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STEP
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on Sunday



A year of bold decisions, says BJP president J.P. Nadda
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PM CARES not within the ambit of Right to Information Act: PMO
page 7



Nepali Congress backs PM Oli's govt. in vote on new map
page 8



Trump cuts ties with WHO as pandemic grips Latin America
page 9

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Hold exams, ensure students are safe: CM

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday directed the Higher and Technical Education Department to conduct final year examinations in Maharashtra while ensuring the safety of students.

"It is clear that the exams cannot be held in July. The situation in cities is changing with every passing day. We have to think about using technology to overcome the crisis. We will think of options. Examinations will be conducted ensuring the highest level of safety standards," he said.

Technical and Higher Education Minister Uday Samant had, in a recent letter to University Grant Commission, sought permission to cancel final year examinations in the State in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 5
MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES
CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4

Govt. eases a slew of restrictions; malls, religious places to open

Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in containment zones: MHA

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

As Lockdown 4.0 comes to an end, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday released new guidelines called 'Unlock 1.0' that allow the opening of malls, restaurants and religious places in all areas except the containment zones from June 8.

It, however, prohibits the opening of bars, swimming pools, gyms, entertainment parks, cinema halls, metro rail and international air travel.

Wide publicity
The permit system for inter-State movement of vehicles has been removed and there shall be no restriction on movement within and outside a State. If the local administration has to regulate the movement in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases, it will have to give wide public-

Unlocking the curbs

Several restrictions will be eased in a phased manner in what the government termed as 'Unlock 1.0'



From June 1

- No more red, orange and green zones; lockdown only in containment zones
- No more permit system for inter-State movement of vehicles
- No restriction on movement within and outside a State

From June 8

- Malls, restaurants, religious places to open in all areas, except containment zones
- A decision will be made whether to reopen schools and other educational institutions

In July

- Bars, gyms, entertainment parks, cinema halls, metro rail and international air travel

Advisory in place
► Night curfew for all non-essential activities to continue from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m.

- Face masks and social distancing are mandatory
- Work from home preferable

ment zones and impose restrictions.

On Saturday, the MHA issued the guidelines under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, for a "phased reopening" of areas outside the containment zones, which will be effective till June 30.

The MHA said the lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the containment zones that will be demarcated by the State governments. "Within the containment zones, strict perimeter control shall be maintained and only essential activities allowed."

"The current phase of re-opening, Unlock 1, will have an economic focus," an MHA statement said.

All kinds of social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural and religious congregations would remain suspended.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

State records 2nd highest surge with 2,940 cases

Total COVID-19 cases cross 65,000; 99 more deaths recorded on Saturday

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

For the second time in May, Maharashtra recorded 2,940 cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, the second-highest single-day jump, pushing its tally to 65,168. The State also recorded 99 deaths, taking its toll to 2,197. The State had recorded 2,940 cases on May 22 as well.

The highest number of deaths, 54, were recorded in Mumbai; seven each in Vasai-Virar and Panvel; six each in Thane, Pune and

Solapur; three each in Raigad and Jalgaon; two each in Navi Mumbai and Kalyan Dombivli region; and one in Nagpur.

Two other deaths were of residents of Rajasthan and Bihar who succumbed in Panvel and Mumbai, respectively. According to officials, nearly 67% of the deceased had co-morbid conditions like diabetes, hypertension, asthma, and heart disease. The mortality rate in the State stands at 3.3%.

On Saturday, 1,084 pa-

tients were discharged, taking the total number of recovered patients to 28,081.

Shortage of ICU beds

According to data provided by the State, only 8,501 intensive care unit (ICU) beds are available though the requirement is much higher.

Medical experts say 3% to 5% of infected patients require intensive care. A patient in ICU also takes more than seven days to recover. "In hotspots like Mumbai, from where maximum cas-

es are being reported, there is an acute shortage of ICU beds because of the patient load," said health activist Dr. Abhijit More of Jan Swasthya Abhiyan.

The State has carried out over 4.47 lakh tests in its 43 government-run and 34 private laboratories. This comes to 3,349 tests per 10 lakh population as compared to the national average of 2,523 tests per 10 lakh population. Nearly 5.51 lakh people are under home quarantine.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 7, 8

SIM box racket busted in Govandi, one arrested

Calls were made to defence establishments in Jammu & Kashmir

GAUTAM S. MENGLE
MUMBAI

In its second such operation conducted in collaboration with the Military Intelligence (MI) Department, the Mumbai Police Crime Branch on Saturday busted an illegal telephone exchange allegedly being run using SIM box technology in Govandi.

While possibilities of espionage are being probed, investigations have confirmed that calls have been made to defence establishments in Jammu & Kashmir through the exchange.

Capable of holding several SIM cards at a time, a SIM box routes international calls through a SIM card, enabling the user to bypass the international calling rates as well as to prevent the calls from being intercepted by authorities. Illegal telephone exchanges are run with several SIM boxes being used at a time, making it possible to route hundreds of calls.

In February, the Mumbai Crime Branch, in collaboration with the MI, had busted two illegal exchanges being run in Kerala and Noida, and arrested one accused in connection with the case.

According to Crime Branch officers, the MI shared specific inputs with them earlier this month about a large number of calls made from foreign countries being routed through two cell phone numbers, which



The accused was earlier arrested for running a similar racket in the jurisdiction of the Bhoiwada police in Bhiwandi and was out on bail

AKBAR PATHAN
Deputy Commissioner of Police
(Detection I)

ments in Jammu & Kashmir. Some connections to Nepal and Gulf countries have also come to light and are being probed. One accused has been arrested so far," Santosh Rastogi, Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime), Mumbai, said.

Mr. Rastogi said no connections to any espionage or terrorist outfit based in foreign countries had come to light so far, and investigations are still on.

Crime Branch officers said the exchange was likely to have been a routing point for calls being made from foreign countries to locations out of Mumbai, and the volume of incoming calls was greater than outgoing ones.

"The accused was earlier arrested for running a similar racket in the jurisdiction of the Bhoiwada police in Bhiwandi and was out on bail. We have seized five SIM boxes, of which four were operational, and 223 SIM cards from the accused," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Detection I) Akbar Pathan said.

Heralding monsoon



Ready to rain: Dark clouds hover over Kochi on Saturday. While private agency Skymet announced the arrival of the southwest monsoon over Kerala, India's official forecaster IMD said conditions are not yet ripe for the declaration. • THULASI KAKKAT (REPORT ON PAGE 8)

LAC standoff will be resolved through diplomacy: Rajnath

'We should have good relations with neighbours'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China would be resolved through diplomatic dialogue and India's effort was also to ensure that tensions did not rise further, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday, in the first comments by a member of the Cabinet Committee on Security on the almost month-long standoff.

The number of active cases stood at 90,005, while 86,752 people have recovered. The death toll rose to 5,181, with a surge of 207 fatalities.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 7, 8

I told him [Mark Esper] that India and China already had a mechanism that if there is any problem between the two countries, it is resolved by military and diplomatic dialogue. That mechanism is in place and the dialogue is on

RAJNATH SINGH, Defence Minister

solved incidents that arose from time to time through dialogue and existing mechanisms, he said.

Giving the example of the 73-day standoff at Doklam in 2017, he said India had held a mechanism that if there is any problem between the two countries, it is resolved by military and diplomatic dialogue. That mechanism is in place and the dialogue is on.

Trump's offer
Asked about the U.S. President Donald Trump's offer to mediate between India and China to resolve what he termed a "now raging border dispute", Mr. Singh said

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

TikTok traps Assam's jewel thief

She was caught showing off ornaments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The urge to show off her possessions – jewellery and designer clothes – via TikTok videos led the Assam police to crack a case of theft.

Nabajyoti Payeng of Suruj Nagar village in eastern Assam's Jorhat district had a few days ago informed the local police that his maid servant Sumi Kalita was missing.

Missing jewellery
He also reported that gold ornaments belonging to his wife and son were missing as were other valuables, including designer clothes and watches.

The Pulibor police station in Jorhat registered a case after Mr. Payeng's wife, Pallabi Phukan Payeng, lodged an FIR.

The Payengs did not have to wait long for the missing jewellery to be found.

Their attention was drawn to some TikTok videos in which a woman displayed an array of ornaments and clothes that looked familiar.

They also identified the woman as their missing maid servant.

The Jorhat police traced the woman to Dhopabor



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COVID-19 grounds cabin crew day fete

With only one-third of flight schedules in operation, attendants' focus has shifted to passenger safety

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

International Cabin Crew Appreciation Day or International Flight Attendant Day on Sunday will be a low-key event as airline cabin crew face COVID-19 challenges.

It is a day when the efforts and dedication of flight attendants and cabin crew are recognised. The day has been celebrated around the world since 2015, but with just one-third of flight schedules being operated currently, with exceptions on the number of flight at airports like Mumbai, a majority of cabin crew will not be flying this year.

For the cabin crew, their entire nature of work has shifted focus directly to safety of passengers and themselves due to COVID-19.

Valuable presence

"The presence of cabin crew will be more valued now. Their importance is reflected in a new manner today when there is no service and passengers look at crew for safety," said Nidhi Chaphekar, a former Jet Airways cabin crew, who is a survivor of the Brussels Airport bombing of 2016.

Air Passengers Association of India (APAI) president Sudhakara Reddy said traditionally, the job of a flight attendant has revolved around safety to a much greater extent than those of similar staff in other forms of transportation, though passengers might only realise the service part as it is more personalised and an experience to remember.

"For the cabin crew, there is more direct involvement with passengers because of



Adequate precautions: Passengers being screened at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mumbai airport has seen 30,000 passengers in 5 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Since it opened to domestic flights on May 25, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has catered to 30,000 passengers.

On Saturday, 5,277 passengers flew five airlines to 14 sectors. The airport operated the entire sanctioned number of 50 flights comprising 25 arrivals and 25 departures.

"On Saturday, CSMIA

catered to 5,277 passengers, which include 3,999 at departures and 1,278 at arrivals. The highest passenger load capacity was seen on the Delhi route departing from CSMIA," an airport spokesperson said.

The first flight took off for Kolkata at 6.05 a.m. while the first flight arrived at 8.10 a.m. from Lucknow, which were operated by SpiceJet and IndiGo, respectively.

former colleagues.

Feeling like robot

Narrating her conversation with her nephew, who is a cabin crew with a foreign airline, Ms. Chaphekar said,

Though not flying since the incident, Ms. Chaphekar has been in touch with her

"After flying with his personal protection equipment (PPE) kit on for a 12 hour-odd flight from Doha to Melbourne, he felt like a robot given that there was no service and limited passenger interaction."

Mumbai-based Vidhi Thacker, a core lead cabin attendant for IndiGo, did her first flight after a two-month gap on Saturday. "It was very different out there. All of us were in our PPE gowns and face shields. The passengers too appeared scared and kept to themselves maintaining all prescribed norms," Ms. Thacker said.

For the Ghatkopar resident who lives with her family comprising an 18-month daughter, husband and senior citizen in-laws, two months on ground had prepared her for flying again.

Flying is safest way

"The need to wear face shields and gown may feel a

Agitation by tribals in four districts enters fifth day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THANE

The agitation launched by hundreds of tribals at some places in Thane, Palghar, Raigad and Nashik districts over various demands, including getting ration cards, continued for the fifth day on Saturday, according to an organisation that is spearheading the demonstration.

Apart from ration cards, they have been demanding essential commodities and work under the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Shramjivi Sanghatana, which is leading the protest, said the agitation could be intensified in the coming days if their demands were not met.

Testing compliance



Under scrutiny: Thane Traffic Police personnel checking autorickshaws at Wagle Estate in Thane on Saturday. ■ VIBHAV BIRWATKAR

His words communicate the vicissitudes of life

Lyricist Yogesh, whose popularity faded with time though his songs continue to be remembered with fondness, passes away on Friday

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

*Zindagi ek baar phir milna;
Is dafa tujhko ko pyaar
kar na sake,*

*Tera daaman khushi se
bhar na sake,*

*Tujhko kah bhi na sake
hum apna.*

The opening stanza of one of the veteran Hindi film lyricists Yogesh's several heartfelt songs (this is a non-film one at that) exemplifies a life-long concern – deploying words to communicate the vicissitudes of life itself. Ironically, he slipped into oblivion silently, with few from the industry and the fans or the media in the know of his life in the final days. Though he passed away early on Friday, the official confirmation could come only towards the end of the day. He was 77.

According to Mr. Tripathi, Yogesh had not been keeping well for the past couple of years and had been treated for a kidney ailment since January and had turned extremely weak. After the imposition of the lockdown, Mr. Tripathi had been managing his daily food and medicinal needs remotely from his home in Vasai, with



Hindi film lyricist Yogesh ■ FILE PHOTO

the help of the Goregaon building watchman. Yogesh had a fall on May 20 and was shifted the next day by Mr. Tripathi to a rented flat near his own home, to keep a closer eye on him.

Mr. Tripathi had known him for more than 15 years and would escort him for all

his meetings, recordings, shows, and social gatherings. He had even sung one of his last songs, a thumri – *Piya mose rooth gaye* – in the 2018 film, *Angrezi Mein Kehte Hain*.

Yogesh came into prominence with *'Kahan duur jab din dhal jaye'* and *'Zindagi mein bahaar aa jaye'*.

Approach BMC for permission to sell alcohol over the counter: HC

Wine shop owners want proportionate amount of licence fee to be refunded

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday directed the Maharashtra Wine Merchants Association to approach the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner and seek permission for over-the-counter retail



Chaotic: A policeman lathi charges to disperse the crowd outside a wine shop at Sahar Road, Andheri. ■ FILE PHOTO

sale of liquor over the counter is permitted in Pune and Nashik, then why it can't be allowed in Mumbai.

A Division Bench of Justices Nitin Jamdar and N.R. Borkar was hearing via videoconferencing a petition filed by the association. The plea challenged the notifications and orders dated May 5, 12 and 22, and sought a direction to permit over-the-counter retail sale of liquor in Mumbai. It also sought refund of the proportionate amount of the licence fee.

The advocate representing the association contended that if despite being red zones in view of the COVID-19 pan-

merce platforms to be utilised for its delivery. "This decision is in the nature of policy. Such a decision entails evaluation of various competing factors. Situation may differ from place to place. The relevant factors can also undergo a change by passage of time."

The Bench added, "It will be appropriate that the petition be placed before the Municipal Commissioner" regarding the sale of liquor over the counter, and directed the authorities to file their reply within four weeks on the refund of the proportionate amount of the licence fee.

Maharashtra likely to receive pre-monsoon rain next week

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

A low pressure area in the west central Arabian Sea is likely to become a depression and bring pre-monsoon showers to coastal areas of Maharashtra in the first week of June.

Fishermen have already been advised not to venture into the sea. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast very light to light rain on Monday for Mumbai, Thane, and Palghar. The forecast for Tuesday for these three cities will be light to moderate rain and rain or thundershowers for Wednesday.

The arrival date for monsoon in Kerala is around June 1 every year and in Maharashtra around June 10. However, last year, monsoon was unusually late in Mumbai, arriving at June 25.

Southwest monsoon

A statement issued by the IMD said a low pressure area is likely to form over southeast and adjoining east central Arabian Sea from May 31 to June 4.

"In view of this, conditions are very likely to become favourable from June 1 for onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala," the IMD said.

There is another low pressure area forming over west central Arabian Sea. It is ve-



Coast is not clear: Fishermen trying to get their boats on shore at Badhwar Park on Saturday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

ry likely to turn into a depression over the same region in the next 48 hours. This weather system will move towards Oman and East Yemen coast in the next three days, the released said.

Fishermen have already been advised not to venture into the sea. This weather system will give light to moderate pre-monsoon showers in Mumbai and rest of Maharashtra.

Explaining the phenomenon, Mahesh Palawat, vice-president, meteorology and climate change at Skymet, said, "The earlier weather system over southeast Arabian Sea is passing towards Oman without affecting Indian subcontinent. The low pressure area over west central Arabian Sea will become well marked and further in-

tensify into a deep depression by June 1. It will move from coastal Karnataka towards Maharashtra and weaken by the time it reaches coastal Gujarat."

According to Mr. Palawat, the weather system will give up to moderate (up to 30-40mm) pre-monsoon rainfall in the coast of Maharashtra between June 2 and 4, even leading to waterlogging at a few places. The pre-monsoon showers will give respite from the heat. So far, the IMD has not issued any warning for Maharashtra. Skymet has forecast onset of monsoon in Kerala on Saturday and for Mumbai around June 10.

Mumbai recorded a maximum temperature of 35.7 degrees Celsius and minimum temperature of 29.2 degrees Celsius on Saturday.

