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Donald Trump postpones G7 summit, seeks to invite more countries
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Nearly 2,500 more cases; State tally nears 68,000

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The COVID-19 pandemic continued its scourge in Maharashtra on Sunday with 89 more deaths and 2,487 new cases, taking total fatalities to 2,286 and cases to 67,655, so far.

The number of active patients was, however, 36,031 with as many as 1,248 patients being discharged on Sunday to take total recoveries in the State to 29,329, Health Department officials said.

A major silver lining is that the rate at which cases are doubling in the State has improved significantly over the past week and is now better than India's overall doubling rate.

"The patient doubling time for the State has now increased to 17.5 days from the 11.7 days in the previous week. This is higher than the rest of the country's averaging doubling time figure of 15.7 days. Maharashtra's recovery rate stands at 43.35%," said State Surveillance Officer, Dr. Pradeep Awate. Total cases in Mumbai inched towards the 40,000 mark with 1,244 new cases. However, little over half of the cases - 20,845 - were active.

DETAILS ▸ PAGE 3

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Stay more vigilant than ever against COVID-19 threat: Modi

Migrant workers faced the worst of the pain during this period, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked Indians to stay more vigilant than ever against the threat of COVID-19, a day after the Centre notified a phased opening up of the economy, termed Unlock 1.0.

Mr. Modi was addressing the nation via his monthly radio broadcast *Mann ki Baat* on Sunday. "We should not be careless in our fight against corona. We have to continue to follow social distancing and other protocols as there is no vaccine, or even precedents, on how to combat the disease," he said.

On Sunday, the country registered 8,562 new cases and 219 deaths. This takes the total number of cases to 1,90,531 and fatalities to 5,400, according to the State Health Departments.

Under the Ministry of Home Affairs' orders, strict lockdown of the kind that prevailed since March 25 will be limited to containment zones – areas sealed because of a large number of COVID-19 cases – at least till June 30.

'Humanitarian crisis'

The Prime Minister also spoke of the large humanitarian crisis over inter-State workers, who he said had faced the worst of the pain during this period.

"It has also brought to the fore the vulnerability of our eastern States, whose labour has contributed to building our country and who have the potential otherwise to be the economic engine of the country. There are many lessons to be learnt from this situation to improve our future. Many have already been taken to heart by some States. Some are setting up Migrant Commissions, others are mapping skills of the workers, some are encouraging start-ups," he said.

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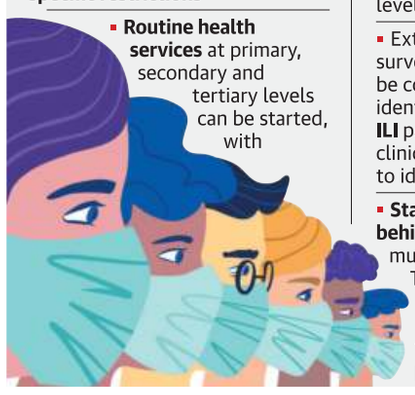
EDITORIAL ▸ PAGE 6

What the experts say

A look at some of the recommendations by health practitioners, researchers and academics to the government to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **A panel of health experts and social scientists** at Central, State and district levels should be constituted to address the health and humanitarian crises
- **Comprehensive data**, including test results, should be made available in the public domain
- The nationwide lockdown needs to be replaced with **cluster specific restrictions**
- **Routine health services** at primary, secondary and tertiary levels can be started, with adequate protection for health workers
- Rapid scaling up of public health services and research should be done with allocation of 5% of GDP to health expenditure at the Central and State levels
- Extensive surveillance should be conducted to identify **SARI and ILI** patients through clinical institutions to identify hotspots
- **States lagging behind on testing** must catch-up. The government needs to support free testing in private labs



'Indefinite lockdown is more harmful'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A group of public health experts, two of whom are part of a government-constituted advisory committee to contain the pandemic, has said that enforcing the lockdown "indefinitely" would be too disruptive and "overtake lives saved due to the lockdown mediated slowing of the COVID-19 progression".

"Had the migrant persons been allowed to go home at the beginning of the epidemic when the disease spread was very low, the current situation could have been avoided. They are now taking infection to every corner of the country; mostly to rural and peri-urban areas, in districts with relatively weak public health systems," says the letter jointly authored by the Indian Public Health Association, the Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine and the Indian Association of Epidemiologists.

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

Amendment on new map tabled in Nepal parliament

Rift with Madhesi parties re-appears during session

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The government of Nepal on Sunday tabled the crucial Constitution Amendment Bill to formalise the country's new map, which claims parts of India as its territory. The Bill was tabled by Nepal's Minister of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Shiva Maya Tumbahangphe even as Nepal's Madhesi parties refused to welcome the Bill as of now.

Meanwhile, there was high drama on the streets with reports that senior diplomats wanted to reach the Parliament to witness the historic session.

Strategic sliver

The Constitution Second Amendment Bill will change the Schedule 3 of the Nepalese Constitution and replace the existing map with the map that was unveiled on May 20. The new map depicts the sliver of strategically important land covering Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani as part of Nepal. The area is currently part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand but Nepal has disputed the Indian position based on historical documents and bilateral understanding.

Ms. Tumbahangphe said the Coat of Arms of Nepal will be altered after the amendment is passed as it will depict the new map.

The tabling of the amendment Bill came a day after the chief Opposition, the Nepali Congress, extended support to Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's government, which ensured that the Bill will get the required two-thirds majority in the Parliament. The process is expected to take around a week.

Political support

Former Foreign Secretary of Nepal Madhu Raman Acharya said the amendment is bound to sail through, given the unanimity among major political parties. "It's just a matter of time as all sides are united that Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh belong to Nepal and the map needs to show the correct territory of our country," said Mr. Acharya, speaking to *The Hindu* on the phone.

However, despite Mr. Acharya's claim of support from "all sides", the Parliament showed the deep division within Nepal's polity as the parties from the plains, or the Madhes region, appeared less than enthusiastic about the new map, which has emerged as an emotive issue among a majority of the people.

Samajbadi Party leader Upendra Yadav said his party, which has been at the forefront of struggle for Madhesis' rights, has not taken a clear stand on the map. "We have not decided to support or oppose the amendment Bill till now."

New worry: Students protesting in Kathmandu against the Indian government earlier in May. ▪ AP

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FRIEND TURNED FOE ▸ PAGE 10

2 militants escape from encounter site

Early morning gun battle in Anantnag

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

At least two trapped militants managed to break a security cordon and escape from an encounter site in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday.

A police official said the militants were engaged in a brief gunfight in south Kashmir's Posh-Kreeri area in Anantnag in a pre-dawn cordon-and-search operation of the Army, the CRPF and the police.

"A firefight broke out around 2 a.m. The operation was launched after a specific tip-off and the militants were spotted too. However, by the time first light of day broke, there was a lull from the militants' side. Later, no contact was established with them. It seems the militants managed to break the cordon," the police said.

No bodies or weapons were recovered from the encounter site despite hectic search operations, the police added.

Internet services, which were snapped during the operation as part of precautionary measures, were restored as soon as it was called off by the security forces.

Jawans near the encounter site in Anantnag district on Sunday ▪ NISSAR AHMAD

Getting ready to sail

Work beckons: Fishermen busy refurbishing their mechanised boats at the Thoothukudi harbour in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. They will be venturing into the sea on Monday after a long gap, owing to the lockdown and the annual fishing ban. ▪ N. RAJESH

'Intolerance against judiciary is growing'

Don't mistrust the system: SC judge

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Sanjay Kishan Kaul said there was growing intolerance against the judiciary fuelled by social media.

He said imputations were being made against judges for their decisions. Damage was done to the judicial institution if the tendency to criticise crossed certain lines.

"Criticism is also information but boundaries need to be made or if such criticism becomes part of misinformation... This is not good for the system... If you mistrust every system, then you do not have a system and all you have is anarchy," Justice Kaul said.

He said this during an online lecture on Sunday on 'Freedom of Speech in times of COVID-19 - Fake news and misinformation', organised by the MBA Academy, Madras Bar Association. The event saw the participation of S. Parthasarathy, chairman of the MBA Academy, and M. Baskar, secretary of the Madras Bar Association.

Justice Kaul was part of the Bench which recently took suo motu cognisance of the migrant workers' crisis.

Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul

CONTINUED ON ▸ PAGE 8

SpaceX's spacecraft successfully docks with ISS

It marks the dawn of a new age in commercial space travel; it is a great day for the country, says Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

SpaceX's Dragon spacecraft with two NASA astronauts on Sunday successfully docked with the International Space Station (ISS) after a historic launch from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, marking the dawn of a new age in commercial space travel.

Elon Musk's SpaceX company confirmed the successful docking of NASA astronauts Bob Behnken, 49, and Doug Hurley, 53, with the ISS, the orbiting laboratory. "Docking confirmed – Crew Dragon has arrived at the @space_station!" the California-headquartered company announced on Twitter. NASA also took to Twitter to announce the docking.

The crew will be welcomed aboard the ISS, where they will become members of the Expedition 63 crew, which includes NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy.

The liftoff also assumes significance as it marks the launch of humans into orbit from the U.S. soil for the first time in nearly a decade.

The SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft, carrying astronauts Behnken and Hurley, lifted off on Saturday atop the company's Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

With the liftoff, SpaceX became the first private company to launch people into the orbit, a feat achieved previously by only three governments: the U.S., Russia and China.

The launch, postponed early this week due to inclement weather, gave Americans something to cheer about as in the last three months they have lost over 1,00,000 of their countrymen due to the COVID-19 that has brought the economy to its knees. More than 40 million people have lost jobs.

Top U.S. leadership including President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, and thousands of curious Americans had gathered to watch the launch live on a bright Sunday afternoon. Congratulating Mr. Musk, NASA and the astronauts, Mr. Trump described the launch day as a great day for the country.

The President said he spoke with Mr. Musk, whom he called one of the "great brains".

He also spoke with the two NASA astronauts prior to the takeoff.

Landmark mission: People watch as SpaceX Falcon 9 lifts off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. ▪ AP

State begins gradual unlocking, outside containment zones

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Commuter train rides, haircuts and visits to shopping malls and religious places will remain out of bounds across the State for the next phase of the lockdown till June 30, the Maharashtra government announced on Sunday. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that COVID-19 cases in the State have almost peaked and the curve will flatten and come down if people adhere to safety norms with responsibility.

'Mission Begin Again', the State's nomenclature for the gradual unwinding of lockdown restrictions beginning June 3, envisages no relaxations for containment zones to be notified by local civic bodies, while buses and taxis for commuters will not operate in most urban areas that will see some relaxations over June such as shops and private offices being allowed to open on June 3 and June 8, respectively.

"This is the beginning of yet another battle as we have to tread carefully from now on. We are beginning from scratch... The curve may rise slightly, but it will be flattened now. We have to bring down the numbers by following prescribed safety norms," the Chief Minister said.

Restricted relaxations will kick in for areas under municipal corporations of Mumbai, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Region (MMR), Pune, Solapur, Aurangabad, Malegaon, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Akola, Amravati and Nagpur. Shops can open here and private offices can operate at 10% strength, while courier services, plumbers, electricians and garages can also begin work.

For the rest of the State, some more relaxations have been offered, such as plying of intra-district buses, taxis and personal vehicles (with restricted passengers) and running private and government offices at full strength. Physical distancing norms are to be followed for all activities.

Home delivery of newspapers will resume from June 7, while shooting for films and TV or web series can also commence.

DETAILS ▸ PAGE 2

Let's tread carefully to flatten the curve: CM

Thackeray thanks Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal for increasing trains from State in recent days

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Launching the 'Mission Begin Again', by unlocking the services in a phased manner, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said the State has almost reached the peak in terms of COVID-19 patients and the graph will come down if people adhere to safety norms with responsibility and precautions.

"This is the beginning of yet another battle as we have to tread carefully from now on. We are beginning from scratch and do not want to go back on the lockdown phase. We have almost reached the peak in terms of number of COVID-19 patients. The curve may rise slightly, but it will be flattened now. We have to bring down the numbers by following prescribed safety norms," the CM said.

Asserting that it is wrong to say Maharashtra has over 65,000 patients, Mr. Thackeray said the number includes even the first patient who is now cured and back home. While over 28,000 have been discharged, the active cases are around 34,000. Of them, 24,000 are asymptomatic, while 9,5000 are with mild to medium symptoms. Only 1,200 patients are serious and 200 are on ventilator.

No final exams

Mr. Thackeray also announced that final-year students in degree courses will be given marks or grades by taking average of their previous semesters' marks.

"It is not possible to conduct examinations in June while uncertainty remains about July and August. We cannot let students suffer because of these delays," he said in his social media address, adding those who still want to improve their marks can opt for appearing for exam in October.

'We are prepared'

Presenting the data on the State's preparedness to fight the pandemic, the CM said the state had only two testing labs when the first patient was detected.

"It was Kasturba Hospital in Mumbai and NIV in Pune. But today, we have 77

Uddhav Thackeray

labs and the number will be increased to 100 in the next few days. We will be increasing the number of labs as testing in monsoon for flu-like symptoms will go up," he said.

Mr. Thackeray said from three hospitals with isolation facilities, the number has jumped to 2,500, while the number of isolation beds has grown from 400 to 2.5 lakh, of which 25,000 beds are with oxygen facility.

Trains for migrants

Informing that over 16 lakh migrant workers have left Maharashtra by trains and buses, Mr. Thackeray said the spat between Union Railways Minister Piyush Goyal and the State over trains seems to have done the trick. "Since then, the number of trains has increased and I thank Goyal ji for that," he said.

The CM announced that the home delivery of newspapers will resume from June 7. "However the delivery boys must be provided with masks and sanitiser. Their safety is also our concern," he said.

Ease in lockdown restrictions from June 3

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Commuter train rides, haircuts and visits to shopping malls and religious places will remain out of bounds across the State for the next phase of the lockdown till June 30, the Maharashtra government announced on Sunday.

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These restricted relaxations will kick in for areas under municipal corporations of Mumbai, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Region (MMR), Pune, Solapur, Aurangabad, Malegaon, Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Akola, Amravati and Nagpur. Shops can open here and private offices can operate at 10% strength, while courier services, plumbers, electricians and garages can also begin work.

For the rest of the State, some more relaxations have been offered, such as plying of intra-district buses, taxis and personal vehicles (with restricted passengers) and running private and government offices at full strength.

Physical distancing norms are to be followed for all activities.

The Central government's guidelines for this period permit religious places and restaurants, but the State has decided to keep religious places closed and permit restaurants to open only for home delivery purposes.

The easing of restrictions will be done in a phased manner along with standard operating procedures.

Outdoor activities

In what may prove to be a significant relaxation for many residents staying inbound for over two months, the State has allowed outdoor physical activities like cycling, jogging, and walking in open public spaces like beaches and playgrounds, in the first phase of 'Mission Begin Again', albeit with certain conditions. For instance, these activities can only be carried out between 5 am and 7 pm, with no permission for group activity or the use of indoor facilities.

Children, if they step out, should be accompanied by an adult.

Maintenance services

The green signal has also been granted for self-employed workers like plumbers, electricians, pest-control and technicians, which may come as a big relief for several households. Vehicles can also be taken to workshops, but with prior appointments.

Government offices (excluding emergency, health and medical, treasuries, disaster management, police, NIC, food and civil supply, FCI, N.Y.K., municipal services who can operate at the levels as per the need) will function at 15% strength or minimum 15 employees, whichever is higher.

Phase II

In the second phase, to be effective June 5, all markets, market areas and shops, except malls and market complexes, are allowed to function with the condition that shops on one side of a road or lane will open on odd dates and the other side on even dates. They can only operate from 9 am to 5 pm.

The use of trial rooms in shops will not be permitted for clothes, apparels and similar items to prevent spread of infection.

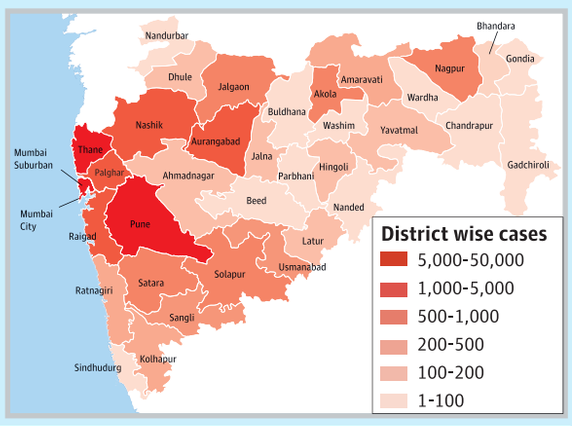
Phase III

In the third phase, to be effective June 8, private offices can operate with up to 10% strength as per requirement, with remaining persons working from home. In the rest of the State, no permission is needed for permitted activities. (See MISSION BEGIN AGAIN for more details)

MISSION BEGIN AGAIN

WHAT'S ALLOWED & NOT ALLOWED IN MAHARASHTRA

- Containment zones will be demarcated by Municipal/ District Authorities.
- A containment zone can be a residential colony, mohalla, slum, building/s, lane, ward police station area, village or a cluster of villages



Activity	Municipal Corporations of MMR, Pune, Nagpur, Aurangabad etc	Remaining Areas	Containment Zones
Travel- Air, train, metro	No	No	No
Inter-state road movement	No	No	No
Taxi, cab, rickshaw	Essential	1+2	No
4 wheeler	Essential	1+2	No
2 wheeler	Essential	1	No
Inter-district plying of bus (2)	No	No	No
Intra-district plying of bus	No	Yes	No
Movement for medical emergencies	Yes	Yes	Yes
Education Institutions	No	No	No
Hospitality- Hotels	No	No	No
Medical Clinic, OPD	Yes	Yes	No
Places of worship & large gatherings	No	No	No
Agri activities	N/A	Yes	No
Industries (Urban)	Essential	Yes	No
Industries (Rural)	N/A	Yes	No
Urban in-situ construction	Yes	Yes	No
Shopping Malls	No	No	No
Supply of goods	Yes	Yes	Yes
Markets/Shops	Yes (5th June)	Yes	No
Essential goods shops	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-Com essential goods	Yes	Yes	No
E-Com non-essential goods	Yes	Yes	No
Liquor shops	Yes / Home Delivery	Yes	No
Barber shops, spas, saloons	No	No	No
Private Offices	10% strength (8th June)	Yes	No
Govt. Offices	15% or 15 whichever is higher	Yes - 100%	No
Sub Registrar/ RTO/Dy. RTO	Yes	Yes	No
Bank & Finance	Yes	Yes	No
Courier & Postal	Yes	Yes	No
Outdoor Activities	Yes (3rd June)	Yes	No
Home Delivery Restaurants	Yes	Yes	No
Electricians, Plumbers etc	Yes (3rd June)	Yes	No
Garages, workshops etc.	Yes (3rd June)	Yes	No

Wednesday may bring rain to Mumbai, Thane

Red alert for Palghar; low pressure area in Arabian Sea may turn into cyclonic storm

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast 'heavy to very heavy rain' in Mumbai and Thane on Wednesday and Thursday, while issuing a red alert for Palghar for the same days. A low pressure area that is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea will result in pre-monsoon showers at least until Thursday.

The usual date for onset of monsoon in Mumbai is June 11 every year. However, the actual onset varies depending on weather systems, and last year, it was delayed till June 25.

On Sunday, a low pressure area formed over south-east and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea in the early morning and remained till forenoon. It is very likely to concentrate into a depression by Monday and could intensify into a cyclonic storm over east-central Arabian Sea. It is very likely to move nearly northwards initially until June 2 and then recurve north-northeastwards and reach near north Maharashtra and south Gujarat coasts around June 3.

Dark clouds gather over Mumbai on Friday. • PTI

Owing to this, IMD has forecast that Maharashtra, especially its west coast, will experience a wet spell between June 1 and 4. IMD has issued a red alert (extremely heavy rain at isolated places) for Palghar district for Wednesday and Thursday. It has issued an orange alert (heavy to very heavy rain at a few places) in Mumbai and Thane for the same days. Meanwhile, all three districts will get rain and thundershowers on Monday and Tuesday.

Owing to high wind speeds and sea conditions being very rough, fishermen were asked to return to coast on Sunday itself.

Commenting on the situation after June 4, Akshay Deoras, a Ph.D scholar at University of Reading, U.K., who follows India and especially Maharashtra's weather, tweeted, "From 4 June, normal #weather conditions (mostly clear sky & humid weather) will make a comeback in #Mumbai. This period will witness at the most a few odd passing pre-#monsoon showers. It will be surprising if the #monsoon's arrival in #Mumbai is announced before ~15 June. The Arabian Sea low-pressure system will lead to a transient rainfall phase, but surface/near-surface wind pattern won't be westerly so as to declare the monsoon's arrival. I'd like to cite the case of Cyclone Vayu which didn't allow the onset of westerly surface/near-surface #monsoon winds over #Mumbai for a long period around mid June 2019. Due to the same reason, @Indiametdept had waited for many days for announcing the monsoon's arrival."

GoAir travellers fret over cancellations

Many take to social media after repeated web check-in attempts fail

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

Passengers flying on GoAir said on Sunday that they realised their flights were cancelled only when they tried to complete their web check-ins, as mandated by the government.

Several passengers of the airline, which is set to resume flights on Monday, took to social media after they failed to check-in online after several attempts.

Bharat Khattar, who has a Pune-Delhi ticket for June 1, said he had been struggling since Saturday. "I am unable to web check-in for my flight. I have no clue what is going on. There is no response from the customer care number," he said.

Mayank Kumar, who had booked a Delhi-Mumbai flight, and whose cancellation he learnt about on Sunday, hours after struggling with the web check-in, tweeted, "They are saying that they will not return the money in credit shell and only option exists is of rescheduling for which they will charge Rs. 3,000."

The airline, owned by the Wadia group, gave a standard response to the social media complaints, which said, "We will be commencing domestic flight operations in a phased manner and are looking forward to welcoming you on board soon. We request you to stay tuned to our website for further updates."

The head of a leading online travel website said that in many cases, the airline was not informing about cancellations till the last day. "And then for refunds also, there is no proactive communication to customers and even if it cancels, it is talking about credit shell which is a non-starter for a customer," the official said.

Airline sources said given that only one-third of the approved summer schedule flights were allowed and certain airports like Mumbai had a cap of 25 imposed by the State government, the challenges had increased.

A statement from the airline on sectors it would be operating flights in a curtailed manner from June 1 is awaited.

GoAir, unlike other Indian carriers, did not resume operations on May 25. In a statement, the airline had on May 23 said that it awaited clarity on the readiness of the respective States and their airports on acceptance of flights, or the conditions applicable to passengers entering the respective States.

Web check-in has been made compulsory by the Ministry of Civil Aviation since it will aid physical distancing at airports. This is among the requirements for air passengers in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Airport sees 5,535 footfall

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

As the resumption of domestic flights completed a week, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) on Sunday saw 50 scheduled flights catering to 5,535 passengers.

The flights, consisting of 25 departures and 25 arrivals as mandated by the government, saw CSMIA being connected to 14 sectors, which were operated by five airlines.

"There were 4,203 passengers at departures and 1,332 at arrivals. The highest passenger load was on the Patna route departing from CSMIA," an airport spokesperson said.

Film and TV shoots set to resume, with conditions

Government guidelines recommend presence of 33% crew on the set and none above 65 years

KENNITH ROSARIO
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government has allowed shooting of films, TV serials and web series to resume by following the guidelines issued by the State. The guidelines detail the measures to be taken by all departments on the sets: from studios, make-up, casting, catering to those handling equipment like camera and lighting.

In order to facilitate physical distancing on the sets, the guidelines recommend reducing the crew strength to 33%, not including the main cast, and to identify activities that can be done remotely for the rest. Cast and crew above the age of 65 will not be allowed on the sets.

Staff will have to carry an identification card and use the Aarogya Setu app. On arrival on the sets, crew members will have to get their temperature checked and every studio will have to have an ambulance, a doctor and nurse. The sets will have to be fumigated daily, including post-production areas like edit rooms.

During the shoot, all members present on the sets will have to wear masks and gloves, except those being filmed, and maintain basic rules of hygiene. Tasks that require close contact like applying make-up, will require the make-up artistes to wear a face shield and mics will have to be labelled according to the artistes who use them. For reality shows,

On arrival on the sets, the State guidelines say, crew members will have to get their temperature checked and every studio will have to have an ambulance, a doctor and nurse. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

seating arrangements shall be made keeping in mind adequate physical distancing, which includes three separate tables for judges, instead of one long table.

Last week, the Producers Guild of India had come up with a 'Back to Action report' recommending standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be instituted whenever the permission to resume production activities is granted by the government. The State government's guidelines are similar to the practices suggested by the guild.

Ashoke Pandit, chief advisor, Federation of Western India Cine Employees (FWICE), said he was thankful to the Maharashtra government to have listened to the entertainment industry after several representations were made and SOPs suggested by various film bodies and associations. However, he said some points in the guiding principles didn't seem feasible to implement. "They have set an age limit of 65 for people who can be on the sets. That means actors like Amitabh Bachchan, Anil Kapoor and Anupam Kher can't work. I think everyone has a right to work and earn a living so long as they are healthy and fit," he said.

According to Mr. Pandit, it is also not implementable to have a doctor, nurse and ambulance at every shoot. "We can understand the concern but given the shortage of them otherwise, even when it comes to the hospitals, how can we ensure their presence on the shoots? There are at least 70 shoots happening on a normal day all over Mumbai. How can we have 70 of each available at all these spots?" he asked.

Mr. Pandit suggested that producers make arrangements with local hospitals according to the shoot area, and have doctors, nurses and ambulance on call. He said FWICE will be making further representation to the government on these two issues.

Timings
MUMBAI

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
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 03		
RISE	06:01	SET 19:13
RISE	16:48	SET 03:51

Mumbai Weather	max	min
Mumbai Airport	36	30
Pune	37	25
Mumbai City	36	30

Mumbai Today
36°C Mostly dry and warm weather with partly cloudy sky to prevail.

