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India must brace itself for a sharp slowdown, says former CEA
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NEARBY

Deadliest day yet as virus claims 122 lives in State

Maharashtra recorded 122 more COVID-19 deaths on Wednesday, its highest surge in fatalities, taking its death toll to 2,587. It also recorded 2,560 cases, pushing its tally to 74,860. Mumbai recorded 1,276 new cases, taking its tally to 43,492. For the second consecutive day, the city reported 49 deaths, pushing the toll to 1,417.

REGION ▶ PAGE 3

11-year-old boy run over by BEST bus

AJEEET MAHALE

MUMBAI
An 11-year-old boy was killed when he came under a BEST bus in Kandivali (East). The victim, Ali Aslam Khan, was riding pillion with his father.

According to an officer with the Samata Nagar police, the accident occurred around 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday. "They were returning home to Nallasopara from KEM Hospital, where the boy was being treated for an illness. Since it was raining, the bike skidded and the boy came under the bus, which was passing by," the officer said. The incident occurred near Sai Dham bus stop on Western Express Highway. The boy was taken to Shatabdi Hospital, where he was declared dead on arrival.

A BEST spokesperson said the bus was on hospital duty and was going to Gorai Depot from JJ Hospital after finishing the day's shift. The driver applied the brakes when he saw the bike skid, but couldn't stop in time.

The boy's father, Aslam Khan (48), is a labourer. The bus driver, Narendra-kumar Kedar (57), has been arrested for causing death due to negligence.

Mumbai escapes Nisarga's fury, Gujarat heaves sigh of relief

Two people killed in Maharashtra; 120 kmph winds uproot hundreds of trees



Wind power: Strong winds lashing the Alibaug coast as Cyclone Nisarga made landfall on Wednesday. ■ PRASHANT NAKWE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Alibaug and the process was completed by 2.30 p.m., India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director-General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

IMD officials said the cyclone might weaken into a "deep depression" by midnight. Given its final trajectory, the cyclone spared Mumbai any damage. But nine incidents of slab collapse and 117 complaints of trees falling, causing damage to vehicles, were reported from the city.

Plane skids off runway

A U.S. cargo aircraft skidded off the runway while landing at the Mumbai airport from Bengaluru, leading to a temporary closure of all flight operations. Wind speeds of

up to 90 kmph were recorded in the city.

A total of 117 complaints of falling trees and branches was reported from Parel, Churchgate, Kalachowki, CST, Kurla and other areas. The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) moved people to safer locations at Cuffe Parade, Worli Koliwada, Mahim Causeway, Juhu and Shimpoli in Borivali.

Navi Mumbai reported 147 tree-falls, while the Panvel Municipal Corporation recorded 150.

In Raigad district, Murud, Alibag, Shrivardhan and Uran talukhs bore the brunt and around 13,541 people were evacuated to safety. After reaching Diveagar in Shri-

vardhan, the speed of the cyclone lowered to 115 km per hour.

As the cyclonic storm lost its intensity, it moved north-eastwards at a speed of 65-75 kmph. It was located about 100 km from Alibagh and headed to Nashik, Dhule and Nandurbar late on Wednesday evening.

In Gujarat, the cyclone did not hit the coastal areas as expected. The authorities were, however, fully equipped to deal with any eventuality. The government on Wednesday shifted over 60,000 people living in low-level areas in south Gujarat to safer places as a precautionary measure.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 2, 11

India registers massive spike of 9,577 cases; toll rises to 6,077

1,37,158 samples tested on Wednesday, says ICMR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

India on Wednesday registered a massive spike of 9,577 new COVID-19 cases and 253 fatalities, according to data from the State Health Departments.

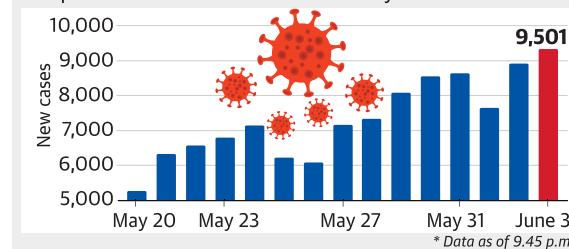
The number of active cases stands at 2,16,735, including 1,06,658 active ones, while 1,04,000 people have recovered. The death toll rose to 6,077.

The Indian Council of Medical Research said that 1,37,158 samples were tested on Wednesday, going up from 1,28,868 on June 2, when India registered 8,917 cases.

India, in terms of its confirmed cases, is closing in on three European countries,

Worrying peak

A total of 9,501 confirmed COVID-19 cases were recorded on Wednesday*, the highest single-day rise. The chart depicts new COVID-19 cases since May 20



whose health systems collapsed under the pandemic. These are Italy with 2,33,836 cases, the U.K. with 2,81,264 cases and Spain with 2,40,326 cases. While cases continue to climb in these countries, they are much fewer than India. Italy, for

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

instance, registered slightly more than 300 cases on Wednesday, the U.K. is adding around 1,800 cases a day on an average, while Spain has been adding less than 600 cases since May 25.

"Many people were also finding it difficult to secure a doctor's prescription. The new guidelines will ease

High-risk contacts don't need prescription for test

JYOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

Asymptomatic, but high-risk contacts of COVID-19 patients can now get tested for the virus without a doctor's prescription, as per a new guideline issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The Maharashtra government, meanwhile, has formed a committee to review the cost of tests.

High-risk contacts will now only need to submit a self-declaration form to the laboratory stating that their close contact has contracted COVID-19. The move will bring relief to many high-risk contacts who live with the anxiety of not knowing if they have the virus.

"Many people were also finding it difficult to secure a doctor's prescription. The new guidelines will ease

that," said Dr. Pranita Tipre, deputy executive health officer, BMC. Till now, the BMC had permitted testing only for those contacts who had symptoms and could produce a prescription.

"It is a very good move. It was much needed," said Dr. Pratit Samdani, a physician based in south Mumbai. He said everyone who wishes to get tested should be permitted to do so. "The mass testing strategy in other countries has worked effectively along with contact tracing, isolating and quarantining individuals."

Dr. Samdani said the city's testing capacity should be bolstered.

For the past week, Mumbai has carried out an average of 4,000 tests a day. Over two lakh tests have been done in the city since the start of the outbreak.

IED expert among three Jaish militants killed in Pulwama

'He was the mastermind of the recent foiled car bomb attack'

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

Three Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM) militants, including an improvised explosive device (IED) expert and the mastermind of the recent foiled car bomb attack, were killed in an operation by the security forces in south Kashmir's Pulwama.

"Among the slain trio, one was a top commander of Jaish and his killing is a big success. He was an IED expert of the outfit and partici-

pated in the Afghan war. He was also the mastermind of the foiled car bomb attack in Pulwama on May 28," said Kashmir Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar.

The police identified him as Abdul Rehman, alias Fouji Bhai, a resident of Multan, Pakistan. "Rehman had been active in Kashmir since 2017. The identification of two other terrorists is being ascertained," Mr. Kumar said.

Over 40 kg explosives hidden in a car were recently

defused in Pulwama. "The trio was trapped in the Kangan area by a joint team of the police, the Army and the CRPF," the police said.

Mr. Kumar said two more Jaish militants and IED experts, identified as Waleed Bhai and Lamboo Bhai, both foreigners, were still active in the area. "We have also identified Jaish chief Abdul Rashid Gazi, who operates in Khrew area of Pulwama district and is hiding in the woods."

Taking position: Army jawans rushing towards the encounter site in Pulwama on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD



Taking position: Army jawans rushing towards the encounter site in Pulwama on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Govt. to boost infrastructure in areas along China border

Villages, towns identified by security forces to get priority

VIJAIITA SINGH

NEW DELHI

To ramp up infrastructure along the China border, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to spend 10% funds of a Centrally sponsored scheme only on projects in Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

The Border Area Development Programme (BADP) has been allocated ₹784 crore in the 2020-21 fiscal and the money is distributed to the border States and Union Territories depending on various criteria such as the length of the international border and population. In 2019-20, ₹825 crore was granted for the scheme.

According to the new guidelines, approved by Union Home Minister Amit Shah effective April 1, the projects for developing strategically important villages and

Extra attention

The government has decided to boost infrastructure along the 3,488 km border with China

₹78.4 CRORE FUNDING: The amount will be spent on projects in villages in Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim

PROJECTS THAT CAN BE FUNDED: Roads, bridges, culverts, mini stadiums, community health centres, primary schools and hostels, apart from supply of medical equipment to hospitals
WHO WILL CHOOSE THE PROJECT? The border guarding forces will play a key role in choosing the project

towns in border areas that have been identified by the border guarding forces will be given priority. Around ₹78.4 crore has been parked for projects in areas inhabited along the 3,488 km China border.

The creation of infrastructure "would help integrate these areas with the hinterland, create a positive perception of care by the country and encourage people to stay on in the border areas leading to safe and secure borders", the MHA said.

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U.S. to bar Chinese flights from June 16

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

The Trump administration on Wednesday barred Chinese passenger carriers from flying to the U.S. starting on June 16 as it pressures Beijing to let U.S. air carriers resume flights amid simmering tensions between the world's two largest economies.

The move penalises China for failing to comply with an existing agreement on flights between the two countries.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Class IV staff crunch at all civic hospitals, say resident doctors

After KEM, doctors at Nair, Sion hospitals speak out

JYOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

A day after resident doctors from KEM Hospital highlighted the shortage of Class IV staff and nurses, their counterparts in Sion and Nair hospitals have narrated a similar plight.

Doctors said they have been reeling under the shortage for several weeks, and the issue was discussed with State Health Minister Rajesh Tope in a meeting held recently. Class IV staff consists of employees like ward boys, cleaners, labourers and ayahs.

Doctors said they have been reeling under the shortage for several weeks, and the issue was discussed with State Health Minister Rajesh Tope in a meeting held recently. Class IV staff consists of employees like ward boys, cleaners, labourers and ayahs. They are addressed as *mama* and *mavashi* in all hospitals.

On Wednesday, the civic-run BYL Nair Hospital, which has been converted into an exclusive COVID-19 facility, had merely 15 Class IV staff in its 40 wards.

While the number was drastically low due to the cyclone warning, a doctor said that on other days, only one-third of the Class IV staff have been reporting to work, putting immense load on resident doctors.

"Due to the lack of Class IV staff, wards are not cleaned on time. Shifting patients for essential investigations, getting samples, X-rays, scans, is delayed because of lack of manpower," said a resident doctor from Nair hospital.

The doctor said soiled diapers of patients are not changed for over four hours, leaving them at the risk of infection. "These patients are in the intensive care unit, where relatives can't come to help," he said. At Nair, the doctor said, the problem only pertains to Class IV staff. "We have no shortage of nursing staff," he said.

A resident doctor from Sion hospital said they, too, had enough nurses, but Class IV staff numbers are severely low. "There is nearly a two-hour gap between shifts when no one is around. For example, the afternoon shift staff leaves by 1.45 p.m. to catch the 2.30 p.m. bus. But the staff for the next shift only arrives at 3.30 p.m.," the resident said.

Additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakani said the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is looking into the issue. "Many staff members live extremely far away, which makes it difficult for them to travel due to the lockdown," he said.

"Nearly 40% Class IV posts are vacant," the letter said.

Additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakani said the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation is looking into the issue. "Many staff members live extremely far away, which makes it difficult for them to travel due to the lockdown," he said.

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Cyclone Nisarga lands, but Mumbai catches a break

Civic agencies kept busy through the day; over 50,000 people evacuated to safer places; minor reports of waterlogging

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Cyclone Nisarga crossed the coast of Maharashtra on Wednesday, coming within 75km of Mumbai but not causing loss of life in maximum city. The city experienced rain and high speed winds through the day, uprooting dozens of trees which damaged cars and property.

City authorities moved 50,000 people from flood prone areas to safety. By Wednesday evening the severe cyclonic storm had weakened, owing to which there is no alert for Thursday.

Civic agencies in Mumbai stayed on high alert throughout Tuesday night and Wednesday as Cyclone Nisarga inched closer to the city. By Wednesday noon, it lay 100km south of Mumbai. Landfall was forecast near Alibaug by 3 p.m. However, the cyclone crossed Maharashtra coast south of Alibaug, 75km south-southeast of Mumbai, 65km west of Pune with a maximum wind speed of 110kmph, going up to 120kmph between 12.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m.

Owing to this change, Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mumbai city were impacted less than expected. Mumbai experienced maximum wind speed of 90 kmph and by 5.30 p.m. on Wednesday had received merely 22.8mm rainfall (Santacruz). India Meteorological Department's Colaba observatory reported 46.7mm rainfall.



Riding the storm: A man on a bicycle braves high speed winds at Bandstand on Wednesday. ■ AADESH CHOWDHARI

Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General of Meteorology, IMD, said, "We always said the landfall would be near Alibaug. The system moved close to south of Alibaug, which is why Raigad district was most affected.

The system had just formed on May 31 but we alerted Maharashtra and Gujarat governments the same day. Being over-prepared is better than being under-prepared."

Despite the cyclone, IMD is expecting Mumbai to keep its date with monsoon.

Dr. Mohapatra said, "There has not been much impact on the Arabian Sea current, which will improve. This means day after tomorrow, monsoon will revive."

BCM on high alert

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) moved almost 25,000 people from various parts of the city to safer locations, with another 30,000 people moving voluntarily to safer areas, including many from landslide prone areas. The BMC

will provide them meals. They will also undergo a health checkup for COVID-19 symptoms.

The BMC had also kept all pumps and pumping stations ready. However, there were only minor complaints of waterlogging. There were nine incidents of slabs collapsing, and 117 complaints of trees or branches falling.

The garden department had stationed 96 small teams in Mumbai to clear collapsed trees. A towing vehicle was also on standby to clear vehicles from roads in case of break downs. Representatives of BEST, Fire Brigade, police, shelter facilities were stationed at the disaster control room for better coordination.

Apart from the disaster control room, Municipal Commissioner I.S. Chahal visited seven locations in Mumbai, including a shelter and a pumping station.

Mayor Kishori Pednekar also took stock of the situation at various beaches of Mumbai along with the fire brigade.

Uddhav asks administration to ensure immediate relief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Wednesday directed the State administration to maintain operational readiness and ensure immediate rescue works as Cyclone Nisarga moves from Mumbai and Thane to north Maharashtra.

Mr. Thackeray is in constant touch with collectors of districts on the coast of the State for updates about the impact of the cyclone, the Chief Ministers Office (CMO) said.

Mumbai, Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts have been affected by the severe cyclonic storm, which made landfall in Raigad district with a speed of 100 to 110 kmph gusting to 120 kmph.

"The CM has given directions for maintaining a state of operational readiness and to ensure immediate rescue works as the cyclone moves

Zoo officials shift animals to safe enclosures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

All carnivorous animals in Mumbai's zoo have been shifted to holding areas in their enclosures to keep them safe from rain and strong winds, an official said on Wednesday.

A 20-member zoo emergency response team was also on alert to avoid any untoward incident, he said.

Officials are keeping a watch on the animal enclosures through CCTVs, he said.

from Mumbai and Thane to North Maharashtra. #CycloneNisargaUpdate," the CMO tweeted.

Mr. Thackeray is also in touch with Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal and ward officers, ensuring that the cyclone causes minimum damage, it said.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar is also reviewing the situation in Thane, Raigad, Palghar, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg by speaking to the district collectors. Mr. Pawar urged people to remain alert until the intensity of the storm fades, a statement from his office said.

Cyclone Nisarga made landfall near Alibaug in Raigad district on Wednesday, with two casualties, multiple incidents of trees being uprooted and the destruction of electricity poles being reported in the district. Navi Mumbai too saw its fair share of damage.

Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co. Ltd (MSEDCL) employee Dashrath Waghmare (58) was killed after an electric pole fell on him at Banglewadi in Umte taluka of Raigad. Amol Javlekar (16) from Shrivardhan was killed after the compound wall of his house fell on him. The wall was damaged when a tree fell on it.

Nisarga had a landfall in Murud at around noon with a radius of 60 km and speed of 120 km per hour. On reaching Diveagar in Shrivardhan, its speed reduced to 115 km per hour.

Two dead as Nisarga tears through Raigad district

16-year-old crushed by wall; electric pole falls on MSEDCL employee; homes see roofs blown away

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Cyclone Nisarga tore through Murud, Alibaug, Shrivardhan and Uran talukas in Raigad district on Wednesday, with two casualties, multiple incidents of trees being uprooted and the destruction of electricity poles being reported in the district. Navi Mumbai too saw its fair share of damage.

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Houses in Raigad had their tin and tile roofs blown away by the impact. Power supply in Raigad district was disconnected from 11 a.m. as a precaution. "Electricity was disconnected at sub stations in Uran, Alibaug, Uran, Tala, Mangaon, Mhasla, Shrivardhan and Goregaon. Around 2.68 lakh consumers were affected by the power cut," said the MSEDCL spokesperson. Three 6 ft-by-6 ft electricity poles fell into the creek at Mhasla tehsil, while

three high voltage poles in Amarle village at Mangaon were damaged, he said. Mobile networks at Murud, Shrivardhan, Alibaug and Panvel were unavailable.

Navi Mumbai bore the brunt of the cyclone too. At Vashi, 22 KV feeder tripped. Electric poles at Sector 17 in Vashi, Navada in Taloja, Karanjade and Boudhwada in Panvel were also damaged in the cyclone. The compound wall of the 22 KV substation at Turbhe MIDC collapsed in

the cyclone, the MSEDCL spokesperson said. Jadhav, head of the Fire Department, PMC.

The Raigad district collector evacuated nearly 13,541 people from Alibaug, Uran, Shrivardhan and Murud talukas before the cyclone hit.

In the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation jurisdiction, 66 people from Durgamata Sambhaji Nagar in Belapur, and 125 from the Ramesh Metal quarry in Nerul were evacuated to safer places. The total loss is yet to be evaluated, officers said.

