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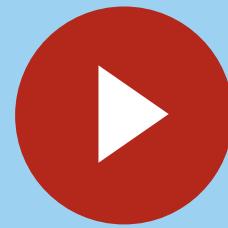
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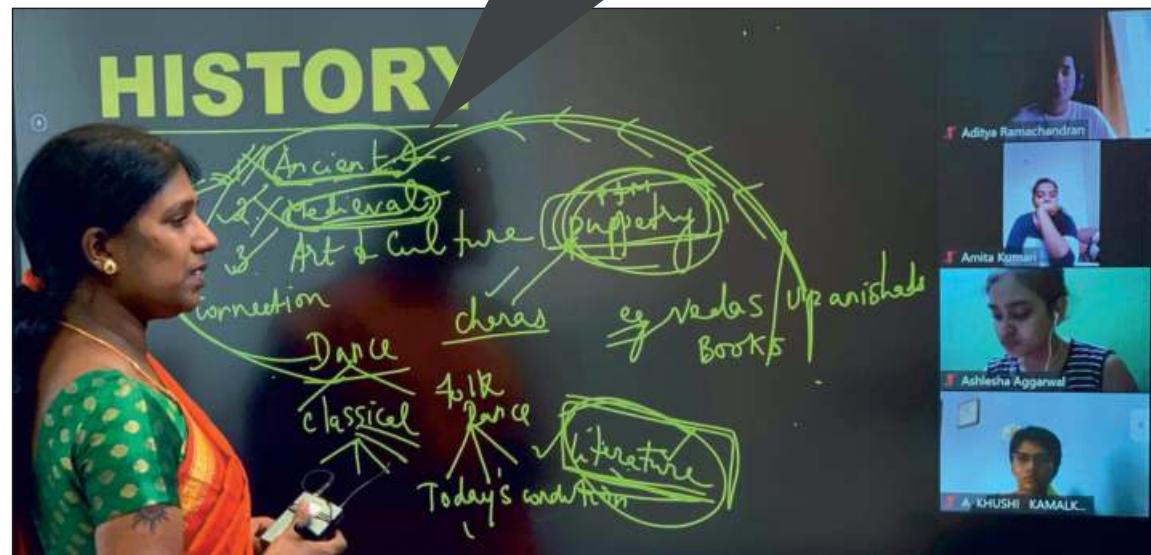
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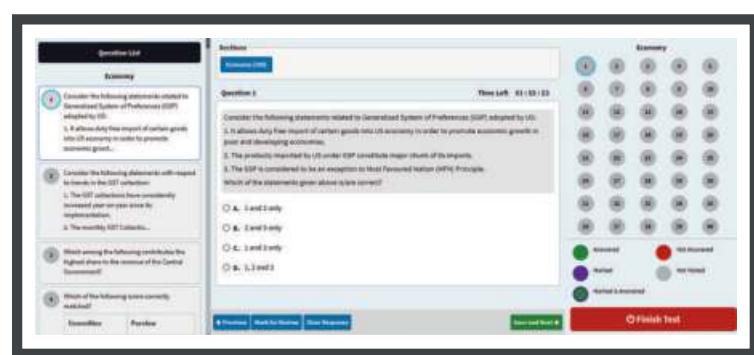


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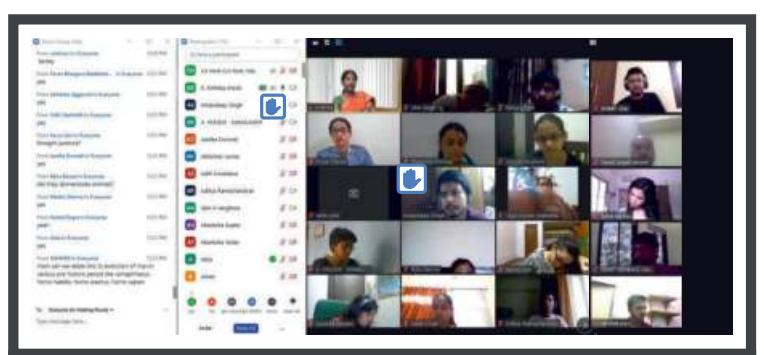


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One dead in fire  
accident at pharma  
company in Vizag  
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U.K. bans purchase  
of 5G equipment from  
Huawei from January  
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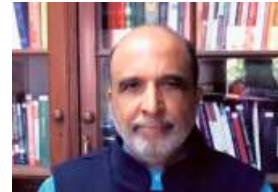


Sales of passenger  
vehicles nosedive in  
first quarter  
page 13

Hagia Sophia will  
open outside prayer  
time, says Turkey  
page 12

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## NEARBY



Cong. suspends Jha for  
'breach of discipline'

MUMBAI  
The Maharashtra Congress on Tuesday suspended former spokesperson Sanjay Jha from the party "with immediate effect for anti-party activities and breach of discipline". State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat signed the suspension order of Mr. Jha, who was removed from the party's media panel last week.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

## Hospitals with exorbitant fee to face action

JALNA  
Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope has said strict action would be taken against private hospitals charging exorbitant fees from COVID-19 patients and for other treatments. Mr. Tope was talking to reporters after a meeting with private doctors in the State's Jalna district on Monday. Asked about complaints that some private hospitals in Jalna were taking advance and hefty sums from COVID-19 patients, the minister said, "We will not tolerate it." The State has included COVID-19 treatment under its flagship health scheme. PTI

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 11

## Cong. crisis deepens after CLP sacks Pilot from Cabinet, PCC

He was accused of colluding with BJP to topple the govt.; Gehlot meets Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The political crisis in Rajasthan took a dramatic turn on Tuesday with the Congress sacking rebel leader Sachin Pilot both as the Deputy Chief Minister as well as Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president.

The party also accused him of colluding with the Opposition BJP in its conspiracy to topple the State government. Two Ministers in the rebel camp were also dropped from the State Cabinet.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala, who was camping in Jaipur as a central observer, announced the decision after a meeting of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) passed a resolution to remove Mr. Pilot and others from their positions. Mr. Pilot and the MLAs supporting him did not attend the CLP.

**2 Ministers removed**  
The Cabinet members removed were Tourism Minister Vishvendra Singh and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Ramesh Meena.

Mr. Surjewala announced the appointment of Minister of State for Education Go-



Show of confidence: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot outside Raj Bhavan in Jaipur on Tuesday. ▶ ROHIT JAIN PARAS

vind Singh Dotsara as the new PCC president, replacing Mr. Pilot.

### Swayed by BJP plot

Mr. Surjewala said the Congress had taken the decision with a "heavy heart", as its edifice was built around its policies and principles, which were far more important than the individuals. "Mr. Pilot and some of his associates were swayed by the BJP's plot and had joined it to topple the government, which was unacceptable," he said.

The 42-year-old Mr. Pilot, credited with leading the

party's successful campaign in the 2018 Assembly election, has been miffed over a notice issued to him by the Special Operations Group of the Rajasthan police for recording his statement in a case filed in connection with the alleged attempts to topple the government.

Soon after the CLP meeting got over, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot drove to Raj Bhavan to inform Governor Kalraj Mishra of the decision and make a formal request to drop the Ministers from the Cabinet.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Pilot likely to spell out plans today

Rebel Congress leader Sachin Pilot is expected to spell out his future plans on Wednesday, a source close to him told *The Hindu*. Apart from a cryptic tweet thanking his supporters and a change in his Twitter bio, calling himself as MLA from Tonk and a former Union Minister, Mr. Pilot didn't drop any hints. ▶ PAGE 9

## Raje silent; BJP watching situation

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister and BJP leader Vasundhara Raje has been silent on the goings-on in the State. Sources in the BJP say Ms. Raje's silence and her considerable hold on MLAs is one of the reasons why the party has been proceeding rather gingerly with regard to "toppling the Gehlot government". ▶ PAGE 9

## Centre limits duration of online school sessions

Pragya guidelines factor in unequal access to technology

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Schools can hold live online classes for a maximum of 1.5 hours per day for Classes 1-8, and three hours per day for Classes 9-12, according to the Pragya guidelines for digital education, released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on Tuesday.

For kindergarten, nursery and preschool, the guidelines don't recommend any screen time for children; they only recommend that teachers spend a maximum of 30 minutes per day to interact with parents and guide them.

These guidelines, prepared by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), are only advisory in nature, and State governments have been asked to build on them and formulate their own rules, based on local needs.

Over 25 crore students have been out of school since mid-March. The Pragya guidelines acknowledge that these students live in households which fall into different categories: those having computers or smartphones with 4G, those with smartphones but limited or

### Restricting screen time

The following guidelines were prescribed by the MHRD for school heads and teachers for implementing digital education

- For pre-primary students, not more than 30 minutes a day to be spent by teachers in interacting with parents
- For classes 1 to 8, not more than two sessions of online classes of 30-45 minutes each can be held
- For classes 9 to 12, not more than four sessions of online classes of 30-45 minutes each can be held
- Teachers are recommended to adopt the academic calendar of NCERT at <http://ncert.nic.in/ac.ac.html>
- Instant messaging groups/ emails involving parents to be used for sharing important information and resources
- Teachers are instructed to make students aware of cyber bullying

Breaks of  
**10-15**  
minutes between  
two consecutive  
classes are  
recommended

sume that teaching-learning through synchronous communication is the only requirement or even desirable in order to support effective digital learning." Synchronous or real-time communication could be the Zoom classes that many private schools have begun, or other video or audio conferencing, allowing instant feedback.

"Children exposed to digital technologies or gadgets for a longer time are prone to severe health issues," the guidelines said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Awaiting tourists



Just another day in paradise: A CRPF jawan stands guard on the banks of the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Tuesday. Authorities have decided to open Jammu and Kashmir to tourists in a phased manner subject to certain guidelines. ▶ NISSAR AHMAD

## India, China hold fourth round of consultations

Focus on phase II of disengagement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India and China held the fourth round of Corps Commanders talks at Chushul on Tuesday to work out details on the second phase of disengagement on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The talks were still on at the time of going to print. This round of talks come about a month after the violent clash at Galwan on June 15, which left 20 Indian soldiers dead.

The talks began around 11 a.m. on Tuesday, a defence source said, adding they would cover the entire eastern Ladakh. The focus of the talks is to work out details of further disengagement from the standoff areas and withdraw the massive deployment by China of troops, tanks, artillery and air de-

fences along the LAC, including at the strategically important Depsang Plains.

Like in the previous rounds, the Indian delegation was led by Lt. Gen. H. Arinder Singh, commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps and the Chinese side by Major General Liu Lin, commander of the South Xinjiang military region. The earlier talks were held on June 6, 22 and 30. While the first two rounds were held on the Chinese side at Moldo, the third round was held on the Indian side at Chushul.

During the talks, India has consistently maintained restoration of status quo ante of April and complete withdrawal of deployment by China along the LAC.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Rangers guide three tigers out of Kaziranga

The big cats get disoriented by flood waters and human structures along their paths



Search for sanctuary: A tiger trying to reach higher ground in the flooded Kaziranga National Park. ▶ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Animals use nine major and several minor corridors between the KNP and the hills of Karbi Anglong to escape floods during the monsoon and return when the waters subside.

About 95% of the park has been flooded this year, with 173 of the 223 anti-poaching camps inundated.

structures have come up over the years on the corridors that are beyond the KNP but within the eco-sensitive zone that is yet to be specified. Among the newest such structures is a resort being built on the Kanchanjuri animal corridor allegedly by an MLA of the ruling alliance in Assam.

On Monday, an operation to guide a sub-adult male tiger to safety took 11 hours. It came out of the park and took shelter in a goatshed at Kandolimari village. "The tiger was disturbed by human activities. We waited patiently to let it rest and regain its strength while making the villagers understand they need to give the striped cat some space," said Sanshul Ali, a rehabilitation veterinarian.

## State reports 6,741 new cases, 213 deaths

Lockdown may be arresting cases in MMR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra reported 6,741 more COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, pushing the total to 2,67,665, even as fresh cases in Mumbai city, that accounts for over a third of total infections, moderated to 954 – only the second time this month that it has reported less than 1,000 cases in a day.

With 213 more deaths reported on Tuesday, the toll rose to 10,695, rendering a case fatality rate of 4%. Of these, 145 deaths were from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), with 70 from Mumbai, taking the city's pandemic toll to 5,405.

Within the MMR, which reported 2,893 new cases, Kalyan-Dombivli Municipal Corporation (KDMC) re-

corded the second highest after Mumbai city, overtaking Thane Municipal Corporation (TMC). KDMC reported 405 cases to take its tally to 15,510, while the TMC's tally, with 304 new cases, rose to 15,414.

Mumbai recorded 954 cases, taking its tally to 95,100 with cases in the MMR rising to 1,79,760. The last time Mumbai reported less than 1,000 cases this month was 785 on July 7. While the MMR, large parts of which are currently under lockdown, showed some moderation in fresh cases, the Pune, Nashik and Nagpur divisions reported a significant surge.

With 4,500 patients discharged, the total number of recoveries is 1,49,007, a recovery rate of 55.67%.

# A throwback to the Golden '60s

**Czechmate - In Search of Jiří Menzel**, a seven-hour documentary on the Czech New Wave, has been released by Second Run on Blu-Ray

KENNETH ROSARIO

In 1960s Czechoslovakia, after more than a decade of the nationalisation of the film industry, emerged a breed of filmmakers who resisted against the political establishment in their movies, while ironically being funded by the State. This Czechoslovakian New Wave, a movement of creative rebellion in cinema, permeated the country's cinema till the fall of Communism in November 1989.

The Golden '60s, as it was called, saw the emergence of some critical filmmakers like Jiří Menzel, Miloš Forman, Ivan Passer, Jaromír Jireš, Pavel Juráček, Ewald Schorm, Jan Němec and Věra Chytilová, whose works were not just popular among the masses but also formed the cornerstone of the movement in film history.

In 2010, filmmaker Shivendra Singh Dungarpur met Menzel at a café in Prague, to fulfil his desire to interview the filmmaker after watching his debut film, *Closely Watched Trains* (1966), an integral product of the New Wave. The purpose was simply to understand Menzel's works, which fascinated Dungarpur as a film student. But the encounter gave birth to *Czechmate - In Search of Jiří Menzel*, a documentary chronicling the evolution of the New Wave movement and Menzel's pivotal contribution to it. "I had no idea that the meet-

ing would result in a film and certainly not [one] that would take eight years to make, be seven hours long and be about so much more than Menzel," recalls Dungarpur.

#### Censorship and cinema

Dungarpur's documentary explores the artistry of the Czech New Wave as well as delves into the socio-political background, covering a period of over four decades. "As I heard the stories of avant-garde film-

makers who had to work in factories, or as sweepers, whose films were banned for years or who had no choice but to make films on dam-building and housing, some who even died from depression, having to deal with the heavy hand of the censors and an oppressive regime, but yet managed to make remarkable films... it really made me think," he reminisces.

#### What intrigued Dungarpur

was the parallels between India and Czechoslovakia, in terms of censorship and using cinema for political resistance. "In India, in the fight against censorship, it's every filmmaker for himself. I don't see the industry

standing together against the government," he observes. "I also found parallels between the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and the Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU), both state-funded film schools that gave birth to the New Wave movements in their countries – the only difference being that the Czechoslovakian filmmakers took on the regime through their films."

#### Beyond Menzel

As Dungarpur investigated the movement further, he decided to broaden his ambition and establish connections with other New Wave movements around the

world. "I had no idea that the meeting would result in a film and certainly not [one] that would take eight years to make, be seven hours long and be about so much more than Jiří Menzel

SHIVENDRA SINGH DUNGARPUR  
Filmmaker

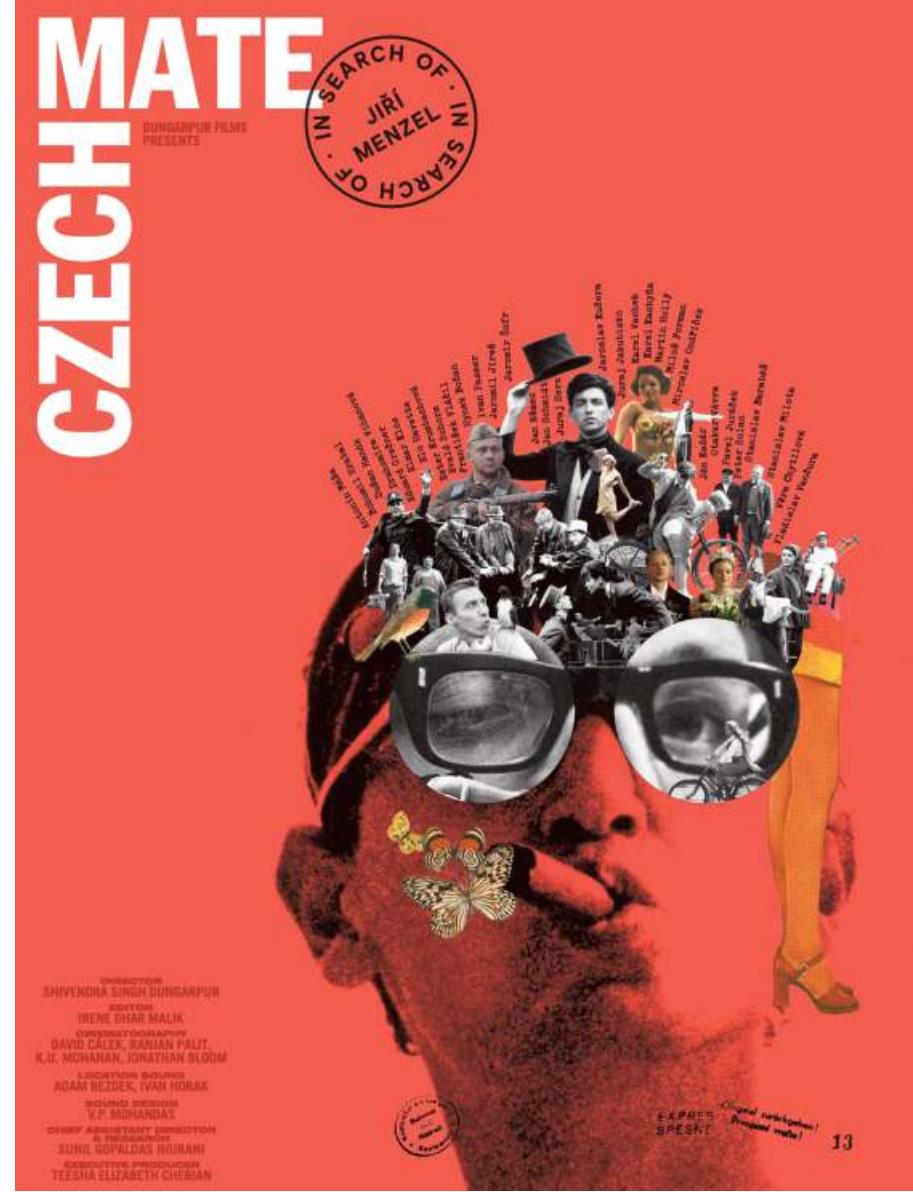
world. The 85 film personalities he interviewed, included filmmakers like Andrzej Wajda in Warsaw, Raoul Coutard in Bayonne, István Szabó in Budapest, Ken Loach in London and Emir Kusturica in a village in Bosnia. "The documentary discovers a generation of filmmakers who fell off the map," says Dungarpur.