Mumbai Tomorrow
35°C Day will be very warm and humid with cloudy sky. Light rain and thundershower is likely. Night will be uneasy.

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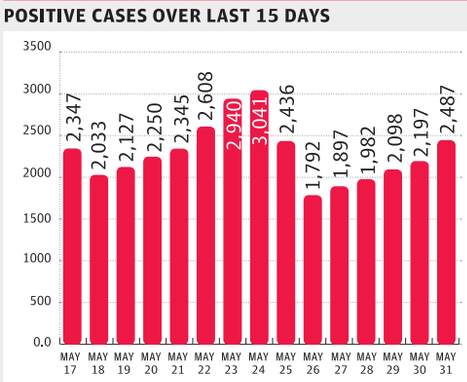
Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
67,655	2,487	36,031	29,329	2,286

DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

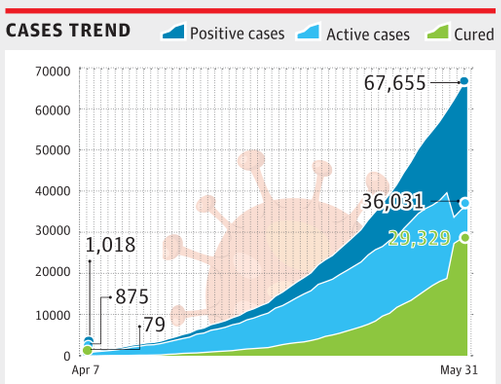
DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	39,686	1,279	Latur	125	3
Thane	9,585	200	Jalna	125	0
Pune	7,919	329	Ahmednagar	120	6
Aurangabad	1,501	65	Sangli	112	1
Nashik	1,135	66	Nanded	111	6
Raigad	1,108	39	Osmanabad	73	0
Palghar	1,018	30	Gondia	66	0
Solapur	897	70	Parbhani	63	1
Jalgaon	616	72	Buldhana	62	3
Akola	584	28	Beed	47	0
Nagpur	574	10	Nandurbar	35	2
Satara	523	16	Gadchiroli	35	0
Kolhapur	457	4	Sindhudurg	33	0
Ratnagiri	264	5	Bhandara	32	0
Amravati	226	16	Chandrapur	25	0
Hingoli	149	0	Wardha	12	1
Dhule	140	16	Washim	8	0
Yavatmal	130	1			

POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS

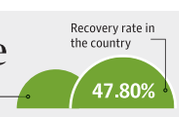


1,244 (50.02%) of Sunday's cases are from Mumbai

CASES TREND Positive cases · Active cases · Cured



43.09% is the State recovery rate

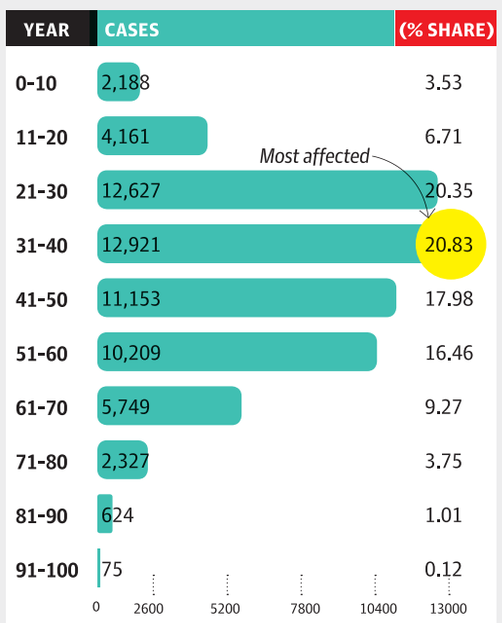


MORTALITY RATE

Maharashtra 3.37%

India 2.84%

AFFECTED (AGE-WISE) As on May 29



QUARANTINE NUMBERS

5,58,100 Home quarantine

34,480 Institutional quarantine

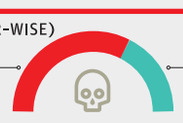
CASES (GENDER-WISE) As on May 29

MALE 62% (38,778)

FEMALE 38% (23,439)

DEATH (GENDER-WISE) As on May 29

MALE 64% (1,411)



FEMALE 36% (786)

69% of deaths due to co-morbidities

HELPLINE NUMBERS

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

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

Mumbai city: 022 22664232
Mumbai suburbs: 022 26556799 / 26556806
Thane: 022 25301740
Palghar: 02525 297474
Raigad : 02141 222118
Ratnagiri: 02352 226248
Sindhudurg: 02362 228847

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

Nearly 2,500 more cases; State tally nears 68,000

Doubling time for cases now better than national rate

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to take a toll on Maharashtra on Sunday with 89 more deaths and 2,487 new cases, taking total fatalities to 2,286 and cases to 67,655, so far.

The number of active patients was, however, 36,031 with as many as 1,248 patients being discharged on Sunday to take total recoveries in the State to 29,329, Health Department officials said.

"The patient doubling time for the State has now increased to 17.5 days from the 11.7 days in the previous week. This is higher than the rest of the country's averaging doubling time of 15.7 days. Maharashtra's recovery rate stands at 43.35%," said State Surveillance Officer, Dr. Pradeep Awate.

Final journey: Hospital staff carry the body of a COVID-19 victim to a morgue at Sion hospital in Mumbai on Sunday. ▪ AADESH CHOUDHARI

Total cases in Mumbai inched towards the 40,000 mark with 1,244 new cases. However, little over half of the cases – 20,845 – were active. As many as 52 deaths were reported from the State capital, taking its total fatalities to 1,279. Nine deaths each were reported from Pune district and Navi Mumbai.

Despite an improvement in the recovery rate, Malegaon city in Nashik district – a major virus hotspot in north Maharashtra – reported six deaths to take its death toll to 58. Thane district reported five deaths and Kalyan Dombivli reported four to take their respective death counts to 89 and 25.

"Of the total deaths reported today, 39 had occurred in the last couple of days while the remaining fatalities are from the period between April 27 and May 27. 63% of the deaths reported had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease," said Dr. Awate.

He added that the State's mortality rate stood at 3.37% (higher than the country's rate of 2.86%).

Besides Mumbai, the surge in fresh cases in Thane in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) continued unabated, with more than 240 new COVID-19 cases taking the district's total tally to 4,486. Navi Mumbai reported 56 new cases as its total tally reached 2,673.

"Till date, of a total 4,62,176 laboratory samples, 67,655 have been tested positive. There are 78 laboratories – 44 government-run and 34 private – functioning in the State currently. A total 3,585 tests per 10 lakh population are being conducted in Maharashtra which is higher than the national figure of 2,722 tests per 10 lakh population," Dr. Awate said.

He said currently, 5,58,100 people across the State were in home quarantine and 34,480 were in institutional quarantine facilities. There are 3,157 active containment zones currently, said Dr. Awate.

Mumbai tally close to 40,000 mark with 1,244 new cases

City reports 52 more deaths; 430 patients discharged

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Mumbai inched close to the 40,000-mark on Sunday, recording 1,244 new cases and 52 more deaths. The cumulative number of cases in Mumbai has now reached 39,686, while 1,279 people have died so far.

So far, 16,791 patients have recovered, meaning that the city has 21,610 active cases as of now. On Sunday, 430 recovered patients were discharged.

Of the 52 deaths, eight occurred earlier and were added to the tally on Sunday. Twenty-eight patients had co-morbidities. While 28 victims were in the 40-60 age group, 22 were above the age of 60, and two under 40.

According to the ward-wise breakup of cases issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, as on May 30, L ward (Kurla) saw a leap of around 100 cases, going from 2,495 cases on May 29 to 2,594. K East ward (Andheri East), too, saw a rise of more than 100 cases, going from 2,107 to 2,218 cases.

Similarly, in F South ward (Parel), the tally jumped from 1,816 to 1,939, while in P North ward it went from 1,239 to 1,342. But the biggest increase was in N ward (Ghatkopar), from 1,676 cases on May 29 to 1,804 cases on May 30.

Local doctors hold a check-up camp at Munshi Compound, Gulshan Nagar, in Jogeshwari (West) on Sunday. ▪ VIJAY BATE

According to ward-wise growth rate in the week leading up to May 30, the trends are slightly different. R North ward (Dahisar) showed the highest growth rate in this period at 8.1%. Other wards that showed a high growth rate include S Ward (Bhandup, Powai) (7.4%), and P North and R Central (Borivali) at 7.2%. Compared to the week leading up to May 30, Mumbai's average growth rate stood at 4.26% on Sunday, lower than Saturday's 4.52%.

Dharavi, meanwhile, reported 38 cases on Sunday, pushing its tally to 1,771. Two people from Dadar died. Dadar has reported 12 deaths so far and 319 cases. Mahim reported 23 cases.

94 positive, 98 recover

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) reported 94 new cases on Sunday, but also posted 98 recoveries. Its recovery rate now stands at 61%. The case tally under NMMC is now 2,204, of which 1,346 have recovered. With three deaths reported on Sunday, one in Vashi and two in Koparkhairane, the death toll is now 73. Meanwhile, 30 cases were reported under the Panvel Municipal Corporation, taking its total to 526. Panvel rural reported 13 cases, taking its total to 360.

(With inputs from Raina Assainar)

With 205 fresh cases, tally continues to mount in Pune

Wadarwadi slum cluster in city emerges as hotspot

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Fresh COVID-19 cases continued to pile up across Pune district on Sunday, with 205 new cases taking the case tally to 7,670.

The total death toll has climbed to 332 with three new fatalities recorded during the day, according to figures released by the district administration.

Of the total cases, only 2,988 are active, with 4,350 people discharged thus far. As many as 152 people were discharged on Sunday. Among the active cases, 207 are in a critical condition.

"As many as 205 new cases were reported till Sunday evening, of which more than 190 are from Pune city. The city has also recorded 301 of the 332 deaths," District Health Officer Dr. Bhagwan Pawar said.

The slum clusters of Wadarwadi and Janwadi in Shivajinagar have emerged as the new hotspots in the city, with two deaths being reported from these parts.

"While Wadarwadi did not have a single case until a week ago, it has witnessed a daily increase of 15-20 cases in the past few days. At present, there are 55 active cases here," Bharatiya Janata Party leader and Shivajinagar legislator Siddharth Shirole told *The Hindu*.

Back in business: The wholesale vegetable market in Pune resumed operations after two months. ▪ MANDAR TANNU

Mr. Shirole said the authorities have intensified screening and come up with a plan for early detection of co-morbidities among residents. While significant parts in the cluster have already been sealed off, all of Wadarwadi will be sealed off by Tuesday morning. "The infection has spread to Ramoshiwadi and Gokhalenagar as well," he said.

The death toll in Pune division, which includes Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur districts along with Pune, has reached 446. After Pune, Solapur has the highest death rate. It reported five more fatalities on Sunday to take its toll to 84. Satara reported three deaths to take its toll to 21.

Divisional Commissioner Dr. Deepak Mhaisekar said the division's case tally has reached 9,749 with 4,220 active cases, while 5,063 people (more than 50%) have been discharged till date.

"Solapur reported a spike of 52 cases since Saturday evening to take its total tally to 891. Satara reported 34 cases to take its tally to 516, while Sangli district reported nine cases to take its total to 110," Dr. Mhaisekar said.

Kolhapur witnessed a sharp spike of 58 cases in the last 24 hours as its tally rose to 562, with as many as 439 active cases.

NMMC notice to three Vashi hospital doctors

Inquiry complete in body mix-up

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Navi Mumbai Municipal Commissioner Annasaheb Misal has served a show cause notice to three doctors of the civic-run Vashi hospital in the case of a mix-up of cadavers.

Medical officer of health Dr. Balasaheb Sonawane had conducted an inquiry into the matter and submitted a report, following which Mr. Misal issued a notice to hospital superintendent Dr. Prashant Jawade and mortuary in-charge Dr. Bhumesh Darade and Dr. Bhushan Jain on May 29. "The report said there was a lack of supervision on part of Dr. Zawade and negligence by the in-charge of the mortuary. Depending on the reply of the doctors, further action will be taken," Mr. Misal said.

The deceased

The body of migrant worker Umar Farooque Shaikh (29), who died on May 9, was exchanged with that of Kajal Suryawanshi (18), who died on May 4. The girl's father, Dashrath Suryawanshi, performed the last rites on the body handed to him as per Hindu rituals.

On May 14, the hospital had called families of both deceased to collect the bodies as both their samples had tested negative for COVID-19. Both their relatives went to collect the bodies on May 16. Due to the pandemic, the body was completely wrapped. Mr. Suryawanshi directly went to the crematorium.

Missing corpse

When Shaikh's relatives went to collect his body, authorities realised it was missing. They approached the police on May 18, who learnt that the bodies had been mixed up.

The police went through CCTV camera footage and the register maintained about the bodies. Mr. Suryawanshi was then called to check a body in the morgue, which he identified as his daughter's.

While Shaikh died of pneumonia, Kajal died of jaundice, at their respective residences at Ulwe and Digha. The bodies were brought to the hospital by the NRI Coastal police as per protocol to verify if they had COVID-19. On May 20, the Vashi police registered a case against ward boy Sunil Waghela, who handed over the body, and Mr. Suryawanshi who performed the last rites without verifying the identity.

Six arrested for dancing on road

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Six people were arrested in the early hours on Sunday for playing loud music inside their cars and dancing on a road near a COVID-19 centre in Vile Parle.

The incident occurred around 1 a.m., a police official said, adding that the accused are residents of Andheri who were found to be roaming the streets in their cars in violation of the lockdown norms.

They were booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Epidemic Diseases Act, he said. They were later released on bail.

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(A Central University established in 1974 by an Act of Parliament)
P.O. Central University, Prof. C.R. Rao Road, Gachibowli, Hyderabad - 500 046.

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The eligibility criteria as prescribed by the MHRD is attached along with prescribed application format for information of the eligible candidates, and is available on following links:-

https://mhrd.gov.in and
https://www.uohyd.ac.in/careers-uoh/

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Date : 01-06-2020 **REGISTRAR**

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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY

Birth: 7th June 1932
Death: 31st May 2020

Shri P M JOSEPH (Poothullil)
IRSE Retd CAO Konkan Railway,
Project Director IRCON,
DRM Southern Railway Bangalore and Mysore

SLEPT IN THE LORD ON SUNDAY MAY 31, 2020.

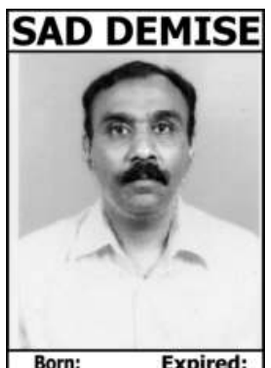
The funeral services has been conducted at our residence (Kilpauk, Chennai).

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Wife:Sheila Joseph
Children:Mathew Joseph (Raju) & Anu, Nina & Stanley, Kunjippalu and Roshini Joseph.
Grand children and great grandchildren.

DEATH

SAD DEMISE



Born: 16-8-1964
Expired: 31-5-2020

VENKATESH HARIDASS
Son of
late Smt Pushpa Haridass
& late Shri. S.Haridass

passed away peacefully on 31-05-2020.

Deeply mourned by his loving family members

9840093940, 9848010755
9246580603

Homebound, but in high spirits

As weekends at home become the norm, home-delivered cocktails and big brand campaigns for premium spirits could help bring the party indoors

:: ANOOTHI VISHAL

If life gives you lemons, make limoncello. If you are handed tomatoes, sip on a Bloody Mary. Mumbai-based Mallika Sarkar may have taken this to heart while celebrating her lockdown birthday recently. Physically distanced from friends but not socially isolated, she organised the party over Zoom – and ordered a batch of premixed cocktails (sans alcohol) from the bar Social, popular with her set in pre-Covid times. The mixes were delivered to her and each of her friends individually, and the fiery Bloody Marys (with alcohol added from home bars) got the party going.

The way young, metropolitan India was used to socialising has been turned upside down in the last few months. Yet despite the closure of restaurants and bars, alcohol still remains a big part of our lives: whether it is to deal with the stress in Covid-19 times, to wind down for the day, or meet friends, albeit virtually.

Living room mixologists

In India, liquor sales may have been hit during lockdown, but now all eyes are on home bars to rev up spirits. Literally. Brands,retailers, professional bartenders and influencers are focussing on ways to engage with consumers at home. Consumers, for their part, are moving on from plain vanilla drinks, to paying more attention to what is in their glass – not just the quality of spirits (which is invariably better at home when people are likely to drink in a more discerning way than while bar-hopping on a budget) but also the mixers, garnishes and the ice that go into their drinks.

Globally, in pandemic-hit capitals such as New York, one category that has been cheering up otherwise beleaguered restaurants is high quality to-go cocktails. Authorities in the Big Apple allowed restaurants serving food to also home deliver cocktails, wine and spirits in March, and since then, homebound customers seem to be going all out for well-balanced Negronis, Martinis and Manhattans.

Research firm Nielsen reported that the category of home-delivered premixed cocktails had shot up by over 75% by the end of March. In fact, chef Sujan Sarkar, whose restaurant, Rooh, in Chicago has been delivering three-course menus successfully (commanding a higher $45 per meal price than many takeaways), says that customers are even demanding things like square ice cubes to enhance their drinking experience.

Fix a drink: (clockwise from above) Nitin Tiwari; Masque's mix; and Siddharth Wadia; Jack Daniel; Bokeh; and Payal Nijhawan • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Local flavours

In India, the cocktail culture had been growing steadily in the last few years, but was still nowhere close to what you'd find in other global cities like London or Singapore. Despite the emerging cult of the Negroni, sales were led by weekend binge-drinking, claustrophobic events, or over-priced shots. The culture of small cocktail bars where people could converse and savour well-made drinks was hardly pervasive even in more alcohol-friendly markets such as Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

Home-delivered cocktails may change that. Some of our best establishments are luring millennial customers with artisanal premixes sans spirits (because delivery of alcohol-laced cocktails is not permitted in India). Social recently launched Social-Mixers in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chandigarh, with mixes made using seasonal ingredients and prepared in individual outlet kitchens.

Then there is Masque, the luxury restaurant in Mumbai, which is delivering two delicious mixes made by chef Prateek Sadhu, to be ordered alongside food. These include Limetter, a cordial made with smoked sweet lime (add gin or vodka at home), and The Terra, made from turmeric, ginger and honey. Both have been doing very well.

In Delhi, bars like Sidecar are offering bael (wood apple) and elderflower-basil spritzers delivered in serves of four to six people, with instructions on how to blend these with alcohol at home. As celebrity mixologist Nitin Tiwari, of Together At 12th in Gurugram, points out, "Bottled premixers and pre-batched drinks are becoming popular because when people are drinking at home, they are more conscious about quality. Local bars are using seasonal ingredients such as wood apples, turmeric, mangoes and tamarind, which can be made into cordials."

Big brands, big winners?

Meanwhile, liquor brands are hoping to up the game on their luxury portfolios; the rationale being that people at home invariably consume higher quality of alcohol (albeit in more limited quantities). In pre-Covid days, the majority of marketing spends for big brands were directed at eyeball-grabbing, high-energy events such as music or fashion festivals – enabling consumption within bars – but now the accent has shifted to online engagements that educate the customer as to the legacy, taste profile and other attributes of the spirit and brand.

While earlier, the average budget for a three-day music festival, attracting 2,000 to 3,000 people per day, could be as much as ₹50 lakh by a liquor brand, now these kinds of approaches have been recalibrated to focus on in-home consumption. "The biggest shift is to move our resources to engage with consumers on digital and at retail stores," says Siddharth Wadia, of Brown-Forman Worldwide LLC. Social media sessions where consumers can interact with global brand ambassadors, learn to make cocktails using kitchen ingredients, and participate in online quizzes are some ways in which campaigns are happening. "We are seeing consumers more inclined to experiment and go deeper into knowing what they are drinking. Our initiatives such as Grant's Triple Wood Trivia Nights online and Monkey Kitchen Cocktails [with Monkey Shoulder] have been very successful," says Payal Nijhawan, Head of Marketing, William Grant & Sons India, with brands such as Glenfiddich and Grant's.

Most luxury brands say they get around 250-300 people viewing each online session. It is a far more sedate engagement, where the assumption is that the Indian customer at home is actually as thirsty for knowledge as for the beverage. This means that, eventually, premium brands may be the biggest gainers. While lockdown and high taxation in states such as Delhi have seen business suffer, Sanjeev Banga, president, International Business, Radico Khaitan (with brands such as Jaisalmer gin and Rampur whisky) says luxury brands will see an increase in sales. "When you drink less, you always drink premium," he quips.

He is right. The days of endless Long Island Iced Teas in bars may be over for a while, but we can sip (attentively) on a perfect Martini – balanced between the juniper of the gin and the herbal of the dry vermouth, stirred not shaken – while comparing it with the smooth Belvedere Vodkatini we may contemplate next.

Bacardi @home

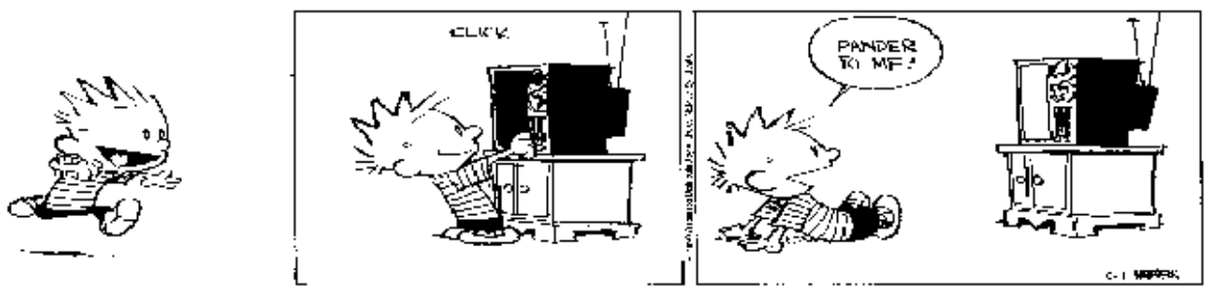
While most liquor brands are focusing on educating the customer, some are looking at online engagements through art and culture. Bacardi India – with brands such as Bombay Sapphire, Dewar's, and Breezer – has been running campaigns around lockdown art, collabs with chefs, virtual music concerts, and encouraging people to dance to #BreezerShuffle while doing household chores.

POOCH CAFE

PEANUTS

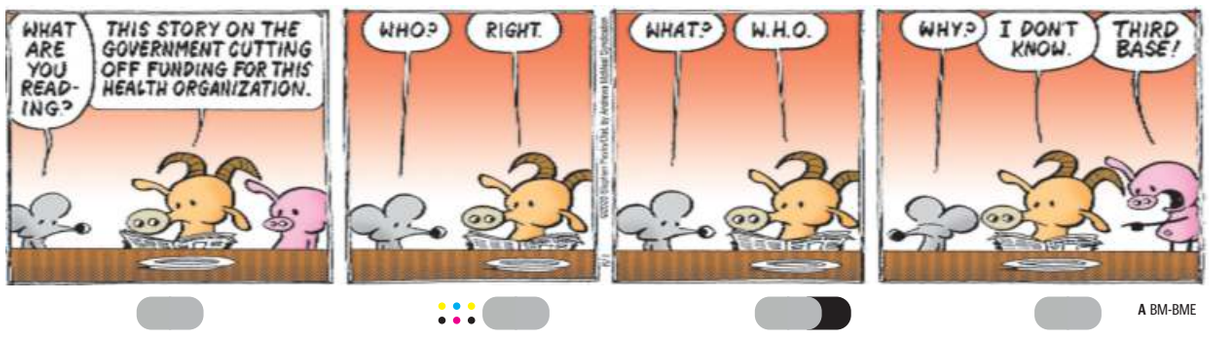
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY

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

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, south Konkan, Goa, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe, Lakshadweep, Karnataka, Telangana, central Maharashtra, West Bengal, Sikkim and Odisha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.2	32.7	25.1	Kozhikode	49.2	33.0	25.2
Ahmedabad	–	41.4	29.2	Kurnool	–	39.7	29.6
Aizawl	–	23.5	17.5	Lucknow	58.6	32.6	22.0
Allahabad	1.6	38.1	25.4	Madurai	–	39.0	26.7
Bengaluru	–	30.2	20.0	Mangaluru	0.1	33.0	25.1
Bhopal	–	40.6	27.4	Mumbai	–	35.7	29.5
Bhubaneswar	–	37.0	26.5	Mysuru	–	30.1	23.0
Chandigarh	6.6	33.3	22.4	New Delhi	9.2	34.6	20.0
Chennai	–	37.6	29.0	Patna	–	34.2	21.7
Coimbatore	0.1	34.8	24.8	Port Blair	16.3	30.0	23.9
Dehradun	1.3	27.6	21.1	Puducherry	–	35.8	28.4
Gangtok	24.6	17.4	15.3	Pune	–	38.0	25.5
Goa	0.7	30.8	26.5	Raipur	29	39.2	27.2
Guwahati	2.1	32.0	24.0	Ranchi	1	35.4	21.0
Hubballi	–	32.0	24.0	Shillong	4.1	22.7	–
Hyderabad	–	37.3	29.6	Shimla	63.4	17.4	12.2
Imphal	–	26.8	19.6	Srinagar	6	22.8	12.7
Jaipur	–	33.0	23.5	Thiruvananthapuram	5.4	31.5	25.7
Kochi	–	31.8	26.2	Tiruchi	–	39.9	27.4
Kohima	–	24.2	15.5	Vijayawada	–	39.5	29.8
Kolkata	1.1	35.0	25.0	Visakhapatnam	–	35.0	29.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing — **Yesterday**

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	–	18	.24	38	66	
Bengaluru	12	.20	.82	31	54	
Chennai	.2	.19	100	102	–	
Delhi	22	.27	120	40	–	
Hyderabad	.4	.63	.24	63	92	
Kolkata	.3	.11	.17	24	33	
Lucknow	.2	.27	.54	92	–	
Mumbai	.4	6	8	19	81	
Pune	23	8	.59	29	28	
Visakhapatnam	.7	.41	.24	39	–	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Nandesari, Gujarat 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)

SO_2: 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_2: 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

Schools must reopen in June, says Thackeray

Education dept. officials told to explore online, offline options

Long summer vacation: Most schools in the State ended their terms early in March due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. ▪ FILE PHOTO

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Schools in Maharashtra must start their academic year in June, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Sunday in a videoconference with Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad and Education Department officials.