Villagers collect mangoes that fell due to the storm, at Gondhalpada near Alibaug on Wednesday; (right) a garage shed near the coast lies severely damaged as tin sheets were blown away by the cyclone. ■ PRASHANT NAKKE




HC allows under-arrest cruise ship to move to safe waters

Staff of MV *Karnika* must surrender passports to Port Trust

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court allowed an under-arrest vessel anchored at Mumbai port to move temporarily to safe waters due to cyclone Nisarga.

On June 2, a single Bench of Justice A.K. Menon was hearing an application on behalf of the vessel, *MV Karnika*, which has been under arrest due to a ₹30 crore dispute among the owners. The application said the ship was lying at Y1/V2 Anchorage at the port of Mumbai since the order of arrest on March 17.

Advocate S. Priya said the vessel is a 14-deck passenger cruise ship and has 63 crew members aboard. As per reports assessed by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the cyclone is fast approaching and will be moving across Maharashtra towards Gujarat, she informed. The applicant contended that considering the sheer size of the vessel, it may be impacted

10 sailors rescued off Ratnagiri coast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

At least 10 sailors were rescued from a ship, which was stranded off the coast of Ratnagiri on Wednesday, an official said. The vessel with a crew of 10 was spotted from Mirya Bunder and efforts were made to bring it to the coast, the official said. However, high tide, coupled with heavy rains and rough winds, pushed the ship towards the coast of Mirakwada, where the sailors were rescued.

ed by the cyclonic weather and may also cause damage to other vessels. The application sought permission for the vessel to temporarily go out of Mumbai to safer waters, probably beyond territorial waters, while under arrest, and return after the cyclone has passed.

Heavy rains, gusty winds in Pune

Senior citizen killed, family members hurt in house cave-in

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Parts of Pune and western Maharashtra, especially Satara district, were lashed by gusty winds and relentless showers as Cyclone Nisarga hit the State on Wednesday.

"Manjabai Ananta Navale (65), a resident of Wahagaon in Khed, died after her house caved in. Five other family members, including her two sons, were injured. They are being treated at local hospitals in Khed and Chakan," said Ayush Prasad, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Pune zilla parishad.

Though not as intense as the winds which buffeted the Konkan region, several parts of Pune's rural areas were on 'high alert'.

Mr. Prasad said around 200 people residing in 'high-risk' areas had been moved to safer places as part of preventive measures taken by the administration.

"The intensity of the winds caused some damage to property, mainly taking blowing away tin roofs of



A tree fell on a house after rain and strong winds due to Cyclone Nisarga, in Sindhudurg on Wednesday. ■ PTI

some schools and anganwadi centres in a few tehsils. However, no casualties or injuries were reported. There were no calls for ambulance either. Most of the calls we received were regarding incidents of tree fall," Mr. Prasad said.

Pune City and Pimpri Chinchwad, too, received moderate to heavy showers through the day, resulting in waterlogging and tree falls at a number of places.

At least 20 trees, mainly

in the Bhosari area of Pimpri Chinchwad, fell following continuous showers since Tuesday night.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that in the last 24 hours, Shivaji-nagar in Pune had recorded 44 mm rain, while Lohegaon received 97mm and Pashan recorded 51 mm rainfall.

Heavy rainfall was also reported from Mahabaleshwar, in Satara district, which also witnessed disruption of electricity at a number of places.

IN BRIEF

Cement blocks fall on shanty, three injured

MUMBAI
Three members of a family were injured on Wednesday when cement blocks fell on their shanty in an adjacent under-construction building in Santacruz here due to gusty winds, according to the police. Three shanties were damaged in the incident that occurred around 11.30 a.m. in Dawai Nagar in Santacruz (East). The injured have been identified as Viraj Paste (15), Santosh Paste (43) and Sanjay Paste (45), a police official said. PTI

Traffic on Bandra-Worli Sea Link suspended

MUMBAI
Vehicular movement on the iconic Bandra-Worli Sea Link in Mumbai was suspended on Wednesday in light of cyclone Nisarga which began landfall near Alibaug, about 95 km from Mumbai, the police said. "In light of #CycloneNisarga, no vehicular movement is permitted on the Bandra-Worli Sea Link," the official handle of the Mumbai Police tweeted. An alert has already been sounded in the city in view of the cyclone. PTI

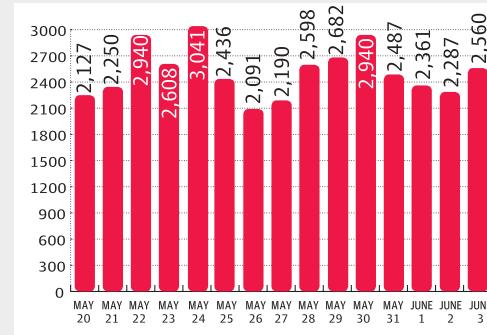
Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
74,860	2,560	39,935	32,329	2,587

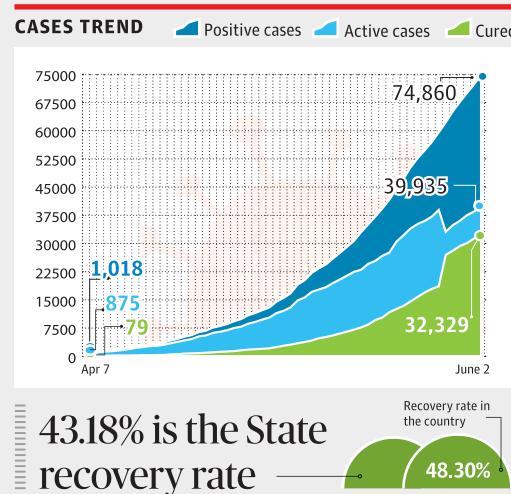
DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	43,492	1,417	Jalna	154	2
Thane	10,865	240	Latur	125	3
Pune	8,463	367	Sangli	126	4
Aurangabad	1,653	84	Nanded	135	6
Nashik	1,235	68	Ahmednagar	165	8
Raigad	1,238	51	Gondia	66	0
Palghar	1,199	34	Osmanabad	91	2
Solapur	1,032	85	Buldhana	74	3
Jalgaon	781	74	Parbhani	73	1
Akola	647	33	Beed	49	1
Nagpur	635	11	Nandurbar	37	4
Satara	564	22	Sindhudurg	78	0
Kolhapur	607	6	Gadchiroli	39	0
Ratnagiri	314	5	Bhandara	37	0
Anravati	261	16	Chandrapur	27	0
Hingoli	193	0	Wardha	9	1
Dhule	177	20	Washim	8	0
Yavatmal	148	1			

POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS



1,276 (50%) of Wednesday's cases are from Mumbai

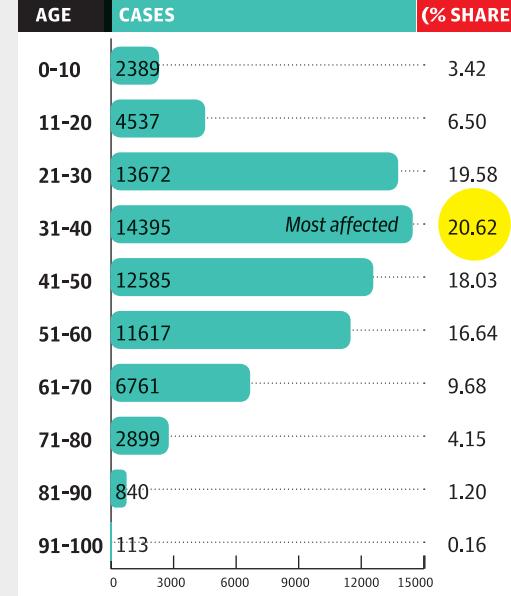


MORTALITY RATE

Maharashtra 3.45%

India 2.79%

AFFECTED (AGE-WISE)



QUARANTINE NUMBERS

5,71,915

33,674



Home quarantine

Institutional quarantine



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 25301740Palghar: 0252 297474
Raigad: 02141 222118
Sindhudurg: 02362 228848

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

122 more die as Wednesday proves deadliest yet

2,560 more cases take tally near 75,000; case growth rate drops below national average; doubling rate improves



On the safe side: A man adjusts his mask after taking a COVID-19 test at a medical camp conducted by BMC doctors near Badhwar Park in south Mumbai. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Maharashtra recorded 122 more deaths on Wednesday, its highest surge in fatalities, taking its death toll to 2,587. The State also recorded a spike of 2,560 COVID-19 cases, pushing its tally to 74,860. Of the total cases, only 39,935 are active.

State Health Department officials said the case growth rate has seen a dip between May 1 and June 1. The rate now stands at 4.15%, lower than the national average of 4.74%. The State's doubling rate has also improved.

"On May 1, the rate of increase in cases stood at 7.76%, while the doubling rate was 9.27 days. On May 15, the figures were 6.23% and 11.56 days respectively. On May 30, the case growth rate was 4.72% and on June 1, it was down to 4.15%. The doubling rate has improved to 17.35 days," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

According to State Health Department officials, 9.27 days. On May 15, the figures were 6.23% and 11.56 days respectively. On May 30, the case growth rate was 4.72% and on June 1, it was down to 4.15%. The doubling rate has improved to 17.35 days," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

now stands at 43.18%.

The surge in fresh cases in Thane in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region continued unabated, with 225 new cases taking the district's tally to 5,052. Pune's tally, as per the State Health Department, has reached 8,463, with the district reporting over 250 new cases on Wednesday.

Dr. Awate said, "There are 82 laboratories functioning in the State for COVID-19 diagnosis. They include 46 government labs and 36 private ones. Till date, of the 4,97,276 laboratory samples collected, 74,860 have tested positive. Almost 16,000 samples were tested across the State on Wednesday."

He said 5,71,915 people across the State are in home quarantine and 33,674 are in institutional quarantine. There are 3,661 active containment zones in the State, said Dr. Awate.

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The latest victims comprised 27 men and 22 women, and 36 had co-morbidities.

In G North ward, Dharavi recorded 19 new cases, pushing its tally to 1,849, while Dadar and Mahim recorded 10 and 25 new cases respectively. On Wednesday, 259 patients were discharged, taking the tally of recoveries to 17,472.

Additional municipal commissioner Suresh Kakan said the civic body is looking into the issue of non-COVID-19 patients not receiving proper medical care and being unable to approach doctors for routine consultations.

He said all doctors have been urged to open clinics and start attending to patients.

"As far as surgeries are concerned, we have set apart the State-run JJ Hospital as a non-COVID hospital.

Patients requiring treatment for such procedures can be directed here," he said.

While the civic-run Nair hospital has been converted into a dedicated COVID-19 hospital, KEM and Sion hospitals are working on a hybrid model, treating both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.

Doctors said it has become difficult to carry out routine procedures as healthcare workers at all

April 30 and May 31. 72% of victims had co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, asthma and heart disease," said Dr. Awate.

Spike in cases in Thane

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Doctors said it has become difficult to carry out routine procedures as healthcare workers at all

hospitals are exposed to the novel coronavirus.

With the city receiving rain for the past two days, civic officials have requested citizens to report symptoms such as fever, chills, joint pain, rashes, cough, breathlessness, and sore throat to a doctor or a community health volunteer. A civic official said, "All citizens are requested not to ignore any signs of fever and not take self-medication. Watch out for any symptoms for the next seven to 10 days." Doctors said the change in weather will lead to a spurt in common viral diseases and they could spread panic as their symptoms are similar to those of COVID-19.

Panvel reported 15 new cases, taking the tally to 580. One death was recorded in Kamtothe, pushing the death toll to 27. Six recoveries were recorded, taking the tally to 344. Panvel Rural reported six new cases, taking its tally to 290. (With additional inputs from Raina Assainer)

TO ADVERTISE

PLEASE CONTACT



We'd started out with fans from America, India and Canada... but now we see people from Russia, the Czech Republic, Tanzania and Brazil

KUSH NIJHAWAN

Double TROUBLE

Indian-American musicians duo Kush and Neil Nijhawan discuss bridging their dual cultures with music, plans to shift base to Mumbai and a soon-to-be-released Twinjabi single, 'Brown Magic'

• DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Neil and Kush Nijhawan loved their visit to Mumbai in February so much, they made the bold move to make the city their base for six months of the year.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and their plans had to be put on hold. But that has not hindered their drive to create music and connect with fans.

Over a Zoom call, the 26-year-old twins are at their home in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. Ask them to look back on their career so far and name one prominent turning point, and Kush responds, "We started out with zero and at zero. But we started recording in

2018 and our music kept getting better. For me, the turning point was when we dropped the 'Bombay' audio – our second recorded track, but first release – at the start of 2019. We released a video on May 24, 2019, and that video was picked up by Vh1 India and they played it on rotation six times a day on television. Our debut video [which has over 4,00,000 views on YouTube] was picked up by international television!"

Kush and Neil add that, up till then, they had received a lot of skepticism from their community about their career choices but the success of 'Bombay' effected a lot of pride.

"Another turning point had to be when we got onto the cover of Spotify's playlist Bridge To Bombay; and we're still on the cover. It's a popular playlist for a lot of people. We have family in India seeing us on TV which is great."

That said, Twinjabi have their fourth release coming out on June 5: 'Brown Magic' which Neil pegs as "an anthem for all the brown girls around the world. It's a very soulful record with empowering vibes; it's especially important for brown girls in different parts of the world who were probably picked on as kids for being brown, to embrace their culture."

Growing fanbases

Have the pandemic and lockdowns hindered their creativity? No, they are

Playing with genres Kush (Kushy) and Neil (Neilstar) aka Twinjabi
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Neil agrees, explaining that Twinjabi prides themselves on quality control. "We want anything we put out to be the best thing and compete with the A-listers. We really need to bring change to the game, not just the Indian communities. The advantage of our diaspora is that we were born and raised in Louisville, Kentucky, and being Indian, we are bringing so many different elements through our journey."

creating music.

"During this time, our social media has grown the fastest, and not just from India. We'd started out with fans from America, India and Canada, which is normal because those places were our bases, but now we see people from other countries – Russia, the Czech Republic, Tanzania and Brazil – enjoying songs like 'Rani Recognize' which is a mix of Hindi and English. Some fans don't understand it but they love the vibe of it."

It is natural to believe that working with family is tough, and Neil and Kush agree to an extent. "Like any brothers, we fight but we love each other. The hardest part is that we are hard on ourselves and hard on each other too, and maybe it is not what the other person wants to hear but they have got to realise it comes from a good place. We are pushing and challenging each other, because I know Neil will kill his part so I have to do the same." One of the challenges, which the two are overcoming, is learning Hindi as they go. Kush holds up a small Hindi dictionary and explains that

lyricising in Hindi does require

effort but it is effort they are

both happy to continuously make.

A is for Africa



MUSIC COLUMN

NARENDRA KUSNUR
The author is a freelance music writer

On May 22, well-known Guinean singer Mory Kante passed away. While he did some very successful work in the 1980s, Indians know him mostly for his smash hits, 'Yeke Yeke' and 'Tama'. The latter was famously copied by Bappi Lahiri in the *Thandidaar* (1990) song 'Tamma Tamma' and by Laxmikant-Pyarelal in *Jumma Chumma* (1991).

Kante is the third famous African musician to leave us this year. On February 11, Joseph Shabalala of South African band Ladysmith Black Mambazo passed away. The band attained global fame after appearing in the DVD of Paul Simon's *Graceland*. On March 24, Cameroonian singer-saxophonist Manu Dibango, who had the smash 1972 hit 'Soul Makossa', died of coronavirus.



Nakupenda Africa: Well-known Guinean singer Mory Kante passed away on May 22 ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

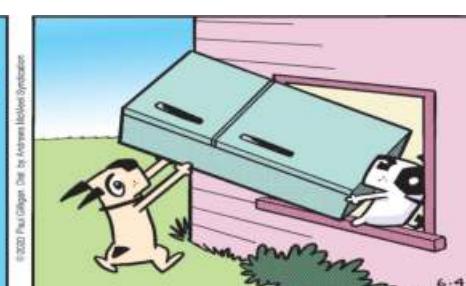
Africa is a large continent, and the music of the southern part is vastly different from that of the western and northern regions. Yet, a commonality is the vibrancy of the sound and the pulsating rhythms. One may not understand the language, but the tunes have a groove, energy and hummability. Despite the existence of many great artists, much of African music isn't known in India. The exceptions were chartbusters like 'Yeke Yeke' and 'Tama', Algerian star Fela Kuti popularised the Afrobeat sound globally. Many musicians of African origin stayed in London, Paris and Belgium, blending African roots styles with modern music. Some notable examples – Osibisa and Afro-Celt Sound System, settled in London, Zap Mama and Sabine Kabongo based in Belgium, and Algerian star Cheb Mami, who popularised the sound in Paris. In the 1980s, Osibisa and Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour visited India. Later, Algerian DJ Cheb-i-Sabbah used North African sounds in his mixes, and Sardokie created a form of rap rooted in Ghanaian music.

Diverse rhythms
Over the years, the role of Africa in world music has been phenomenal. Much of early jazz is rooted in African music, and later, the Afro-Cuban sound evolved from this region and Latin America. In the 1960s, Nigerian musician Fela Kuti popularised the Afrobeat sound globally. Many musicians of African origin stayed in London, Paris and Belgium, blending African roots styles with modern music. Some notable examples – Osibisa and Afro-Celt Sound System, settled in London, Zap Mama and Sabine Kabongo based in Belgium, and Algerian star Cheb Mami, who popularised the sound in Paris. In the 1980s, Osibisa and Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour visited India. Later, Algerian DJ Cheb-i-Sabbah used North African sounds in his mixes, and Sardokie created a form of rap rooted in Ghanaian music.

For starters
To be initiated into African music, listeners may focus on specific regions. A good beginning would be music from South Africa - singers Miriam Makeba and Vusi Mahlasela, trumpeter Hugh Masekela, pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, guitarist Madala and the groups Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Soweto Gospel Choir. Or one could try the fantastic music of Mali -- singer-guitarist Ali Farka Toure, singers Salif Keita, Vieux Farka Toure, Oumou Sangare and Fatoumata Diawara, kora player Toumani Diabate and the group Tinariwen.