In the process, lasting almost a decade, Dungarpur formed a friendship with Menzel. "Being a part of his life, I saw him become a father at the age of 77 and was privileged to be at his side travelling on the train to Loděnice station to celebrate 50 years of *Closely Watched Trains*," he shares.

While he managed to feature most names on his wishlist, legendary Czech filmmaker Otakar Vávra, who had turned 100 in 2011, passed away before he could be interviewed for the documentary. "The other person I really tried my best to get an interview with, and failed, was [author] Milan Kundera," informs Dungarpur. "He taught these filmmakers at FAMU and had a huge influence on them."

#### A long watch

With a surfeit of material collected over years of interviews, archival footage



**Delving deeper:** The poster of *Czechmate*, a documentary that explores the artistry of the Czech New Wave; (left) Jiří Menzel with Shivendra Singh Dungarpur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and film clips, editing the documentary proved to be challenging, especially as the film was primarily in Czech. With the first cut of 15 hours, *Czechmate* took nearly three years to be brought down to its final runtime of 446 minutes.

"I was very clear I did not want a linear structure and if you see the film, you will see how everything is interlinked and it was interesting to go back and forth

between different periods," he points out.

The documentary is the longest Indian feature film to be cleared by the Central Board of Film Certification. The length of the film made it difficult for the makers to find distribution and even slots at screenings and festival programming. "The film was screened at II Cinema Ritrovato Festival in Bologna, Mumbai Film Festival and the Kolkata Film



Festival and had screenings at UCLA, in London, Prague and Bratislava, but festivals have found blocking a seven-hour slot for the film a challenge." The film has now been released by Second Run on Blu-Ray. "The special features on *CzechMate* include two of Menzel's rare early short films and a 24-page booklet with extracts of my shooting diaries from 2010 to 2016," he informs.

## Your guide to buying a pre-owned two-wheeler

With many wishing to avoid using public transport, the demand for two-wheelers has risen dramatically



#### VISHAL VENUGOPAL

Over the last few months, two-wheeler sales took a massive hit due to obvious reasons and the lockdown period saw numbers sink to an all-time low. However, the figures from June, though nowhere near as high as those from a year ago, come as a silver lining.

As people slowly start getting back to their normal lives, the need for an affordable, personal mode of transportation has increased; especially when public transport is something many

will be trying to avoid.

Considering that we live in the largest two-wheeler market in the world, there are a lot of used two-wheelers out there that one can choose from. We have listed out some steps you can follow to ensure a hassle-free purchase.

#### Be prepared

As self-explanatory as this might be, it is best that you know exactly what you are looking for and what your budget is. Once you have narrowed down your options, do your homework by going through forums and speaking to your local mechanic or service centre to know more about the bikes.

Many bikes have dedicated forums with owners' experiences and these will give

you a lot of insight. Search for similar offerings as that will help you compare prices, consider service and running costs – things that you usually look into even if you were buying a brand-new motorcycle.

#### Where to buy from?

There are three main avenues you can buy your used motorcycle from: a used-bike broker, an online platform, or directly from a motorcycle owner who is interested in selling to you.

Your final pick depends on which of these options has what you are looking for and how convenient each of them is for you.

A broker gives you the opportunity to physically inspect the bike before you lay down your money.



#### Talk to the seller

Some questions you should be asking the seller are: Why are they selling the motorcycle? How often has it been serviced? Has it had any falls or major alterations you should know of? If the seller is able to provide you with service slips and bills of what they have spent on the bike, it usually points towards a well-looked-after motorcycle. Nevertheless, it is always safer to be wary and do your own inspection.

#### Physical inspection

Unless you are looking to acquire an older model in particular, it is usually best to avoid one that is over five years old. It is also worth noting that mileage sometimes has little to do with how well a bike runs. A bike that has seen regular oil-changes and proper maintenance at 20,000 kilometres is typically a better deal than one that has ridden half the distance, but with half the care.

In most cases, a thorough physical inspection should tell you what to be wary of. As the most expensive component on the motorcycle, the engine is the first component to inspect. Ideally, a short test ride should give you a better understanding as to how well it runs. Check for rust on the frame and do not be afraid to question the owner about anything that seems out of the ordinary. See if all the electrical components are working and that there's no questionable wiring to be seen. Also take

a look at the bearings and seals. Prop the bike up on its centre stand and see that the wheels spin freely, and that the rear shock and fork oil seals aren't leaking. Next, look at consumables like tyres, brake pads and the chain sprockets. These could be worn out and that is something you should factor into the final price negotiations.

#### Paperwork

Once a motorcycle fits your requirements, the last part is the paperwork. Important documentation includes the registration certificate, vehicle insurance papers, original purchase invoice, road-tax receipt and the valid pollution certificate.

You will also need Form 28 – the No Objection Certificate (NOC); Form 29 – the intimation of transfer of vehicle ownership; and Form 30 – the report of transfer of ownership of a motor vehicle. If the vehicle was financed, you will also need to submit Form 35 to the RTO, along with a copy of the NOC from the financing company stating that there are no more dues to be paid.

Keep in mind that any change in the vehicle, like engine replacement or a new body colour, has to be updated in the registration certificate as well. Also, make sure that there is no accident history associated with the vehicle.

**Making your decision**  
Buying a used two-wheeler can be a daunting prospect, but remember to stay grounded and think with your wallet if you are on a budget. Follow the steps and guidelines we have listed here and buying a pre-owned bike will be a seamless experience.

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Pre Bid Meeting		Period of Sale and Preparation of bid & Bid Submission		Bid Opening
1		Purchase of Instrument & Equipment.		16.07.2020 At 14:00 Hrs.
		From 08.07.2020 18.00 Hrs. To 23.07.2020 up to 14.00 hrs		27.07.2020 at 14.05 hrs. onwards
2		Purchase of Instrument & Equipment.		(Bidders should send their queries by email on or before 20.07.2020 up to 14.00 hrs.)
		From 13.07.2020 13.00 Hrs. To 03.08.2020 up to 14.00 hrs.		6.08.2020 at 14.05 hrs. onwards
3		Purchase of Instrument & Equipment.		From 13.07.2020 10.00 a.m. To 27.07.2020 up to 14.00 p.m.
		From 13.07.2020 18.00 Hrs. To 23.07.2020 up to 14.00 hrs		30.07.2020 at 14.05 hrs. onwards
4		Purchase of Instrument & Equipment.		16.07.2020 At 14:00 Hrs.
		From 09.07.2020 18.00 Hrs. To 30.07.2020 up to 14.00 hrs		03.08.2020 at 14.05 hrs. onwards
5		Purchase of Instrument & Equipment.		16.07.2020 At 14:00 Hrs.
		From 09.07.2020 18.00 Hrs. To 23.07.2020 up to 14.00 hrs		27.07.2020 at 14.05 hrs. onwards
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RISE 06:10	SET 19:19
RISE 02:16	SET 15:29
FRIDAY, JUL. 17	
RISE 06:11	SET 19:19
RISE 02:58	SET 16:23

Mumbai Weather	max	min
Mumbai Airport	29	26
Pune	30	22
Mumbai City	29	26

**Mumbai Today**  
31°C A warm morning. Heavy rain will occur over the city. The sky will remain cloudy over the city.

**Mumbai Tomorrow**  
31°C The morning will be warm. Heavy rain are possible over the city. A mostly cloudy sky is expected over the city.

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## Missing teen reunited with family

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 15-year-old girl, who had fled from her residence in south Delhi's Govindpuri, was counselled and reunited with her family, the police said on Tuesday.

DPC (South) Atul Thakur said a WhatsApp message from a local named Roopa was received stating that a woman was in her area. When asked, the girl said she was from Kanpur and that there is no one in her family.

Two women officers then counselled the girl and took her in confidence to share details of her family. Next, the girl said her mother used to scold her often due to which she left the house in Govindpuri. It was then revealed that she was also reported missing from the area and a case on charges of kidnapping had been registered.

Mr. Thakur said Ms. Roopa has been rewarded with ₹2,000 for informing the police. "She has been rewarded to encourage the public to come forward to help without any hesitation," he said.

## HC allows abortion at 23 weeks

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday allowed a woman's plea seeking termination of her over 23-week pregnancy after All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) endorsed the procedure in view of the complications associated with the birth of the baby.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said in view of the report submitted by a team of medical experts at AIIMS, it was allowing the woman's plea seeking termination of her pregnancy due to certain abnormalities in the foetus.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act stipulates a ceiling of 20 weeks for termination of pregnancy beyond which abortion of a foetus is statutorily impermissible.

The counsel for the petitioner had stated that the abnormalities in the foetus was detected only after the 20th week of the pregnancy.

The counsel said the foetus suffered from "spina bifida and Arnold Chiari Syndrome defect", which results in the spinal cord being outside the body.

## HC tells NCDC to submit results, analysis of sero-survey today

The survey was done between June 27-July 5 to understand spread of COVID-19

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday directed the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to submit a report and analysis of the serological survey that was recently conducted in the national capital.

A Bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad ordered the NCDC to place the report before the court by Wednesday.

Under the survey, blood samples of 21,793 people were tested for antibodies against COVID-19. The Delhi government collected the samples and sent them to the NCDC, which comes under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The survey was done between June 27 and July 5. The results of the survey have not been released.

The High Court was in-



al Solicitor General Chetan Sharma and the Centre's standing counsel Anurag Ahluwalia, representing the Ministry of Health, that the court would not accept such kind of "red-tapeism" and asked them to ensure that the NCDC director is present on Wednesday.

The High Court's direction came on a petition filed in public interest by Rakesh Malhotra, highlighting va-

### COVID-19

rious issued faced by individuals while conducting tests for COVID-19.

The Delhi government, in its report, said that 9,844 Rapid Antigen Detection (RAT) tests were conducted on July 1, and by July 10, the figure had increased to 11,741. It added that on July 1, 10,697 RT-PCR tests were

also conducted, which decreased to 9,526 on July 10.

Mr. Malhotra stated that the report does not specify how many persons had undergone RAT tests and turned out to be COVID-19 negative, and then were made to undergo the RT-PCR test.

He stated that those figures would correctly reflect the extent of ramping up of tests that Delhi government claims it has done. Taking note of the submission, the High Court directed the Delhi government to submit a brief affidavit clarifying the matter.

The Bench also asked the Indian Council of Medical Research to submit an updated affidavit indicating the applications it has received from private hospitals and labs in Delhi seeking authorisation for carrying out RAT tests.

## Delhi sees less than 2K cases for fourth consecutive day

Active cases and positive results continue downward trend

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

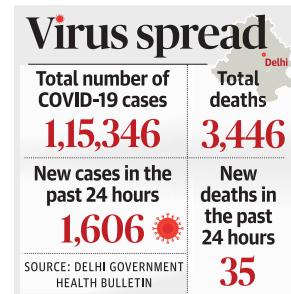
The city recorded less than 2,000 new COVID-19 cases for the fourth consecutive day on Tuesday with 1,606 fresh infections being reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 11,534, read a health bulletin released by the government.

Since June 23, when 3,947 new cases were reported – the highest so far – the number of new cases has been dropping and it has been less than 3,000 for the past 18 days. Also, 35 more deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 3,446.

Of the total cases, 93,236 people have recovered and there are 18,664 active cases.

Though the total cases in Delhi have been increasing, the active cases have been decreasing since July 1.

The number of active cases was 27,007 on July 1 and has



crease of 35.96%. Also, the positivity rate, which is the percentage of people who test positive, has dropped from 12.2% on July 1 to 7.6%. But lesser RT PCR tests, which has higher positivity, and more rapid antigen tests, which has lower positivity, was done, shows bulletin.

"Close monitoring of patients to be done by specialists," read an advisory by the government. It also said the 'Internal Death Audit Committee' of the hospital should suggest remedial measures to lower mortality.

## BJP accuses Delhi govt. of being anti-labour

It demands CBI probe into matter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP Opposition on Tuesday accused the Delhi government of being anti-labour and demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe of the accounts of the Delhi Building & Other Construction workers welfare board for the last 5 years.

### CAG report

According to a recent CAG report, the funds of the Board were to be used for the upliftment of poor labourers but the government, Mr. Gupta alleged, recruited

## Govt. act of demolishing houses inhuman: Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said at a time when the government was asking people to stay at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the same government was throwing the poor out on the streets by carrying out demolition drives.

1982.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said at a time when the government was

asking people to stay at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the same government was throwing the poor out on the streets by carrying out demolition drives.

## Gadkari lays foundation stone for 11 highway projects in Haryana

The projects are worth a total of ₹20,027 crore



Nitin Gadkari

the 85.36 km two-lane with paved shoulders Jind-Karnal Highway on NH-709 costing ₹200 crore.

### New vistas

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Gadkari said National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) would spend ₹22 lakh crore on the construction of new roads in Haryana in the next two years.

He said the highway projects worth ₹20,027 crore,

which he dedicated to the people of Haryana, would open new vistas of development in the State and provide better road connectivity to the western part of the country and also neighbouring States of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and

## After ILBS, Delhi gets its second plasma bank at Lok Nayak Hospital

Over 200 people benefited from plasma bank at ILBS: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated Delhi's second plasma bank at the Lok Nayak Hospital on Tuesday. The new plasma bank was set up 15 days after the first plasma bank was opened at the ILBS Hospital.

The Chief Minister said that the government will continue setting up facilities and beds even if the beds for COVID-19 patients remain vacant to ensure there is no shortage if the cases surge.

"Today [Tuesday], Dr. Sudesh and his team have started Delhi's second plasma bank at the Lok Nayak Hospital. Delhi is the first State to have launched India's first plasma bank at the ILBS Hospital. Plasma has been proven to be helpful in the treatment of COVID-19 infected patients and saving their lives until a vaccine comes," he said.

"We are not claiming that 100% of lives will be saved through the plasma, but it has been effective in treating people. Plasma has also played an important role in declining the death rate in Delhi. The Lok Nayak Hospi-

tal is located in central Delhi, so it will be convenient for people to reach here and donate plasma," he also said.

Mr. Kejriwal said the spread of pandemic in Delhi is gradually reducing and the recovery rate of patients is increasing. Earlier, 35 out of 100 people tested would be diagnosed with the virus whereas only seven or eight people out of 100 are found positive now.

The number of fatalities due to COVID-19 had also come down from about 101 per day in mid-June to around 40 now, he pointed out.

More than 200 people

have taken plasma from ILBS so far. "We do not want to store plasma in the bank forever, but no one should suffer for lack of plasma either.

Many people are coming for plasma, they are getting it and no one is denied plasma. Everyone is now getting plasma easily," he said.

He also credited the Delhi government's "strong fight" against the virus to all institutions and support from the Central government and other agencies.

"I am happy that the Prime Minister has also praised the model of Delhi and everyone's cooperation in it," the CM added.

TRAI told to act against unregistered telemarketers

Case posted for hearing on Aug. 28 to allow TRAI to show progress in registration

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

Jammu and Kashmir. He said that apart from these road projects, the 687-km-long Delhi-Amritsar-Katra expressway passing through Jind in Haryana would benefit Haryana and give boost to the State's economy.

The Union Minister also urged Chief Minister Mahender Lal to develop new industrial clusters along the Delhi-Mumbai Corridor and said that Centre was ready to give all support to Haryana in this work.

### SYL Canal row

Expressing gratitude to Mr. Gadkari for dedicating various highway projects, Mr. Lal sought his intervention in resolving the long-pending issue with Punjab regarding Sutlej Yamuna Link (SYL) Canal so that Haryana could get its legitimate share of river water.

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha MP Deepender Hooda said that four-lane Rohna-Hasangarh-Jhajjar section of NH-334B and four-lane of Punjab-Haryana border to Jind section of NH-71 were approved during the UPA government in 2013 and 2014.

These foreign nationals,

sending commercial communications. "Header" is an alphanumeric string of maximum eleven characters or numbers assigned to an individual, business or legal entity to send commercial communications under the Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preferences Regulations (TCCCP).

"Ensure that there is more registration as per the regulations. Show some interest that you are interested in execution of the law," the Bench told TRAI. The court made the remarks after senior adv-

ocates over various networks.

Mr. Dave stated that as per the regulation, every access provider has to ensure that any commercial communication using its network only takes place using registered header assigned to the sender

for the purpose of commercial communication. The senior advocate claimed that due to the large number of unregistered players, Paytm was experiencing fraud of its customers to the tune of ₹1-2 crore each month. "The moment everyone is registered, the matter is over," Mr. Dave said.

"Are you [TRAI] so powerless that you can't do anything. Have you taken action against a single person. You are waiting for what, the fraud to be committed," the Bench asked.

Tablighi Jamaat event: 150 foreign nationals from Indonesia granted bail

All of them told to furnish a personal bond of ₹10,000 each

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday granted bail to 150 foreign nationals, who were charged for attending Tablighi Jamaat congregation here allegedly in violation of visa norms, indulging in missionary activities illegally and violating government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak.

These foreign nationals,

all from Indonesia, told to furnish a personal bond of ₹10,000 each. Foreign nationals from five other countries were allowed to walk free on payment of different fines after they accepted mild charges under the plea bargain process, for various violations, including visa norms while attending the same congregation.

Metropolitan Mag

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## TENDERS

## ANIDCO, PORT BLAIR

Tender Notice  
Sealed tenders are invited for renting out of land and building of the Fish Processing Plant at Garachara, Port Blair.  
The tender document giving details of the terms and conditions of the tender can be obtained from Sr. Manager (Projects), Vikas Bhawan, ANIDCO Ltd., Port Blair on any working day upto 17.08.2020 or it may be downloaded from the website <https://andaman.nic.in>.  
The quotation in sealed cover addressed to General Manager (Projects) should reach latest by 18.08.2020 at 3.00 pm which will be opened on the same day at 3.30 pm in the presence of the tenderers or their authorized representatives, if any, present at the time of opening tenders.

The Managing Director, ANIDCO reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof.  
GeneralManager(Projects),ANIDCO  
anidco@gmail.com

## No quarantine in Punjab for three-day visit: CM

'This concession will help students and business travellers'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said on Tuesday that those coming to Punjab for less than 72 hours would be exempted from the mandatory home quarantine.

"It has been decided to provide this concession to facilitate students wishing to come for examinations and business travellers, whose stay in the State is less than 72 hours from the time of their arrival. It has been decided to exempt such travellers from the 14-day mandatory home quarantine requirement that remains in place for domestic inbound travellers in Punjab," he said in a statement.

He said the travellers



Amarinder Singh.

FILE PHOTO.

tive throughout their period of stay in Punjab.

The additional SOPs for such travellers require them to voluntarily submit that they were not coming from any containment zone and undertake not to stay for more than 72 hours in Punjab from the time of arrival in the State, he added.

While the Government of India had recently waived the requirement of home quarantine for domestic travellers and replaced it with self-monitoring, Capt. Amarinder had made it clear that quarantine restrictions would continue to remain in place in Punjab on account of the rising numbers.

Tuesday's announcement is the only exemption to the rule.

