



Manipur Cong. plans no-confidence motion against Biren govt.

page 10



New map becomes part of Nepal Constitution after President's assent

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Revenue demand from non-telecom PSUs withdrawn, govt. tells SC

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PM to launch Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan in Bihar tomorrow

page 10

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Viral tracker

With 10,887* new COVID-19 cases and 278* fatalities, the total infections stood at 3,78,048 while total deaths were 12,540 as of 10.45 p.m. on Thursday in India. States are classified based on where the cases are rising red, dropping green or flattening orange.

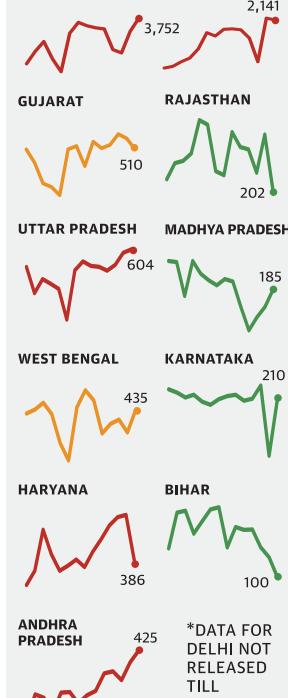
NEW CASES AND DEATHS IN INDIA

CASES 10,887 DEATHS 278

7 DAY-CHANGE +18.7% 7 DAY-CHANGE +7.3%

FIGURES IN THE GRAPHS SHOW NUMBER OF NEW CASES ON THURSDAY

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Days after clash, China frees 10 soldiers

The release follows agreement at Major General-level talks; no troops missing in action, says Army

DINAKAR PERI
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Three days after clashes in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh left 20 Indian soldiers dead, the Chinese on Thursday evening released 10 Indian Army personnel, including a Lieutenant Colonel and three Majors, from their custody.

A security source told *The Hindu* that all 10 persons were released around 5 p.m. after an agreement was reached at the Major General-level talks on Wednesday evening and they were returned unharmed.

Separately, the Army clarified in a statement that there were "no Indian troops missing in action".

'Soldiers were armed'

In another development, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said the Indian troops, who were outnumbered and attacked by the Chinese side, carried arms.

"All troops on border duty always carry arms, especially when leaving post. Those at Galwan on June 15 did so. Long-standing practice (as per 1996 & 2005 agreements) not to use firearms during faceoffs," Dr. Jaishankar said on Twitter, in response to a tweet from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

Article VI of the 1996 agreement between India and China on "Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) in the military field along the



Nation's salute: Army personnel and the public paying tributes to Havildar Sunil Kumar in Patna on Thursday. He was among the 20 soldiers killed by the Chinese at Galwan. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

Why no arms, asks Rahul

"China has committed a big crime by killing unarmed Indian soldiers. Who sent these bravehearts towards danger without arms and why? Who is responsible for this?" former Congress president Rahul Gandhi asked in a video message. In a tweet, he said, "How dare China kill our unarmed soldiers? Why were our soldiers sent unarmed to martyrdom?"

(With inputs from Vajaita Singh)

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MORE REPORTS ■ PAGE 9

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PLA meticulously planned attack for at least two days

VIJAITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) meticulously planned the attack on Indian troops at Galwan in eastern Ladakh for at least two days, a senior government official said.

The Chinese blocked small rivulets in heightened areas, releasing water at a high speed when Indian Army personnel appeared at the disputed site of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the official stated.

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► PAGE 9

strong gush of water made the men lose balance. The Chinese charged, pushed the Army personnel and many fell into Galwan river," the official said.

The Chinese did a reconnaissance by flying unmanned aerial vehicles to see the strength of the Indian troops and accordingly bolstered their presence on the other side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the official stated.

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India coasts to win in Security Council polls

Nation bags 184 of the 192 votes

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Terming India's winning of a non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council one of its "best performances" ever, the Union government said the majority of votes received in the General Assembly demonstrated the "goodwill" the country enjoyed.

India will promote multilateral solutions for the COVID-19 crisis and enhance global action against terrorism, among its priorities, during the two-year term beginning January 2021, it said.

Several countries, including the permanent Security Council members, the U.S., the U.K., France, Russia and China, congratulated India.

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EDITORIAL ■ PAGE 6

100 more deaths in State Spike of 3,752 cases; tally now 1,20,504

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE/MUMBAI

Maharashtra on Thursday reported 100 more COVID-19 deaths, taking its case load past 62,000. The city now has 62,875 cases, of which, 31,856 have recovered. As many as 67 more deaths were also recorded, pushing the toll to 3,311.

Of the total cases, 53,901 are active ones, said State Health Department officials. As many as 1,672 patients were discharged on Thursday, taking the total number of recoveries to 60,838.

State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said the State's recovery rate stands at 50.49%, while its case fatality rate is 4.77%.

Mumbai reported 1,288 new cases, taking its case load past 62,000. The city now has 62,875 cases, of which, 31,856 have recovered. As many as 67 more deaths were also recorded, pushing the toll to 3,311.

After an uproar over the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation adding 862 deaths to the city's toll, following a data reconciliation exercise, the civic body issued a statement on Thursday, claiming there has been no attempt to hide deaths.

DETAILS ■ PAGE 3



महाराष्ट्र राज्य रस्ते विकास महानगर

महाराष्ट्र शासनाचा उपकरण



HIGHWAY TO GROWTH



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With this project, IRB's asset base grows beyond Rs. 45,000 Cr. - the largest in the industry.

Lenders to the project:



Advisor to IRB



Advisor to MSRDC



www.irb.co.in

IN BRIEF

92-year-old woman recovers from COVID-19

A 92-year-old woman from Dombivli has been discharged after recovering from COVID-19. A woman tested positive on June 8 and was admitted to Neon Hospital, chief of the hospital Dr. Milind Shinde said. She walked out of the hospital on Wednesday under a shower of flower petals. PTI

Timings MUMBAI

FRIDAY, JUN. 19
● RISE 06:02 SET 19:18
● RISE 04:21 SET 17:39
SATURDAY, JUN. 20
● RISE 06:02 SET 19:19
● RISE 05:05 SET 18:34
SUNDAY, JUN. 21
● RISE 06:02 SET 19:19
● RISE 05:54 SET 19:31

Mumbai Weather	max	min
Mumbai Airport	32	27
Pune	30	23
Mumbai City	32	27

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

Mumbai Tomorrow	31°C
Moderate rain and thundershower is expected over the city. A comfortable morning. The sky will remain cloudy.	

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THE HINDU
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CM urges Ganesh mandals to keep celebrations austere

COVID-19 still a danger, have to take every possible precaution, says Uddhav

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday appealed to Ganpati mandals to celebrate Ganeshotsav in an austere manner this year, in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"A number of mandals in Pune and elsewhere have decided to observe austerity in this year's celebrations. All these mandals have said they will support any government decision in this regard. I wholeheartedly thank all of them for this stand," said Mr Thackeray.

He was speaking at a meeting organised to discuss law and order arrangements during the festival.

"It is sad, but true, that this year, the festival will not be celebrated in an extravagant manner. The danger of COVID-19 is not over and we cannot allow crowding at one place. We have to take every possible precaution regarding law and order. Therefore, we will have to celebrate the festival in an austere manner," he said.

Mr Thackeray said the government has launched Mission Begin Again to gradually lift the lockdown, but with utmost care. "We will ensure that tradition is not broken, but celebrations are socially responsible," he said. The CM sought suggestions from the association of Ganesh mandals on spreading awareness during the festival.

Housing societies warned against banning entry of help, vendors

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

State Cooperation Minister Balasaheb Patil on Thursday warned housing societies against forcefully stopping the entry of domestic help and newspaper vendors, and said such a move may attract legal action.

Every member of society has helped in successful implementation of the lockdown in fight against COVID-19, Mr Patil said. "We are on the path of recovery and have started unlocking various services, based on the Central guidelines.