Mr. Thackeray also directed that schools should open wherever possible with safety precautions and compliance with physical distancing norms, and at other places use of digital platforms could be explored.

"The novel coronavirus pandemic shouldn't be a roadblock in the education of children. The academic year has to be started from June. Maharashtra should set an example before the rest of the country. Methods such as online, offline, or pre-loaded tablet can be explored. These options can be used in remote areas with problems of connectivity," said Mr. Thackeray at the meeting also attended by eminent individuals from the field of education.

Mr Thackeray said that those schools which were used for institutional quarantine would be sanitised.

Ms. Gaikwad said the academic year starts on June 15 in some parts of the State, and on June 26 in Vidarbha. "We are in the process of preparing a standard operating procedure by consulting experts, parents, and officials. We have also made preparations to start using online, television, and radio for education purposes. All schools will also receive textbooks by June 15," the minister said.

Real estate body looks to fill void created by migrant exodus

CREDAI Pune to train and employ 50,000 local youth

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Pune chapter of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) has announced a drive to train and hire youth across the State in Pune's real estate and construction sector, in an attempt to fill the vacuum caused by the return of migrant labourers to their hometowns.

The initiative from CREDAI-Pune Metro, called 'Kushalta', aims to train around 50,000 youth across villages and towns to transform them into a skilled workforce for the State, as well as Pune district's burgeoning real estate sector. The pilot project will involve training around 1,000 youngsters.

Suhas Merchant, President, CREDAI-Pune Metro, said at least 200 big projects have been held back owing to the exodus.

"We estimate that around 70% of the migrant labour population in the State has gone back to their hometowns during the COVID-19-induced lockdown," said Mr Merchant.

"There is a massive labour shortage plaguing the construction sector in the district and the State, and there is tremendous uncertainty on when these migrant labourers will return."

Leaving for home: Migrants from West Bengal wait for a Shramik Special train at Pune station. ▪ JIGNESH MISTRY

'Kushalta', which is to be implemented through the 'Kushal CREDAI' wing of the confederation, will also provide local youth an employment opportunity, said Mr. Merchant.

"We plan to train 50,000 youth from the State's rural hinterland and towns and transform them into a skilled and semi-skilled workforce in the construction segment," he said. The confederation will soon issue advertisements in this regard, besides working closely with the local administration across the State to source the youth.

Realtor J.P. Shroff, who heads the Kushal CREDAI wing said their past experience of training over 35,000 construction workers in making them more efficient and productive, would be the key driver of this initiative.

Separate training modules would be developed to help trainees adapt to the work climate in the construction sector, he said. The free training programmes and workshops will be conducted in Pune once the lockdown is lifted. The contractors will provide for their food and lodging.

Aditya Javdekar, Secretary, CREDAI Pune Metro, said CREDAI will act as a facilitator in the process of training and placement. "The relevant details for the enrolment to these programmes will be announced soon," he said.

Lockdown relaxation: curbs ease on shops, travel, banking in Gujarat

Buses can run with 60% capacity; restrictions continue on cinema halls, educational institutes, gardens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government has announced relaxations in lockdown with efffect from Monday and decided to allow shops and businesses located outside the COVID-19 containment zones to operate without any restriction of the odd-even formula.

State transport buses will be allowed to operate with 60% passenger capacity, two-wheelers allowed to have a pillion rider, and four-wheelers with six or more seats can have three passengers along with the driver.

Banks in both containment and non-containment zones will be opened and government offices allowed to operate with full capacity. A government resolution (GR) to this effect was issued late on Saturday night.

Restrictions will however continue on single screen cinema halls, multiplexes, educational institutes, large public gathering, cultural events, swimming pools, zoos, public gardens, tourist places and beaches, it said.

Opening up: Shops and businesses in non-containment zones will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ▪ FILE PHOTO

According to the GR, shops and businesses in non-containment zones will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"The government will allow all shops, except those located in containment zones or placed under negative list, to open between 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. in municipal areas and till 8 p.m. in areas outside the municipal limits. The odd even formula for shops located in shopping complexes and markets will be done away with in the fifth phase of the lockdown or Unlock-1 starting Monday," according to the GR.

Shops located in malls and restaurants will be allowed from June 8 in accordance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

City buses have been allowed to operate in non-containment zones with passenger limit of 50% in Ahmedabad and Surat, and 60% in other cities, it said.

The State government will also come up with a list of micro-containment areas, which will continue to remain under restrictions along with the containment zones, with only essential services allowed there between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Nobody living in these areas will be allowed to leave for work.

Street vendors will be allowed to operate only in areas designated by the urban local bodies starting June 8, it said.

All economic activities will be allowed in areas outside the containment/micro containment zones, and industries allowed to operate with 100% capacity with physical distancing, it said.

Liquor shops have been allowed to open for permit holders.

Curfew will be imposed across the State between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., the GR said.

From today, Goa to get more trains, flights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

Trains and flights are expected to arrive in Goa in large numbers from Monday as the fifth phase of the lockdown brings with it a greater rollback of restrictions, officials said.

Three trains originating from Delhi and Mumbai will halt at Madgaon station, and so would Mangala Express (New Delhi to Ernakulum), Netravati Express (LTT-Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram) and Duronto Express (Nizamuddin to Ernakulum), Konkan Railway public relations officer Baban Ghatge said. The State has set up facilities to test passengers, he added. The New Delhi-Vasco Goa Express will also start its regular trips from Monday.

As per standard operating procedure, anyone arriving in Goa will have to either carry a COVID-19 negative certificate from an ICMR-certified lab or get himself tested for the infection here.

A repatriation flight will arrive from Dubai on Monday, bringing home those stuck in the Middle East. Besides, two Srilankan Airlines flights carrying 200 Indians working on different ships abroad are scheduled to land at Goa airport on Monday, Dixon Vaz, founder president of Goa Seamen Association of India, said.

Namaste Trump caused spread of COVID-19: Raut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday alleged that the Namaste Trump event in Ahmedabad to welcome U.S. President Donald Trump in February was responsible for the spread of novel coronavirus in Gujarat, and later in Mumbai and Delhi, which some of his delegates visited.

Mr. Raut also hit out at the Centre saying the lockdown was implemented without planning, but now the responsibility of lifting curbs was left to the States.

"It can't be denied that the spread of novel coronavirus in Gujarat was because of the massive public gathering held to welcome U.S. President Donald Trump. Some of the delegates, who accompanied Trump, also visited Mumbai, Delhi, which led to the spread of the virus," Mr. Raut said in his weekly column in Shiv Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*.

Mr. Raut also said that any move to pull down the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA overnment and impose President's Rule in the State, would be suicidal.

From national capital to Maximum City, relief knows no borders

Delhi-based Gurpreet Wasi extends COVID-19 aid to Mumbai, connects people and helps with funds, distribution

SHUBHA SHARMA
MUMBAI

Gurpreet Kaur Wasi considers herself to be a "strong person who doesn't normally get fazed". But something within her gave way a few weeks back. A young boy in Delhi's Kashmere Gate, down to skin and bones due to starvation, died in front of her.

Ms. Wasi (52) was in the area distributing food. Her work through North East Delhi during the lockdown and earlier, when riots tore through the area, inured her to many things except hunger. "Earlier, I used to tell people that urban hunger is a myth, that nobody in Mumbai or Delhi goes without food," she said. There's always a temple or gurudwara that feeds people, or at the very least, a vada pav that is within reach, she believed. "But today, I've seen a starvation death. I've seen how critical food is."

Getting people together

The situation is "equally difficult" in Mumbai, said Ms. Wasi. Through connects on social media, she has extended her field of operation to Maximum City and has so far supported over 1,000 families through a network of volunteers from Dharavi to Juhu Gully and even Kalwa. She has also started to help with transporting migrant labourers.

Ms. Wasi, a digital entrepreneur who helps grow small businesses, was no stranger to volunteer work, having worked with Khalsa Aid International and the Super Sikh Foundation.

When the Delhi riots broke out in February, she decided she couldn't just be a mute spectator and contacted the deputy police commissioner of North East Delhi, the hub of the violence. "I decided to see what I could do by myself. The area was all sealed under curfew, and I got permission for helping with rations," she said.

Eventually, Khalsa Aid got involved in relief work, paving the way for other organisations to get there.

Just as she decided to pull out of there, the novel coronavirus lockdown was announced. Ms. Wasi continued her relief work in the area, collecting money from family and friends.

For a while, she worked alone, before she put out a call on Facebook for volunteers. Gradually, she started receiving support from all over.

> Earlier, I used to tell people that urban hunger is a myth ... But today, I've seen a starvation death. I've seen how critical food is
>
> GURPREET KAUR WASI
> Digital entrepreneur

The Mumbai connect

Through these connections, a Mumbai support group came into existence – filmmakers, an entrepreneur, and an online trainer joined hands through WhatsApp to form the Mumbai COVID relief group, which grew over days and weeks.

Fatima Humra Jilani from Versova is one such volunteer. The 43-year-old curriculum head with an online computer training startup was, like Ms. Wasi, a lone warrior when she began, motivated by the urge to just go out there and "do something".

Ms. Jilani began by putting out a call for volunteers on her society's WhatsApp group. From serving cooked meals to those affected by the lockdown, she has now switched to distributing groceries.

When Ms. Jilani started, she had no idea whom to approach for help locally. "I needed someone to talk to, and to get some direction. Gurpreet gave me that, and connected me to people. This increased my confidence," she said.

K.K. Mookhey, who runs a cyber security company in Mumbai, was also introduced to Ms. Wasi's work during the Delhi riots. He is now actively involved in COVID-19 relief work through Ms. Wasi's WhatsApp group, besides several others. "I'm on at least 20 groups in Mumbai," he said.

Like him, Navneet Ranjan, a filmmaker and social entrepreneur who runs the Dharavi Diary project that works with children from the area, too began COVID-19 relief with Ms. Wasi's group, but is now on his own. "Gurpreet helped a lot, but the bandwidth for the group eventually became large. I'm now thinking of starting a crowdsourcing campaign for Dharavi," Mr. Ranjan said.

Among them all, Ms. Jilani is someone who Ms. Wasi was still hands-on with, helping her raise funds, connecting her to people, or just motivating her.

The two connected often. Despite never having met her, Ms. Jilani said she felt a sense of comfort working with Ms. Wasi. "She joins dots for me, and ties things up quickly. There is never a need to go through a process to reach her."

Family support

Despite coordinating relief efforts in Mumbai and Delhi, Ms. Wasi said she was "not left with a choice."

Ms. Wasi credits her family for being a source of support. "I get at least five calls every morning. I have kids, but don't even know what's going on at home," she said.

The learnings along the way have been huge too. Duplication of effort or people working in silos, Ms. Wasi said, is common.

"In Delhi, everybody knows everybody. The NGO and civil society or social work scene is not as organised in Mumbai. It's taken us long to find out who's doing what here," she said.

Also, there is often a need to verify the genuineness of those who seek help. Over time, Ms. Wasi learnt to "trust everything that comes in," with checks and balances in place. "You also get to know from telephonic conversations, you use your gut to figure it out," she said.

Perhaps the most sobering learning for her has been to look beyond her 'privilege'. "People in vulnerable areas couldn't care about the novel coronavirus. The first time that struck me was when I went to a slum, thinking people would come to me asking for help. They didn't want to come near me. They know the disease comes 'from people like us who drive cars', and it's no fault of theirs," she said. Sometimes, people have said, "We have to die either way. It's better to die in hospital than from hunger."

Webel

WBEIDC Ltd. (A Govt. of West Bengal Undertaking)
Webel Bhavan,Block EP & GP, Sector - V, Salt Lake,Bidhannagar, Kol -700 091

West Bengal Electronics Industry Development Corporation Limited(WEBEL) invites item rate e-tenders on two bid systems for the following works:

Name of the work	NIT No	Value put to Tender (including taxes)	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Time of completion
Modular Interior works for IT Park at BN-9, Sec-V, Salt lake.	WEBEL/IT Park/BN-9/ 07/IDM/20-21/07 Dated 26.05.2020	RS. 1,26,46,602.15	0.5% of the estimated cost put to tender rounded off to the next higher Rs.50	60 Days
Misc. Non modular Interior works for IT Park at BN-9, Sec-V, Salt lake.	WEBEL/IT Park/BN-9/ 07/IDM/20-21/08 Dated 26.05.2020	RS. 49,09,906.13	0.5% of the estimated cost put to tender rounded off to the next higher Rs.50	45 Days

The Tender Documents and other details are available at e-Tender **portal, http://wbtenders.gov.in** and can be viewed by typing the respective NIT Nos., as above in the 'TENDER SEARCH' section of the website.
For any query please dial - 033 - 2357 - 6022.

ICA-T1919(4)/2020

noida **New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: **www.noidaauthorityonline.com** & **http://etender.up.nic.in**. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

Sl. No.		Job No.	Name of Work	Amount in Lac
A	1	39/GM(R)/ SM (WC-1) /2019-20	M/o Drain (Repair of B/W, Plaster, RCC Cover & Steel work near Punch Mukhi Hanuman Temple (Juna Akhara) on Zonal road No.-5), Noida.	₹ 9.32

Which can be uploaded by Date:08-06-2020 upto 5.00 PM.

Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on Date:09-06-2020 at 11.00 AM.

General Manager (R)
Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

Open with caution

A resumption of economic activity is essential, but the vigil on the virus must remain

It is a truth universally acknowledged now that the severe restrictions to contain COVID-19 produced traumatic displacement of the weakest sections, while the check on infection spread was modest. The Centre's move for a phased unlocking of public activity after the rigorous lockdown since March 25 sets the stage for people to resume their jobs and undertake some travel. The 'Unlock 1' plan should ensure a careful restarting of activities, the most important of which is the delivery of goods and everyday services, including health services unrelated to COVID-19 infections. Latest data since the virus surfaced in the country show that 13 cities, including some of the biggest metros, host 70% of the cases, and many of the earlier restrictions will continue there. Retaining curbs on big gatherings, such as in religious places, is reasonable, given the history of these sites unwittingly becoming super spreaders. But States must show diligence in actively testing and quarantining individuals in cities with high incidence to significantly control the spread. Half-hearted approaches to implementing the measures mandated by the National Directives for COVID-19 Management, such as those on face cover, physical distancing in public places, shops and establishments, spitting, and gathering in large numbers, can only worsen the crisis, especially with resumption of public transport. Citizens who have accepted severe curtailment of liberties during the lockdown can be persuaded to adopt a healthy public behaviour code using measures that are civil, yet firm.

Even with the easing of the lockdown, the severe economic contraction caused by loss of jobs requires governments to demonstrate as much commitment to mitigating misery as to containing infection. A genuinely universal PDS with adequate supplies of foodgrain, ensuring that no one is left behind, must be provided in all States. Cash supplements should reach all intended beneficiaries. This needs to be underscored, as surveys of workers who lost jobs after the pandemic indicate rising hunger levels and missing financial support. Some sections, such as Dalits, women, and low-skilled workers are even worse off. For the elderly, vulnerable individuals and children below 10, the Centre's advice is to shelter in place even during the relaxation phase. This is medically sound advice, but cannot be done over a long period in big cities, as they cannot access goods and services at their doorstep, simply because they are classified as non-essential. The course of COVID-19 in the weeks ahead is by no means predictable, and the Centre recognises the possibility of new rural clusters emerging due to large-scale return of migrants. Whether in the cities or the countryside, 'Unlock 1' must prioritise some actions: create public awareness that the virus is present, ramp up testing, provide health services, and intensively monitor relief measures.

Land of the unfree

America is in great need of legislative reform that supports a pluralist ethos

If ever there were a doubt that racism in the U.S. had outlived eight years under former President Barack Obama, the events of this week, including protests following the death of an African-American, George Floyd, in police action in Minneapolis, Minnesota, have set them to rest. Even as rallies and police crackdowns engulfed a wide swathe of American metros, President Donald Trump inserted himself into the controversy and triggered a broader debate on censorship of posts by social media platforms. On Friday, Twitter masked and attached a caution note to a tweet by Mr. Trump for "glorifying violence". In that tweet he had labelled protesters calling for action against police for Floyd's death "THUGS", adding "when the looting starts, the shooting starts", a reference to a threat by a police chief, who in 1967 declared "war" and vowed violent revenge on African-Americans in Miami Beach. As outrage spread across social media, Mr. Trump appeared to dial down his rhetoric subsequently, tweeting, "It was spoken as a fact, not as a statement." This is hardly the first time that the U.S. President has fanned the flames of hatred. He has said, among other things, that Mexicans were rapists and drug dealers, and in early 2017 he banned visitors from certain Muslim-majority countries.

It is almost inevitable that racial tensions will bubble to the surface in an election year and explode when incendiary remarks are made by leaders. Amid such a toxic public discourse, fuelled by a Republican Commander-in-Chief, hope for a more reasonable, tolerant and bipartisan approach rests on the shoulders of Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic Party nominee. Should Mr. Biden select an African-American or a minority community leader as his running mate, the base of potential voters could broaden and help improve the Democrats' odds of taking back the White House. The potential candidates for this role include California Senator Kamala Harris and Representative Maxine Waters, former National Security Adviser Susan Rice, not to mention former First Lady Michelle Obama. However, the mere tokenism of including persons of colour as a vice-presidential candidate or in a potential Biden cabinet of 2021 will not suffice to heal the painful fractures in American society, riven by hateful rhetoric on race. The balm must include far-reaching legislative reform on the use of excessive force by police against minorities, punishment for all hate crimes, workplace discrimination, and inhumane treatment of migrants at the border. Unless such an agenda, focused on the complete reform of government institutions toward supporting a pluralist ethos, is adopted by the next occupant of the White House, the American dream will remain a mirage for many.

The waning of subaltern solidarity for Hindutva

The migrant labour crisis offers fertile ground for political change but the will to execute it is missing

SAJJAN KUMAR

As the plight and precarity of migrant workers take centrestage, a pertinent question is about its political bearings. The fact that an overwhelming majority of those precariat are subalterns or Dalit-Bahujans, who, since 2014, shifted to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Hindutva in a big way, merits the question whether they would rethink their saffron link and return to the fold of non-BJP parties. Understanding this puzzle requires a brief engagement with the structure of subalterneity and its dynamic interplay with the Hindutva and Muslim question in India.

Contrasting claims

There are two contrasting claims of subalterneity – one oppositional to Hindutva and the other conciliatory towards it. There is a deep fraternity towards Muslims in the oppositional view as they are believed to be low caste Hindus who converted to Islam to escape from Brahmanical Hinduism. Pasmanda politics of the Muslim community is a reciprocal response to this claim of oppositional subalterneity.

On the other hand, the conciliatory subalterneity which is friendly to Hindutva, heralds a phenomenon which I term as subaltern Hindutva, which at present is the dominant political discourse in the western, central and northern States of India, and of late has made a remarkable entry in the east, particularly in Bengal by winning over a majority of Dalits and tribes. It takes a constructivist approach of myth building and argues that Muslim rule and a secular discourse of minority appeasement is responsible for their precariat position. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-endorsed three volume book by BJP Dalit leader Bizay Sonkar Shastri claiming Dalits to be upper castes before the advent of Islam in India is a case in point.

Back to 2014

To decipher the expected political behaviour of the subalterns in the wake of the current crisis engulfing reverse migration-bound workers, one needs to go back to 2014 to deconstruct the phenomenon of the mainstreaming of subaltern Hindutva which overwhelmed the democratic discourse of India except in the southern and north-eastern States. It led to most non-dominant Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Dalits abandoning social justice-centric parties and rallying behind the BJP. Three factors explain this shifting alliance of the subalterns in 2014.

One, with the deepening identitarian turn in the democratic discourse since the mid-1980s, the numerically weaker subaltern castes, particularly in the western, central and Hindi heartland States, were aspiring to carve a niche for themselves within the discourse of subalterneity. Since, the oppositional subalterneity was vanguarded by dominant OBC and Dalit caste leaders, the weaker subaltern caste members felt relatively deprived.

Two, the BJP witnessed an electoral decline at the national level in the 2000s until 2014. However, in its six year stint during National Democratic Alliance-I, the party had effectively quelled its image as being anti-Mandal and anti-reservation.

Three, by late 2013, when the Modi phenomenon appeared on the political horizon with a package of subalterneity, Hindutva and development, the target was two-fold: the secular and the oppositional subalterneity. Since both had an indispensable Muslim constituency, they became clubbed as one, their ideological incommensurability notwithstanding. The majority of non-dominant OBCs and Dalits nurturing a sense of relative deprivation eagerly embraced both the BJP and Hindutva. It was an active political choice by majority of the subalterns against the secular. It is in this context that since 2014 we have witnessed the emergence of a new dialectic – of 'the secular vs the subaltern'.

K.V.S. GIRI

A discourse of solidarity

What is at stake for the BJP and Hindutva in the wake of the ongoing migrant crisis? In other words, if subalterns came to the fold of the BJP by willing to bypass secular parties for order, certainty and opportunity packaged as Hindutva's model of social justice, would the turmoil in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic change it?

The answer lies in the discourse of solidarity that lies behind the spectacular success story of Hindutva's subaltern outreach. Subaltern Hindutva is premised on the claims of cultural and political solidarity among Hindus across the spectrum. Thus, it is the perpetual need and demonstration of solidarity across the Hindu spectrum that is indispensable for the hegemony of subaltern Hindutva.

It must be remembered that unlike Savarkarite Hindutva which signified ideological dogmatism of upper caste Hindus, subaltern Hindutva weighs more on the instrumental side. The latter is an outcome of an active political bargain between the subalterns and traditional proponents of Hindutva. Subalterns carry a thick deal of political legitimacy and hence they are needed. Hindutva has the accommodating space which subalterns need to satiate their democratic desire for political representation. The leadership profile of the BJP as a party from the top to the rank and file, has an impressive presence of the subalterns. Other parties have had to give a substantial share of these spaces to Muslims; in the BJP's case, it shares them with subalterns and other caste Hindus, thereby placing the party in an advantageous position to offer the best deal. Hitherto, the Prime Minister's personal charisma, his claim to conciliatory subalterneity and the corresponding trust factor have created a sense of solidarity between him and the majority of subalterns. Therefore, much of the political attack on him became a collective attack on the subalterns. Criticism of his government and its policies from the vantage point of secularism versus communalism metamorphoses into one of secularism versus subalterneity.

Impact on States, Opposition

This throws a semantic challenge for the non-BJP parties endeavouring to employ the language of political economy to privilege material politics over the cultural one. In the past, the cultural solidarity of subalterns with Hindutva, particularly in the Hindi heartland, the prime suppliers of inter-State migrant workers depending upon cash and labour intensive informal sector, sustained the shock therapy of demonetisation.

However, equations seem to be changing now. Media reports and feedback from the ground in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, where migrant workers have returned show that the political mood is layered. Unambiguously, they are not happy with the Prime Minister and the way in which they were treated. Hence, there is a clear sign of a waning of the sense of solidarity which they had for him in the past. There is a feeling of being abandoned by the state. Nevertheless, there is an interesting twist here. While they are not happy with the Prime Minister, they are more angry with the State governments and their leaders. Hence, in Bihar it is Nitish Kumar and in West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee. A section of subaltern section in Bengal apparently believes that Ms. Banerjee on a few occasions relaxed lockdown norms for the benefit of the Muslim community.

This means, the waning of subaltern solidarity to Hindutva and the Prime Minister does not translate into a significant change of political action as there are no alternative solidarities. In fact, given that there is a greater degree of anger against the regional parties in the western and northern States along with West Bengal, it is plausible that the BJP may not suffer much therein. Economic precarity and material politics do not succeed in the absence of a powerful anchor. In the past, the Opposition was able to defeat the cultural politics of the BJP on a material plank in States such as Delhi, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh as it had State-level anchors who acted as a bridge between material crisis and its electoral translation. However, the same may not be true about the national scenario as the Prime Minister combines both, persuasion and policy. It is persuasion that holds the ground perpetually leaving policy weaknesses on the high road to nowhere. On the other hand, the prime Opposition party, the Congress, seems to be a party lacking both an effective anchor and programmatic action. True, the ongoing crisis is fertile ground for political change, but the will to execute it is missing. The crisis and political action do not seem to interact. They exist in parallel.

Sajjan Kumar is a political analyst and is associated with Peoples Pulse, a Hyderabad-based research institution

The dimming of a Chinese strongman's aura

The question is not whether but when disgruntled forces might challenge Xi Jinping's leadership

SUJAN R. CHINOY

To the outside world, China seeks to project a picture of monolithic unity behind President Xi Jinping's highly centralised leadership. However, media tropes point to a greater scrutiny of his role and leadership style, especially during the early stages of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan. Reports have surfaced alleging delays in reporting facts, conflicting instructions and tight censorship. Observers have drawn parallels between Mr. Xi and his powerful predecessors, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, perhaps a tad unfairly to both the iconic architects of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

A timeline of change

Mao presided over the founding of the PRC in 1949. He consolidated his leadership during the Long March in the mid-1930s. Despite his many detractors, he remained the undisputed leader of China until his death on September 9, 1976 even if, towards the end, it was the Gang of Four, led by his wife Jiang Qing, which had usurped power in his name. Mao banished his adversaries frequently, whether it was Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, or even Deng Xiaoping. Mao's reign after the founding of the PRC lasted 27 years. By comparison, the 67-year-old Xi Jinping has been at the helm for just under eight years.

Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader who never held the posts of either Head of State or Head of Government, changed China's economic destiny with bold and far-sighted policy shifts, ushering in the Four Modernisations of agriculture, industry, defence, and science and technology. The open-door policy, beginning the late 1970s, enabled China to emerge as the world's largest recipient of foreign direct investment and a trade behemoth.