## 9 more dead in Assam

32.94 lakh people affected by floods

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Nine people drowned in Assam on Saturday, taking the floods-related death tally to 59. The flood situation continued to worsen, affecting 32.94 lakh people across 28 of the State's 33 districts.



A female rhino calf being rescued in the Kaziranga National Park on Tuesday.

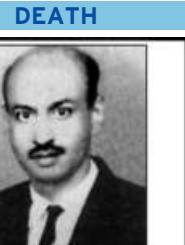
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

1.28 lakh hectares has been affected. "Heavy rainfall in adjoining Arunachal Pradesh is adding to Assam's woes. The Brahmaputra and nine of its tributaries are flowing above the danger mark," the spokesperson said.

A person each was reported missing in Golaghat and Morigaon districts. Officials said efforts were on to trace them.

Among the affected people across 3,371 villages and localities, 44,108 have taken shelter across 198 relief camps in 18 districts. An official estimate said crop on

## OBITUARY &amp; REMEMBRANCE



Prof WP Vijayaraghavan  
(1926 - 2020)  
Principal (1971 - 1986),  
College of Engineering, Guindy

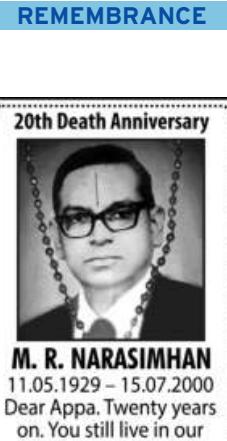
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## Grandma clears Class 12

## RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI

A 50-year-old grandmother in Meghalaya has cleared her Class 12 humanities examination 32 years after dropping out of Class 10.

It was particularly satisfying for Lakyntiew Syiemlieh, who began teaching basics of the Khasi language at a community-run school in 2008, three years after her husband abandoned her. She had her inherited house in Shillong, but the rent was barely enough to raise her four children. Teaching children for ₹3,000 a month gave her a sense of satisfaction besides "that much more to sustain my family". But what rankled in her more than a failed marriage was her educational status.

"I loved literature enough to write poems in the Khasi language. But my inability to fathom mathematics and

Lakyntiew Syiemlieh. ■  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

science made me leave school in Shillong in 1988," Ms. Syiemlieh told *The Hindu* on Tuesday. She shifted to Umsning Lumumpi two years later. The opportunity to complete her Class 10 came when the National Institute of Open Schooling set up a centre at Umsning. She cleared Class 10 in 2017. In 2018, she enrolled at a missionary college at Umsning for higher secondary.

"For Class 12, I took a year's leave from the school," Ms. Syiemlieh said. She has now set her eyes on a Bachelor's degree.

## Speaker dismisses petitions for disqualification of 7 MLAs

Opposition Naga People's Front had sought the action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Nagaland Speaker Sharangain Longkumer has dismissed petitions for the disqualification of seven MLAs of the Opposition Naga People's Front (NPF).

The NPF had filed the petitions against the lawmakers in 2019 for 'wilfully' defying its collective decision to support Congress candidate K.L. Chishi in the Lok Sabha elections that year.

The seven MLAs had ahead of the election issued a 'declaration' supporting Tokheho Yephomi of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party, which runs the government in alliance

with the BJP. This, the NPF had said, was tantamount to voluntarily giving up the party's membership.

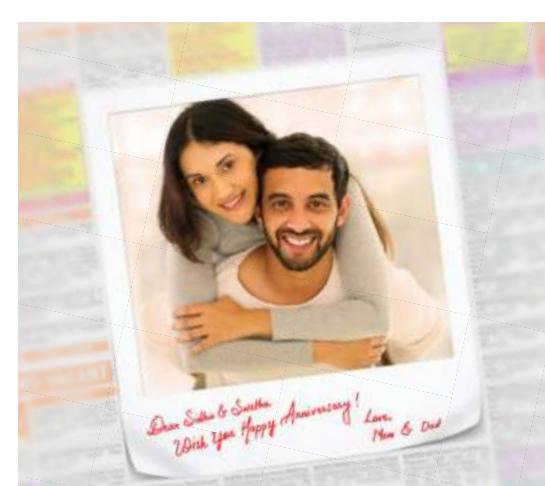
The Speaker said in his "final hearing" on Tuesday there were no sufficient grounds to presume that the MLAs in question had voluntarily given up the membership of the NPF.

'Angry with NPF'  
The seven MLAs had in their statement said they were angry with the NPF for not fielding a candidate and backing the Congress nominee "against the principle of regionalism".  
The NPF had subsequently suspended them from the

party's primary membership after serving them show-cause notices.

After Manipur, the BJP is facing trouble in Nagaland, with 12 of its legislators, including Ministers, camping in New Delhi seeking the ouster of State unit president and Minister Temjen Imna Along Longkumer. Ten district unit presidents of the BJP had earlier written to the central leadership seeking his removal, resenting his 'autocratic' and 'dictatorial' style of functioning. "We met national president J.P. Nadda on Monday and discussed the way he [Mr. Longkumer] is running the party," said a party leader.

## A GREETING TO REMEMBER



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Ref. No. 527 / II-02(xii)ITCO/URRDA/20 Dated : 13-07-2020  
PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA  
(PMGSY)

## e-Procurement Notice (Fifth Call)

The Government of India has received a loan/credit facility "LN 8864 IN" from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/International Development Association towards the cost of Rural Roads Project (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana) and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed in NIT. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the bidding document.

The General Manager (Project), BRIDCUL on behalf of URRDA Uttarakhand invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system (Fifth Call) for construction of Roads and Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the Garu (District-Bageshwar) for 01 number of Package with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 344.24 lakh including their maintenance 2 year for stage-1 & 5 years for stage-2 from the eligible contractors registered with PWD/CPWD or equivalent".

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 15-07-2020.

## Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission:

The bid documents are available online and should be submitted online in [www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in](http://pmgsytendersuk.gov.in). The bidder would be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document per provisions of Clause 4.8 B (ii) of ITB with the Projects related to Garhwal Mandal at office of BRIDCUL HQ Opp. Govt. ITI Majra, Nirjanpur, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun-248001" For Package No. (UT-02-10) submission of all physical documents will be accepted only upto or before the time and date of submission of bids (29.07.2020 (05:00 pm)) after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering  
29.07.2020 01:00 PM.

For further details please log on to [www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in](http://www.pmgsytendersuk.gov.in)

Chief Engineer, URRDA, Dehradun.

\* Non Registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

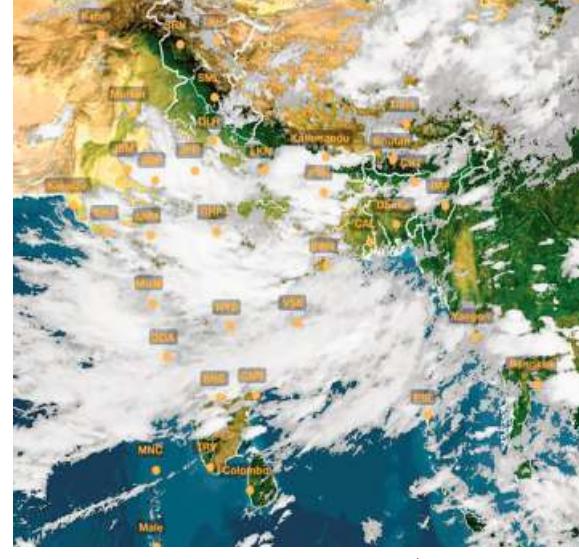
Note : For e-Procurement for any sort of queries 0135-2522941 number may be contacted 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM in any office days.

DIPR/Alaknanda/2020-21

Sd/-  
Deputy Resident Commissioner,  
Karnataka Bhavan, New Delhi

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Heavy/very heavy rain likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Saurashtra & Kutch, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rayalseema, Karnataka, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.8	33.9	26.8	Kozhikode	0.4...	31.8...	24.6
Ahmedabad	—	36.6	27.2	Kurnool	0.2...	30.4...	24.0
Aizawl	8	24.0	17.5	Lucknow	33.8...	33.4...	22.7
Allahabad	7.9	31.9	24.1	Madurai	—	37.0...	25.4
Bengaluru	—	26.2	21.4	Mangaluru	36.7...	27.0...	22.9
Bhopal	—	32.0	25.6	Mumbai	27.4...	28.9...	25.6
Bhubaneswar	1.4	31.2	25.4	Mysuru	—	28.9...	20.8
Chandigarh	—	36.1	27.0	New Delhi	—	38.5...	28.6
Chennai	—	32.0	27.6	Patna	—	32.8...	27.0
Coimbatore	—	33.2	22.6	Port Blair	9.1...	29.8...	24.3
Dehradun	—	34.1	25.8	Puducherry	0.2...	34.4...	26.6
Gangtok	61	22.3	18.3	Pune	4.6...	29.6...	22.5
Goa	65.3	27.5	23.8	Raipur	19.3...	29.0...	25.0
Kohima	—	25.0	17.7	Ranchi	9.9...	31.6...	22.9
Kolkata	—	34.8	27.9	Shillong	17.1...	24.9...	18.6
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shimla	—	27.6...	20.0
Hyderabad	0.4	29.9	23.2	Srinagar	—	31.0...	15.0
Imphal	31.9	27.5	22.1	Thiruvananthapuram	0.4...	34.0...	24.5
Jaipur	1.4	38.3	25.0	Tiruchi	—	38.4...	26.2
Kochi	0.4	31.8	24.8	Vijayawada	14.2...	32.4...	24.0
Kohima	9.8	25.0	17.7	Visakhapatnam	—	30.2...	25.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	23	39	41	63	85	—
Bengaluru	13	16	52	37	46	—
Chennai	5	31	93	101	—	—
Delhi	10	38	58	168	—	—
Hyderabad	7	39	15	23	40	—
Kolkata	6	10	33	31	49	—
Lucknow	1	102	55	72	—	—
Mumbai	59	25	9	25	33	—
Pune	16	6	54	15	16	—
Visakhapatnam	10	63	43	55	84	—

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

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

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

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

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Nandesar, Gujarat recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 259 indicating an unhealthy condition of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 12

# Govt. orders probe into 'Covid-19' marksheets

No instruction on stamping 'Promoted Covid-19': minister

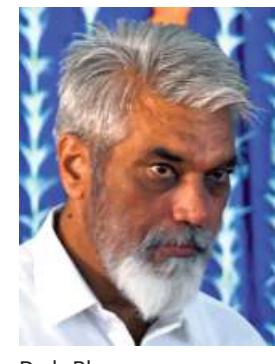
ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday ordered an inquiry after marksheets of agriculture university students in the State were found with 'Promoted Covid-19' stamped on them.

Agriculture Minister Dada Bhuse also said that no such instruction to format the marksheets has been ordered by the State government. "The government has ordered an inquiry into the instances of distributing marksheets with 'Promoted Covid-19' stamped on them. Those guilty will face strict action from the government," said Mr. Bhuse.

The Minister has asked Maharashtra Council of Agriculture Education and Research (MCAER), Pune, to conduct an inquiry. "A detailed report regarding the same should be submitted to



Dada Bhuse

the State government. Investigation must be held on who issued such directions without government orders," he said.

All four agriculture universities in the State – Balasaheb Sawant Konkan Agriculture University, Dapoli; Mahatma Phule Agriculture University, Rahuri; Marathwada Agriculture University, Parbhani; and Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh Agriculture Uni-

versity, Akola – conducted examinations for the final year students, while the rest were promoted.

According to reports from these regions, the students of first, second and third year of agriculture, gardening, agri-biotechnology, forestry, agriculture business management, agriculture engineering and food technology have been given marksheets with 'Promoted Covid-19' stamped on them.

Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) slammed the government for the mistake. BJP MLA Ashish Shelar said that his party has been constantly warning the government of this. "The incident is not only wrong but an injustice on the students. This government does not want to listen to our instructions but then it commits such long-lasting damage to students," said Mr. Shelar.

# Varavara Rao in neurology ward following complaint of giddiness

Family says they were not aware of him being taken to hospital

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

Poet Varavara Rao (81) has been admitted to the neurology department of JJ Hospital after he complained of giddiness, and is undergoing tests. He was taken from Taloja Central Jail to the State-run hospital on Monday morning.

Dr. Sanjay Surase, superintendent of JJ Hospital, confirmed to *The Hindu* that Mr. Rao is admitted to the neurology department. "This is a case of giddiness and he is under evaluation and investigation. His general condition is fair and vitals are stable," he said.

Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) slammed the government for the mistake. BJP MLA Ashish Shelar said that his party has been constantly warning the government of this. "The incident is not only wrong but an injustice on the students. This government does not want to listen to our instructions but then it commits such long-lasting damage to students," said Mr. Shelar.



Varavara Rao

on Mr. Rao so far, a doctor at JJ Hospital said, "Tests and investigations conducted on a patient cannot be revealed. It would be a breach of the patient's privacy."

Meanwhile, advocate R. Sathyanarayanan, who represents Mr. Rao in courts in Mumbai, however, said the family was not informed about him being shifted from the jail to the hospital. "We had called in the morning of July 13 and were told by the Superintendent of Taloja jail that Mr. Rao was doing absolutely

fine," she said.

She recollects events on May 29 when she learnt about her father being shifted to the hospital a day later not from prison authorities but from the local police in Hyderabad.

Mr. Rao was incoherent and delirious when he called his family on July 11 and spoke about his parents' funeral that took place decades ago. Vernon Gonsalves (61), a co-accused in the Bhima-Koregaon case, who takes care of Mr. Rao inside the prison, told the family that he is not able to walk, go to the toilet, and brush his teeth on his own.

Mr. Rao's daughter, Pavana, however, said the family was not informed about him being shifted from the jail to the hospital. "We had called in the morning of July 13 and were told by the Superintendent of Taloja jail that Mr. Rao was doing absolutely

GT Hospital asked to submit Rakesh Wadhawan's health report

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The special Prevention of Money Laundering Act court on Tuesday rejected the regular bail pleas filed by the Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) promoters and key accused in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank fraud case, Rakesh Wadhawan and Sarang Wadhawan.

The special court also rejected the default bail pleas filed by the Diwan Housing Finance Limited promoters, Kapil Wadhawan and Dheeraj Wadhawan, in connection with the multi-crore Yes Bank fraud case.

Mr. Rakesh Wadhawan (66) has been admitted to GT Hospital since July 10 after he was tested COVID-19 positive. He has been lodged in the Arthur Road Jail with his son Sarang, following their arrest in October last year, on charges of money laundering.

A doctor at GT hospital said, "He was brought in on July 10 and is in the ICU."



Rakesh Wadhawan

Advocate Subir Kumar, representing Mr. Rakesh Wadhawan, said, "He has several medical issues such as gastrointestinal bleeding."

On rejecting the regular

bails filed by the duo, Judge P.P. Rajvaidya also directed GT Hospital to submit Mr. Rakesh Wadhawan's latest health report.

On May 25, the sessions court had rejected both their interim medical bail pleas on the grounds of the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 8, a magistrate court had also rejected Mr. Rakesh Wadhawan's interim medical bail plea.

HDIL accounted for nearly 73% of PMC Bank's total loans. Of the ₹4,355.46 crore loans under the scanner, ₹2,145.78 crore were transferred to accounts held by the Wadhawans.

The Enforcement Director

loans to the tune of ₹4,355 crore from the bank in a fraudulent manner.

On May 6, the ED had filed a chargesheet against Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor, his wife, and three daughters on charges of laundering money, forgery of valuable security, will, etc., 471 (using as genuine a forged document or electronic record), and 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

It was alleged that the Wadhawans, in a criminal conspiracy with PMC Bank officials, including former managing director Joy Thomas and former director Waryam Singh, had availed of

## Two workers killed in cylinder blast at Khopoli industrial unit

One suffers 15% burns; cause of explosion not clear: police

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

Two people died and one sustained injuries after an LPG cylinder exploded at an industrial plant in Khopoli in the early hours of Tuesday.

According to the police, the incident occurred at India Steel Works Ltd. around 1.15 a.m. "The industry manufactures steel wires by processing scrap material. The blast occurred while the cutting of some scrap material involving steel rods was going on. Two workers died on the spot while another received 15% burn injuries and was taken to Criticare Hospital, Kamtole, Navi Mumbai," senior police inspector Dhanaji Kshirsagar of Khopoli police station said.

The impact of the explosion was such that the sound was heard in a radius of one km and the bodies of the duo

were torn into pieces. "The cause of the explosion is not clear," Mr. Kshirsagar said.

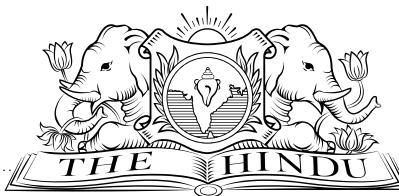
The deceased have been identified as Dinesh Wamanrao Chavan (55) and Pramod Duddhnaidh Sharma (30), and the injured is Subhash Dhomdiba (55).

Chavan is survived by wife and a son, who is an engineer, while Sharma is survived by wife and a four-year-old daughter. While Chavan had been working as a fitter in the company for the last 22 years, Sharma, an engineer, had been overseeing the work in the plant for 10 years.

Anand Panmand, assistant general manager, industrial relations of the company, said, "Sharma supervised the work, and it seems while he was taking rounds, he got trapped in the explosion." Sharma's

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## Lost opportunity

India's loss in failing to develop the Chabahar port project in Iran might be China's gain

Right from the beginning of its tenure, the government has underlined the geostrategic importance it attaches to the Chabahar port project. The project, signed in 2003, has been a symbol of traditionally important India-Iran ties. Connected by sea lanes to ports on India's west coast, Chabahar would form the fulcrum of India's outreach to Russia and Central Asia, enhancing connectivity, energy supplies and trade. Given that Pakistan had blocked Indian aid to Afghanistan and all trade over land, Chabahar provided India an alternative to permanently bypass its troublesome neighbour. As a result, the government fast-tracked plans for the project, and in 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Tehran to sign a trilateral trade and transit agreement with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani. According to the MoUs, India would be granted a 10-year lease to develop and operate two terminals and five berths, access to the Chabahar free trade zone, and the opportunity to build the 628 km rail line from Chabahar to Zahedan, just across the border from Afghanistan. The government acted quickly to develop Chabahar port facilities, sent exports to Afghanistan in 2018, and has moved over half-a-million tonnes of cargo, including grains and food supplies, for Afghanistan again, through the port. However, the rail line has never taken off for a number of reasons despite a commitment from state-owned IRCON, to undertake its construction at an estimated \$1.6 billion. While contract changes by the Iranian side and delayed responses from the Indian side were part of the problem, the main hurdle has been the fear of American penalties. Even though India was able to negotiate a sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port and rail line from the U.S., few international construction and equipment partners were willing to sign on to the project; New Delhi has also dragged its feet on the matter. After appeals to India, including one issued by its Foreign Minister Javad Zarif when he visited Delhi in January this year, Iran decided to go on its own, by beginning to lay tracks for the line connecting Chabahar to Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, last week.