Timings MUMBAI

SUNDAY, MAY 31
RISE 06:01 SET 19:12
RISE 13:48 SET 01:44
MONDAY, JUN. 01
RISE 06:01 SET 19:13
RISE 14:47 SET 02:25
TUESDAY, JUN. 02
RISE 06:01 SET 19:13
RISE 15:47 SET 03:08

Mumbai Weather	max min
Mumbai Airport	36 29
Pune	38 24
Mumbai City	36 29

Mumbai Today	36°C
Rise in temperature. Day will be very warm and humid with cloudy sky. Light rain is likely. Night will be uneasy.	Mostly dry and warm weather with cloudy sky to prevail. Short spells of light rain is likely at some parts.

Mumbai Tomorrow
38°C Rise in temperature. Day will be very warm and humid with cloudy sky. Light rain is likely. Night will be uneasy.

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THE HINDU
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kaisi hai paheli in Hrishikesh Mukherjee's *Anand* (1971). But his journey into Hindi film music had started almost a decade earlier when he came to Mumbai from Lucknow as a teenager and got his first break as a lyricist with the film *Sakhi Robin* (1962) in which he wrote the lovely romantic duet sung by Manna Dey and Suman Kalyanpur – *Tum jo aao to pyaar aa jaye, zindagi mein bahaar aa jaye*.

After the death of his regular collaborator, lyricist Shailendra, Salil Chowdhury picked Yogesh to team up with and the two worked on several mellifluous compositions together. He worked as successfully – though not as frequently – with both Sachin Dev Burman.

No wonder his songs reflected middle class dreams and aspirations, like *'Nain hamare, saanjh sakare, dekhin laakhon sapne'* in *Annadaata*. His words were simple and about everyday sights, sounds and people. Yet they were resonant with deep meaning and off-the-cuff philosophy, like *'Na jaane kyun'* (*Chhoti Si Baat*) and *'Kai baar yun bhi dekha hai'* and *'Rajnigandha phool tumhare mahke yun hi*

jeevan mein (*Rajnigandha*) that spoke of love in all its simplicity and profundity.

His work had some deeply melancholic songs like *'Aye tum yaad mujhe'* and *'Badi sooni sooni hai'* in *Mili*. But the hopelessness also came with some positivity attached as in *'Kahan tak yeh mann ko andhere chhale'*, *udaasi bhare din kabhi to dhale'* in *Baton Baton Mein*. Or *'Raaton ke saaye ghane, jab bojh dil par bane'* in *Annadaata*, perhaps a song which can help us all tide through the present, endlessly despairing times.

While it's still some time to the monsoon, Yogesh's death has brought his most memorable song, the Hindi rain anthem like no other – *'Rajnigandha gire saawan'* from *Manzil* (1979) – back into our collective mind a little ahead of the time even though there may not be much to romanticise about Marine Drive, Mumbai, and monsoon this year.

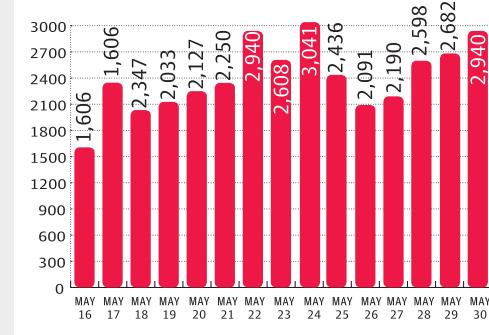
Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
65,168	2,940	34,881	28,081	2,197

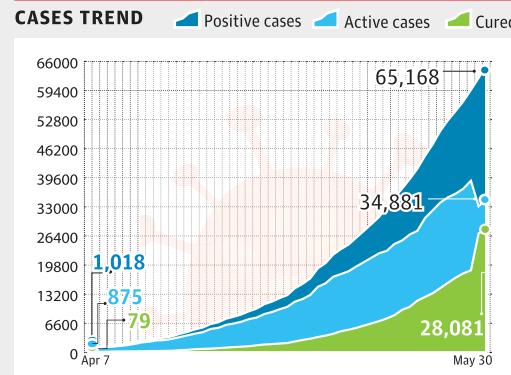
DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	38,442	1,227	Jalna	119	0
Thane	9,123	182	Latur	118	3
Pune	7,537	320	Sangli	112	1
Aurangabad	1,462	65	Nanded	108	6
Nashik	1,111	60	Ahmednagar	108	6
Raigad	1,042	39	Gondia	69	0
Palghar	968	30	Osmanabad	66	0
Solapur	872	62	Buldhana	58	3
Jalgaon	607	72	Parbhani	57	1
Alkola	571	28	Beed	46	0
Nagpur	556	10	Nandurbar	34	3
Satara	490	16	Sindhudurg	33	0
Kolhapur	429	4	Gadchiroli	32	0
Ratnagiri	242	5	Bhandara	29	0
Amravati	213	16	Chandrapur	25	0
Hingoli	149	0	Wardha	11	1
Dhule	140	16	Washim	8	0
Yavatmal	130	0			

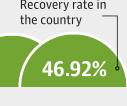
POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS



1,510 (51.3%) of Saturday's cases are from Mumbai



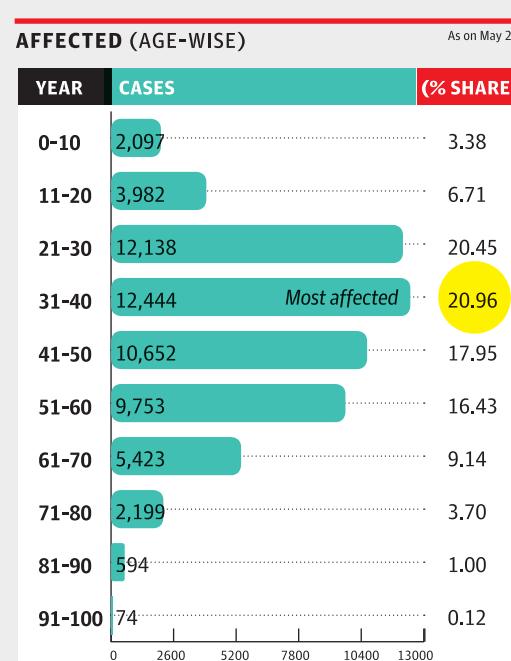
43.09% is the State recovery rate



MORTALITY RATE

Maharashtra 3.37%

India 2.84%



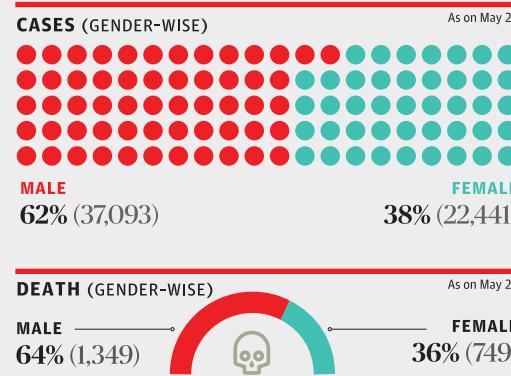
QUARANTINE NUMBERS

5,51,660 | 35,420



Home quarantine

Institutional quarantine



DEATH (GENDER-WISE)

As on May 28

Male 64% (1,349)



Female 36% (749)

As on May 28

Democratic, liberal ethos being undermined: Gehlot

Modi govt. is disrupting communal harmony, says CM

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR
Describing the first year of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second term as the worst for the majority of common people in the country, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday said the democratic and liberal ethos of India as an inclusive society had been completely undermined in the BJP government.



Ashok Gehlot. ■ FILE PHOTO

would be remembered as one of those periods in Indian history when people suffered the most and faced unbearable hardships.

Trial and error'

"Even after six years of trial and error on the economic front, we still see no silver lining how the government is going to revive the economy, provide jobs and look after the people, who have no money and no work," he said. A thriving economy under the UPA had been completely destroyed by the

NDA, he added.

The Chief Minister said Mr. Modi's tenure would be remembered as the time when lakhs of people lost everything and faced unbearable hardships during the COVID-19 lockdown. "The government remained a mute spectator to the suffering of people. The nation saw a most insensitive government [which was] least bothered about lives or livelihood of crores of Indians," he said.

Commenting on the operations of Shramik Special trains ferrying the migrant workers, Mr. Gehlot said as many as 40 trains had been delayed, one took nine days to reach its destination and 80 deaths had been reported so far. He said Railways Minister Piyush Goyal should be divested of his portfolio, as such a mess was never heard of before. "Let him concentrate on fundraising for the BJP," he said.

The migrants said they were given food and shelter by the Andaman administration, NGOs and fellow natives, settled in the island for several decades.

Migrant workers were flown back home in char- tered flights by the Jharkhand government after Mr. Soren wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah on May 21, seeking permission to operate flights to bring back stranded workers from Andaman-Nicobar Islands, Ladakh and the north-east as they could not be ferried by buses or trains.

chi's Birsa Munda Airport, a labourer said, "Many of us worked in road construction projects."

Another labourer said, "We were staying in South Andaman and got food from the administration, NGOs and some people from Jharkhand who have stayed there for a long time."

Water & Sanitation Minister Mithilesh Thakur, who reached the airport to welcome the migrants, said another flight would take off from Andamans on Sunday.

Sought govt. help

These returnees had requested the government to make arrangement for their return.

After emerging from Ran-

chi's Birsa Munda Airport, a labourer said, "Many of us worked in road construction projects."

Another labourer said, "We were staying in South Andaman and got food from the administration, NGOs and some people from Jharkhand who have stayed there for a long time."

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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.30 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning/hail/squall/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan and Muzaffarabad. Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Konkan & Goa, Kerala and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	29	30.2	22.0	Kozhikode	5.8...	34.0...	25.8
Ahmedabad	—	41.7	29.7	Kurnool	13.4...	36.9...	23.8
Aizawl	6	23.7	17.0	Lucknow	1...	35.3...	25.0
Allahabad	—	40.5	28.6	Madurai	—	37.8...	26.2
Bengaluru	0.2	31.1	20.8	Mangaluru	—	35.0...	25.0
Bhopal	—	41.5	29.0	Mumbai	—	35.7...	29.2
Bhubaneswar	—	34.2	20.9	Mysuru	—	34.0...	21.2
Chandigarh	20.2	32.8	24.4	New Delhi	3.5...	34.8...	22.2
Chennai	—	38.7	29.6	Patna	—	36.4...	27.2
Coimbatore	—	33.9	25.0	Pond Blair	22	27.7	25.2
Dehradoon	—	29.1	21.2	Puducherry	—	36.4...	29.2
Gangtok	5.6	20.6	13.8	Pune	—	38.5...	25.0
Goa	—	36.8	27.8	Raipur	2.4...	42.6...	23.5
Guwahati	—	32.7	22.0	Ranchi	—	35.9...	23.0
Hubballi	—	36.0	23.0	Shillong	0.3...	31.2...	—
Hyderabad	—	39.7	29.2	Shimla	0.9...	21.3...	13.4
Imphal	8.7	25.6	19.0	Srinagar	1...	22.2...	11.2
Jaipur	11.4	35.2	21.6	Thiruvananthapuram	40.9...	32.7...	24.8
Kochi	0.2	32.0	26.2	Tiruchi	—	39.3...	27.8
Kohima	—	24.2	14.4	Vijayawada	—	39.3...	29.4
Kolkata	—	36.4	27.9	Visakhapatnam	—	33.8...	26.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	.20	.17	...43	...71	—
Bengaluru	—	.73	.31	—	—	—
Chennai	3.25	.94	.128	—	—	—
Delhi	2	35	104	.73	.93	—
Hyderabad	14	17	12	.36	.74	—
Kolkata	.5	.8	.13	.24	.60	—
Lucknow	.3	.29	.78	.157	—	—
Mumbai	.5	.9	.18	.19	.86	—
Pune	24	8	.59	.30	.28	—
Visakhapatnam	—	.64	.32	—	—	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Nandeshwar, Guwahati recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 221 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 22

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

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

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

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

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

Hold exams, but make sure students are safe: Thackeray

Have to think of using technology to overcome the crisis, CM tells vice-chancellors

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday directed the Higher and Technical Education Department to conduct final year examinations in Maharashtra while ensuring the safety of students.

Mr. Thackeray held a video-conference with vice-chancellors of all non-agricultural universities in the State to discuss the issue of pending final year examinations.

Technical and Higher Education Minister Uday Samant, Minister of State Prajakta Tanpure, chief secretary Ajay Mehta and other senior officials also took part in the video conference.

"It is clear that the examination cannot be held in July. The situation in cities is changing with every passing day. We have to think about



New normal: The seating arrangements for students taking university exams will change drastically to ensure physical distancing and safety guidelines are followed. ■ FILE PHOTO

using technology to overcome the crisis. We will think of options. Examinations will be conducted ensuring the highest level of safety standards. In addition, options of giving average marks or grades or checking the legality of optional examination for those who want

to improve their grades can also be looked into," said Mr. Thackeray.

Mr. Samant had, in a recent letter to University Grant Commission (UGC), sought permission to cancel final year examinations in the State in the wake of novel coronavirus pandemic.

HC seeks report on procedures migrants need to follow to leave

Judges were hearing PIL on the plight of workers

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has directed the Maharashtra government to file a report, by June 2, listing the entire procedure that a migrant worker is required to follow to be eligible to leave the State.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice K.K. Tated was hearing a bunch of public interest litigations (PIL) filed by Centre of Indian Trade Unions and others.

The PIL raises concerns about the migrant workers who have submitted applications to leave the State by Shramik Special trains and buses during the continuance of the lockdown.

It says they have been left in the dark on the status of their applications and that till such time they can board the trains/buses to leave for their native places, they have to live in cramped and unhygienic shelters, without being provided food and other essentials.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, appearing for the Union of India, informed the court that the Supreme Court is seized of the issue of migrant workers and a detailed order was passed



Long wait, long journey: People from Mizoram waiting outside Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai on Saturday. They will be first taken to Pune and from there by special train to Silchar in Assam where they will board buses to their respective hometowns in Mizoram. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

on May 28 on their plight.

The Bench said, "At this stage, neither are we empowered nor do we wish to make any order contrary to the spirit of the order of the Supreme Court. However, having regard to the peculiar local conditions, we consider it fit and proper to call upon the State to file a report indicating therein how the plight of the migrant workers, who have been assembling at the railway stations/bus stands in Mumbai and places around it, are being addressed."

The court added that, "In fact, we have come across photographs in newspapers showing congregation of migrant workers not only on railway platforms but also on the streets adjoining the railway stations. Such congregation, if allowed, would run counter to the object, for which the lockdown has been imposed."

The Bench directed the State to file a report by June 2 indicating the whole procedure that a migrant worker is required to follow to be eligible to leave, the likely time within which he could board a train/bus, the nature of shelter he is provided with during the waiting period as well as provisions made for sustenance.

He also said that Maharashtra has enough labour force of its own.

"[Migrant] Labourers have returned to their home States just with their clothes. They may come back after some time. At present we have enough labour force to supply to our industries," he said, speaking to reporters.

"But if labourers from other States return, they will need to register their names here," said Mr. Desai, who is a senior Shiv Seva leader.

The Minister also visited a special hospital for COVID-19 patients being set up at Chikalthana and a testing laboratory at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Maharashtra University here.

"The laboratory will also study how front line warriors can be saved from getting infected while serving coronavirus patients," Mr. Desai said.

Gujarat MLAs detained on way to protest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

RAJPIPLA (GUJ)

Eight Congress MLAs and 20 others on their way to join tribal people protesting the fencing, by the State government in six villages near the Statue of Unity in Kevadiya in Narmada district, were detained on Saturday, the police said.

Inspector R.N. Rathva of Rajpipla police station said the eight MLAs and 20 others were detained soon after they left the collectorate here to reach Kevadiya to

join the protests.

Congress MLAs Anil Joshiyara, P.D. Vasava, Chandrakaben Baria, Punabhai Gamit and local leaders were opposing fencing work being carried out by the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited (SSNNL), which claims the land had been acquired in the 1960s.

In a memorandum to the Narmada collector, the MLAs asked if written permission was taken to carry out such works during the ongoing lockdown.

Goa planning to bring back approved travel pass system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PANAJI

With Goa witnessing a huge influx of people in the last couple of days, the government is planning to go back to its previous system of issuing travel passes, that require approval by authorities, instead of the self-generated e-passes introduced earlier this week.

As those who enter the State have to undergo COVID-19 test, the influx in large numbers is putting a strain on the medical infrastructure, a minister said.

The issue was discussed during a meeting of the MLAs and office-bearers of the ruling BJP at the residence of the Chief Minister.

State Health Minister Vishwajit Rane, who took part in the meeting, told reporters that it was discussed that travel passes need to be reintroduced in place of the self-generated e-passes.