Deng generally favoured a collegial form of decision-making in consultation with a clutch of senior leaders - the Party's "Eight Elders". Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, both successive General Secretaries of the CPC, were for long Deng's "left and right hands", but when they were perceived as deviating from the CPC's line, they were packed off ignominiously by the party elders led by Deng. From 1990 until his death in 1997, Deng's only title was that of the Honorary Chairman of the Bridge Association of China. Yet, he remained the unquestioned leader, wielding great power even in his dotage, long after his successor Jiang Zemin had assumed the top posts.

Spotlight on Xi

The history of the CPC suggests that Mr. Xi wields less power than either Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping. He perhaps evokes more fear than respect on account of his ruthless anti-graft campaign that has brought down even high-ranking People's Liberation Army (PLA) generals and Politburo members. In the consensus-driven system of the CPC developed after the Cultural Revolution, it was not uncommon to target the gofers of rivals, but top Party and PLA leaders were generally considered inviolable to avoid retribution when fortunes changed. In contrast, Mr. Xi has put behind bars "tigers" such as PLA Generals Xu Caihou and Guo Boxiong, political heavyweights such as Bo Xilai, Zhou Yongkang and Sun Zhengcai, besides thousands of "flies" – venal lower-ranking cadres. The question is not whether but when disgruntled forces might challenge Mr. Xi's leadership.

AP

Since reining in the pandemic in China, the Chinese economy has had a head start, but it is clearly not out of the woods. Economic hardship could spark off public dissent and harsher security measures. Moreover, a military confrontation with the United States leading to a "loss of face", however limited the engagement, is a risk that Mr. Xi can ill afford. Indignation could lead the Chinese people, nurtured on hubris, to quickly direct their ire against a leader who has abandoned Deng Xiaoping's advice, so well captured in the abbreviated aphorism, "hide our capacities and bide our time".

Having steered through a constitutional revision in early 2018 that permits him to stay on in power beyond two terms, no doubt Mr. Xi would wish to preside over not just the centenary celebrations of the CPC in 2021 but also the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the PLA in 2027.

Trouble areas

The run-up to the PLA's centenary harbours potential for instability and conflict, especially in relation to China's avowed goal of reunification with Taiwan. Any use of force by China could drag the U.S., and perhaps its allies too, into the maelstrom, a view supported by the recent passage of the Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act by the U.S. which seeks to *inter alia* strengthen Taiwan's *de facto* independence.

Contrary to tradition, Mr. Xi has no anointed successor. When he assumes the mantle again beyond the 20th CPC Congress in 2022, he will thwart the ambitions of an entire "sixth generation" leadership. The only leader after Deng to have an extended stint was Jiang Zemin who was General Secretary from 1989-2002, President from 1993-2003 and Chairman of the CPC's Central Military Commission (CMC) from 1989-2004. Jiang had clung on to the CMC post well after the baton had been passed to Hu Jintao as General Secretary of the CPC and President of the PRC. He survived after loosening his grip on power perhaps because he did not ride roughshod over other influential power centres. By comparison, Mr. Xi is "riding a tiger".

A recently leaked internal report of the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), a think-tank affiliated to the Ministry of State Security in Beijing, purportedly warns China's top leadership of a rising tide of anti-China sentiment in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, the worst since the Tiananmen incident of June 1989. The leak may point to internal churnings or it could well be meant to convey that China remains undaunted. The analogy is also reminiscent of China's short-lived isolation after Tiananmen.

The hope, that an economically rich and prosperous China would gradually become liberal and democratic, has been belied. Whether the current U.S. pressure on China for its controversial policies towards Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, and Taiwan will induce change remains to be seen.

For now, the face-off continues and demands for accountability for the outbreak are mounting, testing Mr. Xi's leadership. The alienation by China of a sizeable section of the international community and public criticism of Mr. Xi, including in the Chinese social media, suggest that the sun may have reached its zenith.

Sujan R. Chinoy, a China specialist and former Ambassador, is currently the Director General of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

To read more letters online, scan the QR code

A blot on America

George Floyd's death is a dastardly and brutal act ('World' page, "George Floyd protests flare in U.S. cities", May 31). The image of him begging for air to breathe is tragic. The circumstances around his passing are a shame not only for the United States, which still follows racism in this computer age, but also for the rest of humanity. It is nothing but a vulgar display of authority and arrogance by the police and is a case that must be condemned in harsh terms. It is a sheer violation of human rights. There is the law and the judiciary available to declare a man guilty or not.

N.R. RAMACHANDRAN,
Chennai

■ The death of George Floyd, an African-American man in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is most shocking and ghastly. The graphic footage where the man pleads with police officers saying that he couldn't breathe is very disturbing . As a global citizen, I wish that justice is dispensed to his family as the incident is clearly race related. Gone are the days of slavery and white supremacy.
What is interesting is that even Whites have registered their protest along with other communities across America in the demand for justice.

NASIR SOOMRO
Karachi, Pakistan

Virus transmission

The article, "Can coronavirus spread through airborne transmission of aerosols" (Science & Technology" page, May 31), is certainly a strong topic of debate among medical professionals, especially dental surgeons. We are in direct contact with saliva and blood as the oral cavity cannot be devoid of these body fluids; they are direct carriers of the virus too. Most of the dental procedures generate aerosols, especially hand pieces and scalers that are operated with a water spray attached to them in order to reduce the heat generated and to prevent injuries to biological tissues.
As a precautionary measure, all treatments which generate aerosols are stopped now to curtail virus transmission.
The lack of professional studies in the transmission rate of aerosols reveals the ground level reality of research analysis in India.
Let us hope that this episode of the novel coronavirus pandemic turns our collective conscience as a mature society toward more scientific data accumulation and research methodologies, with enough monetary grants and infrastructure support from both the central and State governments.

DR. JAYASEKHARAN V.P.,
Payyanur, Kannur, Kerala

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The graphic that accompanied "Spike in coronavirus cases as 117 test positive in Telangana" (May 29, 2020, some editions) erroneously included Nizamabad in the red zone.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India.
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A phantom called the Line of Actual Control

The absence of a definition of the LAC allows new and surreptitious advances on the ground

V. SUDARSHAN

At the heart of India's and China's continued inability to make meaningful progress on the boundary issue are four agreements – signed in September 1993, November 1996, April 2005 and October 2013 – between the two countries. Ironically, India and China keep referring to these agreements as the bedrock of the vision of progress on the boundary question. Unfortunately, these are deeply flawed agreements and make the quest for settlement of the boundary question at best a strategic illusion and at worst a cynical diplomatic parlour trick. Here's how.

According to the 1993 agreement (on the maintenance of peace and tranquility along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas), "pending an ultimate solution", "the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the LAC between the two sides... No activities of either side shall overstep the LAC."

Further, both the 1993 and the 1996 agreement (on confidence-building measures in the military field along the LAC) say they "will reduce or limit their respective military forces within mutually agreed geographical zones along the LAC." This was to apply to major categories of armaments and cover various other aspects as well, including air intrusions "within ten kilometres along the LAC".

No bearing on ground reality

The specification of this phantom LAC as the starting point and the central focus has made several key stipulations and articles of the four agreements effectively inoperable for more than a quarter of a century. In fact, many of the articles have no bearing on the ground reality. Article XII of the 1996 agreement, for instance, says, "This agreement is subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of exchange of instruments of ratification." It is not clear if and when that happened.

Astonishingly, nowhere in the 1993 agreement is there the provision to recognise the existing lines of deployment of the respective armies, as they were in 1993. The agreement does not reflect any attempt to have each side recognise the other's line of deployment of troops at the time it was signed. That would have been the logical starting point. If both armies are to respect the LAC, where is the line? The ambiguity over the LAC has brought a prolonged sense of unease and uncertainty and thus exponentially contributed to the military build-up in those areas. The absence of a definition of this line allows ever new and surreptitious advances on the ground.

"The ambiguity over the LAC has brought a prolonged sense of uncertainty and thus exponentially contributed to the military build-up in those areas." Army patrol teams in the Sub-Sector North along the LAC. • DINAKAR PERI

Had the wordsmiths of the 1993 agreement begun the exercise with the phrase "pending an ultimate solution, each side shall strictly respect and observe the line of existing control/deployment" instead of the "LAC", it would have been more possible to keep the peace. In such a case there would have been two existing lines of control on the map – one for the physical deployment of the Chinese troops and the other for the physical deployment of the Indian troops. This would have rendered the areas between the two lines no man's land, and would have ensured that the two armies were frozen in their positions.

In effect, in the eastern sector, where the Chinese have not accepted the loosely defined McMahon line which follows the principle of watershed, and the western sector, which is witnessing another episodic stand-off, the LAC is two hypothetical lines. The first is what Indian troops consider the extent to which they can dominate through patrols, which is well beyond the point where they are actually deployed and present. The second is what the Chinese think they effectively control, which is well south of the line they were positioned at in 1993.

Now consider para 4 in Article II of the 2013 agreement (on border defence cooperation). It enjoins the parties to "work with the other side in combating natural disasters or *infectious diseases* (emphasis mine) that may affect or spread to the other side". Given this serious intent, how do we read the latest round of fisticuffs and intense physical scrimmage between Chinese and Indian soldiers that left at least 70 Indian soldiers injured and hospitalised in Ladakh? It could have exposed some of the Indian soldiers to a local Chinese mutation of COVID-19. Forget physical distancing, were they even wearing masks?

Perceptions of LAC

It is in this theatre of the militarily absurd that we should look at the outcome of the attempted exchange of maps in the western sector where this round of confrontation continues between India and China. This came after the exchange of maps in the middle sector where divergences were the least, i.e., the existing line and the Chinese and Indian idea of the LAC were more or less the same (in 2002). Kanwal Sibal, who was the Foreign Secretary then, and Wang Yi, the head of the Chinese delegation, met in New Delhi in 2003 for this purpose. It had been agreed that both sides would exchange maps to an agreed scale on each side's perceptions of the location of the LAC in the western sector. The idea was to superimpose the maps to see where the perceptions converged and, crucially, where they diverged. Due to the contentious nature of the sector, it would provide a starting point, not the end point, to discuss how to reconcile divergences presumed to be significant, given Chinese military behaviour on the ground there.

Each side handed over its map to the other. Mr. Wang took the map, gave it a long, hard look, and wordlessly returned it. He provided no reason for his action. The meeting effectively ended there. Had he been instructed not to accept any map the Indian side provided? Or did he make a spur-of-the-moment decision that this exchange was not in China's interests? In hindsight, it is obvious that Mr. Wang didn't think the map was in Chinese interests, because if he had, the Chinese would have with them, officially, New Delhi's claim with regard to the LAC in the western sector where they wanted the most territory. That meant that their hands would have been tied because New Delhi could subsequently say that the Chinese were intruding into India's LAC.

By disregarding the map, China is not bound in any way by New Delhi's perception of the LAC, and therefore does not have to limit liberty of action. This was evident then and is especially evident now. Because the nature of the terrain, deployment, and infrastructure and connectivity asymmetries in the border areas continue to be so starkly in China's favour that it is clear that the Chinese are in no hurry to settle the boundary question. They see that the cost to India in keeping this question open suits them more than settling the issue.

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FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

A week in which a reporter and the Solicitor General failed

Empathy is the cornerstone of journalism

A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

A report, "Death in Goa: woman alleges that daughter was murdered" (May 26), failed to adhere to journalistic standards in reporting about people with different sexual orientations. For nearly a decade, various journalistic organisations have been striving to create a culture where there is fair, accurate and inclusive reporting of the life stories and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) people. The focus of the guidelines on reporting the LGBTQ community is to create journalistic standards to not only treat LGBTQ people with fairness, integrity and respect, but also ensure that they are not stigmatised and victimised by society.

Raising fundamental questions

Dr. Joy Muthipeedika, a neurologist from Kochi, was disappointed with the report as it quoted only one source despite the controversial circumstances that led the death of the activist. He wrote: "It is a clear affront to the LGBTQ community which has been battling stigma and the violence of conversion therapy since long. By publishing the misrepresentation of the post-mortem report from the side of the oppressors and simultaneously suppressing the voice of the deceased, your reporter has contributed to the further demonisation of the LGBTQ community in India. Let me remind you that India no longer criminalises the community. It is unfortunate that your newspaper with its long history of defending democracy has, however inadvertently, supported narrow, vicious, and violent social reaction."

Academic J. Devika of the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, was equally appalled at the way in which the staff reporter reported the death of the young woman. She listed out some key information, all in the public domain, that the reporter failed to see: one, the young girl was identified with the LGBTQ community; two, she left home following conversion therapy; three, it left her, a budding wrestler, a physical wreck; and four, the post-mortem confirmed suicide. Ms. Devika wondered what prompted the staff reporter to merely restate the version of the young woman's family, whom she unambiguously referred to as her "oppressors". There were similar letters raising fundamental ethical questions.

The readers are right and the reporter is wrong. The solution to this quagmire does not lie in removing the story – even with a disclaimer – as that would amount to tampering with the archives. What is required is an exhaustive follow-up report that respects the dignity of the LGBTQ community, and more vigilant gate-keeping by the desk.

Bearing witness

Meanwhile, the Solicitor General of India added three more terms to the growing list of derogatory epithets to describe professionals committed to informing the citizenry. On May 28, during the Supreme Court hearing of the suo motu case regarding the plight of migrant labourers, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta referred to journalists as "vultures", "prophets of doom", and "armchair intellectuals". Apart from making these stunning observations, he also gave a terribly skewed picture of the celebrated photojournalist, Kevin Carter. Carter documented Apartheid excesses in South Africa and the famine in different parts of the continent, among other things. Instead of looking at credible sources of information to understand Carter's contributions to journalism, his moral and ethical dilemmas, and his trauma of covering tragedy after tragedy in Africa, Mr. Mehta chose to borrow from a WhatsApp forward about the photojournalist. My column, "Lens of truth, lens of empathy" (April 4, 2016), dealt with the tragic life of the South African photographer. Fact-checking organisations such as AltNews exposed how the Solicitor General cited a false WhatsApp forward as a fact in the apex court.

Mr. Mehta should know that journalism has three inalienable components: bearing witness, empathy or humanity, and holding power to account. Photojournalism is one of the finest tools to bear witness because it brings home the cruel nature of our reality, shakes a society out of its deep slumber, and forces those in power to act and redeem themselves. In fact, the suo motu case regarding the plight of India's migrant workers would not have happened if photojournalists were not witness to their long and painful journey.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

It's time for a universal basic income programme in India

Providing unconditional regular pay checks, at least till the economy normalises, is the need of the hour

ANIL K. ANTHONY

The ongoing crisis is creating changes that could end up dividing society into pre- and post-COVID-19 days. These changes are also likely to exacerbate the novel challenges accompanying the fourth industrial revolution.

Today, disruptive technologies like artificial intelligence are ushering in productivity gains that we have never seen before. They are also steadily reducing human capital requirements, making jobs a premium. A microcosm of these trends can be seen in Silicon Valley. The region is home to five of the world's eight most valuable companies. These giants, all technology companies, have a cumulative market cap of over $4 trillion, yet they together directly employ just 1.2 million people.

Tool to eradicate poverty

Many consider a universal basic income (UBI) programme to be a solution that could mitigate the looming crisis caused by dwindling job opportunities. UBI is also deliberated as an effective poverty-eradication tool. Supporters of this scheme include Economics Nobel Laureates Peter Diamond and Christopher Pissarides, and tech leaders Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk.

UBI in its true sense would entail the provision of an unconditional fixed amount to every citizen in a country. Nevertheless, countries across the world, including Kenya, Brazil, Finland, and Switzerland, have bought into this concept and have begun controlled UBI pilots to supplement their population.

India's huge capacity and infrastructure-building requirements will support plenty of hands in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, even before the pandemic, India was struggling to find enough opportunities for more than a million job aspirants who were entering the job market each month.

The 2016-17 Economic Survey and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had once proposed quasi-basic income schemes that leave out the well-off top quartile of the population as an effective means of alleviating poverty and hunger. The fiscal cost of a UBI pegged at ₹7,620, at 75% universality, was 4.9% of the GDP. A UBI on par with the numbers suggested by the Economic Survey could lead to targeted household incomes increasing by almost ₹40,000 per annum, since the average Indian household size is approximately five.

The political will was nonetheless lukewarm because of the costs involved. Requirements to trim some of the existing subsidies to balance the resultant deficit were also difficult political minefields for the then government. So the proposition was finally shelved.

Different times

The times now are very different. IMF has projected global growth in 2020 to be -3.0%, the worst since the Great Depression. India is projected to grow at 1.9%. The U.S. economy is expected to fall by 5.9%. The unemployment rate and unemployment claims in the U.S., since President Donald Trump declared a national emergency, is the highest since the Great Depression. Unfortunately, India does not even have comparable data.

Lockdowns in some format are expected to be the norm till the arrival of a vaccine. With almost 90% of India's workforce in the informal sector without minimum wages or social security, micro-level circumstances will be worse in India than anywhere else. The frequent sight of several thousands of migrant labourers undertaking perilous journeys on foot in inhumane conditions is a disgraceful blight on India. One way to ensure their sustenance throughout these trying times is the introduction of unconditional regular pay checks at maximum universality, at least till the economy normalises. If universal basic income ever had a time, it is now.

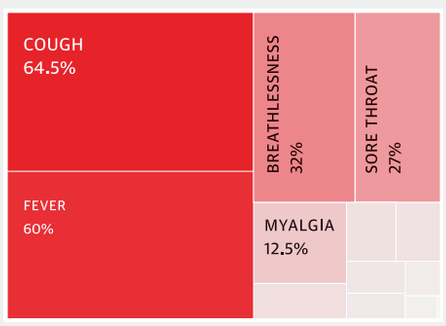
Anil K. Antony is the Convener of INC - Kerala Digital Media, and the National Coordinator of PIIndia.org, a COVID19 action group. Tweets @anilkantony

DATA POINT

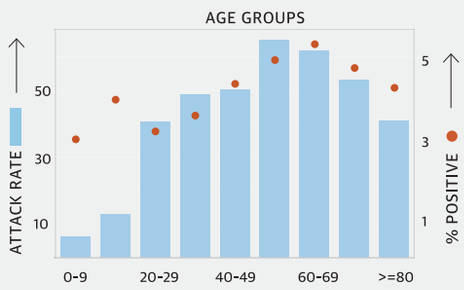
A study of India's cases

More men than women and those aged 50 to 69 years were infected with COVID-19, found a research paper* published recently. The study, which analysed cases and tests conducted between January 22 and April 30, also presented its findings on the most commonly reported symptoms of patients and the chance of secondary transmission. **The Hindu Data Team**

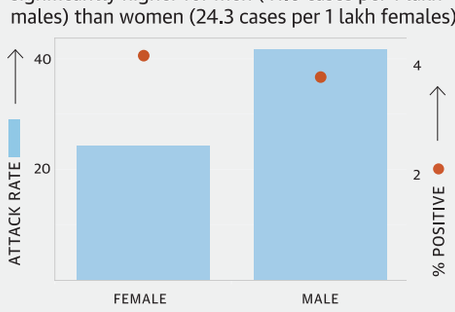
1. SYMPTOMS | Cough & fever were the most commonly reported symptoms among COVID-19 patients at the time of specimen collection



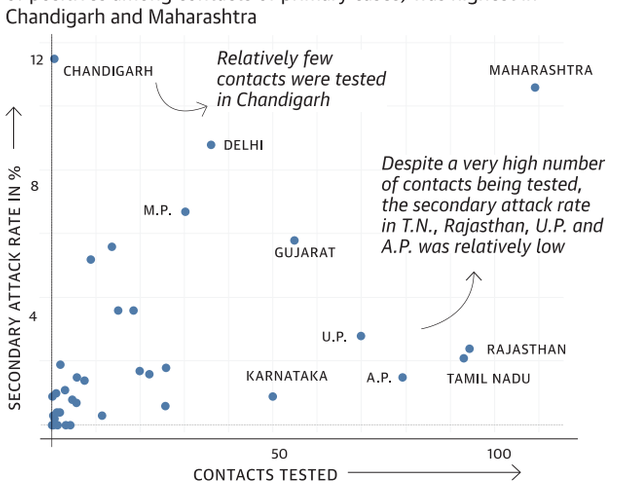
2. MOST VULNERABLE The attack rate (people affected per 1 lakh population) and % of positive cases among those tested were highest in the 50 to 69 age group



3. GENDER RATIO | The attack rate was significantly higher for men (41.6 cases per 1 lakh males) than women (24.3 cases per 1 lakh females)



4. CHANCE OF TRANSMISSION The secondary attack rate (number of positives among contacts of primary cases) was highest in Chandigarh and Maharashtra



*"Laboratory surveillance for SARS-CoV-2 in India...", ICMR COVID Study Group, Priya Abraham et al

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 1, 1970

Japanese form of strike

Workers in a big industrial establishment in Japan were on strike, but work in the factory was in full swing, with all the employees wearing strike badges on their arms. This very much surprised the Union Minister of State for Steel and Heavy Engineering, Mr. K. C. Pant, who visited the factory in Japan during his recent trip there. The workers did not stop work, or interfere with the process of production in the national interest. Mr. Pant, who was inaugurating the Agrobin Trades Industrial Estate in Edapally near here [Cochin, May 31], said the management of the factory was fully cognizant of the fact that there was a strike and started negotiations for a settlement of the dispute. Thus the workers, the management and the country did not suffer. Mr. Pant said such an attitude and climate were highly essential for India.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 1, 1920.

Amritsar.

(From an editorial)

At a time when the majority report of the Hunter Committee, the Government despatches and their reception by the British and Anglo-Indian press are driving India to despair of Britain's sense of honour and justice, the appearance of M. Horniman's book - "Amritsar and Our Duty to India" - will serve as a reassuring record of an honest Englishman's righteous indignation at the reckless sacrifice of his country's fairness and good faith at the altar of frightfulness. Besides presenting the British public with an accurate account of all the essential facts so as to guard against the obscuring of the real issues by misleading reports from interested quarters, the primary object of the book is to rouse the British mind to a sense of its responsibilities to the aggrieved Indian nation. At the very outset, Mr. Horniman rightly draws attention to the unsatisfactory nature of the Hunter Committee both by the limitations in its terms of references which excluded the responsibility for, and participation in wrongdoing of the Government of India, as well as by the partial methods of its inquiry which resulted in the entire withdrawal of the presentation of the people's side of the case. Convinced of the utter inadequacy of even the fairest report of such a Committee to rightly inform the British public of the depth of the wrongs afflicted on this country, the author proceeds to give a correct and comprehensive account.

FROM PAGE ONE

Stay more vigilant than ever against virus: PM

"Apart from that, certain decisions taken by the Centre would also contribute to the development of our rural areas as economic centres and contribute to their self-reliance," Mr. Modi said.

He commended the Indian Railways, which has been under fire for the facilities provided to inter-State workers on Shramik Special trains taking them home.

"Indian Railways has been working to get people home. They have worked round-the-clock for it," he said. He singled out several philanthropic individuals, who on their own contributed to relief work during the lockdown.

"Those who serve are positive, vital and confident, and it was a pleasant discovery for me on how Indians across the country have pitched in to serve," he said.

The Ayushman Bharat universal health insurance scheme clocked over 1 crore beneficiaries last week, a fact marked by Mr. Modi.

"For our poor, medical help is expensive and a choice has to be made between sinking further into poverty and not getting the required treatment. I am happy that over 1 crore beneficiaries, 80% of whom are from rural areas, and 50% of whom are women, got help under the scheme. Our honest tax payer also needs to be commended as it is through his/ her taxes that all these welfare programmes are funded," the PM said. Mr. Modi reiterated that the phasing out of the lockdown cannot be seen as an end to COVID-19, but that social distancing and other measures should be followed.

Indefinite lockdown is more harmful: experts

The government on Friday announced a series of relaxations called Unlock 1 that limits lockdown only to containment zones until June 30 and a spate of relaxations after June 8.

The government relied on modellers, or theoreticians, rather than field-level epidemiologists who are better acquainted with disease transmission dynamics. "From the limited information available in the public domain, it seems that the government was primarily advised by clinicians and academic epidemiologists with limited field training and skills," the letter underlines.

India was paying a heavy price both in terms of humanitarian crisis and disease spread, the experts said.

The "incoherent" and often rapidly shifting strategies and policies especially at the national level were more a reflection of "afterthought" and "catching up" phenomenon by the policy makers rather than a well-thought, cogent strategy with an epidemiological basis, they said.

Among its suggestions, the group said the government should rapidly scale up public health and allocate 5% of GDP to health expenditure.

Call to exempt helplines from COVID-19 message

STAFF REPORTER
KOZHIKODE

Demands have come up from various quarters to exempt all emergency helpline numbers from playing the recorded COVID-19 caller tune as it has been reportedly affecting quick response to distress calls.

In a recent incident, a resident of Kayanna panchayat faced difficulties while trying to contact the Fire and Rescue Services after a fire outbreak at his house.

"When contacted, we kept hearing the recorded message frequently," he said, adding that the fire was then brought under control after several failed attempts.

Changing situation

The authorities should take into account the changing situation and the improved level of awareness, said Sudhakaran, a retired engineer.

"Emergency services should be totally exempted from playing the tune."

Some traders and those working in the health sector too have called for the removal of COVID-19 caller tune from helplines managed by the police, fire and rescue services and the Health department.

Representatives of the Kerala Fire Service Association said the matter had been taken up with the State government.

They said there were not many cases in Kerala where the caller tune stood in the way of prompt action on their part in addressing distress calls.

Ten people succumb to virus, cases soar in southern States

Telangana records 5 deaths, Karnataka adds 299 cases in record spike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Five more COVID-19 patients died in Telangana, taking the toll to 82, while there were two deaths each in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. One woman succumbed to the disease in Kerala.

The fatality in Kerala was that of a 55-year-old woman from Mavoor in Kozhikode district, who was under treatment at Government Medical College Hospital.

A hospital bulletin said the patient had returned from Riyadh and was admitted on May 25. She had hypertension and coronary artery disease and tested positive for the virus. She was shifted to the intensive care unit on May 28.

