI:**  
Around 160 Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh volunteers conduct mass COVID-19 screenings in the Shiv Nagar slum's containment zones. After screening as many as 4,607 people, the data of high-risk suspects was shared with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's M (East) ward officials. ■ VIJAY BATE

**2 JUNE 14 | BYCULLA:**  
The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation readies a 24-m girder on the British-era Hancock bridge between Sandhurst Road and Byculla stations. The bridge was demolished in January 2016, and the BMC is planning to open the new 64.6-m bridge to traffic by August-end. ■ SALMAN ANSARI

**3 JUNE 16 | CHURCHGATE:**  
Commuters wait at a suburban train station to board a local train as services resumed after 85 days for those engaged in essential services. Local train services were suspended from March 23 to contain the spread of COVID-19. ■ VIVEK BENDE

**4 JUNE 15 | BANDRA:**  
Atish Katakdond and Prajakta Awar leave the registrar's office after formalising their wedding. Marriage bureaus have restarted operations, helping couples register their marriages and organising quick wedding rituals in mini halls during the lockdown period. ■ AADESH CHODHARI

**5 JUNE 18 | NARIMAN POINT:**  
Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad members protest outside the Chinese consulate following the clashes with Indian security forces in the Galwan valley. The call for boycotting goods made in China is growing. ■ EMANUEL YOGINI

**6 JUNE 16 | JUHU:**  
Owners of readymade garment stores dress up mannequins as they prepare to return to reopen shops and restart their business as Unlock 1 and Mission Begin Again rolls out in the city. While being nowhere near normal, the city, with over 62,000 cases, is slowly finding its feet in the midst of the pandemic. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

## If killing 20 jawans isn't provocation, what is?: Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that India will give a befitting reply if provoked, the Shiv Sena said on Friday that the killing of 20 Indian jawans by the Chinese Army was itself a provocation.

The editorial in the Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* also said that those who used to blame Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for the defeat in the 1962 Sino-India war should now introspect.

"Modi says if provoked, we will respond. If killing of 20 jawans is not a provocation, then what is? It is an at-

tack on our self-respect and sovereignty," it added.

"Coffins of 20 soldiers is not a matter of pride," the editorial said.

"We spoke of retaliation then and even now. But we can threaten only Pakistan. When will we get rid of the perception that we cannot take on China?" it asked.

"Compared to 1962, we are stronger. If people who blame (then Prime Minister) Nehru introspected, the martyrdom of 20 soldiers will not go in vain," it said.

The Marathi daily also accused Mr. Modi of taking on China "for U.S. President Donald Trump".

"It is being said that Trump is keeping a close watch on the India-China developments. What (good) will happen with that? In 1971, when U.S.A. sided with Pakistan, Russia sent its naval fleet for India's help. Will Modi's friend Trump send similar help to India?" the editorial asked.

"We can definitely impose economic blockade on China. Indians should boycott Chinese goods. Chinese firms are spread all across the country. If Maharashtra cancels a contract, other States can sign a contract with that company. So the Union government should

have a uniform policy regarding Chinese companies," it said.

"Trade between the two countries is worth ₹6 lakh crore. There is investment and employment on both sides but China benefits the most," the Sena mouthpiece said, claiming that relations between the two countries have deteriorated because of the U.S.

"We cannot forget that China is an important neighbour. Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka are trying to counter India. China will not back off because of India's growing proximity to the U.S.," the editorial said.

**Sushant case: Police seek details of YRF contracts**  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

and also asked her to stop working with the banner. Rajput, 34, known for films like *Kai Po Che!*, *MS Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Chhichhore*, was found dead in his Bandra apartment on Sunday.

"Police are investigating various angles, including that of professional rivalry," the official said.

So far, Bandra police have recorded the statements of more than 13 people, including Rajput's family members and close friends like Ms. Chakraborty, he said.

**Timings**  
**MUMBAI**  
SATURDAY, JUN. 20  
● RISE 06:02 SET 19:19  
● RISE 05:05 SET 18:34  
SUNDAY, JUN. 21  
● RISE 06:02 SET 19:19  
● RISE 05:54 SET 19:31  
MONDAY, JUN. 22  
● RISE 06:03 SET 19:19  
● RISE 06:47 SET 20:27

**Mumbai Weather** max min  
Mumbai Airport 33 24  
Pune 31 22  
Mumbai City 33 24

**Mumbai Today**  
32°C Moderate rain and thundershower are expected over the city. Day will be warm with a cloudy sky.

**Mumbai Tomorrow**  
32°C Moderate rain and thundershower is expected over the city. A comfortable morning. The sky will remain cloudy.

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**THE HINDU**

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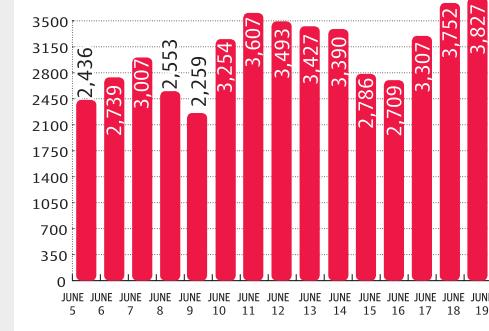
### Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

| TOTAL CASES | NEW CASES | ACTIVE CASES | RECOVERED | DEATHS |
|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| 1,24,331    | 3,827     | 55,651       | 62,773    | 5,893  |

#### DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

| DISTRICT   | CASES  | DEATHS | DISTRICT   | CASES | DEATHS |
|------------|--------|--------|------------|-------|--------|
| Mumbai     | 64,139 | 3,425  | Hingoli    | 243   | 1      |
| Thane      | 22,033 | 375    | Sangli     | 274   | 11     |
| Pune       | 14,704 | 610    | Nanded     | 271   | 12     |
| Aurangabad | 3,164  | 176    | Yavatmal   | 222   | 5      |
| Nashik     | 2,515  | 137    | Latur      | 209   | 13     |
| Palghar    | 3,029  | 88     | Osmanabad  | 166   | 8      |
| Raigad     | 1,781  | 64     | Sindhudurg | 161   | 3      |
| Solapur    | 2,113  | 185    | Buldhana   | 154   | 5      |
| Jalgaon    | 2,118  | 179    | Parbhani   | 83    | 4      |
| Akola      | 1,145  | 56     | Gondia     | 101   | 0      |
| Nagpur     | 1,191  | 13     | Beed       | 82    | 2      |
| Satara     | 810    | 34     | Gadchiroli | 52    | 1      |
| Kolhapur   | 737    | 8      | Chandrapur | 58    | 0      |
| Ratnagiri  | 474    | 18     | Nandurbar  | 83    | 6      |
| Dhule      | 479    | 54     | Bhandara   | 71    | 0      |
| Anravati   | 405    | 27     | Wardha     | 14    | 1      |
| Jalna      | 327    | 12     | Washim     | 67    | 3      |
| Ahmednagar | 261    | 12     |            |       |        |

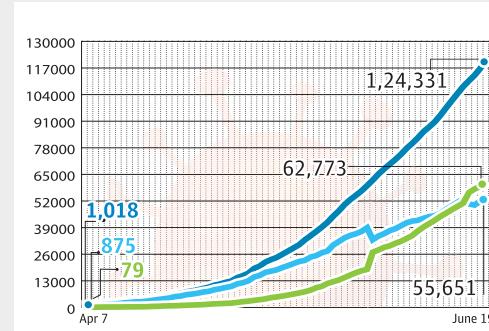
#### POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS



1,264 (33.02%) of Friday's cases are from Mumbai



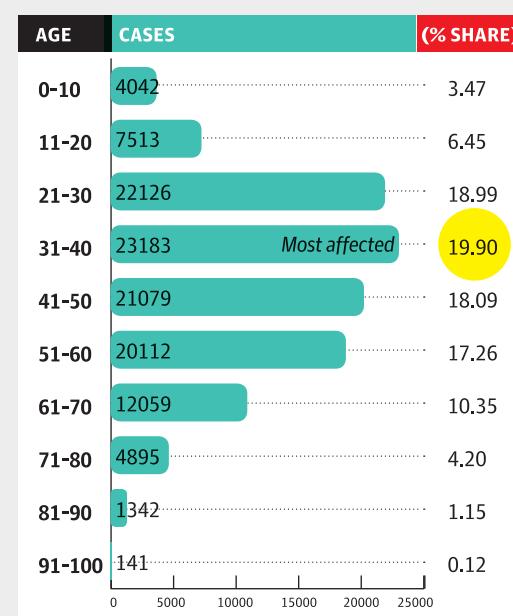
#### CASES TREND



50.48% is the State recovery rate



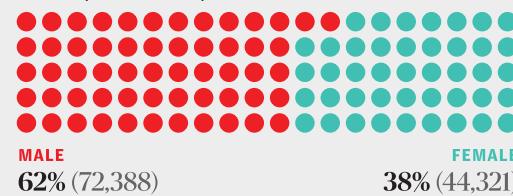
#### AFFECTED (AGE-WISE)



#### QUARANTINE NUMBERS



#### CASES (GENDER-WISE)



#### DEATH (GENDER-WISE)



70% of deaths due to co-morbidities

#### HELPLINE NUMBERS

Toll free number: 104/1075  
Maharashtra: 020-26127394  
National: 1075/1800-112-545/011-23978046  
State helpline email id: ssuumarashtra@gmail.com

#### CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

Mumbai city: 022 22664232  
Palghar: 0252 297474  
Mumbai suburbs: 022 26556799 / 26556806  
Raigad: 02141 222118  
Thane: 022 25301740  
Raigarh: 02352 226248  
Sindhudurg: 02362 228847

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

# Mumbai's COVID-19 cases cross 64,000; 114 more die

With discharge of 401 patients, the number of recoveries reaches 32,257

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

The tally of COVID-19 cases in Mumbai rose to 64,068, with 1,269 new patients detected on Friday, while the death toll due to the pandemic reached 3,423, with 114 deaths, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said.

Of the 114 deaths, 55 were recorded between June 16 and June 18, and the remaining 59 deaths had occurred before June 15. As many as 79 of these patients died due to co-morbidities, the civic body said.

A total of 401 COVID-19 patients were discharged from hospitals, taking the number of recovered patients in the city to 32,257.

Mumbai now has 28,388 active patients. As many as 791 new suspected patients have been admitted to hospitals since Thursday night.

#### Dharavi sees 17 cases

With 17 new patients detected, the number of cases in the slum-dominated Dharavi rose to 2,151 on Friday, the BMC said.

One death due to COVID-19 was also reported in the area, which took the death toll to 79. Of the 1,251 COVID-19 patients in Dharavi, 1,055 have been discharged from hospitals.

#### Surge in Thane

Besides Mumbai, the surge in new cases continued in Thane, with the district reporting more than 350 new COVID-19 cases, to take the district's total tally to 9,337.

"A total of 103 laboratories – 60 government and 43 private – are currently functional for testing samples. Till date, of a total 7,35,674 laboratory samples, 1,24,331 (16.9%) have been tested positive, with around 16,000 samples across the State tested on Friday," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep



Bumper to bumper: Heavy traffic jam on the Western Express Highway at Jogeshwari in Mumbai on Friday. There has been a rise in traffic snarls, following relaxations in the lockdown. • VIJAY BATE

## Navi Mumbai sees 124 new cases

#### RAINA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) reported 124 COVID-19 cases on Friday, taking the tally to 4,515. Of the new cases, 82 are men and 42 are women, while the highest number of cases (44) was recorded at Koparkhairane, followed by 20 at Turbhe.

With nine deaths, the death toll in Navi Mumbai is now 147. On Friday, the youngest death under the NMMC was that of a 18-year-old girl from Indira Nagar in Turbhe. In all, there were four deaths at Turbhe, one

at Vashi, one at Ghansoli, and two at Airoli.

As many as 16,329 people have been tested by the NMMC till date, of whom, 11,118 have been found negative and 696 reports are pending.

The civic body on Friday conducted a screening of 120 people at Juhu village in Vashi, of whom eight were suspects and of the 223 screened in Sanpada, there were three suspects. Swab tests of all the suspects were done. The active cases in NMMC stand at 1,765.

Panvel rural recorded 23 fresh cases, pushing the total tally to 566. While nine recoveries took the figure of those discharged to 422, two more deaths took the death toll to 14. As many as 129 patients are under treatment.

the highest single-day positive cases on Friday, with 65 new cases. The total number of positive cases is 1,194.

With 32 recoveries, the number of people discharged so far stands at 812. With one death in Kalmaboli, the death toll is now 53. Currently, the active cases under the PMC is 329.

Panvel rural recorded 23 fresh cases, pushing the total tally to 566. While nine recoveries took the figure of those discharged to 422, two more deaths took the death toll to 14. As many as 129 patients are under treatment.

Awate said. The laboratory testing per million population in the State is 5,317, higher than that of the na-

tional level, which is 4,210.

Dr. Awate further said that presently, 5,91,049 people across the State are in home

quarantine and 25,697 are in institutional quarantine.

(With inputs from Shoumoj Banerjee)

wad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) reported 104 new cases on Friday, as the township's total case tally surged to 1,569, of whom 579 are active, while 954 have been discharged. Despite the contagion having been hitherto under control in the PCMC area, the civic body has reported relatively few cases on Friday, with Solapur recording only eight cases, taking the district's case tally to 1,905. However, only 663 of them are active ones, with 1,074 people discharged so far. Solapur's death tally has risen to 168.

"Satara has reported 11 new cases to take the district's tally to 781. Of them, the number of active patients is 151, with 592 recoveries thus far," Mr. Mhaisekar said. Meanwhile, along with Pune's fatalities, the death toll in Puna division – which consists of the districts of Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur, along with Puna – has now risen to 774.

Pune division's case tally stands at 17,929, of whom 6,151 are active cases, while 11,004 people have been dis-

charged thus far, Mr. Mhaisekar said. As many as 316 people in the division are critical, of whom 304 are from Pune district.

All other districts, besides Pune, have reported relatively few cases on Friday, with Solapur recording only eight cases, taking the district's case tally to 1,905. However, only 663 of them are active ones, with 1,074 people discharged so far. Solapur's death tally has risen to 168.

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Sangli district reported four fresh cases to push its tally to 266, of whom 110 are active ones, while Kolhapur recorded only one new case to take its tally to 729, of whom merely 55 are active.

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WORLD MUSIC DAY, JUNE 21



The beat goes on  
(Clockwise from bottom left) Swarathma, TAAQ, Shilpa Natarajan, and Parekh & Singh

# Making concerts pay

How music bands and artistes are finding ways to go digital and still make a living during the pandemic



## • LALITHA SUHASINI

In 2008, Bob Boilen and Stephen Thompson, of American non-profit National Public Radio, walked out of a South by Southwest Music Festival by singer-songwriter Laura Gibson. The noisy Texas bar audience preferred the basketball game on TV, while Gibson's set was more suited to an intimate setting. Thompson joked that she should perform at Boilen's desk instead. The latter then created the Tiny Desk Concert, which has featured close to 1,000 musical acts with millions of views on YouTube. But nobody imagined that 2020 would make these bedroom/desk/living room concerts the norm.

Over the last few months, Indian artistes have performed on their social media pages. This may not have produced the best results or created any income, but the gigs appeased their fans – till they began griping about poor sound quality, unreliable internet and Instagram live fatigue. Musicians agree that Insta lives leave a lot to be desired. "These shows provide a sub-par experience. [They expect] a concert and it is not going to change unless you're creating something truly valuable," says Jishnu Dasgupta, the bassist of Bengaluru folk rock band Swarathma.

Last month, the band per-

formed for an IT company's annual awards show and close to 1,000 employees logged in to watch on Zoom. "We had a professional setup in a recording studio, with a two-camera system," adds Dasgupta. Later, they played a gig dedicated to the teachers of a private school. Both were paid shows. Similarly, in late May, Kolkata pop rock duo Parekh & Singh performed a ticketed virtual show from their home studios. Even if the fee is half of what bands such as these command otherwise, it is a start to redefining the revenue model for the independent music industry.

## Streaming support

A number of these gigs are being streamed via SkillBox, a platform set up last year to provide artistes with live-stream ticketing support, among other services. Over the past three months, it has witnessed a 300% growth in user registrations, including businesses and end-consumers. "While corporate bookings are the major revenue, we have seen many tuning in for home entertainment too," says co-founder Anmol Kukreja. And it is not just Indian artistes. On World Music Day tomorrow, the platform will host a conversation with vocalist Jacoby Shaddix of American rock band Papa Roach, known for hits such

as 'Last Resort'.

With Bengaluru's lockdown being eased, the city's best-known band, Thermal And A Quarter (TAAQ) recently got together for a jam session after a 90-day break. They also performed two corporate shows this month via Streamphony, a performance venue in Frazer Town. Here, bands can plug into a professional audio set-up, plus a video team and a rig with LED, smoke machines, etc, and stream live shows. "This is the future for the next year at least. These gigs have been a morale booster for us," says TAAQ's lead vocalist and guitarist, Bruce Lee Mani. Fiercely

While corporate bookings are the major revenue, we have seen many tuning in for home entertainment too

ANMOL KUKREJA,  
CO-FOUNDER, SKILLBOX

“

optimistic, he tells us that the band is already thinking of alternate music experiences. "We'd like for audiences to be part of our song writing or jamming process and are thinking of ways to support sound engineers and videographers," he says.