Among old timers, one could check out Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, who sang in Arabic. Angélique Kidjo of Benin has also released some great music, also collaborated with Indian drummer Trilok Gurtu on his album *African Fantasy* and even did a memorable show in Mumbai in 2011, where the audience danced with her on stage. Then, there are Nigerian percussionists Babatunde Olatunji and Sikiru Adepoju. Talking of African drums, Taufiq Qureshi has adapted the djembe to Indian technique. The upshot is that African music has its own charm. Even Beyoncé used many African musicians like Burna Boy, Tiwa Savage and Shatta Wale in her 2019 album *The Gift*, a companion to the new *King* soundtrack.

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



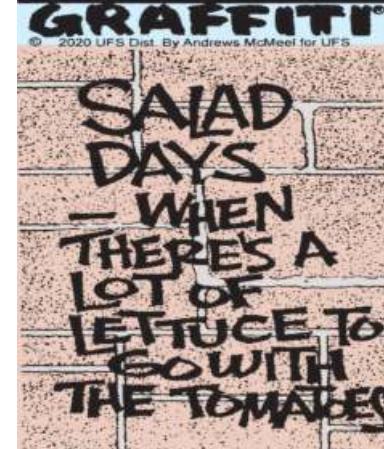
CALVIN AND HOBBES



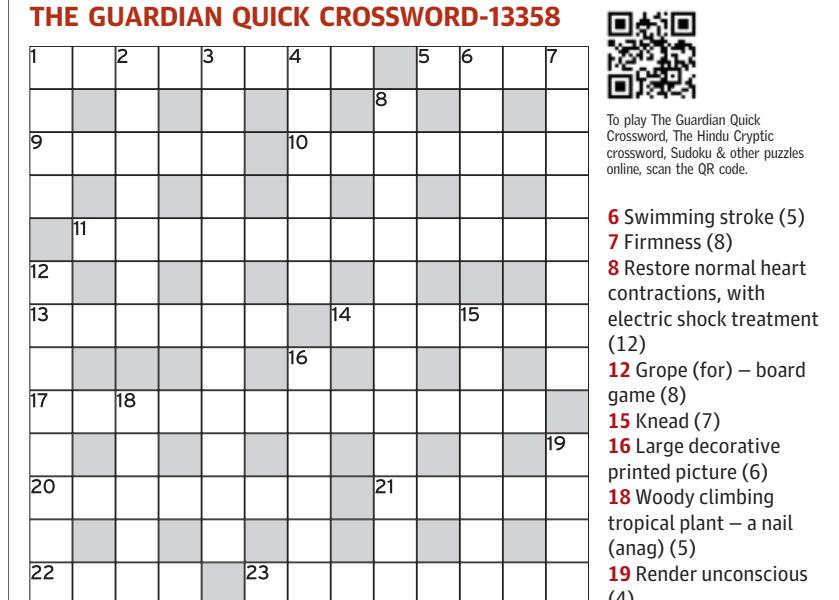
TIGER



GRAFFITI



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13358



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

6 Swimming stroke (5)
7 Firmness (8)
8 Restore normal heart contractions, with electric shock treatment (12)
12 Gripe (for) – board game (8)
15 Knead (7)
16 Large decorative printed picture (6)
18 Woody climbing tropical plant – a nail (anag) (5)
19 Render unconscious (4)

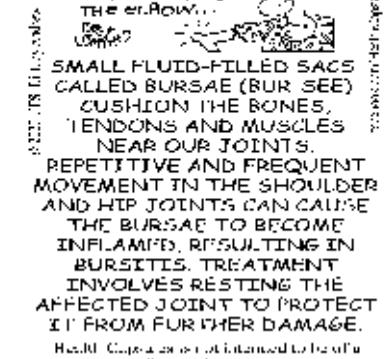
Solution will appear on June 6, 2020.

Solution No. 13357

WUMO

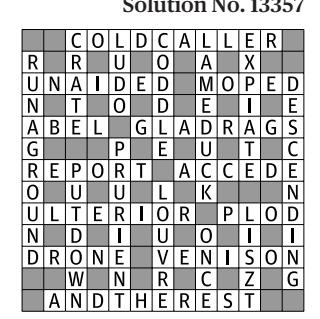


HEALTH CAPSULES



- Across**
- 1 Innkeeper (8)
 - 5 Laws (4)
 - 9 Stretch of a river between bends (5)
 - 10 Stare at closely (7)
 - 11 Without integrity (12)
 - 13 Prairie wolf (6)
 - 14 Refresh the memory – on time (6)
 - 17 Despite appearances there is still a chance of recovery (3,2,3,4)
 - 20 Without any attempt at concealment (7)
 - 21 Unconnected (5)
 - 22 Stylish elegance (4)
 - 23 Carte blanche (4,4)
 - 24 Down
 - 1 Remove the skin from (4)
 - 2 Soft soap (7)
 - 3 That's permanent or widely accepted (2,4,2)
 - 4 Growing old (6)

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

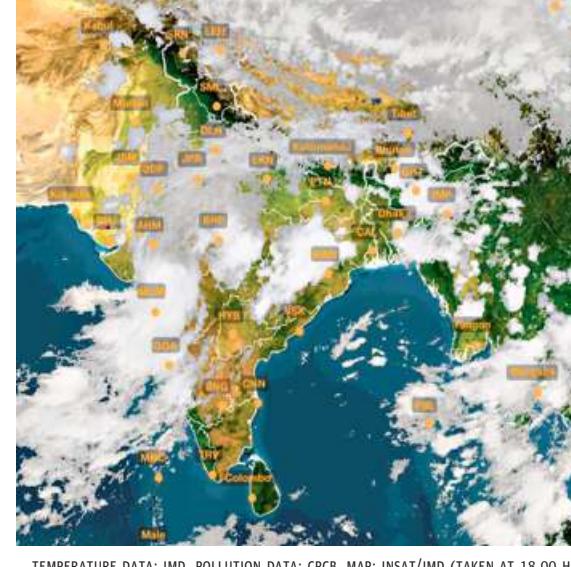


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Solution No. 13357

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Delhi, east Uttar Pradesh, west Rajasthan, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Gujarat, central Maharashtra, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	7.8	35.0	26.0	Kozhikode	65.4	29.2	24.2
Ahmedabad	—	38.6	27.6	Kurnool	0.6	34.0	—
Aizawl	—	23.7	18.2	Lucknow	—	35.3	26.0
Allahabad	—	37.7	28.4	Madurai	—	38.4	25.2
Bengaluru	—	29.4	21.2	Mangaluru	21.1	—	24.2
Bhopal	—	32.8	26.5	Mumbai	23.4	26.8	25.0
Bhubaneswar	—	35.4	24.4	Mysuru	—	—	22.2
Chandigarh	—	37.1	21.4	New Delhi	—	36.4	24.9
Chennai	—	39.2	29.0	Patna	—	35.4	27.6
Coimbatore	—	33.0	23.1	Pond Blair	28.4	—	25.4
Dehradun	5	33.6	21.6	Puducherry	—	37.2	27.6
Gangtok	7.4	20.3	15.2	Pune	20.2	23.7	21.7
Goa	127.9	26.4	23.3	Raipur	—	4.5	—
Guwahati	6	32.1	24.6	Ranchi	—	31.6	21.6
Hubballi	—	26.0	23.0	Shillong	0.7	25.8	—
Hyderabad	0.6	34.7	25.7	Shimla	2.2	22.6	12.3
Imphal	7.8	26.9	19.4	Srinagar	—	25.7	11.4
Jaipur	0.9	37.8	25.2	Thiruvananthapuram	24.6	31.5	23.6
Kochi	25.6	31.4	24.0	Tiruchi	1.2	38.6	25.1
Kohima	—	24.6	14.4	Vijayawada	10.7	39.0	28.0
Kolkata	6	37.1	25.5	Visakhapatnam	—	35.0	29.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	22	60	.10	—	—	—
Bengaluru	11	12	.53	—	—	14
Chennai	.3	.23	.88	.60	—	—
Delhi	6	42	104	190	125	—
Hyderabad	.5	.19	.18	.23	.42	—
Kolkata	.6	.8	.12	.20	.49	—
Lucknow	.3	.32	.50	.183	—	—
Mumbai	18	.37	.3	.14	.26	—
Pune	.6	.2	.58	.8	.8	—
Visakhapatnam	.9	.39	.31	.29	.92	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Amritsar, Punjab recorded an overall AQI score of 314 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Hubballi, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

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

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

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated 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

HC increases working hours

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court will increase its working hours from Friday, and will hear matters via videoconferencing in two shifts from 10.45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

In the first shift from 10:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m., cases will be heard by five

Benches, including three Division Benches and two single-judge Benches. Five other benches will hear urgent matters in the second shift from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Subordinate courts, meanwhile, will start with 15% staff from June 8, operating from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Virar teenager goes on hunger strike for child beggars' rights

16-year-old has been holding day-long protests since Dec. 2019

GAREEMA BANGAD

MUMBAI

A 16-year-old Virar teenager recently went on her 21st day-long hunger strike to demand the betterment of child beggars.

On May 26, Saloni Todkari (16), president, Chiranjeevi Sanghatana, a group that works for the wellness and rights of students and young children, went on the day-long hunger strike, which she has been doing since December 2019.

In December 2019, Saloni undertook a three-day hunger strike, after which she began to go on day-long hunger strikes at various places every Monday.

"The government continues to bring in laws, but as citizens, it is our duty to ensure that we do not promote beggars by giving them money. We all know how these are rackets that are silently supported by influential people. This leads to non-fulfilment of the basic rights of the children involved," the 16-year-old said.

Saloni, who is originally from Virar, is staying at the Maitrakul Jeevan Vikas Kendra in Kalyan for her education. "Ever since the lockdown began, we have been conducting hunger strikes at Kalyan while following all the rules of physical distancing. We have also conducted them in Bhiwandi and Kharadali," she said.

The 12-hour hunger strike



Saloni Todkari (right) at her 21st strike. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

begins at 7 a.m., and the mornings are spent in unmasking various activities and functions. As the day progresses, Saloni and her associates read books and stories. The group has also written to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and the district collector's office with their demands.

Among their demands are that the minimum age for employment should be increased to 18, and a person employing child labourers be punished with a fine of ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh and imprisonment of five to 10 years. Further, child labour should be a non-bailable offence, schools should be built for child beggars, and the government should crack

down on rackets forcing children to beg on the street.

Saloni says Independent MLA Omprakash Kadu has promised her that he would develop a 'Balvikas Gruh' in Pune for underprivileged children. She also said that since visiting places is difficult during the lockdown, they spread awareness through social media.

Her associates are just as committed as she is. Sakshi Bhoir (19) of the Chiranjeevi Sanghatana said, "This is a group for and by young children as only they can understand their problems. The entire area has been cordoned off and no one is allowed to move out, Dr. Sawant said.

Till Tuesday, 57 COVID-19 patients had been dis-

charged after recovery, as per official figures. The State has not reported any death due to the virus so far.

40 test positive in Goa containment zone

CM blames family living in the area

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PANAJI

As many as 40 people from a COVID-19 containment zone in Goa tested positive for the virus on Wednesday, Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant said. Local transmission of the virus has happened due to the fault of one family residing in the locality, he said.

With this, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the State has reached 65, the CM said.

The family members consulted a private medical practitioner after developing COVID-19 symptoms. "They should have gone to a coronavirus testing centre," Dr. Sawant said.

The State government on Monday declared Mangor Hill in Vasco in the South Goa district as a containment zone after six members of a family tested positive for COVID-19.

Contact tracing on
On Tuesday, 200 samples were collected from the area, of which 40 tested positive on Wednesday. Those who came in contact with the infected people are also being tested, he said.

Around 2,000 people live in the locality and they will be tested in a phased manner. The entire area has been cordoned off and no one is allowed to move out, Dr. Sawant said.

Till Tuesday, 57 COVID-19 patients had been dis-

45,000 dial mental health helpline in 2 months

Half of those who have called BMC-Mpower 101—from Ratnagiri to Punjab—have been anxious about 'new normal'

Surviving the LOCKDOWN

ADITYA ANAND

MUMBAI

BMC-Mpower 101, a 24x7 helpline to address mental health concerns of citizens in the wake of the novel coronavirus pandemic, has received around 45,000 calls in just two months, with 52% of the callers anxious about the post-lockdown scenario.

The helpline, which began in April, is a partnership between Mpower, a mental health service provider, the government of Maharashtra and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Across age groups and backgrounds, callers reported symptoms of depression and anxiety, typically about the future. "While the overall range of callers has been 18 to 85 years, the highest number of calls, at 55%, are in the 26-to-40-year range," an Mpower spokesperson said.

Trying times

While 52% of the calls centred around anxiety, 22% were about isolation and adjustment, 11% about depression, 5% on sleep-related

difficulties and 4% related to exacerbation of previous mental health concerns.

A 72-year-old man from Guhagar in Ratnagiri called to say he wanted his grandson, who lives in Mumbai as a paying guest, to return to the village.

An 18-year-old woman from Punjab called to discuss issues she was having with her family and felt that she was being ignored by them. She also indulged in self-blame. Another 18-year-old woman from Lucknow called because she was having strange dreams over the past two months about snakes and insects, besides dreaming about her father's death.

A tailor called to say he was worried about the future and was having suicidal thoughts. Another caller was feeling depressed because he was away from his family and had tried every avenue to get permission to travel home, without success.

At least 65% of the calls are in Marathi, 27% are in Hindi and 8% are in English. Even though the helpline was unveiled for Maharashtra, it has received calls across India. While 37% of calls are from the Mumbai

Metropolitan Region, 60% are from the rest of Maharashtra and Goa.

Outside Maharashtra, the number of calls is the highest from Delhi at 2%, while Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat follow at 1% each. The helpline runs in three shifts, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., when it receives 45% of calls, from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m., when it gets 50% of calls, and 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., when it gets just 5% of

calls. A caller who reaches out at night is likely to connect easily to one of the mental health counsellors on the helpline and even receive a bigger window of advice.

Almost 20% called the helpline but disconnected the call before they could speak to one of the counsellors, highlighting the stigma around mental health.

With many cities in India

gradually relaxing lockdown norms, BMC-Mpower 101 has witnessed anxiety levels about the 'new normal'. A majority of the concerns were related to safety, anxiety about stepping out of home, returning to work, commute, work-life balance, and family and friends.

Since March, Mpower has seen a rise in new cases of anxiety, stress, depression and paranoia during the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these concerns, it has been providing counselling and therapies virtually through telephonic conversations, online chat and video calling to help callers through this phase. Additionally, Mpower has been sharing health advisories and tips to parents, young professionals and families to better handle everyday situations.

To reassure citizens that the helpline is available 24x7 to discuss any of these mental health concerns, Mpower has unveiled a campaign, #MpowerYourTomorrow. It aims to spread the message that it is all right to be anxious, but not to shy away from reaching out and seeking help to addressing one's concerns.



Seven to eleven

India deserves its place on the global stage, but on G-11, it must be clear about its aims

Dismissing the current configuration of the "Group of Seven" or G-7 of the world's most developed nations as "outdated", U.S. President Donald Trump announced over the weekend that he would like to expand it to a G-11, by adding India, Russia, South Korea and Australia. He followed that up with invitations to their leaders, including Prime Minister Modi, to attend the G-7 summit in the U.S. later this year. The news was welcomed by Mr. Modi, who commended Mr. Trump for his "creative and far-sighted" decision to expand the format of the grouping to keep up with the new realities of the "post-COVID world". Australia and South Korea have also welcomed the invitation, while Russia, that lost its membership of the grouping in 2014 over its annexation of Crimea, said President Putin would attend "if treated as an equal". Notable by its absence in the proposed grouping is China, which had earlier, along with India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, been invited regularly to G-8 summits as an outreach by the developed world to the five emerging economies (called the G-8+5). U.S.-China tensions, particularly over coronavirus issues, clearly played a part in Mr. Trump's decision to leave Chinese President Xi Jinping off his summit guest list. A White House spokesperson even explained that the G-11 would be a way for the U.S. to bring together its "traditional allies to talk about how to deal with the future of China". Predictably, Beijing has lashed out at the G-11 idea, as one that would be "doomed to fail".

The proposed G-11 grouping would recognise India's place amongst the world's richest nations, and acknowledge its global voice. However, the government must weigh the benefits proposed along with some of the factors that are still unclear. As host, Mr. Trump can invite any country as a G-7 special invitee, but changing its composition will require the approval of the other members. Already, there are some concerns over Russia, which could derail the entire G-11 plan, making any concrete decision by New Delhi on the issue premature. It is unclear when the summit will actually be held, given the November polls in the U.S., although Mr. Trump has indicated that he could hold it close to the UN General Assembly session in September. Despite its border tensions with Beijing, India must also consider its objectives in attending a grouping that appears aimed at fuelling a new Cold War between the U.S. and China. Finally, an evaluation of the G-7's effectiveness as a multilateral forum thus far is needed, given deep member differences on issues including climate change, security contributions, Iran, etc. In France, last year, the grouping was unable to issue a joint communiqué due to these differences – a first in its 45-year-old history.

Curves and recoveries

As cases mount, India must focus on keeping mortality low

The silver lining equivalent of science in this COVID-19 pandemic for India is the relatively low case fatality rate, and the high recovery rate. Case fatality rate – the number of deaths among the cases detected – has been dropping over the months, and is at 2.79% (as of 5 p.m. on June 3). Experts have advanced several hypotheses, but without a precise understanding, health-care managers are just hoping the good run would continue. Recovery rate, which is the rate of transition from a state of infection to recovery from the disease, here measured as a percentage of the total cases, has been on an upward trajectory. This figure, inclusive of people who tested positive being discharged from hospitals, is now over 48%, according to Health Ministry officials. As the total numbers keep climbing daily, well over 2,00,000 cases so far, the ideal of flattening the case curve with what is currently known about the disease, and with available resources, is perhaps difficult. However, reducing the number of deaths by protecting the old and the infirm from exposure, and improving the recovery rate – flattening the first curve, and ensuring the latter rises – seem well within reach.