COVID-19

The trend of a steady increase in COVID-19 cases in Kerala continued on Sunday, with 61 more testing positive. The total case load of the State was 1,269.

Of the new cases, 20 were those who had returned from abroad, while 37 had come from other States. Two persons each in Kollam and Palakkad contracted the disease from known/unknown sources of infection.

Palakkad district accounted for 12 cases, Kasaragod (10), Kannur (7), Kollam and Alappuzha (6 each), Thiruvananthapuram and Pathanamthitta (4 each), Thrissur, Malappuram, Wayanad (3 each), Kozhikode (2) and Ernakulam (1). On Sunday, 15 persons were reported to have recovered. The total number of active cases stood at 670. So far, 590 persons had recovered.

Kerala had 1,34,654 persons on COVID-19 surveillance across districts. Of these, 1,33,413 were on home or institutional quarantine, while 1,241 who showed symptoms were in hospitals. On Sunday, the number of new admissions was 208. The cumulative samples tested was 67,371. Also, as part of sentinel surveillance, 12,506 random samples were tested from select groups, of which 11,604 were negative.

The total number of deaths in Karnataka due to COVID-19 crossed the 50 mark on Sunday while the State reported 299 fresh cases, the highest for a day.

Two patients passed away on Friday. A Department of Health bulletin said a 50-year-old man from Raichur district who had returned from Maharashtra on May 21 was quarantined. He had severe acute respiratory illness, severe pneumonia, sepsis and respiratory failure and died on Friday.

Another 75-year-old male patient from Bidar district had fever and breathlessness and hypertension. He was admitted on May 18 to a private hospital and died on May 29 at his residence.

The total COVID-19-related deaths stood at 51, while two patients died due to non-COVID-19 causes. Meanwhile, the total number cases reported on Sunday was 299, the highest for a single day. Of the new cases, 255 were from other States and seven had a history of international travel.

Three health workers posted to COVID-19 isolation ward in Davangere tested positive.

Andhra Pradesh witnessed a total of 110 cases besides the two deaths. Of these, 98 cases were among residents, a new high for a single day, while 12 were migrant returnees.

The tally went up to 3,571 and the death toll rose to 62 with one death each in Krishna and Chittoor districts, a Health department bulletin said.

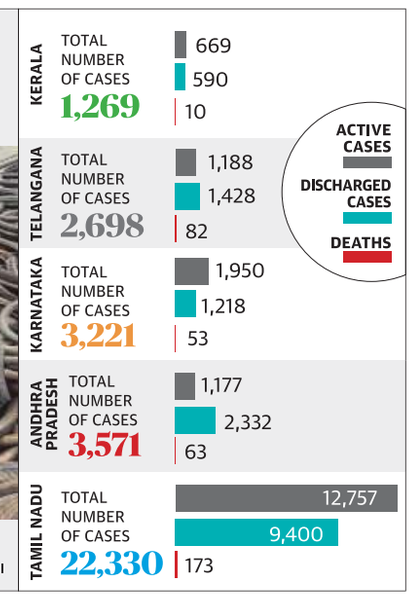
The number of COVID-19 cases in Telangana shot up as 199 samples tested positive. The Health department said 196 were local people, and three were migrants. Of new cases,122 were from Greater Hyderabad.

(With inputs from Bengaluru, Vijayawada and Hyderabad bureaus)

Circle of life

With the government relaxing the lockdown norms, many people have started reporting for work in Andhra Pradesh

Treading gingerly: A labourer busies himself at a tyre recycling unit in Autonagar, Vijayawada, on Sunday. ▪PTI



IN BRIEF

Sreelekha becomes first woman DGP in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

R. Sreelekha has become the first woman to take charge as a Director General of Police (DGP) in Kerala. She assumed office here on Sunday. She succeeded A. Hemachandran as the head of Fire and Rescue Services.

3 die, one falls sick after consuming surgical spirit

VISAKHAPATNAM

Three persons died and one was hospitalised after they allegedly consumed surgical spirit at Kasimkota in Visakhapatnam district. Initially, the police suspected that they might have consumed spirit presuming that it was liquor, but investigation revealed that it was intentional and the persons apparently expected that consuming spirit would give them a better kick than liquor.

Sabarimala temple opens for idol installation

PATHANAMTHITTA

The Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala was opened on Sunday afternoon for day-long rituals to be held in connection with the anniversary of idol installation on Monday. *Melsanthi* (head priest) A.K. Sudheer Namboodiri opened the sanctum sanctorum in the presence of *tantri* Kandararu Maheswararu Mohanararu and devaswom officials at 5 p.m. on Sunday. However, pilgrims are still not allowed to enter the Sabarimala shrine owing to the nationwide lockdown norms.

Amendment on new map tabled in Nepal

The main issue is that the Bill has the single agenda of ratifying the map but we want it to reflect other concerns of the country too," said Mr Yadav. The Samajbadi Party and the larger Rastriya Janata Party are the chief representatives of the people from the Terai plains known as the Madhesis.

The position of the Madhesis will not make a difference in the final acceptance of the new map but it definitely indicates at the lingering internal differences in Nepal. Madhesis maintain that they have been historically marginalised in the Himalayan country and had launched the 2015 agitation to bring in changes through amendments to the constitution which was adopted in September that year.

Indian diplomatic commentators have maintained that the Constitution Second Amendment is a setback to bilateral ties as it will formalise a new territorial dispute with India.

Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali has urged India to withdraw troops from Kalapani and Lipulekh and restore status quo in the region.

India has maintained that it remains open to dialogue though a recent attempt to connect the two prime ministers of India and Nepal failed last week.

Latest reports indicate that a similar telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli is expected in a day or two.

Ramesh Kumar may file contempt plea

He objects to issues raised by the AG

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

N. Ramesh Kumar, who was ordered to be restored as the Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner by the High Court, has decided to file a contempt petition against the State government's alleged violation of the judgment on the A.P. Panchayat Raj (Second Amendment) Ordinance (No.5 of 2020), a statement, purportedly issued by him to the media, said here on Sunday.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Mr. Kumar objected to the issues raised by Advocate General S. Sriram, and insisted that the government's actions amounted to robbing the autonomy of the constitutional body and questioning the very integrity of the institution.

'No ambiguity in order'

He said there was no ambiguity in the judgment, which rendered the ordinance and the consequential GOs unconstitutional and resulted in his restoration as the SEC. He claimed that his five-year term would come to an end on March 31, 2021.

The Advocate-General told the media on Saturday that Mr. Ramesh Kumar could not make self-restoration as SEC and there were other constitutional issues involved in the episode, which prompted the government to approach the Supreme Court.

Too many aspirants for MGNREGS jobs

Administration struggling to create jobs due to reverse migration in large numbers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HUBBALLI

As the COVID-19 induced reverse migration has brought many families to their native places in the northern districts of Karnataka, the onus is now on creating more person days under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). While there are still problems at the ground level, the reality is that not all can find jobs under the scheme.

The sheer magnitude of reverse migration makes it impossible for the administration to create jobs for all under a single scheme. While for a major chunk, the MGNREGS is the only help, not all are dependent on it as they are looking for other options.

During a reality check, it was found that some had found alternative jobs, while in some cases even graduates have turned to the MGNREGS for help. In contrast to the claim of officials, representatives of farmers organisations complained of corruption and non-cooperation at village level.

In Belagavi district, the officials say they are making extensive preparations to gainfully employ labourers, who have returned from big cities, through the MGNREGS. "Against an estimated 6,000 labourers who returned, we have issued 9,000 job cards in one month. We have clocked 90,000 person days per day till May 26," said zilla panchayat chief executive officer K.V. Rajendra.

According to CEO of Dharwad zilla panchayat B.C. Sateesh, following lockdown the demand for job cards had increased and consequently they had added new works to be taken up under the MGNREGS. Navalgund Taluk Panchayat executive officer Pavitra Patil said the scheme had helped workers who hitherto travelled to cities like Hubballi and Dharwad to find job at their village.

However, problems remain. Activists complain that village-level officials are not enthusiastic about the scheme.

Grameena Koolikarara Sangha activist Vishweshvarayya Hiremath alleged corruption.

(With inputs from Rishikesh Bahadur Desai, Praveen Para, Ravikumar Naraboli, Firoz Rozindar, and Dinesh Nayak)

Slow start: Desilting of the Anapur village tank was taken up in Yadgir, Karnataka, on Sunday. ▪SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Intolerance against the judiciary is growing'

In a recent hearing of the case, the Bench saw Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submit how "a handful of people give certificates to judges of neutrality only if judges abuse the Executive!"

The judge said it was a struggle to regulate social media without restricting free speech. He said "fake news propensity has aggravated, creating hostility against identifiable groups" even before the onset of the pandemic in the country.

He said there was a lot of information available during COVID-19 period, including its "remedies", the origin, people who were "helping the spread of the virus" and such.

These messages even take on religious and racial undertones.

Justice Kaul said there was hardly any discernment or effort to know from where information had come or who had sent it on social media. Messages received on social media platforms were "mindlessly forwarded" creating panic and triggering hate at a difficult time when people were worried about their livelihood and basic essentials.

He noted how overall intolerance had exceeded limits. People rushed to the courts if something was found even slightly contrary to their religion and belief.

Even prior to the COVID-19 period, "we had become increasingly intolerant of the opinions that do not match with ours. What is perceived as the middle path becomes the casualty. There are various shades of grey, it is not always black and white. As a democratic polity, we have to appreciate the opinion of others... People who hold opposing views call each other as a 'Modi bhakt' or 'urban naxal', etc.... Both sections are equally intolerant," Justice Kaul said.

Surge in rescue of wildlife during lockdown

Over 20 species of reptiles, birds and animals were found in Bengaluru

K.C. DEEPIKA
BENGALURU

As the city inches towards embracing old and new ways of life in the phased "unlock" planned from June 8, wildlife conservationists are hoping that citizens will adopt a more harmonious way of life – one that will allow Bengaluru's wildlife to thrive. Prasanna Kumar, Wildlife Warden, Bengaluru Urban, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)BBMP Forest Cell, told *The Hindu* that wildlife ventured into urban spaces because of their unusual quietness during the lockdown: "We rescued over 20 different species of snakes, an Indian terrapin turtle, an Indian softshell turtle, black kites, rose-ringed parakeets, Brahminy kites, baby squirrels and peacocks."

Most of these sightings and rescues took place near Jayanagar, Vidyaranyapura and Rajarajeshwari Nagar. Some of these areas, such as Vidyaranyapura, have seen a lot of development work, pushing wildlife out of their habitats. Others are close to green areas, such as Cubbon Park and Lalbagh (Jayanagar), and the Turahalli forest (Rajarajeshwari Nagar), which are also seeing damage to habitats.

KARNATAKA

"The highlight was finding four peacocks and the two species of turtle. Now that the rainy season has almost set in, turtles will be seen outside as they will migrate out of lakes. Snake eggs – vipers, cobras, etc. – too have started hatching," said Mr. Kumar.

Conservationists say urban wildlife is every citizen's responsibility. They are important to the urban ecological balance as, for example, reptiles control the rat population, and kites eat chicken waste, they explain.

Vijay Nishanth, urban conservationist, said, "Despite governments spending crores, lakes haven't been cleaned because effluents continue to flow in. But two months of lockdown showed what radical construction had caused and what lack of traffic, noise pollution and interference can do. This period has also shown us that natural disasters are not limited to certain regions. The pandemic has affected everyone. The world is one organism and it is time we make space for forests and wildlife."

In safe hands: A bird and a monkey that were rescued in Bengaluru during the lockdown.

Release Varavara Rao, demand former CICs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Former Central information Commissioners – Shailesh Gandhi and M. Sridharacharyulu – have urged the Maharashtra government to release revolutionary Telugu poet and writer P. Varavara Rao who has been in judicial custody for the last 18 months in the Bhima Koregaon case related to alleged attempt to murder Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

They wanted acquittal of Mr. Varavara Rao or his release on bail immediately if the trial could not be completed speedily.

The government should shift him to a hospital in Hyderabad or permit his family to travel across the State and meet him in the hospital if his release on bail was not possible, they said.

They also wanted the government to share certified copies of entire file relating to the probe available with the Mumbai police headquarters or with the Maharashtra Home Minister.

APPEAL

15 years old **Abinaya** aged needs your support to bring a new hope to her life. She Suffers from Ewing Sarcoma. She requires **Rs 7,00,000/-** towards Chemotherapy and Radiation Therapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Donations sent by Ch/D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. **will be acknowledged.** The donations sent through Ch/ D.D/NEFT Transfer (Syndicate Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C.No: 60182010063310, IFSC No: SYNB0006018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT. Please give us your e-mail ID.

All correspondence is done through **WWS,** Regd Public Charitable Trust, **Flat No. GF 1, Corddel Apartments, O.No.13. N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/ 28235324 E Mail ID: womenswelfaresyndicate@gmail.com** Website: **www.womenswelfaresyndicate.org.**

WWS

IN BRIEF

PM Modi to share his vision with India Inc.

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc. during an address at the annual session of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Tuesday, sources said. He will deliver the inaugural address at the day-long virtual event to mark 125 years of the CII since its inception in 1895, said sources in the industry chamber. PTI

Govt. should allow bars to reopen: NRAI

CHANDIGARH

Following the Centre's decision to allow hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services to reopen from June 8, the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI) has requested the government to include bars within the purview of permitted activities. "It is important to kick-start the economy with adequate safeguards in safer places while continuing with the lockdown in more severely impacted zones. However, we fail to understand the logic of keeping out bars from the purview of permitted activities," said Anurag Katriar, president, NRAI.

Pak. High Commission staffers held for spying

NEW DELHI

A Delhi police special cell held two visa assistants of the Pakistan High Commission for alleged espionage in New Delhi. They have been declared *persona non grata*, a senior police officer said. They were caught red-handed by a police team and were held immediately, he said. In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said the government had declared both the officials *persona non grata* for indulging in activities incompatible with their status as members of a diplomatic mission, and asked them to leave the country within 24 hours.

Home Ministry gave 94 orders in 68 days

Directions sent under Disaster Management Act; States can frame rules based on these guidelines

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

In the 68 days since the nationwide lockdown was imposed to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, the Union Home Ministry on an average, issued 1.3 orders a day.

As on Sunday, as many as 94 orders, guidelines, addenda and letters have been issued by the Ministry to the States pertaining to the lockdown.

2005 Act

The orders were issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, invoked for the first time in the country since the legislation was drafted after the tsunami in 2004.

The Act also, for the first time, introduced a legal framework for disaster management in the country, with the Ministry being the nodal Ministry. Under the Act, the States and district authorities can frame their own rules on the basis of broad guidelines issued by the Ministry.

On Saturday, it issued another set of guidelines lifting most of the restrictions imposed since March 24 and restricted strict implementation of lockdown measures till June 30 to containment zones where multiple cases have been reported.

Steps to slow the spread

A timeline of some of the key policy decisions taken by the Centre to restrict the spread of COVID-19:

- **February 5:** International visa restrictions
- **February 26:** 14 day quarantine for travellers from COVID-19 affected countries and medical screening
- **March 16:** Physical distancing measures
- **March 20:** International passenger aircraft ban
- **March 23:** Closure of flights, railways and immigration checkposts in India
- **Mar. 24:** National lockdown
- **March 31:** Quarantine of migrant workers to prevent their movement due to the countrywide lockdown
- **April 15:** National lockdown 2.0
- **May 4:** National lockdown 3.0
- **May 18:** National lockdown 4.0

The lockdown first imposed on March 24 was extended four times. The fifth phase has been renamed Unlock 1.0 to open up economic activities even as more than 1.75 lakh cases and around 4,900 deaths were reported till Sunday.

Calls to control rooms

The Ministry had also started three control rooms to monitor the complaints received from States and to resolve the migrant crisis. As all modes of public transport were suspended, thousands of migrants have been walking back several hundred kilometres to reach home.

A senior Ministry official said the helplines in the control room had been getting around 600 calls daily in the initial days but gradually the number had come down. After over 50 days into the extended lockdown, the Railways started running Shramik Special trains for the migrant workers.

Meanwhile, the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) are yet to receive orders from the Ministry on what comprises *swadeshi* or indigenous products. On May 13, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had announced that CAPF canteens would sell only *swadeshi* goods from June 1.

A government official said the Commerce Ministry was yet to issue the guidelines defining *swadeshi* products, though the scheme is to be implemented from June 1. The canteens sell many daily-use products at a subsidised rate to around 10 lakh personnel, their families and those retired.

1 dead in second lynching in a week in Assam

Man killed in row after road accident

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A 23-year-old man was lynched by a mob in Jorhat district of eastern Assam on May 29, a week after a middle-aged vegetable vendor was killed in a similar incident in Kamrup district.

Officials said the man, identified as Debasish Gogoi from Nakachari Milgaon near Mariani town, died of injuries at the Jorhat Medical College and Hospital on Saturday.

According to eyewitnesses, the incident happened after an accident. Mr. Gogoi and his friend Aditya Das, riding a two-wheeler, were stopped from going to a picnic spot through the Gabharu Parbat Tea Estate by its watchmen. A quarrel that ensued was brought under control, but the duo's vehicle allegedly hit two women, both plantation workers, on their way back home.

Debasish Gogoi

"Our two-wheeler skidded. A crowd gathered and began raining blows and kicks on us," said Mr. Das, who is undergoing treatment at the JMCH.

"We are interrogating four people who have been picked up," said the police outpost's in-charge R. Dutta.

'Govt. doesn't have data on migrants'

How much have you paid them from the PM CARES Fund, Congress asks Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

How will the government help migrant workers when it doesn't have basic data about them and the only numbers based on which it has drafted its relief policy is from the 2011 census, the Congress asked on Sunday.

Party spokesperson Kapil Sibal said at a press conference through video link, "They make announcements but the fact of the matter is that this government does not even know the number of migrants."

He said the 2011 census said there were about six crore migrant workers, which itself was dated. The government, he said, doesn't know how many of these have travelled outside the State for work and how many have travelled to the bigger cities.

According to the World Bank, Mr. Sibal said there are 40 million internal migrants impacted by the lockdown. The unemployment rate, as per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, is 27.1% now and in March 2020 it was 8.7%.

Troubled times: Migrants from Mumbai arriving at the Danapur railway station in Bihar on Sunday. ▪RANJEET KUMAR

Job losses

"More than 12 crore persons have lost their jobs." He accused the government of spending the last six years on divisive issues such as Article 370, National Register for Citizens, Citizenship Amendment Act and bringing law to criminalise triple talaq.

"I humbly request the Prime Minister and please do answer. How much have you paid to the migrants from the PM CARES fund," Mr. Sibal asked. He said over 600 persons had died due to the lockdown, and the National Disaster Management Act dictated that their families should get ex gratia.

Section 12 of the Act says the authority shall recommend the guidelines for minimum standard relief to be provided to persons, affected by disaster which shall include ex gratia on account of loss of lives as also assistance on account of damage and for restoration of means of livelihood, he said.

'Lack of strategy'

The party also criticised the government for what it called a lack of comprehensive exit strategy.

Party's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted, "Today, we witnessed the biggest 'single day spike' in COVID-19 infection. The 5th lockdown begins on Monday, what is the government strategy? Have the lockdowns failed? Is there a blueprint to fight corona?"

Tata Sons to manufacture Sree Chitra institute's test kits

RT-LAMP technology gives results in lesser time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, has entered into an agreement with the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology , Thiruvananthapuram, for commercial production of COVID-19 testing kits.

The kits will be based on the RT-LAMP (Reverse Transcriptase Loop-Mediated Amplification) technology which can produce results in significantly less time thereby increasing the throughput of labs in India, a Tata Sons statement said. The tests are expected to get approval shortly and production will start thereafter.

The tie-up follows the Tata Sons' partnership with the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology to produce CRISPR-based test kits.

Banmali Agarwala

'Futuristic technology'

"The RT-LAMP is a futuristic technology that can be adapted for point-of-care setting. The 'Chitra Gene LAMP-N' test uses an isothermal set-up to create copies of viral DNA for detection, which significantly reduces the complexity of overall process compared to the prevalent Real Time PCR technology," the statement said. The test also uses proprietary magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction, which gives highly purified and concentrated level of RNA from the swab sample, it said.

Banmali Agrawala, president, infrastructure and defence & aerospace, Tata Sons, said, "Testing is a crucial part of this fight against COVID-19 as early detection and treatment arrests the spread of the infection."

"The mass production of RT-Lamp-based COVID-19 testing kits with the active support of the Tata Group will be a significant milestone for the institute. I would like to commend the efforts of the R&D team of the institute and the Tata Group," said V.K. Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog.

Railways set to get back on track

Over 1.45 lakh are set to travel today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

More than 1.45 lakh passengers are booked to travel via trains on Monday as the Railways begins graded restoration of passenger services with 200 new special trains.

As per the data shared by the Railways, till Sunday morning, nearly 26 lakh passengers had booked in advance for the reservation period from June 1 to June 3. These 200 trains will be run in addition to the 30 special passenger trains that started operations on May 12, as well as the Shramik Special trains.

Meanwhile, a Railways spokesperson said that some States, such as Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, have expressed reservations about the running of trains or the number of stoppages as planned. "The matter is being discussed with the States," the spokesperson added.

As per the new rules for rail travel, passengers will need to reach the station at least 90 minutes in advance and only those with confirmed/RAC (reservation against cancellation) tickets will be allowed to enter the railway station and board the train. Partially wait-listed ticket holders will be allowed (that is, if there are both confirmed as well as wait-listed passengers under a single PNR). All passengers will be compulsorily screened and only asymptomatic people will be allowed to board the train.

About 26 lakh passengers had booked in advance till Sunday morning.

Passengers will need to carry their own linen as these items will not be provided on the trains. "All passengers must download and use the Aarogya Setu application," the Railways said.

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will make provision for limited availability of eatables and packaged drinking water on payment basis only in limited trains.

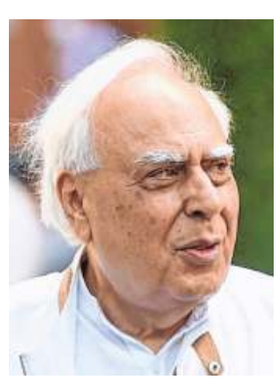
'Centre trying to browbeat the courts'

Kapil Sibal hits out at Solicitor General for his comment on High Courts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Responding to Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta's statement in the Supreme Court that the "High Courts are running a parallel government", Congress leader and former Law Minister Kapil Sibal on Sunday accused the Central government of attempting to "browbeat" the courts.

Addressing a press conference through a video link, Mr. Sibal said that Mr. Mehta's statement was not a personal opinion, but reflected the government's stand on the issue.



Kapil Sibal

Mr. Mehta had made this statement on Thursday in the Supreme Court.

"I wonder if this is meant to browbeat the courts. It is certainly a very arrogant attitude that should not be taken and should not be articulated in this fashion," Mr. Sibal said.

He accused the Central government of interfering with the functioning of the judiciary.

"The government has, in the past, displayed this kind of arrogance. We have known of the fact that Justice Muralidhar was told at one point in time that there would be 'consequences'. Ultimately, he was transferred to Chandigarh. Similarly, Justice Qureshi, who was meant to be the Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, is now the Chief Justice of Tripura because the government apparently had certain misgivings," Mr. Sibal said.

'Should take cognisance'

The courts should take cognisance of these comments, he added.

"Unless the courts are alive to what is happening on the ground and render judgments, these kind of attacks that are not conducive to a democratic environment will continue," the former Law Minister said.

Bihar asks Centre to bear entire cost of schemes

The State's revenue collection has dropped drastically, says Sushil Kumar Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Bihar has sent an SOS to the Centre urging that it bear the State's share of all 66 Centrally sponsored schemes for the next one year owing to the low tax collections because of the extended COVID-19 lockdown.

Bihar has registered a drop in tax collection from its own resources by 85% in April this year.

"In the financial year of 2019-20 the State government had spent ₹10,000 crore as its share for 66 Centrally sponsored schemes but, due to extended lockdown the State's own revenue collection has dropped drastically and the government is not in a position to generate funds for bearing its share," Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who also holds the Finance portfolio, said on Saturday.

The implementation of Centrally sponsored schemes such as the MGNREGA, the PMAY (Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna), mid-day meal and others could even be suspended in case the Central government did not bear the "entire cost of these 66 schemes", Mr. Modi added.

"Most of schemes have 60:40 ratio, however, in some schemes the ratio is even 50:50," he said.

However, Mr. Modi thanked Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, for allocating ₹9, 263 crore as State's share in Central taxes for the current fiscal year.

Bihar is currently facing a massive reverse migration of its workers and the State government is grappling with the problem of generating employment for them.

Crossed wires at hospital leave family stunned

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

Negative test results for COVID-19 led to a bizarre incident at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital earlier this week, with the family of a deceased patient informed by hospital authorities that he was alive just hours after they had performed his cremation.

Devrambhai Bhisikar was admitted to the COVID-19 ward of Ahmedabad Civil Hospital on May 28 with fever, cough and breathlessness, all symptoms of COVID-19. He died the following day before the results of his samples arrived. As per protocol for suspected COVID-19 cases, his body was wrapped in PPE and handed over to the family, who cremated him soon after.

"When we returned home [after the cremation], we received calls from the hospital that the results of Devrambhai were negative and he could be shifted to the general ward. We were shocked," said Nilesh Nikte, Bhisikar's son-in-law. "When we rushed to the hospital, the doctor said it was a mistake by the control room person, who had called us based on Devrambhai's negative results without checking on his status," he added.

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T.N.No.3/2020-21/HDO, Dated: 29.05.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto **08.07.2020, 15.00 hours** by th Superintending Engineer (H), C&M. Coimbatore Circle for **CRIDP 2020-21 Works, (Package No.28 to 46)** pertaining **Pollachi (H) C&M Division.**

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available in the Government website **https://tntenders.gov.in.** from **05.06.2020.** If any Changes / Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Coimbatore Circle.