Streamphony is founded by musicians, including Debjit Basu of Bengaluru rock band Perfect Strangers, and Richard Andrew Dudley, former keyboardist with Moksha. "Our roster is packed until August," says Basu, whose band performed at the venue this month. "We thought we would miss having a crowd, but with Richard compering, it was fun. We sold close to 150 tickets and had audiences from Japan, the UK and Netherlands, too."

The revenue shared by the bands and the ticketing platform is based on the number of tickets sold. For instance, if 100 tickets are sold, the split would be 50:50.

## Virtual classes

Meanwhile, as virtual gigs take off, online lessons are also providing some salve to artistes, who are regarded as "non-essential" personnel. "We've been regarded as non-essential for most of our lives," jokes Mani. TAAQedemy, his music school, has been conducting virtual lessons since March. The num-

ber of students have dropped to less than 40% of their original strength but, on a positive note, "now we have students from across the world", he adds. Chennai-based vocalist Shilpa Natarajan, who teaches western classical and contemporary music and music theory, has slashed her fees by half. "I don't feel that it is fair to charge the same amount. I can't correct their posture or breathing techniques; what you hear via Zoom or Skype is very different from what you would hear in person," she says.

## Future ready

While windows to the world are opening up slowly for Indians, this is probably the best time to organise the industry. "We can choose exactly what we want to do at gigs now. We need to experiment with the visual set-up, change the technology we use and look at various options to engage with our fans," says Dasgupta. As yet another Friday went by, TAAQ performed to the employees of a law firm, who cranked up the volume on their laptops and settled down with a couple of beers. "While younger bands might miss feeding off the energy of a live audience, old fogies are quite used to playing for ourselves," adds Mani. The Tiny Desk Concert may just be the new normal.

## FILM REVIEW

# Kadakh – an edgy and fun romp through darkness

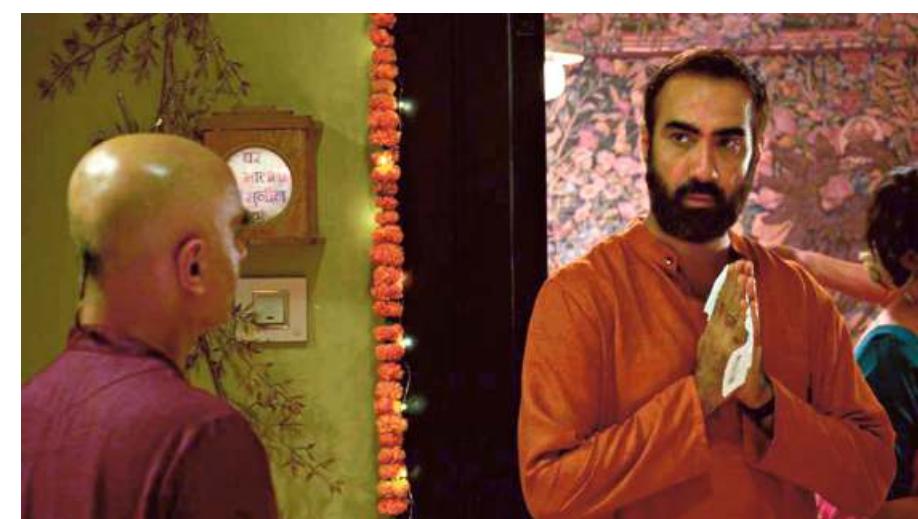
Despite the locational containment, there is a fluidity in the interpersonal interactions amongst *Kadakh*'s actors, as we move from revelry to skirmishes to drunken brawls

NAMRATA JOSHI

A Diwali party is on in Sunil (Ranvir Shorey)'s home when an aunt (Yamini Das) and uncle (Manoj Pahwa) walk in unannounced with pollution masks on their faces. Given the situation the world is in, at this moment in time, I found myself chuckling away at the eerie and unintended immediacy of it. Though, of course, they are wearing them (incorrectly at times) for other reasons—to keep the "germs" away and for their "highly evolved sense of smell" and a nose that—just like a dog's—sniffs out the malodorous.

There's lots that's fetid in Sunil's home and in the party. The food served to the guests, for instance, has rotted. A French min-

drauder Francoise Marie (Kalki Koechlin) can sense something uneasy in her very first visit to Sunil and Malti (Mansi Multani)'s home. Earlier, at the start of the film, we find a stranger Raghav (Chandrachoor Rai) walking into the house just as things are being arranged for the party. It's Raghav's entry that throws things uncontrollably up-



Drunken brawls: A still from *Kadakh* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

side down.

Even though it's about a huge set of friends assembled for merriment, there's a sense of locational containment in *Kadakh*. Ho-

wever, director Rajat Kapoor maintains a sense of movement, much of it emerging from the nicely gliding camera, the individual energies of the cha-

racters and the interactions of the actors playing those roles. There is a fluidity in the interpersonal as we move from the revelry to the skirmishes to the

## Kadakh

**DIRECTOR:** Rajat Kapoor  
**CAST:** Ranvir Shorey, Chandrachoor Rai, Mansi Multani, Shruti Seth, Nupur Asthana, Sagar Deshmukh, Rajat Kapoor, Tara Sharma Saluja, Cyrus Sahukar, Kalki Koechlin, Palomi Ghosh, Manoj Pahwa, Yamini Das  
**STORYLINE:** A stranger walks into Sunil's house just before the Diwali party and everything goes upside down

the tonality of the film are just as much of delicious fun. In the very first interaction itself, between Sunil and Raghav, you find things going from the soft and the courteous to the slightly eerie on to the totally edgy. From a Hitchcockian thriller like *Rope* to some mad friendly fun to a dark exploration of betrayal and guilt to the downright macabre—*Kadakh*, is quite like life. The film demonstrates how fortunes can change in a matter of minutes. As does the moral compass of most people. In the game of life, nothing is quite sacrosanct, it all comes in various shades of the amoral.

*Kadakh* dropped from the line-up of Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival in 2018 in the light of #MeToo accusations, is now streaming on Sony Liv

# In search of rare mangoes

If you thought mango season is waning, here is some good news; you can now try fabled, relatively unknown varieties of the fruit, such as Azam-us-Samar and Noorjahan, from this farm in Telangana

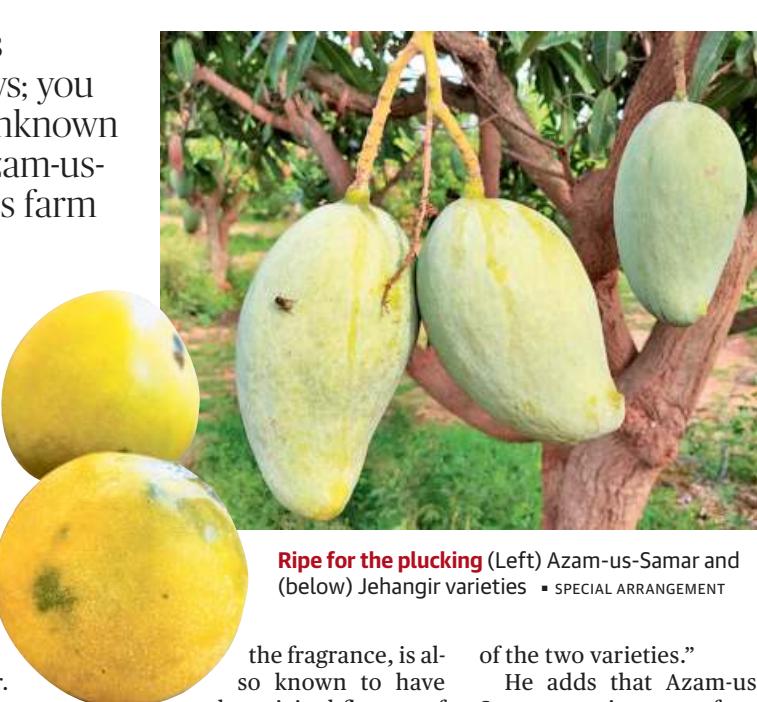
PRABALIKI M BORAH

After almost going extinct, mango variety Azam-us-Samar, rumoured to be the favourite of Queen Victoria, is making a reappearance in the market through boutique farm AR4 Mangoes, owned by Arifa and Mohammad Rafique.

The 21-acre mango farm at Yadagirigutta, near Hyderabad, is now not only growing Azam-us-Samar, but also growing Jehangir, fabled to be emperor Shah Jahan's favourite mango variety from the Deccan.

Says Rafi, "The Jehangir mango looks like an apple and is best consumed when green and 'tight'. The fruit

inside will be ripe and ready to eat. Once it turns orange-ish on the outside, it is best used for juice or pulp. Jehangir is extremely sweet and has a very prominent desi flavour. Meaning, it has a strong fragrance of the original mango. Most other mango varieties are developed, so the actual fragrance of the fruit is missing. Jehangir, along with



Ripe for the plucking (Left) Azam-us-Samar and (below) Jehangir varieties • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the fragrance, is also known to have the original flavour of mango. We acquired both these grafts from the Nawab gardens, who have developed the mango variety, and that each mango can weigh between 400 grams to 1 kilogram. "The fruit, however, is not very

of the two varieties." He adds that Azam-us-Samar gets its name from Nawab Azam Ali Khan, who developed the mango variety, and that each mango can weigh between 400 grams to 1 kilogram. "The fruit, however, is not very

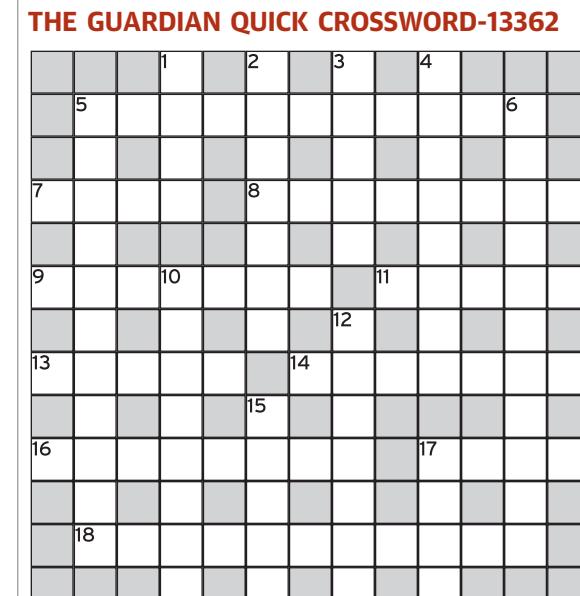
attractive to look at and has a rather uneven surface."

The fable behind the Azam-us-Samar mango goes thus: Developed by the Nawab at his sprawling gardens at Shadnagar, this variety made it to the Buckingham Palace, along with other different mango varieties that were regularly sent to the Queen during her reign. The legend goes that Queen Victoria tasted them all and chose 'Azam-us-Samar' as the best. It is said that the mango was sent to the Queen until the death of Nawab Azam Ali Khan, after which this variety began disappearing.

"If you thought Azam-us-Samar is the biggest, then you are mistaken. It is the Noorjahan variety. Each mango weighs about three to four kilograms," says Rafi.

These two varieties and more from Uttar Pradesh are available at [www.ar4mangoes.com](http://www.ar4mangoes.com).

## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13362



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

- 2 Intolerance (7)
- 3 Naval force (5)
- 4 Suffering (8)
- 5 Taking the same line of argument further (2,9)
- 6 Winner's ceremonial circuit of the track (3,2,6)
- 10 Practitioner (8)
- 12 Quarrel (4,3)
- 15 Bathroom facility (5)
- 17 Speechless (4)

Solution will appear on June 25, 2020.

Solution No. 13361

- Across
- 5 Wish someone harm (4,4)
- 7 Apparatus used by women gymnasts (4)
- 8 Exceeds in height (8)
- 9 In one's real nature – a threat (anag) (2,5)
- 11 Muscular (5)
- 13 Breaks under tension (5)
- 14 Imposing residence (4)

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CM YK

A BM-BME

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Saturday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, east Uttar Pradesh, east Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka and Kerala

**CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN** **CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN**

Agartala ..... 20.4 ..... 33.3 ..... 25.3 Kozhikode ..... 17. .... 32.0 ..... 24.5

Ahmedabad ..... 27.7 ..... 27.7 Kurnool ..... 26. .... 26.5

Aizawl ..... 26.1 ..... 19.1 Lucknow ..... 36.7 ..... 26.8

Allahabad ..... 0.4 ..... 34.7 ..... 27.5 Madurai ..... 41.2 ..... 26.7

Bangalore ..... 29.6 ..... 20.7 Mangaluru ..... 24.9 ..... 30.6 ..... 22.6

Bhopal ..... 126.2 ..... 34.3 ..... 20.6 Mumbai ..... 40.8 ..... 33.2 ..... 24.4

Bhubaneswar ..... 1.35 ..... 25.5 ..... 25.9

Chandigarh ..... 39.0 ..... 30.7

Chennai ..... 40.6 ..... 30.4

Coimbatore ..... 33.0 ..... 23.0

Dehradoon ..... 9.3 ..... 33.3 ..... 24.7

Gangtok ..... 0.2 ..... 19.4 ..... 16.3

Goa ..... 88 ..... 27.7 ..... 23.8

Hubballi ..... 28.0 ..... 23.0

Hyderabad ..... 14.1 ..... 32.7 ..... 23.2

Imphal ..... 0.5 ..... 31.7 ..... 22.8

Jaipur ..... 43.0 ..... 32.1

Kochi ..... 13.2 ..... 29.2 ..... 24.0

Kohima ..... 25.0 ..... 20.0

Kolkata ..... 0.7 ..... 34.4 ..... 27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an average AQI score of 351 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Mysuru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 23

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

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

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

**PM2.5 & 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

## Two accused in Elgaar Parishad case challenge transfer of probe

'Moving probe to NIA amounts to re-investigation'

SONAM SAIGAL

Advocate Surendra Gadling and journalist Sudhir Dhawale, accused in the Elgaar Parishad case, moved the Bombay High Court on Friday, challenging the transfer of investigation to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from the Pune Police.

The two, arrested on June 6, 2018, have been prosecuted for their alleged connec-

tions with Naxalites.

They moved the High Court through advocate Madhavi Ayyappan, challenging the transfer of investigation to NIA after the charge sheet was submitted.

The transfer, they said, is contrary to the NIA Act, under which there is no provision that empowers the Central government to transfer the investigation when there were no compelling circumstances necessitating it.

The transfer of investigation amounts to re-investigation, they said.

"In order to keep the false

implications and wrongful incarceration of innocent people unconnected with the case under cover, the investigation of offences has been transferred by the Central government to NIA, immediately after the Bharatiya Janata Party lost power in Maharashtra," their petition said.

### 'Vague allegations'

The petition also said allegations that Mr. Dhawale was making provocative statements and inflammatory speeches, performing inflammatory street plays and songs, and distorting the his-

tory as per the CPI (Maoist) agenda, were vague. "It is not possible to infer from such allegations that the petitioners are organisers of Elgar Parishad," it said.

The petition has sought an order quashing the direction for an NIA investigation, besides the first information report against the petitioners and eight others in jail.

It has also sought quashing of the order dated February 12, 2020, granting the sanction to transfer the FIR from the Pune Police to NIA.

The matter will be heard on June 23.

**Shetti hints at refusing MLC nomination**

'Hurt by rift in Swabhiman Paksha'

**SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE**  
PUNE

Hatkanangale, has said he would not accept the nomination if his decision upsets his colleagues.

Earlier this week, Mr. Shetti visited Mr. Pawar in Baramati and had accepted the Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)'s offer for a berth in the Legislative Council from the Governor's quota.

The visit did not go down well with two senior Swabhiman Paksha leaders – Savkar Madnaik and Jalindar Patil – believed to be close to Mr. Shetti.

Both leaders, aspirants to the MLC berth, alleged that Mr. Shetti did not take them into confidence.

## State makes final-year varsity exams optional

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

The State government on Friday announced that no final-year exams will be held for university students, but those interested in giving the exam can submit a written application to authorities. Arrangements will be then made for them to appear for the exam.

A decision on ATKT (allowed to keep term) students, who have backlogs, will be taken within two days, State Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant said.

According to the government resolution issued by the State, students in non-commercial courses with no backlogs and who do not want to appear for the exam may inform university authorities. Their results will be then declared based on aggregate marks in the previous exam.

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According to the government resolution issued by



## Revolving door

A never-ending tale of defections continues to churn the political pot in Manipur

The politics in Manipur has come under fresh turmoil following the withdrawal of support to the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government from MLAs belonging to the National People's Party (NPP), two independents and defections by three BJP MLAs to the Opposition. The Biren Singh-led government has probably now been reduced to a minority. The uncertainty in the numbers in the 59-member Assembly has been due to several defections in the last three years, beginning with former Minister T. Shyamkumar's shift of allegiance from the Congress to the BJP in 2017. This enabled the BJP, with only 21 MLAs, to form the government with the support of the NPP, the four member Naga Peoples' Front, an independent and an MLA belonging to the Trinamool Congress. The defection by Mr Shyamkumar who went on to become a minister in the ruling cabinet was not ruled out for disqualification for three years, before the Supreme Court intervened, stripping the minister of his post and banned him from entering the Assembly in March 2020. Subsequently, the Speaker disqualified him. Seven more MLAs from the Congress had defected to the BJP since 2017, and the Speaker has yet to rule on their disqualifications. On Friday, only a select number of these seven, and most of whom had not gone back reportedly to the Opposition-fold were allowed by the Speaker to vote in the Rajya Sabha elections, whose results were disputed by the Congress. This might not survive a legal challenge. But the whimsical changes in loyalties have once again opened the door for the Congress to stake claim to form the government.