Regardless of the reasons for India's inability to join the railway project, the decision can only be seen as an opportunity lost. The impression that India wavered due to U.S. pressure, especially after India cancelled oil imports from Iran, also questions New Delhi's commitment to strategic autonomy. While Iran claims it will fund the railway using its own resources, it seems to have embarked on the Chabahar-Zahedan project with a confidence borne from an imminent deal with China for a 25-year, \$400 billion strategic partnership on infrastructure, connectivity and energy projects. In a world where connectivity is seen as the new currency, India's loss could well become China's gain, and New Delhi must watch this space, created by its exit, closely.

## Field on track

Cricket's restart is not a return to the old normal, but it showed what fans were missing

A blend of joy and relief rippled through the cricketing world last Sunday as the first Test between host England and the West Indies climaxed at Southampton's Ageas Bowl. Coming as it did after a pandemic-induced lull over the last few months, the willow game's resumption, much like the revival of football, tennis and Formula One races, offered cheer in these grim times wilting under the global march of the coronavirus. With the previous breaks having occurred during last century's two World Wars, it was fitting that cricket's third enforced pause concluded at its birthplace England; and to make it doubly sweet, the men of swagger from the Caribbean islands snatched a four-wicket victory. The clash had all the hallmarks of the slow-burn and shredded nerves and cricket could not have asked for a more surreal comeback especially as the solemn backdrop featured the Black Lives Matter movement. West Indian pace legend Michael Holding wrung hearts with a speech on Sky Sports that held a mirror to racism's sordid history. That Jason Holder's men, with their roots harking back to indentured African and Indian labourers at sugar cane plantations, could stun their former colonial masters tied in with sport's proven ability to break through the established order. It may be premature to whisper about a resurgence in West Indian cricket, but a start has been made.

England is a tough opponent at home and the next two Tests at Manchester will offer an intriguing mix while the West Indies will draw inspiration from speedster Shannon Gabriel and batsman Jermaine Blackwood. Besides the action on view, Southampton offered a glimpse of cricket in a bio-bubble wherein a sanitised venue with no spectators and teams staying at a hotel that is part of the ground, ensured that the game could keep the virus at bay. And cricket's quirks were also in vogue as the relevance of saliva and sweat in triggering reverse swing, occupied airwaves and column-width. There were discussions about the ban on applying saliva to the red cherry in these fraught times while selection quibbles were again in play as Stuart Broad's axing from England's playing eleven, whipped up debate. Above all cricket's return highlighted sport's penchant to spring surprises. Just a year ago, Ben Stokes delivered a bravura performance at Lord's as Eoin Morgan's men won the World Cup against a doughty New Zealand led by the dignified Kane Williamson, in a final for the ages. Today, Stokes is mulling over ways to get past the West Indian ambush! Above all, bilateral cricket is back but as for bigger events such as the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia or the much-delayed IPL, the pandemic could still have the last word.

# The stand-off and China's India policy dilemma

As New Delhi seeks to reset ties with Beijing, it must take note of the ongoing Chinese debate on India



ANTARA GHOSAL SINGH

For China, which has long been preoccupied with its relentless pursuit to approach the centre of the world and in managing a turbulent relationship with the United States, the June 15 incident of a violent face-off between Chinese and Indian troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), causing casualties on both sides, came as a big jolt. It brought the national focus back on an otherwise not-so-popular topic of China-India relations. The development took China's strategic community by storm, while the intense debate and discussions that followed, rather than generating a consensus, brought out China's many dilemmas *vis-à-vis* India.

### No accident

On one side of the debate are China's top India watchers such as Lin Minwang and Zhang Jiadong, from Fudan University, and Li Hongmei from the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIIS) among others, who believe that the present conflict is not an "accident" but an "inevitable result" of what they perceive as "India's long-standing speculative strategy on the China-India border". From Doklam to Kashmir to India's "unending infrastructure arms race" at the LAC, they say, Beijing was "fed up" and "had to teach India a lesson".

Their key argument is that China-India relations hold no great prospect in the current international situation. There is no possibility of a negotiated settlement of the border dispute any time soon. India is already a "quasi-ally" of the U.S. with no scope for reversal. With opportunities for coopera-

tion at the global level diminishing, regional competition intensifying and the earlier system of effective management of bilateral differences crumbling beyond control, periodic violent conflicts, they predict, are the "new normal" in China-India ties.

China, they argue, should reconsider its prevalent strategic thinking that India is not its main strategic challenge and, therefore, peace needs to be maintained in its direction as much as possible. Only by daring to fight, by showing strong determination, the will and the ability on the western frontier can China effectively deter its adversaries on the eastern coast. This is also, what they called, the right way to resolve China's primary contradiction, that is the China-U.S. problem, by first breaking "its arms and legs".

### Handling a resurgent India

To deal with a resurgent India, Chinese hardliners suggest a policy of "three nos": "no weakness, no concession and no defensive defence". In other words, China should take all opportunities to crack down on India, take the initiative to hit it hard whenever possible. This, it is argued, will not damage China-India relations; on the contrary, it will make it more stable. Didn't the 1962 China-India war help China to maintain peace and stability on the western front for a long time and directly eliminate American and Soviet ambitions to use India to contain China? In this backdrop there is renewed interest among certain sections of the Chinese strategic community to: keep India under control by destabilising the entire border region, creating tension across the board, from the McMahon Line in the east to the Aksai Chin area in the west; take the initiative to attack and seize territories under India's control from Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, and weaken India internally, by supporting the cause of Maoists,

of China-India relations will further strengthen the "anti-China alliance" between the U.S., Japan, Australia, Vietnam, Indonesia and other countries, who will actively take the initiative to reshape global industrial chains, use the Indo-Pacific Strategy to check and balance China's military and economic power, and expand international organisations such as the G-7 to weaken China's influence in international affairs.

### Opinion on scenarios

On a similar note, various commentaries in the Chinese press highlight that downgrading China-India relations to the level of India-Pakistan relations or a 'Kashmirisation' of the China-India border is easier said than done as this will require a complete reversal of China's present LAC policy of being "reasonable, profitable and economical".

Strategically too, they say, it is "unwise" for China to take the initiative to get into a comprehensive military conflict with India – "a big country with comparable military strength" – at this point in time. The general view among these military analysts is that if China has an advantage in terms of psychology, equipment, and logistics mobilisation, India too has advantage on various fronts such as deployment, supply line, practical war experience, topography, and climate among others. If India's disadvantage remains in the fact that its capital lies well within the bombing range of China, China's key disadvantage is its particularly long supply lines. Therefore, if the conflict ends in a short period of time, it will benefit China. But if it is prolonged, China will be disadvantaged.

If China-India ties are damaged beyond repair, they warn, India alone or in association with other countries will cause "endless trouble for China". For instance, an openly hostile India will use every possible means to prevent China from reaching the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the decoupling



Naga separatists and Kashmiris.

### Some criticism

However, on the other side of the debate are Chinese political thinkers and professors such as Zheng Yongnian and Yu Longyu among others, who in their analysis of the Galwan Valley incident, have been somewhat critical about China's policies towards India, which they say remain mostly tactical, of a "reactive nature" and are characterised by a "tit-for-tat" approach without any clear strategic intent. This, according to them, stokes extreme nationalism in India and unites the otherwise divided nation against China, which not only harms China's interests but might eventually draw China into an untimely military conflict.

They criticise those vying to "teaching India a lesson" as being "short-sighted" and not "psychologically prepared for the rise of India". China, they argue, lacks understanding of the fact that India, as a rising power, is very important to China and will be increasingly crucial in the future, with China-India relations evolving as the most important pair of relations after China-U.S. links.

If China-India ties are damaged beyond repair, they warn, India alone or in association with other countries will cause "endless trouble for China". For instance, an openly hostile India will use every possible means to prevent China from reaching the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, the decoupling

morale will rise sharply; on the contrary, in China, the morale will decline if it cannot beat India decisively. Therefore, in its effort to "teach India a lesson", they fear, China might lose more than it would gain.

### What India must note

The overall consensus within this group is that it is still not the time to 'resolve' the India problem. Instead, China, for now, should strive to make India retreat without a military conflict, maintain basic peace and stability at the borders, and, at the minimum, not deliberately push it towards the U.S. Meanwhile, China simultaneously carries out its strategy of weakening India internally by leveraging its social and political differences, completing its strategic encirclement, improving troop deployment in the Tibet region to secure the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and stationing Chinese troops in the Gwadar Port (Arabian Sea), so as to secure China's Indian Ocean sea routes, among other interests. In the words of another Chinese strategist, Yin Guoming, rather than winning a war, China should aim at attaining a comprehensive and overwhelming advantage in geopolitics *vis-à-vis* India, which cannot be altered by war.

To sum up, despite all the jingoism and rhetoric propagated through its official media, China is actually in a serious dilemma over its India policy. As we, in India, seek to reset ties with Beijing in the post-Galwan era, we should take note of the ongoing Chinese debate on India, factor in its many internal contradictions and perceived vulnerabilities *vis-à-vis* India, and leverage the same to our benefit.

Antara Ghosal Singh is a Researcher at the Delhi Policy Group (DPG). She is a graduate from Tsinghua University, China and has been a Chinese language fellow at the National Central University, Taiwan

## Viral outrage only spikes the data

Adverse public reaction to bad coronavirus figures could only end up creating incentives to suppress crucial numbers



RUKMINI S.

As the number of cases of COVID-19 in Karnataka and Telangana begins to surge, there is a corresponding urge to affix blame to a cause. This has happened earlier too when there was a rise in cases in other States – evidence that governments had failed and had shielded numbers finally appeared to be here. But the knee-jerk response to bad numbers is actually causing great harm.

### Affects lesson learning

When we react with outrage to the rising numbers alone, we get no closer to finding out or fixing what is wrong; if we were to react with horror to bad processes instead, we would have some hope of mitigating the worst of the crisis.

This is particularly important in the context of a disease that, in most of the country, can only be identified when a doctor prescribes a test based on limited criteria; reported new cases are a direct consequence of the decision and ability of State and city administrations to expand the parameters of testing, and numbers need

to be viewed in that context. Roughly 5,000 COVID-19 cases are what separate Telangana from Andhra Pradesh, but it would be a mistake to see this as an indication that the two States are in a similar situation. Telangana discovered these 34,000 cases by testing just 1.7 lakh tests, while Andhra Pradesh discovered its 30,000 cases by conducting 11.5 lakh tests. Then there is the question of what type of test is being conducted. Delhi now conducts more than twice as many tests each day than it did a month ago to discover fewer cases. But well over half of its tests are the far less sensitive and reliable antigen tests.

What all of this means is that the number of new cases reported each day in a city or State is not a purely mathematical fact. It is a combination of not just the city's disease environment but also its political economy. Reacting to its numbers without accounting for this will lead us to the wrong lessons. We have seen this tendency to view higher numbers as a lack of governance than a success of reporting, and it has had similarly deleterious consequences. The publication of India's annual crime statistics is met every year with headlines about relatively developed States having among the highest rates of reported crime, particularly against women. But until we reach the point of "full re-

gistration" – which means a country that is confident it is capturing the full extent of crime – more reported crime is for the most part a good thing. Jacob Punnoose, former Director General of Police of Kerala, put it this way to this writer: "If the police of a State [are] able to significantly increase the registration of crimes in which grievous physical injury does not take place, molestation, for instance, or overspeeding, I will congratulate that police commissioner."

Instead, the outrage following "bad" new numbers is already creating perverse incentives against honest reporting. While investigating the working of committees set up by State governments to audit COVID-19 deaths, this writer found that not all deaths of those who were COVID-19 positive were being recorded as COVID-19 deaths. What was more worrying was that Chennai, New Delhi and Mumbai had recorded zero "suspected or probable" COVID-19 deaths – deaths of people who were set up to do. When missing deaths are discovered, they are

presented like COVID-19 patients but had not had a positive test prior to death – despite clear guidelines by the World Health Organization and the Indian Council of Medical Research. This means that such cities could be missing 20-30% or more of true COVID-19 deaths, according to Dr. Prabhat Jha, professor at the University of Toronto and an expert on mortality who led the 'Million Death Study' in India.

In each of these three cities, health administration officials said reporting more deaths would lead to their cities and States being heavily criticised, and unfairly so, they thought. An adviser to the Delhi government said, "If we start adding suspected deaths, no one's going to praise us for it. All we'll get is 'Deaths shoot up in Delhi' sort of headlines."

### The delay factor

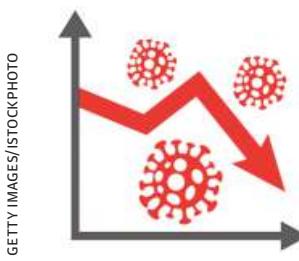
Such concerns have been borne out by recent media coverage of similar attempts. Reconciliation exercises aimed at fixing delayed data in the three cities and were reported as if hidden deaths had been "exposed", even though delayed reporting and reconciliation are a feature of epidemic reporting the world over, and the new numbers were the result of these audit committees doing the job they were set up to do. When missing deaths are discovered, they are

slowly added to the total over the next few days by administrations that fear people becoming angry or panic-stricken if they read about or see a sudden spike.

From a public health perspective, the attempts of State governments to restrict the numbers of deaths being reported so as not to show a higher burden than other States is a loss of valuable knowledge. In fact, Dr. Jha recommends that governments adopt the most liberal definition of a COVID-19 death as possible; leaving in a few extra deaths of COVID-19 positive persons who died in road accidents, or untested people who died of a respiratory illness that was not COVID-19 is a small price to pay, given all of the potentially missed cases such a liberal attitude will bring into the system, he said.

It would of course be a mistake to celebrate every increase in numbers, particularly in the case of a pandemic that is causing such devastation. But parsing the numbers to see what is driving the increase, and whether the underlying processes are working well is key. Without that, all that our outrage would do would be to create incentives to suppress numbers. That is a decline in data that we should not celebrate.

Rukmini S. is an independent journalist based in Chennai



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### State of the INC

The Indian National Congress has failed to indulge in introspection and reinvent itself even after the loss of two consecutive Lok Sabha elections (Editorial page, "To whomsoever it may concern in the INC", July 14). There appears to be no serious discussion about the reasons for the electoral debacles and the top leadership is seen to be indecisive. Even opportunities to win in a democratic way (Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh) or capture power (Goa) were frittered away. There is a leadership vacuum, brewing dissent in States and restive and disgruntled young leaders. If the INC wishes to become a strong contender for power in

2024, it needs to expeditiously elect a strong leader to guide the party, inspire and galvanise the young leadership from various States, hold brainstorming sessions in all State capitals to develop and articulate an economic agenda of development and welfare in tune with the current times, and enthuse cadres to work relentlessly over the next four years. KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI, Hyderabad

■ What had happened earlier in Madhya Pradesh, and now in Rajasthan, is reflective of the failure of the party central leadership and also young Congress leaders putting self before the party. The Congress is witnessing a downfall because of a lack of discipline and unity. When

will the Congress wake up? When it is beyond repair? The Gandhi family should let a new leadership restore the ethos of the Grand Old Party. R.D. SINGH, Ambala Cantonment, Haryana

**Leaders and pandemic** By going easy on the novel coronavirus pandemic, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, U.S. President Donald Trump, and Tanzanian President John Magufuli have only shown sheer lack of common sense in dealing with health issues (Op-Ed, "The club of virus deniers", July 14). Back home, I have seen social commentators advocating zero lockdown and 'live with the virus' for herd immunity. Some of them even make foolish statements such as

'more people die of diabetes, cancer, heart attack etc., so why bother about corona'? 'Why stop the wheels of the economy'? But, are not the after-effects of the disease serious issues? P. MANGALACHANDRAN, West Ponniam, Kannur, Kerala

**Court on temple** All those with faith in god and places of worship, would welcome Monday's Supreme Court verdict on the Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, is "vested in trust in the ruler of Travancore". If anything, the

States to form the United State of Travancore-Cochin, with specific concurrence and guarantee of the Government of India. It is another matter the United State no more exists, following States Reorganisation to form Kerala.

According to the Covenant, among other terms, administration of Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram, is "vested in trust in the ruler of Travancore". If anything, the P.R.V. RAJA, Pandanam, Kerala

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:** In a Business page story titled "Hitachi ABB wins ₹120-cr. CLW order" (July 10, 2020), Mr. N. Venu had been erroneously referred to as CLW MD. It should be *Hitachi ABB Power Grids India MD*. The edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-2852563; E-mail: [readerseditor@thehindu.co.in](mailto:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in); Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)

# Sending the right message

Listening to scientists can lead to better management of the pandemic



SUJATHA BYRAVAN

Miscommunication has rocked numerous aspects of the response to COVID-19. Sometimes, scientists who ought to provide clear, unambiguous public health information have failed to do so because of political interference. At other times, even when key public health messages were clearly articulated, some reporters misperceived grey areas and ongoing debates as scientific chaos and not as open questions that may simply require more evidence to resolve. There has also been mistrust in the efficacy of medical management and cynicism among those who follow public health messages from governments regarding the pandemic.

#### Communicating vital information

Some people are seen removing their masks to speak to others in close proximity or even to cough, but otherwise wear them diligently in public as a badge of civic honour. The message that is entirely lost is that even simple masks can largely stop expelled droplets from a person's nose or mouth; thus, we protect one another from infection when we wear masks. People suspected of having flu-like symptoms are shunned or, worse, physically assaulted. On the other hand, there seems to be little or no awareness that asymptomatic cases may be everywhere.

U.S. President Donald Trump has been one of the worst possible communicators of vital information during the crisis. A few Americans reportedly drank bleach in response to his suggestion that it would perhaps work inside the body. There were also open disagreements between Mr. Trump and medical experts who shared the stage with him during daily media briefings.

In any crisis where science matters, messages that ask people to change their behaviour have to be very clear to be understood and followed. Providing instructions on medication, treatment choices, physical distancing, testing and wearing masks requires elaborating on the reasons, so that people understand the logic. Instead of trying to manage the news, providing sufficient funding for public health research and allowing scientists to work freely and



REUTERS

give independent reports to the press without censorship are vital to a good health system. Transparency and clarity on what public health proposals are being considered would build faith and confidence in the government. The social vetting of scientific claims is necessary and can only happen with transparency. People do not expect infallibility from their governments, but they do seek accountability. Instead, all but a few countries have misled people on numbers of cases and testing protocols.

#### Climate change communication

Some commentators have wondered whether COVID-19 and climate change communication matters are alike. While some aspects seem similar, I believe they are quite different, although there are insights to be learned from experience with the latter.

For several years, a few scientists and the fossil fuel and petrochemical industry have deliberately muddied the facts and the messaging on climate change.

Although the science is clear – that rising greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere mainly due to the burning of fossil fuels have raised average global temperature over more than a century – that message has been deliberately and systematically eroded in some quarters through funds from private parties and corporations that are merely concerned about their profits.

For instance, in the U.S., the Koch Brothers are major sponsors of smoke-screens concerning climate change. The Koch Family Foundations are reported to have spent over \$125 million to finance 92 groups that have attacked climate change science and policy solutions, from 1997 to 2017. In an article in *The New York Times* (July 10, 2019), one learns that funds even from corporations, like Google and Amazon, which have publicly committed themselves to supporting climate change action, were funnelled into groups like the Competitive Enterprise, a Washington-based

think tank that challenges anthropogenic climate change.