DIPR/1985/Tender/2020

Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of Higher Education

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The Vice-Chancellor, being the academic as well as administrative head, is expected to be:

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- Having outstanding academic record throughout and a minimum of 10 years' experience as a Professor in a University or 10 years' of reputed research and/or academic administrative organisation with proof of having demonstrated academic leadership.
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INTERVIEW | ASHWANI KUMAR

'Migrant labourers are the most disenfranchised invisible citizens'

It is shocking that those who build fantasy cities not only can't own a home of their own but also can't vote in elections, says political scientist Ashwani Kumar

NISTULA HEBBAR

Political scientist **Ashwani Kumar,** *whose forthcoming co-edited book titled* Migration and Mobility *is to be out soon, speaks on migration, inter-State workers and amendment to the Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979.*

The COVID-19 crisis for India has also become a humanitarian one, involving inter-State migrants on return journeys home racked by pain and suffering and no surety of any income going ahead. Could we have an idea about the contours of this migration?

■ There is a wealth of theoretical and empirical literature on the reasons behind short-term seasonal and circular migratory flows in India. For a majority of migrant labourers, migration is either a livelihood accumulation strategy or survival risk reducing strategy whichever way we define the nature of migration. The migration studies also confirm that the migrant labourers are the most exploited and also disenfranchised invisible citizens of contemporary India. It's shocking that those who build fantasy cities not only can't own a home of their own but also can't vote in elections and treated like almost 'as second-class citizens'. This double tragedy of migrant life is ironically further exploited by sons of soil politicians in various States of India.

According to the Census of India, 2011, more than 450 million Indians (37%) are internal migrants who change their residence within a country's national borders. About 30% of the migrants are youth aged 15-29 years and another 15 million are children. Women migrants are less represented in regular jobs and more likely to be self-employed than non-migrant women. Domestic work has emerged as an important occupation for migrant women and girls. Facing relentless bouts of gender discrimination at home, and on the farms as wage workers, these migrant women are forced into various forms of servitude in the domestic spaces of affluent city dwellers.

Is there more granular data on migration?

■ Prominent migration scholars like Priya Deshingkar suggest that around two-thirds of internal migrants are concentrated in rural areas, while around one-third are concentrated in urban areas in India. Males dominate the inter-State and inter-district streams of migration, while females dominate the intra-district stream of migration. Studies suggest that household members were found to migrate in various combinations – men only, women only, men and women, and men, women and children. Described as 'footloose workers' in migration studies, about 100 millions of workers/labourers circulate from place to place never with the intention to settle down, but to return to their native villages and towns once a job is completed or when a working season comes to an end. In between migration and settlement for employment and livelihoods, these footloose army of migrants are often denied welfare rights in their destination place and imposed debilitating transaction costs in case they decided to negotiate their citizenship rights.

Short-term migrants are engaged mostly as casual labour and often face exploitative labour practices

What is the distribution in terms of caste and gender deprivation and type of work that migrants move home to do?

■ Research studies suggest that Scheduled Tribes are several times more likely to migrate compared with upper castes, followed closely by the Scheduled Castes who are more likely to migrate than OBCs, and then by Backward Castes (BCs) who are more likely to migrate. Upper caste households with some assets migrate for better opportunities but not for coping strategy. Short-term migrants are engaged mostly as casual labour and mostly remain invisible and often face exploitative labour practices. Such migrants are often found as construction workers, brick kiln workers, auto drivers, rickshaw pullers, sex workers, private security guards, household help, cab drivers, *dabbawalas*, *presswalas*, courier workers, beauty parlour workers, plantation workers etc. Field studies by leading migration scholar R.B. Bhagat indicate that the lead source States of internal migrants are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu, whereas key destination areas are Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka. According to a UNESCO study, Surat at 58% has the highest percentage of migrant labour population in India, while the percentage of migrant population is 43% for Mumbai and Delhi. Internal migration has become so ubiquitous that Kerala, long known for "Kerala model" of human development and land of expatriates, has embarrassingly become a 'rainbow country' of migrants. Pouring mainly from West Bengal, Tripura, Assam and Maharashtra, domestic migrants are now estimated at 25 lakh in Kerala. Micro studies conducted by research institutions and NGOs suggest that around 80 million short-term migrants are working in India, including: 40 million in the construction industry, 20 million domestic workers, 7 million sex workers and around 12 million who work in illegal mines.

There are calls for the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service), Act, 1979, to be amended to respond to the massive changes since then and to be more effective. What are the amendments you would suggest?

■ The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979 is largely a regulatory law failing to incorporate welfare rights of the migrant labourers. The most urgent revision is to introduce a National Migrant Workers Commission at the Central level backed up by State level Migrant Workers Commissions. Also, we need to expand the definition of migrant labourer and include next generation skills like IT, mobile repair, financial services related works. Also, the Act needs to include provisions for State-supported skill training services for migrant labourers. A long pending issue is portability of migrant workers' voting rights. The Election Commission of India is already working, so time has come to empower migrant workers so that they gather better bargaining power and political voice in the system. Other laws relating to workers must be synergised with the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. For instance, the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment And Conditions of Services) Act, 1996 should be integrated into the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act. And it needs to be implemented by the Secretary of the Migrant Workers Commission. In this digital age, we must stress more digital administrative techniques such as smart cards and leverage Jam – Jandhan/Aadhaar/mobile payment infrastructure for portability of all.

Another urgent issue is portability of the public distribution system (PDS) for migrant labourers and also allowing migrant labourers to use their NREGA job cards in any part of the country. This portability of NREGA will be a great relief, if any migrant labourer is in crisis like the pandemic, he or she can take up NREGA work at the destination site rather than returning home.

Cyclone brewing in Arabian Sea

It is likely to move towards Gujarat and Maharashtra by June 3, forecasts IMD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a cyclone in the Arabian Sea that is likely to move towards Gujarat and Maharashtra by June 3.

While such storms are common at this time of the year, their path can have a bearing on the progress of the monsoon. The IMD has indicated that the monsoon is likely to set in over Kerala early this week, though other agencies say it has already set in.

Waiting it out: Fishing boats anchored at the Old Port Harbour in Mangaluru on Sunday. ▪ PTI

Low pressure area

Currently, the storm in the Arabian Sea has been classified as a "low pressure area". It is the first step in a four-rung classification system of increasing intensity that culminates in a "cyclonic storm". As of now, meteorologists expect it to move almost parallel to the West Coast and then by Wednesday take a turn and make landfall in either Gujarat or Maharashtra.

Because the onset of the monsoon over Kerala is imminent, meteorologists say that such a track could, in the worst case, stall it.

"If the storm stays close to the coast, it could help push the monsoon related circulation further up along the coast. However, if it turns towards Oman it could suck away moisture and winds," said D.S. Pai, head of Climate Research and Services, National Climate Centre, IMD. If the cyclone turns towards the mainland it would, other than the associated destruction, stall the monsoon. Last year, Cyclone Vayu, which formed in the Arabian Sea, stalled the monsoon after it entered Kerala on June 8.

Conditions for the monsoon to enter Kerala by the second of June were becoming conducive, said Mr. Pai. "Most of the criteria [for declaring monsoon] were being met," he added.

Army rejects video of stand-off with China

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Army on Sunday denied that a video being circulated on social media was of the ongoing stand-off with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). A picture, too, surfaced later, saying it is of injured Indian personnel surrounded by the Chinese. The images added to the chorus asking the government to make public the details of the situation on the border.

"The contents of the video being circulated are not authenticated. Attempt to link it with the situation on the northern borders is *mala fide*," an Army spokesperson said in a statement.

"Currently, no violence is happening," the spokesperson added.

The video shows a large number of Indian security personnel armed with batons and police shields next to a lake shouting and collecting stones from around as some soldiers are seen coming from the hilltop some distance away.

One person is seen shielding what appears to be an injured Chinese solider. Both the Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police operate along the LAC.

Condemning attempts to "sensationalise" issues affecting national security, the spokesperson said differences were being addressed through interaction between military commanders, guided by established protocols on the management of borders between the two countries. The spokesperson also requested the media not to air visuals that are "likely to vitiate the current situation on the borders".

Shortly after the video, a picture surfaced on Twitter showing several Indian personnel injured and lying on the ground and surrounded by Chinese soldiers.

However, there was no official response on the image.

Friend turned foe: the Oli problem

The Nepal PM, wooed by the U.S. and China, faces a hardened Indian stance

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

With his decision to push through a Constitutional amendment to change Nepal's official map to include parts of Indian territory that have been in dispute, Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has proven the worst fears of many in South Block, who have worried for some years about Mr. Oli's "nationalist politics" that translates in Nepal to an "anti-India" stance.

In happier times: Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, left, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018. ▪ SANDEEP SAXENA

The irony, say diplomats, is that the perception of Mr. Oli as anti-India only goes back about five years. "Prior to 2015, if you were to ask which Nepalese politician had worked most consistently towards strengthening ties with India, the answer would be K.P. Sharma Oli," explains former Ambassador to Nepal Rakesh Sood. In 1996, for example, Mr. Oli split from his own party, the Communist Party of Nepal's Unified Maoist-Leninist (CPN-UML) faction, in order to support the Nepal-India agreement over the Mahakali river water sharing treaty. As Home Minister of Nepal, diplomats recount how he cooperated with Indian authorities to pursue wanted criminals who had crossed over the open border between India and Nepal.

"That [perception] changed in 2015," says Mr. Sood, referring to the events that led up to the promulgation of the Nepali Constitution, one that India felt was unfair to Madhesis living in the south and unrepresentative of India's interests in the country.

Mr. Oli was a key mover for the Constitution, and he expected to take over as Prime Minister in place of the Nepali Congress leader Sushil Koirala, once it had been adopted. At the last moment however, Mr. Koirala decided to challenge Mr. Oli to an election in Parliament, a decision many in Kathmandu believed was prompted by India. Once elected, Mr. Oli faced the blockade at the India-Nepal border that saw supplies into landlocked Nepal stopped on the Indian side for months.

"That's when China stepped in for Mr. Oli," says Nepali author Sujeev Shakya, referring to an eight-point transit and transport facilitation agreement Mr. Oli signed with Beijing in March 2016.

Four months later, the Communist Party faction led by Prachanda, as former Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal is known, pulled support from his government, something for which Mr. Oli blamed New Delhi. A year later, Mr. Oli had sprung back, this time with a unified Communist Party that won a historic two-thirds of the seats in Parliament in the December 2017 elections, after running on an anti-India poll plank.

New map

With the Opposition subdued, Madhesi activists co-opted or jailed, and a largely uncritical media, Mr. Oli coasted along for the first two years, until he faced protests in Kathmandu last year over India's new political map of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. As he faced a possible coup within his own party's standing committee meeting in May, analysts say his tone grew shriller.

"For PM Oli, this [nationalistic plank] is also a legacy building exercise. The Nepali Congress will always be credited with bringing democracy to Nepal and the monarchy was brought down by Prachanda," says former Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri, who retired just after the Kalapani issue erupted last year.

'Strategic autonomy'

India has also hardened its position with Mr. Oli. Despite PM Modi agreeing in 2014 that the Foreign Secretaries would meet on the Kalapani and Susta disputes, no meeting on the disputes has been held in six years. The government dismissed Mr. Oli's demand to release the report of an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) that was due to suggest some solutions on the border issues. In December, New Delhi cancelled a visit by Mr. Oli's envoy, and Nepal's Ambassador to Delhi has not had a meeting scheduled by the Ministry of External Affairs for months, despite requests.

In that sense, Mr. Oli's latest move on the maps maybe a *fait accompli*. The ball is in New Delhi's court.

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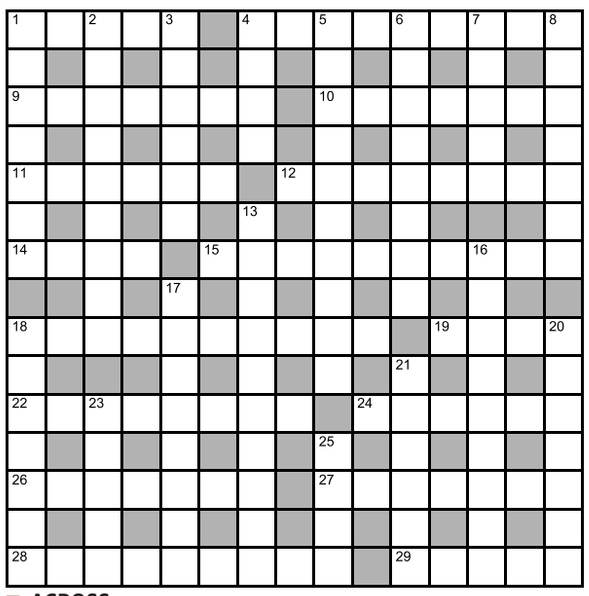

ACROSS

1 Geek of a little boy, pursuing daughter! (5)
4 When a person has to go with more insensitive loonies regularly? (6,3)
9 My depression consumes quietly, doctor (7)
10 Hooks purse after exchanging two sizes (7)
11 Same old stuff from leading raconteur emulating Hon. Aabid Surti, huh? (6)
12 Here are rerouted passengers, finally aboard train! (8)
14 A neighbour (married!) running after love (4)
15 Glamour wearing down when about a hundred and one is crossed? (10)
18 A grass joint – rolled with some expertise – for old students? (6,4)
19 Dashing Bela – no novice! – finds time to help (4)
22 Hairy creatures many insects circle in the morning? (8)
24 Found oneself exposed, ruined (6)
26 An animal seen in clinic – a rib outshooting (7)
27 A bit of dripping petrol, perhaps (7)
28 This character saves Vetal's men in sea storms (9)
29 Mr. Gandhi, having evicted an English presence, gets suspended (5)

DOWN

1 Strange code, strange protocol (7)
2 An undergound movement participant's truth, heartlessly wrapped in a catchy tune (9)
3 Mark makes beer, we're told (6)
4 Bear in mind, the fifth option is incorrect (4)
5 These fruit are spoiled, reimburse about a pound (10)
6 Establish new centre featuring new hospital (8)
7 Hero galloped while carrying Kit at last? That's new! (5)
8 A strict professor, essentially – originally from Asia, perhaps? (7)
13 She might keep a lot of things here to raise her up in steep environs (10)
16 Gussalufz is a boy, or contrariwise, a girl? (Crude, rising misunderstanding) (9)
17 Upheaval in Bali, Cameroon, but not near this country (8)
18 Some hotel (AC!) I'm occupying – revoltingly ridiculous! (7)
20 Forged letters providing support (7)
21 Something that cannot be repeated over connections between her too iffy endpoints (3-3)
23 Romeo residing in 14 Ac. is a jackass (5)
25 Have a meal with Diana for a change (4)

SUDOKU

		6	3		9			4
		3	8		5			
			1				2	5
						1	9	3
		9				6		
8	7	1						
9	3				8			
			5		7	4		
1			4		2	9		

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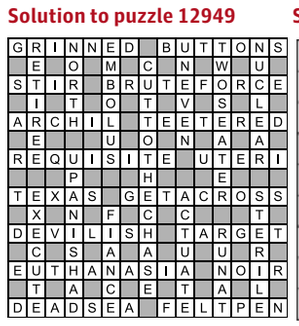
Solution to puzzle 12949



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	3	8	4	9	2	6	7	5
4	7	5	3	6	8	1	2	9
6	9	2	5	1	7	3	4	8
2	5	3	6	8	1	7	9	4
9	4	1	2	7	5	8	6	3
7	8	6	9	3	4	2	5	1
5	6	4	1	2	3	9	8	7
3	2	7	8	5	9	4	1	6
8	1	9	7	4	6	5	3	2

FAITH

Cause of misery

Many have been inspired by Adi Sankara's Advaita philosophy that postulates the non dualistic wisdom embedded in Vedanta teachings. The core of his teaching is that the Supreme Brahman alone is real and is the essence of Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. All else that is manifest as the universe is on account of His Maya and Brahman and Atman are one and undifferentiated. There are many who accept this theory of non dualism, and many who differ or accept alternative views on the oneness of Brahman and Atman.

Among the many texts that explain the Advaita doctrine and try to simplify it so that it is accessible for the common man, the 'Laghu Vasudeva Mananam' offers valuable and practical insights into this doctrine, pointed out Sri R. Rajagopala Sarma in a discourse. As the title implies, it is a condensed version of an original text that is attributed to one Vasudeva which is believed to be lost. From the content, format and arguments in the text, it is clear that it is the work of an ardent and dedicated disciple who has not disclosed his name. The author shows how the origin of human misery is linked together by many factors forming as it were a chain of samsara. Samsara is binding on all beings. The root cause of samsara is avidya or ignorance of self knowledge. As long as one associates with the body and is involved with the world without the perception that the atma is the only reality, one is caught in dissatisfaction and limitations.

One searches to seek fulfilment through desires. Desires lead to karma or action; this results in papa and punya. In reverse order too, papa punya leads one to karma, that is, more action. The chain can be cut if desires are cut. For this one has to realise that the self is the essence of bliss.

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Believe in yourself

How to prepare for the JEE Main-II and Advanced exams during the lockdown

R. L. TRIKHA

The Joint Entrance Exams (JEE) are life changing for IIT aspirants. The JEE Main (JEEM) is the first stage to clear for those who aspire to take admission in the IITs. Those who missed the exams in January must appear in the second phase normally conducted in April, which has now been delayed due to COVID-19. Even those who take the exam in January appear for the second phase since the best of the two scores is considered. The JEE Advanced (JEEA) aspirants are also advised to appear in the JEEM second phase to ensure that they qualify to take the JEEA exam. Due to COVID 19, both exams have been delayed, which means an extended preparation time is available to aspirants.

The JEE Main mostly has questions of singular concepts; some are direct formula based. On the other hand, the questions asked in the JEE Advanced require in-depth understanding of concepts and their application and are even multi-conceptual. Such questions not only require a solid foundation in the subject but also clarity in concepts along with high analytical skill, reasoning power and exposure to problem-solving of various types.

Here are a few tips and tricks to help students strengthen their preparation.

Smart planning and time management is key: First is a smart revision plan that covers the entire syllabus in available time. Make a study task table that utilises time effectively by dividing the subjects and topics on a daily basis. Allocate equal time to each subject so that due attention is paid to each topic/concept.

Utilise resources efficiently: Mastering the concept is a must, so choose study material that is easy to understand. At this stage, NCERT books and concise study notes and tricks to solve seemingly difficult questions will be the handiest. Do not confuse yourself by referring to multiple authors, as different writers have various methods to solve a problem.

Attempt online mock tests: Methodical planned revision and daily mock tests will help overcome weaknesses, increase speed and accuracy and keep you updated with current trend and exam pattern. Go through past papers, online mock tests, doubt clearing sessions, and get expert opinion from real-time analysis. Learn from your mistakes and avoid repeating them. Attend regular mock tests to understand weaknesses. This provides a comparative as well as progressive analysis that will help plan your preparation.

Ensure clarity of concepts: Solve quality problems covering all types and patterns from past years. Cracking the JEE requires clarity of concept and application and analytical skills.

In the last week: Do intermittent quick revisions from your short notes. Go through formulae and concepts of every chapter in all three subjects. Do not attempt new problems. Focus on polishing your strengths by regular revision, testing, analysis, and corrective action. Believe in yourself, work hard and stay focused with positive energy. Taking time to relax or rest also prepares the brain to recall what you have learnt. Keep calm, as nervousness can adversely affect your performance.

Methodical planned revision and daily mock tests will help overcome weaknesses, and increase speed and accuracy

On D-Day: Start with the subject you are most confident about. First, attempt those questions to which you know the correct answer. Do not invite negative marks by attempting questions you do not know anything about.

For JEEA, in addition to the above, attempt questions that do not have negative marks even if you have to guess.

Finally it is the relative performance and not absolute level of difficulty that matters.

The writer is the Director FIITJEE Group and Ex-CMD MECON under MOS

VALUE ADD

The time is NOW

With online education becoming more important, this is a good time for colleges and universities to tap into India's digital potential

SHIBU JOHN AND SEYED EHTESHAM HASNAIN

Even after the coronavirus pandemic subsides, its ripple effects will have a permanent impact on education. While most institutions have shifted to online teaching, this approach will be challenging in the long-term. Amid what is likely to be a deep economic recession, students and parents have begun to question what type of higher education provides the best value (if any).

COVID-19 is forcing parents to become tech-savvy in a short span, to help their children learn. This may become the new normal with far-reaching implications for students from lower economic groups. Unlike the west, we have never developed a backup online education dissemination plan.

According to the 2018-19 All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), there are 993 universities, 39,931 colleges and 10,725 independent institutions nationwide. Unfortunately, higher education institutions are concentrated mostly in urban areas, and that is the reason for the poor Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). An effective online education system can mitigate this challenge and GER can reach beyond 80%.

Looking inwards

Many students today travel abroad to get a good education, primarily due to the lack of globally ranked education institutions in India. COVID-19 will definitely limit their international travel and the proportion of foreign students enrolled in Indian universities will also reduce. If India is to be featured on global education platforms on a large scale, this is the time. Significant focus needs to be laid on technology and innovation with improvisations in the IT infrastructure.

Such a crisis can be turned into an opportunity to align with upcoming prospects. This is the perfect occasion to understand possible threats, spot loopholes and work on capacity building. We have never given online or distance mode of education as much weightage as the regular mode. This is the right time to change this mindset. The University Grants Commission (UGC) and other regulatory bodies need to revise their protocols so that online education is made more mainstream. Faculty selection criteria should also be amended to check for technology friendliness.

The current disruption in the education sector will lead to a paradigm shift in the learning process. This will bring more transparency and address the delivery of quality education on a large scale while ensuring inclusive e-learning. Paul Reville, the Francis Keppel Professor of Practice of Educational Policy and Administration at Harvard Graduate School of Education, says, "We don't simply want to frantically struggle to restore the status quo because the status quo wasn't operating at an effective level and certainly wasn't serving all of our children fairly". The already existing financial and technological disparities among various students have been made more apparent by the current scenario.

There are opportunities for universities to leverage the Internet and offer an "anytime, anywhere, anyone" model of higher education. The real challenge will be for professional courses like Medicine, Nursing and Engineering. The education system should also focus on creating innovative career opportunities, as we could see a complete change in the future job markets.

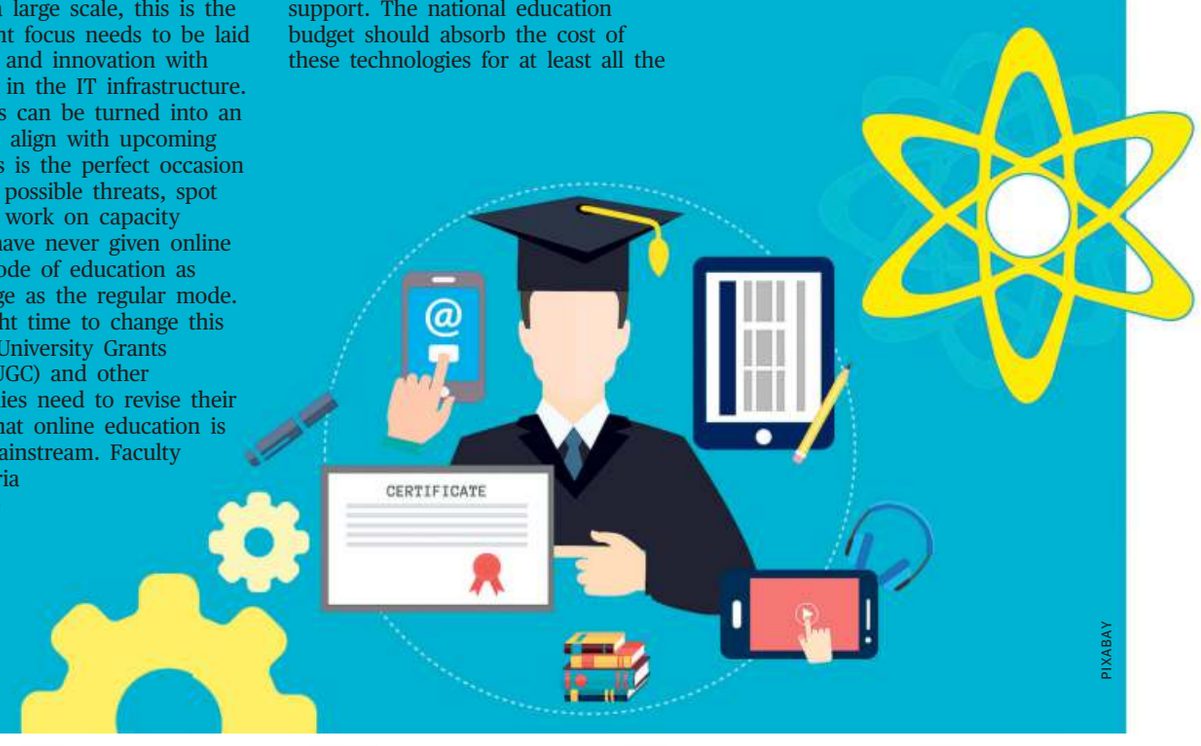
With the young population in India being a large number, policy makers should look at developing a consortium-type cluster university platform. A group of premier institutions like IoEs can form a virtual cluster education model to offer low-cost, high-quality, professional education that does not need separate campuses or geographic boundaries. This requires enormous investment and the majority of the Indian institutions cannot afford that unless the government provides support. The national education budget should absorb the cost of these technologies for at least all the IoEs regardless of their status as private or public. India spends considerably less on education compared to many other countries.

This is the perfect occasion to understand possible threats, spot loopholes and work on capacity building.

The IoE tag permits certain institutions to admit up to 30% international students with no restrictions levied on the fee charged from them. They can also hire foreign faculty up to of 25% of the total number. With the focus on online or distance learning, hiring foreign faculty will be easy and cost-effective. In the recent past, India has become one of the fastest-growing sources of outbound students. This outbound travel can be reduced significantly if global levels of quality can be obtained from Indian universities. Also, IoEs like Jamia Hamdard, IITs and IIMs can enhance their capacity through online mode. While this will trigger a competition to attract Indian students, India will enormously benefit in the long run and also emerge as a world leader in quality education with global rankings coming as a bonus!