The shenanigans in Manipur are not unique to the State. The examples of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh most recently, and Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand earlier show the utter failure of the anti-defection law in curbing the brazen subversion of electoral mandates by legislators who get elected on the ticket of one party but do not find it inconvenient to shift to another, due to the lure of ministerial berths or financial gains. If the role of the Speaker who has the authority to decide upon defections has been utilised by ruling parties to engineer defections without inviting immediate disqualification in some cases, legislators have also adhered to the law in letter if not spirit by utilising the option of outright resignation. This begs the question whether the anti-defection law actually serves any purpose today. In the absence of any amendments to the law suitably, the only disincentive for defectors is the possibility that voters might punish them in a by-election. But as Karnataka recently showed, voters in some States have yet to discern candidacies beyond considerations of patronage and identity, emboldening parties to retain or seize power through immoral machinations.

## Crisis in the peninsula

The U.S. should not give up efforts to bring the Korean talks back on track

By blowing up a joint liaison office on the border with South Korea and threatening to deploy troops along the demilitarised zone, North Korea is back to what it is best at – aggressive posturing with the threat of war. Troubles began in the peninsula early this year after a deadline the North dictated to the U.S. to achieve progress in the denuclearisation talks expired on December 31. North Korea has conducted missile tests this year, sending warning signals to Seoul and Washington. The latest crisis was triggered by anti-North defector groups that sent out propaganda leaflets via balloons across the border. Angered by the South's refusal to crack down on them, Pyongyang has severed hotlines, demolished the liaison office, and is planning to deploy troops along the border. Tensions now risk rolling back whatever little was achieved through engagement over the past two years. South Korea's Unification Minister Kim Yeon-chul resigned on Friday and Seoul has also moved to charge the defector groups. But these moves are unlikely to ease tensions as the real problem is the stall in the talks. Two years after U.S. President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met in Singapore to discuss denuclearisation, little has been achieved in that direction. It is likely that the North is now trying to get back Mr. Trump's attention.

There were no high hopes of a quick solution to the U.S.-North Korean rivalry – it goes back to the 1950-53 Korean war – when Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim met. Still, the summit was an opportunity to open a new direction in relations. Mr. Kim had in principle agreed to denuclearisation in return for the lifting of American sanctions. But talks stalled as the U.S. insisted on "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization" by North Korea in return for any concession. The North Koreans were wary, particularly because of the U.S.'s history of going after dictators such as Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi of Libya or its breaching of the Iran nuclear deal. Mr. Kim's regime offered a staged approach. It put a freeze on nuclear tests and offered to shut its Yongbyon nuclear complex. The U.S. and South Korea could have responded to these measures and kept the talks on track. On less contentious issues, such as declaring a formal end to the Korean war – both Koreas are still technically at war – an agreement could have been achieved as a confidence-building measure. But that road was not taken. Worse, the U.S. and South Korea went ahead with their joint military exercise. Mr. Trump is now grappling with many problems at home – from the coronavirus outbreak and a sagging economy, to anti-racism protests. Still, if he does not want his two summits with Mr. Kim to be mere footnotes of history, he should take measures to revive talks with North Korea and push the peninsula back to normalcy.

# The gross abuse of the Manipur mandate

The politics in the State is a fine example of the law being made a subordinate function of power



PRADIP PHANJOUBAM

**A**midst the COVID-19 pandemic, a parallel crisis of democracy is unfolding in Manipur – one which also reflects on the state of Indian democracy in general, where the mandate of the people decided at periodic elections is increasingly being allowed to be twisted by turncoat-elected representatives to serve the end of their unique and grotesque power game. So endemic had defection become, that a law – the 10th Schedule – was introduced in 1985 by the 52nd amendment of the Constitution, but when the loopholes in the law were being exploited to make it irrelevant, it was toughened in 2003 by the 91st amendment of the Constitution. That a country's leaders have to be restrained thus is itself a disgrace, but in recent times, it is no longer a question of dodging the law, but of overturning the very idea of the rule of law by those in power. The Manipur cases illustrate this very well.

### Government formation

In the March 2017 Assembly election, Manipur saw a hung verdict, with the Indian National Congress emerging as the single largest party with 28 seats in the 60-member House (now 59, after one disqualification). The Bharatiya Janata Party was second, with 21. For inadequately unexplained reasons, the

State Governor, Najma Heptulla, decided the more stable post-poll alliance would be the one the BJP led, though the party needed the support of at least 10 non-BJP MLAs to be in a majority position, rather than the Congress which needed just three. The BJP did manage to forge an alliance that exceeded the majority mark, but at a cost which it is discovering is too dear only now. The ceiling on the Manipur cabinet set by the 10th Schedule is 12 including the Chief Minister. Of the remaining 11, seven had to be given away to the allies to secure their loyalty, (four to National People's Party (NPP) and one each to the Naga People's Front, the Lok Janshakti Party and the first Congress MLA to defect to the BJP), leaving only three cabinet berths for the BJP's own legislators besides the Chief Minister. Luckily for the BJP, most of its veterans did not win the last election, and a great number of those who did were first timers, whose demands were not always seriously for ministerial berths.

### Partisan politics

Nearly three-and-a-half years down the line, after the initial euphoria of being part of a ruling formation has long died down, many BJP MLAs are now obviously concerned with the reduced prospect of re-election from their constituencies if they went to the polls as mere camp followers. Hence, the internal friction within the ruling party has been visible for the past few months. The tipping point was reached on June 17, when three of their MLAs decided to quit the party and Assembly membership to align with the Congress. The crisis



now has the potential of spiralling out of control and more could join the deserters in the days ahead; but given the fact that the adjudication function of the law has been totally smothered, and instead its provisions are now being used with impunity to promote partisan politics, nothing can be said for certain. The resultant loss of esteem for the law in the eyes of the public is predicted to have very long term and grave social consequences in this sensitive, insurgency-torn border State.

Another development after the BJP assumed power was that seven more Congress MLAs defected to the ruling side, bringing up the total number of Congress defectors to eight. They were also obviously hoping for some official position to share the spoils of power, but nothing has been forthcoming for them. Hence, other than the first defector who was absorbed as a cabinet minister, the latter seven continued to sit in the Opposition benches but voted all along with the ruling. Petitions for the disqualification of the eight were left unheeded by the Speaker for more than three years, but on the intervention of the Supreme Court of India, the first defector was disqualified on March 28 this year. When the seven other defectors

remained unpenalised, the Congress moved the Manipur High Court. The High Court took the cue from the earlier Supreme Court ruling to direct the Speaker to dispose of the case at the soonest but after the election to the State's lone Rajya Sabha seat that was scheduled yesterday. Till this was done, the High Court placed a ban on the seven MLAs from entering the Assembly.

### Jumping ship

The BJP, however, has more to worry now. It is also beginning to lose its partners. The biggest of these is the NPP, which has four MLAs in the Assembly. The party walked out of the BJP-led alliance and pledged support to the Opposition Congress on June 17. Along with them, one MLA of the Trinamool Congress and an independent MLA also jumped ship and joined the Congress camp. Almost at the same time, in a curious turn of events, four of the seven Congress defectors also decided to return to the Congress camp. If they remained not disqualified and if they were allowed to vote, it had become a foregone conclusion that the BJP would lose the Rajya Sabha seat. But yesterday, in the morning, the Speaker has heard and disposed of the case of the three defectors still in the BJP camp although there is a High Court directive that the hearing should not be before the Rajya Sabha election, and exonerated them so they could vote. However, the names of the other four were missing from the list of voters.

Even if the BJP, with the help of the Speaker's controversial rulings, wins the Rajya Sabha seat,

the trouble for the coalition can hardly be said to be over. One, it is extremely likely that intervention would come from the High Court on the election and selective disposal of the disqualification cases as well as the Speaker's tribunal overruling the High Court directive. Two, the Opposition is now demanding a no-confidence motion against the government. It remains to be seen where this will lead to, or if those with the reins of power will allow a non-partisan decision of the Assembly. At this moment though, it does seem the law has become what those in power want it to be.

There can be no dispute there is danger in the law being made a subordinate function of power. This cannot have been better explained than in Robert Bolt's 1960 classic, *A Man for All Seasons*. When presented with an opportunity to arrest his opponent and tormentor, Thomas More refused to give a go-ahead, saying the man has not broken any law. When his young assistant, William Roper, challenged him whether he would give the Devil the benefit of the law, he said he would. And when Roper differed to say he would cut every law in England to get at the Devil, More's famous retort was: "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned 'round on you, where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? ... Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake!" The Manipur BJP seems to be wrestling to fight its own original demon now.

Pradip Phanjoubam is Editor, FPS Review of Arts and Politics

## In new lockdown, a second chance for Tamil Nadu

For effective containment, health authorities must actively look for COVID-19 cases in Chennai and adjoining districts



R. PRASAD

**W**ith 54,449 confirmed cases of the novel coronavirus in the State, as on June 19, Tamil Nadu has the second highest numbers recorded after Maharashtra (over 1,20,500). Delhi closely follows with nearly 50,000 cases. The number of new cases recorded in Tamil Nadu, especially in Chennai, has been steadily rising.

Deaths too have increased, from 87 on May 20 to 666 on June 19, a 16-fold increase. While there were just three deaths on May 20, the figures increased steadily but remained under 20 till June 12, except on June 11 when there were 23 deaths. If the toll crossed 30 on June 13, for the first time, it has been above 40 since June 15.

From 13,191 total cases and 743 fresh cases reported on May 20, the State crossed the 50,000 mark on June 17 with a record 2,174 fresh cases on that day – the first time the number of cases reported on a given day have crossed 2,000;

June 18 had 2,141 cases. It was on May 31 that Tamil Nadu crossed the 1,000 mark, with 1,149 cases.

### More testing

But the State has been increasing the number of tests carried out each day since May 20. From 11,894 tests on May 20, Tamil Nadu has ramped up testing with each passing day to reach nearly 25,500 on June 17, a sharp increase from 19,200 odd cases the previous day. June 18 witnessed a further increase to 26,736. So far, Tamil Nadu has carried out 8,00,443 tests as on June 18, which is higher than Maharashtra, with 7,19,637 tests.

The test positivity rate which has been steadily increasing since June 1, reaching a peak on June 9 with 12.7%, has been reducing since June 14 when the number of tests each day has been climbing; it was 8.5% on June 17. At 10,371 tests per million population, Tamil Nadu is among the top six States.

A high test positivity rate reflects either good surveillance or higher spread of the virus in the community. According to Prof. Giridharan R. Babu, Head - Lifecourse Epidemiology, Indian Institute of Public Health, Public Health Foundation of India, Bengaluru, it could be a combination of good



surveillance and higher prevalence of the virus in the case of Tamil Nadu. But he is quick to add that surveillance could have remained constant and not drastically changed in a matter of a few days and hence the increase in test positivity is more a reflection of the higher prevalence of infected people in the community. Test positivity can also reduce when the number of tests carried out is increased and the testing is not based on syndromic surveillance.

The only way to reduce the true prevalence of infected people in the community is by further ramping up testing, contact tracing and quarantining of contacts and isolating those who test positive.

Having squandered the opportunity to contain the spread during the extended lockdown, the State now has a second chance to make up for it during the complete

lockdown for 12 days that began on June 19.

### Go door-to-door

The most important departure that Tamil Nadu needs to make is to actively look for cases in Chennai and certain parts of three adjoining districts (Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur) where the most cases are being reported. There is compulsion to carry out door-to-door surveillance and test anyone who shows even one of the 15 COVID-19 symptoms recognised by the Health Ministry, including a loss of smell and taste, which was recently included. Currently, a person needs to exhibit a combination of symptoms to become eligible for a test.

Another important shift in strategy should be in testing widely without insisting on a person's travel history or contact with a known positive case as a prerequisite for testing. The need of the hour is to move away from the restrictive categories of people eligible for a test to a more liberal and inclusive protocol that allows more people to be tested.

Aggressive testing and isolation of infected people alone will be insufficient to contain the spread unless it is carried out in a short span

of time. With each infected individual capable of spreading the virus to more people, concerted efforts are needed to quickly trace, test and isolate the infected.

### Lessons from Dharavi

While the majority of cases in the State are restricted to Chennai and three adjoining districts – thus making the task of containing the spread relatively easy – the areas in Chennai where more cases are being reported are those that are chock-a-block with people. That crowded neighbourhoods enable easy spread of the virus is the reason why aggressive screening, testing and isolation need to be carried out in double quick time. If the virus spread in Dharavi, Asia's largest slum, in Mumbai, can be controlled, there is no reason why Tamil Nadu cannot achieve the same feat.

Proactive screening door-to-door, aggressive testing, quarantining of people suspected to be infected and isolation of those testing positive helped contain the virus spread in Dharavi. In addition, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation established fever clinics for the early detection of cases.

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## 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.



### Message from Galwan

Either China's rulers lack knowledge about the law of unintended consequences or their hubris has blinded them to it (Page 1, "PLA planned attack for at least two days," June 19). Illegal occupation of a neighbour's territory on the sly and killing the latter's soldiers in unprovoked attacks have long-term consequences even if the perpetrator is a rising power. Chinese statecraft about war, which developed centuries ago, has no eternal relevance, especially in a technology-driven world. The preference for a short-term tactical messaging to the adversary over conventional war, especially if it is carried out in a cowardly and treacherous manner, has hidden long-term costs. The Chinese government thinks it has sent out a signal to India and the rest of the world that it is accountable only to itself. The message that the world received is quite another. What has come out loud and clear is about China's untrustworthiness and blatant disregard for bilateralism and

international conventions. Post-Galwan, India will reinforce its border infrastructure and strengthen its military preparedness to insulate itself against China's territorial expansionism and military aggression. Over the next 10 years, India will look at gradually achieving self-sufficiency in major sectors of the economy and to decouple itself economically from China. China's Belt and Road Initiative will run into rough weather once the signatories start realising the folly of signing contracts with a nation that plays by its own rules.

### Made in India

Decoupling by India from Chinese manufacturing is not something that can be achieved in a short span of time as a retaliatory measure for the border situation created by China (OpEd page, 'Parley' – "Can India decouple itself from Chinese manufacturing?", June 19). Knowing fully well, since the 1960s, the unpredictable and inscrutable ways of China,

India's dependence on manufacturing has been allowed to increase by leaps and bounds, which is a strategic mistake. At least after the economic liberalisation in the 1990s, India should have concentrated on building robust infrastructure, encouraged vocational education in a big way to create a large pool of skilled workers, and encouraged the manufacturing sector with suitable reforms in land, labour and taxes. That would have attracted better Foreign Direct Investment inflows into the manufacturing sector in view of the availability of a huge domestic market. Even the mission, "Make in India", has not made much headway, as the above infirmities have continued to exist. At least now, we should formulate and implement a long-term plan if we are to make India a manufacturing hub. First, we should vastly improve our infrastructure so as to bring down logistics costs. There have to be efforts to bolster the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector which can manufacture a majority of

the goods being imported from China. Steps need to be taken for manufacture of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) locally, as we are critically dependent on China on this front. Further, we need to have a taxation system which is predictable and transparent, apart from eliminating corruption at all levels.

### KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI, Hyderabad

▪ Strangely, the Indian attitude towards buying goods has metamorphosed from buying quality first products to low-priced ones. The use-and-throw attitude has set in and opened the channel for Chinese products to flood the market. Raising slogans of 'boycott', are not going to get us far. Instead, we should learn business lessons from China – adaptability to change the game to suit the situation.

### VIKAS NARON KOMATH, Palayad, Kannur, Kerala

▪ In the dispute cannot be dispensed with at any cost, especially in terms of costs and time. Therefore, I am of the opinion that online mediation will be reduced to an empty formality when it is very difficult to convince the disputing parties through regular face-to-face mediation.

B.M. BALIGA,  
Bengaluru

cost-effective and an efficient use of time. Let me recall that Lok Adalats were established in 1987 followed by mediation centres as compulsory and not merely obligatory after the amendment of the Civil Procedure Code in 2002 (Editorial page, "Mediation in the age of COVID-19", June 19). Now, all over the country, the institution of mediation has become not only common but also popular. The attendance of the disputing parties supported by their lawyers before mediators appointed by the High Courts has become indispensable in a situation of an out-of-court settlement. The personal appearance of all these parties to meet face-to-face, discuss, agree or oppose serious contentions involved in the dispute cannot be dispensed with at any cost, especially in terms of costs and time. Therefore, I am of the opinion that online mediation will be reduced to an empty formality when it is very difficult to convince the disputing parties through regular face-to-face mediation.