However, it has been observed that a number of cooperative housing societies, through their governing bodies and secretaries, are stopping the entry of help and vendors."

Kiran Moghe, who works with the CITU on domestic workers' issues, welcomed the minister's statement.

"Under the Disaster Management Act, it is the Collector who is the final authority. Sadly, the Labour Department is sleeping.

Housing societies are behaving as per their whims when in reality,



Sealed: A vegetable vendor waits outside a housing society's closed gates during the lockdown. ■ FILE PHOTO

they have no such powers," she said.

Ms Moghe said there are senior citizens and working women who genuinely need help. "We are also exposed to our class biases when we stop domestic workers from entering buildings. If their employers want a no COVID-19 certificate from them, then they should pay for it. How can you ask those women to produce the certificate?" she said.

The Union Home Ministry has already sanctioned resumption of services of domestic help and newspaper vendors.

Pune civic chief requisitions beds at 16 private hospitals

COVID-19 patients must be treated at govt. rates, says directive

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

To ensure that private hospitals strictly follow government regulations, Pune Municipal Commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad on Thursday directed 16 private hospitals to reserve 80% of their beds for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Mr Gaikwad told *The Hindu* that in the next few days, similar directives will be issued to other private hospitals to preclude a shortage of beds like in Mumbai.

"These hospitals have been directed to treat patients at government rates. A number of cases have emerged wherein patients have complained of being charged exorbitant rates, running into lakhs of rupees. Such cases are being probed as well," Mr Gaikwad said.

Late last month, the civic chief had warned that private hospitals refusing to treat or overcharging COVID-19 patients were liable to face legal action under the Maharashtra Essential Services Maintenance Act, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

This was in accordance with a State government resolution issued on May 21.

Mr Gaikwad said the fresh directive was issued to make sure private hospitals comply with the government order.

"General directives are routinely ignored. Some



Raising capacity: Pune currently has 9,000 COVID-19 beds across different medical facilities in the city. ■ FILE PHOTO

private hospitals even send their juniors for meetings with civic authorities to discuss intake of COVID-19 patients in their establishments. At other times, they do not correctly disclose their available capacity. We have appointed a team of doctors to verify their facilities and check whether they are under-reporting beds available for COVID-19 patients," he said.

Mr Gaikwad said the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) will secure around 1,700 more beds at these 16 private hospitals, including 900 beds with oxygen supply. The PMC currently has 9,000 COVID-19 beds across different medical facilities.

Spike in district

Meanwhile, Pune district reported a spike of 450 new COVID-19 cases as the dis-

trict's cumulative tally, including deaths and recoveries, rose to 13,685. The district's death toll has climbed to 540, with eight fatalities reported in the past 24 hours.

Pune Divisional Commissioner Dr Deepak Mhaisekar said of these, only 4,794 cases are active, while more than 8,351 people have been discharged so far. The district's current recovery rate stands at 61.02%.

The total death toll in Pune division, which includes Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur districts along with Pune, has risen to 758. The division's total case tally stands at 17,342, of which 5,828 are active. In all, 10,756 people in these five districts have been discharged thus far, Dr Mhaisekar said. A total 296 patients are critical in the division.

Chembur locality wakes up to gunfire; three arrested

Previous rivalry behind attack by history-sheeter on tailor

GAUTAM S. MENGLE

Residents of the Wazir Baba Chawl in Chembur were jolted awake by the sound of gunshots in the early hours of Thursday, after a history-sheeter allegedly tried to shoot dead a local tailor. The Tilak Nagar police have arrested three accused and one more is wanted.

According to the police, the incident occurred around 4 a.m. on Thursday when Sadiq Khan was sleeping in his residence. The main accused, Navneet Singh Rana, knocked on his door to wake him up. As soon as Mr. Khan opened the door, Mr. Rana shot at him twice with a country-made gun.

The first round hit Mr. Khan on the hand and the

second lodged itself in his back when he tried to run back into his house.

The sound woke up other residents, who rushed out to check. Mr. Rana threatened to shoot them as well, and fled the scene along with three others who were with him at the time. Mr. Khan, meanwhile, was rushed to Sion Hospital, and his wife Mehrul lodged a complaint with us," an officer with the Tilak Nagar police station said.

Hunt launched The officer said that the Khans had identified and named Mr. Rana as the assailant, and based on their statements, a hunt was launched. Mr. Rana was nabbed from Chembur on Thursday evening and after

his questioning two others, Yasin Ansari and Samid Tolkar, were also arrested.

Revenge bid The police officer said, "Mr. Rana's brother Inder was injured by some local residents in May this year during a fight that broke out when they asked him to not walk around without a face mask. The Khans had helped one of the accused, arrested in the case, get bail which infuriated Mr. Rana. Thursday's attack was a bid to take revenge for that."

The three have been charged with attempt to murder and criminal intimidation under the Indian Penal Code along with relevant sections of the Arms Act. Efforts are on to trace the fourth person, police said.

Monsoon finally makes its presence felt

IMD forecasts light to moderate rain till Monday

TANVI DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

On its first day with heavy showers since the onset of monsoon on June 14, Mumbai received 36.6mm rainfall on Thursday. The eastern and western suburbs received heavy rainfall compared to the island city. Parts of two buildings collapsed, with three people suffering minor injuries.

Mumbaikars woke up to overcast skies and it rained through the day. Thane and Navi Mumbai, received the heaviest spells in the region, while rain also lashed central Mumbai, including Worli, Dadar, Bandra and Kurla. There was heavy rainfall in the western suburbs too, from Andheri to Dahisar. After 3 p.m., there was a heavy spell in south Mumbai.

Between noon and 1 p.m., Chembur received 20 mm rainfall, while between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., Fort saw 18 mm rainfall, and Malvani 26 mm.

In the 24 hours leading up to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Chembur recorded 83 mm rainfall and Dharam 76 mm. Mumbai received an average of 36.6 mm rainfall as re-



A cyclist struggles in the heavy rain in Kandivali (East) on Thursday. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

corded by the India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Santacruz observatory.

With this, the city has received 284 mm rainfall since June 1, surpassing 50% of the average figure of 493.1 mm for June. The all-time highest single-day rainfall for the month was 399 mm recorded on June 10, 1991.

The IMD has forecast rainfall throughout Thursday night, and light to moderate rain from Friday to Monday.

K.S. Hosalkar, deputy director general of IMD, tweeted that there is a circulation over north Konkan and neighbouring areas, and

models indicate heavy rain in Mumbai and Thane, and very heavy rainfall at isolated places in south Konkan for 24 hours, that is, until Friday.

Akshay Deoras, a Ph.D scholar at University of Reading, U.K., who tracks weather in India and especially Maharashtra, had said the IMD had declared the onset of monsoon too early. On Thursday, he said, "Not a single meteorological factor

suggested the arrival of monsoon in Mumbai on June 14. Finally, strong monsoon winds entered the city on June 18 and triggered widespread rainfall. Since the weather system will weaken, Mumbai and MMRC will witness a sharp reduction in the rainfall amount during this weekend and only intermittent showers are expected."

Meanwhile, three people were injured when a portion of a chawli collapsed in Juhu. They were treated and discharged from Cooper Hospital. A portion of a three-storey building collapsed in Kurla, but no casualty was reported. The BMC also received 18 complaints of trees or branches falling and five complaints of short circuit.

Customs told to release parcel with feeding tubes

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the Commissioner of Customs to release a parcel of feeding tubes imported from the U.S. to an oral cancer survivor, within 24 hours.

A Division Bench of Justices S.J. Kathawala and N.R. Borkar was hearing a plea filed by Samir Patel. The petition said Mr. Patel was diagnosed with oral cancer in December 2016, and due to remedial surgical operations, he can only consume food/nutrients through feeding tubes.

He has to purchase the tubes from the U.S. and recently had four boxes shipped through a courier agency. The Assistant Commissioner of Customs has withheld the parcel. No alternative product is available in India, and the stock with Mr. Patel will last only for a few days, he said.