It is important to ensure that the same urgency and eagerness that goes into counting those who have recovered is reflected when counting the dead. As per WHO definitions, the death of every COVID-19 patient is to be counted as a COVID death "unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related" (e.g. trauma). Guidelines in India require States to record these COVID-19 deaths with notes on complications resulting from pre-existing co-morbidities, and every State needs to follow this model. With States also monitoring Severe Acute Respiratory Infections and influenza-like illnesses in hospitals, the entire gamut of severe respiratory diseases is being monitored, and deaths will not pass unnoticed. Assuring people with known exposure (not necessarily only with symptoms) to SARS-CoV-2 that they will have access to COVID-19 tests, ensuring that they reach care facilities before becoming extremely breathless, protecting vulnerable populations are surefire ways of delivering a double whammy against the disease – reducing case fatality rate further, and bumping up the recovery rate. Even if efforts to control transmission are being frustrated, the sober way of dealing with COVID-19 is to focus on the really sick patients, while ensuring that others who test positive but remain asymptomatic also have access to care when they develop symptoms. The Centre and States must specifically attempt to destigmatise COVID-19 infection and ramp up awareness activities informing people about symptoms in order to encourage people to come forward early. This will amount to seizing the silver lining and bating it into a whole cloud, besides keeping the country's focus on the right curves.

In Himalayan staredown, the dilemmas for Delhi

The time has come for India to checkmate China's aggression even in the backdrop of maintaining robust economic ties



HAPPYMON JACOB

The growing number of reports about Chinese troops crossing the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India in the Ladakh region – neither acknowledged nor denied by the Indian government as yet – indicate a new age of Chinese territorial aggression against India.

While there are around 400 transgressions/faceoffs each year on an average along the LAC, the recent spate of territorial transgressions by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is unprecedented in its scope and manner. Even as independent accounts point out that Chinese troops are yet to withdraw from the transgressed territories, traditionally considered by both sides to be on the Indian side of the LAC, and restore status quo ante, Chinese officials have gone ahead and stated that the "Situation in China-India border is overall stable & controllable". Is all well between the two nuclear-armed adversaries?

If the mounting evidence of China's territorial aggression against India is even partly accurate, and there is no reason to believe they are not, the Narendra Modi government is left with two basic choices: accept territorial loss as a *fait accompli* or force or negotiate a reversal to status quo ante, unless of course the PLA unilaterally withdraws.

Either way, China's growing territorial aggression on the LAC signals the end of Beijing's peaceful rise and its traditional desire to maintain regional status quo with India. China under its President, Xi Jinping, unequivocally seeks to

demonstrate that it is the predominant power in the region.

Explaining the aggression

What baffles most observers is the rationale behind the Chinese escalation on the LAC while the entire world is preoccupied with battling COVID-19, the biggest crisis humanity has faced since the Second World War. While the timing could be explained by the global political distraction caused by COVID-19 and the international pressure on China (including by India) to come clean on the origins of the novel coronavirus, the proximate causes could be several. For one, New Delhi's terse statements about Aksai Chin following the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation in August last year had not gone down well with Beijing. While not many in India believe that New Delhi was serious about getting back Aksai Chin from Chinese control, Beijing may have viewed it as India upping the ante. More pertinently, in a clear departure from the past, New Delhi has been carrying out the construction of infrastructural projects along the LAC – a long overdue activity – which is something that seems to have made China uneasy.

The Chinese angle to the J&K conundrum deserves more attention here. Home Minister Amit Shah's statement about Aksai Chin in August 2019 might have triggered some anxiety in Beijing about its plans for the larger erstwhile princely State of J&K a part of which China is in possession of. China's China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) connectivity to Pakistan through the Karakoram and New Delhi's criticism of it, the reported presence of PLA troops in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), India's new-found activism on Aksai Chin, and the PLA's incursions into areas in eastern Ladakh must be viewed in the broader context of a long-term geopolitical world



FILE PHOTO/AP

view China has for the region.

It is equally important to appreciate the larger Chinese strategic calculations behind its recent spate of aggressions. Having given up its traditional slogan of 'peaceful rise', China, under Mr. Xi, is beginning to assert itself as the next superpower. Over the years, Beijing has perhaps realised that India is not keen on toeing the Chinese line in the region. So this is Beijing sending a message to New Delhi to fall in line, a message that will not go unnoticed in the smaller capitals around China – from Colombo to Kathmandu to Hanoi.

There is more subtle political messaging in Beijing's LAC aggression. Given that China is currently engaged in what many analysts are describing as a new cold war with the United States, in the middle of a crackdown in Hong Kong along with fighting COVID-19 at home, one would not have expected the Chinese leadership to open another front. And yet, by opening a limited military front with India on the LAC, China is signalling the U.S. that it can handle pressure, and telling India that it has the political and military wherewithal to put pressure on New Delhi notwithstanding its other preoccupations.

Doklam redux?

The 2017 standoff between India and China at the Doklam trijunction was the first major military standoff between the two sides in a long time in which New Delhi demonstrated it was not a military pushover despite China's conven-

tional superiority over India. Since Doklam, however, there have been several reports that China has continued with its construction activities in and around Doklam. The 2020 transgressions in Sikkim and Ladakh are perhaps Beijing's way of responding to India consistently and militarily.

China's limited scope military expeditions on the long-contested border is cost effective for the PLA given the ever-growing conventional military superiority that it enjoys with India. Moreover, because limited fights or smaller land grabs may not provoke an all-out confrontation or nuclear use, the side with conventional superiority and more border infrastructure would likely carry the day.

Let me unpack this argument. Picking a direct fight with India which might lead to an undesirable military escalation with India does not suit Beijing's interests, but carrying out minor military expeditions with the objective of inflicting small-scale military defeats on India is precisely what would suit the Chinese political and military leadership; they are cost effective, less escalatory, and the message gets conveyed. More so, India's military response would depend on how far the regime in New Delhi is willing to acknowledge such territorial losses due to domestic political constraints: if New Delhi acknowledges loss of territory, it would have to regain it, but doing so *vis-à-vis* a conventionally superior power would not be easy.

Put differently, growing conventional imbalance and domestic political calculations could prompt New Delhi to overlook minor territorial losses on the LAC, the manner in which Pakistan refused to acknowledge the 2016 surgical strikes carried out by India. But let us be clear: the more New Delhi overlooks them, the more Beijing would be tempted to

repeat them. These considerations lie at the heart of India's China dilemma.

Limits of adventurism

And yet, there are limits to China's LAC adventurism. There are several places along the several thousand kilometre long LAC where the PLA is militarily weak, the Indian Army has the upper hand, and, therefore, a fit-for-tat military campaign could be undertaken by New Delhi. Second, while China enjoys continental superiority over India, maritime domain is China's weak spot, in particular Beijing's commercial and energy interest to which the maritime space is crucial. Finally, and most importantly, would Beijing want to seriously damage the close to \$100 billion trade with India with its military adventurism on the LAC?

In any case, for India, the age of pussyfooting around Chinese intimidation strategies is over. The time has come to checkmate Beijing's military aggression even as we maintain a robust economic relationship with our eastern neighbour. It is also a reminder for us to get more serious about finalising a border agreement with China: the bigger the power differential between India and China, the more concessions Beijing would demand from New Delhi to settle the dispute.

There is little doubt that China is our neighbour and that we have to live next to the larger and more powerful China. However, India should not accept Beijing's attempts at land grabs, or military intimidation. That China is a rising superpower located next door to us is a reality, but how we deal with that reality is a choice we must make as a nation.

Happymon Jacob teaches national security at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

India's Parliament is missing in action

In today's extraordinary circumstances it should convene soon; adapting IT solutions can make this even easier



M.R. MADHAVAN

Parliaments in democracies around the world are meeting and questioning their governments on their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Canadian Parliament had its first lockdown meeting towards the end of April, with roughly 280 of the 338 Members of Parliament attending through video conference and questioning the government for three hours. The British Parliament has adopted a hybrid model of in-person and video attendance. Several other countries have held sessions either with physical distancing (fewer MPs attend with agreement across parties) or video conferencing or a combination of the two. These include France, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Australia and New Zealand. Many others are convening their committees through video-conferencing. The Inter Parliamentary Union has documented the processes used by various national parliaments to meet during the pandemic. India's Parliament, which prides itself as the apex representative body of the world's largest democracy, is a notable absentee from this list.

Parliament has a central role in our system of governance. First

and foremost, it is the institution that checks and challenges the government of the day. While introducing the draft Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar explained why the drafting committee had preferred a parliamentary form over the presidential system of governance. The reasoning was that while the presidential system provides a higher level of stability, the parliamentary system is better at holding the government to account on a daily basis through questions, motions and debates. Over the decades, our Parliament has evolved procedures of accountability including hearings of committees. The fact that Parliament and its committees have not met for over two months indicates the absence of scrutiny of government actions.

National laws are made by Parliament. The current steps by the central government are being taken under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, which was not designed to handle epidemics. The reasoning is that the central government had no choice as there was no other law that provide it with powers to impose a lockdown across the country, which was needed to arrest the spread of the disease. This misses the point that Parliament, which was meeting till a day before the national lockdown was announced, could have passed an appropriate Act. This is what many other countries have done – an Act with suitable checks and an expiry date, which could be renewed by Parliament, if required.

The Constitution requires all expenditure by the government to be approved by Parliament. The government has announced a series of measures to address the economic crisis sparked by the health crisis and the lockdown. These have not been subject to parliamentary scrutiny or approval.

The pressing issues

MPs have a duty to shape policy and guide the government in national interest. They represent the concerns of people by raising issues in Parliament. The country is facing serious challenges on many fronts as a consequence of the pandemic. These include addressing questions on how to stall the epidemic from spreading, how to treat people who are infected, and how to minimise the loss of life to the virus. There is also the question of how the economy is impacted, both from the supply side due to the lockdown, and from the demand side as incomes and spending contract.

Then there is the large humanitarian question of mitigating the impact on the most vulnerable

sections of the population, both the urban poor and in rural areas. There have been several news reports of migrants being mistreated, not provided transport, being harassed by the police – and being stripped of their dignity, even in cases where they have been provided with food and shelter. There needs to be concerted action to alleviate the distress. Parliament is the forum where such issues should be discussed and a plan of action agreed upon.

Our Constitution does not prohibit meetings that may require maintenance of physical distancing or remote meetings. It states that the President may summon Parliament "to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit". The Rules of Procedure of both Houses require the Secretary-General to issue summons to each member specifying the "date and place for a session" of the House. These enabling clauses can be used to hold hybrid meetings or remote meetings. The Rules require parliamentary committees to sit within the "precincts" of the House but the Speaker may permit meetings to be held outside; indeed, sub-committees often go on study tours outside Delhi. Thus, there is no prior parliamentary action required to permit meetings through video-conferencing.

Secure connectivity

The question of security and secrecy may come up. The meetings of the Houses are usually telecast live, and there is no issue of confi-

dentiality. Committee meetings, on the other hand, may require secure remote working tools. Given that large global corporations as well as parliamentary committees of several other countries seem to have solved this problem, there is no reason that the Indian Parliament cannot adapt these solutions. All district headquarters are linked with fibre optic lines, so even if there is a problem of connecting the constituency office of MPs, they could use such government facilities.

The question boils down to how our parliamentarians view themselves. If they think that they are sentinels of the people, they should find a way to perform their constitutional duties. Over the last three months, central and State governments have issued over 5,000 notifications to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The appropriateness of these circulars need to be examined by Parliament and its committees. In ordinary times, Parliament would have its next session in the second half of July. In today's extraordinary circumstances, Parliament should meet sooner, perhaps within a couple of weeks. India prides itself on being the world's largest democracy as well as the information technology provider to the world. It is imperative that Parliament harnesses the country's IT strengths to buttress our credentials as a performing democracy.

M.R. Madhavan is President of the PRS Legislative Research, New Delhi

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.

Grand plans

It is not surprising that the government of the day is pushing through projects that are unnecessary or could wait, using a one-off situation to further its agenda (Editorial, "Monumental hurry", June 3). Its haste in accomplishing its pledge of privatisation even when the chips are down and with the economy spiralling out of control, is odd. The move by the top leader to promote indigenous manufacturing does not seem to be matched by the actions of the government. The urgency shown in initiating the humongous Central Vista project, in testing times, is disgusting

when there are so many other issues that need immediate attention.

G.B. SIVANANDAM,
Coimbatore

■ The nation is undergoing severe strain due to the pandemic. Therefore, what is the urgency for the Central Vista project? What happened to the new Legislative Assembly building in Chennai is still fresh in people's minds – the fierce politics over its construction first resulted in its being called unsuitable and later led it to being converted into a hospital. What about the political drama in Andhra Pradesh over Amaravati? Is India so well-advanced to bear such

lavish spending? It is better for the country and the common man that the government of the day holds widespread political consultations before incurring such a huge expenditure and to avoid the risk of project abandonment later. But will it listen? RAJA SREENIVASAN, Chennai

Access to e-learning
The education sector has been one of the first sectors to adapt to the pandemic crisis and begin various methods to help students and learners. Though online classes have become a go-to solution and a way to push ahead with the academic calendar, it has raised many

concerns about cyber perils. But more important is we should not forget that there are many who are unable to avail of this facility due to economic problems. There are children from poor families in danger of being left out of e-learning. Experts say the government can go about e-learning using TV channels and radio. Perhaps community radio and television can help. Kerala has already initiated programmes on TV which have been lauded for planning and content. It is time the Indian electronics industry comes up with low-cost, state-of-the-art technological devices that can be used for online learning. Many poor children

will be grateful.

M. PRADY,
Thalikkavu, Kannur, Kerala

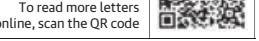
■ It is unfortunate that a Class X student "hailing from an impoverished family", in Malappuram, Kerala, is said to have ended her life as she was unable to attend online classes for want of a smartphone ("Death of Class X girl triggers protests", June 3). As there are bound to be lakhs of students who do not

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the report titled "Scientists find second most common coronavirus type in India" (June 3, 2020), the sentence that read "The most dominant coronavirus clade in India is the A2a and of 213 genomes analysed, 62% of them were A2a" should be corrected to read: "The most dominant coronavirus clade in India is the A2a and of 361 genomes analysed, 45% of them were A2a".

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



have access to online classes, Education Departments should have checked and made the necessary arrangements before starting these classes. For officials to now prepare a list of houses that lack facilities to access online classes is a classic case of locking the stable door after the horse has bolted.

P.G. MENON,
Chennai

FROM PAGE ONE

Govt. to boost facilities along China border

The BADP, which was started in 1980 for the western border, has over the years expanded to cover 396 blocks of 111 border districts in 16 States and two UTs.

The new BADP guidelines said, "10% of the total allocated funds will be additionally allocated to the States/UTs abutting Indo-China border [Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Sikkim and Uttarakhand] for taking up works/projects in the districts abutting Indo-China border."

It said that 10% funds would be reserved as an incentive for the better performing States. Out of the remaining ₹638.2 crores, the northeastern States – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim – would get ₹255.28 crore, or 40% of the remaining 80% funds. Around

₹382.9 crore, or 60%, would be allocated to Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the guidelines said.

Forces such as the Border Security Force (BSF), deployed along the Bangladesh and Pakistan borders; the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) on the China border; the Sashastra Seema Bal along the Nepal border; and the Assam Rifles stationed along the Myanmar border would provide independent feedback on the projects in the blocks concerned and may be tasked to conduct social audit of the works, it stated.

No NGO or private institution could be hired for infrastructure related work, the guidelines said.

No need for third party intervention, says China

Mr. Zhao repeated the Foreign Ministry's statements from the past week describing the situation as "overall stable and controllable", in remarks seen as suggesting that escalation along the LAC may be unlikely even if there was no agreement yet on disengagement.

Standoff situations and increased deployments have been reported in at least four locations along the LAC in Ladakh and Sikkim, and talks so far have made no headway.

'Through dialogue'
Mr. Zhao said, "China and India have a full-fledged border related mechanism and communication channel. We have the capability to resolve this issue through dialogue and negotiations. There is no need for third party intervention."

On Wednesday, China's official media reported the Chinese military in Tibet has held night-time high-altitude "infiltration exercises behind enemy lines".

The Communist Party-run *Global Times* reported that the "PLA Tibet Military Command recently sent troops to a high-altitude re-

gion at an elevation of 4,700 meters at night for infiltration exercises behind enemy lines and tested their combat capability under a harsh environment".

Reports indicated that the drills were held in the Tanggula Mountains, which is not close to the border but on the other side of the Tibet Autonomous Region on the central Tibetan plateau, near the eastern border with Qinghai province.

The newspaper's report noted that "China and India share borders at the high altitude area, and incidents have recently occurred between the two countries' troops, and both sides reportedly reinforced deployments".

Ma Qian, commander of the scout battalion involved in the drills, told state broadcaster CCTV that "more than 2,000 munitions, including mortar shells, rifle grenades and rockets were fired during the mock battle" and "the exercises not only tested the results of the troops' training with newly commissioned equipment, but also placed them in an extremely complicated situation".

India registers massive spike of 9,501 cases

While the death rates in these countries have reduced, these three countries have registered deaths five-six times more than India. According to the Union Health Ministry, India's current fatality rate is 2.80%. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Gujarat continue to lead in terms of cases.

Testing capacity
India's testing capacity has increased via its 480 government and 208 private laboratories (total 688 laboratories). Cumulatively,

41,03,233 samples have been tested so far for COVID-19, whereas, 1,37,158 samples were tested on Wednesday alone.

As part of its healthcare preparation, India has 952 dedicated COVID hospitals with 1,66,332 isolation beds, 21,393 ICU beds and 72,762 oxygen-supported beds are available.