LALITHA EVANI,  
Tiruchanur, Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh

Online and offline attending online classes might have its advantages but the drawbacks should also be considered (Andhra Pradesh, "Online classes: students complain of eye and ear problems", June 19). With the emphasis now on digital methods, students do not have a choice. Compulsory online attendance and regular online tests after classes keep them glued to the screen for

# Testing the limits of the capital

Even as COVID-19 cases and deaths are rapidly rising in the capital, the AAP government is grappling with complaints of under-reporting, inadequate facilities and exploitative private hospitals. **Nikhil M. Babu** reports on how it frittered away an opportunity to ramp up healthcare facilities during the lockdown period

**O**n February 29 afternoon, when a 45-year-old Rohit Dutta walked into the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in New Delhi to take a COVID-19 test, he didn't think the hospital would ask him to stay the night. The process of getting admitted was "very easy" and the stay "extremely comfortable," he said. The next day, at around 8 p.m., the doctors said they would move him and three other patients suspected of having COVID-19 to a "better facility," Dutta said. "They shifted us in an ambulance to the Safdarjung Hospital. We didn't have to arrange for anything. The next morning, at Safdarjung, three doctors approached me and asked me sit down. I knew then that I had tested positive for COVID-19," he said.

Dutta, a businessman with a travel history to Italy, was Delhi's first confirmed COVID-19 case. On March 10, after lunch, he received an unexpected call. It was none other than the Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, calling to enquire about his health. "He called me on WhatsApp and asked me if I faced any problem. He asked me what I ate. He told me that even the Prime Minister had enquired about my health," he said. Four days later, Dutta walked out of the hospital relieved and happy, after testing negative twice for the virus.

That was the Delhi of three and a half months ago. Today, the story is starkly different. On June 14, Rohit, 25, clambered onto his scooter. He left his house in Azadpur, in north-east Delhi, in search of a hospital to admit his mother who had tested positive for the virus. "I first went to AIIMS. Then I went to Safdarjung Hospital and then to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. None of them had beds despite the Delhi government app, Delhi Corona, showing us beds being available. Finally, I reached GTB (Guru Teg Bahadur) Hospital. There the authorities told me that beds were available," he said.

But Rohit's problems did not end there. "I called 102 (the emergency number for an ambulance), but no one answered. I had to pay ₹5,000 for an ambulance to get my mother admitted," he said, at the parking area of GTB Hospital, where he had spent the previous night. Rohit said his mother, Rajkumari, was miserable in the hospital. Doctors were busy and there was no one to attend to her. "Yesterday, she called me at 12 p.m. and told me that she was not getting water. I bought two bottles of water. I asked many people for help and finally a guard agreed to give her the water. By the time she got the water, it was around 4 p.m.," Rohit said. Food for her was kept outside the door of her room, but she had trouble walking which made it difficult for her to get it, he said.

The contrast between the two stories paints a picture of the Delhi government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis. From having an initial grip over the situation, the Aam Aadmi Party government is now fighting several accusations – of delayed decision-making, poor planning, hiding data on the dead, disappearing numbers, and poor testing – even as it grapples with the surging cases. Further, unlike Mumbai, Delhi is yet to cap the charges for treatment of COVID-19 in private hospitals. On June 12, the Supreme Court expressed shock at the videos of the "deplorable conditions of wards" and the "pathetic condition of patients" in Delhi hospitals. The Centre intervened, with Home Minister Amit Shah calling for a meeting with all the stakeholders in Delhi. However, with estimates showing cases rising rapidly over the next two months, the government is worried. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal described the challenge as being "unprecedented". The government will do its best to salvage the situation, he said, even as he urged neighbouring States to help create more facilities so that fewer people come to Delhi from these States.

**A cluster, and a delayed response**  
How did things come to such a pass? On April 1, at around 5 a.m., the last bus carrying people from a religious centre in Nizamuddin left the area. A total of 2,346 people had been evacuated from the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat, according to the Delhi government. Evacuating them was the government's first big challenge, and the religious congregation for which they had gathered, one of its first failures.

The religious congregation was held in mid-March despite two orders by the Delhi government restricting the size of gatherings. The attendees of the congregation violated the orders, while the police and the Delhi government failed to enforce the orders. A local police station was hardly 100 metres from the Markaz. In the weeks that followed, about 3,000 people, including those evacuated, were traced to the religious gathering and about 1,100 of them tested positive for COVID-19 in Delhi alone, according to officials. In parallel, the number of healthcare workers and their family members who tested positive too gradually increased.

Though the first case was reported on March 2 and though a huge cluster of



Patients at the GTB Hospital. (Below): Medical staff guiding a patient at the COVID-19 ward of the LNJP Hospital in Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

cases was reported from Nizamuddin in late March and early April, it was only in June that the government issued a flurry of new orders aimed at fixing basic issues in hospitals. After reports of numerous complaints from people about lack of helplines, lack of help desks in hospitals, and lack of information on availability of beds, on June 2 the Delhi government launched an app to enable people to check the availability of hospital beds. In addition, 1031 was launched as a Central helpline number. On June 4, the government ordered all hospitals to create a 24X7 helpline number for people to register their complaints. On June 6, Kejriwal released a government order that patients suspected of suffering from the disease cannot be denied treatment by any hospital. A June 7 order said that "some patients" are facing difficulties in admission in government hospitals. Hospitals were ordered to set up a 24X7 help desk. Another order on the same day noted that rules were not being followed in "letter and spirit". A senior nursing officer was to be appointed in each private hospital to monitor the admission of patients.

"Delhi did not do as well as one would expect," M.C. Mishra, former AIIMS Director, told *The Hindu*. "These things should have been done in the beginning. Things were not planned properly." To this a Delhi government spokesperson responded: "Initially, no one expected that the situation would get this big. Also, at different stages our main challenges were different and we kept addressing them. Whenever we noticed issues, we fixed them."

**The sorry plight of patients**  
Issues have not been fixed, however. On June 16, at the GTB Hospital, there was no help desk, no helpline number displayed, and no LED board displaying the number of beds. Rohit said he could not find any help despite all the government orders. "There is no one to listen to us. The guards are also very rude," Rohit said. Hospital authorities blamed the Public Works Department for its failure to provide the information on a LED board.

At the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital, there is a help desk, and information on the number of beds is displayed, but the hospital has been in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. There was shock and anger when a video surfaced of a naked body lying under a bed in a ward in the hospital, Delhi's biggest COVID-19 treatment facility. The Supreme Court took note of the video, but Delhi's Health Minister, Satyendra Jain, dismissed it as the "mischievous" act of a contract staff.

In the blistering heat, on June 15, Sandeep Kumar, 21, and his father sat on the steps of LNJP Hospital, tired and helpless. "My mother was admitted here on June 9. But they are yet to tell us whether she has tested positive or not. She has breathing issues," said Kumar. The doctor on duty said people often provide the wrong number or switch off

their phones making it very difficult for hospital authorities to reach them.

At the Max Super Speciality Hospital in Patparganj, Divya Sharma, 28, was angry. She had come with her father who was complaining of shortness of breath. She said they had to argue for nearly half an hour with the hospital staff who told them that beds were not available. "They did not allow him inside though he was sweating in an air-conditioned car. His condition was really bad," Sharma said in the waiting area of the hospital. She went to the hospital because the government app showed beds being available there, she said. In the admission area of the hospital there was no notice displaying the number of vacant beds or the rates for treatment, despite government orders. By 6 p.m., Divya's father, Sanjay, died at the hospital. Max Hospital refused to comment.

#### Capping prices

While there are some families like the Sharmas who are being refused admission in private hospitals due to lack of beds, there are other families in Delhi that simply cannot afford private hospitals. Private hospitals in Delhi have been demanding anywhere between ₹2 lakh and ₹8 lakh for COVID-19 testing and treatment even before patients get admitted into hospitals. Responding to reports on the issue, Kejriwal said his government would not allow "black marketing" of beds in private hospitals.

In contrast, in mid-March, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation announced that private hospitals in Mumbai allocating isolation beds for COVID-19 patients will have to limit their charges per bed to ₹4,000. On May 21, the Maharashtra government said in a notification that 80% of beds in private hospitals would be regulated to ensure that patients are billed according to the government price cap. While the charges for a COVID-19 patient in an isolation ward cannot be more than ₹4,000 a day in the State, the maximum charge for an intensive care unit is capped at ₹7,500 a day, and charges for a ventilator are capped at ₹9,000 a day. Also, items such as personal protective equipment cannot be charged over 10% mark-up on the net procurement cost.

Ten days since Kejriwal made that

promise, there are still no details in the public domain of action being taken against Delhi hospitals that are charging such high rates. Nor has the government capped the rates. The Delhi government spokesperson said that they were working, along with the Central government, on capping the prices. "It will happen soon," she said. On June 19, the Union Home Ministry said that a committee set up by it has recommended capping the price of isolation beds for COVID-19 patients in private hospitals in Delhi in the range of ₹8,000-₹18,000 per day.

#### Disappearing data

Apart from complaints of exploitative billing, the government is also facing complaints of under-reporting cases and deaths. Delhi has had a serious data problem since the COVID-19 outbreak.

First, in the second week of May, *The Hindu* reported that the total number of COVID-19-related deaths reported by the Delhi government was fewer than the number of deaths being reported by hospitals.

The government responded that the hospitals sent data on deaths to a government-appointed death audit committee, and only deaths certified by the committee were counted as part of the official death toll. The government blamed the hospitals for delaying reporting deaths. And thus ensued a blame game between the Delhi government and the city's hospitals. On May 14, the government stopped releasing the hospital-wise number of COVID-19-related deaths happening in the city.

Second, from April 15, the government stopped providing details of cases "under investigation". In a "case under investigation", it is unknown how a patient got infected by the virus, suggesting chances of community transmission. The health bulletin on April 14 had 85 cases that were "under investigation". After that, the category was simply removed from the bulletin.

Third, data on testing too has been inconsistent. At one point, the government stopped providing details of the number of COVID-19 tests being done and began to provide the data again only after a High Court order on May 4.

Fourth, there has been a drop in daily testing in June. During the first week of

June, daily testing fell to 3,700 even though the government had a capacity of 8,600 tests per day. The Delhi government said it was a "momentary drop" and that the number of tests per million of the population in Delhi was higher than the national average.

Fifth, on June 2, the Delhi government issued an order limiting the scope of people who can be tested for COVID-19. Also, eight labs were asked not to collect samples and conduct tests as they allegedly violated Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines.

Finally, the number of containment zones also reduced. On May 18, the Secretary of the Health and Family Welfare Department, Padmini Singla, raised this issue in an order. She said the number of containment zones had gone down despite cases going up. A month since then, the number of containment zones has increased from 73 on May 18 to 247 on June 17.

#### A controversial decision

Through the months of March, April and May, Kejriwal made multiple statements assuring people that "things are under control" and that "there was no need to panic". He said on June 2 that "Delhi is four steps ahead of corona". Sufficient arrangements have been made for a potential increase in cases, he said. But on June 7, he said Delhi government-run hospitals and private hospitals would be reserved only for the residents of Delhi. He cited an expert committee report and suggestions from lakhs of residents who apparently said that Delhi hospitals should be reserved only for the people of Delhi. "The expert committee has said that if we open the hospitals for all, then the 9,000 beds that the Delhi government has kept for COVID-19 patients will be filled within just three days," Kejriwal said.

The decision came under criticism from many quarters. "It was made overnight. The government shouldn't have gone forward with it as the High Court had struck down a decision for preferential treatment for Delhiites in the GTB Hospital in 2018," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*.

On June 8, the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, Anil Baijal, overruled the Kejriwal government's controversial decision as well as a June 2 order restricting testing. Harking back to a series of Supreme Court judgments, Baijal said that the right to health is an integral part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

In the next three days, the 9,000 beds in the city did not get filled as Kejriwal said. As on June 17, 4,245 of the 9,647 beds were vacant, according to the Delhi Corona app.

But why did the Delhi government take such a decision in the first place? The capital witnessed its first 1,000-plus daily new cases on May 28. The number of daily new cases has been consistently exceeding that mark since then, except on one day. The committee which recommended restricting access to hospi-

tals was formed on June 2. An earlier committee, headed by S.K. Sarin, formed by the Delhi government, had not made any such recommendation.

"We had made an extensive plan on the need for beds at different stages, based on the recommendations of the Sarin Committee.

It included details on when we should start acquiring banquet halls or stadiums. The plan was already in place during the lockdown. And we are ramping up facilities whenever cases reach a particular mark. Our preparations have been ahead of the virus," the Delhi government spokesperson said.

K. Srinath Reddy, President of the Public Health Foundation of India, does not think so. "The lockdown should have been used to ramp up systems. But that level of organisation and planning has not been done in Delhi," he said. Mishra said the government panicked. "They thought they won't be able to cope with the increase in cases. It was an impulsive decision," he said.

On June 9, the Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, said after a meeting with the Lieutenant Governor that the latter had not done "any calculation" on the requirement of beds before overturning the government's decision. Kejriwal said 1.5 lakh beds would be needed by July 31, based on estimates. The AAP government has ordered the Taj Man Singh Hotel to isolate all its rooms and place them at the disposal of the Sri Ganga Ram Hospital. It has begun to convert a large tent of the spiritual organisation, Radha Soami Satsang Beas, to a 10,000-bed COVID-19 facility. It has also identified 77 banquet halls which are expected to have 11,229 beds. A panel formed by the government had suggested in June that Pragati Maidan, the Talkatora Stadium, the Thyagaraj Stadium, the Indira Gandhi Stadium, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, and the Dhyanchand National Stadium in 2018," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*.

**Centre's intervention**  
When Baijal overruled the two decisions by the AAP government, the Centre stepped in. Shah reviewed the preparedness of Delhi in a meeting with Baijal and Kejriwal. After the meeting, he said testing would be increased two-fold in the next two days and three-fold after six days. He said testing will begin at every polling station in containment zones after a few days. He promised to provide 500 railway coaches to augment bed capacity. On Wednesday, the Central government capped the price of COVID-19 testing in Delhi at ₹2,400.

Seeing the chaos in Delhi, Dutta said he considers himself lucky for being infected at the beginning of the epidemic and not later on. "What is happening is depressing," he said. "I would have faced problems if I was infected now. The government did not prepare well."



FROM PAGE ONE

## China lays claim to entire Galwan Valley

Monday's clash was reported to have taken place on India's side of the LAC.

India's constructions, including a bridge across the river that was completed on Friday and is thought to be one of the triggers for the recent clash, are on India's side of the LAC, in an area in between the Galwan-Shyok confluence and the line.

While most Chinese maps show almost all of the Galwan river within Chinese territory, the western edge of the river where it meets the Shyok River has not previously been shown as Chinese territory previously in most maps.

By now staking a claim to the entire valley and up to the confluence of the rivers – including on land where India has carried out construction work – Indian officials said China had expanded its claims and was seeking to alter the LAC.

While the LAC has not been demarcated and there are differing perceptions in more than a dozen locations along the LAC, this has not been a point of contention previously in the Galwan area, they said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry's statement said: "For many years, Chinese border guards have been patrolling and performing their duties here. Since April this year, the Indian border defence forces have unilaterally continued to build roads, bridges and other facilities in the Galwan Valley region. China has repeatedly made representations and protests on this, but the Indian side has intensified cross-border troubles."

The statement revealed China sought a commitment from India to "not cross the Galwan estuary to patrol and build facilities", underlining its claims up to the confluence.

The statement claimed that in the early hours of May 6, Indian border guards "crossed the line into the Chinese territory in the Galwan Valley area by night, constructing construction barriers, blocking the normal patrol of the Chinese border guards, deliberately provoking incidents, and attempting to unilaterally change the status of border control." It said that "at the strong request of the Chinese side" India had "agreed and evacuated the personnel and facilities beyond the line".

The statement claimed that at the June 6 Corps Commander-level talks, India "promised not to cross

## No outsiders on Indian territory, says Modi

Among the first political leaders to speak was Congress president Sonia Gandhi who adopted a hard line, saying that the Indian government must assure that status quo ante is restored.

She also asked if the violent face off was the result of an intelligence failure.

She said the "entire Opposition was willing to make any sacrifice to ensure that Indian troops are battle ready".

Noting that the first reports of Chinese intrusion came on May 5, Ms. Gandhi said "crucial time" was lost by the government in starting diplomatic level talks with China.

"Did our external intelligence agencies not report any unusual activity along the LAC? Did the Military Intelligence not alert the government about the intrusion and the build-up of massive forces along the LAC, whether on the Chinese side or on the Indian side? In the government's considered view, was there a failure of intelligence?" Ms. Gandhi asked.

Most political parties said they supported whatever action the government was prepared to take for restora-

the Galwan Estuary to patrol and build facilities, and the two sides agreed to withdraw the troops in batches through a meeting of local commanders." It repeated China's statement from earlier this week that blamed India for the June 15 violence.

On Friday, a Chinese strategic expert cited "historical rights" going back to the Qing Dynasty to claim the entire valley.

"Multiple accounts from the Qing Dynasty [1644-1911] and Western literature have recorded that the Galwan Valley was China's territory. Based on the principle of 'historic rights,' China has jurisdiction over the valley area," Zhang Yongpan, a research fellow of the Institute of Chinese Borderland Studies at CASS, told the *Global Times*.

He referred to India's construction activity near the Shyok river as reflecting an attempt "to break into Chinese land".