The court directed the Commissioner of Customs to process the documents and ensure the parcel was handed over to Mr. Patel's lawyers within 24 hours.

BJP demands reduction in BEST power bills during lockdown

SHARAD VYAS

MUMBAI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has demanded an immediate reduction in electricity bills issued by the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) Undertaking during the lockdown period.

While industries and businesses in Mumbai remained closed during the lockdown starting March 23, they were sent electricity bills generated on the basis of an average of last year's consumption, the BJP said.

"Many of these businesses suffered huge losses due to the closure of shops and offices. The salaries of workers in these businesses were

slashed. It is unfair to force businessmen and citizens who have lost their income to pay the entire bill amount, that too inflated."

MANGAL PRABHAT LODHA Mumbai BJP president

Mr. Lodha spoke to BEST general manager Surendra Kumar Bagde on the issue on Thursday.

BEST officials clarified that for March, consumers were charged an average amount based on past consumption. This was because the undertaking was not able to take meter readings during the lockdown. BEST said all grievances are being addressed, and if a dispute is found to be genuine, the amount will be adjusted in future bills.

"For now, we demand that at least some concessions are given in electricity bills to help businesses and citizens recover from these losses," Mr. Lodha said.

WESTERN RAILWAY CONTRACT FOR HOUSEKEEPING AND MAINTENANCE

1. Sr. No.: 1, 2, Executive : Sr.DOM-BCT, 3. E-Tender Notice No. & date : E-Tender No. S. 234/19/6/6/R/

Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

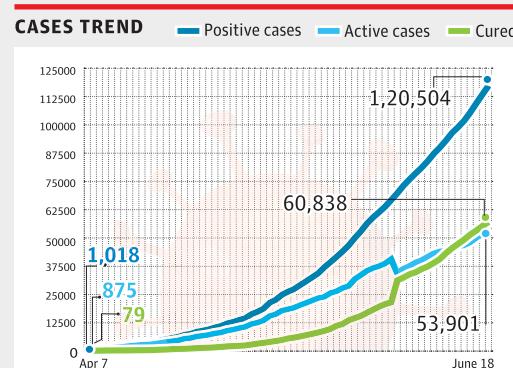
TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
1,20,504	3,752	53,901	60,838	5,751

DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	62,875	3,311	Ahmednagar	255	12
Thane	21,093	673	Nanded	266	12
Pune	14,000	610	Hingoli	243	1
Aurangabad	3,064	168	Yavatmal	210	5
Palghar	2,853	83	Latur	201	13
Nashik	2,306	134	Osmanabad	161	8
Raigad	2,166	86	Sindhudurg	161	3
Solapur	2,061	184	Buldhana	149	5
Jalgaon	2,031	176	Gondia	101	0
Nagpur	1,154	13	Parbhani	83	4
Alkola	1,126	56	Beed	82	2
Satara	791	34	Nandurbar	72	6
Kolhapur	736	8	Washim	66	3
Ratnagiri	472	18	Bhandara	58	0
Dhule	466	51	Chandrapur	57	0
Anhravati	386	27	Gadchiroli	51	1
Jalna	319	12	Wardha	14	1
Sangli	273	11			

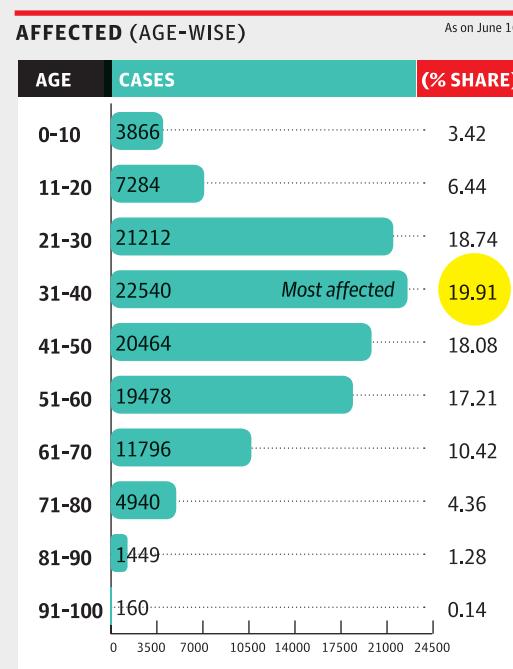
POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS

1,288 (34.32%) of Thursday's cases are from Mumbai

**MORTALITY RATE**

Maharashtra 4.84%

India 3.33%

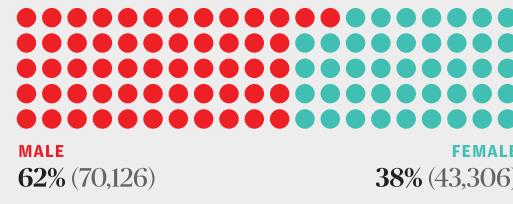
**QUARANTINE NUMBERS**

5,81,650 | 26,740



Home quarantine

Institutional quarantine



70% of deaths due to co-morbidities

HELPLINE NUMBERS

Toll free number: 104/1075

Maharashtra: 020-26127394

National: 1075/1800-112-545/011-23978046

State helpline email id: ssuumarashtra@gmail.com

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

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

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

With over 1,200 new cases, city breaches 62,000-mark

67 more deaths reported; BMC claims there has been no attempt to hide deaths

TANVI DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Mumbai reported 1,288 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, taking its tally past the 62,000-mark. The city now has 62,875 cases, of whom, 31,856 have recovered. As many as 67 more deaths were recorded on Thursday, pushing the toll to 3,311.

After an uproar over the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) adding 862 deaths to the city's tally, following a reconciliation exercise, the civic body issued a statement on Thursday, claiming there has been no attempt to hide deaths.

BMC clarification

"On June 6, a private hospital reported 17 deaths to the BMC's epidemiology cell, following which, the Municipal Commissioner conducted a thorough investigation. It was found that only one death had occurred on that day and the other 16 deaths, which had not been announced earlier, were included in that day's report. In order to get accurate information in this regard, all public and private hospitals were instructed on June 8 to submit details about the past deaths, within 48 hours without any delay," the statement said.

Accordingly, information started pouring in from various hospitals and suddenly, 862 death reports from June 12 to 15 were received by the cell, it said.

"The BMC immediately submitted a report on June 15 to the State government and requested it to put the information in public domain in a transparent manner," the statement added.

The statement said it is important to note that the epidemiology cell was unaware of these deaths until June 12. "Therefore, there is no question of hiding this information at the level of the BMC."

The BMC further said doctors and other staff at public and private hospitals, who are responsible for providing this information, are working round the clock. "It should be understood that



Healthcare workers at a medical camp at Shastri Nagar in Dharavi on Thursday. ■ VIJAY BATE

Navi Mumbai sees highest cases, deaths

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) on Thursday reported its highest single-day COVID-19 positive cases and deaths, at 202 and nine, respectively. The recovery rate, however, has gone down from 59% to 57%.

With the 202 fresh cases – 120 men and 82 women – the tally has now gone up to 4,391. The total positive cases also include 10 children in the age group of three to 12. Similarly, with nine

more fatalities – six women and three men – the death toll is now 138.

On Thursday, the NMMC screened 242 people at Sectors 1 and 2, Vashi, during which six suspects were found and of the 138 people screened in Nerul village, two suspects were detected.

Swab tests of all the suspects were held. Till now, the civic body has conducted screening of 32,724 people in areas where maximum cases are found and at places with high population density.

these records could not be retrieved from these hospitals due to inadequate staff on account of disruptions in many of them at that time and limitations in the means of communication. Of course, in the future, all these hospitals have been instructed to be constantly on alert and send this information within 48 hours of any death," it said.

Besides, the BMC has given all city hospitals one last chance to "come clean and report any COVID-19 death cases if still pending for reporting for more than 48 hours... these are permanent

standing instructions applicable to all such cases in future also," the statement said.