Also, 2,391 dedicated COVID Health Centres with 1,34,945 isolation beds and 11,027 ICU beds and 46,875 oxygen-supported beds have been operationalised.

U.S. not to allow Chinese flights from June 16

U.S.-Chinese relations have soured in recent months amid tensions surrounding the novel coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's move to impose new national security legislation for Hong Kong.

The order applies to Air China, China Eastern Airlines Corp, China Southern Airlines Co and Hainan Airlines Holding Co, as well as smaller Sichuan Airlines Co and Xiamen Airlines Co. Chinese carriers are currently flying four round-trip flights to the U.S. weekly.

Delta Air Lines and United Airlines have asked to resume flights to China this month, even as Chinese carriers have continued U.S.

flights during the pandemic.

Delta said in a statement on Wednesday that "we support and appreciate the U.S. government's actions to enforce our rights and ensure fairness."

United said it looks forward to resuming passenger service between the U.S. and China "when the regulatory environment allows us to do so."

China "remains unable" to say when it will revise its rules "to allow U.S. carriers to reinstate scheduled passenger flights," a formal order signed by the Department of Transportation's top aviation official Joel Szabat said.

Virus claims 12 more lives in three States

Cases rise in Telangana, Karnataka and A.P.; returnees' tally up in Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Seven more COVID-19 patients have died in Telangana, taking the toll to 99 while four COVID-19 deaths and 180 new cases were reported in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. In Karnataka, apart from 267 new cases, one more death was reported, taking the toll to 53.

Karnataka's tally touched 4,063. While it took 69 days to cross 1,000 cases on May 15 (after the first was reported on March 9) the number doubled in nine days touching 2,089 on May 24.

Later, in seven days the total crossed 3,000, and in three days, 1,000 more cases were added. In May alone, the number of cases saw almost a six-fold increase, and the huge spike was mainly due to the influx of people from Maharashtra and a few other States.

From 565 cases on April 30, the number of positive cases rose to 3,221 by May 31. The number of cases started shooting up ever since the State eased lockdown restrictions on May 18.

COVID-19

An 80-year-old woman of Davangere district, presenting with fever, cough and breathlessness on May 28 after contact with a positive patient, was brought dead to a designated hospital on May 29. She tested positive.

Among new cases, 250 were inter-State travellers. Many new cases were in Kallaburgi - 105, including 27 children.

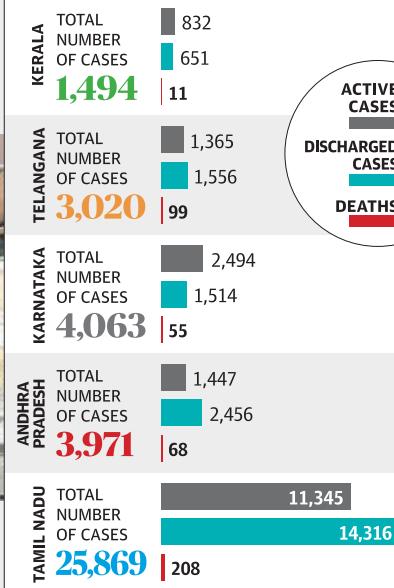
Udupi had the highest number of active cases at 408, in designated hospitals. The coastal district added 62 cases on Wednesday. While

Daily ordeal

With no let-up in the number of COVID-19 cases across the country, health workers are on their toes trying to contain the spread



Sun-baked: A health worker drying overalls that form part of the personal protective equipment at a clinic in Vijayawada on Wednesday. ■ V. RAJU



Raichur reported 35 cases, Bellur Urban and Mandya saw 20 and 13 respectively.

Udupi had the highest number of active cases at 408, in designated hospitals. The coastal district added 62 cases on Wednesday. While

were foreign returnees.

Chittoor district reported two deaths and Krishna and Kurnool, one death each.

The toll in Kurnool at 26 was the highest among districts. It was followed by Krishna (19), and the two districts account for 66% of the deaths

in the State. The toll had gone up to 68.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Telangana crossed 3,000 on Wednesday as 129 more tested positive. The total number of cases in the State stood at 3,020. Seven more COVID-19 patients died

It constitutes a committee to prepare restoration plan

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) held that LG Polymers India has absolute liability for the loss of life caused by a gas leak at its factory in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam. It said the ₹50 crore in compensation, deposited by the company, would be spent on restoration. It also constituted a committee to prepare a restoration plan.

Referring to an inspection report furnished by a NGT-appointed committee, a Bench, headed by Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, said, "The committee has opined that the company did not take proper care of the storage tank resulting in auto polymerization of styrene releasing excess heat which escaped from the goose-neck and dip hatch in the form of vapour."

It also noted the committee's submissions pertaining to the unit operating without requisite environmental clearances.

tee's submissions pertaining to the unit operating without requisite environmental clearances.

The Bench said, "Overwhelming material establish liability" of the company. "The company has operated without EC [environmental clearance] and the State PCB, on account of its ignorance of law or otherwise, gave 'Consent to Establish' and 'Consent to Operate' in violation of law. The amount

deposited has thus to be appropriated towards part liability and interim compensation, subject to further others," it said.

The NGT directed a committee of representatives from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State government officials to prepare a restoration plan within two months.

On March 10, the High Court had concluded that

painting public buildings in ruling party and flag colours amounted to "influencing the minds of the citizens towards its ideology."

The High Court had called it an

evil practice" using public money. It had directed the State to remove the paint within 10 days.

"There is no ambiguity in the direction

issued by the High Court that any colour which is similar to the flag of any political party should not be used for painting gram panchayat buildings...," the Supreme Court held while dismissing the State's appeal.

lack of proper directions from the State government.

Meanwhile, Girija C.C., mother of two students from Kasaragod, filed a writ petition seeking a directive to the State government and the Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) not to broadcast online classes till all students were provided with the technical facilities.

Mr. Vijayan said the death of a Class 10 student of the Government High School, Irimbiliyam, in Malappuram was unfortunate.

III and VII students. The judge said the right to education was mandated under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

According to the petitioner, the school authorities had threatened several parents that unless the fee was

paid, textbooks would not be given. In fact, the students whose parents objected to the additional fee were denied WhatsApp voice tutorial and other media of teaching of the first day classes.

The authorities were insisting on payment of a fee for online classes because of

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Lt. General-level talks with China on June 6

GO C of Leh-headquartered 14 Corps to represent India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India and China will hold talks at the level of Lieutenant Generals later this week in an effort to resolve the tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), sources said.

The Indian side will be represented by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Leh-headquartered 14 Corps that covers eastern Ladakh, sources said. The meeting will take place at one of the designated border meeting points.

The groundwork for this was laid at the third meeting at the level of Major Generals held on Tuesday, it has been learnt. Ahead of the important talks, Northern Army Commander Lt. Gen. Y.K.



India and China have been engaged in a stand-off for close to a month now.

Joshi is in Leh, the sources said. He was earlier supposed to reach Leh on Tuesday, but that got delayed.

Daily discussions are on between the militaries on the ground at various levels, including at the Brigadier level and twice by Major Generals earlier. But there has been no breakthrough so far

to end the impasse. Transgressions, and with that face-offs, tend to increase sharply in summers as both sides increase their patrols. According to data, there were 273 transgressions by Chinese troops in 2016, 426 in 2017, 326 in 2018 and 356 in 2019.

A proposal to set up a hotline between senior officers to resolve such issues quickly has been held up for several years due to procedural differences. In January last, Army Chief Gen. Manoj Naravane stated that all issues had been resolved and the procedural aspects ironed out. The hotline would be between the Directors General of Military Operations from India and China's Western Theatre Command.

'Border strife more serious than in the past'

Former Generals point out multiple face-offs and the geographical spread of the conflict

ANANTH KRISHNAN
CHENNAI

The ongoing border tension with China at multiple points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is more serious than past incidents, indicating China's planning and the likelihood of a protracted stand-off, two senior former Generals said on Wednesday.

Unlike previous LAC incidents that were localised, the current stand-offs were spread over at least four points along the LAC and involved more troops than before, which complicated the possibility of an early disengagement and return to status quo, they said.

"The fact of the matter is some kind of planning has gone through before these multiple face-offs," said Lt. Gen. (retd) S.L. Narasimhan, Member, National Security Advisory Board. "Earlier,



On guard: An Army patrol team in Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control with China. ■ FILE PHOTO

they used to take place in one place. This time there have been multiple face-offs and geographically spaced out, in Sikkim, Pangong Tso and Galwan. The kind of numbers we see is also not what we saw earlier, and the aggression has been more than normal."

'Well-prepared'

"Normal face-offs happen every year, they don't lead to these kind of incidents," ad-

ded Lt. Gen. (retd) D.S. Hooda, former Northern Army Commander. "This is much more serious. They have come completely well-prepared ... We have never seen this level of violence," he added. Both were speaking at a webinar organised by the Institute of Chinese Studies.

Stand-offs in at least four locations along the LAC remain unresolved, with reports of a build-up in Galwan valley, Pangong Tso and Hot

Springs in Ladakh, and Naku La in Sikkim, with Chinese troops present on India's side of the LAC in some of these spots. Talks at the level of Lieutenant Generals are set for June 6.

Gen. Hooda said a key difference was that past incidents, including in Depsang in 2013, Chumar in 2014 and Doklam in 2017, were localised, triggered by road-building activity. "We were absolutely clear of the red lines and demands of two sides. One wanted to build, the other said no. Therefore, we knew the steps towards resolution. I am not sure we know that in this case. What is it the Chinese want, and why [are there incidents] in so many areas? Will they ease off and go back having invested so much and come into these areas? That adds to risk and possible difficulty in resolving it. We are in for

tough hard negotiations and maybe a protracted stand-off," he said.

Also new in this instance

is the stand-off at Galwan valley, which is not one of the points on the LAC where there have been differing perceptions of alignment. In Pangong lake, face-offs had occurred in the past, as India has been patrolling up to its LAC at Finger 8 while China would come up to Finger 2 (the "fingers") from I to 8, running from west to east, refer to mountain spurs on the lake's northern banks. Here also the stand-off is different, as Chinese troops are now present in the area between Fingers 4 and 8 and are preventing India from patrolling up to Finger 8, effectively altering the status quo.

Gen. Hooda suggested that clarifying the LAC in all key areas needed to be done "on an urgent basis".

Shah Faesal, 2 PDP leaders released

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The J&K administration on Wednesday released former IAS officer and J&K People's Movement party founder Shah Faesal and two PDP leaders, who were booked under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA).

An official said the release order of these leaders, who had been behind the bars since August 5 when J&K's special status was ended, was issued after their PSAs were revoked by the Home Department. Sartaj Madni, uncle of PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, and Peer Mansoor, a former MLA, were among those released.

Rahul calls for clarity on border crisis

He asks Centre to clarify whether Chinese troops entered Indian territory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday asked the government to clarify whether or not Chinese soldiers entered into Indian territory.

"Can GOI [the Government of India] please confirm that no Chinese soldiers have entered India?" he wrote on Twitter. He also shared a news report that said India and China would hold a top-level military meeting on June 6.

Earlier, too, Mr. Gandhi had asked the government to come clean on the stand-off as its silence is fuelling speculation and uncertainty.

His tweet came after the Press Information Bureau (PIB) "clarified" that Defence



Minister Rajnath Singh had only talked about a differing perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the presence of Chinese troops. On Tuesday, Mr. Singh said in a television interview that a "sizeable number" of Chinese troops had been moved near eastern Ladakh on the LAC and India, too, had taken necessary steps to deal with the situation.

"It is being misinterpreted as if Chinese troops entered Indian side of LAC," read a tweet on the PIB's official fact-check handle.

Congress spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Abhishek Singhvi said the PIB's clarification "reveals more than what the government is trying to conceal". "I want to make it clear that we stand with the nation on this issue and we will support any proper policy of the government. To be very aggressive with China, to be neutral, diplomatic or to be negotiator is the government's call," Mr. Singhvi said. "But, with great regret, we must bring to your attention that becoming an ostrich, putting your head in the sand and trying to avoid

and ignore an issue is not to face the real fact..." he said.

Mr. Singhvi also questioned the Centre's claim that the Centre had paid 85% of the cost of the Shramik Special trains run for migrant workers. "The learned Solicitor-General has repeatedly said in the Supreme Court that all of the cost of the Railways, travel for the migrants, is to be borne by the sending States or by the receiving States ... Unless the government of India clarifies, we must take this statement, made in solemnity of court proceedings, as true... Which means whatever the Railway Minister [Piyush Goyal] and other Ministers have been saying is not true," he said, demanding Mr. Goyal's resignation.

India slams defacement of rock carvings in Gilgit-Baltistan

'Religious and cultural rights being trampled with impunity'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has reacted strongly to reports of vandalism and defacement of ancient Buddhist rock carvings in Gilgit-Baltistan under Pakistan's control. Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Anurag Srivastava, said the incidents, which happened in an area known for its Buddhist carvings, shows Pakistan is dismantling the "invaluable Indian Buddhist heritage" there.

Mr. Srivastava said the incidents, which happened in an area known for its Buddhist carvings, shows Pakistan is dismantling the "invaluable Indian Buddhist heritage" there.

gion found in the rock carvings and engravings, especially in areas like Hunza, which were part of the Buddhist circle covering Ladakh and Tibet. The engravings have been in news recently also because of the Diamer-Bhasha hydro power project that the Chinese and the Pakistani companies will construct nearby, as locals have opposed it, claiming it may endanger the heritage.



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ ଶକ୍ତି ସଂଚାରଣ ନିଗମ ଲିୟ.
ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)

Regd. Office: Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022, Telephone: (0674) 2540051 (EPABX), Website: www.optcl.co.in, CIN: U4102OR2004SGC007553, e-mail: rtc@optcl.co.in

APPLICATION BEFORE CERC IN PETITION NO-141/TT/2019

Dt.: 03.05.2019 FILED BY OPTCL

(1) Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), Regd. Office Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022, Odisha has made an application before the Central Electricity Regulating Commission, New Delhi for approval of Tariff for inclusion of transmission assets in Computation of Point of Connection (PoC) charges and losses as per CERC order dated 12.05.2017 in petition No. 07/SM/2017 for inclusion in PoC charges in accordance with CERC (Sharing of Inter-state Transmission Charges and Losses) Regulations, 2010 and amendments made thereto, (2) The beneficiaries of the transmission system are: (a) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL), (b) Jharkhand State Electricity Board (JSEB), (c) West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (WBSEDCL), (d) Andhra Pradesh Power Coordination Committee (APPPC), (3) Line length, number of bays of the transmission system: 400 KV-245.47 ckt.km, 220 KV-56.33 ckt.km, 132 KV-49.90 ckt.km, (4) Approved Capital Cost of the project- (₹ In lakh): N/A, (5) Authority which has approved the Capital Cost: N/A, (6) Schedule date of commercial operation: N/A, (7) Actual date of commercial operation: 01.04.1999, (8) Capital cost on the date of commercial operation (₹ In lakh): N/A, (9) Details of Tariff: (Publication only application portion): Total ₹ 21899.33 Lakhs for 2014-19 Block Period.

	Tariff for previous year (2013-14)	Year wise tariff sought to be determined (₹ in lakhs)
Annual Transmission Charges	N/A	3664.59 4085.63 4611.4 4681.68 4856.03

(10) A copy of the application made for determination of tariff is posted on the website of OPTCL (www.optcl.co.in). (11) The suggestion and objections, if any, on the proposals for determination of tariff contained in the application be filed by any person, including the beneficiary before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulating Commission, 3rd & 4th Floor, Chandni Chowk, New Delhi, with a copy to the applicant within 30 days of publication of this notice.

Place : Bhubaneswar
Date : 04.06.2020

Sd/-
Sr. General Manager
Regulation, Tariff & Commercial

Please connect us: optcl.odisha optcl_odisha energyodisha

Cabinet sets up Secretaries' group to attract investment

Every Ministry will have a project development cell

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the setting up of an empowered group of secretaries (EGoS) and project development cells (PDCs) in Ministries and departments for attracting investments to India, said Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar.

Speaking at a press briefing after the meeting, Mr. Javadekar, referring to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, said: "We know the world's situation. Industries are thinking to diversify their investments in diffe-

rent localities, so to ensure that investment is enhanced in India, an EGoS has been formed. And simultaneously in every Ministry, there will be a project development cell. This will make India a more investor-friendly destination and we will also hand-hold the new industries."

\$5 trillion economy

He added that the two decisions would help domestic industries and lead to direct and indirect employment.

The government said the decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting, chaired by

India, Bhutan ink MoU for environment cooperation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bhutan for cooperation in the field of environment protection and management of natural resources.

It will cover air, waste, chemical management, climate change and other areas and will remain in force for 10 years from the date of signing.

Central Coalfields Limited
A Miniratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
NOTICE
"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in and its respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfIELDS.in), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalinindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://reprocure.gov.in> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>"

and promotion of closer and long-term cooperation in environment protection and management of natural resources on the basis of equity, reciprocity and mutual benefits..." the government said.

The MoU, signed at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "will enable establishment

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS: TIRUPATI MARKETING DEPARTMENT e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Roc.No.TTD-34022(31)/67/2020/PROC. SEC-TTD DT:02-06-2020
e-Tenders are invited for procurement of Large Handle Laddu Bages (Grease Resistant) - Through e-tenders cum e-Reverse Auction by the Marketing Department, T.T.D., Tirupati. For Tender Notice and Tender details log on to the Web site <http://www.tirumala.org> and [https://tender.approcurement.gov.in](http://tender.approcurement.gov.in). Click on current Tenders and select "more" and "Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams MARKETING". For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, Fax No. 0877-2264554.

Roc.No.PRA/13919/Adv.No.34/PRO/2020; Dated:03-06-2020

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, (PROJECT) PHED CHURU (RAJ.)