"In nearby Shyok River in west Galwan River, India built an airport, constructed bridges, roads and villages. For years, the country has been seeking to break into Chinese land," he said.

"Chinese maps that I have seen show almost all of the Galwan River as lying within the territory China claims in the area," M. Taylor Fravel, an expert on the Chinese military at MIT, told *The Hindu* earlier.

"The one discrepancy would be the western tip of the Galwan River as it meets the Shyok River. Here, the last few kilometres of the Galwan River are often depicted as lying beyond China's border. How one defines the parameters of the valley itself might be different than the river, however."

While there was some ambiguity on where the extremities of the valley may be defined, the new statements from China suggest their claim goes up to the confluence of the rivers.

China's new claims, observers said, may have been triggered by last year's opening of the vital Darbuk-Shyok-Daulet Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road, that runs parallel to the LAC providing key all-weather access to the post at Daulet Beg Oldie, one of the northernmost points in Ladakh.

China may also be seeking access to areas closer to the confluence, from where it could neutralise the strategically important DSDBO road.

## Three States face challenge of case fatalities

7 of 10 dead in Karnataka from Bengaluru; A.P. reports a record 465 new cases in a day; Telangana also adds 499 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Karnataka on Friday recorded 10 more COVID-19 deaths, taking the toll to 124, seven of them from Bengaluru.

Two of the four new deaths in Andhra Pradesh were reported from Krishna district, which has the highest COVID-19 mortality rate in the State.

In a massive rise, Telangana recorded 499 cases in 24

### COVID-19

hours. For comparison, 352 cases were recorded on Thursday. The total number of cases till date stood at 6,262.

Of the 499 cases, as many as 329 were from Greater Hyderabad, followed by 129 from Rangareddy district. Three more COVID-19 patients died, raising fatalities to 198.

Kerala reported 118 new COVID-19 cases and 96 recoveries on Friday, taking the



**Cause for concern:** Health Department officials taking samples for COVID-19 test at the Kalasipalyam police station in Bengaluru after nine staff tested positive. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

number of active cases in the State to 1,380. All except six were imported cases, with 67 cases detected in people who came from abroad and 45 in people from other States.

Six cases were acquired through local transmission. Three were reported in Thi-

ruvananthapuram, while one case each was from Kannur, Kottayam and Wayanad.

The State's cumulative number for COVID-19 positivity stood at 2,912, of whom 1,509 persons had recovered. Mortality from the virus stood at 21 in the State.

With a chunk of the cases currently testing positive being reported among expatriates, northern districts in the State which have significant numbers of people working in West Asia were bearing the brunt.

Malappuram had the max-

## Notice to government over pension, salaries Ordinance

Advocate-General asked to file counter in three weeks

MARRI RAMU  
HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Friday issued notice to the State government on a writ petition filed by a retired forest officer challenging an ordinance empowering the government to



defer payment of pension and salaries of retired and serving employees respectively.

A Bench of Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy instructed Advocate-General B.S. Prasad to file a counter-affidavit in three weeks.

Petitioner G. Raman Goud stated that the Ordinance No. 2, dated June 16, was against all constitutional norms.

Senior lawyer S. Satyam

Reddy, appearing for the petitioner, said the ordinance was against the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. It also contravened the fundamental rights of pensioners and serving employees by depriving them of their legitimate pension and salaries, he contended.

While the Ordinance was promulgated by the Governor on June 16, it was given retrospective effect from

March 24. In the guise of an ordinance, the government had deferred pension and salaries which was unconstitutional, he argued. In fact, the Disaster Management Act mandates that the government come to the rescue of people on all fronts during pandemics. But the

government had come out with the ordinance deferring pensions and salaries of employees, the senior lawyer said.

Observing that the government had the power to impose reasonable restrictions on the fundamental rights in the larger interest of public, the Chief Justice asked Mr. Satyam Reddy to establish how the ordinance was against the Constitution.

The Bench said the Governor derived power under Article 213 to promulgate an Ordinance.

"This can be challenged on very limited grounds," the Chief Justice said.

Mr. Satyam Reddy con-

tended that unless there was a financial emergency, the government could defer pension and salaries.

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Observing that the government had the power to impose reasonable restrictions on the

# Satellite images suggest increased Chinese activity at border before clash

The pictures show signs of altering the landscape of Galwan Valley through the widening of tracks, moving of earth and making river crossings

REUTERS  
SINGAPORE/NEW DELHI

In the days leading up to the most violent border clash between India and China in decades, China brought in pieces of machinery, cut a trail into a Himalayan mountainside and may have even dammed a river, satellite pictures suggest.

The images, shot on Tuesday, a day after soldiers engaged in a hand-to-hand combat in the freezing Galwan Valley, show an increase in activity from a week earlier.

India said 20 soldiers were killed in a premeditated attack by Chinese troops on Monday night at a time when top commanders had agreed to defuse tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

China rejected the allegations and blamed front-line Indian soldiers for provoking the conflict which took place at the freezing height of 14,000 feet (4,300 metres) in the western Himalayas.

The 4,056-km border between India and China runs through glaciers, snow deserts and rivers in the west to thickly forested mountains in the east.

The Galwan Valley is an arid, inhospitable area, where some soldiers are deployed on steep ridges. It is considered important because it leads to the Aksai Chin, a disputed plateau claimed by India but controlled by China.

The satellite pictures, taken by earth-imaging company Planet Labs and ob-



Valley of strife: A satellite image of Galwan Valley in Ladakh. • PLANET LABS INC/ REUTERS

tained by Reuters, show signs of altering the landscape of the valley through widening tracks, moving earth and making river

crossings, one expert said.

The images show machinery along the bald mountains and in the Galwan River.

the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at California's Middletbury Institute of International Studies.

"There are a ton of vehicles on both sides [of the LAC], although there appear to be vastly more on the Chinese side. I count 30-40 Indian vehicles and well over 100 vehicles on the Chinese side."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said he was unaware of the specifics on the ground but reiterated that the Indian Army had crossed into Chinese territory in several places in recent days and that they should withdraw.

## Backlash

The clash was the most serious since 1967. Since early May, soldiers have faced off

on the border where India says Chinese troops had intruded and set up temporary structures. The confrontation turned into a deadly brawl on Monday.

The fighting was trig-

gered by a row over two Chi-

nese tents and observa-

tions towers that India said

had been built on its side of

the LAC, said Indian govern-

ment sources in New Delhi

and on the Indian side of the

border in the Ladakh

region.

China had sought to erect

a "structure" in the Galwan

Valley on India's side of the

LAC even after military offi-

cials had reached an agree-

ment on June 6 to de-esca-

late, Indian Foreign Minister

S. Jaishankar told China's se-

nior diplomat Wang Yi in a

phone call on Wednesday,

there was no such structure in

the image taken a week earli-

er.

The Chinese troops had

thinned out and left behind

the two tents and small ob-

servations posts. The Indian

party demolished the tow-

ers and burnt the tents, the

sources said.

The satellite images show possible debris from the obser-

vation posts on Tuesday

morning on a ridge on In-

dia's side of the LAC. There

was no such structure in the

image taken a week earlier.

## Assam CM orders arrest of Bengal man

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday ordered the State police to arrest a Kolkata-based ideologue for "hurting Assamese sentiments" by calling the founder of the medieval Ahom dynasty "a Chinese invader".

Mr. Sonowal instructed Guwahati's Commissioner of Police Munna Prasad Gupta to leave for the West Bengal capital immediately to arrest and bring Garga Chatterjee, who calls himself a Bengali nationalist, for questioning.

Alluding to the Chinese attack on Indian soldiers in Ladakh, Mr. Chatterjee tweeted on Wednesday: "There is a State in India where the 'State Day' is celebrated to commemorate a Chinese invader who brutally attacked India with Chinese troops." He added: "This invader is considered a hero by #China-funded anti-Indian separatist group ULFA (United Liberation Front of Assam)."

December 2 is observed as Assam Day or Sukaphaa Divas. The day marks the arrival of Chaolung Sukaphaa from Mong Mao, now in China's Yunnan province. Sukaphaa is revered in Assam as the founder of the Ahom dynasty in the early 13th century and is credited with unifying various ethnic groups to form Bor Asom, which is much of present-day northeast.

A police complaint was filed against Mr. Chatterjee by one Bhaskarjyoti Gogoi on Thursday.

## Russia begins discreet moves to defuse India-China tension

Moscow has 'high stakes' in the early resolution of the border issue

ATUL ANEJA  
NEW DELHI

Russia has launched an energetic behind-the-scenes effort to defuse military tensions between India and China, ahead of hosting a trilateral RIC video conference, which includes External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on Tuesday.

Russia's diplomatic activism began on June 17, when Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov discussed regional security, "including developments on the Line of Actual Control on the border between India and China in the Himalayas," with Indian ambassador to Russia, D. Bala Venkatesh Varma.

The meeting took place in the backdrop of the clash in the Galwan Valley, in which 20 Indian and an undclared



Carrying reinforcements: An Army convoy on the way to Leh through a highway bordering China on Friday. • GETTY IMAGES

number of Chinese troops were killed.

The Russian foreign ministry did not give any further details about the conversation, but Russian diplomatic sources told *The Hindu* that Moscow has "high stakes" at a global level, in the early resolution of tensions between the two Himalayan neighbours.

"Good relations between India and China are central to the rise of Eurasia and the emergence of a multipolar world order, which is not dominated by a single pole," the diplomat said. He pointed to the "centrality" of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which includes India, Pakistan, Russia and China as well as most

of the Central Asian Republics as the anchor of a "post-west" global system.

"The persistence of tensions between India and China will not only have a huge negative impact on the SCO but also on the rise of the emerging economies under the Brazil Russia India China South Africa (BRICS) grouping," the source said.

But the diplomat pointed out that Russia would only like to play a constructive behind-the-scenes role, as both India and China were fully capable of resolving their differences. On Wednesday, Dmitry Peskov, press secretary of Russian President Vladimir Putin said reports from the China-India border were "very alarming". "But we consider that the two countries are capable of taking necessary steps to prevent such situations in the future..," Mr. Peskov said.

## No Indian troops with us, says China

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

China has not seized any Indian personnel presently, its Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson said on Friday when asked about the detention and release of 10 Indian soldiers by Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley.

"As far as I know, China hasn't seized any Indian personnel presently," spokesperson Zhao Lijian said in Beijing.

Editor-in-Chief of the Chinese state media *Global Times* Hu Xijin said on Twitter, "These 10 Indian soldiers must have been treated well in China, more fortunate than those 17 Indians who died in freezing temperatures. In fact, most of the Indian soldiers died due to the backward logistical support of the Indian army. China shouldn't be blamed."

As reported by *The Hindu* on Thursday, China released 10 Indian Army personnel held in its custody following the clash on Monday night in the Galwan Valley that resulted in the death of 20 Indian Army men.

Asked about the situation in the Galwan Valley and the demonstrations in India against China, Mr. Zhao said, "The right and wrong is very clear and the responsibility entirely lies with the Indian side."

IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria made a quiet visit to Leh and Srinagar in the last two days to review the operational preparedness, a defence source said.

## Tone down nationalist rhetoric: Gowda

He cautions against calls for economic boycott

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has argued for toning down the "nationalist rhetoric" and cautioned against calls for economic boycott in the backdrop of Galwan Val-

ley clashes.

In his letter on Friday, Mr. Gowda, while stating that he fully appreciated the Prime Minister's decision to call for a meeting of Opposition leaders to discuss the India-China situation, urged that the "nationalist rhetoric should be toned down" in order to ensure that the matter did not escalate.

Mr. Gowda also warned the government against encouraging the "reactionary

language of economic boycott" which could have deep implications.

Speaking of media outlets "spreading fake information and cheap rhetoric", he said it could end up endangering the lives of soldiers and diplomatic staff. "This is not the time for a language of provocation and revenge," he said, warning particularly about social media.

He suggested that a senior serving military officer and a

senior serving diplomat make a detailed presentation to Opposition leaders on the ground situation, and the progress of talks.

Mr. Gowda also urged Opposition leaders not to use intemperate language. "This is an hour for cooperation. Domestic politics and national security interests cannot be equated. Having said this, I do not mean we should not question the government."

"On which date did the Chinese troops intrude into our territory in Ladakh? When did the government find out the Chinese transgressions into our territory? Was it on May 5, as reported, or earlier? Does the government not receive, on a regular basis, satellite pictures of the borders of our country?" she asked.

"The question is, what next? What is the way forward? The entire country would like an assurance that the status quo ante would be restored and China will revert to the original posi-

## SC asks its Registry to explain delay in listing Mallya's petition

He had appealed against a verdict of contempt

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In an unexpected twist in the Vijay Mallya case, the Supreme Court has asked its own Registry to explain a three-year delay in listing the fugitive businessman's review petition against a verdict of contempt against him.

The Supreme Court had on May 9, 2017 found the fugitive businessman guilty of contempt for wilful disobedience of its order to come clean about his assets, and not disclosing \$40 million (₹600 crore) he received from British liquor major Diageo Plc following his resignation as chairman of United Spirits Limited in February 2016.

**Prolonged delay**  
Taking up Mr. Mallya's review petition in their chambers on June 16, a Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Ashok Bhushan said it would get to



Vijay Mallya

the bottom of the prolonged delay in listing the case before going into its merits.

"Review petition was not listed before the court for last three years. Before we deal with the submission raised in the review petition, we direct the Registry to explain why the review petition was not listed before the court concerned for last three years," the Bench said in an order via circulation.

The court also directed the Registry to reveal the names of the officials who had dealt with the case file in

## Row over Nepal Army chief's visit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A day after the chief of the Nepalese Army visited the Nepal-India border near Kalapani, a controversy has broken out with media reports suggesting that the Nepal Defence Minister pressured General Purna Chandra Thapa to visit the region.

Online news portal *Nepalmag* has reported citing senior Nepali military sources that General Thapa was under pressure from the leading figures of Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli's government, who wanted him to display Nepal's territorial claims over the Kalapani region.

"According to a highly placed military source, it was the pressure from Deputy PM and Defence Minister Ishwor Pokhrel that made Thapa visit Darchula near the Indian areas," the online publication said, adding "initially, the chief was reluctant to go" owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, China embraces Bangladesh in trade

Export tariff waived on most goods

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

A significant show of economic diplomacy in South Asia, China has announced tariff exemption for 97 per cent of exports from Bangladesh. And diplomatic sources of Bangladesh have described the Chinese move as a "major success" in Dhaka-Beijing relationship.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh announced on Friday that 97 percent of items covering fisheries and leather products would be exempted of Chinese tariffs.

Beijing's decision came a month after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Xi Jinping discussed enhancing bilateral relation in the background of the economic hardship triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh already receives tariff-exemption for 3,095 items under the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APT). As a result of the latest announcement, a total of 8,256 goods from Bangladesh will be exempted of Chinese tariffs," Mr. Islam said.

## DIRECTORATE OF SPORTS PUNJAB

SCO No. 116-117, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh

Appointment As Director (Curriculum & Training)

Corrigendum

Applications are invited for appointment as Director (Curriculum & Training) in Punjab state Institute of Sports SAS Nagar, HQ at Mohali on Contractual basis initially for a period of Three Years was published in The Tribune, The times of India, Hindustan Times & The Hindu (All Edition) on 03-06-2020. The last date to accept applications on dated 23-06-2020. Now last date to accept applications on dated 30-06-2020. The addition of criteria of professional qualification Arjun Award and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award may also apply for this position.

DPR PB /4/37914/2020

Director Sports, Punjab

 ALL INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

## IN BRIEF



Davinder Singh gets bail in terror case

NEW DELHI  
Suspended Jammu and Kashmir police officer Davinder Singh, who was arrested, allegedly with two Hizb-ul-Mujahideen terrorists earlier this year, was granted bail by a court on Friday as the Delhi police failed to file a chargesheet within the stipulated time period. However, he will continue to remain in judicial custody in connection with the case registered by the National Investigation Agency.

## SC seeks response on Sharjeel Imam's plea

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Friday gave Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh time to respond to a plea by activist Sharjeel Imam challenging FIRs registered against him in five States under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Mr. Imam, represented by senior advocate Siddharth Dave, said the FIRs were the products of a politically coloured ruse to silence his right to dissent.

## 2 Khalistani operatives arrested; guns seized

CHANDIGARH  
The Punjab police on Friday claimed to have busted a terror module, arresting two alleged Khalistani operatives preparing to carry out terror attacks. Director-General of Police Dinkar Gupta said that acting on a tip-off from the public on Thursday night, a team of the Amritsar Rural Police raided a spot near an eatery on GT Road at Jandiala and arrested Gurmeet Singh and Vikram Singh. They also seized two guns.

## India attends FATF group meet online

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Indian officials, including representatives from enforcement agencies, on Friday attended the 32nd special Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG) plenary meeting, under the aegis of the Financial Action Task Force. The meeting was held online.

The EAG is a regional body comprising nine countries: India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. It is an associate member of the FATF.

The FATF's virtual plenary meet will be held on June 24.

## SC refuses to stay work on Central Vista

'Can we restrain authorities from acting as per law?' asks Justice A.M. Khanwilkar

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to stay the groundwork for the Central Vista project even as the Union government said there was no overreaching of the court process in the pursuit of the ₹20,000-crore redevelopment plan of the nation's power corridor clearances.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, advocate Shikhil Suri, for petitioner Rajiv Suri, said the government was "churning out approvals" for the project regardless of propensity of challenge in the top court.