28 cases in Dharavi

Dharavi reported 28 new cases on Thursday, pushing the tally to 2,134. Of the total cases, 1,055 have been discharged so far. In Mumbai, K East ward has the highest cases at 4,336. R North ward continues to have the highest case growth rate at 5.3%.

The city's average case growth rate stands at 2.3%, while its doubling rate has been pushed to 30 days.

Meanwhile, the BMC is in the process of installing oxy-

The NMMC has so far tested 16,018 people, of whom 11,020 were found negative, while reports of 607 are pending. Around 35,930 people within the NMMC limits have completed the quarantine period.

The civic body has released a list of 23 containment zones – two in Belapur, seven in Nerul, eight in Turbhe, one in Koparkhairane, three in Airoli and two in Digha. The NMMC currently has 1,734 active cases, with 3% mortality rate.

gen cylinders in 20 COVID-19 facilities, with a total capacity of two lakh litres. The city has 7,114 oxygen-supported beds for positive patients.

The largest oxygen tanks with a capacity of 13,000 litres each have been installed at six jumbo COVID-19 facilities, including NSCI, Worli and Mahalaxmi Racecourse.

Besides, six major city hospitals and six other COVID-19 facilities have been provided the oxygen tanks. Most of the oxygen cylinders have been installed, while a few are at the completion stage.

PMC taps into CSR reserves to boost screening, testing

Civic body plans to push its testing capacity to 4,500 samples a day



A street vendor walks past coronavirus awareness banners in Pune. ■ FILE PHOTO

risk zones. "There 1.25 lakh senior citizens and 3,188 pregnant women living in these zones. We are making efforts to get as many of them tested in the coming weeks," Ms. Agarwal said.

The Microsoft CSR venture will see these co-morbid people being checked for body temperature, oxygen saturation, along with X-Ray and blood tests to enable early identification of the virus.

While Google has helped the PMC by supplying pulse

oximeters, the civic body is on the verge of finalising a ₹1.5 crore proposal with the UNICEF to renovate Naidu Hospital – one of the vital COVID-19 treatment centres in the city.

Pune city has been witnessing an average daily surge of more than 350-400 cases in the last few days, taking the total case tally to more than 10,500, of whom around 3,500 are active cases. "We aim to increase the testing capacity at Sasoon General Hospital to 1,500 samples from the current 200. Furthermore, the National Institute of Virology's testing capacity for samples within the PMC limits, which is currently 900, will be increased to 1,500 in the coming days," Ms. Agarwal said.

She said facilities at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune, which was hitherto not being tapped into, will be utilised for testing 200 samples daily. Ms. Agarwal said the funds were given as part of a special campaign run by the PMC for early detection to reduce the mortality rate among co-morbid patients.

As part of this drive, civic body authorities have prepared a ward-wise list of senior citizens and pregnant women living in the 'high-

Pollution watch

FORECAST TODAY (AQI*)		
Bhandup	17	
Colaba	51	
Malad	30	
Mazagaon	31	
Worli	27	
Borivali		

INTERVIEW | SUSHMITA SEN

'I did it, my way'

Back on-screen after a hiatus, Sushmita Sen discusses ambition, mental health, and shooting in one take

KENNETH ROSARIO

It's a rainy day, and Sushmita Sen has been patched on a phone call by her publicist to discuss her latest show, Aarya, in which she plays a mother taking to crime to protect her family. Contrary to the gloomy weather, Sen is in a rather cheery, and almost Zen-like, mood. "We have it so much better, compared to so many people right now," she says, alluding to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It's inevitable, therefore, for our conversation to steer towards larger, philosophical subjects, as we discuss her return on a set after five years. Excerpts from an edited interview...

Your take on ambition as been rather unique compared to your contemporaries, from your film choices after winning Miss Universe in 1994 to embracing motherhood as a single parent. How has your take on ambition evolved over the last 26 years?

plause or the insults. I continue to live my truth. Now, that hasn't been easy. Anybody wanting to follow that path should know that it's never going to be easy, but rewarding it is. I think the best way to summarise these 26 long years is: I did it my way.

You wrote a post on mental health on social media after Sushant Singh Rajput's demise, and you've been quite vocal about the subject. How do you see the relationship between fame, celebrityhood and mental health, which can get quite toxic sometimes?

■ The word you used is toxic,

I myself was clinically depressed as an after-effect of taking steroids for two years.



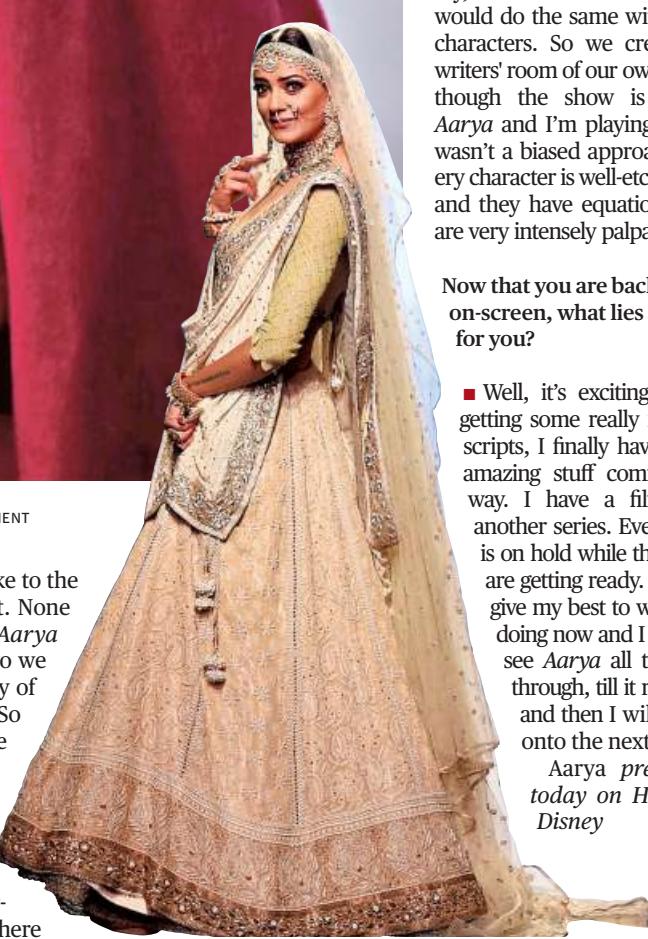
In action: Sushmita Sen plays a mother out to save her family in *Aarya* ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ask for help whatever kind of help, but we have to fight it.

As an actor, was it mentally disorienting to be back on a set after a long time?

■ Luckily that wasn't the case at all. I was coming back after 10 years in Hindi cinema but five in Bengali. I did *Nirbaak* (2015). The good thing about *Aarya* was that I wasn't just facing the camera after five

years, I was facing the camera in a completely different format and style of shooting. So not just me but for other actors in *Aarya*, who have been facing the camera on a regular basis every day, it was a new format as well, because Ram shoots everything in one take. You may have a two-take scene or a six-take scene, you may have two characters or six, he takes the whole scene with a three-camera set-up from the first take to the last. There is no cut. None of us attached to *Aarya* worked with Ram, so we didn't know this way of shooting at all. So thank god for the three weeks of the workshop that we all did, individually and collectively. So it was like doing a theatre performance live, and there



happen to be three cameras shooting while you are performing. So it was coming back to the art and craft of cinema in the way that a newcomer does. I've realised I'm a better actor in this format than I've ever been.

Since *Aarya* is an adaptation of the Dutch series *Penoza*, have you seen the series and how did you interpret it?

■ I saw every single episode of *Penoza*, all seasons except the last one, because the last season doesn't have English subtitles yet, so I couldn't watch it. But I saw the four while travelling to the US, all the way through the flight, landing in New York, during the trip, and I came back with my feedback. Even though it is inspired by *Penoza*, and is a fantastic character, the way Ram has Indianised it, it makes it completely different. *Penoza* doesn't have the same emotional connect as *Aarya* with her three kids. Personally, I love *Aarya* more, needless to say. We sat down and questioned everything that the character would do and say, and all the other actors would do the same with their characters. So we created a writers' room of our own. Even though the show is called *Aarya* and I'm playing her, it wasn't a biased approach. Every character is well-drawn and they have equations that are very intensely palpable.