"The State witnessed a huge inflow of people in the last few days. We need to cap the number of arrivals in the State. Once the travel pass system is introduced, the health authorities will know

how many people are going to arrive on a particular day," he said.

As per the previous system, district collectors would issue travel passes to people if they wanted to enter the State.

State BJP president Sadanand Tanavade, who also attended the meeting, said the government might revert to the earlier practice in which people had to apply for the travel passes and get approval by the authorities.

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State Health Minister Vishwajit

FROM PAGE ONE

Restrictions eased; malls, religious places to open

In Phase III, dates of their opening would be decided based on the assessment of the situations. Shramik Special trains and a limited number of domestic flights and trains would continue to run.

"All activities that were prohibited earlier will be opened up in areas outside the containment zones in a phased manner with the stipulation of following Standard Operating Procedures to be prescribed by the Health Ministry," said the statement.

Religious places, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls would be permitted to open from June 8 and the Health Ministry would issue the SOPs.

The decision to reopen schools and educational institutes will be taken in the second phase in July. Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla wrote a letter to all the Chief Secretaries on Saturday asking them to send feedback on consultation held with parents and other stakeholders so that a "timely decision" can be taken for opening of educational institutions. He said the new guidelines have been issued after suggestions were received from the States following a videoconference with the Cabinet Secretary on May 28.

The State governments, based on assessments, may prohibit certain activities

outside the containment zones or impose restrictions as deemed necessary. Persons above 65 years of age, those with comorbidities, pregnant women, and children below the age of 10 have been advised to stay at home, except for meeting essential requirements and for health purposes, the MHA said.

The authorities have been advised to encourage the use of the Aarogya Setu app. Wearing of face masks and maintaining social distancing was compulsory at all public and workplaces.

The National Directives for COVID-19 management had been reiterated and work from home as far as possible was advised. It prescribed staggered work hours, frequent sanitisation and social distancing at workplaces. The number of people in marriage functions cannot exceed 50 and for funerals and last rites the number had been capped at 20.

Spitting in public places would be a punishable offence. Any kind of violation of lockdown measures would be punishable under the DM Act, 2005.

The maximum containment zones are in 13 cities/regions - Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi / New Delhi, Ahmedabad, Thane, Pune, Hyderabad, Kolkata / Howrah, Indore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur.

‘Standoff will be resolved through diplomacy’

Except for a few statements from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and one message from Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane, the government had maintained silence on the ground situation.

The MEA had said that the issues would be resolved according to five agreements on border management signed by India and China between 1993 and 2013.

Mr. Singh did not respond to a direct question on whether Chinese troops crossed over into Indian territory. Instead he said there were differing perceptions on the alignment of the LAC due to which both sides patrolled across the LAC till their lines of perception.

The country "should be assured that we will not allow India's dignity to be hurt under any circumstances," he said.

The government has so far not said why the tense situation came about and why were the bilateral mechanisms activated other than the two acknowledged May 5 and 9 incidents which, the Army said, were locally resolved.

Movement of troops
However, sources said that beginning early May, Chinese troops moved inside Indian territory with vehicles and equipment at several points along the LAC, in-

cluding Pangong Tso, several points in Galwan Nallah area and Demchok in eastern Ladakh and Naku La in Sikkim, where PLA soldiers also blocked Indian patrols and pitched tents.

In response, India, too, moved troops forward and also redeployed additional troops to the Ladakh region.

Satellite images

Satellite images put out by Open Source Intelligence handles on Twitter show construction and build-up by Chinese troops at several points both inside Indian held territory and also on their side close to the LAC.

Images by open source intelligence expert Detresa, an analyst with Shadow-Break Intl, show Chinese units moving upwards from the base area at finger 4-5 of Pangong Tso.

India holds up to Finger 4 area of the 135-km-long Pangong Tso but claims up to Finger 8 while China claims up to Finger 2. Similarly, images show large-scale activity by Chinese troops at Gogra and Hot Springs sectors too.

Images dated May 22, put out by an analyst with the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, an independent think tank based in Canberra, show about 80 tents set up by Chinese soldiers along the Galwan river.

They also show vehicles and other structures.

Seven Air India staff among 58 cases in Kerala

Six die in Telangana, A.P. adds 131 cases, Karnataka tally goes up by 141

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The number of COVID-19 cases in Telangana stood at 2,499 as 74 more people tested positive for coronavirus on Saturday. Six more patients died taking the toll to 77. Of the 74 new cases, 60

had district while two other persons were found to have contracted the infection from a known source of infection.

The Health department said the tally included the positive test results of a 38-year-old man who had returned from Abu Dhabi and had died on Friday night while in quarantine.

The total number of active COVID-19 cases in the State was 624, all of whom were undergoing treatment. Till date, 575 had recovered from the disease.

The State had 1,30,157 persons on surveillance and quarantine, of whom 1,28,953 were on home or institutional quarantine and 1,204 with suspected symptoms were admitted to hospitals. There were 243 hospital admissions on Saturday.

Andhra Pradesh reported 131 fresh cases in 24 hours until Saturday. Of the total,

COVID-19

were among people from the State, nine migrants and five deportees.

Kerala reported 58 more COVID 19 positive cases on Saturday, taking the State's total case load to 1,208 cases.

These include seven cases reported among employees of Air India.

Of the 58 new cases, while 17 are people who had come from abroad, 31 cases were found in people who had returned from other States. A healthcare worker was found COVID 19 positive in Palak-

Back to business

Shopping malls will be allowed to open from June 8 as per Centre's new guidelines



All set: A worker cleaning the escalator at a mall in Bengaluru's Rajajinagar on Saturday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

70 were locals and 61 were migrant returnees, a Health Department bulletin said on Saturday. No deaths were reported.

The overall tally was 3,461 and excluding cases pertaining to migrant returnees and foreign returnees the local cases were 2,944. The tally of

foreign returnees remained 111 and all the patients were under treatment while cases of migrant returnees increased to 406. Again, 189 of them have recovered.

Meanwhile, 55 persons recovered during the past day and the total recoveries rose to 2,281.

There were 1,120 active cases and among local cases, 792 were active cases and 2,092 were discharged, putting the recovery rate at 71%.

Out of 60 'local cases' in Telangana, 41 were from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), five from Rangareddy, three

from Sangareddy, two each from Mahabubnagar and Jagtial, one each from Suryapet, Wanaparthy, Warangal Urban, Vikarabad, Medchal, Nagarkurnool and Nizamabad.

Bengaluru surges

In Karnataka, after a relatively low number of COVID-19 cases reported over the past few days, 33 new cases were reported in Bengaluru Urban on Saturday. This was the highest among all districts, followed by Yedgir at 18.

The total number of new cases on Saturday was 141, and the State tally 2,922.

Bengaluru municipal authorities said 11 individuals who tested positive were primary contacts of patients.

Of the 141 new cases reported on Saturday, 90 were inter-state passengers. Meanwhile, 103 patients were discharged across the State. With this, the total number of discharges stand at 997.

(With inputs from Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Bengaluru bureaus)

Border vigil



Restricted entry: Police personnel standing guard at the Walayar checkpoint in Kerala's Palakkad district bordering Tamil Nadu on Saturday. The district has seen a sudden spurt in COVID-19 cases. ■ K. K. MUSTAFAH

Kerala issues data security guidelines

High Court observation prompts move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

the pandemic would behave in the State.

However, the Opposition had dragged the government to the High Court, accusing it of having used the outbreak as a cover to allow the U.S.-based firm to "harvest and monetise" the medical information of the State's population.

The government order seemed to address some of the points raised by the High Court when it considered the Opposition's plea.

It insisted that agencies and departments should collect sensitive personal data of citizens only with their legally recorded informed consent.

HC questions SEC's appointment

Selection of V. Kanagaraj is objectionable, says court

V. RAGHAVENDRA
VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has termed the appointment of Justice (retired) V. Kanagaraj as State Election Commissioner (SEC) "objectionable".

The appointment was made in accordance with Section 200 of the Andhra Pradesh Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, instead of Article 243K (I) of the Constitution, the court said.

The government order seemed to address some of the points raised by the High Court when it considered the Opposition's plea.

It insisted that agencies and departments should collect sensitive personal data of citizens only with their legally recorded informed consent.

The court said the State should revisit the definitions of Section 2(39) and 2(40) and the provisions of Section 200 of the Panchayat Raj Act and take a decision in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution as expeditiously as possible.

The ordinance could not

take away the vested right of Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar without the completion of the tenure (five years) for which he was appointed.

It was actuated by fraud on the power of the Constitution and did not pass the test of rationality under Article 14, the judges said.

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

APCC working president Sk. Mastan Vali has filed a caveat petition in the Supreme Court, requesting it not to pass any order related to the Special Leave Petition that is likely to be

moved by the State against the High Court order on the A.P. Panchayat Raj (Second Amendment) Ordinance (No.5 of 2020). The petitioner's advocate, N. Srinivasa Rao, has appealed to the court not to pass any order without giving notice.

The court said the State should revisit the definitions of Section 2(39) and 2(40) and the provisions of Section 200 of the Panchayat Raj Act and take a decision in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution as expeditiously as possible.

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

In the wake of revolutionary poet Varavara Rao's admission to JJ Hospital, Mumbai, from Taloja jail amid varied news reports, his wife P. Hemalatha has requested the Centre and the governments of Maharashtra and Telangana to enable the family members to know his health condition by arranging a video-conference with him immediately.

Ms. Hemalatha, 72, in a statement signed by her and released here on Saturday, said they came to know through the local Chikkadapalli police around 8.30 p.m. on Friday that Mr. Rao's

health condition was precarious and he was moved to JJ Hospital. They informed the family members that they got that information from the Pune police and did not have any further details.

Later, after three hours of gruelling anxiety and enquiries, she said the family

came to know that Mr. Rao fell unconscious on Thursday evening in jail, moved to hospital, and by Friday evening all his vital signs were normal.

But then, another news item appeared that he was hospitalised in the jail for three days and only then was he moved to JJ Hospital. "Of these news items, we do not know which contains how much truth and gives out the exact health condition. In the meanwhile, the statement by Telangana police officials that they will make arrangements for the family to visit Mumbai is much more worrying," she said.

CM B-M-B-E

It is raining melodies every night on Facebook



The aim is to raise funds for struggling musicians whose incomes have been hit due to the lockdown.

president, Sudeep Kumar, and will go on until July 2.

"I don't think there has ever been a series of music shows featuring so many professional singers anywhere and the response has been

overwhelming," Sudeep told *The Hindu* on the phone.

"Many of our shows recorded more than one lakh views."

M.G. Sreekumar, Shwetha Mohan and Vijay Yesudas

Free Varavara Rao immediately'

Wife points to conflicting reports on his health condition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

In

the wake of revolutionary poet Varavara Rao's admission to JJ Hospital, Mumbai, from Taloja jail amid varied news reports, his wife P. Hemalatha has requested the Centre and the governments of Maharashtra and Telangana to enable the family members to know his health condition by arranging a video-conference with him immediately.

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CM B-M-B-E



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A year of bold decisions, says Nadda

Modi government has introduced a culture of change in governance, says BJP president

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
BJP president J.P. Nadda on Saturday acknowledged that India faced the twin challenges of combating COVID-19 and the economic pain engendered by the long lockdown, and noted that the Union government's prescription of self-reliance however, was not a return to the licence quota raj.

Addressing a press conference on the first anniversary of the second successive term of the BJP-led government, he said, "The concept of *aatmanirbarta* or self-reliance expounded by Modiji is not about going back in time to the license quota raj or anything nega-

The concept of *aatmanirbarta* or self-reliance expounded by Modiji, is not about going back in time to the license quota raj ... It is about encouraging our industry and is a progressive policy

J.P. NADDA, BJP

tive. It is about encouraging our industry and is a progressive policy."

The last one year "will be known for many bold decisions", and the government's timely actions to deal with coronavirus had ensured that the situation remained in control when many big and powerful countries found themselves "helpless", he said.

The Modi government had introduced a culture of change in governance, of "doing the right thing because it is right," and not procrastinate due to political expediency, he said.

Mr. Nadda lambasted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his criticism of the government's handling of the COVID-19 situation. He said Mr. Gandhi's understanding of these issues was limited and that his

statements were not aimed at addressing the crisis but were about politics. "Rahul Gandhi doesn't understand these issues deeply. His understanding and study of issues is limited. That is why he makes confusing remarks by sometimes questioning the lockdown and sometimes demanding why it was not being extended. His statements were for political ends and all about politics, and they have got nothing to do with addressing coronavirus issues."

Mr. Nadda recounted that BJP workers had been on the ground doing relief work during the entire lockdown.

He noted that the COVID-19 testing in India had reached 1.6 lakh a day from

10,000 earlier, and the country was manufacturing over 4.5 lakh personal protective equipment (PPE) kits.

Key decisions

Mr. Nadda cited the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, annulment of Article 370, strengthening of laws against terror laws and those against crimes against children and bank mergers among the government's key decisions. He said the COVID-19 situation would have an impact on elections campaigns. The BJP had been using technological tools to organise its activities.

The Bihar Assembly election in October-November is the first major one to be held soon.

Two COVID-19 cases in CPWD office

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
Two officials of the Central Public Works Department

(CPWD) headquarters at Nirman Bhawan tested positive for COVID-19. While a member of the clerical staff of the

Additional Director General (ADG) tested positive on May 22, a PS of the ADG (HR) tested positive on Friday.

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Web: www.nio.org, Email: ocean@nio.org, Tel: 91-832-245-0450, Fax: 91-832-245-0602

विज्ञान संख्या: REC-1/2020 / Advertisement No: REC-1/2020
राष्ट्रीय समुद्र विज्ञान संस्थान को निम्नलिखित तकनीकी पदों के लिए युवा एवं ऊर्जावान कार्यक्रमों की आवश्यकता है।

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पदों का संक्षेप विवरण:

पदनाम: तकनीकी सहायक

कुल पदों की संख्या: 24 [सामान्य-12, अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग-07, आर्थिक रूप से कमज़ोर वर्ग-02, अनुसूचित जाति-02, और अनुसूचित जनजाति-01; पद कोड टी-502, टी-504, टी-509, टी-510 एवं टी-511 में से एक पद बिधि एवं कम सुनने वाले अध्यर्थी के लिए आवश्यक है।]

वेतन-मान: सातवें केंद्रीय वेतन आयोग के अनुसार वेतन स्तर 6 [पीढ़ी 2 रु. 9300-34800 + छहें केंद्रीय वेतन आयोग के अनुसार पदक्रम वेतन 4200]

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आयु-सीमा: सामान्य/ आर्थिक रूप से कमज़ोर वर्ग-28 वर्ष, अन्य पिछड़ा वर्ग-31 वर्ष, अनुसूचित जाति/जनजाति: 33 वर्ष। इनके अतिरिक्त भारत सरकार द्वारा जारी किए गए नियम जो साएसआईआर एवं अनुसूचित आयु सीमा में छूट दी जाएगी।

Brief Summary of Posts:

Designation: Technical Assistant

Total No of posts: 24 [UR-12, OBC-07, EWS-02, SC-02, and ST-01; of which one post is reserved for Deaf and Hard hearing across Post codes T-502, T-504, T-509, T-510 and T-511]

Scale of Pay: Pay Level 6 as per 7 CPC [PB 2 Rs. 9300-34800 + GP 4200 as per 6 CPC]

Total Emoluments: Rs. 41,418/- (Excluding HRA and Transport Allowance)

Age Limit: UR/EWS - 28 Yrs, OBC-31 Yrs, SC/ST -33 Yrs. [Further Age Relaxation will be as per GOI rules made applicable to CSIR]

पदों के लिए आवश्यक शैक्षणिक अहर्ता एवं अनुभव/ Essential Educational Qualifications and Experience for the posts.