Lawyers and experts who previously worked with the tobacco industry and helped them lie about tobacco being seriously harmful to health have been funded by conservative think tanks like the George C. Marshall Institute to support the climate change denial industry. In *Merchants of Doubt*, Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway argue that these groups have operated by sowing doubt although scientific consensus has already been reached. Their strategy has been to maintain the controversy and therefore keep any fake confusion alive. By roping in scientists, establishing research groups and appointing spokespersons who maintain doubt, they are co-opting scientific trappings without deploying scientific logic and methods. The same approach has been applied to tobacco smoking, DDT, acid rain, the ozone hole and some nutrition studies. These activities therefore end up looking and sounding like legitimate science.

While the focus of the confusion in the case of climate change is deliberate and planned, in the case of COVID-19, scientists did not know much about the SARS-CoV-2 virus when the pandemic broke. There appears nothing to be gained from deliberately obfuscating the message. But those who consider economic losses to be a graver danger than lost lives through COVID-19 are protesting. Will elite interests then try to muddle the science deliberately?

#### Responsibility towards the public

Communicating science means explaining details to the public without condescension, admitting mistakes, promptly rebutting pseudo-science, being guided by data and interpreting the logic for policies undertaken. Instructions provided by scientists may be inconvenient and fail to take note of election cycles. Even when the situation is long-drawn-out, as in the COVID-19 pandemic, listening to scientists and putting their advice into practice can lead to better management of the pandemic, as seen in New Zealand and some Southeast Asian countries.

It is essential that those who can influence decisions, such as civil servants and scientists, along with the politicians making decisions, be guided by a sense of responsibility towards the public.

Sujatha Byravan is a scientist who studies technology, science and development policy

## Needed: Clear testing data

If Delhi provides a break-up of test numbers, the success of rapid antigen PoC kits can be determined

#### GIRIDARA GOPAL

India's fight against the pandemic started on a commendable note. The government responded early by issuing travel advisories, conducting screening at airports, imposing lockdowns, and putting in place a series of testing strategies devised by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) based on the progression of the disease in the population.

#### The use of rapid antigen PoC

A recent development in the testing strategy devised by ICMR was the adoption of rapid antigen point-of-care (PoC) tests, which provide test results within 30 minutes. Delhi has used this in substantial numbers, as is evident from its bulletins, to improve the testing numbers, in the last three weeks. And Delhi has shown a steady reduction in the daily number of confirmed cases (from 3,788 on June 24 to 1,781 on July 11).

SD Biosensor, which manufactures these kits, has the Food and Drug Administration's approval dated April 23 for the Standard M nCoV Real-Time detection kit (a RT-PCR kit) but not for the Standard Q COVID-19 Ag (rapid antigen PoC test) which ICMR has approved based on independent validations by AIIMS and itself. The rapid kits are to be used across India in containment zones, hospitals and labs under the NABL. The manufacturer claims sensitivity (ability of a test to correctly identify those with the disease) of 84.4% and specificity (ability of the test to correctly identify those without the disease) of 100%. The test procedure requires a nasopharyngeal sample (taken from a part behind the nasal cavity which forms the upper throat). The kit needs to be maintained at a temperature of 2°C-30°C for optimal results.

The negative results reported by these rapid antigen kits in Delhi need to be interpreted with caution. Individuals need training and expertise in collecting nasopharyngeal samples, else the swab will only collect nasal secretions. Temperatures in Delhi now average 40°C-45°C; hence the cold chain used for transporting and storing these kits in the community needs to be monitored close-

ly. Low sensitivity could be worsened further by these factors and pave the way for 'false negatives'. Although ICMR has said that all rapid antigen test negatives should be re-tested in RT-PCR, the Delhi bulletin report doesn't show how many of these negatives have been tested again. The ideal sensitivity and specificity in community settings can be estimated if there's data showing how many of these negatives turned out to be positive in RT-PCR. Additionally, if these kits were used in low prevalence settings, the validation parameters (sensitivity and specificity) get disturbed by Bayesian laws.

#### Details in break-up

Delhi should start giving a break-up of these test numbers so that a scientific conclusion can be made on the success of these kits. Else it could be possible that 'false negatives' continue to spread the virus unknowingly. The break-up could include a) symptomatic/asymptomatic tested; b) RT-PCR/rapid antigen test used; c) first test/second test of the individual. Since re-tests are mandatory for all rapid test negatives, it's possible that the same individual could be counted twice – once on the day of rapid testing and then on the day of RT-PCR.

Positivity rate is a metric that measures the adequacy of testing capacity in a given region. According to the World Health Organization, if the positivity rate is less than 5% for 14 days, the region can be classified as having good testing. Taken on face value, Delhi's epidemic appears to have been controlled very well (positivity rate is now below 10%). However it's important to get the break-up of these numbers to understand the reality behind the scenes.

The COVID-19 fight would require real-time data reporting for insights. It also requires synchronisation of data between communities, laboratories and hospitals to plan and prioritise resources. Data collection, analysis and interpretation can have layers of bias. Hence, monitoring the process during this phase of the epidemic is of paramount importance.

D. Giridara Gopal, M.D., is pursuing a Ph.D. and working as a research scientist in AIIMS

# Tablighi Jamaat, an island unto itself

It chooses to emphasise some aspects of Islam while underplaying others



ZIYA US SALAM

The Tablighi Jamaat, a non-political body, is considered to be the 'ideal Muslim organisation', focused solely on introspection in isolation. Often criticised for reducing Islam to a set of rituals, the Tablighi Jamaat was accused of spreading COVID-19 in Delhi following a mass gathering in March. Inside the Tablighi Jamaat provides a lowdown on the organisation and its ideological beliefs. An excerpt:

Founded in 1927 in Mewat, the Tablighi Jamaat is now perhaps the largest Muslim organisation in the world, and the only one to have a footprint across all continents. Its membership is rather conservatively pegged at 80 million, though admittedly, with millions of floating members who join for a tour and drop out, only to come back later, keeping a headcount is not easy. Or, perhaps, even desirable.

In any case, the Tablighi does not maintain an account of its members, their names, addresses, profession, family, and other such details. There is no card-holding cadre; just foot soldiers of Islam. People join of their volition and leave accordingly; sometimes they return. No questions are asked.

That this leaves the organisation vulnerable to charges of possibly hosting a potential terrorist who might use his membership to get visas and lodging in mosques is another matter. In England, for instance, two of the 7/7 bombers, Shehzad Tanveer and Mohammed Sidique Khan, had prayed at a Tablighi mosque in Dewsbury. Although this did not prove that the Tablighi Jamaat was involved in the incident, the organisation did come under suspicion. The Tablighis reason that merely offering a prayer in the Markaz or any of its centres in other countries does not make the organisation responsible for a person's conduct. No more than it does the church or temple where a terrorist might offer prayers.

#### No questions asked

Due to its almost unprecedented flexibility on membership and lack of records, the Tablighi has flummoxed sociologists and religious commentators alike. The body has no written constitu-



tion, no plans chalked out to reach a certain number of people by a certain date and year. It does not operate using a blueprint for progress, and does not take stock of the year gone by. Unlike the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind or the Tameez-e-Islami of Pakistan, the Tablighi Jamaat defies easy definition. It does not aim to restore the Caliphate. It does not set out to establish a world order governed by the Quran and Sunnah.

Unlike the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, it nurtures no pronounced emphasis on the concept of nationalism either. The Tablighi never questions the nizam, the laws of the land, the way of functioning of a polity. Its volunteers travel to a new city or a country, park themselves in a mosque, read and recite from religious books, share the message of faith with their fellow practitioners, and go back home. The body eschews conversion of people of other faiths and concentrates on making Muslims better Muslims. This makes it difficult for opponents of Islam, or the Tablighi, to point fingers at the organisation. After all, it does not seek depletion of numbers in other religions, or augmentation within the ranks of Islam. If it says not a word on divorce among Muslims, internationally, it does not speak on political issues involving countries such as Palestine or Yemen, or even some of the poverty-stricken Muslim states of the African continent. This again is unlike other Muslim organisations which have taken an unequivocal pro-Palestine stance, or a more nuanced stand in the Saudi-Yemen conflict.

The Tablighi professes a uniquely insular approach that chooses to emphasise particular aspects of Islam while underplaying others, thus ensuring the

organisation remains an island unto itself. While it certainly believes in the five pillars of Islam – the Kalima, salah, roza (fasting in the month of Ramzan), zakah and Hajj – it follows its own six principles, of which it clearly stresses salah or prayer above all else.

The Tablighi's proponents say that it is because of the Tablighi Jamaat several community members who might have fallen prey to the last century's Shuddhi campaign did not. No other organisation came forward to help the deprived and the dispossessed find their way back to their own faith.

A huge number of young men and women today owe a debt of gratitude to the Tablighi for teaching their ancestors the correct way to offer prayers and perform ablutions, the importance of fasting in the month of Ramzan, and other aspects of the faith.

#### Controversial actions

While these are, undoubtedly, laudable accomplishments, a few questions about the Tablighi Jamaat and the way it functions remain. It is fine to recruit a man who is either unlettered or knows little about Islam and teach him the basics, but why should the teaching stop at that? Why should a man who memorised certain surahs on a three-day trip over a 40-day or even a four-month trip? Why does the Tablighi assume that every new entrant is either ignorant or negligent of his prayers? What does it offer people with higher intellectual prowess? Why not look for answers to emerging issues in the light of the Quran and Sunnah, instead of resorting to obscurantism or convenient silence?

Excerpted with permission from HarperCollins



#### DATA POINT

## COVID-19 returns to Kerala

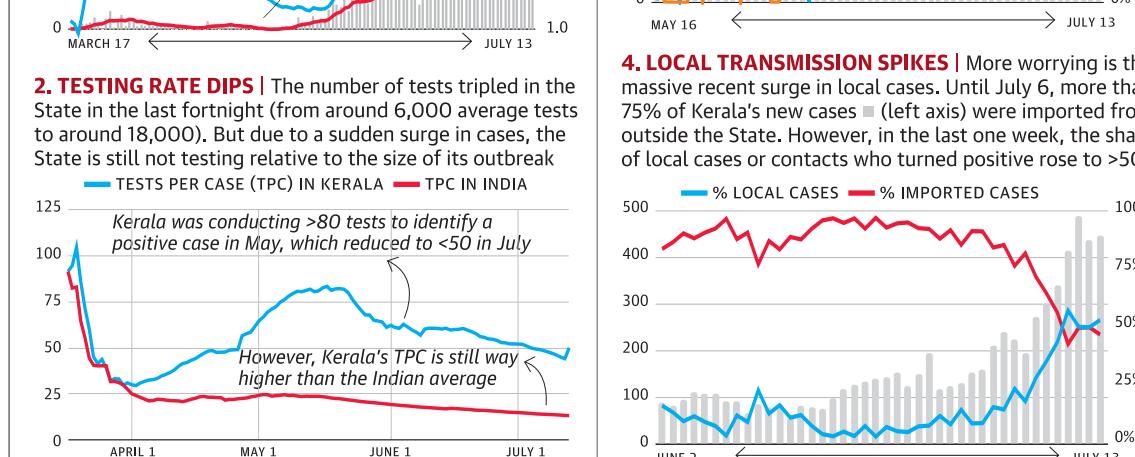
On Tuesday, Kerala recorded 608 new COVID-19 cases, the highest single-day spike since its first case on January 30. After the initial surge in March and April, the State successfully brought down the new cases to zero on many days in May. Kerala increased its testing rates by a high margin in the initial months of the pandemic, a proven ploy to tackle the disease. However, after the economy opened up and migrants from abroad and other States started to return, the State was not able to test enough relative to its outbreak despite a significant increase in tests. Cases through local transmission (contacts of imported ones) have lately surged, a definite cause for concern for the State. By **The Hindu Data Team**

**1. CASES SURGE** | Kerala recorded >300 new cases (left axis) on all days in the past week. The share of total tests that were positive (right axis) also slightly increased to 2.1% on July 14 from 1.2% two months ago. However, it is still far below the national average of 7.5%.

**2. TESTING RATE DIPS** | The number of tests tripled in the State in the last fortnight (from around 6,000 average tests to around 18,000). But due to a sudden surge in cases, the State is still not testing relative to the size of its outbreak.

**3. MIGRANTS BACK HOME** | The sudden rise in cases can be attributed directly to the fact that migrants flocked to the State from abroad and other States, especially by air, after mid-June.

**4. LOCAL TRANSMISSION SPIKES** | More worrying is the massive recent surge in local cases. Until July 6, more than 75% of Kerala's new cases (left axis) were imported from outside the State. However, in the last one week, the share of local cases or contacts who turned positive rose to >50%



## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1970

#### Tusker dying due to lack of funds

Kesavan, the 60-year-old temple tusker of Kachamkurichi temple, is to-day fighting a grim battle for his life. But the temple has no funds to pay for his treatment. In the absence of adequate medical attention, the once majestic pachyderm is undergoing real torture. With his head drooping, Kesavan has been on his legs for the past six months, unable to lie down and relax. There are ulcerous wounds all over his body, with worms thriving in them. Kesavan, who is owned by the Vishnu temple in Kachamkurichi, was in great demand for temple festivals all over Kerala, and earned for the temple an annual income of Rs. 10,000. And when this "faithful servant" is stricken, the temple is unable to help him. Mr. K. Sankunni Menon, Manager of the temple, said the temple depended solely on the income from its lands. The tenants had not paid the rent, following the implementation of the Land Reforms Act, and even the hereditary servants of the temple could not be paid for the last five months. The elephant, he said, could be saved if treated immediately and he had to raise a loan for the purpose. The Kachamkurichi temple is one of the oldest and biggest landowning temples in Palghat district.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1920

#### Imperial Preference Committee (From an editorial)

We wonder when the Government of India are going to realise that the documents prepared by them are of greater use and interest to the country than to the British Press which often dismiss them with but a tantalising reference and at most a jejune and indifferent hundred or fifty-words summary. The Times in a recent issue referred to the Government of India's memorandum prepared in the Commerce Department for the Imperial Preference Committee and the reference shows that that paper is in possession of a copy of that memorandum. But we, in this country, who are certainly far more interested in the question, unless the theory as well as the practice be that the Government of India exist to forward the interests represented by the Times, have had to be content with the two-page report of the Committee published in the Gazette of India, a report which in more than one place refers to the memorandum but does not give us any full and definite idea as to the nature of the contents of the memorandum.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## CLP sacks Pilot from Cabinet, PCC

He also handed over a list of MLAs supporting him and apprised the Governor of the impending Cabinet reshuffle.

Mr. Gehlot told reporters after meeting the Governor that while the BJP was trying to destabilise his government, Mr. Pilot was playing into the hands of the opposition party. "The BJP wanted to repeat in Rajasthan what it did in Madhya Pradesh, but its intentions will not fructify here," he said.

Mr. Gehlot said Mr. Pilot and other Ministers as well as MLAs were given ample opportunities, but they chose not to attend the CLP meetings on Monday and Tuesday.

Mr. Pilot reacted immediately through a post in Hindi on Twitter, saying "Satya ko pareshan kiya ja sakta hai, parajit nahin (The truth can be harrassed, not defeated.)"

In another tweet, he thanked all those who had come out in his support and

changed his profile to delete the reference to his position as Deputy CM and PCC chief.

Earlier, Ministers Mr. Vishvendra Singh and Mr. Ramesh Meena and former Assembly Speaker Deependra Singh Shekhawat released a statement affirming that Mr. Pilot's "public humiliation" was unacceptable to them. "We are seeking to restore our self-respect and are not clamouring for any posts and positions contrary to false reports in the media," they said.

The signed statement said the leaders were taking a stand to protect their dignity when Mr. Pilot was threatened with the SOG's notice.

Mr. Gehlot presided over a meeting of the State Cabinet and the Council of Ministers at his official residence here late on Tuesday evening. After the sacking of the three Ministers, 12 senior Ministers, including the CM, remain in the Cabinet.

## Centre limits duration of online school sessions

"Hence sitting with digital gadgets for longer hours or their excess use can be avoided by designing age appropriate schedules of digital education," it added.

Keeping the overall development of students in mind, it recommended that "online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than two sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days the States/UTs decide to have online classes" for Classes I-8. For Classes 9-12, the recommendation was for not more than four sessions per day. A 10-15 minute break needs to be provided between sessions, it added.

Apart from such live classes, it offered a number of recommendations for "asynchronous learning" with tools to allow students to download lessons or listen to radio and TV pro-

grammes, communicate through WhatsApp and SMS, study on their own and undertake creative projects.

**Sharing devices**  
While States and schools develop timetables, they must keep in mind that multiple children in one family may need to access the same devices, to survey the digital infrastructure available with teachers as well as students, to assess the levels of possible parental involvement, and to remember that teachers may also be parents needing to supervise their own children's learning as well, said the guidelines. They must also make arrangements to reach students who do not have access to any digital infrastructure at home, or who have special needs, to ensure that no child is left behind.

## Move to map COVID-19 after-effects

Diabetologist Dr. V. Mohan observed that there were indications of COVID-induced diabetes among recovered patients.

There was a move to collect the data on this globally to understand the effect of this relatively new and evolving virus.

The stress on the body associated with this virus could lead to long and short term complications.

**Damage to lungs**  
Dr. Yash Gulati, orthopaedic surgeon at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, said: "The fact of the matter was that nobody knew for sure the exact after effects of the disease but in the medical community, we are aware the damage is caused by thrombosis in the small vessels that ultimately damages lung tissues and other organs, including the heart, and can lead to fatal pulmonary embolism."

At a press conference, In-

## India, China hold fourth round of consultations

Last week, Indian and Chinese troops completed the first phase of disengagement from standoff areas in Galwan valley, Hot Springs and Gogra and also partial disengagement from Pangong Tso, where Chinese troops moved back from the base of Finger 4 to Finger 5.

However, Chinese troops are still present on the ridge line of Finger 4.

At each place, Indian

dian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Dr. Balram Bhargava said that two indigenous vaccine candidates had undergone successful toxicity studies in rats, mice and rabbits and the data had been shared with the Drug Controller General of India.

"They have now got clearance to start human trials early this month. These candidates have got their sites ready with clinical study on approximately 1,000 human volunteers now having been initiated. Also 60% of the vaccines supplied in the world are of Indian origin, India is perceived and is an important player in the vaccine supply. Any vaccine produced or developed in any part of the world will have to be scaled up by India or China," he said.

The Union government, meanwhile, said it had instructed the States to follow the WHO guidelines on testing.

At a press conference, In-

troops also moved back a couple of kilometres following pull back by the Chinese troops as per consensus reached, creating a temporary buffer zone with only a small group of soldiers left to verify the disengagement.

Another defence source said restoration of status quo at Pangong Tso is going to be tough and could take more rounds of talks.

At each place, Indian

CM

YK

## With 608 cases, Kerala experiences a big surge

Understand reality of virus spread, says CM Pinarayi Vijayan; Karnataka witnesses 87 deaths, a single day high; A.P. toll is 43

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

ed for more than double the number, at 409.

Mr. Vijayan said that in 26 "contact cases", an epidemiological link was yet to be established.