Tel. 01562-251415 e-mail:acephedchuru@gmail.com

Notice Inviting Tenders for Works

Online tenders are hereby invited on behalf of the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from eligible enlisted Contractor / Firm as per Rules. Details of this tender notice and pre-qualification criteria can also be seen in NIT exhibited on web site [www.dpr.rajasthan.gov.in](http://dpr.rajasthan.gov.in), <http://ppr.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://rajayav.gov.in> and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Tenders to be submitted online electronic format on web site <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, RISL Charges, tender fee and bid security shall be submitted through e-GRAS only in respective budget head.

NIT No. Work Description Estimated Cost Date & time for online bidding

ACE CHU/01/2020-21 Conversion of Water supply scheme into piped WSS with provisions of household connection (FHTCs) of village Punisar, Somisar & Amrasar, Tehsil Taranagar & Sardarshar, Distt. Churu" ... UBN No ACE2021WLOBO1668

Rs. 646.02 Lacs Up to 18-06-2020 (18:00 hrs)

ACE CHU/02/2020-21 Conversion of Water supply scheme into piped WSS with provisions of household connection (FHTCs) of village Sherkot, Tehsil Sardarshar, Distt. Churu" ... UBN No ACE2021WLOBO1669

Cabinet nod for agri marketing reforms

Essential Commodities Act to be amended via ordinance

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved an amendment to the 65-year-old Essential Commodities Act, removing cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities. The amendment will be made effective immediately via an ordinance, according to the Agriculture Ministry.

At its meeting on Wednesday, the Cabinet also approved ordinances to remove restrictions on farmers selling their produce outside notified market yards, as well as to facilitate contract farming and allow farmers to engage in direct marketing, according to an official statement. All these measures were promised in the Aatmanirbhar package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month.

Foreign investment

The amendment to the ECA, which has been under discussion for more than a decade, will deregulate the production, storage, movement and distribution of these food commodities. By removing the private sector's fears of "excessive regulatory interference," the Centre hopes to increase private and foreign investment, especially in cold storage facilities and the modernisation of the food supply chain, said the statement. Adequate processing and storage facilities will reduce wastage and increase income for farmers of perishable commodities.

To protect consumers, the amendment allows regu-



To lose tag: The Cabinet has approved an amendment to remove pulses from the list of essential commodities.

lation during war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity, while providing exemptions for exporters and processors at such times as well.

The Farming Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 aims to open up agricultural marketing outside notified mandis for farmers, and also remove barriers to inter-State trade. While both agriculture and markets are State subjects, the Centre is counting on the fact that trade and commerce in foodstuffs is part of the concurrent list to push through its ordinance.

"We are not touching markets. We are simply saying that the full country outside the physically demarcated premises of mandis run by APMC committees should be open to a farmer to sell his produce to anyone with a PAN card," said Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal. "Why is the farmer, who is the producer, restricted from selling his own produce? Those who buy from the farmer are unlimited in their further marketing or export, but the farmer is being curbed. By allowing the farmer more choices, it will raise his income and also reduce wastage and improve quality," he added.

In fact, industry sources suggest that 60% of agricultural trade already takes place outside the mandis through unregulated sales. By legalising and facilitating such sales, the Centre hopes that farmers will benefit, rather than middlemen.

Not all States have been on board with these reforms, especially as State governments will not be allowed to levy fees on these sales.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020 is aimed at facilitating contract farming, where a private buyer contracts to purchase a crop at a certain price at the beginning of a season, transferring the risk of market unpredictability from the farmer to the corporate sponsor. However, farmers groups have expressed concern that corporates will benefit more than small farmers from such direct marketing measures, and wish to see the specific provisions of the ordinance before welcoming it.

Presenting an analysis of

HCQ clinical trials will resume: WHO

The Lancet says it has concerns about article on use of drug in COVID-19 patients

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REUTERS
GENEVA/NEW YORK

The World Health Organisation said on Wednesday that clinical trials of the drug hydroxychloroquine will resume, after having been suspended pending a safety review in the search for coronavirus treatments.

"On the basis of the available mortality data... the executive group will communicate with the principal investigators in the trial about resuming the hydroxychloroquine arm," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual news briefing.

Concerns about data
British medical journal *The Lancet* said on Tuesday that it had concerns about data



Hydroxychloroquine has anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties. ■ REUTERS

behind an influential article that found that HCQ increased the risk of death in COVID-19 patients, a conclusion that undercut scientific interest in the medicine championed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Hydroxychloroquine – which has anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties – in

hibited the coronavirus in laboratory experiments, but has not been proven effective in humans, particularly in placebo-controlled, randomised clinical trials considered the gold standard for data. The debate has become highly politicised, and many scientists have voiced concern.

Open letter

Nearly 150 doctors signed an open letter to *The Lancet* last week calling the article's conclusions into question and asking to make public the peer review comments that preceded publication.

"This is not some sideshow or minor issue," said Walid Gellad, a Professor at University of Pittsburgh's medical school, who was not a signatory of the letter but

has been critical of the study. "We're in an unprecedented pandemic. We've organised these enormous clinical trials to figure out if something works. And this study stopped or paused a couple of those trials, and changed the narrative around a drug that no one knows if it works or not," he said.

The study, using data provided by healthcare data analytics firm Surgisphere, was not a traditional clinical trial that would have compared hydroxychloroquine to a placebo or other medicine.

The Lancet's editors said in a note that serious scientific questions about the study were brought to their attention and an independent audit of the data has already been commissioned.



Sitaram Yechury

CPI(M) protest to demand cash transfers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Wednesday accused the Narendra Modi government of using the pandemic as an excuse to replace the secular democratic and federal structure of the country with a unitary form of theocratic government. The party will be holding country-wide protests on June 16 demanding immediate cash transfers and free foodgrains for the poor.

He addressed reporters via Facebook live to brief about the decisions taken by the party's Polit Bureau. This was the first meeting of the Polit Bureau after the lockdown was announced on March 24. The members met via video link.

Mr. Yechury said the Central government had now virtually left the Indian people to fend for themselves in combating the pandemic. State governments which were on the forefront of this battle had been denied even their legitimate dues such as GST payouts. Mr. Yechury said the pandemic was being used for centralisation of authority which in turn was destroying a basic feature of our Constitution – federalism.

Mr. Yechury said both the imposition and now lifting of the lockdown was unscientific.

'Need new stimulus of ₹10 lakh cr.'

Economists urge cash transfers to 80% of households to revive economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre needs to announce a ₹10 lakh crore fiscal stimulus package providing universal food ration and cash transfers for 80% of households in order to revive the economy at this time, the Heterodox Economists Collective has urged. Employment guarantees must be expanded for both rural and urban workers at a time of soaring joblessness, the group of economists added during a webinar on Wednesday.

Funding such a package would require suspension of fiscal deficit targets, which could impact the country's credit rating. "It does not help if you have a wonderful



credit rating if your economy is going down the drain," warned JNU professor and economist Jayati Ghosh. "If fear of credit rating agencies are what drives the government's policies, they are doomed to failure," she added.

Presenting an analysis of

the government's ₹20 lakh crore Atmanirbhar package on Wednesday, the Heterodox Economists Collective observed that the fiscal component amounted to only ₹3 lakh crore, which includes already announced budgetary measures. The measures announced for MSMEs would only benefit larger players within that segment, they said, adding that provisions for higher liquidity may not increase actual credit offtake. Minimum support prices for farmers had not kept pace with inflation, while real wages were being suppressed.

In order to mitigate the crisis, the public distribution system must be universalised, with free cereals, pulses

and cooking oil provided to all for the next six months, said the economists' group. It proposed cash payments of ₹15,000 to the bottom 80% of households as compensation for lost incomes during the 75 days lockdown.

Employment guarantees needed to be expanded to urban areas, while agricultural work needed to be included under the existing rural scheme, with 200 days of guaranteed work, said the economists.

To fund the package, they suggested the issue of special bonds for low-interest public borrowing, increased central transfers to States and, if required, a monetisation of the central fiscal deficit.

Defence Secretary tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar tested positive for COVID-19, a defence official said on Wednesday.

Mr. Kumar tested positive but continues to work and look into files from quarantine, one official said.

'Source not known'

"The particular section has been disinfected and those in contact have self quarantined," another official said.

Details are not known on the likely source of infection and on the contract tracing.

Necessary protocols are being followed, the official said.

PUNJAB EFFLUENT TREATMENT SOCIETY FOR TANNERS (PETS) LEATHER COMPLEX, KAPURTHALA ROAD, JALANDHAR
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS.
eproc.punjab.gov.in

Tender Ref: PETs/CETP/Upgradation/2020-21

The Administrative Officer, Punjab Effluent Treatment Society for Tanneries, 58-Leather Complex, Kapurthala Road, Jalandhar, on behalf of Deputy Commissioner, Jalandhar-cum-chairman, Interim Committee, Punjab Effluent Treatment Society for Tanneries invites bids in Electronic Tendering system for the upgradation of 5 MLD capacity Common Effluent Treatment Plant on the basis of the costs estimate approved by Govt. of India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (Leather Section), Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi as per eligibility criteria mentioned in DNT. The Bids document is available online, bids are to be submitted online through e-procurement portal <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> only. Bids submitted manually will not be accepted.

S. No.	Name of Work	Tender Value (In Rs.)	1. Earnest Money deposit (In Rs.)	2. Processing Fees	3. Tender Form Fees (In Rupees)	Period of Contract	Last date of submission	Date of opening of Tender	Date of pre bid meeting
1	Upgradation of 5 MLD Tannery Common Effluent Treatment Plant	Rs. 2467.00 Lacs	1 Rs.24,67 Lacs	2. Rs.5900/-	3. Rs.1120/- including GST.	9 Months	25.06.2020 4:00 PM	26.06.2020 2:00 PM	11.00 AM through Video Conference

For detailed terms & conditions please visit website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in

Administrative Officer, PETS
For Deputy Commissioner, Jalandhar-cum-Chairman, Interim Committee, PETS for Tanneries. e-mail:p.pets@yahoo.in
Ph:0181-5063003 Mob: 9814716229

DPR PB I/30544/2020

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Tirunelveli Highways (Construction and Maintenance) Circle
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.6/2020-21/HDO. DATED:03.06.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 09.07.2020 At 14.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Tirunelveli Circle for CRIDP 2020-21 Works, (Package No.51 to 57) pertaining to Nagercoil(H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 08.06.2020 onwards in the Government website <http://intenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

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

T.N.O.11/2020-21/HDO. DATED:02.06.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 10.07.2020, 15.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Trichy Circle, TVS Tollgate, Pudukkottai Road, Trichy-20 for CRIDP 2020-21 works, (Package No.78 to 92) pertaining to Thanjavur(H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 08.06.2020 onwards in the Government website <http://intenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H), C&M Circle, Trichy-20.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Trichy Highways (Construction and Maintenance) Circle
TENDER NOTICE
T.N.O.11/2020-21/HDO. DATED:02.06.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 10.07.2020, 15.00 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Trichy Circle, TVS Tollgate, Pudukkottai Road, Trichy-20 for CRIDP 2020-21 works, (Package No.78 to 92) pertaining to Thanjavur(H) C&M Division.

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Superintending Engineer (H), C&M Circle, Trichy-20.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Chennai Construction and Maintenance Circle
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.6/2020-21/HDO. DATED:30.05.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 15.07.2020, 12.00 Noon by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Chennai Circle for works under CRIDP Scheme 2020-21 (Package No.89 to 121) pertaining to Tiruannamalai, Cheyyar and Chengalpattu Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 10.06.2020 onwards in the Government website <http://intenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

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

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Chennai Construction and Maintenance Circle
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.6/2020-21/HDO. DATED:30.05.2020

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Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 10.06.2020 onwards in the Government website <http://intenders.gov.in>. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

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

TAMIL NADU HOUSING BOARD -MADURAI CIRCLE
Ellisnagar, Madurai-16. Phone- 0452-2600 901
TENDER NOTICE NO: 04/2020-2021 Dated:03.06.2020

Sealed tenders with Pre-Qualification System duly super-scripted on the covers with Name of work, Reference No., Due Date and Name of the tenderer are invited for the following work so as to reach office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai-16 up to 11.00 A.M (as per office clock) on the date mentioned below. The tenders will be opened by the tenderer at his office at 11.30 AM on the same day in the presence of the tenderer or their agent who choose to be present.

Sl. No.	Description of Work	Approximate value (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD in Rupees
1	Area Development Scheme for 79 Nos. of Plots (HIG-16, MIG-20 & LIG-43) in S.No.12/3A etc., of Thathaiyan Village, at Sector-III, North Taluk, Madurai District and Area Development Scheme for 46 Nos. of Residential Plots (HIG-12, MIG-15 & EWS-19) in S.No.21/3 etc., of Madukulam Village at Ellis Nagar.	217.04 Lakhs	Rs. 1,19,000/-
2	Area Development Scheme for 297 Nos. of Residential Plots (HIG-15, MIG-48, MIG-117 & EWS-117) in S.No.7/2 etc., to an Extent of 15.98 Acres of Uchappatti Area-VIII Scheme at Uchappatti Village, Thirumangalam Taluk, Madurai District.	533.98 Lakhs	Rs. 2,77,000/-
3	Area Development Scheme for 1135 Nos. of Residential Plots (HIG-196, MIG-299, LIG-197 & EWS-443) in T.S.No.572 etc., to an Extent of 72.22 Acres of Palai Phase-VII Scheme at Kulavangapuram Village, Palaiyam-Kottai Taluk, Tirunelveli District and Area Development Scheme for 28 Nos. of Residential Plots (HIG-15, MIG-11 & LIG-2) in Ward No. L5/25, T.S.No.2 etc., to an Extent of 2.46 Acres in Vallikunnamavilai, Nagarkoil, Kanyakumari District.	2422.10 Lakhs	Rs. 12,21,500/-

Date & time of receipt of tender is 26.06.2020 upto 11.00 AM & opening of tender is on 26.06.2020 at 11.30 AM. Tender schedule will be available for sale till 25.06.2020 upto 1.00 PM Cost of Tender Schedule (Non refundable) is Rs.15,750/- (including Tax). Further particulars and tender documents can be had from the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle, Ellisnagar, Madurai-16. The undersigned reserves the right to accept/ reject any or all the tender documents without assigning any reasons therefore. The tender schedule can also be downloaded from the web site www.tenders.tn.gov.in at free of cost.

Superintending Engineer, Madurai Circle.

DPR/2020/Tender/2020

Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMC)
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel.: (0674) 2380608; Website: www.osmcilod.nic.in
Email: proc.osmcilod@nic.in
Date : 29.05.2020

NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER FOR SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT FOR EQUIPMENT OF ENDOCRINOLOGY & PULMON

Alert sounded
in west M.PSTAFF REPORTER
BHOJPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has issued alerts in the western divisions of Ujjain and Indore, bordering Maharashtra, anticipating heavy rain, lightning and damage to crops and damage to crops and damage to crops, owing to the cyclone Nisarga.

The wind speed would reach close to 50 km per hour and there was a possibility of lightning and heavy rain, Indore Commissioner Akash Tripathi told the collectors of eight districts of the division on Wednesday.

"In such a situation, make sure to take appropriate action for disaster management, and if needed, through proclamations and loud speakers, and the social media, alert people," Mr. Tripathi wrote to the Collectors.

He pointed out that in a few districts, the purchase of wheat and gram was under way and grains had not been carried away entirely.

"In such a situation, grains must be taken to warehouses as soon as possible and arrangements must be made to cover them with tarpaulin," Mr. Tripathi said.

Gujarat moves 60,000 to safer places

Government ensures uninterrupted power in COVID-19 hospitals during cyclone

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Though Cyclone Nisarga did not hit the Gujarat coast as was expected, the State authorities were equipped to deal with any eventuality that could have arisen.

The Gujarat government on Wednesday shifted over 60,000 people living in low-lying vulnerable areas in south Gujarat to safer places as a precautionary measure against Cyclone Nisarga.

"We have shifted more than 60,000 people living in coastal areas of south Gujarat. Special measures were taken in Valsad and Navsari districts as the cyclone was expected to make an impact there. The administration has taken all precautions regarding COVID-19 at shelter houses where people were taken to," said Pankaj Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue), in Gandhinagar.

He pointed out that in a few districts, the purchase of wheat and gram was under way and grains had not been carried away entirely.

"In such a situation, grains must be taken to warehouses as soon as possible and arrangements must be made to cover them with tarpaulin," Mr. Tripathi said.



Clean sweep: A truck loaded with tiles overturned on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai highway at Palghar due to strong wind brought on by Cyclone Nisarga on Wednesday. ■ SANTOSH RAI

ployed to tackle the situation in south Gujarat," Mr. Kumar added. The government had deployed more than a dozen teams of NDRF and six teams of SDRF in coastal districts in South Gujarat and Saurashtra, while around a dozen extra NDRF teams were put on standby mode in neighbouring districts.

The State had also asked

all industrial units in Vapi to remain shut for a day on Wednesday and other industrial areas were directed to take all safety measures.

According to Mr. Kumar, the administration also ensured that no power cuts occur at COVID-19 hospitals in these areas during the severe cyclone.

All fishermen in these

areas were asked to return from the sea. People associated with prawn cultivation and salt pans have been shifted to safer places.

The district administration had pulled down 236 large hoardings in Surat, Valsad, and other cities in south Gujarat. As many as 125 high masts too have been pulled down as a precaution.

Power supply
disrupted in
4 districts in
MaharashtraPRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Power supply to over 25 lakh consumers of the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) in four districts of Raigad, Palghar, Thane and Pune has been hit due to Cyclone Nisarga.

MSEDCL said power supply to many substations in these districts were cut as a precautionary measure and it is working on a war footing to restore power supply by Thursday. "Due to the cyclone, electric poles at various locations were uprooted and power supply was interrupted," the MSEDCL said.

MSEDCL supplies electricity to over 2.7 crore consumers in the State, except Mumbai. "We have set up a control room to monitor the situation and take immediate action," an MSEDCL official said.