पद कोड, पदों की संख्या एवं श्रेणी / Post Code, No of Posts & Category	आवश्यक शैक्षणिक अहर्ता एवं अनुभव / Essential Educational Qualification and Experience
T-501: UR-02, OBC-01 & EWS-01	भौतिकी/गणित में प्रथम श्रेणी वीएससी की डिग्री के साथ निम्न में से किसी एक का एक वर्ष का अनुभव जीवीकैम्पस में समुद्र विज्ञान के उत्करणों, तरंग मालों की तैनाती, ज्वार प्रमाप, तरंग लवर (wave buoys), यांत्रिक जलाल एवं अनुसंधान जलालय के माध्यम से सीटीडी या समुद्र तटीय एवं महासागरीय प्रैक्टिकों की सत्यालापन महाराष्ट्रा
T-502: UR-01	First class B.Sc. degree in Physics/Mathematics with one year experience either in handling physical oceanography instruments, deployment of current meters, tide gauges, wave buoys. CTD through mechanised trawlers and research vessels or numerical modelling of coastal and ocean processes.
T-503: UR-01 & SC-01	बीएससी (विज्ञान) प्रथम श्रेणी के साथ पुस्तकालय विज्ञान में स्नातक की डिग्री।/ First class B.Sc.(Sci.) with B. Lib. Sci.
T-504: UR-01 & OBC-01	कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्रों में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ सरकार द्वारा अनुमोदित एवं मान्यता-प्राप्त संस्थान / तकनीकी बोर्ड से कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का या पार्श्वकालिक प्रवेश के मामले में 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इंजीनियरिंग / प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा।
T-505: UR-01, OBC-01 & SC-01	First Class, Diploma in Electrical Engineering / Technology from a Government approved and recognized institution/technical board of atleast 3 years full time duration or 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission in Diploma course with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.
T-506: UR-01, EWS-01 & OBC-01	कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्रों में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ सरकार द्वारा अनुमोदित एवं मान्यता-प्राप्त संस्थान / तकनीकी बोर्ड से कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का पार्श्वकालिक प्रवेश के मामले में 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इंजीनियरिंग / प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा।
T-507: UR-01 & OBC-02	First Class, Diploma in Civil Engineering / Technology from a Government approved and recognized institution/technical board of atleast 3 years full time duration or 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission in Diploma course with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.
T-508: UR-01	कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्रों में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ नदी/झील/समुद्री जल एवं अवसाद के नमूनों के रसायनिक मापदण्डों के विश्लेषण में एक वर्ष का अनुभव।
T-509: UR-01	First class B.Sc. degree in Chemistry with one year experience in river/lake/ marine water and sediment sample analysis for chemical parameters.
T-510: UR-01	रसायन में प्रथम श्रेणी से बीएससी की डिग्री के साथ नदी/झील/समुद्री जल एवं अवसाद के नमूनों के रसायनिक मापदण्डों के विश्लेषण में एक वर्ष का अनुभव।
T-511: UR-01; OBC-01 & ST-01	भूविज्ञान में प्रथम श्रेणी से बीएससी की डिग्री के साथ नदी/झील/समुद्री जल एवं अवसाद के नमूनों के भूर्भूमि या मापदण्डों के विश्लेषण में एक वर्ष का अनुभव।
T-512: UR-01	पुरातत्व/भूगोल/भूविज्ञान में प्रथम श्रेणी से बीएससी की डिग्री के साथ एक वर्ष की पूर्णकालिक अवधि पुरातत्व अधार्ता या अंतर्राजीय पुरातत्व में एक वर्ष का अनुभव।
T-513: UR-01	First class Diploma in Archaeology/Geography with one year experience in Underwater Archaeology.
T-514: UR-01	कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स/इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एवं संचार/कंप्यूटर विज्ञान/कंप्यूटर इंजीनियरिंग/सूचना प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा या कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्र में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का डिल्सोमा।
T-515: UR-01	First class Diploma in Electronics/Electronics and Communications/Computer Science/Computer Engineering/Information Technology of atleast 3 years full time duration or atleast 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.
T-516: UR-01	कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स/इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एवं संचार/कंप्यूटर विज्ञान/कंप्यूटर इंजीनियरिंग/सूचना प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा या कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्र में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का डिल्सोमा।
T-517: UR-01	First class Diploma in Electronics/Electronics and Communications/Computer Science/Computer Engineering/Information Technology of atleast 3 years full time duration or atleast 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.
T-518: UR-01	कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स/इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एवं संचार/कंप्यूटर विज्ञान/कंप्यूटर इंजीनियरिंग/सूचना प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा या कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्र में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का डिल्सोमा।
T-519: UR-01	First class Diploma in Electronics/Electronics and Communications/Computer Science/Computer Engineering/Information Technology of atleast 3 years full time duration or atleast 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.
T-520: UR-01	कम से कम तीन वर्षीय पूर्णकालिक अवधि का इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स/इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स एवं संचार/कंप्यूटर विज्ञान/कंप्यूटर इंजीनियरिंग/सूचना प्रैद्योगिकी में प्रथम श्रेणी से डिल्सोमा या कार्य की प्रकृति के उल्लेखित क्षेत्र में दो वर्षों के अनुभव के साथ 2 वर्षों की पूर्णकालिक अवधि का डिल्सोमा।
T-521: UR-01; OBC-01 & ST-01	First class Diploma in Electronics/Electronics and Telecommunications/Computer Science/Computer Engineering/Information Technology of atleast 3 years full time duration or atleast 2 years full time duration in case of lateral admission with experience of 02 years in the areas mentioned in the nature of work.

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For essential qualifications and complete details of advertisements, the candidates are required to refer our website <http://www.nio.org>. Eligible candidates are required to apply only through online mode. The Online Application Form will be available on our website from 02nd June 2020 till 17th July 2020 up to 5.30 p.m..

हस्ताक्षरित S/d
(सिमेश वर्मा) (Simesh Verma)
विवरित प्रशासन न

Six dead in Assam floods

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A person drowned in the Kamrup area of Nagaon district of central Assam, taking the flood-related death toll in the State to six in less than a week even as more than 4,000 people went back home from relief camps on Saturday.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said the floodwaters had been receding since May 28 with the number of affected districts down from 11 to six.

The number of affected people also came down from 3.81 lakh to 3.72 lakh in a span of 24 hours with Goalpara in western Assam continuing to be the worst hit. Some 1.59 lakh people remained displaced in the district, followed by 1.07 lakh in Nagaon district and 94,445 in Hojai. "One person drowned in the Kamrup area of Nagaon," an ASDMA spokesperson said.

Mrutunjay Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said conditions were still not right for the onset.

Skymet had forecast that the monsoon would reach Kerala on May 28 with an error margin of two days. The IMD had announced June 5 as the onset date, though

Skymet says monsoon is in; IMD waits

Private weather agency says all stipulations met; official forecaster says conditions are not yet ripe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon has arrived in Kerala ahead of its normal onset date of June 1, private agency Skymet Weather announced on Saturday, but the India Meteorological Department said conditions were not yet ripe for the start of the season on mainland India.

Jatin Singh, chief executive officer, Skymet Weather, said all conditions such as rainfall, outwave longwave radiation (OLR) value and wind speed had been met to declare the onset over Kerala.

Mrutunjay Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, said conditions were still not right for the onset.

Skymet had forecast that the monsoon would reach Kerala on May 28 with an error margin of two days. The IMD had announced June 5 as the onset date, though



On the threshold: Leaden skies over the Vellayani Lake in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday. The IMD has said that the southwest monsoon is likely to set in over Kerala soon. ■ S. GOPAKUMAR

earlier this week, it said a cyclonic circulation in the Bay of Bengal would help advance the date and the rains could reach Kerala on June 1.

"#JUSTIN Southwest #Monsoon2020 finally arrived on the mainland of India, #Monsoon arrived on Kerala before the actual onset date. All the onset conditions including rainfall, OLR

value, wind speed, are met. Finally, the 4-month long festival begins for Indian. #HappyMonsoon (sic)," the private forecaster tweeted.

Three parameters

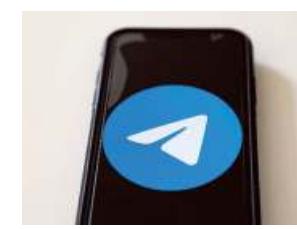
The IMD says there are three major conditions to declare the onset.

The first is if after May 10, 60% of the 14 weather stations – Minicoy, Amini, Thiruvananthapuram, Punalur, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Kochi, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur, Kudal and Mangalore – report rainfall of 2.5 mm or more for two consecutive days, the onset over Kerala will be declared on the second day.

The second is the depth of the westerlies should be maintained up to 600 hectopascals (hPa) and the third is the OLR should be below 200 watt per square metre (wm⁻²).

Delhi HC raps Telegram on Jagran e-paper row

'Reveal users sharing content illegally'



The app has been told to take down channels that violate copyright.

of the *Dainik Jagran* are being uploaded in PDF format on a daily basis. It said Telegram with the help of these channels is not only permitting availability of current editions of the e-paper but also previous editions.

Jagran Prakashan had moved the High Court complaining that Telegram, a Dubai-based company, has allowed its users to create various channels without disclosing their identity.

Some of the users, *Jagran Prakashan* said, have created channels on which e-papers

Bar Council slams former judge Lokur

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Bar Council of India (BCI) on Saturday said some former judges and senior advocates are in a conspiracy to weaken and browbeat the Supreme Court through a "sustained and synchronised attack" on the institution.

The BCI, in a statement signed by its chairman Manan Kumar Mishra, names former Supreme Court judge, Justice Madan B. Lokur. "It is painful to see that only a few days after two advocates made unfair and unhealthy remarks against our apex court, Mr. Justice Madan Lokur also joined this bandwagon, fully knowing that such idle talk lead to undermining the authority of judiciary as a whole," the BCI said.

Justice Lokur has been vocal about the court's intervention in the migrant workers' crisis.

Nepali Congress backs Oli govt. in vote on new map

NC support crucial to ensure passage in Parliament

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The government of Nepal on Saturday secured crucial support of the main opposition party, the Nepali Congress (NC) to grant constitutional status to the updated map of the country that claims the disputed territory of Kalapani. A leading figure of the NC confirmed that the party has decided to back the move of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli and help in passing the amendment next week.

"Nepali Congress party today has decided to vote for constitution amendment regarding the new map," said Dr. Minendra Rijal, a member of parliament, speaking to *The Hindu* on the phone from Kathmandu.

Earlier reports had suggested that NC would support the government while



K.P. Sharma Oli
urging it to resolve differences with India through diplomatic means.

Several groups from among the Madhesi community of the Terai region, however, maintained that they were unlikely to support the amendment as it includes only the agenda of the revised map and does not address the issues relevant to people living in the plains of Nepal bordering Indian States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

However, Madhesi opposition is unlikely to significantly alter the outcome as the Nepal Communist Party of Prime Minister Oli can get the amendment passed easily with the support of the NC, led by former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba.

The map once constitutionally guaranteed will also figure in text books and other state symbols and official documents, currency notes. Experts said parliament's stamp for the new map will alter the status quo from the Nepalese side and make a future solution difficult.

Nepal has accused India of unilateral actions like building roads in the disputed Kalapani territory. Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has urged India to withdraw troops from Kalapani-Lipulekh region and restore status quo.

Ministry highlights 'Vande Bharat'

It lists India's response to COVID-19 crisis among the achievements in one year

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Highlighting India's response to the coronavirus pandemic worldwide at the top of its list of "achievements" in the first year of the NDA government's second term, the External Affairs Ministry on Saturday said India had played a "leading" role globally. A document released on Saturday comes a few weeks ahead of India's election to the non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for 2021-22.

Equipment exports

According to the list released by the Ministry, India supplied COVID-19 related medical supplies to 154 countries, deployed "rapid response teams" (RRTs) in different countries, and held more than 100 "virtual diplomatic meetings".

The achievements listed the government's "Vande Bharat mission" for its



Evacuation mission: Indians being brought back in naval ships from the Maldives earlier in May. ■ PTI

"mammoth coordinating efforts" to bring home more than 40,000 Indians on 230 by commercial flights and naval ships.

More than 3,00,000 Indians, who have been stranded in various parts of the world because of the travel restrictions imposed by the government as part of its lockdown, have registered with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), where a special COVID-19 Emergency fund was created. India had contributed \$10 million to the fund.

home, at their own cost, on special flights in the next few months.

"Corona-era Diplomacy was activated", the MEA's list said, referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's video conference with leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), where a special COVID-19 Emergency fund was created. India had contributed \$10 million to the fund.

The country has seen a steady rise in the average number of cases per day over the last month.

The average number of new cases per day for the six-day period of May 8-14 was 3,675. This figure stands at 6,738 for the period May 22-28.

The average number of deaths per day for the two periods is 116 and 164 respectively.

Doubling time which in the past 14 days was 13.3, has improved to 15.4 in the last three days. The fatality rate is 2.86%, added the Ministry.

The Ministry added that the hubs are the government labs approved by the Ministries and so far 19 city/regional clusters had been established.

"Institutes and labs which have the capacity and expertise for both sample collection, handling/processing (BSL-2 facility) and testing (RT-PCR) serve as the hubs and they [will] involve a number of laboratories which have RT-PCR machines and the requisite manpower as their extended testing facilities," a senior health official said.

The Ministry added that the hubs are the government labs approved by the Ministries and so far 19 city/regional clusters had been established.

Meanwhile during the past 24 hours, a total of 11,264 COVID-19 patients have recovered, according to the Ministry.

"This is the highest num-

CSIR chief flays HCQ trial suspension

He also condemns study in *Lancet*

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The head of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) – India's largest chain of industrial laboratories – and two other scientists have castigated an influential study published in the *Lancet*, which purported to show hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), a prominent antimalarial, as being unhelpful and harmful to COVID-19 patients.

The letter signed by Shekhar Mande, Director-General, CSIR; Anurag Agrawal, physician and Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology – a CSIR institute – as well as Rajeeva Karandikar, Director, Chennai Mathematical Institute, says the World Health Organization's decision to suspend trials of the drug was a "knee-jerk" reaction.

"The observational data is sloppy, and the statistics underlying them is faulty. There is no doubt that it will not stand the test of time. You can't compare apples with oranges," Mr. Mande told *The Hindu*.

The study concluded that the drug regimens increased in-hospital death and frequency of arrhythmias.

biotic, benefited over those who were on other treatments. 'Benefit' here was defined as either having improved in-hospital survival or less likely to suffer from irregular heartbeat, a side effect associated with HCQ.

The study concluded that the drug regimens increased in-hospital death by 33-45% and increased frequency of ventricular arrhythmias by several degrees. On May 25, the WHO cited this study and said it had "temporarily suspended" clinical trials of hydroxychloroquine as a potential treatment for COVID-19.

This trial was part of a so-called solidarity trial being overseen by the WHO where four drug combinations – all of them developed for other diseases but showing promise for COVID-19 treatment – were being tested at four hundred hospitals in 35 countries. France, Italy and Belgium have also halted HCQ trials.

A WHO pause doesn't stop a country – even India – from conducting any form of trial, Mr. Mande said.



The study concluded that the drug regimens increased in-hospital death and frequency of arrhythmias.

India's recovery rate improves to 47%

City and regional clusters formed in a hub-and-spoke model to ramp up testing



Safety first: Workers in PPE preparing to cremate a patient who died of COVID-19 in Karad on Saturday. ■ PTI

These are in Delhi/NCR, Ahmedabad, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Banaras, Palampur among other areas.

"Clusters on the other hand will now be scaled up in next four weeks to reach remote corners of the country," the Ministry said.

Meanwhile during the past 24 hours, a total of 11,264 COVID-19 patients have recovered, according to the Ministry.

"India recorded 7,964 new COVID-19 cases – the highest so far – and 265 deaths in the last 24 hours. Total number of cases in the country now

stands at 1,73,763 and 4,971 deaths.

Data from State health departments put the total number of cases in the country at 1,76,840 with 87,362 active cases. The nationwide toll was 5,028.

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"This is the highest num-

Track COVID-19 exposure, ICMR tells States

It suggests sero-survey with indigenous kit to decide future course of action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Saturday advised the States to conduct sero-surveys to measure the coronavirus exposure in the population using IgG ELISA Test.

As per the direction of the council, the coronavirus exposure in the general population as well as in high-risk populations would be mea-

"The numbers and frequency in different groups to be tested has been entrusted with the States depending upon the requirement and situation in that particular area," the note said.

The sero-survey would be conducted using an IgG ELISA kit. Scientists at the ICMR National Institute of Virology, Pune, have developed and validated an indigenous IgG ELISA test for antibody

sured and the outcome will help "decide the future course of action against the pandemic".

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detection for SARS-CoV-2.

The test has undergone intense validation in three stages and has been found to have high sensitivity and specificity.

The ICMR said that it had offered to provide technical support to the States/ Union Territories, if required, in planning and carrying out sero-surveys using IgG ELISA test kits and also interpreting the results.

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Govt. blocks
WeTransferPRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The government has ordered internet service providers (ISPs) to block computer file-sharing website WeTransfer due to security reasons. The order issued by the Department of Telecom (DoT) on May 18 directed all ISPs to block two download links on the Dutch website WeTransfer and also the entire website www.wetransfer.com.

"The compliance be submitted immediately failing which shall, inter alia, invite initiation of actions under licence conditions," the DoT order e-mailed to several ISPs said.