"Can we restrain authorities from acting as per law?" Justice Khanwilkar, flanked by Justices Dinesh Mahesh



Power corridor: A view of the Central Vista on a rainy evening in New Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

wari and Sanjiv Khanna, asked Mr. Suri.

Senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, appearing for another petitioner, said clearances were being sought and obtained continuously.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said a consolidated

reply to the allegations would be filed. The court asked the government to file it by July 3. It posted the case for hearing after July 6, when the court reopens post vacations. The court is closing for a two-week vacation on June 19.

The petitions have prima facie challenged a notification issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on March 20 authorising the change of land use.

On March 6, the top court transferred the issue from the Delhi High Court and ordered that "any steps taken by the authorities, in the meantime, will be subject to the outcome of the proceedings".

## Land use change

Mr. Mehta countered why the petitioner has a problem as the project envisaged only Parliament construction.

Mr. Suri argued that the proposed change in land usage of the Central Vista, the historical boulevard of approximately 3.5 km from

Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, and further to the National Stadium, was a symbol of India's historic past, nationhood and vibrant democracy.

In the 'redevelopment' of the Central Vista, the entire matter has been cloaked in secrecy and opacity. More sinister are the murky, dubious and suspicious events, leading up to the present day events. Foremost is the malevolent and malicious manner in which Central Government decided in May 2015 to withdraw India's nomination to attain a World Heritage City tag for Delhi's Imperial Capital Cities from UNESCO; a quest it had been pursuing over the last decade or so," the petition stated.

## SC adjourns hearing of NIA plea in Navlakha case

Case to be heard after court reopens

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Gautam Navlakha

to prepare a response and listed the case for hearing after the court reopens post vacations on July 6.

The NIA, represented by Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, maintained that it had acted quickly in the background of the uncertainty surrounding the lockdown and availability of inter-State flights.

## Gains from coal mine auction uncertain

Production and compliance costs outweigh that of renewable power: expert

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

What lies ahead: Coal mines have to comply with strict environmental norms.

The benefits of the Coal Ministry's proposal to auction 41 coal mines are uncertain as energy production and environmental compliance costs outweigh that of renewable power, said an expert associated with the Union Environment Ministry.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that coal would be brought out "after decades of lockdown" and private sector involvement would help realise ₹33,000 crore of capital investment in the next five years. Analysts and environmentalists have said that this

Standing Committee on Environment Jairam Ramesh wrote to Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar that opening up coal blocks in dense forests would be a "triple disaster" as mining and transportation of coal would involve a heavy environmental cost; valuable forest cover would be lost and public health would suffer.

The technical expert associated with the Environment Ministry told *The Hindu* that while companies seeking blocks would have to comply with existing environmental provisions and, given diminishing demand for fossil fuel, climate commitments and

the cost of fly-ash processing – managing the residue from burning coal – it was not a certainty that companies would come flocking to mine coal.

"It's a matter of changing ownership. Areas with very dense forest will not be opened up so easily and it might be profitable for some companies to export if market conditions are right. But that's not so easy now," the expert said.

India has committed to ensuring that fossil fuels contribute no more than 60% of its energy production by 2030 as per the 2015 Paris Agreement.

## Charge of favouritism in listing reckless, says SC

Lawyer cited Arnab Goswami case

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Goswami being listed overnight. Mr. Kansal accused the Registry of showing partiality towards senior advocates and big law firms.

"Why make reckless allegations against the Registry?" Justice S. Abdul Nazeer, on the Bench, asked.

Justice Mishra orally remarked that it was "very fashionable" to make allegations. The court reserved the petition for orders.

**GODAVARI URBAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
Kakinada, E.G.Dist., A.P.  
**Bid Reference No. GUDA/TU 142M/01/2020-21**  
RFP for Conversion of Decommissioned Aircraft Tu-142M into Museum, Refurbishment and Q&M at Kakinada Beach. Tender document can be downloaded from [www.guda.ap.gov.in/](http://www.guda.ap.gov.in/)

Sd/-Dr. R. Amarendra Kumar,  
Vice-Chairman, GUDA, Kakinada.

RAJIV GANDHI CENTRE FOR AQUACULTURE  
(MPEDA, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India)

3/197, Poompuhar Road, Karimedu, Sattananthapuram - 609 109, Tirukkannamalai, Tamil Nadu, Ph:04364 265200, 265217, Email:[rca@cgov@gmail.com](mailto:rca@cgov@gmail.com)

## E-TENDER NOTICE

Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture, the R&D arm of MPEDA (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India) invites competitive bids for Labour and Materials separately from eligible bidders for the Construction of Retaining Wall for the Drainage Canal and the Repair and renovation of the Hostel Building at the Multiples Aquaculture Complex (MAC), Vellarpadam, Cochin through the e-procurement portal (<http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>)

Last date: 06-07-2020, For details visit: <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> or [www.rgca.org.in](http://www.rgca.org.in)

Further corrigendum / addendum will be published only on websites

ANDHRA PRADESH POWER DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED  
(A subsidiary of APGENCO, Govt. of AP Undertaking)

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

APPDCL is operating 2 x 800 MW Super Critical Thermal Power Station namely Sri Damodaram Sanjeeviah Thermal Power Station ( SDSTPS) at Nelatur (V), Muthukuru (M), SPSR Nellore District A.P.

The intent of the EOI is to identify prospective Agencies for Study and Implementation of the Flexibility operation for SDSTPS i.e. lowering the technical minimum of Thermal Power Plant to 20% of the installed capacity as against the existing 55% to 60%.

Interested firms/ organizations are requested to submit their Expression of Interest for Implementation of the Flexibility operation for SDSTPS and the required technical inputs will be arranged by APPDCL / SDSTPS based on requirement.

For Further details, please visit website: [www.apgenco.gov.in](http://www.apgenco.gov.in)

Schedule Closing of EOI submission : up to 15:00Hrs on 10.07.2020

Chief General Manager / APPDCL

SOUTHERN RAILWAY  
PROJECT ORGANISATION

## E-Tender Notice No.SG/PROJ/PT/PGT-HASSDAC/2020/EOT(02) Dt : 10.06.2020

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Projects, Podanur, Southern Railway, Coimbatore - 641023, invites E-Tender from the tenderers for the following work:

1. Name of the work : Provision of Dual Detection with High Availability Single Section Digital Axle Counter (HASSDAC) 35 Block sections Palakkad Division over Southern Railway.

2. Approximate cost of the work (₹) 10,68,88,330.31

3. Cost of tender document (₹) 11,200/-

4. Earnest Money to be deposited (₹) 6,84,500/-

5. Completion Period of the work 12 Months from the date of issuance of LOA

6. Date & time for closing of tender Closing at 14.00 hrs. of 04.07.2020

7. Website particulars from where tender documents can be downloaded <http://www.ideps.gov.in>

Note : For more details, terms and conditions the tenderer is advised to refer the tender documents. (Volume I and Volume II)

Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer/Project/Podanur

Follow us on : [twitter.com/GMSRailway](http://twitter.com/GMSRailway)

## Varavara Rao seeks bail

Plea before a special court cites medical conditions

SONAM SAIGAL  
MUMBAI

Varavara Rao

ing his arguments on June 26.

## Appeal by MPs

Fourteen MPs, most of them from Tamil Nadu, wrote a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashish Uddhav Thackeray requesting urgent attention to poet Varavara Rao's health and transfer him from a jail to a hospital.

Meanwhile, advocate Sharif Sharif sought the court's permission to speak to professor Shoma Sen (61), another accused in the case, who is lodged at Byculla jail.

The two are among 11 rights activists to have been jailed in the case.

## NLC India Limited

"Navratna" - Government of India Enterprise  
Regd. Office : First Floor, No.8, Mayor Satyameet Road,  
FSD, Egmore Complex of Food Corporation of India, Chetpet, Chennai - 600 031.  
Corp. Office : Block-1, Neyveli-807 001, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu.  
CIN No.: L19390TN1956G01003507, Website: [www.nlcindia.com](http://www.nlcindia.com)

## NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES (e-Tender Notices Sl.No. 1 to 5)

| Sl.No.  | Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Req'd.   | Date of opening                 |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. UNIT : M.M.COMPLEX: ENQ / 20-21 / 000518 / MM05 (05) | dt.08.06.2020: Procurement of 2 items of Seamless Tubes.  | Due date of opening: 06.07.2020 |
| 2. ENQ / 20-21 / 000522 / MM03 (01)                     | dt.09.06.2020: 3.3 KV, 800 KW Squirrel Cage induction Motor. Qty.: 2 Nos.   | Due date of opening: 09.07.2020 |
| 3. ENQ / 20-21 / 000428 / MM25(01)                      | dt.10.06.2020: Circulating water pump HT Motor – 1 No.  | Due date of opening: 09.07.2020 |
| 4. ENQ / 20-21 / 000568 / MM11(02)                      | dt.16.06.2020: RG 10 INGOTS as per DIN 1705 specification (GCU Sn 10 Zn) Copper: 86 to 89%; Tin: 9 to 11%; Zinc: 1 to 3%; Nickel: 2% (max.); Lead: 1.5% (max.); P: 0.1% (max.); Antimony: 0.3%; S: 0.05% (max.); Iron: 0.25% (max.) Wt. per piece to 10 Kgs. Qty: 8 MT. | Due date of opening: 15.07.2020 |
| 5. ENQ / 20-21 / 000579 / MM23(01)                      | dt.18.06.2020: Skid Mounted LT switch Gear  | Due date of opening: 20.07.2020 |

FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/ DETAILS/ CORRIGENDUM VISIT: [www.nlcindia.com](http://www.nlcindia.com)

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## BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Dasarahalli Division, MEI Layout, Bagalaguppe, Hesaraghatta Main Road, Bengaluru - 560 073.

No:BBMP/EE/DD/Ten-07/2020-21 Date: 19.06.2020

## INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only) (Two Cover Tender)

The Executive Engineer, (Dasarahalli) Division BBMP, Bengaluru-73 invites tenders from eligible Contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with KPWD/CPWD/BWSSB/Railways/MES/National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the Construction of works detailed in the table below. (Standard Tender Document- KW1, 2, 3 & 4)

| Sl. No. | Name of the Works | Approx. Value of Work (₹ in Lakhs) | EMD |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |


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## Institutional quarantine must in Delhi

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

A five-day institutional quarantine for COVID-19 patients in the Capital, Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal ordered here on Friday.

Such cases, after institutional quarantine, will be sent back to home isolation except in cases where symptoms require further hospitalisation, according to the order issued by Mr. Baijal in his capacity as chairperson of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority.

**'Reconsider decision'**  
With 77.8% of the active cases till June 11 in the city recuperating in home isolation, the Delhi government called the decision "arbitrary" and asked for it to be reconsidered. "Today's order of the Central government stopping home isolation will discourage people from testing and further spread corona as asymptomatic and mild symptom patients will resist testing and will not be quarantined," the Aam Aadmi Party government said in a statement.

The statement said strict isolation protocol following Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines and daily monitoring and counselling has resulted in thousands of mild and asymptomatic cases recovering at home.

Sources in the Delhi government said the L-G's directive would strain the city's already stretched medical infrastructure, with the need to house "thousands of asymptomatic people" necessitating "thousands of beds" in quarantine centres.

Mr. Baijal cited a Ministry of Home Affairs observation that home isolation may be a reason for increasing spread of infections in Delhi to issue the new order. "Mandatory physical verification of each case is to be carried out by the surveillance teams under supervision of the District Magistrate," the order stated.

## Centre bats for contact tracing

'Lockdown gave the govt. a breathing space'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Contact tracing continues to be a critical component to contain the COVID-19 epidemic and ensure that the health infrastructure is not overwhelmed, said the Health Ministry on Friday.

It has advised State governments to adapt the best practices to suit the local context and replicate them for better management of the pandemic.

It said the lockdown provided breathing space for the government to ramp up testing facilities and the health infrastructure, which ensured improved recovery rate through timely detection and clinical management of cases.

"Our rising case recovery rate is the result of the timely, graded, pre-emptive approach of the government to contain COVID-19 and its implementation by countless frontline workers," said the



**Safe distance:** Essential service workers waiting for a local train at Mumbai's CSMT station on Friday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

Health Ministry.

In the last 24 hours, 1,76,959 samples were tested. The total number of samples tested thus far was 64,26,627 according to the Indian Council of Medical Research on Friday.

### Karnataka's approach

Meanwhile, the Ministry has lauded Karnataka's best practice for COVID-19 management, which it says includes comprehensive contact tracing of positive cases and physical/phone-based

survey that has covered more than 1.5 crore households.

"The two initiatives taken by the State Government are developed as part of the 'Whole of Government' approach, with the involvement of multi-sectoral agencies and supported by technology-based solutions and interventions. They effectively trace and track each case, thereby successfully containing the spread of the epidemic," the Ministry said.

## SC refuses plea to 'clarify' who should pay migrants' train fare

'Our only concern is that the workers should not pay'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused a plea to "clarify" that the Centre should bear 85% of the train travel costs of migrant workers and not leave it to cash-strapped States to foot the bill amid the pandemic.

A three-judge Bench led by Ashok Bhushan said, "Our concern here was only that migrant workers should not pay. Whether the Centre pays or the States pay is not the issue", Justices Bhushan and Justice M.R. Shah told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan. Mr. Sankaranarayanan, appearing for National Law University alumni, who have been aid-



**Long wait:** Migrant workers waiting outside a railway station to board a train in Ahmedabad on Thursday. ■ REUTERS

ing migrant workers' travel, submitted that "the Centre should clarify that it will take 85% of the costs".

The issue dates back to May 4, when it was announced that the Railways would subsidise 85% of the ticket fare of migrant workers. However, the very next day, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta refrained from making any commitment in the Court on behalf of the centre. On May 28, the court

ordered that the departure and destination States of the worker's journey should pool the expenses. On June 9, the court ordered the States to complete their transportation within 15 days.

But on Friday, the court realised that the transportation of workers was far from complete, and asked the Centre and the States to ensure compliance and file their reports in July.

According to a Ministry official, several options are on the table, including giving students a choice on whether to write the examinations or not, universal cancellation, and further

## Panel suggests fixing cost of beds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A high-powered committee, set up by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has recommended fixing the cost of COVID-19 isolation beds and ICU beds with ventilator in private hospitals in Delhi, the Home Ministry said on Friday. The committee was set up under the chairmanship of NITI Aayog member V.K. Paul.

"The committee has recommended ₹8,000-₹10,000, ₹13,000-₹15,000 and ₹15,000-₹18,000 including PPE costs for isolation bed, ICUs without & with ventilator respectively to all hospitals as compared to the current charges of ₹24,000-₹25,000, ₹34,000-₹43,000 & ₹44,000-₹54,000 (excluding PPE cost)," a Ministry spokesperson said in a tweet.

"When the government does not endeavour to know any shortcomings or lapses in its hospitals and patient care, the chances of reme-

## Lack of vigilance will prove costly, SC warns Delhi govt.

Court orders weekly hospital visits by officials

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday cautioned the Arvind Kejriwal government that lack of vigilance and turning a blind eye to shortcomings in COVID-19 management will lead to a point of no-return.

The court said the Delhi government's affidavits suggest "all is well." This is despite the fact that videos have surfaced in the media about the deplorable conditions in COVID-dedicated hospitals of the Delhi government.

"The committee has recommended ₹8,000-₹10,000, ₹13,000-₹15,000 and ₹15,000-₹18,000 including PPE costs for isolation bed, ICUs without & with ventilator respectively to all hospitals as compared to the current charges of ₹24,000-₹25,000, ₹34,000-₹43,000 & ₹44,000-₹54,000 (excluding PPE cost)," a Ministry spokesperson said in a tweet.

"When the government does not endeavour to know any shortcomings or lapses in its hospitals and patient care, the chances of reme-



**On duty:** Medics guiding patients outside the special COVID-19 ward at the LNJP Hospital in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

dial action and improvement become dim....," a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan told the Delhi government. The court urged the Delhi government to be "more vigilant."

The Bench found the Delhi government-managed LNJP Hospital's move to install CCTV cameras a "welcome step". The hospital was in the thick of a controversy over its treatment of patients and bodies. The court ordered weekly and surprise visits to hospitals by officials of the Union Ministry of Health and teams of senior doctors constituted by the Ministry to get CCTVs installed in a week.

**Surprise visits**  
In a series of directions to redress the surge in COVID-19 infection in the capital and to improve transparency in hospitals, the court ordered weekly and surprise visits to hospitals by officials of the Union Ministry of Health and teams of senior doctors constituted by the Ministry to get CCTVs installed in a week.

## Street vendors to start getting loans by July

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Street vendors are likely to start getting small loans starting July under a special micro-credit scheme launched by the government as part of the COVID-19-related economic relief package, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said on Friday.

The Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with the Small Industries Development Bank of India to be the implementing agency for the PM Street Vendors Atma-Nirbhar Nidhi scheme, said the Ministry statement. Under the scheme, vendors can apply for working capital loans of up to ₹10,000 to restart work after the lockdown. The loans will have to be repaid in a year in monthly installments.