Now that you are back on-screen, what lies ahead for you?

■ Well, it's exciting. From getting some really rubbish scripts, I finally have some amazing stuff coming my way. I have a film and another series. Everything is on hold while the drafts are getting ready. I like to give my best to what I'm doing now and I want to see *Aarya* all the way through, till it releases, and then I will move onto the next step.

Aarya premieres today on Hotstar+ Disney

When Britten met Auden

English playwright Alan Bennett's *The Habit of Art* is now available to stream online on Book My Show



As Titans reunite: A scene from the play ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ring Matthew Kelly and David Yelland in the lead roles, the play was shot digitally before London went into complete lockdown.

It is a layered re-examination of a long-lost friendship. "In the play, the nature of creativity is looked at through the question of whether to live for art or humanity, and the cost of either choice, is examined with Alan Bennett's typical wit and in-

sight," Philip Franks writes to us, adding that themes of friendship, love, humanity and creativity remain un-tampered with. This is the first time the play has been revived since its original production, and has since been tweaked by Philip so that it appeals to a universal audience. "It is also a play within a play. We are watching the run-through of a new work about the two men, and the di-

rector of the play is absent. The tensions between the cast and the characters they play and the cast and the author are examined. It is often very funny!"

Bennett is a wonderful writer of dialogue and a brilliant observer of humanity, writes Philip. "His way with language: rhythm, texture et cetera are

very precise and you mess with this at your peril. I encouraged from the cast, the most precise of learning and a minimum of decoration," continues Philip, adding that the trick here was to make the play look as spontaneous and real as possible. "The entire cast is on stage all the time. In full light. This means that whatever anybody is doing at any given time is in some way adding to the moment. Therefore, if somebody was over on the side doing some improvisation of their own, this may well prove extremely distracting," says the director.

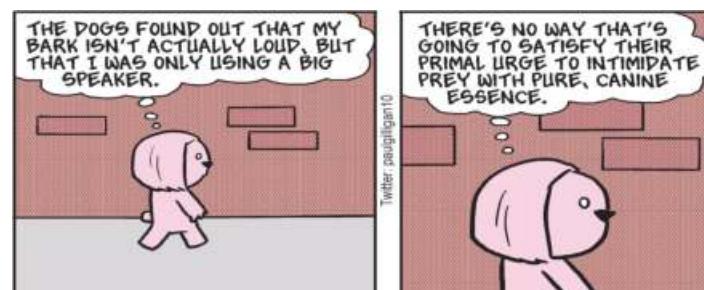
The performance also has a heavy musical component to it, unsurprising, since the story follows the legendary Britten. Songs are sung live and a few pieces of music are used as

background score. Apart from that, during a climactic moment, a particular piece of Britten is played on a record player to demonstrate the genius of the man. In terms of choreography, the play opens with a carefully constructed ballet performance as the cast arrives, and a few members of the cast often embody intangible emotions.

Has shifting to the digital format affected the cast and crew's working process? "The live experience of theatre is irreplaceable, but I hope it gives some flavour of a piece of work, of which I am very proud," concludes Philip.

The play will be streamed till June 21 daily at 7 pm. Tickets are available on www.bookmyshow.com.

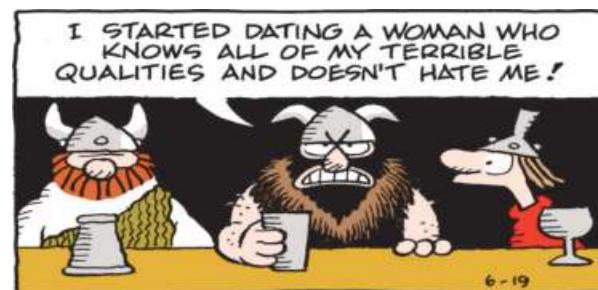
POOCHE CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



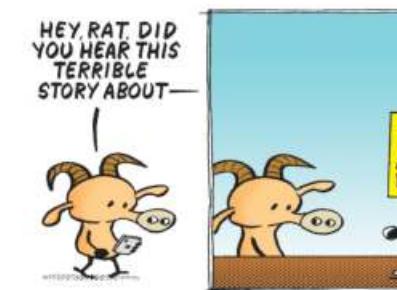
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER

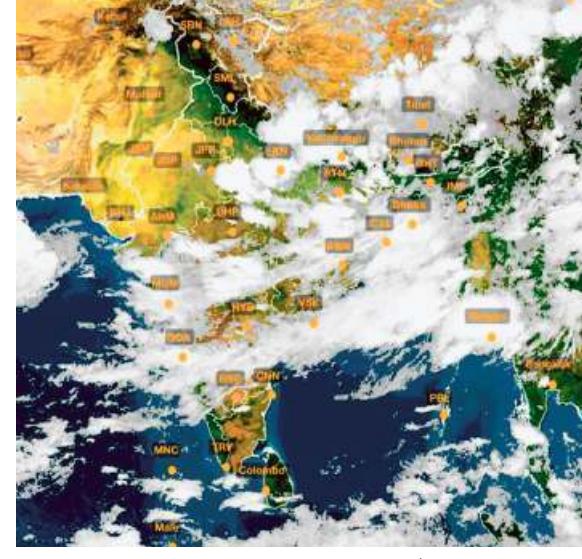


PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied by lightning and gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Gujarat, Telangana and coastal Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	14.8	28.6	25.3	Kozhikode	9.2	31.6	23.2
Ahmedabad	—	36.7	27.3	Kurnool	—	35.0	26.9
Aizawl	0.6	30.0	23.6	Lucknow	—	35.5	27.6
Allahabad	17	34.1	28.0	Madurai	—	41.6	27.2
Bengaluru	—	27.0	20.6	Mangaluru	54.4	29.0	22.9
Bhopal	3.4	35.1	24.0	Mumbai	1.2	30.8	26.8
Bhubaneswar	—	32.0	26.6	Mysuru	6.2	27.9	21.8
Chandigarh	—	41.3	30.0	New Delhi	—	42.5	28.6
Chennai	—	38.4	29.4	Patna	2.1	33.4	27.4
Coimbatore	—	34.0	22.8	Poil Blair	10.1	31.4	25.3
Dehradun	—	35.2	25.7	Puducherry	—	39.3	28.6
Gangtok	70.9	23.0	21.1	Pune	28.7	28.7	23.7
Goa	98.4	27.7	24.2	Raipur	—	32.6	27.0
Guwahati	44.3	30.4	24.2	Ranchi	—	29.6	23.0
Hubballi	—	27.0	22.0	Shillong	33.3	31.2	19.0
Hyderabad	1.5	31.5	23.6	Shimla	—	30.4	21.9
Imphal	6.8	30.2	22.6	Srinagar	—	30.6	12.7
Jaipur	—	43.3	33.3	Thiruvananthapuram	1.5	32.6	24.8
Kochi	8.2	31.6	24.0	Tiruchi	—	39.2	28.6
Kohima	10.8	25.0	18.8	Vijayawada	10.6	36.0	25.2
Kolkata	0.9	32.3	27.5	Visakhapatnam	0.4	31.0	27.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO NO CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

CITIES	SO	NO	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	—	25	—	—	—
Bengaluru	12.25	49	136	101	—	—
Chennai	5.4	98	61	—	—	—
Delhi	—	36	10	141	92	—
Hyderabad	7.7	43	14	19	32	—
Kolkata	7.47	20	31	48	—	—
Lucknow	4.4	2	68	100	—	—
Mumbai	—	1	57	15	37	—
Pune	—	—	—	—	—	—
Visakhapatnam	13.48	40	31	72	—	—

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor □ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO: 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: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.
PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

State to screen returning migrants

Govt. expects 13 lakh workers to come back by July: Anil Deshmukh

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

The State government will begin a special drive to screen migrant workers returning to Maharashtra, after leaving for their home towns during the extended nationwide lockdown.