According to sources, the DoT has received reference from the Ministry of Electronics and IT to block the website and two download links immediately.

The exact reason for blocking of the website could not be ascertained.

However, an official, on the condition of anonymity, said "most probably due to security reasons."

Query sent to the DoT elicited no response.

New PoA
norms from
August 1: SEBIPRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

SEBI has extended to August 1, the date for implementing norms concerning power of attorney (PoA) given by clients to trading members (TM) or clearing members (CM).

In February, SEBI had specified guidelines with regard to margin obligations to be given by way of pledge and re-pledge in the depository system.

COVID-19 setback to business
could be serious: Infosys

Financials may be hit due to negative impact on economies of U.S., U.K., EU

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

The COVID-19 pandemic has its footprints all over Infosys's annual report of fiscal 2020 that was released on Saturday.

The economic slowdown or other factors affecting the economic health of the U.S., the U.K., the EU and Australia are expected to cast a gloom on the financials of the Indian IT services giant.

Infosys, on account of its revenues being concentrated in a few geographies, expects to see a serious impact.

"In fiscal 2020, 61.5%, 24.1% and 11.8% of our revenues were derived from projects in North America, Europe and the rest of the world, respectively," the report said.

In fiscal 2020, it derived 31.5% of its revenues from the financial services and in-



During the fiscal, Infosys's employee count rose 6.09% over the previous fiscal, the report said. ■REUTERS

surance industry. "Instability and uneven growth in the global economy has had an adverse impact on the growth of the IT industry in the past and may continue to impact it in the future. This instability also impacts our business and results of operations and may continue to do so in the future," the report added. If the economies of the U.S., U.K. or the EU

weaken or growth remains uneven – including as a result of the uncertainty surrounding Brexit – Infosys believes its clients may reduce or postpone their technology spending significantly. This may, in turn, lower the demand for its services, negatively impacting its revenues and profitability.

Meanwhile, during the fiscal, its employee count rose

6.09% over the previous fiscal, the report said. Infosys had 2,42,371 employees, of which 228,449 were professionals, involved in service delivery to clients. During the previous year, it had grown over 11%.

During the year, Nandan M. Nilekani voluntarily chose not to receive any remuneration for his services rendered to the company.

As an independent director, Biocon's executive chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw received \$150,000. During the fiscal ended March 31, CEO Salil Parekh received total remuneration of \$6 million, which was 27% higher than his previous year's total remuneration of \$4.8 million.

COO Pravin Rao's total remuneration also rose to \$2.2 million from \$1.7 million last year, a 29% rise.

'Airline sector was already
weak, COVID-19 exposed it'

Industry experts call for structural, regulatory changes

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

With five of India's six airlines operating with weak balance sheets that are compounding their problems in the time of COVID-19, industry experts have called for immediate structural and regulatory changes that could reverse their fortunes.

They were speaking at a webinar organised by leading aviation consulting firm CAPA India.

"The main issue with Indian airlines is their low-yield and high-cost structure. We would look for a higher yield market [to make airlines sustain]. The next 4 to 6 months are crucial as to who [which airline] will be around," said Jeffrey Goh, CEO, Star Alliance.

He said despite the setback, India must invest in improving aviation related infrastructure. Stressing that Indian aviation had been suf-



fering on account of profitless growth, that are technically bankrupt, continue to expand. The operating environment in India is characterised by high costs and poor planning. Due to their inability to control costs in FY19 SG [SpiceJet], G8 [GoAir], UK [Vistara], and 15 [AirAsia India] combined lost an average of \$5/passenger," he said.

Stating that COVID has provided a pause for reflection, he said the last three months has delivered negative outcomes that were previously unthinkable.

Hyundai
exports 5,000
units in MaySPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

South Korean car maker Hyundai Motor India Ltd. has exported more than 5,000 cars in May 2020.

"We have once again made a humble beginning towards normalcy by exporting more than 5,000 units in May 2020. This is a testimony of Hyundai's resilient efforts towards localisation and to accentuate economic recovery," said S.S. Kim, MD & CEO, Hyundai Motor India.

The first shipment left Chennai Port on May 26.

IDBI Bank in black after 13 quarters

Makes a strong pitch for exiting PCA restrictions; asset quality improves

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

IDBI Bank has reported a net profit of ₹135 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2020 compared to a net loss of ₹4,918 crore in the year-earlier period.

The lender posted a net profit after a gap of 13 quarters as additions to non-performing assets fell sharply during the quarter.

"First time NPAs reduced to ₹727 crore in Q4-2020 from the ₹1,781 crore in Q4-2019," the bank said.

"The profit would have been higher but for the recoveries which were adver-

Metrics	Q4 FY20
Net profit (₹ cr.)	135.39
Net NPAs (%)	4.19
Gross NPA (%)	27.53
Capital adequacy ratio (%)	13.31

sely affected during March due to COVID-19 impact," said Rakesh Sharma, MD & CEO, IDBI Bank in an interaction with the media.

The net NPA ratio improved to 4.19% as on March 31, 2020 against 10.11% as on March 31, 2019 and 5.25% as on December 31, 2019. The gross NPA ratio stood at

27.53% as on March 31, 2020 against 27.47% as on March 31, 2019 and 28.72% as on December 31, 2019.

"All the parameters have shown improvement. Net NPAs have also come down and aging provisions are evenly spread so that there is no extra burden," he said.

Improved CAR

Tier 1 capital and capital adequacy ratio (CAR), which was at 10.57% and 13.31% respectively as on March 31, 2020, have improved as against 9.14% and 11.58% as on March 31, 2019.

"The bank has achieved

all PCA parameters for exit, except RoA," the lender said.

While there is an overall write-back in provision of ₹1,511 crore during the quarter compared with the ₹7,233 crore provided during the fourth quarter of the previous year, a ₹247-crore provision was made against standard assets as per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms for moratorium accounts which are in default.

While the central bank had allowed the lenders to make the provision in two quarters, IDBI Bank had made the entire provision in the January-March quarter.

Draft e-com policy for
comments soon: DPIIT

'Country should have a clear policy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will very soon put a draft e-commerce policy in the public domain to seek views and comments, a top government official said on Saturday.



of privacy can be protected; how the e-commerce data is being leveraged for other purposes, other commercial benefits accrue to the e-commerce data holder; how citizens like you and me can have access to those benefits.

Secondly, there are a lot of counterfeit and inferior products and violation of various safety standards.

How can these be taken care of, how can consumer rights be protected...? We have now finalised a (draft) e-commerce policy; very soon, we will put [it] in the public domain.

At the time, we will request all of you to give comments on how to improve on the content of the draft e-commerce policy," he added.

SAINIK SCHOOL BIJAPUR, (KA)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender notification on prescribed form are invited from reputed firms for supply of Manpower for Security related duties. Last date for submission of offline form is 27 Jun 2020. For downloading tender form and more details visit our website www.ssbj.in or www.eprocure.gov.in.

Sd/-
Principal

RITES THE INFRASTRUCTURE PEOPLE	RITES LIMITED (A Govt. of India Enterprise) CIN No.: L74899DL1974GD007227
Notice Inviting e-Tenders	
The Group General Manager (Civil), RITES Ltd, Bhubaneswar, invites on behalf of M/s. MCL, KANHA area, Talcher, online percentage rate bids, on two packet system for the following work:	
NIT No.: RITES/BBSR/MCL/KANHA/TLHR/OT/2020, Dated.30.05.2020; Name of Work: EARTHWORK IN FORMATION, CONSTRUCTION OF RUB WITH APPROACHES, RETAINING WALL & DRAINS, SUPPLY OF PWY MATERIALS, SUPPLY OF BALLAST, TRACK LINKING WORKS, AND ALLIED WORKS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 2' RAILLINE, AT KANHA AREA, UNDER TALCHER COAL FIELDS OF MCL. Estimated cost: ₹129,459,116/-, EMD: ₹ 12.95 Lakhs, Completion period: 08 (Eight) months, Last time and date of submission of bid : 15:00 Hrs (IST) of 22.06.2020	
The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website: https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app . Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, shall be hoisted online only.	

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD (A Government of Karnataka Undertaking) # 49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khaniya Bhavan Race Course Road Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in	Date:29.05.2020
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)	
KIADB is inviting tender for Item rate Tenders under two cover system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from Class-I & Above Contractors (Electrical) registered in KPWD & KCEI who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work 1). Repair, Re-Conditioning and Annual Maintenance of Street Lights at Hi-Tech Defence Aerospace Park, Devenahalli, Bengaluru. 2). Providing Electrical Infrastructure Facilities to newly formed Sub-Layout at Hi-Tech Defence and Aerospace Park, Devenahalli, Bengaluru Rural District. 3). Drawing 11kV Feeder Lines from Sub-Station and Providing HT/LT distribution system to Sira Industrial Area, Tumakuru District. 4). Drawing 11kV Feeder Lines from Existing Sub-Station and Providing Electrical Infrastructure Facilities to Mummigatti Industrial Area, Dharwad District.	
The last date and time of receipt of tender is : 18.06.2020 upto 04:00 pm	
Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the E-Procurement Portal https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in .	

Sd/-
Chief Development Officer & Chief Engineer-01

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking) Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur-302005, India Phone No. : 0141-2228066, 2228066 CIN: U24223RJ2015GSC035067, Website: www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in . E-mail: edprmsc@gmail.com	Dated: 22.05.2020
E-bids are invited upto 6.00 PM of 01.07.2020 for Rate Contract cum Supply and Empanelment of Surgical (Non Durg item). Details of NIB-05/2020 (UBN No MSC2021GRRC0004) may be seen in the Bidding Documents at our office or at the website of State Public Procurement Portal http://ppr.raj.nic.in , www.dpronline.org , http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and may be downloaded from there.	
Note: If any amendment is carried out in the tender specifications and terms & conditions following pre-bid meeting, the same will be uploaded on the Department website www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in and http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in . In case any inconvenience is felt, please contact on telephone number i.e. 0141-2228066	
Executive Director (Procurement) RMSCL	
Raj.Samwad/C/394/2020-2021	

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Can coronavirus spread through airborne transmission of aerosols?

A study measured the size distribution, travel distance and velocity of droplets when a person coughs or speaks

R. PRASAD

Direct contact with an infected person, droplet transmission and contact with contaminated surfaces are some of the most common routes of transmission suggested for novel coronavirus. But a Perspective piece published in *Science* by a team led by Kimberly A. Prather seems to suggest that a "large proportion of the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) appears to be occurring through airborne transmission of aerosols produced by asymptomatic individuals during breathing and speaking". Dr. Prather is from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California.

In the case of 2002 SARS, airborne transmission was reported by several studies. It was retrospectively explained as the route of spread in the case of Hong Kong's Prince of Wales Hospital, and health care facilities in Toronto.

In the case of SARS-CoV-2, it is said that "aerosols can ac-



Buoyant aerosol: Smaller droplets, less than five microns, evaporate faster than they settle, hence, get carried away by air to longer distances. ■ GETTY IMAGES

cumulate, remain infectious in indoor air for hours, and be easily inhaled deep into the lungs". Yet, there has not been any study to confirm this.

Viability in aerosols

A Correspondence published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggested that SARS-CoV-2 remained viable in aerosols for as long as three hours, though with time there

was a reduction in the amount of infectious virus. But the equipment used to generate aerosol may not mimic natural conditions of cough. "This is a high-powered machine that does not reflect normal human cough conditions. Further, the finding of COVID-19 virus in aerosol particles up to 3 hours does not reflect a clinical setting in which aerosol-generating procedures are per-

formed—that is, this was an experimentally induced aerosol-generating procedure," WHO cautioned.

But a team led by Daniel Bonn from the Institute of Physics, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, has in a paper published in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine* studied droplet production when a person coughs and speaks and also measured the droplet size distribution, travel distance and velocity, and the airborne time in relation to the level of air ventilation.

Droplet sizes

They used a laser to determine the droplet sizes in a single cough and during speech. When a healthy volunteer coughed, they found both large droplets (100-1,000 microns) and small droplets (1-10 microns) being produced. But smaller droplets were more prevalent than the larger ones. During speech, the smaller droplets were the only ones produced.

They then used another laser system to track droplets

for speed and trajectory when a person coughed. Larger droplets (500 microns) did not travel long and fell to the ground in about one second. Based on this information, they estimate that smaller droplets (5 microns) will remain in the air for nine minutes before settling on the ground.

Next, they used specially designed spray nozzle to disperse small droplets into the air, reproducing the effect of coughing. The droplets produced were on average 5 micron in diameter. In the case of a room with no ventilation, the droplets took five minutes to reduce by half. While in a well-ventilated room it reduced by half in just 30 seconds, and 1.4 minutes in a poorly ventilated room.

Borne by air

The team led by Dr. Prather note that while larger droplets settle faster than they evaporate, the smaller ones (aerosols), which are less than five microns, evaporate faster than they settle. As a result,

they are buoyant and can get carried away by air to longer distances.

A study published in *Nature* found higher concentration of the viral RNA in aerosols in the toilet areas used by patients in two Wuhan hospitals but low concentration in isolation wards and ventilated rooms. Though the researchers did not establish infectivity of the virus, they did find that small droplets expelled during normal breathing and talking can remain in the air and can infect others when inhaled. They proposed that novel coronavirus "may have the potential to be transmitted through aerosols".

But WHO has cautioned that "detection of RNA in environmental samples based on PCR-based assays is not indicative of viable virus that could be transmissible. Further studies are needed to determine whether it is possible to detect COVID-19 virus in air samples from patient rooms where no procedures or support treatments that generate aerosols are ongoing".



Fallout: COVID-19 will take away at least six months from the productive life of PhD students. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Plight of doctoral students during the pandemic

This crisis will most severely affect those who have just finished, or are finishing, their PhD degrees

T. PRADEEP

In the establishment of advanced research, the ones most affected due to the COVID-19 crisis are fresh PhD scholars and those who are on the verge of completing their doctoral research. This cream of our scientific establishment, after years of dedicated and consistent hard work, find that their opportunities have disappeared suddenly.

In the unfolding saga of human crisis threatening the existence of millions, it is important to bring up the issue of these young scholars, lest their plight never gets heard.

Research fellowships

It takes five years to finish a PhD degree in one of the top Indian institutions, and student fellowships are available generally during this period. Students enter the PhD programme after clearing competitive examinations such as GATE or CSIR/UGC NET or with INSPIRE and PMRF fellowships, the latter being awarded generally to top rankers. Doctoral fellows in national institutions get a fellowship of Rs.31,000 per month for the first two years and Rs.35,000 per month for the remaining three years or till they submit their theses, whichever is earlier. There are other schemes with different fellowship amounts, too.

Research fellows after completing the PhD programme often go for post-doctoral fellowships (PDF) for higher studies and independent research, which make them eligible for faculty/staff scientist position in academia or industry. Typically, three years of PDF experience is expected for a faculty job. It is common to go abroad for such assignments although domestic opportunities are increasing.

No support from parent labs

During the COVID-19 crisis, those who have completed their degrees, even if they have postdoctoral offers, are stuck. Universities abroad have been closed as well. They have no support from parent laboratories, as advisors have no additional money and institutional resources are limited. There are other battles to fight for the institutions within their meagre resources. These unique challenges faced by the young PhDs have left them in the lurch.

Those who are finishing their degrees might still be receiving their fellowships, although they may not be in the institutions due to the ongoing lockdown. However, their work suffers and it will certainly take more time to finish the degrees and that too without any fellowship.

Even more worrisome is the situation of existing postdocs and those who are caught in-between postdoctoral assignments. Many have come back from China and other such places and are unable to go back. They do not have new assignments, and even if they do, there is no way to proceed with them. They too remain unpaid.

There are four students after PhD in my lab, with valid postdoctoral offers but unable to take them up. There are four more finishing their PhD theses and who have exceeded the fellowship period. They are exploring postdoctoral opportunities, but COVID-19 has crushed research funding in many places. With funds drying up, they are likely to stay back for several more months. Fortunately, these students are being supported, but many advisors do not have that an option to support their students.

The COVID-19 crisis will take away at least six months from the productive life of PhD students irrespective of the stage they are in their degree. The most severely affected will be those who have just finished or are finishing their degrees and those currently in their postdoctoral period with uncertain funding.

About 20% of all PhD students belong to this category. This number is estimated to be about 3,000 in the premier institutions. The total must be at least twice that if you consider the students in the top State universities and other laboratories put together.

Measures needed

What then can be done to support them? The government must come to their rescue in this period of crisis. The government may do well by extending the fellowship for six more months for all eligible scholars and those who have just completed their tenures.