## CBSE likely to decide on Board exams by Monday

Several options on the table, says Ministry official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is likely to take a final call on its pending Board examinations by Monday, following consultations with the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry, National Testing Agency, University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on Thursday and Friday.

According to a Ministry official, several options are on the table, including giving students a choice on whether to write the examinations or not, universal cancellation, and further



Some parents and students have sought cancellation of the examinations.

postponement to September.

A section of parents and students are demanding cancellation of the examinations scheduled to be held in July in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Supreme Court has given the Board a deadline of June 23 to communicate a final decision.

**Pending papers**  
Class XII students across the country still have to write

pending papers after the examination schedule was suspended in mid-March. Both Class X and Class XII students in parts of north-east Delhi affected by violence in February have pending papers as well. Several States, including Maharashtra and Delhi, have expressed reservations against conducting the exams in July.

HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhrayan Nishank has been holding regular consultations on the issue, as well as demands for postponement or cancellation of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and JEE (Joint Entrance Exam). If the examinations are cancelled or made optional, internal assessment scores may be considered, along with the student's performance in the examinations already completed, said an official.

## Puri Shankaracharya wants review of SC order on Rath Yatra

It can be held with a few servitors, he says

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati and several traditional priests of Shree Jagannath Temple, Puri, said on Friday that the decision to not hold this year's Rath Yatra should be reviewed.

A day after the Supreme Court stayed this year's Rath



**Long tradition:** This will be the first time in 285 years that the Rath Yatra will not be held. ■ FILE PHOTO

Yatra and the State Cabinet decided to abide by the court's order, political leaders and devotees have de-

manded that the centuries-long tradition should not be disrupted.

"The Supreme Court or-

der cancelling Rath Yatra is welcome in view of the pandemic. But it can be held with just a few servitors. People can watch Lord Jagannath on chariot through live telecast," said Puri Shankaracharya.

Chattisa Nijog, the apex body of priests of the Shree Jagannath Temple, urged the State government to take the view of legal experts, preparatory to approaching the Supreme Court again.

This will be the first time in the last 285 years that the Rath Yatra will not be held.

## Individual contributions to NDRF get green light from Finance Ministry

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has given approval to a proposal to allow individuals and institutions to contribute directly to the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF). In an office memo issued on Friday, the Expenditure Department said it had no objection to the proposal made by the Union Home Secretary on May 4.

This is a significant deve-

lopment at a time when many have expressed concerns about donations sent to the PM CARES Fund or the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, as both claim they are not public authorities subject to questions under the Right to Information Act. On Wednesday, the Supreme Court sought a response from the Centre to a plea that contributions made to the PM CARES Fund to fight COVID-19 should be transferred entirely to the NDRF.

The NDRF was set up in accordance with Section 46 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005. It is meant to "meet the expenses for emergency response, relief and rehabilitation" for any disaster situation. Although Section 46 includes a clause for grants made by any person or institution, provisions for such donations had not been made.

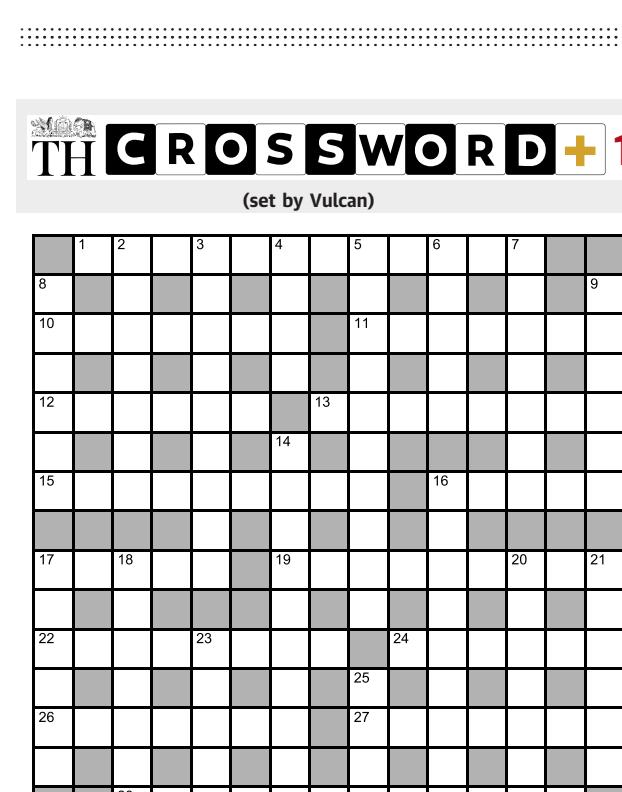
## FAITH

### Concepts of Vedanta

Thirumoolar's Thirumantiram is full of the concepts of Vedanta. In the first forty verses, he gives us a summary of what he is going to talk about in his work. Saint Thirumoolar uses numerals from one to eight to highlight the principal qualities of Lord Siva, said R. Narayanan in a discourse.

He is One, because if you look at the Universe, it becomes clear that He pervades it. Thirumoolar goes on explaining how each numeral can be used to describe Siva. Four serves as a meaningful description, because He gave the world the four Purusharthas. He is the head of all seven lokas. Thirumoolar then says he salutes the One who is present in everyone, the One who is wedded to Parvati and the One who kicked Yama, the god of death. The last is a reference to the story where Siva kicked Yama away and saved Markandeya. Thirumoolar says that even those who have the privilege of being close to Lord Siva cannot fully grasp His qualities. He is Lord of the devas and of humans. He made Thirumoolar discard his original body, and made it possible for him to worship the Lord night and day. In a world where everyone is subject to temptations, He is without desires.

Thirumoolar says Lord Siva took him (Thirumoolar) close to Him. Thirumoolar is acknowledging that whatever he says comes from Siva. All the philosophy that is found in Thirumoolar's work comes directly from Siva himself, for He is the One who has enabled Thirumoolar to elucidate these ideas. Thirumoolar says the One, who holds a deer and an axe in His hands, put His feet on his head and imparted jnana to him. It was the Lord who taught him the Vedas and the Agamas. He is the One who controls the sentient and non-sentient. Thirumoolar uses the word Nandi to refer to Lord Siva.



**ACROSS**  
1 A place to drink lager with one perhaps (8,4)  
10 Existing with what's given (7)  
11 Enterprise's opening quarter ridden with frequent losses (7)  
12 Small islands one ship allowed to enter (6)  
13 This artisan charges nothing! (4,4)  
15 Fighter of an animal, say (9)

**DOWN**  
2 Use Aloevera to get rid of very dark spots (7)  
3 Selector allegedly caught – something related to polls (9)  
4 Current total, essentially small amount (4)  
5 Bengal, rioting stopped – manageable (10)  
6 Oz start off to attack (5)  
7 Bird facing/ behind mirror (7)  
8 Well, special call made (6)  
9 Skits eventually turn out to be a parody (6)  
14 Automated one large concrete building (10)  
15 Carriage and taxi given permission to go around city (9)  
17 Direct suggestion (6)  
18 Poor rating given to a dessert (7)  
20 A short song about a European leader, in Greek (7)  
21 Model basically without display (6)  
23 Meaning to accumulate (5)  
25 Works of Tamil literature (4)

## SUDOKU



**Solution to puzzle 12966**      **Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**  

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | T | O | U | T | S | P | E | A |
| E | W | A | S | L | P | E | V | I |
| E | V | I | P | R | A | G | A | N |
| J | E | E | P | P | R | A | N | D |
| I | E | E | P | P | R | A | N | D |
| S | L | A | T | E | H | I | S | T |
| A | T | E | H | I | M | E | T | S |
| H | A | B | E | D | A | S | H | E |
| A | M | A | S | S | D | E | T | N |

# Trump warns of decoupling from China

President contradicts U.S. official, who said Beijing was living up to the terms of their trade deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump warned on Thursday the U.S. had the option to separate from China's deeply intertwined economy, despite the powers' pledges to move forward on a trade deal.

Tensions have been mounting between Beijing and Washington on a number of fronts including trade, although the two sides signed a "phase one" deal earlier this year to bring a truce to a bruising trade war. The U.S. "certainly does maintain a policy option, under various conditions, of a complete decoupling from China. Thank you!" Mr. Trump tweeted.

## Trade talks

The U.S. President wrote that he was responding to comments by his Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who has been at the forefront of trade negotiations with Beijing.

Mr. Lighthizer told a congressional committee this week that China so far has been living up to the terms of a "phase one" agreement that eased the dispute, but that decoupling the two economic giants was now impossible.

"That was a policy option years ago, but I don't think it's a policy or reasonable policy option at this point," Mr. Lighthizer said.

Mr. Lighthizer described himself as a hardliner on China policy, and outlined the Trump administration's plans to "reset" the World Trade Organization, largely so that it can better rein in Beijing's policies, which he said run afoul of free trade rules.

But his admission that the world's two largest econo-

mies are inextricably linked – despite Mr. Trump's aggressive campaign to push American firms to relocate production to the U.S. – caused some angst in Republican circles.

On Friday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular press briefing that "trying to artificially cut global industrial and supply chains, and using political power to change the laws of the economy, is neither realistic nor wise". "This cannot solve the U.S.'s problems and will only cause ordinary Americans more harm," he added.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said a senior Chinese official also confirmed to him Beijing's commitment to phase one, which includes China stepping up purchases of U.S. products.

Mr. Pompeo met Wednesday in Hawaii with Yang Jiechi, a veteran maker of Chinese foreign policy, in Hawaii to discuss soaring tensions.

## Pompeo's warning

Mr. Pompeo on Friday warned Europeans that they are abandoning democracy if they embrace China, in a scathing denunciation of Beijing two days after he held talks on trans-Pacific friction.

In his speech, Mr. Pompeo indicated that his meeting with Mr. Yang did little to change his hawkish views on China, which he called a "rogue actor" on the world stage. He renewed calls on Europeans to shun Chinese telecom giant Huawei, which he called the arm of the communist "surveillance state," and said Beijing was "flagrantly attacking sovereignty" through its port investments in Greece and Spain.



**Our leader:** A supporter waving a flag outside the BOK Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where the U.S. President is scheduled to hold a political rally on Saturday. • AFP

## U.S. officials pressing spy agencies to hunt for evidence on Wuhan lab links

MARK MAZZETTI  
JULIAN E. BARNES  
WASHINGTON

Senior Trump administration officials have pushed U.S. spy agencies to hunt for evidence to support an unsubstantiated theory that a government laboratory in Wuhan, China, was the origin of the COVID-19 outbreak, according to current and former U.S. officials. The effort comes as President Donald Trump escalates a public campaign to blame China. Some intelligence analysts are concerned that the pressure from administration officials will distort assessments about the virus and that they could be used as a political

weapon in an intensifying battle with China over a disease that has infected more than 3 million people across the globe.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has taken the lead in pushing U.S. intelligence agencies for more information, according to current and former officials.

Matthew Pottinger, the deputy national security adviser who reported on SARS outbreaks as a journalist in China, pressed intelligence agencies in January to gather information that might support any origin theory linked to a lab.

And Anthony Ruggiero, the head of the National Security Council's bureau

tracking weapons of mass destruction, expressed frustration during one videoconference in January that the CIA was unable to get behind any theory of the outbreak's origin. CIA analysts responded that they simply did not have the evidence.

In a statement released earlier Thursday, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said that the intelligence community "will continue to rigorously examine emerging information and intelligence to determine whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan."

## COVID-19 was present in Italy in Dec. 2019, suggests study

Research was done on sewage samples from two cities

REUTERS  
LONDON

Scientists in Italy have found traces of the new coronavirus in wastewater collected from Milan and Turin in December 2019 – suggesting COVID-19 was already circulating in northern Italy before China reported the first cases. The Italian National Institute of Health looked at 40 sewage samples collected from wastewater treatment plants in northern Italy between October 2019 and February 2020. An analysis released late on Thursday said samples taken in Milan and Turin on Dec. 18 showed the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.



A man walking on a street in Milan in May. • REUTRS

by scientific teams in the Netherlands, France, Australia and elsewhere have found signs that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be detected in sewage, and many countries are beginning to use wastewater sampling to track the spread of the disease.

Scientists said the detection of traces of the virus before the end of 2019 was consistent with evidence emerging in other countries. Small studies conducted

that COVID-19 may have been circulating before China reported the first cases on Dec. 31. "That COVID-19 could have been circulating in Italy is possible," said Rowland Kao, a veterinary epidemiology and data science professor at Scotland's Edinburgh University.

A study in May by French scientists found that a man was infected with COVID-19 as early as Dec. 27, nearly a month before France confirmed its first cases. Mr. La Rosa said the presence of the virus in the Italian waste samples did not "automatically imply that the main transmission chains that led to the development of the epidemic in our country originated from these very first cases".

Samples positive for tracers of the virus that causes COVID-19 were also found in sewage from Bologna, Milan and Turin in January and February 2020. Samples taken in October and November 2019 tested negative.

Scientists said the detection of traces of the virus before the end of 2019 was consistent with evidence emerging in other countries

Small studies conducted

## China publishes virus genome data

REUTERS  
BEIJING

China has released genome sequencing data for the coronavirus responsible for a recent outbreak in Beijing, with officials saying on Friday it identified a European strain. China, which had been under pressure to make the data public sooner rather than later as COVID-19 cases mount in the country's capital, said it had also submitted the data to the World Health Organization (WHO).

In the latest Beijing out-

break, the WHO said on Sunday it had been informed by the Chinese of ongoing investigations into the source of the cluster and the extent of the infections.

**Origins in Europe'**  
The genome sequencing was published late on Thursday, and had also been shared with the WHO and the Global Influenza Data Initiative (GISaid), said the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Details published on China's National Microbiology

Data Center website revealed the Beijing genome data was based on three samples – two human and one environmental – collected on June 11. "According to preliminary genomic and epidemiological study results, the virus is from Europe, but it is different from the virus currently spreading in Europe," CDC official Zhang Yong was cited as saying in an article published by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI).

Details published on China's National Microbiology

## IAEA passes critical resolution against Iran

It seeks access to two sites in the country

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
VIENNA

The board of governors at the UN's nuclear watchdog passed a resolution critical of Iran on Friday, the first of its kind since 2012, as tension mounts over Tehran's nuclear programme.

The resolution was put forward by European states and urges Tehran to provide inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with access to two sites in Iran to clarify whether undeclared nuclear activity took place there in the early 2000s.

It "calls on Iran to fully cooperate with the Agency and satisfy the Agency's requests without any further delay, including by providing prompt access to the locations specified by the Agency". Iran has been

blocking access to the sites for months.

The resolution was carried by 25 votes in favour versus two against, with seven abstentions. Russia and China, both of which had spoken out against the prospect of a resolution earlier this week, voted against.

Former diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor were arrested in late 2018 on state security charges, soon after Canadian authorities arrested Huawei Technologies Co's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, in Vancouver on a U.S. warrant. While China maintains the detentions are not linked to Ms. Meng, former diplomats and experts have said they are being used to pressure Canada.

Even though the sites in question are not thought to be directly relevant to Iran's current nuclear programme, the agency says it needs to know if activities going back almost two decades have been properly declared.

China has repeatedly called for Ms. Meng's release, and has warned Cana-

## China charges 2 Canadians with espionage

Their arrests in 2018 had followed the detention of Huawei executive by Canada

REUTERS  
BEIJING



**For their freedom:** People seeking the release of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig in Vancouver last year. • REUTERS

da that it could face consequences for aiding the United States in her case.

**Stealing state secrets'**  
Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a regular briefing on Friday that the indictments were "of particularly serious circumstances which violated Article III of the Criminal Law of the Peo-

ples Republic of China," which pertains to espionage and state secrets. Under that article, a conviction can carry a sentence of from 10 years to life imprisonment "when circumstances are particularly serious". The charges mean a formal trial can begin.

Canada has called the arrests "arbitrary". The Cana-

dian Embassy in Beijing did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The ruling Communist Party's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission said last year that Mr. Kovrig is accused of "stealing and spying on sensitive Chinese information and intelligence." It said Mr. Spavor provided Mr. Kovrig with intelligence.

Mr. Kovrig works for the International Crisis Group, a non-governmental organisation that focuses on conflict resolution. Mr. Spavor, 44, is a businessman with deep ties to North Korea.

Last month, Huawei's Ms. Meng, the daughter of the founder of the telecoms giant, lost a legal bid to avoid extradition to the United States to face bank fraud charges, dashing hopes for an end to her house arrest in Vancouver.

## Committed to February deal, says Taliban

'No terror threat from our country'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL

The Taliban on Friday played down concerns that Afghanistan could be used as a launching ground for future attacks on the West, after the U.S. said it had so far upheld its pledge to reduce its military presence.

The top U.S. commander for the region said it cut the number of troops to around 8,600 in line with a deal agreed with the insurgents in February, but warned that conditions must be met for a full withdrawal by next year. General Kenneth McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command, said "conditions would have to be met that satisfy us – that attacks against our homeland are not going to be generated from Afghanistan".

The Taliban on Friday said it was committed to the February deal, "especially the U.S. and the West's concern about a threat to them from Afghanistan". "Our country will not be used against anyone..." said Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

The February deal calls for all U.S. and foreign troops to withdraw from Afghanistan by mid-2021.