The Maharashtra Police have been directed to conduct thermal screenings at border checkpoints, which are recording an entry of approximately 15,000 workers daily. Their registration and quarantine will be made mandatory, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh said on Thursday. Senior police officials said a special control room may also be set up to monitor inflow.

Around 13 lakh migrant workers, who left the State during the extended lockdown, are expected to return in July. As many as 60,000 industries have reopened in the first phase of unlocking, and the migrants are returning in large numbers to Mumbai, Pune,



Return journey: Police at the State's border checkpoints are recording an entry of 15,000 workers daily. ■ FILE PHOTO

Thane, Navi Mumbai, and Raigad, officials said.

At present, 4,000 to 5,000 workers are returning daily to Gondia, Nandurbar, Kolhapur, Nagpur, Pune. Another 11,000 to 11,500 are returning to Mumbai, Thane, Navi Mumbai. The number is low due to limited railway services at present, but will definitely increase, the Mr. Deshmukh said.

A list of these workers is provided to us by the respective States from where they are returning. The inflow is being recorded accordingly and workers thermally screened. They are then stamped with 'Home Quarantine' on their hands and sent to their residence," he said. Since May 1, over 3,700 Shramik Specials ferried an estimated 50 lakh migrant workers to their native States. Of these, 695 trains originated from Mumbai.

New initiative

Meanwhile, Skill Development Minister Nawab Malik has said the government is making all efforts to provide jobs to unemployed workers and youth, while facilitating availability of labour for the newly opened industry and entrepreneurs.

Inaugurating a website www.mahaswayam.gov.in on Thursday, Mr. Malik said, "Through this platform, the unemployed youth and workers will be able to get information about vacancies in government and private offices. They will be able to submit candidature applications, get information about job fairs, participate in employment promotion programs, and participate in various skill development schemes and skill training institutes of the Central and State governments," he said.

Info for job seekers

The website will provide entrepreneurs and industrialists with information on registered job seekers, their education, skills, experience, and location.

They will be allowed to register for new plants, branches separately, notify vacancies created from time to time, get the list of eligible candidates, publish these posts free of cost, download the list in PDF or Excel, and conduct interviews. They will also be able to send free SMSes to the selected candidates through the system, and online placement of candidates, the minister said.



Rahul Gandhi

tude, the party workers will felicitate doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, police personnel, essential service providers and government employees who are risking their own lives and fighting on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State Congress said that the five lakh food packets will be prepared through community kitchens. State Congress president Balasaheb Thorat said the packets will be delivered to the homes of the poor.

Blood donation camps

To tackle the shortage of blood during the COVID-19 crisis, 10,000 bottles of blood will be collected by organising blood donation camps. The party will also distribute raincoats to police personnel and personal protective equipment to doctors and nurses.

A medical camp will be organised for government employees, and they will be given immunity boosters, masks and sanitisers. Five lakh masks made by the women self-help groups will be distributed among the needy in the State.

Meet with CM satisfactory, say Congress leaders

Discussed party concerns, ways to expand welfare schemes: Balasaheb Thorat

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Congress leaders expressed satisfaction after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday held a meeting with State party chief and Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat and PWD Minister Ashok Chavan.

The Congress leaders had sought time to meet Mr. Thackeray to discuss issues such as the party being side-

lined in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government's decision-making process and a lobby of bureaucrats working to create a rift in the alliance.

The meeting scheduled for Tuesday was cancelled after the death of Mr. Thackeray's father-in-law. On Wednesday, senior Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Anil Desai met Mr. Thorat to discuss the issues.

Following the talks, Con-

gress leaders arrived at Mr. Thackeray's residence, Moshthree, on Thursday.

Sought CM's opinion

"We wanted to convey our concerns about certain administrative happenings and sought to know his opinion. We also wanted to discuss how welfare schemes can be expanded to help the poor," Mr. Thorat said.

According to sources, one

of the major grievances of the Congress was the planned division of the Public Works Department.

An editorial in Sena mouthpiece *Saamana* had recently criticised the party over its approach and called it a 'old creaking cot'.

The Congress in response said the editorial was based on incomplete information and sent out a wrong message about the party.

Sardar Sarovar dam 11 m short of full capacity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA AHMEDABAD

Though the monsoon has just arrived in Gujarat, the water level of Sardar Sarovar Dam on Narmada river is rising and has reached 127.46 metres, just 11.22 metres short of its full capacity, officials said on Thursday.

With the fresh inflow of upstream water, mainly

from Omkareshwar and Indira Sagar dams in Madhya Pradesh, the live water storage of the dam has reached up to 2,700 million cubic metres, the officials said.

"The water level of the reservoir has reached 127.46 metres," Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited Director P.C. Vyas said. In September last year, the water level

reached its highest capacity for the first time since its height was raised in 2017.

Mr. Vyas said with an inflow of around 40,000 cubic metres, both the river bed and the canal head power houses on the dam have been started from Wednesday.

The water discharged into the main canal is being utilised to fill up dry lakes.

Woman saves last four digits of truck's number plate on phone

RAINA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

The Panvel City police have arrested a 35-year-old truck driver for raping an 18-year-old woman on the pretext of giving her a lift to Pune.

The police said they tracked the accused based on the last four digits of the truck's number plate, which the woman had dialled on her phone after she was abandoned by the roadside.

The woman reached Mumbai on Sunday on a Shramik Special train from Mahavadi village in Uttar Pradesh. She stayed with a relative and left on Tuesday to meet her husband in Pune.

On Tuesday afternoon, the woman reached Kalyan by a local train and took a bus to Panvel. Around 1 a.m. on Wednesday, when she

way's warehouse. The woman had said the accused had a beard and wore a turban. The police found him sleeping in the truck, but he started the vehicle and fled when he saw them.

45-minute chase

"After a 45-minute chase, he abandoned the truck on realising that he was driving on an under-construction bridge. He tried to run, but we caught him," Mr. Tarmale said. The accused was an employee of a transport company in Vashi and was heading to Uran for work. "He has no criminal record," Mr. Tarmale said. The woman got married seven months ago and hadn't met her husband in four months. The couple decided to meet in Pune and settle there.

CIDCO promises safe abode to Dungi villagers

Authority asks residents to provide papers to relocate them from flood-prone village

RAINA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

With the onset of monsoon, the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) held a videoconference last week with Dungi villagers, living near the Navi Mumbai International Airport site, to assuage fears of water entering their homes.

Relief package

CIDCO has asked them to submit necessary documents to be eligible for 11 months' rent and a house in a safer place. The rent being offered is ₹12 per square feet as per their current house. Of the 122 families that have applied for the package, CIDCO has cleared the documents of 46 families. The remaining 62 need to submit their papers. Of the 122 houses, 51

are on a Gaonthan plot and 71 on privately-owned land. To be eligible for the package, the families need to prove that their houses on the Gaonthan plot were built before 2013 and the ones on the private land before 2014. A CIDCO officer said, "Forty-six houses on the Gaonthan plot

met the criterion, while five were built just months before we carried out a video survey of the village in September 2019." CIDCO officials said they haven't been able to identify eligible residents as villagers are not allowing them to conduct a video survey.

Villagers who shifted last year returned after CIDCO gave them just four months' rent

ADESH NAIK

Resident of Dungi village

be eligible for the package, families need to produce a consent letter from their owner, procure an eligibility certificate and provide proof that their house was built before 2014.

Adesh Naik, a resident of Dungi village, said, "The villagers who shifted last year returned after CIDCO gave them just four months' rent. This year too we might have to face flooding."

CIDCO officials said they haven't been able to identify eligible residents as villagers are not allowing them to conduct a video survey.