Those who have completed their PhD within the past year, and without jobs or adequate support may be provided with urgent funding for the same period. Postdoctoral fellows, graduated from institutions of national importance and currently jobless, may be provided with quick assistance for six months, if they can work with eligible institutions. It is estimated that a package of Rs.200 crores (0.001% of GDP) be allocated to help the young scientific talent pool of the country. Immediate financial support at such a crucial time would provide them immense relief.

Surely, we will live with COVID-19 for some more time. What can our young scientists do to ensure that they can self-support afterwards? This crisis must be used to skill themselves beyond their areas of research – scientific editing, online tutoring, business incubation, development of computational skillsets, taking up online courses and conferences for revisiting fundamentals as well as to gain advanced knowledge. Our industry leaders should also provide new opportunities for this talent pool.

(T. Pradeep is an institute professor at IIT Madras.)

Monoclonal antibody to block coronavirus infection identified

The team had isolated the SARS virus during the outbreak of 2002

ASWATHI PACHA

When the news of the pandemic reached a team of researchers in the Netherlands, their first reaction was to go back and look at frozen antibodies that recognised the 2002 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), which they had stored in the early 2000s during the outbreak. And surprisingly one of the antibodies was found to recognise the infection due to the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Further study showed that it can help block infection in cultured human cells.

Berend-Jan Bosch from Utrecht University explained in a release that the antibody binds to a domain that is conserved in both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2, explaining its ability to neutralise both viruses. He is one of the lead authors of the paper published in *Nature Communications*.

Tests and assays
The paper adds that this antibody can help develop antigen detection tests and serological assays. "This antibody – either alone or in combination – offers the potential to prevent and/or treat COVID-19, and possibly also other future emerging diseases in humans caused



Useful discovery: The antibody could help block infection in cultured human cells. ■ Utrecht University

by viruses from the *Sarbecovirus subgenus*," the team writes.

Frank Grosveld, co-lead author of the study from Erasmus Medical Center explained to *The Hindu* in an email what a human monoclonal antibody is and the group's previous work on it.

"We set out to make antibodies against SARS, MERS, and HCoV-OC43 [another coronavirus] with the aim to get antibodies that would recognise all three coronaviruses. Parts of the proteins of these viruses are highly conserved (which means they are very similar) and we hoped to get antibodies that recognise these conserved parts. And indeed we found such antibodies [details of which were published some time ago.]

He adds that the newly identified antibody was found among previously identified

ones that did not recognise all three viruses and were put in the freezer.

"With new infections it is a race between the body making new antibodies versus the virus replicating, destroying cells and doing its damage. The antibodies that are made in humans or in the mice can be isolated by several tricks. The classic one is to fuse the B-cells with leukemic cells to make them immortal," explains Dr. Grosveld.

"The fused B-cells called hybridomas are grown individually and tested whether they make an antibody that would recognise the target. Because they come from single B-cells hybridomas, they make only one specific antibody which is called a monoclonal antibody. When a monoclonal-like [antibody] that we have generated is given to patients it does its work immediately, that is, much faster that the body could make its own antibodies," he adds.

Dr. Grosveld said that the team is currently testing the antibody in animal models and also collaborating with a pharmaceutical company to develop the antibody further. "On the more academic side we are studying how the antibody acts on the protein that the virus uses to infect cells."

The search for an animal model to study COVID-19

Cats and ferrets may help study disease transmission, while hamsters show promise for studies of efficacy of vaccines

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

At the time of writing this the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 worldwide has touched 57,04,736 which includes 3,57,736 deaths, according to the World Health Organization's update of May 29. Naturally, researchers are racing to find an animal model that would be suitable to study this disease. Animal models will be useful in testing therapeutic such as vaccines and antivirals before they are tested on humans. A study published in *Nature* and two in *Science* have looked at a range of animals from this perspective.

It emerges that only some of these, namely, hamsters, cats, ferrets and non-human primates, are suitable to study various aspects of the infection.

Susceptible animals

A group from China (Jiangzhou Shi and coworkers, in *Science*) studied the susceptibility of ferrets, dogs, pigs, chicken, ducks and cats to infection by SARS-CoV-2 – the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. According to their study, while the virus replicates poorly in dogs, pigs, chicken and ducks, it actually replicated well in the upper respiratory tracts of ferrets and cats. They also found that cats transmitted the infection among themselves.

In the experiment with ferrets, the animals were divided into two groups one of which was inoculated with a strain of virus isolated from an environmental sample collected from Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan and the other group was inoculated with a strain isolated from a sample taken from a human patient. Nasal and rectal swabs were examined on alternate days.

One ferret in each group developed fever and loss of appetite on days 10 and 12 after inoculation.

They were sacrificed on day 13, and sample tissues from various organs were collected and tested in order to find out whether the virus had infected the lower respiratory tract and other organs.

They did not find viral RNA in these organs.

number only.

B. Rockx and coworkers studied cynomolgus macaques (monkeys). This study published in *Science* finds that when the monkeys were infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, they shed the virus in the upper and lower respiratory tracts. They did not show severe symptoms. A paper published in *Nature* by researchers from Hong Kong studies golden Syrian hamsters. The group finds that SARS-CoV-2 infection in golden Syrian hamsters was like a mild infection experienced by humans.

Right question

Which then are the animals that can be used as suitable models to study COVID-19? A 'Perspective' article in *Science* discusses this: It really depends on the question being asked - Cats and ferrets may be useful in studying how the disease is transmitted and in testing antivirals to stop disease progression. Hamsters could be used for studying efficacy of vaccines. Non-human primates could be used to assess vaccine and antiviral effectiveness.

"The study is useful because it indicates that from a diverse set of animals only a couple get infected in a reliable manner - ferrets and cats. It is interesting that cats can transmit the infection among themselves," says Satyajit Rath, biologist from IISER Pune, who was not involved in these studies. He also draws attention to the fact that since none of the animals developed serious illness, it may not be immediately close to the condition of humans.

"Even in humans, only a small percentage are seriously sick," he adds, emphasising that the animal studies involved a small

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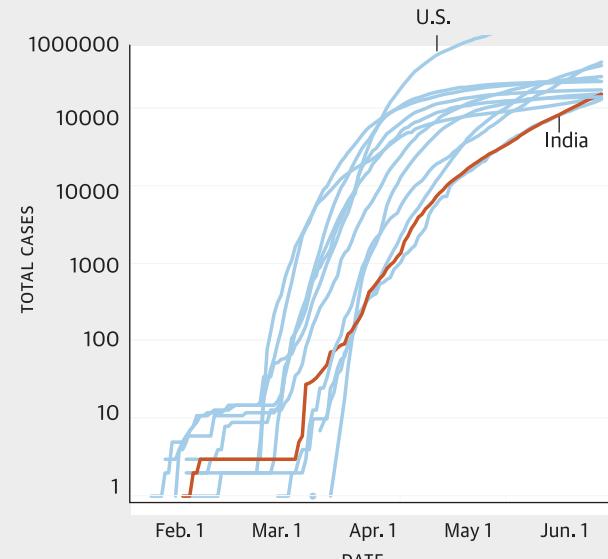
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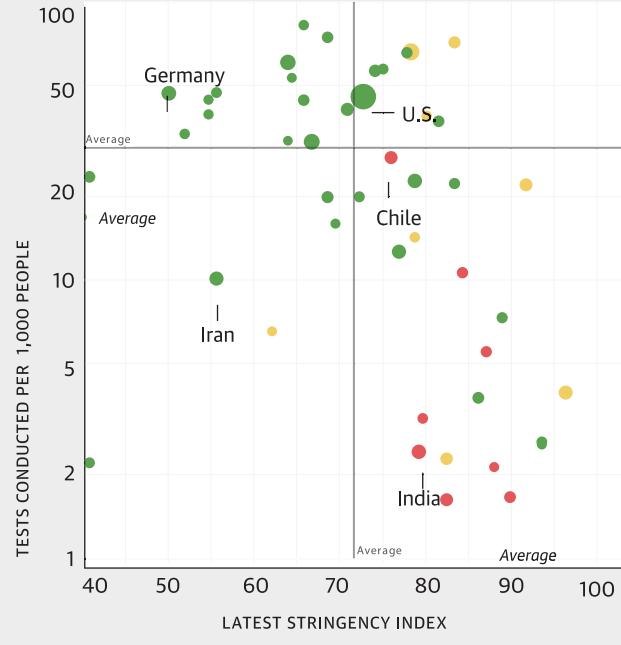
percentage of secondary infections," he adds, emphasising that the

No option but to test more

I A STEADY RISE Even though, India had fewer infections than many countries in March and April, cases have steadily risen every day to pitchfork the country to be among the top 10 countries with most number of cases. With more than 1.75 lakh cases, India's case trajectory has also been on a steady upswing unlike the U.S. and countries in Europe, where the case increase has slowed down distinctly. See chart below for the steady rise in cases in India (among countries with more than 1,00,000 cases)



II TESTING IMPACT One way to determine whether the lockdown had an impact on arresting the case rise is to check the "doubling time" for each country. The chart plots the stringency index* for each country against total tests conducted per 1,000 people. Countries with doubling time greater than 35 days are marked in green, between 15 and 35 days in orange, and below 15 days in red. Size of the circles corresponds to the total cases

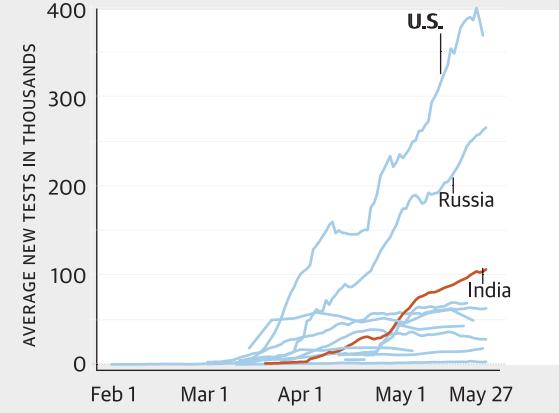


The graph shows that most countries which have a high testing rate have a much slower doubling time (>35 days or between 15-35 days). Even countries such as the U.S. with a high number of cases have registered a slower doubling time. In contrast, countries with a lower test rate still have faster doubling times, irrespective of higher stringency - which is borne out in India's case as well. India - where cases are doubling in 13.5 days, continues to have among the most stringent lockdowns (index: 79.2) and a low testing rate (2.4 of every 1,000 people tested). Clearly, testing is the key variable in reducing the case load growth rate as this comparative exercise across countries shows

Nearly six million people have been infected by COVID-19 resulting in more than 3.65 lakh deaths across the world. Most countries have implemented lockdowns for physical distancing to arrest the spread of the virus, but data collected over three months of the pandemic show that early testing, isolation and treatment are the surest way of reducing the impact of the pandemic irrespective of the scale of the lockdown. How does India fare in comparison with other countries and how do Indian States stack up on the testing front? An overview, using graphs, by **Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Naresh Singaravelu, Sumant Sen and Srinivasan Ramani**

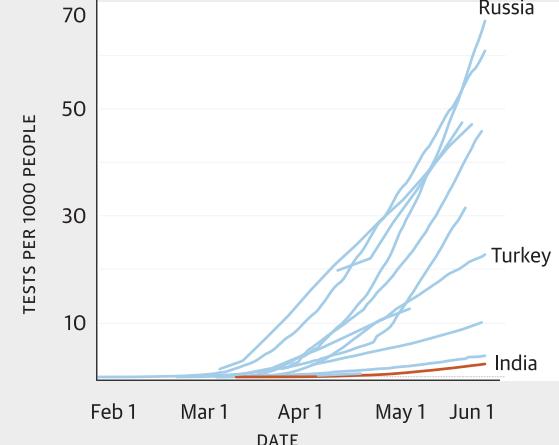
III TESTING MORE In terms of total number of tests conducted, India ranks third worldwide. More than 1,00,000 tests were conducted in the last seven days. Only the U.S. (3.7 lakh tests) and Russia (2.66 lakh) have conducted more tests overall in the last week. It is clear that India has been ramping up its test rate in overall terms

Seven-day rolling average of new tests conducted for countries with >1 lakh cases



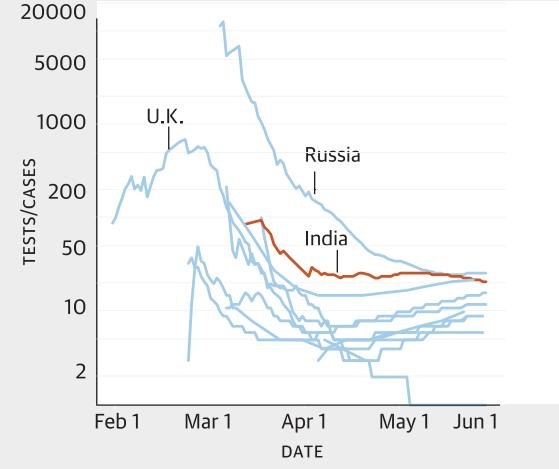
IV TEST RATIOS But in terms of tests per 1,000 people - a better way to find out what is the proportion of people who are being tested, India ranks relatively low among countries with the most cases. This is understandable, considering India's high population compared to these countries

Tests conducted per 1,000 people



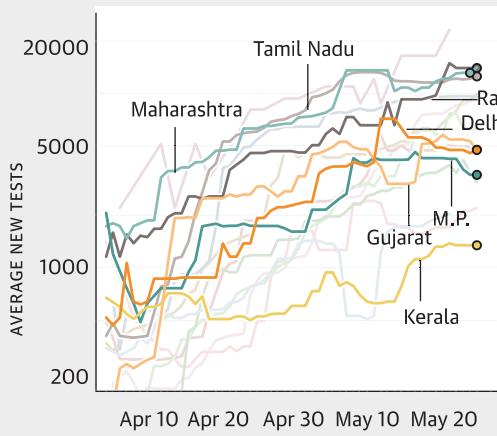
V TEST STRATEGY Tests conducted for each identified case is a better metric to find out how India compares globally. Among countries with the highest case load, India's tests per case have reduced slightly, which means it conducts fewer tests to detect a case as infections have increased

Tests conducted per confirmed case



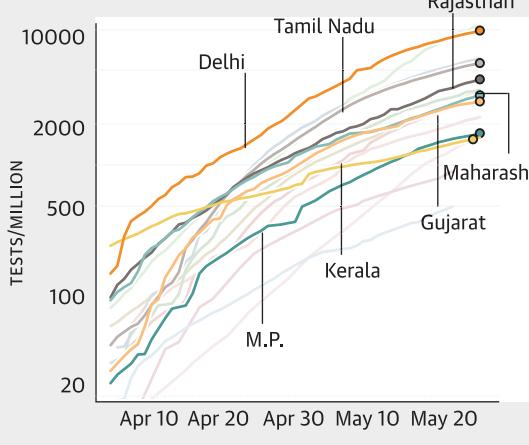
VI AVERAGE TESTS IN STATES This graph looks at the rolling average number of tests conducted (every seven days) since April 1. Interestingly Kerala, which had reduced its case load significantly has conducted the fewest tests on an average among major States.