Taliban prisoners being released in Afghanistan in May. • AFP

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## U.S. following India-China face-off 'closely', says regional envoy Stilwell

Secretary Mike Pompeo condoles death of Indian soldiers

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

A top U.S. diplomat on Thursday said China's actions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India could be a negotiating tactic or a manoeuvre to demonstrate its superiority.

David Stilwell, the U.S.'s top diplomat for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, also said the U.S. was following the India-China conflict "very closely". Later in the day, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted a message of condolence about the Indian soldiers who were killed in this week's conflict.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the people of India for the lives lost as a result of the recent confrontation with China. We will remember the soldiers' families, loved ones, and communities as they grieve," Mr. Pompeo said. Twenty Indian soldiers were killed in clashes in the Galwan Valley.

**Past disputes**  
"What we're doing... we're obviously watching the India-China border dispute very closely... this activity is similar to activity we've seen in the past on border disputes with the PRC [People's Republic of China] and again, I would point you to those," Mr. Stilwell said. He was speaking during a briefing with reporters on Mr. Pompeo's meeting with Chinese Communist Party Politburo member Yang Jiechi.

The PLA invaded this contested area deeper and longer, with more people, than ever before historically. Again, whether that was a negotiating tactic or... just a punch in the nose to demonstrate their superiority.

The actions that we've seen out of the PRC of late... have been not really constructive as we look at India, the South China Sea, Hong Kong issues, and just go around the perimeter," Mr. Stilwell added.

## U.S. marks end of slavery on Juneteenth

A Union general had proclaimed this day in 1865 that all slaves were free

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The

United States marked the end of slavery by celebrating Juneteenth on Friday, with the annual unofficial holiday taking on renewed significance as millions of Americans confront the nation's living legacy of racial injustice.

Demonstrations, prayers and cultural celebrations of food and music will enliven communities from New York to Los Angeles to honour the day in 1865 when a Union general proclaimed in Galveston, Texas that all slaves were free.

**Virtual commemorations**

Several commemorations have gone virtual to account for the COVID-19 pandemic, but many are going ahead as planned or with modifications such as social distancing and mask-wearing guidelines.

Floyd's neck for nearly nine minutes and ignored multiple pleas of "I can't breathe."

**Taking to the streets**  
Video of the horrific incident triggered coast-to-coast protests against racial injustice and police brutality. Millions took to the streets under the "Black Lives Matter" banner.

As Americans grapple with their country's legacy, Juneteenth has the potential to amplify calls for action and reform.

Pressure has mounted for Juneteenth to be declared a national holiday. New York and Virginia have moved to make it an official State holiday. The auto-racing series NASCAR banned Confederate flags at its events.

And in the U.S. Capitol, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ordered the removal on Thursday of four portraits of 19th century lawmakers who served in the Confederacy.

CM

B-M-BME

**New Zealand policeman shot dead at traffic stop**  
A New Zealand police officer was killed and another seriously injured on Friday after they were shot during a routine traffic stop, the country's police commissioner said, as officials urgently hunted for the suspect. Schools and daycare centres near the scene of the incident in Auckland were on lockdown. • Reuters

**Moon accepts Unification Minister's resignation**  
South Korean President Moon Jae-in on Friday accepted the resignation of Kim Yeon-chul, the Minister responsible for relations with North Korea, as tensions rise over the activities of defectors in the South and stalled diplomacy. • Reuters

CM

YK

## MARKET WATCH

|           | PRICE  | CHANGE |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| Sensex    | 34,732 | -1.53  |
| US Dollar | 76.28  | -0.18  |
| Gold      | 48,334 | -0.06  |
| Brent oil | 42.36  | -2.74  |

## NIFTY 50

|                   | PRICE    | CHANGE  |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Adani Ports       | 348.90   | +5.10   |
| Asian Paints      | 1622.50  | +24.70  |
| Axis Bank         | 417.05   | +11.65  |
| Bajaj Auto        | 2674.35  | +4.00   |
| Bajaj Finserv     | 5899.80  | +472.25 |
| Bajaj Finance     | 2698.60  | +172.65 |
| Bharti Airtel     | 572.50   | +11.60  |
| BPCL              | 380.55   | +10.30  |
| Britannia Ind     | 3438.55  | +34.30  |
| Cipla             | 636.20   | +5.85   |
| Coal India        | 137.25   | +0.35   |
| Dr Reddy's Lab    | 4005.60  | +1.40   |
| Eicher Motors     | 17349.35 | +233.30 |
| GAIL (India)      | 99.50    | +2.45   |
| Grasim Ind        | 601.25   | +3.15   |
| HCL Tech.         | 569.60   | +9.35   |
| HDFC              | 1835.10  | +20.85  |
| HDFC Bank         | 1033.35  | +13.40  |
| Hero MotoCorp     | 2355.85  | +9.10   |
| Hindalco          | 151.05   | +0.25   |
| Hind Unilever     | 2092.75  | +27.40  |
| ICICI Bank        | 363.80   | +11.80  |
| IndusInd Bank     | 483.65   | +15.55  |
| Bharti Infratel   | 218.85   | +9.55   |
| Infosys           | 705.55   | +8.35   |
| Indian Oil Corp   | 85.30    | +0.45   |
| ITC               | 184.05   | +2.55   |
| JSW Steel         | 194.30   | +0.90   |
| Kotak Bank        | 1302.50  | +0.85   |
| L&T               | 898.20   | +1.55   |
| M&M               | 500.05   | +6.55   |
| Maruti Suzuki     | 5897.35  | +182.95 |
| Netra India Ltd.  | 16094.85 | +84.10  |
| NTPC              | 93.00    | +0.30   |
| ONGC              | 85.75    | +2.15   |
| PowerGrid Corp    | 171.40   | +5.95   |
| Reliance Ind      | 1759.40  | +103.50 |
| State Bank        | 184.50   | +4.85   |
| Shree Cement      | 21678.95 | +187.15 |
| Sun Pharma        | 488.10   | +3.85   |
| Tata Motors       | 102.50   | +6.15   |
| Tata Steel        | 320.55   | +2.45   |
| TCS               | 2044.60  | +6.50   |
| Tech Mahindra     | 538.85   | +2.95   |
| Titan             | 975.85   | +0.15   |
| UltraTech Cement  | 3836.35  | +7.90   |
| UPL               | 436.90   | +9.00   |
| Vedanta           | 105.25   | +1.75   |
| Wipro             | 222.05   | +3.90   |
| Zee Entertainment | 172.95   | +1.45   |

## EXCHANGE RATES

| CURRENCY           | TT BUY | TT SELL |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| US Dollar          | 75.99  | 76.31   |
| Euro               | 85.11  | 85.47   |
| British Pound      | 94.09  | 94.49   |
| Japanese Yen (100) | 71.04  | 71.37   |
| Chinese Yuan       | 10.73  | 10.78   |
| Swiss Franc        | 79.90  | 80.25   |
| Singapore Dollar   | 54.49  | 54.73   |
| Canadian Dollar    | 55.90  | 56.14   |
| Malaysian Ringgit  | 17.76  | 17.84   |
| Australian Dollar  | 52.18  | 52.44   |

Source: Indian Bank

Meanwhile, the broader-

The 30-share Sensex gained 523.68 points or 1.53% to close at 34,731.83.

Reliance Industries contributed the maximum – 306 points to be precise – to the day's gains while breaching the ₹1-trillion mark in market capitalisation. The stock touched a new high of ₹1,788.60 before closing at ₹1,759.50, up 6.23% or ₹103.25.

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## TV PICKS

**Premier League:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.50 p.m. & 12.10 a.m. (Sunday); SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 4.40 p.m. & 7.20 p.m., 9.50 p.m. & 12.10 a.m. (Sunday)  
**Bundesliga:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 4.45 p.m.  
**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.10 a.m. (Sunday)



Moment of magic: Karim Benzema, after his brace against Valencia, is Real Madrid's fifth highest scorer. ■ AFP

## Srikanth recommended for Khel Ratna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Badminton Association of India (BAI), on Friday, recommended K. Srikanth for the Khel Ratna award after he apologised for pulling out of a tournament midway. BAI, however, show-caused H.S. Prannoy for his outburst against the Federation after not being nominated for Arjuna.

Srikanth and Prannoy did not play for India in the semifinal of the Asian Team Championship in Manila in February, choosing to fly to Barcelona for another event. After the former accepted his mistake and promised that it will never happen again, his name was forwarded to the Sports Ministry.

"Considering Srikanth's accomplishments, we have decided to recommend him for Khel Ratna," BAI general-secretary Ajay Singhania said.

On Prannoy, he said: "The Federation had been very tolerant with him, but in the recent past his attitude has forced BAI to take action and also look at the disciplinary policies."



K. Srikanth.  
■ FILE PHOTO: M. KARUNAKARAN

## Real blanks Valencia

Benzema and Asensio on target

### EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MADRID

Karim Benzema scored what could well be LaLiga's goal of the season and Marco Asensio scored with his first touch in over a year as Real Madrid stormed past Valencia 3-0 on Thursday.

Two brilliant volleys helped Real to a convincing win at the empty Alfredo di Stefano Stadium, where Benzema continued his excellent form with a brace after putting his team in front thanks to another combination with Eden Hazard.

Valencia had been the better side in the first half when Rodrigo Moreno hit the post and then had a goal controversially ruled out after referee Jose Sanchez consulted VAR.

Benzema's stunning second goal that saw him take the ball out of the air with

one foot and then volley home with the other was a breathtaking moment that came shortly after a dramatic one for Asensio too.

This was Benzema's 243rd goal for Real Madrid in all competitions, putting him above Ferenc Puskas and into fifth in the club's all-time list.

#### Stiff test for Juve

Meanwhile, Juventus' supremacy faces a stiff test with the champion just one point ahead of Lazio as Serie A kicks off again this weekend. Four postponed games will take place first this weekend involving teams at the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Inter Milan is third, nine points behind Juventus.

**The results:** LaLiga: Alaves 2 (Sainz 56, Aguirregabiria 90+6) bt Real Sociedad 0; Real Madrid 3 (Benzema 61, 86, Marco Asensio 74) bt Valencia 0.

The Indian team-management and medical team have requested a six-week train-

ing stint.

The BCCI is yet to zero in on a safe destination for training, and not many players are keen on travelling from their hometowns.

#### In no hurry

With the T20 World Cup, scheduled for October-November in Australia, likely to be postponed, the BCCI is in no hurry to organise a camp

knock of 98 against Pakistan in the 2003 World Cup as India chased down a target of 274 with six wickets to spare.

"That innings is hard to describe in words. He played so well, especially when India was under pressure and we were good at bowling. That was probably one of his best innings.

"Even if you ask Sachin about this (innings) he might also say the same thing. The way he faced Shoaib Akhtar, Wasim and me under pressure, the way he attacked and got early runs, I think it was an amazing innings," he recalled.

Waqar went on, "Tendulkar is not only a great player, but also a great human being. Due to his qualities, people of all ages like him. He is a very humble man. Overall, full marks to him for the way he has handled his career."



Sachin Tendulkar.  
■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

very difficult to stop them.

"So, I think it was a silly mistake, to begin with, to ask India to bat. Batting first, on that pitch, was the way to go. It did not really help Pakistan that day and India was too good... way too good."

#### Tendulkar at his best

The speedster also raved about Sachin Tendulkar's

as there is no series in the near future.

According to a BCCI official, when the training camp is planned, the selectors will be asked to shortlist "deserving youngsters" who could be drafted in along with the centrally contracted players.

This means that the question of drafting in M.S. Dhoni "does not even arise," the official added.

### IN BRIEF

Neymar ordered to pay Barcelona €6.7 million

BARCELONA Neymar must pay €6.7 million to Barcelona, a court ordered on Friday after the player's case against his former employer was dismissed. After his world-record transfer to Paris Saint-Germain in 2017, the Brazilian had sued Barca for €43 million he claimed he



was due for various bonuses. Neymar has five days to appeal the decision. AFP

#### Poulter and Hubbard share first-round lead

WASHINGTON Englishman Ian Poulter fired seven birdies, including a 31-footer on the 17th, to share the first-round lead with American Mark Hubbard on seven-under 64 at the RBC Heritage on Thursday. Colombia's Sebastian Munoz, Norway's Viktor Hovland, South Africa's Dylan Frittelli and Americans Webb Simpson, Michael Thompson, Brice Garnett and Ryan Palmer shared third on 65. Three-time Major winner Jordan Spieth was in a group on five-under 66. World No. 1 Rory McIlroy was one-over 72 and has some work to do to make the cut. PTI

#### Sindhu to take part in Olympic Day workout

NEW DELHI World champion and Olympic silver medalist shuttler PV Sindhu will join 21 top athletes around the world in a live workout to mark the Olympic Day on June 23. Commonwealth and Asian Games champion Wrestler Vinesh Phogat will also be a part of the celebration. The video will be available on the Olympic Channel. PTI

#### Ouseph applies for Dronacharya Award

KOCHI T.P. Ouseph, who has coached some of the country's finest women jumpers, including Anju Bobby George, Bobby Aloisius and Lekha Thomas, has applied to the Sports Ministry for the Dronacharya Award. This is the fifth time the 73-year-old is applying for it. AFI has nominated deputy chief national coach Radhakrishnan Nair for Dronacharya this year.

**Stuart Baxter appointed Odisha FC head coach**  
BHUBANESWAR Odisha FC on Friday announced the appointment of Stuart Baxter as head coach for the seventh edition of Indian Super League. He has a cumulative coaching experience of more than 25 years and was also a manager of the South African national side. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to develop players in India," Stuart Baxter said. PTI

## Pakistan got it all wrong against India in 2019 WC, says Waqar

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

"Pakistan got it totally wrong against India in the 2019 World Cup, starting from the toss" was how former Pakistan captain Waqar Younis described his nation's 89-run defeat in England.

The defeat was the seventh for Pakistan in as many World Cup encounters against India. Interacting online through GloFans, the current bowling coach of Pakistan found fault with many things his team did that day.

"I think they (the Pakistan think-tank) were hoping that the pitch to do a lot more, help them get early wickets and put India under pressure.

"India's seasoned openers did not really let the bowlers settle down. The pitch did not really do much and once the openers got going, it was

## No clarity on preparatory camp

### CRICKET

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

With uncertainty over India's next international assignment due to COVID-19, the BCCI is in no position to plan camp for its centrally contracted players.

The Indian team-management and medical team have requested a six-week train-



Sachin Tendulkar.  
■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

very difficult to stop them.

"So, I think it was a silly mistake, to begin with, to ask India to bat. Batting first, on that pitch, was the way to go. It did not really help Pakistan that day and India was too good... way too good."

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## Hockey players finally go home

Probables were in Bengaluru for more than 100 days

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

More than 100 days since they reported at the national camp, the Indian men's and women's hockey players finally headed home for a month-long break, starting Friday.

The 56-odd probables had been stuck at the Sports Authority of India's Bengaluru Centre due to the lockdown. While the men had been at the camp since March 2 following their Pro League games against Australia, Belgium and Holland in Bhubaneswar, the women had been cooped since February 16, making it a four-month long stay.

The decision was taken by Hockey India late on Wednesday evening following consultations with SAI officials, coaches and support staff and players themselves. It is understood that while most of the players preferred leaving on Thursday itself, ticketing issues and working out travel formalities took time.

The players, both men and women, started leaving in batches with the first group leaving on Friday morning and most expected to be gone by Sunday evening.

They will, however, have to strictly follow quarantine rules – home or institutional – depending on their respective states.

Goalkeeper Suraj Karkera doesn't travel because of the situation in Mumbai

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Karnataka native S.V. Sunil, though, went home Thursday itself. Goalkeeper Suraj Karkera, who decided against travelling because of the severe pandemic situation in Mumbai, and the women's duo of Sushila Chanu (Manipur) and Lalremiama (Mizoram) will continue to stay in Bengaluru.

While women's Dutch coaches Sjoerd Marijne and Janneke Schopman too left for home early Friday morning, the men's staff including coach Graham Reid and Chris Ciriello is uncertain and staying put at SAI for the moment.



P. Harikrishna.  
■ FILE PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

against Carlsen, Russia's Daniil Dubov, USA's Hikaru Nakamura and Russia's Grischuk.

After Sunday's rest, Hari plays the same rivals with opposite colours. It is pertinent to note, Carlsen and Dubov won the first two legs at the expense of Nakamura.

The other group includes Caruana, Liren, Nepomniachtchi, Lagrave, Teimour Radjabov and Anish Giri.

Four players from each group advance to the quarterfinals.

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land. After seeing 11 white slams recorded by men and women in the two-day competition last month, the format has been tweaked a bit to make it more exciting for the online fans.

Now, each player will con-

tinute to play the white and

black pieces alternately,

from the same position, till

the finish, for eight boards.

Through this method,

the players have the chance

to score a white slam, a black

slam and both slams. Each

white slam will fetch five

points, and a black slam,

three points. The ultimate

slam of scoring both the

white and black slams in the

same board, will fetch 10

points.

All the players will have a

chance to keep scoring

points for the first four days.

Afterwards, the top four

men and women will com-

pete separately for the titles

in the knockout stage.

champion on their own or co-opt them as coaches, en-

suring livelihood for former

sportspersons and includ-

ing them in India's sporting

development.

However, the sportspersons