At the high table

India must adopt value-based positions at the UNSC and be the voice of the weaker nations

India's election to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member is a significant diplomatic victory for the country, which has long been pushing for reforms at global institutions. The victory wasn't unexpected as India was the only contestant for the Asia Pacific seat. But the Indian foreign policy establishment took no chances as the election would be done by secret ballot at the UN General Assembly and two-thirds of the votes were needed for victory. India secured the seat with 184 votes in the 193-strong General Assembly. Mexico, Norway and Ireland were also elected as non-permanent members. While Mexico won the Latin American seat uncontested, Norway and Ireland emerged victorious from a three-way contest for the Western Europe and Others Group seat. Canada failed to win enough votes in this group. Neither Kenya nor Djibouti, which were contesting the seat from Africa, won a two-thirds majority. They will face another vote. India sought the support of member countries by highlighting its commitment to multilateralism and reforms. Ahead of the vote, India had launched a campaign brochure which highlighted its demand for transparency in mandates for UN peacekeeping missions and push for the India-led Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism, and called for joint efforts for UN reform and expansion of the Security Council. A "new orientation for a reformed multilateral system" (NORMS), as laid out by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, would be India's overall objective during the two-year tenure that will begin next year.

Achieving this would depend on how India will conduct diplomacy in the global body, build alliances and raise issues that go beyond the interests of the big five. India has long been of the view that the structure of the UN Security Council doesn't reflect the realities of the 21st century. It has also got increasing support from member countries for its push for reforms. But the five permanent members of the Security Council have resisted these attempts. The COVID-19 pandemic has already shaken up the global order and sharpened the rivalry between the U.S. and China. It has also opened up fresh debates on strengthening multilateralism and multilateral institutions. In this context, the challenges before India are many. The Security Council is one of the most important multilateral decision-making bodies where the contours of global geopolitics are often drawn. India should avoid the temptation of taking sides at a time when the Security Council is getting more and more polarised. To serve its interests and push for its agenda of multilateralism and reforms, India should adopt value-based positions that are not transactional, aspire for the leadership of the non-permanent members of the Council and be the voice of the weaker nations.

Fleecing fuel users

Revenues from fuels come at the expense of people relying entirely on private transport

In just 12 straight days, India's state-owned oil marketing companies have raised the retail prices of petrol and diesel by ₹6.55 and ₹7.04 a litre, respectively. A consumer in Delhi would have ended up spending about 9% more on petrol at an Indian Oil Corporation fuel pump on Thursday while those driving diesel vehicles would have found their fuel costs had risen by a little more than 10%. Over the same period, the price of Brent crude oil futures, which contributes a fourth to the value of the Indian crude basket, declined by about 3%. If one drills down to the price buildup data shared by IOC, petrol's freight inclusive base price as on June 16 in Delhi was ₹22.44, a significant 23% higher than the ₹18.28 before the refiners embarked on their latest round of price increases. It is disconcerting that between the OMCs, which had frozen their daily resetting of prices for almost 12 weeks following a reduction on March 16, and the Central and State governments, automobile fuels have been targeted for milking revenue. The buildup data shows that Excise Duty, levied by the Centre, and VAT collected by the Delhi government together constituted two-thirds the ₹76.73 pump price of petrol as on June 16.

On the face of it, the OMCs' decision to resume daily price resetting would appear to be in broad conformity with the pricing deregulation that the Centre has intermittently committed to ever since the government of the day freed up petrol prices in 2010. However, the timing of the recent moves to raise levies and retail prices by the governments and fuel marketers, respectively, is at odds with logic at a point when the country is grappling with the impact of a pandemic. The aim of maximising takings from fuel products to offset shortfalls in other revenue streams can only bear fruit if petrol and diesel offtake remains unaffected and the rising fuel bill doesn't end up depleting household consumption budgets. With public transportation yet to restart fully in most urban areas and operating with tight restrictions and at lower frequencies even where some services have resumed, most commuters continue to have little choice but to use personal vehicles. Also, with the lockdowns imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19 having severely hit business activity at all levels, the onus is on the governments – both at the Centre and in the States – to facilitate the resumption of economic activity in every manner possible. Given that diesel is the primary fuel for the vast and essential road freight sector, every incremental addition to haulage costs ends up dampening both the transport industry and wider economic revival. It is imperative that authorities remove the speed breakers on the path back to normalcy.

Galwan: Postscript to a tragedy

Apart from insisting on a timely and early clarification of the LAC, India should take a long view of its South Asia policy



NIRUPAMA RAO

The night of June 15, 2020 will go down in the annals of Indian history as one steeped in tragedy. Twenty Indian Army personnel, including the Commanding Officer of 16th Bihar Regiment, lost their lives at the hands of Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh. The incident represents a watershed in India's relations with China and marks the end of a 45-year chapter which saw no armed confrontation involving loss of lives on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The period of bilateral relations that was inaugurated with former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December 1988 also drew to a close in the darkness of that fateful Monday night.

The incident has deeply shaken the nation. It had been assumed all along that there would be a de-escalation of the confrontation between Indian and Chinese troops in the area after the Corps Commander-level talks between the two sides on June 6. That things went terribly wrong is more than evident. What is the import and significance of what happened in Galwan Valley on June 15? Can it be business as usual with China after this? That would seem unlikely given the manner in which the whole calculus of relations has been disturbed by the incident.

From 1959 to 2020

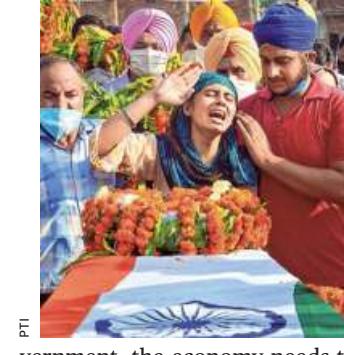
Nothing on this scale was witnessed even in the run-up to the conflict between the two countries in 1962. In October 1959,

there was a face-off between Indian and Chinese troops at Kongka La. Nine Indian soldiers were killed and three soldiers were detained then, including the legendary Karam Singh, the leader of the group who recorded after his release the ill-treatment he and his colleagues had been subjected to at the hands of their captors. It was after Kongka La that the national mood turned against the Chinese in full measure in an atmosphere already complicated by the revolt in Tibet and the granting of asylum to the Dalai Lama in March 1959. There was very little room for reasoned, negotiated settlement being reached on the boundary question between the two countries after that juncture. The rest is history. The conflict in 1962 inflicted gaping wounds on the national soul and prestige from which India took time to recover.

Is the country at a similar juncture today? 2020 is not 1959. India and China are in a very different place in their history as nations today. They have grown immensely in strength and stature on the world stage and their relations have substance and a diversity of content in a manner absent in the 1950s. To assume that India is on a steep descent from here towards a full-blown conflict with China may therefore be an oversimplification. Both countries must stop that fall despite the terse messaging of statements issued in the two capitals after the incident. The statements are mutually accusatory, with each country disclaiming responsibility for the tragic turn of events. The mood is very sombre.

Assessing choices carefully

Cool-headed thinking is the need of the hour. All this comes at a time when the COVID-19 crisis demands the full attention of the go-



PTI

vernment, the economy needs to recover from the stagnancy of the last few months, the tensions with Pakistan persist, and a dispute over territory with Nepal in the Lipulekh/Kalapani area has been headline. There is considerable turbulence generated by all this. Even as we mourn the loss of Indian personnel in Galwan Valley, a reincarnated battlefield with China cannot be blindly embraced, however much national pride and prestige are at stake. The implications of such a choice must be carefully assessed. The instant gratification that an eye for an eye may provide, because we have scores to settle, has its attendant complications.

Strong political direction, mature deliberation and coherence are keys to handling the situation. The Army can make tactical adjustments and manoeuvres to deter the Chinese, but a comprehensive China strategy and its determination should devolve on those tasked with national security policy in the highest echelons of the Government of India under the direction of the Prime Minister. The responsibility of effective strategic communication too rests there. A clearer enunciation of the circumstances surrounding Chinese transgressions in Sikkim and Ladakh in the last few months would have been helpful in guiding the scattershot public debate.