Seven-day rolling average of new tests conducted in Indian States with at least 1,000 cases



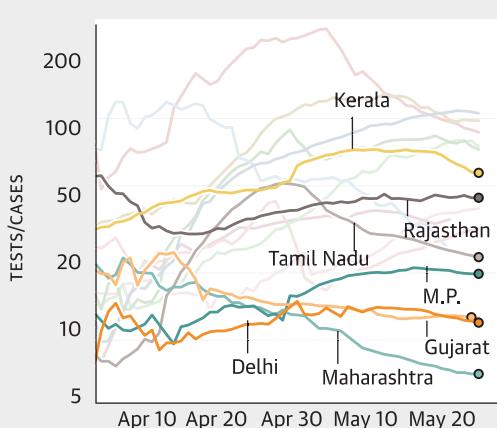
VII TESTS PER MILLION However, when testing rate is considered with respect to population, Kerala had a high test rate initially, which slowed down over time. Testing at a high rate early helped the State reduce its case load significantly before the influx of migrants from abroad and other States

Tests conducted per million people

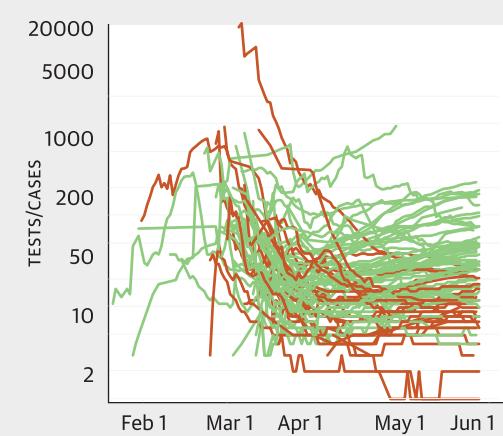


VIII TESTS PER CASE Kerala's relatively better performance is highlighted in this graph that compares tests per case over time. Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi and M.P. fare among the worse off States in this metric with relatively higher cases and lower tests per confirmed case

Tests conducted per confirmed case

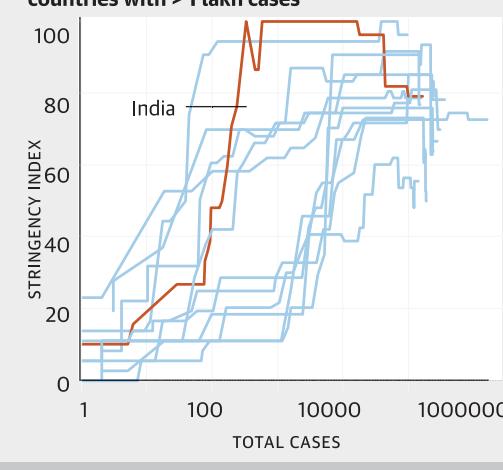


IX TESTS PER CASE WORLDWIDE Countries affected by the virus are divided into two groups (lower - marked in green, and higher case loads - marked in red). Evidently most countries that have tested more over time have reduced their case loads significantly when compared to those that have not tested enough



X STRINGENCY IMPACT Despite having among the most stringent lockdowns, cases in India have continued to rise steadily and fast. Clearly, the lockdown has not had as major an impact as high testing rates have, for other countries that have managed to flatten the infection curves

Stringency index vs total cases for countries with > 1 lakh cases



LAST WORD A high test rate has emerged as the sureshot way of reducing the impact of the pandemic across the world. Lockdowns have helped in physical distancing, but a sure way of limiting the growth of the infection spread has been to test significantly, isolate infected patients and to treat them. Within India, States like Kerala had tested at a high rate relative to their population initially (despite following the same ICMR guidelines as a protocol for identifying test cases). Kerala managed to do so by maximising contact tracing and local surveillance. This early testing strategy helped the State to reduce the total number of infections over time. Other States/UTs such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh have meanwhile experienced higher case loads despite increased testing over time, after having missed the bus early. Only a significant increase in testing and isolation of positive cases will help, short of other possibilities such as increased immunity or the availability of a vaccine. In Kerala's case, a new influx of migrants from other States and countries has made it imperative for the State to also focus on ramped up testing to address the new wave of infections

* Doubling time - Time taken for cases to double in the last 10 days. Stringency index is calculated based on 17 indicators including school closures, restrictions of movement etc. Index was created by Oxford University. Data sources: Johns Hopkins University, India's State health departments

Why is the locust surge posing a threat to agriculture in India?

What explains the attack this year? How can the country combat the insect invasion?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: India is gearing up for what could be one of its worst locust invasions in decades. Outbreaks of the insect attack have been reported from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. On Thursday, May 28, the Delhi government issued an advisory to farmers to spray pesticides and keep a possible attack at bay. Last year, Gujarat and Rajasthan had reported infestations. But it could be worse this year because of a chain of climate events, administrative laxity in several countries and the difficult circumstances brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts have warned of huge crop losses if the swarms are not stopped by June when the monsoons will lead to a new season of sowing rice, sugarcane, cotton and other crops.

When was the last big outbreak? The last big infestation was in 2010. There were 13 locust plagues between 1964 and 1997. From 1997 to 2010, there were five outbreaks that were controlled. From 2010 to 2018, there were no major swarms or breeding reported, according to the Locust Warning Organization (LWO), in Jodhpur. In 2019, Gujarat and Rajasthan reported a significant surge in locust infestations. Nearly 3.5 lakh hectares of cumin, rapeseed and mustard were damaged and officials had then said that it was the worst attack since 1993. This was partly due to an unusually long monsoon but also because pest-control operations were inadequate; therefore, nascent populations of the insect had not been wiped

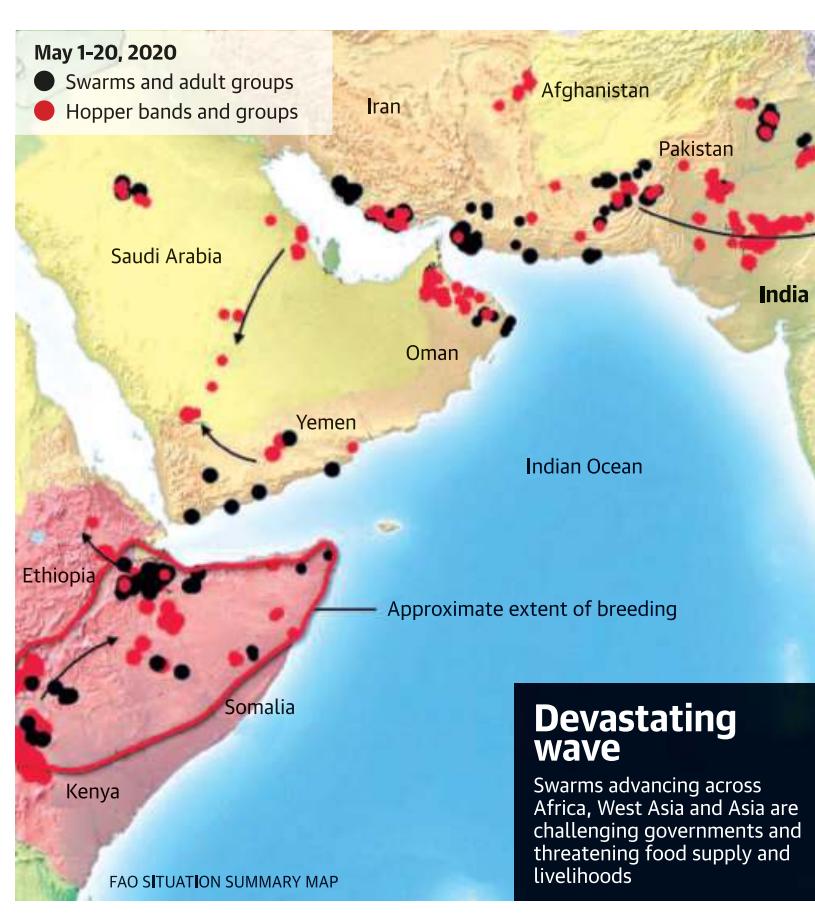
out.

Who keeps an eye on the locusts?

As a result of the 1926-1931/1932 locust plague, India, under the British Raj at the time, began research into the desert locust, beginning in 1931. It then led to the establishment, in 1939, of a permanent Locust Warning Organization (LWO), with a station in Karachi (undivided India). Its main job was to keep an eye for a specific sub-species of the insect, the desert locust, that sprang into the region from the Thar desert. There is a wealth of scientific and newspaper reports that point to locust attacks being a major scourge to the colonial administration and hence the references to it as a "plague" which is how they continue to be recorded to the present. There were serious outbreaks in 1812, 1821, 1843-44, 1863-67, 1869-73, 1876-81, 1889-98, 1900-1907, 1912-1920. A particularly bad season in 1926-1931 prompted the imperial administration to establish the Karachi warning centre and after Independence, India established its own centre at Jodhpur, Rajasthan, as a part of the Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage, under the Ministry of Agriculture.

What is the climate link to the infestation?

A pattern of warming in the Indian Ocean may be a trigger. A phenomenon called the Indian Ocean Dipole, in which the western and eastern parts of the ocean, warm differentially, tend to have an outsized impact in bringing excessive rains to India and West Asia. A "positive" dipole is when the western part is hotter by a degree or more than the eastern. Last year saw one of the



strongest positive dipoles in the Indian neighbourhood which brought on a difference of more than two degrees.

The Indian Ocean Dipole was so strong that it over-rode concerns of a drought in India last June and brought torrential rainfall - the most India has seen in decades. It also lasted nearly a month more than what is normal. This extended rainfall continued in several parts of West Asia, Oman, Yemen and in the Horn of Africa - Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya - so much so that the dry

soil became heavily moisture laden, facilitating the formation of several locust swarms. While this dipole was beginning to take shape by late 2018 - and locust outbreaks were growing in Africa - it increased last year. Due to favourable winds, it helped swarms to fly and breed in traditional grounds in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a specialised agency of the United Nations has been sending alerts on developing swarms. Somalia an-

sand became heavily moisture laden, facilitating the formation of several locust swarms. While this dipole was beginning to take shape by late 2018 - and locust outbreaks were growing in Africa - it increased last year. Due to favourable winds, it helped swarms to fly and breed in traditional grounds in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a specialised agency of the United Nations has been sending alerts on developing swarms. Somalia an-

How are locust invasions dealt with?

A locust attack has to be dealt with by spraying pest control and plant protection chemicals. According to the FAO's locust situation bulletin of May 27, adult locusts were forming groups and small swarms in spring breeding areas in Baluchistan, Indus Valley (Pakistan) and southern coast and parts of Sistan-Baluchistan. These infestations are likely to move to the summer breeding areas along India-Pakistan from Cholistan to Tharparkar.

In India, existing groups of swarms have continued to move east and to the central States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Much of these movements were associated with the strong wester-

ly winds of Cyclone Amphan. Several successive waves of invasions are likely until July in Rajasthan, with eastward surges across northern India as far as Bihar and Odisha followed by westward movements and a return to Rajasthan on the changing winds associated with the monsoon. These movements will cease as swarms begin to become less mobile. The swarms are less likely to reach Nepal, and Bangladesh and south India, according to experts.

Is adequate action being taken?

Indian officials, last year and this year too, have blamed Pakistan for not spraying adequate pesticide to stem the nascent population. It has been part of the protocol for many years, for entomologists from India and Pakistan to conduct border meetings and divide pest control responsibilities. While the lack of funds and inadequate monitoring have been a problem for many years, as the FAO has frequently pointed out, the novel coronavirus pandemic this year has caused unusual focus on natural disasters such as cyclones as well as locust attacks.

While locusts are unlikely to be a threat in urban centres as they do not have much to feed on, the national lockdown has made the availability of pesticide as well as its transportation difficult. With labour also not being available easily due to the lockdown, this could affect spraying operations and, as a result, allow locusts to cause significant damage.

Experience shows that a locust plague usually follows a one to two year cycle after which there is a lull for eight to nine years. However, strong Indian Ocean Dipoles are expected to become more frequent whetted by an overall trend of warming oceans. This phenomenon could trigger regular locust infestations.



ILLUSTRATION: KANNAN SUNDAR

GURKHA REGIMENTS

Military bonding beyond borders

The border dispute with Nepal turns the spotlight on the Gurkha regiments, which have been a pillar of India's national security for decades

ATUL ANEJA

The blow-back from remarks by the Army chief, Manoj Naravane, implying that Nepal was raising imaginary border claims with India at China's behest could hit a vital pillar of India's national security – the seven prized Gurkha regiments comprising battle-hardened troops, with a proven record of loyalty and valour.

Speaking at an online seminar on May 15, Gen. Naravane raised eyebrows when he asserted that Nepal's objections to India's construction of a link road to the Lipulekh Pass may be "at the behest of someone else". "There is reason to believe that they might have raised this issue at the behest of someone else and that is very much a possibility," the Army chief had said, in an ob-

vious reference to China.

The General's remarks raised a firestorm in Nepal, where tensions with India were already high following Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's inauguration of an 80-km stretch of a "pilgrim" road earlier in May. The entire road would provide easier access to Indian worshippers bound for Kailash-Mansarovar in China via the Lipulekh Pass. Mount Kailash is about 96 km away from the Pass.

Following the road inauguration, the India-Nepal dispute over the status of Lipulekh has flared. Indian maps have shown Lipulekh as an Indian territory, with the area to the east of the Pass, belonging to Nepal. Nepal, on the contrary, claims that the Lipulekh Pass is part of its territory, located in its Dharchula district of Sudur-

pashchim Pradesh. Nepal PM K.P. Sharma Oli stoked the fires of nationalism to a new high, by delivering a defiant speech in Parliament, slamming India not only over territorial claims, but also for spiralling COVID-19 infections in his country.

Growing bitterness

Amid the growing bitterness, the Nepalese Army, which has historically enjoyed unique and privileged ties with India, has refrained from reacting to Gen. Naravane's statement. Spokesperson of the Nepal Army, Brig. General Bigyan Dev Pandey, refusing to respond to General Naravane's comments, spotlighted that the controversy fell in the "political" and not the military domain.

But, on the contrary, Nepal's Defence Minister Ishwor Pokhrel, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, has slammed the Indian Army chief's utterance. Gen. Naravane's comments, he said, had hurt the sentiments of Nepalese Gurkhas, who have a long tradition of sacrifice for India, he said on May 25.

"With this, the Indian Chief of the Army Staff has also hurt the sentiments of the Nepali Gurkha Army personnel who lay down their lives to protect India," Mr. Pokhrel said in an interview. He added the Nepal Army "would

definitely play its role in the right time, as per the directives of the government based on our Constitution... If needed, it will fight".

Amid the cross-fire between the Army Chief and the Nepalese political leadership lies the danger that the controversy may breed alienation among segments of at least 40 Gurkha battalions, mainly comprising Nepali soldiers who are the Indian Army's pride. That would be a major Indian concern as New Delhi cannot afford any dissonance in the strong and reliable relationship with Gurkha troops, which as been tested and forged in the line of fire, for more than two centuries.

Recruited by the British

Ties between British-India and Nepali Gurkhas, who originate from the mountainous region of Gurkha, go deep, and can be traced to the famous Treaty of Sugauli, signed at the end of the Anglo-Nepalese war. That was in 1816, when troops of the British East India Company discovered that despite losing the war, the Nepali Gurkhas had fought with exceptional valour and grit, worthy of recruitment in the British-Indian forces. Consequently, the first battalion of the Gurkha Regiment was raised.

The gamble of the Massachusetts-born General of the

East India Company, David Ochterlony, the force behind the induction of the Gurkhas in the military, paid off, as the recruits from Nepal played a significant role in the consolidation of the British Empire in India. Gurkhas had engaged in combat dur-

troops at the dizzy heights of the Siachen Glacier in Ladakh.

Resolutely defending Bila-

fond La, one of the "gates" leading to the glacier, the third battalion of the fourth Gurkha Rifles regiment blunted repeated assaults by the Pakistani troops, all at a height of 20,000 feet. In the battle fought on September 20-24, 1987, 13 Gurkha troops were killed and 23 wounded. For their bravery, the unit earned 3 Maha Vir Chakras (MVC) and 5 Vir Chakras.

During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, a Gurkha battalion pioneered amphibious operations. Amid the Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in Sri Lanka, two Gurkha battalions participated in combat with distinction, but Lt. Colonel Inder Bal Singh Bawa, one of the battalion commanders, was injured and later died, along with many of the unit's officers and troops. Col. Bawa was later decorated with an MVC.

Speaking of the Gurkhas, Sam Manekshaw, India's first field Marshall, who himself belonged to the eighth Gurkha Rifles regiment, once famously said: "If anyone tells you he is never afraid, he is a liar or he is a Gurkha."

In focus

■ East India Company General David Ochterlony was the force behind the induction of the Gurkhas in the military

■ The Gurkhas had fought in the Gurkha-Sikh War, Anglo-Sikh wars, and the Afghan wars

■ During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, a Gurkha battalion pioneered an amphibious operation

There is not a single military campaign launched by independent India where the battalions of the seven Gurkha regiments have not left their indelible mark

Ties with Indian Army After India gained Independence, six Gurkha regiments were transferred from the British to the Indian Army as part of a tripartite agreement between Nepal, India and Britain. A seventh regiment was raised after Independence. Currently, there roughly are 32,000 Gurkhas who make up the 40 battalions serving in the seven regiments in the Indian Army. There is not a single military campaign launched by independent India, where the battalions have not left their indelible mark. In recent decades, many retired Indian Army officers would recall the sheer tenacity, courage and combat skills of Gurkha

BENNY GANTZ

The General in the government

Netanyahu's strongest rival has buried the hatchet and joined hands with him

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Benny Gantz, a relative neophyte in Israeli politics who vowed during three inconclusive elections not to serve under a criminally indicted Prime Minister, was sworn in on May 17 as Benjamin Netanyahu's Deputy Premier. Under the deal he agreed in April, which supporters have derided as a betrayal of trust, the former Army Chief of Staff will swap roles after 18 months with the country's longest-serving leader.

Mr. Netanyahu had previously resorted to a relentless smear campaign against his opponent, calling Mr. Gantz a traitor because he was willing to take the support of Israel's Arab parties to dislodge him. The latter has, however, justified his U-turn in terms of having to save the country from COVID-19 and to avert a fourth general election.