Those who acquired COVID-19 through local transmission included eight health care workers, one BSF jawan, two ITBP personnel and two CISF men.

Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, said the public had to come to terms with the reality that the COVID-19 situa-

## COVID-19

tion was set to escalate. The State had to prepare itself for the long haul and the epidemic was not expected to ease before year end.

Kerala's 608 new cases raised cumulative cases to 8,930. Imported cases were 198, while those reported from the community from local transmission account-

ed for 201 of the 608 new cases, of which 158 were due to local transmission, including 19 with no known source of infection. The district also had the highest case burden with 794 active cases.

As public health experts pointed out, the Poothura cluster in Thiruvananthapuram turned out to be the tip

of the iceberg and at least 200-plus kilometres of the coastal belt was now seen as one single transmission hub.

Andhra Pradesh witnessed 43 deaths in 24

## Bearing the brunt

Fighting from the front, a large number of police personnel have tested positive for COVID-19 in many States. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Containing the spread: A paramedic on a special bus collecting swab samples from a police personnel in Vijayawada. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

hours, and for the third day in a row, cases were close to the 2,000-mark. With 1,916 fresh cases, the tally went up to 33,019 and the death toll to 408, a Health Department

bulletin said. Local cases touched 30,163, representing 91% of all cases. There were 2,856 imported cases and 2,424 of them were people from other States and 432

foreign returnees.

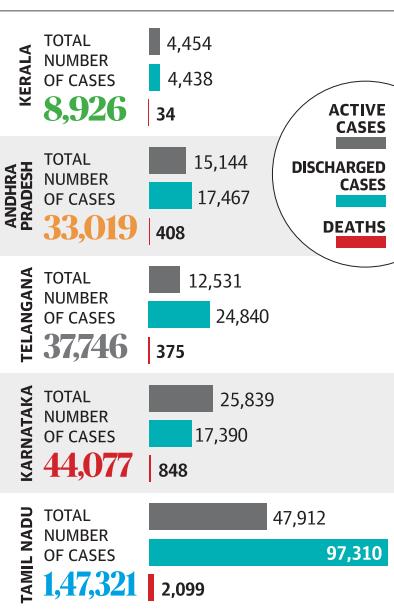
The 43 new deaths were in nine districts. Anantapur reported 10 deaths, followed by West Godavari with nine. Chittoor, East Godavari and Kadapa reported five deaths each, while Kurnool and Prakasam districts had three each. Visakhapatnam reported two and Vizianagaram reported one death.

Eleven districts reported more than 100 new cases.

Karnataka on Tuesday saw 87 deaths, the highest on a single day so far. With this, the toll touched 842.

With 2,496 new cases, the total for positive cases touched 44,077. Bengaluru Urban recorded 1,267 cases and 56 deaths. After seeing a decline in the number of tests in the past two days, as many as 23,674 tests were conducted on Tuesday.

(With inputs from Vijayawada and Bengaluru bureaus)



## Rape accused former Bishop tests positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

Former Jalandhar Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun in Kerala, has tested positive for COVID-19, a Health Department official said on Tuesday.

A Kottayam court in Kerala had cancelled Mulakkal's bail on Monday citing his failure to appear for the trial. It issued a non-bailable warrant against him.

Mulakkal's report, confirming him to be positive for COVID-19, came on Monday evening, said COV-19 nodal officer for Jalandhar, T.P. Singh.

In her complaint to the police in June 2018, the nun had alleged that the Bishop subjected her to sexual abuse between 2014 and 2016. The case was registered by the Kottayam district police in Kerala.

## Customs verifies contacts of the accused

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Customs investigation into the smuggling of gold via the diplomatic channel of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consulate here has appeared to pivot towards potential "persons of interest" whose association with the accused in the case has come in spotlight.

Senior bureaucrat M. Sivasankar, who had to step down as Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan after the scandal broke, seems to top the list. The investigators have summoned him for questioning in connection with the case that has economic and national security implications.

The investigation that has a bearing on international relations comes awkwardly close to the Chief Minister's

## Up in arms: A Congress supporter being taken away by the police during a protest in Palakkad on Tuesday. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

Office (CMO) with the Customs enforcers inspecting Mr. Sivasankar's apartment, verifying his mobile phone calls and trying to fathom whether the official's connection with second accused Swapna Suresh was felonious. Mr. Sivasankar reportedly appeared for questioning at the Customs House here on Tuesday.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is working in tandem with the Customs and seems intent on unearthing well-entrenched gold smuggling networks, their financiers and also beneficiaries, who, agency officials have told the court, could include anti-national outfits.

Meanwhile, Minister for

## NIA to open bag seized from friend of accused

KOCHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), which is probing the gold smuggling case, will get the bag, which it had seized from a friend of accused Sandeep Nair, opened on Wednesday. The investigators believe that the bag may offer some valid clues and evidences to strengthen the case against the accused. The agency had earlier moved the court for getting the bag opened. The court had ordered the process to be videographed.

Higher Education K.T. Jaleel said Swapna had spoken to him on May 27 at the instance of the UAE Consul General to donate food kits to the needy. The consulate had continued to engage Swapna for liaison work on a "request basis" even after she left the mission to work for an IT Department subsidiary.

Meanwhile,

## COVID-19: Kerala to ready 50,000 beds in 10 days

State anticipates a huge surge in cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Anticipating a massive surge in COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks, the government on Tuesday issued an order deputing IAS officials to every district to assist all Collectors in setting up and operationalising more COVID first-line treatment centres (CFLTCs) and reverse quarantine facilities in districts.

CFLTCs with a minimum of 100 beds per panchayat and 50 beds per urban wards should be identified and readied for operation to contain the spread.

The order says that as soon as a containment zone is notified, a 100-bed facility

should be kept ready to admit patients in that area itself. Similarly, reverse quarantine facilities should also be established at the local level. The order directs that in all districts 50,000 beds be readied in CFLTCs within the next 10 days. The District Collectors have been asked to mobilise through sponsorship beds, bed-sheets, and other infrastructural essentials that CFLTCs may need.

Kerala will bank on its experience and strengths derived from the People's Plan Campaign and plan for the decentralised management of COVID-19, as the epidemic is set to scale the peak in the next few months.

## Blaze at Visakha Solvents leaves another injured

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE  
VISAKHAPATNAM

Scare in the air: The fire at the Pharma City in Visakhapatnam lights up the sky on Monday night. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

identified as K. Srinivasa Rao, senior chemist, a resident of Anakapalle, and the injured is Malleswara Rao, junior chemist. Mr. Malleswara Rao suffered about 30% burns and is being treated at a corporate hospital

in the city. The incident occurred between 10.45 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Monday.

According to CEO of JNPC, P.P. Lal Krishna, the incident occurred when a solvent chemical DMSO was in the distillation process.

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Meanwhile,

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T.K. ROHIT  
CHENNAI

The Andhra Pradesh government can proceed with the initial work for the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project but cannot commence physical work till the National Green Tribunal decides on an application against the implementation of the scheme, the southern bench of the NGT has ruled.

The Bench of Justice K. Ramakrishnan and expert member Saibal Dasgupta on Monday modified an interim order passed in May that prevented the Andhra Pradesh government from proceeding with the project. The relief came after counsel for the State submitted

## Joining hands to build home for schoolgirl

Donations poured in after *The Hindu* reported the plight of Kerala student



At home: The new house was handed over to Malavika's family on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tears in a school bus out of hunger.

Her friends and teachers from St. Stephen's Girls Higher Secondary School, Keevarampara, were shocked to see the condition of her home when they dropped in shortly after the

incident. Her father, Subramanyam, was just rendered jobless in that year's floods while her polio-affected mother could hardly supplement the family income.

# Pilot likely to spell out future plans today

Like his friend Jyotiraditya Scindia, the 42-year-old leader could move to the BJP or float his own party

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Rebel Congress leader Sachin Pilot is expected to spell out his future plans on Wednesday, a source close to Mr. Pilot told *The Hindu* as political circles seemed focused on what lies ahead for him and his supporters.

Apart from a cryptic tweet thanking his supporters and a change in his Twitter bio, calling himself as MLA from the Tonk constituency and a former Union Minister, Mr. Pilot didn't drop any hints.

But some of his party colleagues are still hoping to salvage the situation.

#### Dedicated worker

"Sachin Pilot is not just a colleague but my friend. No one can take away the fact that all these years he has worked with dedication for the party. Sincerely we hope the situation can still be salvaged. Sad it has come to this," tweeted former Congress MP Jitin Prasada.

Congress leaders said they would wait for the next move



Past tense: A file photo of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Rahul Gandhi and Sachin Pilot. • PTI

by the Pilot camp and insisted that the party has neither suspended nor expelled him. So what are the possible options for Mr. Pilot?

Like his friend Jyotiraditya Scindia, Mr. Pilot can join the BJP and work towards dislodging the Ashok Gehlot by forcing a floor test. Though the Pilot camp at the moment claims the support of 20 to 22 MLAs, they are con-

fident that more would join in during a floor test.

#### Legal battles

With the Speaker being a Congress leader, the rebel MLAs could get entangled in disqualification and lengthy legal battles. The other option is to follow the Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh model and persuade more MLAs to resign and bring

Best, brightest, says Tharoor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor said Sachin Pilot is one of the best and brightest who should have joined efforts to make the Congress stronger. He was among a few leaders who commented. Former Minister Salman Khurshid tweeted, "We have challenges ahead that make personal ambitions and expectations insignificant."

down the Congress numbers below the BJP and its allies who have 76 MLAs.

In the BJP, however, Mr. Pilot not only faces the risk of getting overshadowed by leaders like Vasundhara Raje and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat but may not be made Chief Minister, the main reason for the feud, immediately. He could, however, be made a Minister in the Union

Sanjay Jha suspended

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

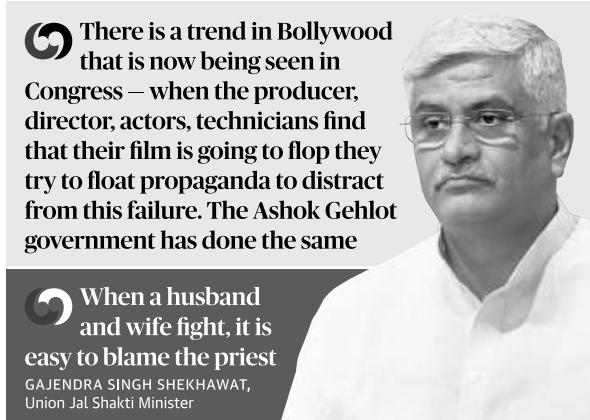
Maharashtra Congress has suspended former spokesperson Sanjay Jha from the party "with immediate effect for anti-party activities and breach of discipline". Mr. Jha was vocal on Twitter in his support for Mr. Pilot. State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat signed the suspension order.

Cabinet.

The 42-year-old Congress leader could float a regional party as he has the experience of working with grassroots workers as the PCC chief. But Rajasthan has largely been a two-party State with even parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) failing to emerge as a force despite a substantial Dalit population.

# Union Minister Shekhawat hints at Pilot's entry into BJP

Any leader with mass base should be welcomed, says Minister



There is a trend in Bollywood that is now being seen in Congress – when the producer, director, actors, technicians find that their film is going to flop they try to float propaganda to distract from this failure. The Ashok Gehlot government has done the same

When a husband and wife fight, it is easy to blame the priest  
GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT, Union Jal Shakti Minister

# Amid rebellion, Raje's silence rings out loud

Former CM plays wait and watch

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Amid the unfolding, cacophonous political crisis in Rajasthan, the silence of former Chief Minister and BJP leader Vasundhara Raje has rung out loud and become a major factor in the BJP's cautious, wait and watch attitude towards Sachin Pilot's rebellion against the Congress.

Ms. Raje is reportedly in Dholpur, her traditional stronghold, and has not – not even via a single tweet – commented on the goings-on in the State where she has twice been Chief Minister. Other BJP leaders from the State – Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, former Union Minister P.P. Choudhary and Rajya Sabha MP Om Mathur – have commented, though in measured tones. Not so Ms. Raje.

#### Regional satrap

Sources in the BJP say Ms. Raje's silence, and her considerable hold on BJP MLAs in the State unit is also one of the reasons why the party has been proceeding rather gingerly with regard to toppling the Gehlot government.

The high command wants to induct Sachin Pilot into the BJP, he would be a great catch. But this is a State unit where Vasundhara Raje is a dominant figure and also has the guts to stand up to Delhi. In such a



Vasundhara Raje's silence proves that it's being seen as a Delhi-led adventure.

situation, it was felt that proceeding with caution was wise," said a source.

#### 2018 stand-off

Ms. Raje very famously held her ground in 2018, over the question of choosing a State unit chief.

While then party president Amit Shah wanted to appoint Mr. Shekhawat, Ms. Raje held firm on preventing a choice from Delhi to prevail. After a 71-day stalemate, Madan Lal Saini, a lightweight, was appointed.

Ms. Raje's silence on events in Rajasthan proves that it is mostly being perceived as a Delhi-led adventure, and being watched as such.

While it isn't clear what Mr. Pilot – currently sacked as the Deputy Chief Minister and Pradesh Congress Committee president – is likely to do, his entry into the BJP will be as cataclysmic for the BJP as his exit was for the Congress.

# Priyanka, Puri spar over her stay in govt. bungalow

Report seeking extension fake, she says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Media reports stating that the Union government had agreed to a request made by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to allow her an extension of stay in the Lodhi Road bungalow sparked a sharp Twitter exchange between her and Urban Development Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday.

Tagging a news report, Ms. Vadra took to Twitter to call it "fake news", and clarified that she would be vacating the bungalow by August 1. Mr. Puri promptly countered her by stating that a "powerful" Congress MP did make such a request.

"This is FAKE NEWS. I have not made any such request to the government. As per the eviction letter handed to me on the 1st of July, I will be vacating the government accommodation at 35 Lodhi Estate by the 1st of Au-



gust," tweeted Ms. Vadra.

The news report said that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a statesman like move had agreed to her request and allowed her to stay in the bungalow for some more time". "Facts speak for themselves! A powerful Congress leader with much clout in the Party called me on 4 July 2020 at 12:05 pm to request that 35, Lodhi Estate be allotted to another INC MP so that Priyanka Vadra can stay on. Let's not sensationalise everything please," Mr. Puri tweeted.

Detailed eligibility conditions and on-line application on [www.kride.in](http://www.kride.in)

# No immediate threat to Congress govt. in Rajasthan

Opposition BJP is far behind the ruling party in its strength in the Assembly

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

After the political turmoil created by Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's rebellion resulting in his removal from the Cabinet on Tuesday, there is no immediate threat to the stability of the Congress government led by veteran leader Ashok Gehlot. In the opposition BJP is far behind the ruling Congress in its strength in the Assembly.

In the 200-member Assembly, the Congress has 107

MLAs, while the BJP has 72. After losing the support of Mr. Pilot's camp, the Congress will still enjoy the backing of smaller parties and 13 Independents, though the party has distanced itself from three Independent legislators.

AICC general secretary in charge of the State Avinash Pande has claimed that the Gehlot camp had the support of 109 MLAs. The Congress needs the support of 101 lawmakers for a simple



Strong stance: Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala addressing mediapersons in Jaipur on Tuesday. • ROHIT JAIN PARAS

majority. Mr. Gehlot, who met Governor Kalraj Mishra after a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party here on Tuesday, handed over a list of 104 MLAs, claiming a majority in the Assembly. According to Congress sources,

as many as 102 MLAs were present at the CLP meeting.

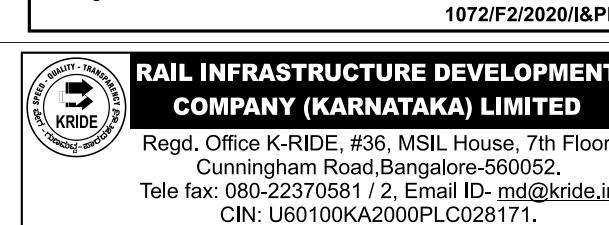
One of the MLAs, Bhanwarlal Meghwal, holding the Social Justice and Empowerment portfolio, did not attend the meeting because of his ill-health.

Mr. Pilot had claimed that over 30 Congress and some Independent MLAs had pledged support to him. However, only 18 MLAs skipped the CLP meetings held here on Monday and Tuesday.

Interestingly,

two-thirds of the Congress MLAs – 72 out of the 107 – will have to leave the party to escape the anti-defection law. Political observers here feel that such a probability would be highly unlikely in the near future.

Sikar-based political analyst Ashfaq Kayamkhan said Mr. Pilot may not be able to cobble together the number of legislators required to top-



Post	Stream	Number of Posts
General Manager	Civil	1
General Manager	S&T	1
Sr. DGM	Civil	2
	Electrical	1
	S&T	1
	Finance	1
Sr. Manager	Civil	5
	Electrical	1
	S&T	2
	Finance	1
Assistant Manager	Civil	8
	Electrical	3
	S&T	4
	Finance	2
Executive	Civil	5
	Electrical	2
	S&T	2
	IT	1
	Finance	1
	HR	1

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Parliament  
project: 7 firms  
bid to qualify

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Seven construction companies, including a Uttar Pradesh government undertaking, have submitted bids for pre-qualification for the contract to build a new Parliament building, according to the Central Public Works Department's records.

The pre-qualification bids were opened on Tuesday, after the 3 p.m. deadline. According to the CPWD's online tender portal, the bids received were from ITD Cementation India Limited, Larsen and Toubro Ltd., NCC Ltd., PSP Projects Ltd., Shapoorji Pallonji and Co Ltd., Tata Projects Ltd. and Uttar Pradesh Rajkiya Nirman Nigam Ltd.

Plea in SC  
for maternity  
benefits

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court sought a response from the government on a plea by an NGO to pay lactating mothers and pregnant women a maternity benefit of ₹6,000 each, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Bench led by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde on Tuesday directed the Centre to submit a status report on the disbursement of the maternity benefit under the National Food Security Act.

The NGO, People's Union of Civil Liberties, sought a judicial direction to the States and Union Territories for disbursal of the amounts with effect from July 2013.

## EU, India to meet on resuming FTA negotiations

COVID-19, bilateral investment, maritime security and concerns over an 'assertive' China will be high on the summit agenda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Seven years after talks on a free trade agreement were suspended, India and the European Union (EU) are set to agree on a "high-level dialogue on trade and investment" to restart negotiations.

According to officials, tackling COVID-19 and its impact on the economy and the global order will be high on the agenda. In particular, medical developments on vaccines and treatment will be discussed along with the withdrawal of the U.S. from multilateral organisations (like the World Health Organisation), and concerns over an 'assertive' China.

European Union officials said they had been fully briefed by New Delhi and Beijing about the situation at the Line of Actual Control, as they were deeply concerned by the deadly clashes at the



**Building ties:** In this photo dated October 6, 2017, Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with EU representatives at the 14th EU-India summit held in New Delhi. •PTI

Galwan Valley last month, and they were "pleased" that both sides have since agreed to military de-escalation.

The trade and investment dialogue, to be conducted between Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan, is expected to give a boost to

negotiations on the Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) as the EU-India FTA is known.