Train services largely
unaffected by cyclone

Diversions made as precaution

AJEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

Railway services remained largely unaffected due to Cyclone Nisarga as trains had either been diverted or rescheduled in anticipation of the storm's impact.

While Western Railway (WR) reported no issues, Central Railway (CR) said foreign objects hit overhead wires due to the high winds experienced, especially in the section between Panvel and Roha. "At Vidyavihar, the overhead wires were damaged due to a tree fall. The issue was rectified by 4.30 p.m. In other places, there was tripping on the overhead equipment caused due to various objects hitting the wires, such as branches or stray pieces of cloth, etc," a senior railway officer said.

CR officials said that while the ghat section was not affected too much, they would undertake an inspection before letting trains pass.

CR had postponed the departures of five train that were scheduled to leave between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. to after 8 p.m. The resched-



Some trains were rescheduled in anticipation of the storm.

uled trains included trains to Gorakhpur, Thiruvananthapuram, Darbhanga and Varanasi from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) to Bhubaneshwar. The LTT-Thiruvananthapuram train had to be again rescheduled to 8.20 p.m.

CR and Konkan Railway (KR) had also regulated and diverted certain trains given that the cyclone was going to make landfall near Alibaug. CR regulated two trains coming from Patna and Varanasi, while trains from Kerala were diverted at Madgaon and routed via Pune.

'India must gird for sharp slowdown'

Former CEA calls for complete revision of this year's budget framework

VIKAS DHOOT
MUMBAI

India should brace itself for a sharp economic slowdown and a difficult fiscal situation by the end of this financial year, former Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian said on Wednesday. He added that the government could have done much more after the 'sudden' lockdown including with helping States deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing public health infrastructure, on tracing and testing efforts, as well as providing social insurance to the worst affected such as the urban poor.

Dr. Subramanian also called for a complete revision of this year's budget framework, which itself was



Arvind Subramanian

ment law, as spending to revive growth would have to take precedence over fiscal considerations in the coming months.

"Long-term fiscal macro questions need to be carefully considered whenever this dust settles," he said at a webinar on the economic and business impact of the COVID-19 pandemic hosted by EY India. "How much should we spend now and what should be the debt reduction path... should we spend an extra 5% of GDP now... I would still say anything that we can spend on public health, cushioning the impact on the poor and those sectors worst hit by the crisis – we should spend as much as necessary," he said.

based on 'unrealistic numbers' amid an already slowing economy, as facts on the ground had changed 'so much' since it was presented. Similarly, he said there was a need to reframe the terms of reference for the Fifteenth Finance Commission and the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management

While the damage on Indian firms' balance sheets would be far more widespread now compared to the 2008 global financial crisis when infrastructure firms were most affected, the former CEA said more efforts were needed to ensure that firms don't face permanent damage from the temporary setback due to the pandemic.

On the decision to allow States to expand their deficits, Dr. Subramanian said the 'conditional' nature of this relaxation made it 'almost like an IMF rule that the Centre has imposed on States.' "No doubt States have to reform, but whether there is the time to do this is questionable," he said.

Denying it to be a badly drafted law, Mr. Sibal, in an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*, said, "In fact, my opinion is just the opposite. I have referred to the statutory provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, in terms of which the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), chaired by the Prime Minister, along with nine nominated members is to approve a National Plan to deal with a national disaster."

Several Opposition parties, including the Congress, in the past, have accused the Centre of 'taking over most administrative power and disempowering States' using the Disaster Management Act.

"The NDMA is charged (Section 2) with the responsibility of issuing guidelines prescribing minimum standards of relief to persons affected by the disaster including minimum requirements to be provided in relief camps in relation to shelter, food, drinking water, medical cover and sanitation. Special provisions are to be made for widows and orphans along with ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life and for restoration of means of livelihood. Unfortunately, the NDMA has washed its hands of these obligations... In fact, this good law has been followed more in its breach than in compliance thereof," Mr. Sibal added.

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

The National Disaster Management Act (NDMA) 2005, enacted by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, is a good law but the Narendra Modi government is not following it in its entirety, former Law Minister Kapil Sibal said on Wednesday.

Denying it to be a badly drafted law, Mr. Sibal, in an exclusive interview with *The Hindu*, said, "In fact, my opinion is just the opposite. I have referred to the statutory provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, in terms of which the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), chaired by the Prime Minister, along with nine nominated members is to approve a National Plan to deal with a national disaster."

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Kapil Sibal

there were no migrants on the road is certainly a decision that is open to criticism."

On the issue of institutions, including the Supreme Court, coming under attack from social media platforms – an issue highlighted by Supreme Court judge Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul – that can lead to erosion of faith, the former Law Minister said social media was not the only factor.

"There are many things that have happened within the court in the recent past that have contributed to this, which is why retired judges of the court have expressed their misgivings about the functioning of the court. The fact that in January 2019, four distinguished judges at a press conference expressed concerns about the functioning of the court and the threat to democracy, had nothing to do with the social media. The fact that an ex-Chief Justice presided over a Bench on a Saturday in respect of allegations concerning him, had nothing to do with the social media. It is time for the institution to introspect and not blame only those beyond court precincts," Mr. Sibal said.

Nation's name plea can be sent to Centre: SC

"Bharat and India are both in the Constitution"

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered that a plea to change India's name exclusively to 'Bharat' be converted into a representation and forwarded to the Union government for an appropriate decision.

word 'Bharat' is closely associated to our Freedom Struggle. The cry was 'Bharat Mata ki Jai'."

The court said the petition be transformed into a representation and forwarded to the Ministries, primarily the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The petition seeks an amendment to Article 1 of the Constitution, which says "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States...". It wants 'India' to be struck off

from the Article. "This will ensure citizens of this country to get over the colonial past and instil a sense of pride in our nationality. Will also justify the hard fought freedom by our freedom fighters", it said.

The court had dismissed a similar petition in 2016. Then CJI T.S. Thakur had said that every Indian had the right to choose between calling his country 'Bharat' or 'India'.

Several Opposition parties, including the Congress, in the past, have accused the Centre of 'taking over most administrative power and disempowering States' using the Disaster Management Act.

"The NDMA is charged (Section 2) with the responsibility of issuing guidelines prescribing minimum standards of relief to persons affected by the disaster including minimum requirements to be provided in relief camps in relation to shelter, food, drinking water, medical cover and sanitation. Special provisions are to be made for widows and orphans along with ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life and for restoration of means of livelihood. Unfortunately, the NDMA has washed its hands of these obligations... In fact, this good law has been followed more in its breach than in compliance thereof," Mr. Sibal added.

Workers' issue

Asked if the Supreme Court should have intervened earlier on the migrant workers' issue, he said, "The decision not to interfere earlier and to have accepted the Solicitor General's statement that

Kolkata Port renamed after
Syama PrasadSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the renaming of Kolkata Port as Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, after the founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

The decision was announced by Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar at a press briefing after the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a statement, the government said the Board of Trustees of the Kolkata Port Trust had passed a resolution to rename the port after Mookerjee at its meeting on February 25, "considering his multifaceted genius as an eminent jurist, academician, thinker and leader of the masses".

The decision was announced on January 12 at the inaugural ceremony of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the port.

The statement said that while major ports in the country were named after the city or town they are located in, some ports in special cases of "due consideration of contribution made by eminent leaders have been re-named after great national leaders in the past".

CROSSWORD 12953
(set by Gridman)

ACROSS

- Wear of walking, two ducks enter New Forest (8)
- Right thing on stage with the central hero (6)
- Setback in the matter of poetry (7)
- Class went ahead yet caused bitterness (7)
- Dim old student abandoned tablet (6)

DOWN

- Build DO seeks for a song – Really? (3,8,4)
- Do away with rolling above it (7)
- Do rush out for burial cloth (6)
- Rush animals to the North (4)
- Agree Ned becomes an outlaw (8)
- Knight makes father take boy to one nook first (7)
- Isles cooperated in building in wave detectors (5,10)
- Passes over party animals among bad set (9)
- Change a tape intended to be heard (9)
- Morsel on each book for insect (5,3)
- Names changed by group cut all together (2,5)
- Indian father gets red Spanish dress (7)
- Reportedly break part of a barrel (6)
- One shape's incomplete in picture (4)

Feeling down in lockdown?
Get across to our Crossword site.
@ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12952

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Joy that lasts long

Prabuddha is one of the nine yogisvaras who feature in Srimad Bhagavatam, said P.T. Seshadri in a discourse. King Nimi asks the yogisvaras for spiritual advice. Prabuddha says that in this world, people want to lead a comfortable life. They do not want to experience any difficulty. And so they begin to acquire wealth, so that they will not lack any comforts. But the very wealth which they seek so ardently, leads to sorrow. You have to work hard to get wealth. And this wealth eventually becomes the cause for the loss of a person's peace of mind. His possessions and his relatives are all impermanent. While these do give him joy, the joy does not last. Being mindful of the results of his actions, a man may do a lot of deeds that will earn him punyas. But punyas only enable him to go to svarga, which is not a peaceful place, as we imagine. It is a place where he will witness quarrels between the devas. So, there is no true joy in svarga either. The only lasting joy comes from knowing about the Supreme One, says Prabuddha.

He tells Nimi that a person should find an Acharya, who will guide him. He must also serve the deity of his choice. He should see God in all creatures. He should dress in simple clothes. He should not have a permanent dwelling place of his own. He should learn the Sastras and contemplate on what he has studied. He must have tolerance. He must observe a vow of silence. He must delight in hearing about God's qualities and His avatars. He must meditate on Him, and spend his whole life in serving Him. He must perform yagas; he must give to the deserving; he must resort to penance. He must do japa. He must have good conduct. He must help God's devotees, when they are in distress.

Protesters defy curfews, march across U.S.

Looting and violence subside; international criticism mounts; Pope condemns racism, street clashes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Protesters defied curfews across the United States as leaders scrambled to stem anger over police racism while President Donald Trump rejected criticism over his use of force to break up a peaceful rally.

Standoffs between police and demonstrators stretched into the night in cities from New York to Los Angeles over the death of George Floyd, an unarmed African-American man whose killing has brought once-in-a-generation protests to the nation for the past week.

But there were fewer reports of the looting and violence that had soured street demonstrations in previous nights.

Tens of thousands gathered earlier Tuesday in Houston to pay a hometown tribute to Floyd, who grew up in the Texas city and is to be buried there next week.

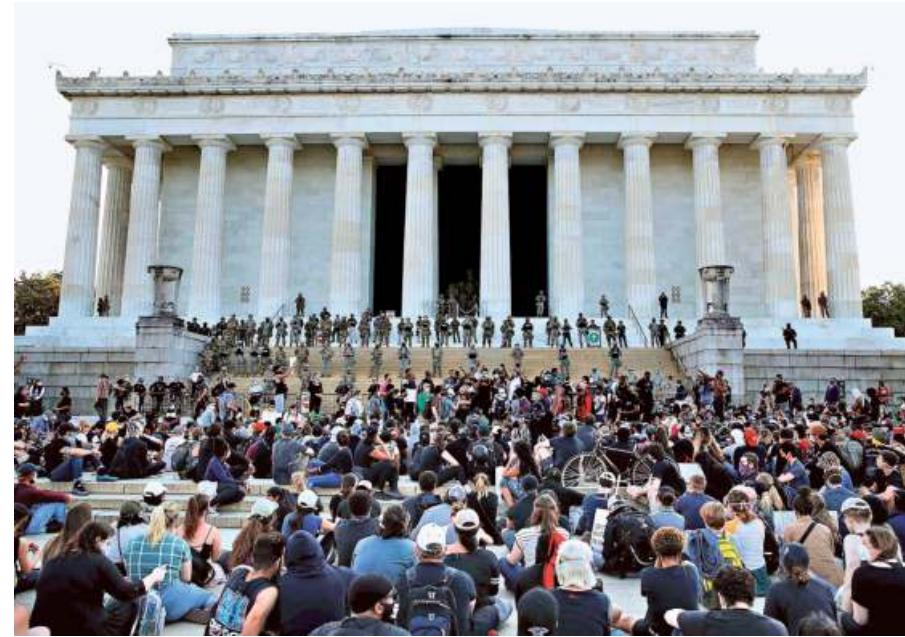
"Today is... about George Floyd's family – we want them to know that George did not die in vain," Mayor Sylvester Turner told an estimated 60,000 people.

A tearful Roxie Washington, the mother of Floyd's six-year-old daughter, told a news conference she wanted "justice for him because he was good."

"No matter what anybody thinks, he was good."

In New York, which on Tuesday prolonged its first curfew since Second World War for the full week, AFP reporters saw hundreds refusing to go home after the 8:00 p.m. cutoff, instead chanting slogans and peacefully walking the streets in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Hours after the curfew, Mayor Bill de Blasio said it was a "very calm situation," a day after many Manhattan luxury stores were looted.



Call for justice: Members of the National Guard stand on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial monitoring a large crowd of demonstrators in Washington. • AFP

"So far, the curfew is certainly helping, based on everything I've seen in Brooklyn and Manhattan over the last three hours," he tweeted.

Minnesota took one of the first concrete actions to address the grievances behind the uprising, which began after Floyd's death on May 25 in the State's largest city Minneapolis.

Civil rights investigation

The State launched a civil rights investigation of the Minneapolis Police Department, looking at possible "systemic discriminatory practices" going back 10 years, Governor Tim Walz tweeted.

Former President George W. Bush called on the U.S. to examine its "tragic failures" and to "listen to the voices of so many who are hurting and grieving."

And in Los Angeles, one of dozens of cities hit by unrest, police officers and Mayor Eric Garcetti dropped to their knees in a symbolic act of so-

lidarity as they met marchers led by African-American Christian groups.

"A black face should not be a sentenced to die, nor to be homeless, nor to be sick, nor to be underemployed, nor to be under-educated," Mr. Garcetti told them, inviting the leaders into City Hall for a discussion about the issues.

In Washington DC, thousands returned to the streets on Tuesday for a peaceful "Black Lives Matter" march.

Hours after the 7:00 p.m. curfew protesters could be heard chanting, as National Guard troops stood on the streets near the White House and helicopters hovered above. Broadcast footage showed police firing tear gas shortly after midnight, but the situation appeared to be calm overall.

"I'm just tired, essentially, of being scared of police, of not getting justice," said Jada Wallace, an 18-year-old protester.

In the same place on Mon-

day, federal police had abruptly opened tear gas and fired rubber bullets to break up a non-violent protest, clearing a path for Mr. Trump to stroll outside for a photo-op at a historic church damaged the previous night.

The move was loudly condemned by religious leaders, the President's political rivals, and onlookers around the country.

People liked my walk'

But Mr. Trump, who has rejected the traditional presidential role of healer, voiced glee on Twitter over the response in Washington and accused the leadership of New York – led by the rival Democratic Party – of succumbing to "Lowlife & Scum."

"Overwhelming force. Domination," he wrote, adding: "Washington, D.C., was the safest place on earth last night!"

He pushed back against the criticism later on Twitter, writing: "You got it wrong! If

True face of U.S. revealed, says Khamenei

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TEHRAN

The police killing of George Floyd shows the "true face" of the U.S., Iran's supreme leader said on Wednesday. "The fact that a policeman has cold-bloodedly pressed his knee on the throat of a black man until he died and that other policemen watched on without doing anything is nothing new," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said. "It is the true face of America, it's what it has always done all over the world," he said.

the protesters were so peaceful, why did they light the Church on fire the night before? People liked my walk."

Joe Biden, Mr. Trump's presumptive Democratic rival in November elections, denounced the crackdown as an abuse of power and promised, if elected, to tackle the "systemic racism" in the country.

"Donald Trump has turned this country into a battlefield driven by old resentments and fresh fears," Mr. Biden said in a speech in Philadelphia.

In his first comments on the unrest, Pope Francis said "we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism" but also condemned the violence.

The U.S. also faced unusual, if polite, criticism from some international allies, including Germany, Britain and Australia.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called the anti-racism protests "understandable and more than legitimate."



Boris Johnson

"Many people in Hong Kong fear their way of life – which China pledged to uphold – is under threat," he wrote in an article for *The Times* newspaper and the South China Morning Post.

"If China imposes its national security law, the British government will change our immigration rules and allow any holder of these passports from Hong Kong to come to the U.K. for a renewable period of 12 months and be given further immigration rights, including the right to work, which could place them on a route to citizenship," he wrote.

The new law was brought in after a wave of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong, and approved by China's Parliament as necessary to tackle "terrorism" and "separatism".

Opponents fear it will lead to political oppression in the financial hub, eroding

freedoms and autonomy supposedly guaranteed in the 1997 handover from Britain to China.

Mr. Johnson said the Hong Kong law would "curtail its freedoms and dramatically erode its autonomy". If implemented, "Britain would then have no choice but to uphold our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong", he wrote.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has further angered Beijing by suggesting that it had time to "re-consider" the plan.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Beijing had lodged "serious representations" with London. "We advise the U.K. to step back from the brink, abandon their Cold War mentality and colonial mindset, and recognise and respect the fact that Hong Kong has returned" to China, Mr. Zhao said.

Mr. Zhao said London must "stop interfering in Hong Kong's affairs and China's internal affairs, or this will definitely backfire."

British PM offers visas for millions in Hong Kong

U.K. to change immigration laws if China passes security law

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Tuesday he would offer millions of Hong Kong residents visas and a possible route to U.K. citizenship if China persists with its national security law.

"Many people in Hong Kong fear their way of life – which China pledged to uphold – is under threat," he wrote in an article for *The Times* newspaper and the South China Morning Post.

"If China proceeds to justify their fears, then Britain could not in good conscience shrug our shoulders and walk away; instead we will honour our obligations and provide an alternative."

'Route to citizenship'

About 35,000 people in Hong Kong currently hold British National (Overseas) passports, which allow visa-free access to Britain for up to six months, Mr. Johnson wrote.

Another 2.5 million people would be eligible to apply for one.