The Prince

Mr. Gantz is best remembered for the 2014 military campaign he spearheaded against Hamas. The son of Holocaust survivors, he was drafted to the Israeli Defence Forces in 1977. His rise through the military ranks was quick – he became a Brigadier General at 39 and Major General at 42. Soldiers called him "the Prince".

In December 2018, three years after retiring as Chief of Staff, Mr. Gantz launched the Hosen L'Yisrael, or Israel Resilience Party, pledging to enhance national se-



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

choose his successor.

In a dramatic about-turn in 24 hours, Mr. Gantz nominated himself as the Speaker and announced his backing for the so-called unity government with his arch-rival. Commentators ascribe the abrupt shift to the resistance within Blue and White legislative factions to cohabiting with the Arab parties, forcing Mr. Gantz to either collaborate with Mr. Netanyahu or risk a fourth election.

West Bank settlements
Crucially, Israel's highly contentious proposal to annex settlements in the occupied West Bank is the only aspect, besides the response to the pandemic, where the coalition deal gives Mr. Netanyahu a free hand. The Joint List and Israel's traditional left supporters have criticised such a stance as complete capitulation on the part of Mr. Gantz.

It perhaps also explains his silence right through his electoral campaigns on statehood for the Palestinians. More broadly, it points to the limitations of the catch-all appeal of the party and Mr. Gantz's political approach, given Israel's highly fragmented polity.

It may hence prove especially hard for him to resurrect his reputation as a rallying force for the country's opposition. Such an opportunity may yet arise when the courts pronounce on Mr. Netanyahu's criminal trials in the coming months.

curity and the rule of law. Resilience merged with two other parties in February 2019, marking the beginning of the centrist Blue and White coalition, just weeks before the first of the three general elections that started in April.

In poll campaigns, Mr. Gantz channelled popular antipathy to Mr. Netanyahu's record in office, exemplified by the attacks on the judiciary and investigation agencies in the wake of ongoing criminal corruption cases. Last year, he supported the creation of a "contiguous Palestinian entity" on 65% of the West Bank and called for a freeze on building settlements outside the major settlement blocs.

No majority
Blue and White emerged the largest combine in the September election, but without a clear majority. During coalition talks after the March 2 election, Israel's Arab parties, the Joint List,

decided to back the alliance and held out hopes of harmony between the nation's diverse religious communities. This momentum enabled Mr. Gantz to rally support among smaller opposition parties to legislate term limits for the Prime Minister – Mr. Netanyahu is now serving a fourth consecutive term. Another measure Mr. Gantz proposed sought to strip indicted politicians of eligibility to run for high office. All of these have, for the moment, been put on ice.

In an evident acknowledgement of his growing strength, President Reuven Rivlin invited Mr. Gantz to form the government. In a bid to kick-start the new legislature, the latter secured a judicial injunction in late March to expedite the election of the Knesset Speaker. The process was nonetheless circumvented, as the incumbent resigned his post, rather than heed the court's ruling to hold an election to

it may hence prove especially hard for him to resurrect his reputation as a rallying force for the country's opposition. Such an opportunity may yet arise when the courts pronounce on Mr. Netanyahu's criminal trials in the coming months.

BOTANIC GARDEN

The sorrow of fallen trees

Cyclone Amphan has turned Kolkata's famed Botanic Garden into a 'graveyard'

BISHWANATH GHOSH

There are places that one associates with Calcutta – or Kolkata – but in reality they are not situated in the city. Take Howrah Station, for example. The red-brick train terminus lies across the River Hooghly in the district of Howrah, and is connected to the city by the iconic Howrah Bridge. Then there is the historic botanical garden – named after Jagadish Chandra Bose as recently as in 2009 – which also lies across the river in Howrah.

The garden dates back to the time when the British were still traders in India. It was set up in 1878 – thirty years after Robert Clive won the Battle of Plassey and consolidated East India Company's hold over Bengal – by Robert Kyd, a lieutenant-colonel in the British Army who was known to have a personal interest in horticulture. In creating the garden he was driven not so much by nature as by the idea of commercial gain: he wanted to grow plants that would bring money to the company.

A botanist's delight
Kyd died in 1793, aged 47. He had wanted the garden, which had over 4,000 plants by now, to be his final resting place but he was instead buried in Calcutta, at the South Park Street Cemetery. Over the years, the garden grew into a botanist's delight with trees from all corners of the world taking root here.

Today, the botanical garden is counting 'dead bodies'. On May 20, Cyclone Amphan tore through its 273-acre spread – containing 15,000 plants belonging to 1,300 species – felling hundreds of trees. Zens of them, that had withstood countless storms, were toppled by Amphan.

The Great Banyan
Had the cyclone been slightly longer in duration and stronger in force, it would also have wiped out the garden's biggest asset: the Great Banyan, which pre-dates the establishment of the garden. It survived two cyclones in the 19th century and in 1925, its decayed main trunk was removed, but it continued to grow. According to Dr. Das, 15 to 20% of the tree was damaged by Amphan. "We may be able to salvage 5% of the part that is damaged."

But many of its contemporaries are gone for good. Like the African baobab, brought from Madagascar. The tree has a lifespan of 6,000 years and can hold up to 500 litres of water. Then the numerous mahogany trees, some of them brought from the West Indies in 1795 by William Rox-

burgh, the botanist who, after Kyd's death, moved from Madras to take charge of the garden as its first full-time superintendent.

The mahogany trees, when they fell, also crushed several species of bamboo. Amphan's other victims include the 'mad tree', whose leaves were differently shaped from one another, and a mountain rose from Venezuela. "The cyclone has done to the garden what COVID-19 has done to Italy and Spain," says Dr. Das.

More 'bodies' are likely to be discovered once the damage-assessment takes place in full swing. The garden, which comes under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, is short of staff at the moment because the area around it has been declared a containment zone due to the spread of COVID-19. "It won't be proper on my part to ask them (staff) to join duty when restrictions are in place," says Dr. Das. As of now, two small teams are examining the extent of damage. They are at a loss because they are unable to figure out where to begin: Everybody is in a state of daze. "It's a hotch-potch at the moment," says Dr. Das. Lucky are those who have ticked the garden in their list of must-visit places. For when it reopens, it will no longer look the same. It's like the botanical equivalent of the Taj Mahal being wiped off the face of earth. For it to look the way it did until May 20, it could take another 200 years.



Rohit Sharma
nominated
for Khel Ratna



Rohit Sharma. ■ FILE PHOTO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has nominated Rohit Sharma for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna while Ishant Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and Deepti Sharma have been recommended for the Arjuna Award.

If Rohit gets the Khel Ratna, he will become the fourth cricketer, after Sachin Tendulkar, Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Virat Kohli, to win the coveted award.

Federer tops
Forbes list,
Kohli 66th

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW YORK

Virat Kohli is the only Indian, and lone cricketer, in the Forbes' list of world's highest-paid athletes with total earnings of \$26 million, jumping to the 66th spot from 100 in the previous list. Roger Federer topped the list for the first time with earnings of \$106.3 million. He was fifth last year.



Virat Kohli. ■ FILE PHOTO

Chance for cricketers to get fitter, stronger'

India bowling coach Arun stresses the need for a camp and some practice matches

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

The challenge before everyone is to make the most of what is available during these unprecedented times of COVID-19. In the lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic, India's bowling coach B. Arun sees possibilities.

"It's a testing situation. But in this difficult period, I also see an opportunity," he told *The Hindu* on Saturday.

Arun elaborated, "You see international cricketers, including pacemen, rarely get such a long break."

"So here is the chance for them to get fitter and stronger and recover from injuries and niggles."

Arun said the Indian team's strength and conditioning coach Nick Webb and physio Nitin Patel have been performing a marvelous job to give the bowlers



The mastermind: Arun has been instrumental in putting together a high-quality pace attack. ■ FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

diverse fitness routines through the internet based on the equipment available.

With the government giving permission to international cricketers to practise

with their trainers, Arun said, "Now the bowlers can send down deliveries, find their rhythm."

But then, cricketers have to attain match fitness. And

so far the government has not given its nod for players to practise together as a team.

Arun, who has put together a high-quality pace attack, said, "Once the government says 'yes', we need six to eight weeks together as a team."

"There has to be a camp, then we need to have practice matches and hopefully we would have some domestic matches by then."

"Match fitness and being sharp and ready for international cricket are crucial."

Arun said, "The team-management has been in constant touch with the boys through video conferencing. They are in good spirits and raring to go."

Immediate focus

Looking at the campaigns ahead, Arun said, "Our immediate focus is on the next

game we play. And every team is tough to beat in its backyard. But the Test series in Australia, later this year, will be a big challenge. We are confident."

Arun termed the Test series setback in New Zealand an aberration, and added: "We are not looking at the past. We are looking ahead."

And dwelling on the contentious issue of the ban on use of saliva for shining the ball owing to COVID-19 concerns, Arun said, "We are allowed to use sweat. So we will work on that."

"And during the camp we will also figure out ways to shine the ball without saliva. If the ICC permits artificial substance to shine the ball, it should be the same for everyone."

For Arun, optimism is the key word.

IN BRIEF



Bremen gets the better of Schalke

BERLIN Schalke lost by a solitary goal to visitor Werder Bremen in the Bundesliga.

The results: Hertha Berlin 2 (Dilrosun 23, Piatek 90+3) bt Augsburg 0; Mainz 0 lost to Hoffenheim 1 (Bebe 43); Schalke 0 lost to Werder Bremen 1 (Bittencourt 32); Wolfsburg 1 (Mbaba 58) lost to Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Silva 27+pen, Kamada 85); Freiburg 0 lost to Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Havertz 54). AFP

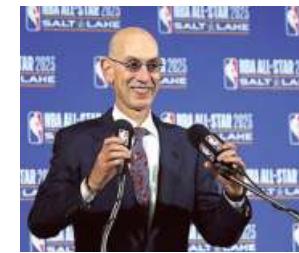
Windies ready for 'bio-secure' tour of England

ST. JOHN'S West Indies cricket chiefs have given approval for a Test tour of England where the team will stay in a "bio-secure environment". "The Cricket West Indies (CWI) Board gave approval in principle for the proposed upcoming West Indies Test tour of England," said a CWI statement on Friday. The ECB has proposed the Tests start on July 8, 16 and 24. AFP



de Kock, Ngidi dominate CSA award nominations

JOHANNESBURG Quinton de Kock and Lungi Ngidi dominated the nominations for the 2019/20 Cricket South Africa (CSA) men's international awards. Marizanne Kapp and Laura Wolvaardt won four nods each among women. PTI



NBA reportedly eyeing a July 31 return

NEW YORK

NBA commissioner Adam Silver told team owners, on a conference call with the board of governors, he's targeting a July 31 return to play, *The Los Angeles Times* reported, although the format for completing the season remains unclear. Currently, players are being allowed into team facilities to conduct solo

workouts, subject to local coronavirus restrictions, but team training has not resumed. AFP

Kohli hails Dhoni's role in his rise to captaincy

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

Virat Kohli credited M.S. Dhoni in his promotion as India captain.

In a conversation with R. Ashwin on the Instagram show *Reminisce with Ash*, Kohli spoke about the transition from his days as the under-19 skipper to his current role, leading the national team.

Taking responsibility
"I liked taking responsibility and I was used to leading my club and State teams. I also captained the Ranji Trophy side with seniors. So I was never overawed by captaincy," said Kohli.

"But becoming captain of India was not even in my wildest dreams. It was about wanting to play and be in the XI regularly or at least I wanted to be discussed... is this guy good enough?"

"Then the transition happens slowly. You start talking to the captain regularly. I was always in MS's ear. He would deny a lot of things but also discuss a lot of things. He got a lot of confidence I can do this after him."

"A large part of me becoming captain was also to do with him observing me for a long period of time."

Weightlifting: revised Olympic qualification system approved

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has approved the revised Olympic qualifying system for weightlifting for the Tokyo Games next year.

Under the revised system, an additional qualification period – running from October 1, 2020 to April 30, 2021 – has been added.

Replacements for the cancelled events, originally scheduled prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, will be held during this period.

Relieved and happy

"He is relieved and happy that he has at last been able to reach India," said Aruna.

She added that Anand was grateful to the central government for facilitating

Anand back in India

Was stranded in Germany for three months

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

Finally, Viswanathan Anand is home. Well, almost.

The five-time World chess champion, who had been stranded in Germany for about three months because of the coronavirus, landed in Bengaluru on Saturday, but he would have to wait for a fortnight to reach his home in Chennai. "He has gone into 14 days of institutionalised quarantine," Anand's wife Aruna told *The Hindu* over phone.



Anand. ■ FILE PHOTO

the return of the Indians stranded in different parts of the world. "He appreciated the efforts the governments took in this regard," Aruna said. "It certainly would not have been easy to organise all these flights."

Anand had gone to Germany in February to play in the Bundesliga. The deadly virus stopped the tournament.

‘Olympic medal far off, but there is progress’

Shikha feels Indians need better exposure and competition

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

An Olympic medal in swimming may be unimaginable for Indians at the moment, but Olympian Shikha Tandon said that she could see progress and it was important to stay on track.

In a chat with swimmers Srihari Nataraj and S.P. Likhith on the web from her home in San Francisco, the 35-year-old Shikha, a product manager with an exercise intelligence company that helps athletes and coaches optimise training and performance, said that it was encouraging to find Indian swimmers looking at the A-qualification mark for the Tokyo Olympics as a



Shikha Tandon.

"We have to do it step by step. From trying to achieve A-qualification for the first time, we can't be talking about a medal. We must look at making the semifinals and then the final. It will take two or three Olympics."

"We have the talent and I

want our swimmers to prove me wrong," said Shikha, a member of the advisory board of the Sports School in Bengaluru.

Interestingly, the Sports School has three FINA-certified swimming pools, including one of Olympic size, with 10 lanes.

Shikha, who missed qualifying for the 2008 Beijing Olympics by 0.05 seconds after competing in Athens 2004, still holds the National records in 50m and 100m freestyle.

Asserting that the only way to reach world standards was to race regularly with better swimmers, Shikha agreed that the Indians needed better exposure.

Nakamura takes it to the decider

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Hikaru Nakamura hit back to beat Magnus Carlsen 2.5-1.5 and steered their semifinal encounter to the deciding third mini-match in the \$150,000 Lindores Abbey Rapid Chess Challenge.

Earlier on Friday, Russia's Daniil Dubov raced away to a 2.5-0.5 win against China's Ding Liren and clinched their best-of-three mini-match 2-0 for a place in the final.

Like in their first mini-match, Dubov won the first two games and drew the third.



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Lancet reports higher post-operative mortality rate among COVID-19 patients

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Patients with the SARS-CoV-2 infection, who undergo surgeries, are at an increased risk of mortality, says a newly published study in the medical journal *Lancet*. Researchers studied data of 1,128 patients from 235 hospitals across the world and found that the 30-day mortality in such patients was nearly 23.8%, which is much greater than the numbers seen in high-risk patients before the pandemic.

The study carried out by experts from University of Birmingham included patients undergoing surgery who had SARS-CoV-2 infection diagnosed within seven days before or 30 days after surgery. Their surgeries were carried out between January 1 and March 31.

"Post-operative pulmonary complications occur in half of patients with perioperative SARS-CoV-2 infection and are associated with high mortality," the study identified further, adding that



Being cautious: Hospitals have told patients to postpone some surgeries during the COVID-19 pandemic. ■ AFP

post-operative outcomes in such patients are substantially worse than pre-pandemic baseline rates of pulmonary complications and mortality.

While overall 30-day mortality in the study was 23.8%, it also showed that mortality was higher among men and patients above the age of 70.

Mortality in other subgroups was also high: 18.9% in elective surgery patients, 25.6% in emergency patients, 16.3% in those who underwent minor procedures and 26.9% in those who underwent major procedures.

countries reported a 30-day mortality of 14.9% in patients undergoing high-risk emergency surgery," he added.

Going by the global experience, medical experts in India have been treading cautiously, by postponing elective surgeries and managing patients with conservative treatment. At KEM Hospital, one of the largest public hospitals in Mumbai, all elective surgeries have been postponed but an average of eight emergency procedures including Caesarean sections, laparotomies, fixing compound fractures etc. are being carried out.

"In patients with the SARS-CoV-2 infection, the postoperative complications are much higher and thus the mortality is high too," said hospital's Dean, Dr. Hemant Deshmukh.

Dr C. Pramesh, director of the Tata Memorial Hospital said it takes about 10 days for a COVID-19 patient to turn negative and it is wise to wait till then to operate.

Map not to scale.

West Bengal State Disaster Management Authority, ICICI Bank, A/C No. 628001041066, IFSC ICIC0006280
Odisha Chief Minister's Relief Fund, State Bank of India, A/C No. 11109339165, IFSC SBIN0010236

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