Shibu John is Professor and former Dean, School of Management and Business Studies, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi. Seyed Ehtesham Hasnain is Vice Chancellor, Jamia Hamdard and Former Vice Chancellor, University of Hyderabad, and Former Invited Professor, IIT Delhi, and Former Member, University Grants Commission (UGC).

A longer version of the article is available online.



PIXABAY

CAREER

The business of law

Corporate law offers incredible opportunities to work on a myriad issues

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

VIVEK SINGH

Corporate law – also known as company law, business law and enterprise law – is one of the fastest growing fields of law in India. High domestic demand, improved infrastructure, rising penetration of the Internet and smart mobile devices, and various government initiatives such as Startup India and Make in India are continuously giving a boost to domestic as well as multinational corporations in India.

Corporate law in India, or any other country, deals with laws governing the rights of the businesses and their people and legally empowers them in the establishment, funding, dispute settlements, ownership of titles, and all the legalities necessary for their successful operation.

Rising demand

Be it issues related to finance, offshore operations, licensing in the international market, insurance of assets and capital, or mergers and acquisitions between various entities, the help and assistance of a corporate lawyer is the need of every business organisation today. In addition, a corporate lawyer or consultant also guides the client in resolving various pending cases in different tribunals and in preparing various deeds, contracts and negotiations.

Apart from the blue-chip and multinational corporations, there are more opportunities for corporate lawyers.

Handsome packages

A fresher's package in India usually depends on the market value of the institution from where he/she acquired the degree. For example, if one is a pass-out from a top-level National Law University (NLU), then he/she has chances of beginning with an annual package of ₹12-15 lakhs. After five-seven years of work experience, it may reach up to ₹25-30 lakhs.

On the other hand, a fresher from mid-level NLU usually begins with an annual package of ₹7-10 lakhs. In general, remuneration depends on work experience.

Many multinational companies also hire Indian corporate lawyers for their overseas subsidiaries. Moreover, Legal Process Outsourcing (LPOs) recruit law graduates for their processes dealing with laws in the US or the UK.

Qualifications

One can opt for a three-year law course after graduation or a five-year course after high school. However, more people now prefer the latter. The The LLB course is regulated by the Bar Council of India. Specialisations are done at master's, M.Phil or PhD stage and pursued by those who are interested in academics.

Corporate law offers incredible opportunities to work on a myriad issues. Besides providing financial stability, it also improves contacts in the industry and helps to develop good connections in the society.

The writer is an advocate, Supreme Court of India.

SCHOLARSHIPS

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APPLICATION: Email soft copy to: inaehq@inae.in By Speed Post/Courier to: Executive Director Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) 6th Floor, Unit No. 604-609, SPAZE I-Tech Park, Tower A, Sector 49, Sohna Road, Gurgaon - 122018 www.b4s.in/edge/INE3

ICAI Doctoral Scholarship Scheme

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India invites applications for ICAI Doctoral Scholarship Scheme 2020 to pursue and complete their Doctoral Research in Auditing, Taxation, Commerce, Management and Accounting Discipline.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates who are ICAI members with minimum 75% marks/grade in class X and XII. They must be a PhD scholar from a recognised university/institution, pursuing doctoral research in Auditing, Taxation, Commerce, Management and Accounting discipline. They must not be more than 40 years of age. Also, they must not be availing benefits under any other government scholarship/fellowship.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹50,000 per annum

DEADLINE: July 31

APPLICATION: Online applications only www.b4s.in/edge/ICA7

Department of Biotechnology Post-Doctoral Fellowship, IIT Roorkee

The Department of Biotechnology, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee, invites applications for Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) 2020 from MD/PhD degree holders. The fellowship is meant for outstanding and enthusiastic researchers.

ELIGIBILITY: The fellowship is open to residents of India who hold an MD in Pharmacology (Preferred)/ Pathology/ PhD in Nanobiotechnology. They must have experience of working on cutting-edge research in the medical area and have a strong background in the area of Pharmacology and drug delivery area.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹60,000 per month

DEADLINE: June 10

APPLICATION: By email to biotech@iitr.ac.in, soumitrasatapathi @gmail.com and by post to Professor and Head, Department of Biotechnology Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee Roorkee - 247667 www.b4s.in/edge/PDF4

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

U.S. streets left scarred after fifth night of outrage

Violence spreads to major cities like Atlanta, Los Angeles, Portland and Louisville

REUTERS
MINNEAPOLIS

Another night of outrage left stores looted and cars smoldering in many U.S. cities on Sunday as curfews failed to quell violence that replaced peaceful daytime demonstrations over the death of a black man seen on video gasping for breath as a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck.

In Salt Lake City, a man aimed a bow and arrow at protesters and was attacked by the crowd. Fires burned in the streets of Los Angeles. Protesters ripped apart an American flag in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas in many cities.

Anger spreads: Demonstrators in Los Angeles marching on Saturday to protest against the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis earlier in the week. ▪ AFP

Sense of crisis

The sight of protesters flooding streets fuelled a sense of crisis in the United States after weeks of lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen millions thrown out of work and has disproportionately affected minority communities.

The closely packed crowds and many demonstrators not wearing masks sparked fears of a resurgence of COVID-19, which has killed more than 1,00,000 Americans.

Violence spread overnight despite curfews in several major cities rocked by civil unrest in recent days, including Atlanta, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Denver, Cincinnati, Portland, Oregon, and Louisville, Kentucky. Protests also flared in Dallas, Chicago, Seattle, Salt Lake City and Cleveland.

The clashes marked the fifth night of arson, looting and vandalism in parts of Minneapolis, the State's largest city, and its adjacent capital, St. Paul. The State's Governor said on Saturday that he was activating the full Minnesota National Guard for the first time since the Second World War.

Over 170 stores affected

About 170 stores have been looted and some burned to the ground in St. Paul, its Mayor said on Sunday. "We are seeing in St. Paul and obviously around the country this level of rage and anger that frankly is legitimate, as we see this horrific video of George Floyd being just suffocated to death," Mayor Melvin Carter told CNN. "Unfortunately, it's being expressed right now, over the past week, in ways that are destructive and unacceptable."

While covering the protests in Minneapolis, two members of a Reuters TV crew were hit by rubber bullets and injured on Saturday night. The administration of President Donald Trump, who has called protesters "thugs", will not federalise and take control of the National Guard for now, national security adviser Robert O'Brien said on Sunday.

Demands for an end to police brutality have spread globally.

Rallies in London, Berlin

In London, hundreds of protesters took to Trafalgar Square on Sunday chanting "no justice, no peace." On Saturday, a crowd descended on the U.S. Embassy in Berlin calling for the police officers to face justice.

The arrest on murder charges on Friday of Derek Chauvin, the police officer seen kneeling on Floyd's neck, has failed to satisfy protesters. Three officers who stood by as Floyd died have yet to be charged.

Floyd's name is only the latest to be chanted by protesters over the perceived lack of police accountability for violent encounters that resulted in the death of black men. The issue ignited in 2014 with the shooting death of a black 18-year-old, Michael Brown, by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, where police fired tear gas at protesters on Saturday night. Also, the body of an unidentified man was found early Sunday near a burning vehicle in Minneapolis, police in the protest-rocked northern U.S. city said.

Police spokesman John Elder said the body showed obvious signs of trauma, and the death was under investigation by the city" homicide unit. It was unclear if it was related to the protests.

Trump postpones G7 summit, seeks to expand list of invitees

It could include India, Russia, South Korea and Australia

REUTERS
ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that he would postpone a Group of Seven summit he had hoped to hold next month until September or later and expand the list of invitees to include Australia, Russia, South Korea and India.

Speaking to reporters on Air Force One during his return to Washington from Cape Canaveral in Florida, Mr. Trump said the G7, which groups the world's most advanced economies, was a "very outdated group of countries" in its current format. "I'm postponing it because I don't feel that as a G7 it properly represents what's going on in the world," Mr. Trump said.

Most European countries offered no immediate comment on the proposal, with a spokesman for the German government saying Berlin was "waiting for further information".

Expanding the group?

It was unclear whether Mr. Trump's desire to invite the additional countries was a bid to permanently expand the G7. On several previous occasions, he suggested Russia be added, given what he called Moscow's global strategic importance.

Russia was expelled from what was then the G8 in 2014 when Mr. Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, was U.S. President, after Moscow annexed the Crimea region from Ukraine. Russia still holds the territory, and various G7 governments have rebuffed previous calls from Mr. Trump to readmit Moscow. White House spokeswoman Alyssa Farah said Mr. Trump wants the countries to discuss China.

French President Emmanuel Macron backed the idea of an in-person meeting, according to the White House. But Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declined to endorse it, saying there were too many health-related questions. Earlier, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said she could not attend.

Al-Aqsa compound reopens

REUTERS
JERUSALEM

Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound reopened to Muslim worshippers and visitors on Sunday after a two-and-a-half month COVID-19 closure, but authorities imposed some precautions. The resumption of prayers at Islam's third-holiest site capped a sombre period for Jerusalem's Muslims, who this year marked the holy fasting month of Ramzan and the Id holiday without their usual daily visits to Al-Aqsa and the adjoining Dome of the Rock. The Council of Islamic Waqf cited the slowed local spread of COVID-19 in reopening the compound's iconic shrines, which shut on March 15.

Coronavirus numbers cross six million

Even as Brazil suffers record daily surge, Bolsonaro seeks an end to lockdown

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRASILIA

The number of COVID-19 cases worldwide topped six million Sunday as Brazil registered another record surge in daily infections and divisions deepened on how to deal with the pandemic.

Latin American countries are bracing for difficult weeks ahead as the virus spreads rapidly across the region. This contrasts to other parts of the world where the pace has eased and permitted a cautious exit from lockdowns that have wrecked economies and stripped millions of their jobs.

The new epicentre

In Brazil – the epicentre of South America's outbreak with nearly 5,00,000 confirmed cases – disagreement among its leaders over lockdown measures has hampered efforts to slow a virus that has cost nearly 30,000 lives.

President Jair Bolsonaro, who fears the economic fallout from stay-at-home orders will be worse than the virus, has berated Governors and Mayors for imposing what he calls "the tyranny of total quarantine." Even as his country surpassed France to have the world's fourth-highest death toll, Mr. Bolsonaro called for Brazil's football season to resume.

Cautious reopening: Families with their children seen on the Paseo de la Castellana in Madrid, Spain, on Saturday. ▪ AP

The pandemic has killed nearly 3,70,000 people and infected more than six million worldwide, according to an AFP tally.

As the virus progresses at different speeds around the globe, there has been pressure to lift crippling lockdowns, despite the lack of a vaccine and experts warning of a possible second wave of infections.

South Africa will reopen its economy on Monday, the continent's hardest-hit country moving to level three of a five-tier lockdown.

Some good news turned sour in China, where the first flight carrying Europeans arrived on Saturday since the country suspended visas in late March.

Just a day later, Chinese authorities said a German engineer on the flight had tested positive for coronavirus as an asymptomatic carrier.

With infection numbers falling in many of Europe's most affected countries, restrictions are being steadily eased.

Parks open in Paris

Parks opened in Paris on the weekend for the first time in months, ahead of restaurants, cafes and bars reopening on sidewalks and terraces on Tuesday. "Paris needs to support its restaurants and bars.

They are the heart of our city," Mayor Anne Hidalgo said, as some restaurants jumped the gun by opening early, with police largely turning a blind eye.

Across the Atlantic, the U.S. capital Washington also resumed outdoor dining, while on the West Coast, restaurants and hair salons in Los Angeles reopened.

New York City, the worst-hit American city with about 21,500 coronavirus deaths, is on track to begin reopening the week of June 8.

The overall U.S. death toll has topped 1,03,000 out of more than 1.7 million cases.

Talks with U.S. futile, says new Iran Speaker

Ghalibaf vows revenge for leader's killing

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran's new Parliament Speaker said on Sunday that any negotiations with Washington would be "futile" as he denounced the death of a black American that has led to violent protests across the U.S. Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, a former commander of the Revolutionary Guards' air force, was elected Speaker on Thursday of a chamber dominated by ultra-conservatives following February elections.

The newly formed Parliament "considers negotiations with and appeasement of America, as the axis of global arrogance, to be futile and harmful," he said in his first major speech to the chamber. Mr. Ghalibaf also vowed revenge for the U.S. drone attack in January that killed Qasem Soleimani. "Our strategy in confronting the terrorist America is to finish the revenge for martyr Soleimani's blood," he told lawmakers, pledging "the total expulsion of America's terrorist army from the region".

Speaker of Iranian Parliament Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf

'Trump's move will hurt the U.S. more than China'

Beijing slams decision on Hong Kong

REUTERS
HONG KONG/BEIJING

China's state media and the government of Hong Kong lashed out on Sunday at U.S. President Donald Trump's vow to end Hong Kong's special status if Beijing imposes new national security laws on the city, which is bracing for fresh protests.

Mr. Trump on Friday pledged to "take action to revoke Hong Kong's preferential treatment as a separate customs and travel territory", and to impose sanctions on unspecified individuals over Beijing's new laws on the Asian financial centre.

But China's state media pushed back, saying this would hurt the United States more than China. "The baton of sanctions that the United States is brandishing will not scare Hong Kong and will not bring China down," China's Communist Party mouthpiece, the *People's Daily*, wrote in a commentary. *The Global Times* wrote, "China has already prepared for the worst. No matter how far the U.S. goes, China will keep its company."

In a sign of diplomatic manoeuvring, the U.S. government said it would put one of its prime Hong Kong properties up for sale. A spokesman for the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong said this was part of a global programme that "reinforces the U.S. government's presence in Hong Kong" through reinvestment in other areas.

ELSEWHERE

Raab defends loosening of restrictions in U.K.

LONDON

British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab defended on Sunday the government's "careful" loosening of the COVID-19 lockdown. "We are taking those steps very carefully, based on the science but also based on our ability now to monitor the virus," said Mr. Raab. AFP

Spain PM to seek 2-week extension to lockdown

MADRID

Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Sunday he will seek Parliament's approval to extend Spain's state of emergency one final time, which would keep the COVID-19 lockdown in place until June 21. The current emergency is set to expire on June 7, and the Premier said that one last two-week extension was required. AFP

100-year-old Indonesian woman beats COVID-19

Surabaya's Kamtim discharged after a month of treatment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SURABAYA

A 100-year-old Indonesian woman has recovered from COVID-19, making her the country's oldest survivor of the deadly respiratory illness.

Kamtim, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, was discharged from hospital this week after a month of treatment in her hometown Surabaya, Indonesia's second-biggest city, officials said.

An inspiration

East Java Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa said she hoped Ms. Kamtim's story would give a boost to at-risk residents – the illness is especially dangerous for older people and those with chronic conditions.

"I hope her recovery can motivate elderly people during the pandemic," Ms. Parawansa added.

Kamtim, left, with her daughter-in-law Siti Aminah in Surabaya on Sunday. ▪ AFP

Born in 1920, Ms. Kamtim was taken to hospital last month after showing symptoms and she was later confirmed to have contracted the virus.

Siti Aminah, the woman's daughter-in-law, chalked up her recovery to "discipline and persistence".

"Every day I checked her condition with nurses and they always told me that she was very strong and diligent about taking her medicine," Ms. Aminah said. "She was very motivated to get better."

It was not clear how the home-bound woman contracted the virus. "She probably got it when people from the neighbourhood came around to visit since she never goes outside," said Ms. Aminah.

Low testing rate

Indonesia has confirmed more than 26,000 cases of COVID-19 and 1,613 deaths.

But the sprawling Southeast Asian archipelago of more than 260 million has among the lowest testing rates in the world.

Researchers estimate the true number of virus infections and fatalities is several times the official toll.

INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY

The following e-tenders are published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to **www.ireps.gov.in** and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. Hindi translation of display advertisement available in the website: **www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in.** Closing and Opening time for all tenders are **10:30 hrs** and **11.00 hrs.** respectively.

Sl. No.	Open Tender No.	Short description of work	Approx. Value in Lakhs (₹)	Date of Tender	
				Closing	Opening
1.	EW/1074	**Dismantling of existing compound wall, re-construction of compound wall, re-construction of drain road and pavement in Shell factory.**	151.58	12.06.2020	12.06.2020

GREEN ICF ! CLEAN ICF !

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
Office of The Chief Engineer, (Design)
9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G Road, Bangalore-560009
No.: BWSSB/CEDTE/TA2/03-2020/211/2020-21 Date: 29.05.2020
INVITATION FOR TENDER
(Through E-Procurement Portal Only)

BWSSB invites tenders in two cover system from Eligible Contractors for the work of **Construction 12 nos of new Quarters Building, with Ground + Three Floors at Byadarahalli, Magadi Road coming under CMC/TMC/110 Villages area, Bengaluru.**
Amount Put to Tender: **Rs. 307.05 lakhs.**
EMD Amount: **Rs. 4.61 lakhs.**
Last Date and Time for Receipt of completed tender is on : **30.06.2020 upto 16.00 hrs.** and The Technical Bids will be opened on **02.07.2020 at 12.00 noon.** The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement can be obtained by logging on to **https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Design)

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES ZONE, JODHPUR
Lal Sagar, Kishore Bag Jodhpur (Rajasthan) 342304
Tel. 0291-2570681(O) Email:- acejdr.wr@rajasthan.gov.in, acejdr.wr@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING BIDS

NIB NO. 02/2020-21 Date 18.05.2020 **UBN**: WRD2021WLOB00425

Single stage two-Envelopes unconditional covered bids are invited electronically on e-procurement portal, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in on behalf of the Governor of Rajashtan for the procurement of Works as listed below, from enlisted bidders of appropriate class of the department on e-procurement portal, latest upto 4:00 PM of 26.06.2020:-

S. No	Name of Work and Site	Estimated Cost of Work (Lacs)	Completion Period	Price of Bidding Document (Rupees)	Amount of Bid Security (Lacs)
1.	Rehabilitation and Improvement work of Jawai Dam Distt. Pali under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II	2400.00	36 Months (including rainy season)	7500/-	48.00

The complete Bidding Document may be seen or downloaded from the Sate Public Procurement Portal http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or e-procurement portal http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or our website www.water.rajasthan.gov.in and its non-refundable price may be paid along with processing fee and bid security at the time of submission of the bids by eGRAS.

(R.K. Tepan)
Chief Engineer
Water Resources Zone, Jodhpur

DIPR/C/3637/2020

NLC India Limited
'Navratna' - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office : First Floor, No.8, Mayor Sathyamurthy Road, FSD, Egmore Complex of Food Corporation of India, Chetpet, Chennai - 600 031.
Corp. Office : Block-1, Neyveli-607 801, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu.
CIN No.: L93090TN1956GOI003507, Website: www.nlcindia.com
CREATING WEALTH FOR WELLBEING

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES (e-Tender Notices Sl.No.1 to 3)

Sl.No. Tender Ref./Scope of Supplies & Qty. Reqd.

1.UNIT:M.M. COMPLEX:PTE/ENQ/20-21/000360/MM18(06) dt. 21-05-2020: Procurement of Non-electric detonators (Nonel) **Qty. : 500000 Metres.** **Due date of opening :** 22-06-2020

2. ENQ/20-21/000246/MM24(01) dt.13-05-2020: Design, manufacture, assembly, testing at manufactures works, transport, delivery at site, erection, testing and commissioning of 250A/253V (Float mode) & 300 A/297 V (Boost mode) DC float and float cum boost charger - **4 Nos.** **Due date of opening:** 12-06-2020

3. PTE No. ENQ/20-21/000290/MM01(03) dt. 21-05-2020: 7 items of Track tensioning spindle. **Due date of opening:** 24-06-2020

FOR e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
PUBLIC SECTOR IS YOURS: HELP IT TO HELP YOU

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES ZONE, UDAIPUR
Near Akashvani, Chetak Circle, Udaipur (Rajasthan) 313001
Phone No. : 0294-2528265 Email :- accudaipur2019@gmail.com
No.- ACE/Actt./DRIP-Matrikundia/F/2020-21/6993 Dated:- 22.05.2020

INVITATION FOR BIDS
IFB NO. 03/2020-21
NIB NO. : WRD2021A0123

NAME OF WORK	Rehabilitation and improvement works of Matrikundia Dam District Chittorgarh/Bhilwara under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II. **(UBN No. WRD2021WLOB00433)**
ESTIMATED COST OF WORK	Rs. 1130.00 Lacs
AMOUNT OF BID SECURITY	Rs. 22.60 Lacs
PERIOD OF COMPLETION	24 Months including rainy season
COST OF BID DOCUMENT	Rs. 5000/-
PERIOD OF SALE OF BIDDING DOCUMENT	From 01.06.2020 to 01.07.2020
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF PRE-BID MEETING	08.06.2020 Time 16:00 hours at Office of Additional Chief Engineer, Water Resources Zone, Udaipur
LAST DATE FOR RECEIPT OF BID (ONLINE UPLOAD)	02.07.2020 upto 16:00 hours
TIME AND DATE OF OPENING OF BIDS TECHNICAL PART	02.07.2020 at 17:15 hours
PLACE OF OPENING OF BIDS	Office of Additional Chief Engineer, Water Resources Zone, Udaipur

Details of NIT/BID document may be seen on website **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.diproline.org, www.sppp.raj.nic.in** and it may be downloaded / uploaded from **http://www.waterresources.rajasthan.gov.in** and it may be downloaded / uploaded from **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in**

Additional Chief Engineer
Water Resources Zone, Udaipur

DIPR/C/3695/2020

ASK US

N. SREEKANTH

Q. I retired from a government-owned bank in July 2018.
My employer has got a medical assistance fund for retirees and their spouses. From this fund, a group mediclaim policy is taken for covering hospitalisation expenses subject to a maximum of ₹4 lakh per hospitalisation. Recently, I was admitted to a hospital for undergoing a neurosurgery for Parkinson's disease and the total expenses amounted to ₹15 lakh. Of this, the insurance company paid ₹4 lakh and the balance amount was paid by me. After writing to the bank, I received ₹8 lakh from the medical fund leaving ₹3 lakh to be borne by me.
Now, my question is: are the amounts received from the insurance company and the bank taxable?

R. SAMPATH

A. There are no express provisions entailing taxability of medical insurance claims in the Income Tax Act, 1961. It is widely understood that such claims received from insurers are reimbursements in nature, as medical expenses are already incurred by the policyholder wherein insurers either take over such expenses in cashless claims or make a direct payment to policyholders on scrutiny of medical records and bills. In our opinion, such receipts are not taxable in the hands of the policyholder irrespective of the deductions claimed under section 80D.

With respect to the amount received from the fund of the bank, the querist has not clarified whether the fund is registered under Section 12A/12AA/10(23C). The amount received from the funds registered under the sections referred to are not subjected to tax.

Q. I had taken a home loan of ₹20 lakh in 2016. About 10 days ago, I received ₹2.3 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana interest subsidy. Is it tax exempt or taxable? Besides, I also pre-paid ₹2 lakh towards the home loan.

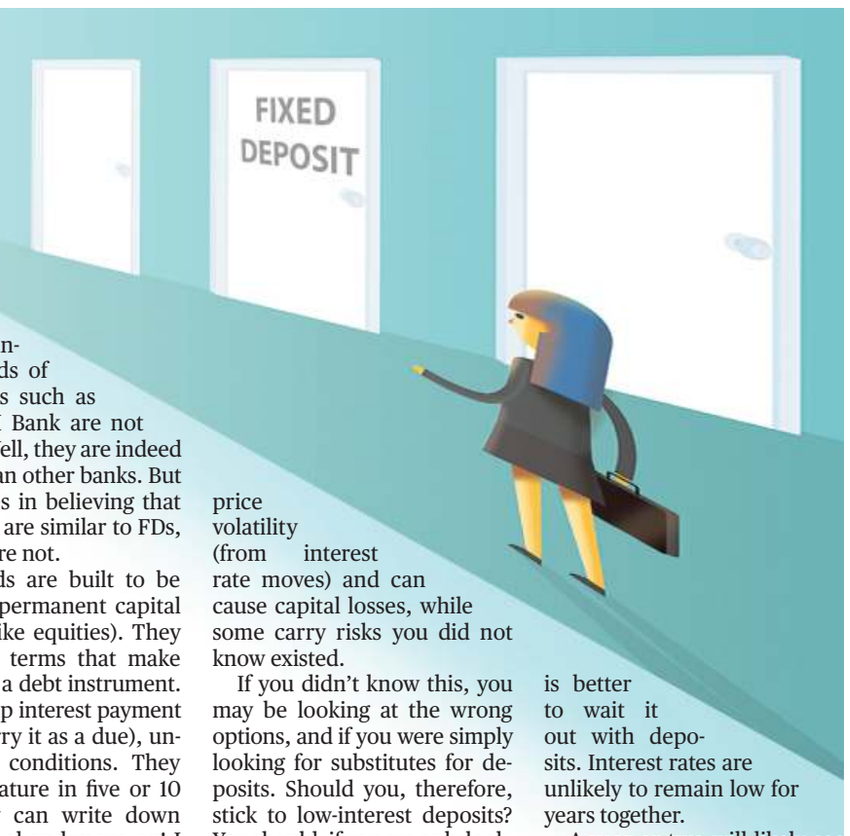
SELVAKUMAR V.

A. As per the scheme policy, interest subsidy will be credited upfront to the loan account of beneficiaries through primary lending institutions, resulting in a reduced effective housing loan and equated monthly instalment (EMI). The interest subsidy under CLSS is released on approval of the nodal agencies directly to the applicant's lender in lump sum. As this results in reduced EMIs over the remaining tenure of the loan, it can be considered as a "capital receipt". Capital receipts are not chargeable to tax under the Income Tax Act. This view is also supported vide an ITAT Ruling in Kolkata bench in the case of DCIT V. Pricewaterhouse Coopers Pvt. Ltd. in 2016.

(The author is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

Why the humble FD is the BEST CHOICE NOW



Low interest rates on such investments may steer an investor to look for substitutes, but pitfalls abound

VIDYA BALA

Over the course of the past one month, I received many more queries on debt investments than usual. If you think this happened solely because of the Franklin India debt fund fallout, that isn't the case.