The leaders have expressed their ambition to move towards a comprehensive free trade agreement and an investment protection agreement and we will

announce a new dialogue which will give a political impetus to such efforts," said EU officials based in Brussels.

An EU official, who specialises in trade issues, admitted that there was "no timeline" for the BTIA talks yet and that negotiators are still "quite far apart" due to what Europe perceives as India's "protectionist stance".

"We have witnessed a trend in India that goes towards the protectionist side. The Make in India programme was accelerated by the COVID-19 crisis and recent pronouncements that India wants to go "self-reliant," didn't help the situation," the official said, referring to Mr. Modi's launch of "Atmanirbhar India".

The official said trade with

India formed under 3% of the EU's global trade, which is "far below" what was expected of the relationship. Conversely, the EU is India's largest trading partner and investor, and accounts for 11% of India's global trade.

The official also said the EU has reservations about the model "Bilateral Investment Treaty" (BIT) that New Delhi has proposed, especially on dispute mechanisms in Indian courts.

Speaking about the importance of multilateralism and cooperation on global forums, the officials said the EU had welcomed India's election to the UN Security Council next year, and that India's role would be important in reconciling the UNSC "paralysed by vetoes and infighting".

CBSE Class 10  
results to be  
out today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will declare the Class 10 board exam results on July 15, it announced on Tuesday.

The board had on Monday announced the results for Class 12 examinations.

Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank also took to Twitter to share the update. "My dear children, parents and teachers, the results of Class 10 CBSE examinations will be announced tomorrow. I wish all the students best of luck," he said.

The board will announce the results evaluated through an alternative assessment scheme.

Medical test not needed for  
trans ID certificate: draft rules

Move comes after opposition from rights activists

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

After facing flak from the transgender community, the Union government has done away with the requirement of a medical examination for trans persons applying for a certificate of identity in its latest draft rules framed under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

The draft of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020, published in the gazette on Monday, stated that a District Magistrate would issue a transgender identity certificate and card based on an affidavit by the applicant,

but without any medical examination".

An earlier draft of the rules, for which the Ministry had invited public comments till May 18, mandated a report from a psychologist along with the affidavit for the application. The trans rights movement had opposed this, as it was seen as going against a trans person's right to self-identification.

Social Justice Ministry Secretary R. Subrahmanyam said the latest draft, which is open for comments for 30 days from July 13, had addressed the community's issues regarding identity and included welfare measures

for trans persons.

An online application system was being prepared and may be ready by September, he said.

Trans persons would be required to fill out a form and submit an affidavit saying they perceive themselves to be "a transgender person whose gender does not match with the gender assigned at birth".

In case of change of gender, the application for new identification certificate would require a certificate from the medical superintendent or chief medical officer of the medical institution where the applicant underwent the intervention.

More Spike  
missiles to be  
ordered

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Army is set to place a repeat order for Spike-LR (long range) Anti-Tank Guided Missiles from Israel as part of emergency procurement, a defence source said on Tuesday.

The decision comes days after the Army's decision to place a repeat order for 72,400 Sig Sauer assault rifles from the U.S.

The emergency procurements come in the backdrop of continuing tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. The Spike order will be a repeat order for 12 launchers and around 250 missiles under emergency procurement, the source stated.

India dropped for not involving  
actively in rail project, says Iran

Tehran had gone ahead with project citing funding delays



A view of Iran's Chabahar port, in which India has invested.

*The Hindu* reported on Tuesday that Iran had gone ahead with the important transit project on its own citing delays from the Indian side in funding.

The delay has also indicated at possible impact of U.S. sanctions on India's projects with Iran. Though India secured exemption for the Chabahar port from U.S. sanctions, bilateral ties with Iran took a hit in February after the riots in Delhi drew condemnation from Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif.

India had firmed up the railway plans in May 2016 during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tehran.

THE HINDU

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## Are your teams built to thrive in this crisis?

A Deloitte India study shows that organisations that had invested in self-managed teams were quicker off the block in adopting greater digital processes to support customers

PRINCE FREDERICK

There is a case for adding a new phrase "covid-19 demonstrable systems" to the corporate lexicon. It's about systems in organisations that have proved equal to the challenge posed by the COVID-19 crisis, and therefore, worth building upon.

Recently, Deloitte India conducted a pandemic-related study, connecting with the C-suite members of 39 companies, a mix of Indian organisations and MNCs, across sectors, to assess their systems-readiness. In an interaction with *The Hindu Opportunities*, Mohinish Sinha, partner, Deloitte India, elaborated upon the key findings.

Digital adoption as the main factor of resilience was a leitmotif in the conversations with the C-suite members. The study explored what enabled some organisations to quickly and comfortably reweave a skein of digital-focussed processes around core functions, where others floundered.

"The big finding of the whole survey is that the culture dimension needed for digital adoption is the same dimension that is needed to thrive in the crisis," begins Mohinish, adding that there has been a correlation between digital adaption and an employee- and customer-centric organisational culture.

**The bottom-up approach** Mohinish says companies that have been empowering

their teams, even partially, had a better wicket to bat on.

He illustrates how a cross-functional team of eight to nine members, representing state-level operations of a consumer durables company with a pan-India presence, responded with innovation and agility and adopted a digital strategy. Due to pandemic-related restrictions, sales figures had nosedived, and seeking to stem the tide, the team took the issue to the state-level leadership. By admitting that there were no ready-made answers to offer, and that all of them had to put their heads together to find a solution, the leader was displaying generative leadership style.

"They started talking to the junior guys and tried out different ways to collaborate with the local logistics guys and shift their product online. Within a month and a half, this team was able to manage eight times the average sales the other teams in the country could achieve," says Mohinish, adding that the organisation is now replicating the model across the country, and that there has been a great shift in the way they are functioning. Inferentially, Mohinish says, when there is a bottom-up approach "the net rate of learning in the team is faster than the rate of change. He adds: "In the bottom-up approach, the leadership empowers the team, creates an enabling environment, and leaves the job to the team."

extra layers can adversely affect responsiveness anytime, a disadvantage organisations can hardly live with in a crisis. "If a team is too small, the ideas will be fewer than desired, and more homogeneous," says Mohinish. "If the team is of optimum size, more diverse ideas will come in, and can get examined."

Mohinish considers a six to

eight member cross-functional team to be ideal, and he settles on eight. He explains that in an eight-member team, collectively, there are 56 relationships (8 multiplied by 7) to be fostered. From an intra-team collaboration viewpoint, it is a manageable number.

## Customer experience

Attracting customers is one of the major objectives of digital adoption. The pandemic has thrown this objective into stark relief, as the traditional points of contact have lost their relevance. Mohinish points out that those companies that have the all-important factors in perfect array, including a heightened level of responsiveness to customer needs, were quick off the block.

"Three to four weeks from the onset of the crisis, a company that has traditional stores, put out a prototype of an online store, and moved part of the sales online," he il-

lustrates the point. "There is certainly a survival element to this decision, but it is also about pushing themselves to a point where they serve the customers better."

For, there are companies that are going through the same situation, but don't see the urgency to change, and are sticking to the notion that the real value is in the physical store.

**Talent structure** Companies with talent structure resilience have been faring better. Mohinish points out that these are companies that had not looked at head

count, but skill-sets that were required to execute the work. "They started adding bots, handing over simple calculation-based work to them," explains Mohinish, adding that as a result they had sufficient leeway to source the right talent, when necessary, to meet changing needs and challenges.

Mohinish says that by making the talent structure manageable and flexible, these companies kept salary spends within manageable limits. Mohinish points out that many companies are now considering adopting this model.

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# U.S. rejects Beijing's claims in S. China Sea

The world will not allow China to treat the waters as its maritime empire, says Secretary Pompeo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Monday the United States would treat Beijing's pursuit of resources in the dispute-rife South China Sea as illegal, ramping up support for Southeast Asian nations and triggering a furious response from Beijing.

It was the latest forceful statement by President Donald Trump's administration to challenge China, which he has increasingly cast as an enemy ahead of the November elections.

"We are making clear: Beijing's claims to offshore resources across most of the South China Sea are completely unlawful, as is its campaign of bullying to control them," Mr. Pompeo said in a statement.

"The world will not allow Beijing to treat the South China Sea as its maritime empire."

The United States has long rejected Beijing's sweeping claims in the South China Sea, which is both home to valuable oil and gas deposits and is a vital waterway for the world's commerce.

Mr. Pompeo's statement goes further by explicitly siding with Southeast Asian nations, including the Philippines and Vietnam, after years of the U.S. saying it



**Assertive posturing:** A Super Hornet landing on the deck of the USS Ronald Reagan in the South China Sea on July 6. •AP

took no position on individual claims.

"America stands with our Southeast Asian allies and partners in protecting their sovereign rights to offshore resources, consistent with their rights and obligations under international law," Mr. Pompeo said.

"We stand with the international community in defense of freedom of the seas and respect for sovereignty and reject any push to impose 'might makes right' in the South China Sea or the wider region."

#### Vague delineation'

Beijing claims most of the South China Sea through a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation based on

maps from the 1940s.

It has spent years building military bases on artificial islands in the contested areas to cement its claims, while dragging out a diplomatic process to resolve the disputes for nearly two decades.

China on Tuesday responded forcefully to Mr. Pompeo's comments, saying the accusation of unlawfulness was "completely unjustified".

"We advise the U.S. side to earnestly honour its commitment of not taking sides on the issue of territorial sovereignty, respect regional countries' efforts for a peaceful and stable South China Sea and stop its attempts to disrupt and sabot-

age regional peace and stability," said its embassy in Washington.

The statement accused the U.S. of trying to "sow discord" between China and its fellow claimants in the sea.

Mr. Pompeo issued his statement to mark the fourth anniversary of a tribunal decision that sided with the Philippines against the nine-dash line.

Mr. Pompeo said that China, based on the court decision, cannot make claims based on the Scarborough Reef or Spratly Islands, a vast uninhabited archipelago.

The United States as a result now rejects Beijing's claims in the waters surrounding Vanguard Bank off Vietnam, Lucania Shoals off Malaysia, waters considered in Brunei's exclusive economic zone and Natuna Basin off Indonesia, Mr. Pompeo said.

"Any PRC action to harass other states' fishing or hydrocarbon development in these waters – or to carry out such activities unilaterally – is unlawful," he said.

#### Friction across fronts

Mr. Pompeo also rejected Beijing's southernmost claim of Malaysian-administered James Shoal, which is 1,800 km (1,100 miles) from the Chinese mainland.

The 2016 decision was issued by a tribunal under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Mr. Pompeo noted that China is a party to it and called the ruling legally binding.

The United States, however, is one of the few countries that is not part of the convention, with conservatives opposing any loss of autonomy to a global body.

The South China Sea statement comes amid rising tensions surrounding China, including a deadly border clash last month with India that Mr. Pompeo called part of a strategy by Beijing to challenge its neighbours.

Mr. Trump has also strongly criticized China for not doing more to stop the coronavirus pandemic, news of which was initially suppressed when it emerged in Wuhan late last year.

Critics both at home and abroad say that Mr. Trump is hoping to deflect attention ahead of the November election over his handling of the virus in the U.S., which has suffered by far the highest death toll of any country.

Mr. Trump, after bipartisan calls in Congress, has also stepped up pressure on China over its incarceration of more than 1 million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims.

**No new purchases**

The decision gives British telecom operators until 2027 to remove Huawei equipment

# Britain bans Huawei from future role in 5G network

Operators must phase out the equipment in use by 2027

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON

Britain's government on Tuesday backtracked on plans to give Chinese telecommunications company Huawei a limited role in the U.K.'s new high-speed mobile phone network in a decision with broad implications for relations between London and Beijing.

Britain said it imposed the ban after U.S. sanctions made it impossible to ensure the security of Huawei equipment, forcing it to start turning to other suppliers for components. The U.S. threatened to sever an intelligence-sharing arrangement with the U.K. because of concerns Huawei equipment could allow the Chinese government to infiltrate U.K. networks.

U.K. Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said the decision would delay the 5G rollout and cost millions of pounds, but that it had to be done. "This has not been an easy decision but it is the right one," he said.

#### No new purchases

The decision gives British telecom operators until 2027 to remove Huawei equipment



**Tough signal:** The U.S. had threatened to cut off security cooperation unless Britain dumped Huawei. •REUTERS

ment already in Britain's 5G network. The operators must stop buying 5G equipment from Huawei by the end of the year.

Critically for telecom operators, the government opted not to order firms to rip out legacy equipment manufactured by Huawei in earlier systems, like 4G. Such a decision might have caused havoc in U.K. telecom systems.

Mr. Dowden conceded that Tuesday's announcement means more Britons will have to wait longer to get full access to the speedy new network. "This means a cumulative delay to 5G rollout of two to three years and costs of up to £2 billion," he said.

and restricting its involvement to 35% of the overall project.

But the move set up a diplomatic clash with the Americans, who threatened to cut off security cooperation unless Britain dumped Huawei.

Huawei called the decision "disappointing" and motivated by politics.

Mr. Dowden conceded that Tuesday's announcement means more Britons will have to wait longer to get full access to the speedy new network. "This means a cumulative delay to 5G rollout of two to three years and costs of up to £2 billion," he said.

# China making deep inroads into Iran

Tehran could get an economic lifeline, while China seeks to expand role in region

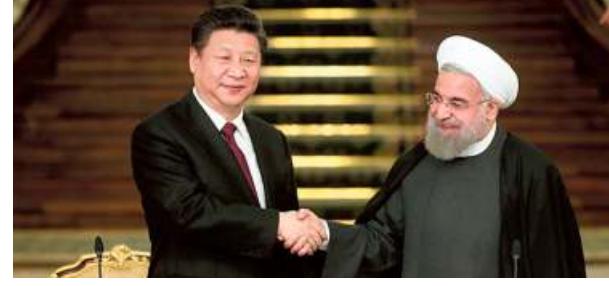
STANLY JOHNY

Both countries are at odds with the U.S. One is a huge energy market and is abundant with surplus cash and the other is a sanctions-hit, cash-strapped energy exporter. At a time when the U.S. is targeting both through a host of economic measures, China and Iran are taking their partnership to a new level through a \$400-billion long-term agreement.

According to a *New York Times* report, the countries are in an advanced stage of finalising the agreement that would allow China to expand its presence in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and several other sectors in the Islamic Republic in return for heavily discounted oil for 25 years. While for Iran, whose oil sales plummeted after President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018 and reimposed sanctions on the country, this agreement could be an economic lifeline, China could enhance its strategic influence in a region where the U.S. has built a strong presence since the Second World War.

**Strategic value**

The partnership was first proposed by China's President Xi Jinping during a visit to Iran in 2016. The Iranian government cleared it last month, according to Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. This means, Mr. Xi made the proposal after the nuclear deal was reached in 2015 that led to international sanctions on Iran being lifted. Now, when Iran is grappling with a struggling economy hit by sanctions following the unravelling of the deal, its leadership has cleared the Chinese proposal.



**Shared interests:** A file photo of Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani in Tehran. •AP

Iran has a very crucial place in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China always wanted to bring Iran on board. As the Americans pursued the policy of 'maximum pressure' against Iran and left Iran under extraordinary privation and deprivation, it is now open to the Chinese initiative," said Talmiz Ahmad, who was India's Ambassador to several Gulf countries.

The partnership agreement has to get the final clearance from the Iranian Parliament. According to the *NYT*, China and Iran would launch joint training exercises, joint research and weapons development and intelligence sharing. China will also offer its GPS to Iran, build infrastructure for 5G rollout and develop free trade zones.

**Game changer**

In his view, a new multipolar world order is emerging in which China is playing a crucial role. China has already cemented ties with Russia in this emerging order. Iran has joined this bloc. "In terms of the evolution of the new world order, this agreement is a game changer."

The agreement, if goes through, could attract punitive measures from the U.S. against China. The U.S. State Department has already said it would target Chinese companies if they make investments in Iran defying American sanctions. But China, which is already in a trade and technological war with the U.S., seems determined to go ahead with its partnership. China continued to buy Iranian oil over the past year even after the U.S. sanctions waivers expired in May 2019, although in smaller volumes. In contrast, India stopped buying Iranian oil last year after U.S. waivers ended. In 2019-20, India's crude oil imports

ports from Iran were 1.7 million tonnes, down from 23.9 million tonnes in the previous fiscal.

#### India's role

Coincidentally, at a time when Iran and China are finalising this partnership agreement, Iran has dropped India from a project to build a rail line from the Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, *The Hindu* reported on Tuesday. The project, signed in 2016, was hailed as a major trilateral project that would give India access to Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan. But Iranian officials cited delay in the proposed \$400 million funding as the reason for dropping India from the project. Under the new partnership agreement, China is likely to play a role in Chabahar port.

The original Chabahar agreement between India and Iran was signed in 2003 between Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and Prime Minister A.B. Vajpeyi. "Within a year, we abandoned it. We started engaging with the Americans, so we stopped pursuing it. And again, we brought it up. Prime Minister Modi went to Tehran and we agreed on a trilateral track with Iran and Afghanistan that we would develop Chabahar and then we would go forward with building a railway and road networks. The strategic plan was to make India a potential role player in the Eurasian scenario," said Mr. Ahmad.

"None of this has happened because under the second Modi government, India has pursued the American line. It's a very serious mistake. Iran cannot afford to wait for India forever. They waited for 17 years. Now they don't need you. I think India has lost out very badly."

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, Rajajinagara Division, BBMP**

"Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru"

# Maldives can't grow without India'

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

The Maldives cannot grow or develop further if the country abandons its ties with India, Speaker and former President Mohamed Nasheed has said.

Speaking at a ceremony in Male on Monday, to mark the Government of India's handing over of outdoor fitness equipment for 61 islands across the Maldives, Mr. Nasheed said: "We must be wise and join hands with India, so that we may enjoy similar growth and development. It is my opinion, and

my firm belief that we cannot grow or develop beyond what we are now, if we abandon our close relationship with India."

Emphasising the Maldives' presence and role in the Indian Ocean Region, Mr. Nasheed said: "I am also certain that Maldivians and their elected leaders will be wise and make shrewd and sensible decisions regarding our foreign policy and our relationship with our closest allies and neighbours, the closest and dearest of whom is India."

Monday's initiative is part of New Delhi's nearly 200 million MVR-worth cash grant and development projects, being executed with Male, apart from the \$800 million line of credit.

Speaking on the occasion, Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid said: "The traditionally close, bilateral relationship between the Maldives and India have been strengthened and deepened since November 2018. This is in no doubt, due to the personal commitment of President Solih to cultivating good neighbourly relations with our closest neighbour."

# First federal execution in U.S. in 17 years

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

The U.S. carried out its first federal execution in 17 years on Tuesday, putting to death convicted murderer Daniel Lee over objections by his victims' relatives after the Supreme Court gave its go-ahead.

Lee was convicted for his role in the killing of three members of an Arkansas family in 1996. His accomplice, Chevie Kehoe, is serving life term.