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The U.S. also faced unusual, if polite, criticism from some international allies, including Germany, Britain and Australia.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas called the anti-racism protests "understandable and more than legitimate."

The government of Philipine President Rodrigo Duterte announced on Tuesday it had suspended plans to cancel the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), a deal that

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us to simply suspend any implementation of the termination," Philippine Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Manuel Romualdez told ANC news channel.

Since taking power in 2016, Mr. Duterte has moved closer to Beijing, but has faced push back from the Philippine public and concern in the military wary of its territorial ambitions in the disputed South China Sea.

Philippines' U-turn on U.S. pact

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MANILA

Security issues in the disputed South China Sea helped convince the Philippines to delay quitting a key U.S. military pact, the nation's envoy to Washington said on Wednesday.

The U.S. also faced unusual, if polite, criticism from some international allies, including Germany, Britain and Australia.

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Military-led unit to curb drug menace

Panel's mandate is to prevent entry of contraband to Sri Lanka from abroad

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has appointed a military-led task force to build "a secure country, disciplined, virtuous and lawful society".

The Presidential Task Force will be headed by Secretary to the Ministry of Defense Retired Major General Kamal Gunaratne, and include heads of the armed forces and chiefs of national and state intelligence agencies.

Curbing drug trafficking

A Gazette notification issued by the President on Tuesday, and signed by his secretary P.B. Jayasundara, said the panel was appointed "considering that it is essential to liberate the entire society" from the drug menace spreading "all over the society".

The task force has been entrusted with taking immediate steps to "curb the illegal activities of social groups which are violating the law", prevent entry of drugs from abroad through ports and airports, to "fully eradicate" drug trafficking in the country.

The task force will primarily focus on curbing the narcotics menace, according to

Mr. Jayasundara. "The drug menace is rampant, and the networks run internationally. The President felt it was time we took some targeted measures to urgently address this issue," he told *The Hindu*.

Sri Lankan authorities believe that the island nation, located amidst a busy sea route, could be used as a hub for narcotics distribution in the region, even as it causes social problems locally.

Different routes

Early March, the Sri Lankan Navy apprehended two foreign trawlers carrying over \$33 million worth of heroin and crystal methamphetamine, in one of the biggest hauls of drugs at sea. They found about 400 kgs of heroin and 100 kg of the drug "ice" on board the two vessels, AFP reported.

More recently, the Navy

seized \$65 million-worth of crystal methamphetamine and ketamine.

The drugs, according to officials, are transported from different countries, including India.

Last week, Ramanathapuram police intercepted a huge consignment of drugs procured from several Indian States, and were moved close to the shoreline in Ramanathapuram district, for smuggling to Sri Lanka by boat. The seized drugs were samples for "quality testing in Sri Lanka," Ramanathapuram Superintendent of Police Varun Kumar had told *The Hindu* then. The haul, estimated at ₹10 crore (roughly \$1.3 million) in the international market, included different quantities of methamphetamine, opium paste, heroin, MDMA (Ecstasy), amphetamine and methamphetamine.

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Biden closes in on race with wins in 7 more States

Next contest in West Virginia, Georgia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Joe Biden is on the cusp of formally securing the Democratic presidential nomination after winning hundreds more delegates in primary contests on Tuesday that tested the nation's ability to run elections while balancing a pandemic and sweeping social unrest.

Mr. Biden could lock down the nomination within the next week as West Virginia and Georgia hold primaries.

Mr. Biden and President Donald Trump easily swept their respective primary contests that ranged from Maryland to Montana.

Mr. Biden won Tuesday's primaries in Indiana, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and South Dakota. Two

other States holding primary elections on Tuesday, Idaho and Iowa, chose their nominees early in the year.

Pennsylvania, which offered Tuesday's largest trove of delegates, also represented a significant test case for Republicans and Democrats working to strengthen their respective positions.

Steve King ousted in Iowa primary

REUTERS

IOWA

U.S. Congressman Steve King, who was called out by his colleagues last year for using hateful rhetoric, lost his bid for reelection on Tuesday as a Republican ran defeated him for their party's nomination in an Iowa primary election.

Randy Fenster, a state Senator backed by several major Republican organizations, was projected by several news organizations as the winner in Iowa's 4th congressional district, increasing the odds that Republicans will keep the seat in November.

Voters in the district had returned Mr. King to Congress before despite his incendiary comments, often directed against immigrants.

CM

Zuckerberg backs FB's Trump policy

Facebook's failure to remove or flag Trump's 'offensive' posts sparks staff outrage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SAN FRANCISCO

Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg has defended his decision not to interfere with posts by U.S. President Donald Trump, U.S. media reported, after the social media giant's hands-off policy sparked outrage and prompted some employees to quit.

The government of Nepal entered into an agreement to target "criminals" and anti-China activists during President Xi Jinping's Kathmandu visit in October 2019. The

official said Kathmandu expects at least 200,000 Nepalese nationals employed in India will return home in the coming few days.

The official said Kathmandu expects at least 2

IN BRIEF

**Hamilton 'overcome with rage' over racial injustice**

LONDON Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton said he is "completely overcome with rage" about racial injustice in the wake of the death of George Floyd. "I have felt so much anger, sadness and disbelief in what my eyes have seen.... I am completely overcome with rage at the sight of such blatant disregard for the lives of our people," said Hamilton. AFP



BCA axes Bedade as women's team coach
VADODARA The Baroda Cricket Association (BCA) has sacked former India player Atul Bedade from the post of women's team coach while withdrawing his suspension on allegations of sexual harassment levelled by some players, it was confirmed by BCA secretary Ajit Lele on Wednesday. PTI

NZC deputy CEO Crummy resigns
CHRISTCHURCH New Zealand Cricket's deputy CEO Anthony Crummy has stepped down from his post even as the board slashed 15% of its staff as a part of its austerity measures to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, chief executive David White had said it is looking to shed around 10 to 15% and save NZ\$6 million in operation costs as it copes with the "challenges" posed by the health crisis. PTI



Vikram nominated for player-of-the-year award
CHENNAI Vikram Malhotra has been nominated for the PSA Squash Challenger Tour men's player of the year award. The 30-year-old, ranked 47th in the world, clinched three titles last season – the HCL SRFI Indian Tour Delhi leg, Florida Open and Oregon Open – and was a runner-up in the Nash Cup.

MotoGP to release new calendar next week
PARIS MotoGP is expected to announce a reworked schedule next week for a season it hopes to start in July, championship organisers said on Wednesday. "We hope to present our calendar next week," said Dorna chief executive Carmelo Ezpeleta in a video on the MotoGP website. "And it will start, if everything goes well, on the 19th of July in Jerez. AFP

In death, a rhino may have saved many lives

The grenade and Kalashnikovs recovered in Assam from 3 hunters point to larger extremist network

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

The grenade is not a rhino hunter's preferred weapon. But one such explosive seized along with Kalashnikov assault rifles from a group that killed a one-horned rhino in Kaziranga National Park (KNP) on May 5 made wildlife officials realise this – they were up against "more than just poachers".

What hit them harder was that the rhino, the first to be killed in 13 months, may have ended up saving a team of police and forest protection force personnel who tracked the killers for three months.

"Assam has had a history of poaching, but there are no records of grenades having been seized from them. The Chinese grenade found with

'Bio-safe zones can help revival'

Kumble urges government, corporates and National federations to work together

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Former India captain and head of the ICC cricket committee, Anil Kumble, suggested the creation of bio-safe zones to help cricketers get back to training and strike rhythm.

"If we can have bio-safe zones where 30 players can train and play some matches, it will be good," Kumble said, during a panel discussion organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

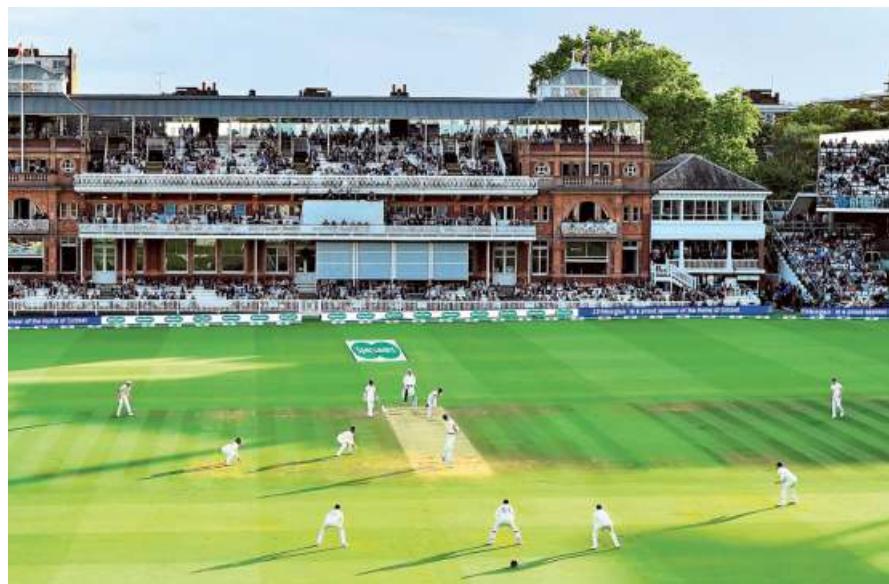
"It is not easy for bowlers to bowl 30 or 40 overs in a match, or even for batsmen, after not having played any cricket for so long."

"You need to build it up with a few friendly games before Test matches," Kumble said, against the backdrop of Test series being announced by England against the West Indies, and cricket being revived in Australia and Sri Lanka.

Work with surfaces

Kumble stated that to make Test cricket lively, the surface could be "played around a bit" by leaving grass on the pitch or roughing it up to help spinners.

A substitute for saliva was discussed by the ICC, but it eventually agreed not to take this route, the legend



Novel idea: Kumble feels a few friendly games, where 30 players can train and then play, should be held before the Test matches. ■ FILE PHOTO

clarified.

"The ICC has been clear about what not to use on the ball all these years," he said, emphasising on the need to retain the sanctity of the good practice over the years.

After months of lockdown, Kumble said everyone was keen to "start the game, and not worry about saliva or sweat", even as different countries and zones faced different challenges.

Kumble sounded practical in his suggestion that the government, corporates and the national federations had

to get together to revive sports as "the virus is not going away, and we have to live with it".

IOA assurance

The president of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), Narinder Batra, assured that athletes preparing for the Olympics were being taken care of in the best possible way, within the constraints posed by the situation.

Batra said that shooting training could be in Delhi, badminton in Hyderabad, hockey in Bengaluru, and athletics in Patiala. He was also confident that the National championships in various disciplines could start from October, if everything went according to plan.



Anil Kumble.
■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Three say no to England tour as West Indies names squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)

Three West Indies players – Darren Bravo, Shimron Hetmyer and Keemo Paul – on Wednesday refused to tour England for next month's proposed three-Test series starting on July 8, which will be conducted in a bio-secure environment to combat the COVID-19 threat.

Cricket West Indies (CWI) announced a 14-man squad for the series, which is expected to mark the resumption of international cricket if it gets the final approval from the UK government.

"Bravo, Hetmyer and Paul all declined the invitation to travel to England for the tour and CWI fully respects their decision to

choose to do so," Cricket West Indies said in a statement.

The squad:

Jason Holder (Capt.), Kraigg Brathwaite, Shai Hope, Shane Dowrich, Roston Chase, Shemar Brooks, Rahkeem Cornwall, Nkrumah Bonner, Alzarri Joseph, Chemar Holder, John Campbell, Raymon Reifer, Kemar Roach, and Jermaine Blackwood.

I can compete any time: Atanu

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

Atanu Das.

A monotonous life during the lockdown may have denied sportspersons the chance of competing in events, but World archery championships silver medalist Atanu Das is looking at the brighter side of a restricted lifestyle.

Atanu, who last was in action in an event where he secured three bronze medals in the Asian championships in Bangkok in November 2019, has never sat without a competition for such a long period.

Mental fortitude
Nevertheless, he relies on his mental fortitude. "It's a mental state. I am ready, I can compete any time. First, everything should become normal," Atanu told *The Hindu*.

On why Indian archers were often said to be lacking mental toughness in bigger events, he said: "Mental toughness gets built by taking part in competitions."

Indians participate in very less competitions in comparison to top foreign archers. We don't even know about many events are happening around the world. The more you play, the tougher you become."

The good thing about the lockdown is that Sports Authority of India (SAI) and

A few lessons

The 28-year-old, who along with Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav, claimed Olympic quota places by bagging a team silver in the Benji Worlds last year – has learnt a few lessons during the lockdown.

"Lockdown has taught us discipline, practices like social distancing and being patient for your turn. It has taught us to value whatever we have. It is teaching us how to be happy with whatever we have," he said.

He acknowledged that training with an international archer like Deepika has helped.

Archery Association of India (AAI) are keeping in touch, caring about our needs and tracking our progress. Hope things will improve in future."

Arpinder, Manjit, Dutee and Chitra for Arjuna

Wolves are hungry to make the cut for CL

Doherty says the games would be competitive as ever, in spite of restrictions

SHYAM VASUDEVAN
CHENNAI

Matt Doherty joined Wolverhampton Wanderers as an 18-year-old with big dreams in his eyes. One dream was to play in the Premier League and the second was to play Champions League football.

Having achieved the first, by enjoying a career spanning a decade and counting with Wolves, Doherty is now closer than ever to realising his second dream too.

Wolves are currently sixth in the Premier League table, trailing fourth-placed Chelsea by five points. With the English top division set to resume in a fortnight, the



Matt Doherty.

resume living my dream, which is playing games and I can't wait to get back.

"We were doing really well before the break and I just can't wait to resume and see where we finish," Doherty told *Sportstar* in an interaction organised by Star Sports which will beam the matches live from June 17.

The 28-year-old Irishman says although social distancing norms are in place, it isn't applicable during competitive football. "Once the whistle goes, everything will be the same except for no fans in the stadium. We will still be tackling and be beside each other. It is impossible to

be social distancing while playing football."

Wolves' last game was a closed-door affair (against Olympiacos in the Europa League) and Doherty felt it would take a while for footballers to get used to playing in quiet stadiums.

Wolves' last win in the Premier League was a 3-2 victory over Tottenham, a game in which Doherty made his 250th appearance for the club and also scored.

"To win all nine matches will be difficult but we came off the back of a win over Tottenham and I don't see why we can't go and achieve something really special."

Dubov forces a decider

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Facing a must-win situation, Daniil Dubov struck early and drew thrice in succession to beat Hikaru Nakamura 2.5-1.5 in the second mini-match of the \$150,000 Lindores Abbey Rapid Challenge final on Tuesday.

The top-prize of the \$45,000 will be decided when the players clash in the third mini-match.

Final results (second mini-match): Daniil Dubov (Rus) bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 2.5-1.5.

In death, a rhino may have saved many lives

The grenade and Kalashnikovs recovered in Assam from 3 hunters point to larger extremist network

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

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What hit them harder was that the rhino, the first to be killed in 13 months, may have ended up saving a team of police and forest protection force personnel who tracked the killers for three months.

"Assam has had a history of poaching, but there are no records of grenades having been seized from them. The Chinese grenade found with



In the net: The three poachers and the team that caught them in Assam. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Apart from a hand grenade, an AK-81, two AK-56 rifles, a double-barrel gun and 400 rounds of assorted ammunition were seized from them.

Following the leads provided by the intelligence agencies, the police tracked Mangboi Paite, another member of the group.

Lines blurred

According to Diphu-based Inspector-General of Police Satyajit Hazarika, who coordinated the operation with KNP Director P. Sivakumar, the kind of ammunition the hunters carried blurred the line between poachers and extremists.

Karbi Anglong, adjoining the southern edge of the 898 sq. km. KNP, which has about 2,400 rhinos. The jungles on the hills of Karbi Anglong

each group has been producing factions that veer towards illegal trade in wildlife body parts, specifically rhino horns, although it was left to "outsourced" locals to do the hunting.

The groups include Karbi Land Protection Force, People's Democratic Council of Karbi-Lonji, Karbi People's Liberation Tiger, United People's Liberation Force and United People's Democratic Solidarity.

"The latest catch indicates that extremist groups with more firepower are getting directly involved in rhino poaching."

"This group had planned five operations and tried to dominate the areas bordering KNP. We lost a rhino but the rhino saved the lives of many of us," Mr. Sivakumar said.

Data of over one lakh Indians posted for sale on dark web

GAUTAM S. MENGLE
MUMBAI

A fresh instance of Indians' data being leaked on the dark net has come to light, with a massive data packet – nearly 100 gigabytes in size – being put up for sale in the dark web market.

The data comprises scanned identity documents of over 1 lakh Indians, including passports, PAN cards, Aadhaar cards, voter IDs and driver's licenses.

The data was found by Cyble, a global cyber intelligence agency founded by cyber expert Beenu Arora, which has also found several other such instances in the recent past, including a massive packet of data of Indian job seekers from across the country.

Cyble researchers, in a post on their official blog on

Tuesday night, said that they came across a relatively non-reputable threat actor offering over 1 lakh identity documents for sale.

"With such a low reputation, ideally, we would have skipped this. However, the samples shared by the actor intrigued our interest, as also the volume."

"The actor claimed to have access to over 1 lakh IDs from different places in India, with the total size being over 100 GB," Cyble's post said.

Identity papers
Mr. Arora said that the entire data has subsequently been acquired by Cyble for approximately \$4,800 in bitcoins.

Samples of the data indicate that the documents are scanned copies of a wide va-

riety of government-issued identity documents that *prima facie* seem to be legitimate.

New player
"The actor appears to be a new player in the market and appears to be trying to establish itself by offering these significant leaks."

"We have verified their claim and it is naturally concerning. We are now investigating the source of this leak," Mr. Arora said.

Cyble researchers have till now not found any indications of this data having leaked from a government system, and believe that it came from a third party.

Central and State cyber crime agencies have also taken note of the incident and have initiated their own inquiries.