There were questions on buying gilts, gilt funds, going for Bharat Bond ETFs, buying bank AT1 bonds and why not fixed deposits in Yes Bank! The chief reason for all these questions is actually the low interest rate scenario prevailing in bank deposits and post office small savings scheme.

The search for higher rates has begun! But in the process, it is important not to choose options that are ill-suited to your risk profile.

Here are some points you will do well to remember:

Gilts may be unsuitable

If your objective is to get regular interest income through a buy-and-hold strategy of safe, government debt securities (called gilts), it not a good idea now. With gilts nosediving to under 6%, you lock into low interest now, just as you would lock into a long-term FD at low rates now. What people do in such scenarios is tactically play this, by entering when yields are expected to go down (and cause prices to rise) and exit with come capital gain when rates touch a low. But if you are not a bond market watcher who is ready to time investments, gilts will not help you at this stage. A discerning investor said he could overcome the need to tactically do this himself by choosing gilt funds as the fund manager would book some profits or enter opportunistically. True. Gilt funds can be good long-term options. But what he did not know is that gilt funds, too, can deliver negative one-year returns, when rates suddenly turn adverse. So, would the investor be willing to see some market-linked losses in his gilts (which he sees as a proxy to FD)?

Another investor told us that he was advised gilt funds as a six-month product and that he could generate 6% in six months. Now, I am not refuting the possibility of such returns in the current scenario. But what he was not told is that the gilt funds can be very volatile and you can lose capital if the interest rate suddenly moves up. Your FD would give you an assured return even over six months, but not so your gilt funds. They need a longer time frame to tide over such volatility and rate risks.

The same holds good for Bharat Bond ETFs too. They are quality papers of PSUs and their yields (current 10-year ETF at 6.81%) are better than gilts but there is no escaping price volatility. The question you need to ask yourself is whether this is the best return you can get if you simply hold for 10 years. And again, they don't fit your bill for steady income or far higher returns, in the current low rate scenario.

Bonds and equity risks

With the search for higher returns came the risk appetite for AT-1 bonds of banks, once again. Many asked us whether investment into AT-1 bonds of 'safer' banks such as SBI or ICICI Bank are not advisable. Well, they are indeed less risky than other banks. But the issue lies in believing that these bonds are similar to FDs, when they are not.

AT-1 bonds are built to be part of the permanent capital for banks (like equities). They carry many terms that make them unlike a debt instrument. They can skip interest payment (and not carry it as a due), under certain conditions. They need not mature in five or 10 years. They can write down your principal and move on! I am not trying to scare you with these details. There could still be bonds that are worth your attention but only if you know that these are unsuitable for capital preservation and that the risks are high. They are most definitely not a substitute for FDs.

This is not to dissuade you from any of the above products. I would like you to understand that some of them can carry price volatility (from interest rate moves) and can cause capital losses, while some carry risks you did not know existed.

If you didn't know this, you may be looking at the wrong options, and if you were simply looking for substitutes for deposits. Should you, therefore, stick to low-interest deposits? You should, if you are only looking for products similar to FDs.

You should go for the above options or similar ones only if you understand market risks. That is, the price of these instruments can swing to market movement (like equity) and even cause losses temporarily or for extended periods.

You need to understand if your timing is right whether the residual maturity is low or high, to assess the risk. Otherwise, it is better to wait it out with deposits. Interest rates are unlikely to remain low for years together.

A year or two will likely see rates move north. Bear the pain for a while and do not also yield to high rates offered aggressively by new-age banks. While you have the comfort that banks aren't allowed to fail in India, a merger or restructuring or even bank insurance is not a quick solution to getting back your money. In these times, discretion is the better part of valour.

(The author is co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)

THINK INVESTOR

Does your risk appetite really matter?

Buying an investment product is more a function of life goal than risk appetite

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

You should buy an investment product that suits your risk appetite, so you are told.

This statement presupposes that you know your risk appetite, and that your risk appetite does not change with time, even if you invest in a product through a long-dated systematic investment plan (SIP).

Suffice to know that determining your risk appetite is difficult because of behavioural reasons. Also, your risk appetite will change over time due to factors other than aging. In this article, we explain why buying an investment product is more a function of your life goal than your risk appetite, when you self-manage your investments.

Risk versus reward: If taking risk can improve your chances of achieving your life's goal, then not taking risk is risky. • ETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Goal pitted against risk

You cannot pursue all your life goals because you have to balance your current lifestyle and savings.

This forces you to prioritise your goals. How do you decide on goal priority? A simple test is to ask a question: can your goal be postponed? If not, then the goal is high priority. Your child's college education fund, is an example.

Suppose your current high-priority goal is to accumulate ₹1 crore as down payment to buy a beach house eight years hence.

Given your current lifestyle and your income levels, you can save, say, ₹75,000 each month to achieve this goal. So, a compounded annual return of 8.5% on your savings will help you accumulate ₹1 crore at the end of eight years. You believe that investing in equity is risky and prefer bank deposits.

But bank deposits earn a pre-tax return of 5.75% and a post-tax return of 4%, assuming a marginal tax rate of 30%.

Given that you need 8.5% post-tax returns, yielding to your perceived risk appetite means you will fail to achieve your goal. Surely, you cannot give up on your high-priority goal because of your presumably low risk appetite. What should you do?

Present versus future

You have two choices: increase your monthly savings so that earning 4% on bank deposits will help you accumulate ₹1 crore in eight years.

Or, invest in products that can offer higher returns but carry higher risk. Now, curbing your current lifestyle to save more is easier said than done. You could marginally increase your monthly savings, but you may still need to invest in risky investments (read equity) to achieve your goal. That said, how should you choose your equity investments: active funds or index funds? Note that index funds carry market risk viz. the risk that the fund will decline in value along with the broader market.

In addition to market risk, active funds carry active risk viz. the risk that the fund could underperform the benchmark index. You may want to settle for only market risk, given that you have to invest in equity despite your concern for such investments.

And that means choosing a large-cap index fund. The risk of investing in a large-cap fund is the price you pay for your current lifestyle.

That is, less savings means better current lifestyle as you spend more of your income now, but that forces you to invest in equity to earn higher returns.

Conclusion

Your risk appetite is not a factor you should consider when investing to achieve high-priority goals. The argument is simple: if your savings cannot help you achieve your high-priority goal with bank fixed deposits, then you have to invest in equity.

If taking risk can help you improve your chances of achieving your goal as well as balance your current lifestyle and savings, then not taking risk is risky. So, start your equity SIPs sooner than later.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

Gold, silver remain range bound in May

B. KRISHNAKUMAR

The price of precious metals remained range bound in May. The sentiment was influenced by the news flow relating to key economic data and stimulus packages announced across the globe. Besides, the news flow relating to the COVID-19, too, played a role in influencing their prices.

Comex gold gained 3.4% to settle at $1,751.7 an ounce by the end of May. The price action in Comex silver was more dramatic with the white metal gaining 24.2% to settle at $18.5 an ounce.

In the domestic market, MCX gold futures gained 4.5% to settle at ₹47,069 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures gained 22% to close at ₹50,096 a kg.

As observed last month, Comex gold was confined to the trading range of $1,650-1,800. The short-term outlook is positive. Comex gold has bounced back from the lower end of the range which is a sign of strength. A move to the immediate resistance at $1,775-1,785 is likely. The uptrend would gather momentum on a close above $1,800. The positive outlook would be under threat if the price closes below the support level at $1,650.

Comex silver, too, moved in line with last month's expectations. The price moved up and reached the target of $17.8-18 mentioned in the previous post. The short-term outlook is positive and Comex silver can move to the short-term target of $19.3-19.8 range. A breakout above $18.2 would be a sign of strength and strengthen the case for a rise to the target zone. A fall below $16.5 would be a sign of weakness and warrant a reassessment of the positive view.

MCX gold futures ruled firm and achieved the target zone of ₹47,800-49,000 mentioned last month. The short-term outlook is positive and gold futures is likely to progress to the immediate target zone at ₹49,100-49,800 zone. A breakout past ₹47,700 would confirm the bullish case scenario. The short-term trend would turn weak if the price falls below ₹44,800 per 10 gm.

MCX silver, too, achieved the target of ₹47,500-48,000. The strong breakout in the price of May 29 is a positive sign. It is likely to head higher to the immediate target zone at ₹52,000-53,000 per kg. A breakout above ₹51,000 would lend momentum to the upside.

(The author is a Chennai based analyst/trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH

"It has nothing to do with the mask. I never could make out whether you were smiling or not when you look at your bank account!"

PERSONAL LOAN - RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Lender	Interest rate (%)	EMI (₹) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure - 5 years	EMI (₹) Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure - 5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
State Bank of India	9.85-14.10	10,587-11,660	2,117-2,332	Upto 1.5% (Maximum Rs 15,000)
Citi Bank	9.99-18.50	10,621-12,833	2,124-2,567	Upto 3%
HDFC Bank	10.75- 21.30	10,809-13,611	2,162-2,722	Rs 2,999-25,000
Bank of Baroda	10.10-15.10	10,648-11,921	2,130-2,384	Rs 1,000-10,000
ICICI Bank	11.25-22.00	10,934-13,809	2,187-2,762	Upto 2.25%
UCO Bank	9.80-10.20	10,574-10,673	2,115-2,135	Upto 1%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.75-24.00	10,809-14,384	2,162-2,877	Upto 2.5%
Bank of Maharashtra	10.85-11.85	10,834-11,084	2,167-2,217	1% (Minimum Rs 1,000)
Bank of India	9.75-12.75	10,562-11,313	2,112-2,263	Upto 2% (Maximum Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.60-14.30	10,772-11,712	2,154-2,342	Upto 1%
Punjab National Bank	9.20-12.05	10,428-11,135	2,086-2,227	Upto 1%
Indian Bank	9.60-14.05	10-525-11,647	2,105-2,329	Upto Rs 255 for pensioners; 0.512% for other borrowers (Minimum Rs 512)

Rates as on May 28, 2020 — *Source: paisabazaar.com*

NEW CAR LOAN-RATES AND CHARGES

Name of Bank	Interest rate (%)	EMI (₹) Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure-5 years	Processing fee (% of loan amount)
Bank of Baroda	7.10-9.10	9,924-10,403	0.50% (Rs 2,500-10,000)
UCO Bank	7.20-7.45	9,948-10,007	Up to 1% (Max: Rs 1,500)
Punjab & Sind Bank	7.50-7.85	10,019-10,102	Nil
Union Bank of India	7.55-7.90	10,031-10,114	Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	7.55-8.05	10,031-10,150	0.25% (Rs 1,000-1,500) For Insta Vehicle Loan: Rs 1,000
Canara Bank	7.70-10.30	10,067-10,697	0.25% (Rs 1,000-5,000)
Bank of India	7.75-8.35	10,078-10,222	Up to 0.25% (Rs 1,000-5,000) For Rural Areas: Rs 1,500-20,000
Indian Overseas Bank	7.95	10,126	0.50%-0.60% (Rs 500-10,000)
State Bank of India	7.95-11.45*	10,126-10,984	Up to 0.50% For Green Car Loan: Rs 1,000-Rs 1,500
Indian Bank	8.20-8.55	10,186-10,270	0.230% (Max: Rs 10,236)
IDBI Bank	8.40-9.00	10,234-10,379	Rs 1000
HDFC Bank	8.80-10.00	10,331-10,624	1%(Rs 5,000-Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	9.05-11.30	10,391-10,946	Rs 3,500-5,500

**Additional concession of 0.25% on application via YONO. Further concession of 0.20% on purchase of EV.*

Rates and charges as on May 28, 2020 — *Source: paisabazaar.com*

Ending a drought: Bundesliga's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski finally managed to score against Fortuna Dusseldorf. ▪ AFP

Bayern goes 10 clear

Lewandowski excels in the 5-0 rout of Dusseldorf

BUNDESLIGA

REUTERS
MUNICH

Bayern Munich moved closer to a record-extending 30th league title after its Polish striker Robert Lewandowski ended a personal jinx in a 5-0 drubbing of struggling Fortuna Dusseldorf in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

The result left leader Bayern, which is chasing an eighth successive league title, top of the standings on 67 points from 29 games, 10 ahead of closest rival Borussia Dortmund.

Lewandowski snapped his goal drought versus 16th-placed Fortuna when he scored for the first time against it to give Bayern a 3-0 lead in the first half after a Mathias Joergensen own goal and Benjamin Pavard header opened the floodgates.

Lewandowski made it 4-0 shortly after the break with another predator's finish before left back Alphonso Davies completed the rout in the 52nd minute after weaving past three defenders.

Meanwhile on Sunday, Marcus Thuram and Alassane Plea combined to score three goals as Borussia Monchengladbach crushed Union Berlin 4-1 to reclaim third place with five matches left.

The results: Borussia Monchengladbach 4 (Neuhaus 17, Thuram 41, 59, Plea 81) bt Union Berlin 1 (Andersson 50).

Saturday: Bayern Munich 5 (Joergensen 15-og, Pavard 29, Lewandowski 43, 50, Davies 52) bt Fortuna Dusseldorf 0.

Nakamura stuns Carlsen

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Comeback-man Hikaru Nakamura knocked out World champion Magnus Carlsen with a thrilling 3-2 win in their third mini-match to reach the final of the $150,000 Lindores Abbey Rapid Challenge chess on Friday.

After a day of rest, Nakamura will take on the 2018 World rapid champion Daniil Dubov for the title.

Nakamura, blown away 3-0 in the first mini-match and staring at defeat in the opening game of the second mini-match, eventually crossed the finish line when Carlsen resigned soon after overlooking the loss of a rook in the Armageddon game of their third mini-match.

Soon after his memorable triumph, Nakamura commented, "It still hasn't completely sunk in, but it's great to beat Magnus – at least one time I found a way, so I'm pretty happy!"

The result (semifinal, third mini-match):

Hikaru Nakamura (USA) bt Magnus Carlsen (Nor) 3-2.

IN BRIEF

Olympic champion Joe Morrow passes away

LOS ANGELES

Triple Olympic gold medallist Bobby Joe Morrow — 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay gold at the 1956 Melbourne Games — has died at the age of 84. The San Benito school district, which honoured the hometown hero by naming its football stadium after him, expressed condolences on Facebook on Saturday, saying Morrow's legacy would "live on forever". At Melbourne in 1956, Morrow joined US athletics great Jesse Owens as the only men to win the 100m, 200m and 4x100m gold at a single Olympics — a feat later matched by American Carl Lewis and Jamaican Usain Bolt. He was named *Sports Illustrated*'s Sportsman-of-the-Year that year — beating out baseball hero Mickey Mantle and boxer Floyd Patterson. Morrow retired from athletics in 1958, and in a brief comeback bid in 1960 failed to qualify for the US Olympic team. AFP

'Extremely honoured'

NEW DELHI

Rohit Sharma, nominated for the Khel Ratna award, said on *bcci.tv*: "Extremely honoured and humbled to be nominated for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award. I am thankful to BCCI, my teammates, support staff, fans of the game and my family for sticking by me." PTI

Vinesh to be nominated for Khel Ratna

NEW DELHI

World Championships bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat is set to be nominated for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award for the second year in a row while Rio Olympics bronze winner Sakshi Malik wants to be in contention for Arjuna. PTI

Sri Lankan cricketers to resume training today

COLOMBO

A group of 13 Sri Lankan cricketers, comprising mainly bowlers, will resume training on Monday following the coronavirus hiatus, SLC said on Sunday. The 13 players will undergo a 12-day 'Residential Training Camp' at the Colombo Cricket Club. PTI

Vettori donates part of salary to BCB staff

DHAKA

Former New Zealand captain and Bangladesh's spin bowling coach Daniel Vettori has asked the BCB to give a part of his salary to the Board's low-income staffers amid the financial hardship caused by the pandemic. PTI

National federations to distribute ITF relief

A dozen Indian players set to benefit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has roped in the national governing bodies of each country to help route financial support to lower-ranked players reeling under the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

Close to a dozen Indians are expected to receive money from the programme aimed at singles players ranked 501-700. This is different from the fund set up by the ATP, WTA, Grand Slam nations and top players led by Novak Djokovic.

"Doubles players ranked between 175 and 300 will also be helped," an ITF source said. "It's a nominal amount, less than $2000 (per player)."

It is understood that only those players who have been competing in the last 10 months are eligible.

The likes of Karman Kaur Thandi (606), Y. Pranjala (664), Manish Suresh Kumar (642) and Arjun Kadhe (655) in singles along with Saketh Myneni (180), Vishnu Vardhan (199) and Rutuja Bhosale (196) in doubles are set to benefit.

US Open: various options being explored

USTA official expects Slam to be held at usual site and spot on the calendar

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

Charter flights to ferry players and limited entourages from Europe, South America and the Middle East to New York. Negative COVID-19 tests before travelling. Centralised housing. Daily temperature checks.

No spectators. Fewer on-court officials. No locker-room access on practice days.

All are among the scenarios being considered for the 2020 U.S. Open – if it is held at all amid the coronavirus pandemic – and described to The Associated Press by a high-ranking official at the Grand Slam tournament.

"All of this is still fluid," Stacey Allaster, the U.S. Tennis Association's chief executive for professional tennis, said in a phone interview.

"We have made no decisions at all."

With that caveat, Allaster added that if the USTA board does decide to go forward with the Open, she expects it to be held at its usual site and in its usual spot on the calendar.

The main draw is scheduled to start Aug. 31.

"We continue to be, I would say, 150% focused on staging a safe environment for conducting a U.S. Open at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on our dates. It's all I wake up – our team wakes up – thinking about," Allaster said.

"The idea of an alternative venue, an alternative date-...we've got a responsibility to explore it, but it doesn't have a lot of momentum."

An announcement should come from mid-June to end of June, Allaster said.

Amended rules: The US Open could be held as scheduled but with restrictions, including no spectators. ▪ FILE PHOTO

National camp likely from June 10

BOXING

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI), the first National sports federation to hold online classes during the lockdown, is taking initiatives to resume the National camp from June 10.

"We had a detailed discussion with our boxers and coaching staff last week. After their unanimous willingness to start the training process, we have proposed the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to start the camps for both Olympics qualified and men and women boxers of the remaining categories in Patiala from June 10," BFI president Ajay Singh told *The Hindu*.

Ajay said the federation tried to keep the boxers in good physical and mental shape. "My colleagues in BFI and the coaches put together a master plan that ensured all the Olympic-qualified boxers, along with probables, were connected and online classes were initiated.

"I spoke to each one of them to understand the challenges. Maintaining weight was a problem for some and mental wellness and diet were some of the key challenges. Due to home training, many faced a roadblock as they did not have the right equipment at home. However, this issue was immediately resolved by SAI as new sets of equipment were delivered at most of the boxers' houses."

The BFI chief said a team of officials and support staff closely monitored the athletes. "BFI also ensured that a specific monitoring system was implemented and online coaching was seamlessly introduced so that boxers could resume training and maintain the level of fitness that is necessary for elite athletes... customised diet charts were also made available," said Ajay Singh.

Ajay Singh.

Dingko tests positive for COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Asian Games gold medal-winning former boxer Dingko Singh, already battling liver cancer, has tested positive for COVID-19, adding to his health complications which earlier came in the way of an urgently-arranged radiation therapy.

The 41-year-old Arjuna and Padma Shri awardee has been admitted to a hospital at Imphal, more than a week after returning from Delhi.

"He was negative when he left from Delhi but has tested positive on his return to Manipur," revealed a source close to the boxer.

'Game is more physical and faster'

Indian women need to become stronger: Williams

BASKETBALL

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

The former coach of the Indian women's basketball team Tamika Williams stressed the need for Indians to improve their skills with respect to strength and speed, to become more competitive at the highest level.

Changed a lot

Speaking at a webinar, organised by the Indian Basketball Players Association, Williams, a former WNBA player and who coached the Indian women's team during the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou said, "The game has changed a lot over the last 10 years. It is more physical and faster with scores of 70-80 the norm from the 50-60 points."

"So the one area where the Indian women need to focus and get better is to become stronger.

"When I was here, there was some apprehension to working on core strengths, lifting weights and being stronger because they did not want to become very muscular. But once they realised what it could do to their games, it changed."

The route

Williams also added that more Indian women need to go through the US university system and slowly lay the foundation by teaching the local talent at the grassroots level and help them take the next step.

Former India player Appoorva Muralinath who is currently an assistant women's coach at Dean College, Massachusetts said, "The strength and conditioning part of the game is something we are not used to, but it is a huge part of the game.

"It does not just help you avoid injuries or recover faster from one, but it goes beyond that. It is not just about becoming big.

" Knowing you are stronger takes your game to a different level and makes you believe in yourself that you can take on any opponent."

Tamika Williams.

> **The strength and conditioning part of the game is something we are not used to**
>
> APPOORVA MURALINATH
> Former India player

MCA defers Apex Council meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Apex Council meeting of the Mumbai Cricket Association, scheduled to be held online on Monday, has been deferred as the chances to organise a meet, which officials can attend in person, have improved.

The central government has announced that several lockdown restrictions will be lifted on June 8.

A Council member told *PTI* that the meeting could be held after June 8 after the "unlock" guidelines come into effect.

The Apex Council meet was scheduled to form an ad-hoc Cricket Improvement Committee, decide on the AGM date, and discuss about the 2020-21 cricket season.

Sports ready for restart in the UK

ECB steps up plans for games behind closed doors

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

"The British sporting recovery has begun" the UK government proclaimed as it approved the return of domestic competitive action behind closed doors from June 1.

But with much of the country still in effective lockdown, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary Oliver Dowden, told a news conference on Saturday: "For more than two months after sport stopped and after weeks of round-the-clock discussions with medical experts and professional sports bodies, I'm delighted to announce today that the government has published guidance which allows competitive sport to resume behind closed doors from Monday (June 1) at the earliest."

Horse racing is set to be the first major sport back in action on Monday.

The England and Wales Cricket Board will step up plans to restart the sport behind closed doors after the British government gave the green light to return to action.

Meanwhile, there have been no positive findings from the latest round of coronavirus testing carried out in the Premier League.

Rare scorpionfish found in Gulf of Mannar

Discovered alive in Indian waters for the first time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Researchers at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have found a rare fish from Sethukarai coast in the Gulf of Mannar.

Camouflaged within the seagrass meadows, the band-tail scorpionfish (*Scorpaenospsis neglecta*), well-known for its stinging venomous spines and ability to change colour, was found during an exploratory survey of the seagrass ecosystem.

This was the first time that the particular species was found alive in Indian waters, said a press release.

The fish has the ability to change colour and blend with its surrounding environment to escape from predators and while preying.

"During the underwater survey, this species was first sighted as a coral skeleton.

On first look, its appearance was totally confusing and we doubted if it was a fish or fossilised coral skeleton covered with bivalve shells.

Colour changing

"It started changing when we disturbed it by touching a dead coral fragment. Within four seconds, the skin of the fish changed from white to mottled black colour," said R. Jeyabaskaran, senior scientist at CMFRI, who led the team of researchers.

The fish is called 'scorpionfish' because its spines contain neurotoxic venom.

Neurotoxic

"When the spines pierce an individual, the venom gets injected immediately and it can be extremely painful," Mr. Jeyabaskaran said, adding that eating the fish would lead to death.

The specimen has been deposited in the National Marine Biodiversity Museum of the CMFRI. The research work was published in the latest issue of the journal *Current Science*.

Scorpionfish (*Scorpaenospsis neglecta*)

Bengal's grand old buildings bear the brunt of Amphan

Centuries-old St. Andrew's Church, Serampore College, and Dupleix Palace among those damaged

SUVOJIT BAGCHI
SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

When super cyclone Amphan swept through south Bengal last week, it not only flattened thousands of houses, but also severely damaged some of its centuries-old heritage structures.

Palaces, mosques, temples or offices depicting Islam's footprint on the Bengal frontier to architectural traditions of European colonialism, gardens from the time of 19th century resurgence in Bengal's cultural landscape to the recently renovated British-era buildings all bore the brunt.

Shubha Majumder, superintending archaeologist of the Kolkata Circle of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), said a report on the damage had been sent to the headquarters of ASI.

Damaged weathercock atop the St. Andrew's Church. ▪ RAJEEV BHATT.

For Antara Mukherjee, a teacher and heritage enthusiast, the experience is "traumatic".

Many of the old buildings, gardens, mosques or colleges in Hooghly district were damaged, said Ms. Mukherjee, who has managed to map the damage with a team from the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), within a week of the cyclone.

Serampore College, founded 200 years back by William Carey, a cultural anthropologist who played a significant role in the spread of western education, is one of the damaged buildings.

The mahogany windows of the stately main building, dropped from the first floor and broke into pieces. "The garden in front of a heritage building in the college is ruined," Ms. Mukherjee said.

The Dupleix Palace at Chandannagar, built by French Governor-General Joseph Francois Dupleix, also suffered severe damage.

Another damage listed by the INTACH members is that to the Hooghly Imambara constructed between 1841 and 1861.

"It has two bronze towers at the top and one of it has plain gone," Ms. Mukherjee said. The main structure of an early medieval brick temple, Jatar Deul, dating back to the 11th and 12th century CE (Current Era) in Namkhana of South 24 Parganas "has not suffered major damage but the compound and boundary walls have been destroyed," Mr. Majumder said.

Narrow escape

In Kolkata, the newly restored Metcalfe Hall has suffered some structural damage, while the Currency Building in city's central business area narrowly escaped when a tree fell a few metres away from the main structure.

The iconic St. Andrew's Church nearby, which dates back to 1818, also sustained severe damage.

"*Iska hawa murga chala gaya* (the weathercock atop the church flew off)," said Avadesh, the upset gatekeeper of the church, who has been working in the premises for nearly 50 years. "It was the main attraction and prestige of the church," he said.

"Our first priority will be to remove the trees near the structures and sites. As far as the complete restoration is concerned, it will take time, maybe a few years," said Mr. Majumder.

Hooghly Imambara.