JAWAHARLAL NEHRU TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY KAKINADA  
KAKINADA-533 002, Andhra Pradesh, India  
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
e-Procurement Tender Notice (Tender cum Reverse Auction)  
Tender Notice No. 01/JNTUK/E/D/NRT/2020-21, Date: 14 / 07 / 2020  
Sl. No. Name of the Work Value in Rs (Approx)  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, NARASARAOPET (in Guntur District), JNTUK.  
1 Construction of Boys Hostel Building (G+5 Structure) Rs. 25.11 Crores  
2 Construction of Girls Hostel Building (G+4 Floors) Structure Rs. 14.76 Crores  
The bidders can download from [www.opalindia.in](http://www.opalindia.in) for the latest information in this regard. In case of exigencies OPal at its option may decide to extend tender sale / bid closing / opening date / time in future, which will be posted on the above referred website for information.



BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Rajajinagara Division,

Sir M. Vishveshwariya Commercial Complex, 12th Main

Road, 2nd Block, Rajajinagara, Bengaluru - 560010

No.: EE/RNR/E-PROC/01/20-21 Date: 14.07.2020

**TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTICE**

Sub.: Reg. Corrigendum Notification for this office E-Proc

Notification No.: EE/RNR/E-PROC/01/20-21.

Ref.: 1. This office Tender Notification No.: EE/RNR/

E-PROC/01/20-21 Dated: 26.05.2020.

With reference to the above subject e-procurement short

term tender notification No.: EE/RNR/E-PROC/01/20-21

Dated: 26.05.2020 invited from this office. Previously

scheduled as Pre-Bid Meeting Date: 15.07.2020 and Last

date for submission of tender date as 22.07.2020. The

tender schedule have been postponed due to the lock-down

in Bengaluru and Bengaluru Rural areas as the Covid-19

pandemic is increasing day by day and the rescheduled

tender dates are as follows.

(1) Pre-bid Meeting: 05.08.2020 at 4:00 p.m. in the

Office of the Executive Engineer, Rajajinagara Division,

Sir M. Vishveshwariya Commercial Complex, 12th Main

Road, 2nd Block, Rajajinagara, Bengaluru - 560010.

(2) Last Date and Time for receipt of tenders: 10.08.2020

upto 4:00 p.m. (3) Last date for submission of tender

difference amount: 10.08.2020 upto 4:00 p.m. (4) Opening

## MARKET WATCH

	14-07-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	36,033	-1.80
US Dollar	75.42	-0.31
Gold	49,996	0.07
Brent oil	42.98	-0.09

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	320.40	-11.80
Asian Paints	1688.40	-17.25
Axist Bank	417.70	-22.35
Bajaj Auto	2899.50	-0.50
Bajaj Finserv	6243.45	-218.00
Bajaj Finance	3190.95	-42.65
Bharti Airtel	589.35	2.55
BPCL	373.75	-6.20
Britannia Ind	3735.25	-61.55
Cipla	632.30	-6.05
Coal India	128.25	-2.25
Dr Reddys Lab	3983.15	83.60
Eicher Motors	18850.15	-804.85
GAIL (India)	99.05	-2.05
Grasim Ind	596.70	-15.05
HCL Tech	591.35	-11.25
HDPC	1791.60	-53.95
HDPC Bank	1058.85	-21.40
Hero MotoCorp	2611.85	-77.85
Hindalco	163.80	-5.45
Hind Unilever	2234.75	-30.50
ICICI Bank	345.55	-8.05
IndusInd Bank	510.80	-28.85
Bharti InfraNet	208.80	-2.90
Infosys	783.25	-13.80
Indian Oil Corp	86.40	-1.00
ITC	195.90	-1.65
JSW Steel	194.05	-4.35
Kotak Bank	1298.30	-37.25
L&T	912.90	-15.25
M&M	545.20	-10.65
Maruti Suzuki	5771.75	-217.10
Nestle India Ltd.	16895.80	-61.05
NTPC	87.65	-2.25
ONGC	77.35	-1.55
PowerGrid Corp	163.35	-5.75
Reliance Ind	1917.00	-18.00
State Bank	186.05	-6.65
Shree Cement	22085.75	-225.45
Sun Pharma	492.10	-7.60
Tata Motors	105.15	-2.85
Tata Steel	336.65	-5.45
TCS	2171.95	-48.05
Tech Mahindra	598.30	-1.75
Titan	973.80	7.45
UltraTech Cement	3770.90	-17.00
UPL	437.50	-1.70
Vedanta	108.90	-3.50
Wipro	225.00	-2.60
Zee Entertainment	166.30	-7.45

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.22	75.54
Euro	85.43	85.79
British Pound	94.16	94.56
Japanese Yen (100)	70.06	70.37
Chinese Yuan	10.72	10.77
Swiss Franc	80.07	80.41
Singapore Dollar	53.97	54.21
Canadian Dollar	55.20	55.44
Malaysian Ringgit	17.60	17.69
Australian Dollar	52.25	52.48

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## Bharti, Verizon ally to offer Zoom rival app

NEW DELHI  
Bharti Airtel on Tuesday said it had partnered with U.S.-based telecom major Verizon to provide video conferencing solutions to businesses in India. Bharti will offer secure enterprise-grade video conferencing solutions under the brand name Airtel BlueJeans to enterprise customers in India, the company said in a statement. Video-conferencing platform BlueJeans is owned by Verizon. Airtel BlueJeans will compete with popular applications such as Zoom.

## DRL unveils OTC Nicotine Polacrilex Lozenges in U.S.

HYDERABAD  
Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) on Tuesday said that it had launched over-the-counter Nicotine Polacrilex Lozenges, 2 mg and 4 mg, in the U.S. market, a store brand version of Nicorette Lozenges. Nicorette is a trademark of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare L.P. The Nicotine Lozenges brands and store brand markets had U.S. retail sales of about \$200 million for the most recent 52 weeks ended May 17, 2020, the pharmaceutical major said, citing market research company IRI numbers.

## Toyota temporarily halts production at Bidadi

MUMBAI  
Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) has announced temporary halting of production at its plant in Bidadi, Karnataka, starting July 14 (second shift) to July 22 (first shift) in accordance with the directives issued by the Government of Karnataka, the company said in a statement. The office staff at TKM's corporate and regional offices continue to work from home to help mitigate risks. TKM said it had provided safety kits, containing essential items to 5,000 employees, their family members and their neighbourhoods, benefiting over 25,000 families.

## CMYK

# Wipro to focus on profitability, growth, as Q1 net remains flat

Big agenda would be 'obsessive growth,' says CEO Delaporte; hiring to continue

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Wipro's new CEO Thierry Delaporte said the IT services major will focus on both growth and profitability 'as there was no choice.'

His comments came in the backdrop of the company reporting an almost unchanged consolidated net profit of ₹2,412 crore for the first quarter of FY21.

Consolidated revenue rose 1.34% year-on-year to ₹14,913.10 crore during the quarter. Wipro 'cannot choose between growth and profitability but will focus on both' as there was no choice, he said while announcing the first quarter results on Tuesday.

"We have our own trajectory and we will build our own trajectory in the years to come," he added.

Responding to a query, he said, "I am a bit conscious in terms of projections. It is dif-



**As needed:** Wipro hired 7,000 people at the gross level and said it would continue to hire in Q2, based on demand.

ficult to say how things are unfolding from a pandemic standpoint. We don't know how this is going to evolve. We will come back to normal course and provide guidance when the time is right for it."

**Closer to customers**  
However, he said, during the pandemic, "Wipro has connected with the customers more closely than ever during the first quarter."

Mr. Delaporte further said the big agenda would be a focus on "obsessive growth," adding it would start with the way Wipro serves top clients, develops relationships, invests in services and solutions that matter to them the most and better leverage its relationships with technology partners such as Microsoft.

"It is [in] my nature to change the status quo. We

will simplify processes and systems internally so that more time can be devoted to customers," he added.

## 'Good order book'

On the demand environment, Jatin Dalal, CFO, said, "We have done very well in Q1 with only 4,000 to 5,000 of our employees coming to office. The order book looks quite good in the context of the environment."

On the results, Mr. Dalal said, "We expanded margins during the quarter, despite lower revenues, on the back of solid execution of several operational improvements and the rupee depreciation. We also continued to sustain robust cash generation with operating cash flows at 174.9% of net income."

During the quarter, Wipro hired 7,000 people at the gross level and indicated it would continue to hire in Q2, based on demand.

## WPI inflation slows for third month in row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

in 15 years. Dispatches for 2-wheelers fell for the sixth consecutive quarter -- the longest in 15 years, by 74% to about 12.93 lakh units.

Mr. Wadhera said industry sales were expected to decline 26-45% across various vehicle segments of the industry. He added that coupled with last year, the sector is looking at a growth of about 50%.

"Huge investments have gone into BS-VI that [firms] will not be able to recover because volumes would have halved. I do not see a case for [new] investments at all." He pointed out that the world over, various governments were supporting the consumer in the form of a stimulus. "We are continuing to engage with the government. They are listening to us. However, we haven't seen any firm action on the ground," he said.

Commercial vehicle sales too, seen as an indicator of economic activity, plunged 84.8% to 31,636 units -- the fifth straight quarter of decline and the second-longest

impact due to the nationwide lockdown -- to just over 1.53 lakh units compared with more than 7.12 lakh units in April-June 2019. "[The slowdown] is also the steepest with a 70% decline over nine quarters," Rajesh Mehta, Director-General at SIAM said during a virtual conference.

Passenger vehicle (PV)

sales declined 78.43% during the first quarter -- the worst

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&lt;p

## TV PICKS

**Premier League:** Star Sports 1, 3, SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m. & 12.45 a.m. (Thursday)  
**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 & Six (SD & HD), 11 p.m.; Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 & Six (SD & HD), 1.15 a.m. (Thursday)

## IN BRIEF



## Holder moves to second in ICC Test rankings

DUBAI  
Jason Holder on Tuesday attained the highest rating points by a West Indies bowler in 20 years, reaching a career-best second place in the ICC Test player rankings, after leading his team to a win over England at Southampton. Holder, who picked up seven wickets, including six for 42 in the first innings, has 862 rating points, the best for a West Indies bowler since Courtney Walsh's tally of 866 in August 2000. PTI

## Hero Group keeps place on European Golf Tour

NEW DELHI  
India's Hero Group will maintain its presence on the European Tour with the title partnership of the second event on the UK swing. The event, originally announced as the English Open, will now be called the Hero Open and take place in Birmingham from July 30-August 1. Pawan Munjal, Hero MotoCorp Chairman and CEO, said: "Golf is the sport of business, which is why Hero is such a strong supporter of the game globally." PTI



## Rest of USPGA Tour closed to spectators

LOS ANGELES  
The remainder of the 2019-2020 PGA Tour will take place without spectators, tournament officials said on Monday. All five tournaments held since the PGA Tour returned from a shutdown in June have been without spectators. AFP



## NBA star Westbrook tests positive

LOS ANGELES  
NBA star Russell Westbrook revealed on Monday he had tested positive for COVID-19 as the league gears up for its return in Florida later this month. Houston Rockets star Westbrook, the 2017 MVP, said in a statement he was feeling well and was in isolation. AFP



## Let's learn from Adria debacle, says Thiem

BERLIN  
World No. 3 Dominic Thiem said that tennis players "must learn" from the ill-fated Adria Tour, and described Nick Kyrgios' criticism of those who took part as "unnecessary". "We have to learn from mistakes and be careful with the pandemic we are facing," he said. AFP



## Chicago Marathon cancelled

LOS ANGELES  
The Chicago Marathon became the latest major marathon to fall victim to the coronavirus on Monday as organisers confirmed cancellation of the race for only the second time in its history. The 43rd edition was to take place on Oct. 11. AFP

## Real closes in on title

United's hopes of Champions League qualification dented

## EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS  
GRANADA

Real Madrid ground out a 2-1 win at Granada on Monday to record its ninth consecutive victory and move within touching distance of reclaiming the LaLiga title.

The win saw Zinedine Zidane's side restore the four-point lead over Barcelona and it will clinch its first title since 2017 with victory at home to Villarreal on Thursday, or if it beats Leganes on the final day of the season.

The visitors got off to a flying start when French defender Ferland Mendy skipped into the box unopposed and rifled the ball into the net from the tightest of angles in the 10th minute. This was his first goal for the club.

## Benzema strikes again

Real's top-scorer Karim Benzema doubled the advantage with a cool finish six minutes later to net his 19th goal of the season. Darwin Machis pulled one back for Granada in the 50th. Real's keeper Thibaut Courtois was forced



On the prowl: Mendy scores his first goal for Real. ■ REUTERS

to produce a fine save to deny forward Antonin late on while captain Sergio Ramos cleared a Ramon Azeez shot off the line.

In the Premier League, Manchester United's Champions League qualification hopes suffered a blow after an equaliser deep in stoppage time from Michael Obafemi earned Southampton a 2-2 draw at Old Trafford.

In Serie A, Inter Milan staged an impressive second-half comeback to beat Torino 3-1 and move up to

second, bouncing back after letting victory slip in two previous games.

## The results:

**LaLiga:** Villarreal 1 (Cazorla 85) lost to Real Sociedad 2 (Willian Jose 61, Llorente 75); Alaves 0 drew with Getafe 0; Granada 1 (Machis 50) lost to Real Madrid 2 (Mendy 10, Benzema 16).

**Premier League:** Manchester United 2 (Rashford 20, Martial 23) drew with Southampton 2 (Armstrong 12, Obafemi 90+6).

**Serie A:** Inter Milan 3 (Young 49, Godin 51, Martinez 61) bt Torino 1 (Belotti 17).

## Blackwood upset at not staying till the end

Silverwood backs struggling Buttler

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SOUTHAMPTON

He missed out on a well-deserved century during the opening Test against England, but West Indies batsman Jermaine Blackwood was more disappointed about not being able to stay till the end.

Blackwood scored a match-winning 95 in the second innings as West Indies registered a four-wicket win. He was dismissed with his team just 11 short of the target of 200.

"I was very disappointed when I got out at that stage of the game," said Blackwood.

"It was very emotional for me when I got out, not because I got out, it was because I didn't take my team across the line. I wasn't thinking about the hundred."

England head coach Chris Silverwood backed



Blackwood. ■ GETTY IMAGES

the struggling Jos Buttler, saying he looked good with the bat in the first Test and will be given the "best chance to succeed" in the remainder of the series.

"I'm not going to go down that road yet of putting Jos under pressure, because I don't think it's going to help him," said Silverwood.

"It was more about getting on court and compet-

## Hemang Amin appointed BCCI's interim CEO

AMOL KARHADKAR  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) may have appointed Hemang Amin as the interim chief executive officer (CEO) after relieving Rahul Johri of his duties last week, but the Indian Premier League (IPL) chief operating officer may soon emerge as a serious candidate for the CEO's position.

Late on Monday evening, BCCI secretary Jay Shah circulated a note to State associations, informing them about Amin's new role and Johri's exit. According to BCCI insiders, the "timing" of the announcement hints at Amin being in contention for the CEO's role.

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Amin's standing as a 'BCCI old-timer', having joined the IPL executives' team in 2010 after stints at the Bombay Stock Exchange and Deutsche Bank, is likely to work in his favour.

"He ticks all the boxes, has the expertise, requisite experience, has earned the trust of his colleagues and BCCI officials alike and has mastered the art of tackling different regimes," said a former BCCI official.

"Don't be surprised if they decide to promote Hemang rather than get a new face just like the previous one and shell out a huge package for him."



Hemang Amin. ■ IPL WEBSITE

## Rijiju interacts with State sports officials

UTHRA GANESAN  
NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Tuesday interacted with ministers and officials of Sports and Youth Affairs from 18 States and Union Territories as part of the two-day meet to share a roadmap for resumption of sports post COVID-19.

Representatives from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, participated on Tuesday while the remaining will do so on Wednesday.

"Our ministry will assist and fund States in their endeavour to achieve excellence in one or two sports. States can also choose to train athletes in other sports but the focus should be on one or two disciplines with the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISC-ES) becoming nodal centres," Rijiju said.

"Don't be surprised if they decide to promote Hemang rather than get a new face just like the previous one and shell out a huge package for him."

## I am incredibly happy, says Guardiola

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Pep Guardiola said on Tuesday a weight had been lifted from Manchester City after its European ban was overturned by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"I am incredibly happy for the decision. It shows all the people said about the club wasn't true," said Guardiola.

"People cannot understand how difficult it was for everyone as a club being under suspicion. Now we have

proven it at the court, we go again on the pitch."

Tottenham's Mourinho said the court's decision was a "disaster" and showed FFP, which limits club's spending in line with their revenue, is now dead, while Liverpool boss Klopp said City's reprieve was a bad day for football.

Guardiola felt it is City which is owed an apology. "We should be apologised to because if we did something wrong we would accept the decision from UEFA."

## Sportstar's Star Talk webinar series

The IPL, since its

inception in 2008, has grown in stature and is now one of the most successful sports leagues in the world. It has always provided a platform for budding youngsters and unheralded players to showcase their talent.

In the first episode of Sportstar's Star Talk, a webinar series, on Wednesday (July 15), at 5 p.m., an expert panel will decode the IPL success story and the road ahead for Indian cricket.

The panel comprises

India cricketer and IPL's second-highest scorer Suresh Raina, and former Zimbabwe captain and ex-KKR and Gujarat Lions coach Heath Streak.

Joining them will be India player and IPL's eighth-highest scorer Robin Uthappa, and Delhi Capitals CEO Dhiraj Malhotra. The session will be

moderated by the Sports Editor of The Hindu, K.C. Vijaya Kumar.

You can be part of the webinar by registering for free at [bit.ly/3fvr4Te](https://bit.ly/3fvr4Te).

## The fascinating Test had many messages for sports and the world in general

'Bio-secure bubble' has already entered cricket's lexicon



## BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

The writer John Berger ended one of his essays thus: "The moment at which a piece of music begins provides a clue to the nature of all art." That probably holds true in other spheres too - the moment at which a Test match begins, for instance, provides a clue to the nature of all sport. Berger goes on to talk about "the incongruity of that moment, compared to the uncounted, unperceived silence which preceded it..."

## Sacred moments

The silence before the Southampton Test may not have been uncounted or unperceived, but the incongruity was inescapable. The moment before the first ball is bowled in a Test match is one of cricket's sacred moments, full of possibilities and hope; the crowd holds its collective breath as it prepares for the unexpected, for that single delivery, which, in hindsight carries with it the potential of all that follows.

Yet, there was no crowd to hold its collective breath, no palpable tension in the air. But it didn't matter. Cricket was restarting, and it wouldn't have mattered if rain had stolen a chunk of it, or if it had finished in three days. God was in his heaven and all was right with the (cricket) world.

Not for the first time, cricket showed the way. The first-ever modern interna-

tion sporting event was, after all, the cricket match between the US and Canada in 1844, more than half a century before the Olympic Games. West Indies' win over England in the first Test meant that a team ranked No. 8 had overcome one that was placed four places higher, and that is one of the joys of sport - to watch the superior team being brought down to earth.

Man-for-man England were the better side, and they were playing at home. But the West Indies had spirit and they had been in England for a month to get acclimated, two things that seemed to nullify England's natural advantages. Joe Root returns to captain England in the second Test this week, and stand-in skipper Ben Stokes can focus on his game, leaving the worrying about the details to someone else. He must be relieved.