Were there early warning signs of the seriousness of the situation that could have been defused at the military, diplomatic and political levels so that the disaster could have been averted? We must draw the right conclusions that can help us in the future. The Opposition must not play politics on this issue.

Turning to the future

It is to the future we must turn. It is India that should take the initiative to insist on a timely and early clarification of the LAC. Pockets of difference of alignment as perceived by each side have to be clearly identified and these areas demarcated by both sides through joint agreement pending a settlement of the boundary. At the same time, India must stand resolute and firm in the defence of territory in all four sectors of the border. Contacts between the two militaries – joint exercises and exchanges of visits of senior Commanders – should be scaled down for the foreseeable future. A border settlement is not envisaged in the short or medium term.

Bilateral relations in other areas will be under considerable strain and soft landings cannot be expected. No leadership-level contact between the top leaders of the two countries can be envisaged in the near term and there is no need for any haste on that front. Diplomatic channels must continue to be open and should not be fettered in any way because their smooth operability is vital in the current situation. Indian businesses in China and Chinese business operations in India can expect the going to be tougher than before. The scenario on trade and investments could encounter similar obstacles. In any case, in areas that impinge on national security, as in the cyber field and in telecommunications, and in technologies that

enable spying and surveillance (5G, for instance), stringent controls, exclusions and clampdowns can be expected in the treatment and the entry of Chinese companies in India.

Taking the long view

But beyond all this is the outside world. India's leverage and balancing power within the Indo-Pacific and the world beyond stems from its strong democratic credentials, the dynamism of its economy, its leading role in multilateral institutions, and the strategic advantage of its maritime geography – an asset possessed by few other nations, and which must be deployed much more effectively to counterbalance the Chinese ingress into this oceanic space that surrounds us. The events in Galwan Valley should be a wake-up call to many of India's Asian friends and partners enabling a high-resolution envisioning of Chinese aggressiveness. This is also an opportunity for India to align its interests much more strongly and unequivocally with the U.S. as a principal strategic partner and infuse more energy into its relations with Japan, Australia, and the ASEAN. The time has also come for India to reconsider its stand on joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. If India is to disengage from economic involvement with China, and build the capacities and capabilities it needs in manufacturing, and in supply chains networks closer home, it cannot be a prisoner of the short term. It is time to boldly take the long view in this area as also on its South Asia policy. Good neighbourhood relations are crucial for national stability and well-being.

Nirupama Rao is a former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to China

Mediation in the age of COVID-19

Online mediation has a host of advantages, but also bears some cautioning



SRIRAM PANNU

We live in strange times. Old certainties have given way to new uncertainties. Down the ages, Lady Justice, sword in one hand and eyes blindfolded, has been pretty much like the Rock of Gibraltar, ensuring stability, but also being resistant to change. One bug, christened COVID-19, comes along and the Lady is reeling. At the heart of the adversarial system is advocacy performed in open setting, in full gaze of clients and fellow lawyers, and that has dictated modes of thought and approach and behaviour, all integral to the system. Justice must not only seem to be done, but judges must also be seen while they are engaged in the task of doing it. But presence in numbers necessitates proximity, and now proximity spells danger. Deprived of their natural setting of the courtroom, judges and lawyers have fallen back to talk of virtual courts, so that the bare essential is achieved – the judge being able to hear the particular lawyer. All other features of the courtroom are

eschewed, and thus an essentially public setting is converted to a closed door one. It is, and will remain, unsatisfactory.

A new kid on the block

There is, however, another tool in the dispute resolution armoury, which is resistant to COVID-19, and perhaps could even thrive on it. That is mediation, which is the polar opposite of the court process. It tries to achieve consensus between parties to come to an amicable agreement, rather than the win-lose verdict of the adversarial system. At its core is confidential discussion between mediator and parties, and between mediator and individual parties. It focuses on uncovering interests, and eliciting suggestions from the parties themselves for practical solutions to end the dispute. As much as the essential attribute of the formal justice system is the open courtroom hearing, mediation's essence is closed door communication with its guarantee of confidentiality. And, important in the present context, it has an inherent flexibility and adaptability.

As a process, structured mediation is a new kid on the block, with an existence of barely two to three decades in India, and just a few more worldwide. Conventional litigation and arbitration are vintage, spanning hundreds of years



and generations of judges and lawyers. Mediation, however, is an idea whose time has come and is rapidly gaining ground. Legislation has given it the legal structure and safeguards, and provided the assurance that the courts will implement mediation agreements. India's judges have been enthusiastic embracers of this process. Lawyers, steeped in adversarial ways, have surprisingly warmed up to a system which is its antithesis.

Convenient and cost-effective

Online mediation will enable the mediator and the parties to assemble together, each on their computer screens perhaps hundreds of miles away. Discussion can be guided, giving parties and lawyers the opportunity to put forth their views. When separate meetings are required, the mediator can, at the click of a button, move the other

party and its lawyer to another virtual room. The great advantage of online mediation is that it is convenient, cost-effective and an efficient use of time. Parties do not have to bear costs, do not have to travel, do not have to wait long hours, and do not have to undergo adjournments and multiple visits to the mediation centre. Much can be done by using this medium to get faster results.

What will be missing in this process is the immediacy, directness and complete contact that is possible only in face-to-face meetings. On the other hand, it may also be that in an online process, we are giving the participant a little cocoon of safety, when we create this grainy barrier of two screens and an intermediate world of Internet and WiFi. It will certainly be of benefit in cases where emotions run high and face-to-face confrontation may increase the conflict. That happens often in matrimonial cases, and in family business disputes, where tempers and emotions arising from frayed domestic situations and settings can edge out sensible business logic. Similarly, where parties are located in different countries, we would have done away with difficulties of distance when we adopt this mode.

As the new rash of webinars shows, it is easy to get people from different locations on to one platform.

Online mediation has a host of advantages, but also bears some cautioning. Confidentiality can be compromised since hearings could be recorded; service providers have to be vigilant, and rules will have to penalise participants for breach. Technical glitches have to be minimised, and Internet services must gear up for providing screen clarity and uninterrupted feed. But above all, there is the apprehension that online communication will exclude the underprivileged, those who cannot afford access to Internet or do not have the capacity or assistance to use it. Such exclusion will be tantamount to denial of access to justice. If the State and its Courts are going to allow and encourage online mediation to resolve disputes, weaker parties must be assisted and enabled to avail of this facility.

As we meander in the dark to find out what the new normal is going to consist of, we may well discover that a good part of the world of dispute resolution has been flipped, and that COVID-19 is the harbinger of change taking online consensual resolution to a higher level. Perhaps, this cloud too has a silver lining.

Sriram Panchu is Senior Advocate and Mediator, and President, Mediators India. Email: srirampanchu@gmail.com

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Border conflict

This incident gives India an opportunity to build closer strategic ties with Quad, build stronger bilateral ties with the U.S. and also its allies in the Indo-Pacific. China has not clashed with India alone; it has adopted an aggressive approach elsewhere too ("Is China's peaceful development over?", June 18). Clearly, if not challenged, China will continue to make inroads into Indian territory. Countries around the world will be watching India's response to this incident. India must think carefully before taking its next step, but without losing sight of what this crisis has to offer in terms of a long-term plan.

SHUBHAM CHOURBAY, Gurugram

It is axiomatic that we make our country; our defence of the country is our defence of ourselves. The surge in nationalist sentiments in the face of an external threat is understandable. The call for boycotting Chinese products is reflective of national anger. At the same time, India has to be realistic and sagacious in responding to China's belligerence. Diplomacy is the best way to settle disputes. New Delhi should refuse to be drawn into an armed conflict, even if provoked. Domestic political considerations must be kept away from foreign policy.

G. DAVID MILTON, Maruthancode

Extracting revenge is not the answer to the face-off.

The situation is precarious. The establishment and the media have to behave sensibly and sanely instead of breaking into nationalistic fervour. Many news channels and newspapers, especially regional language ones, seem to have forgotten COVID-19 completely and are instead busy 'celebrating' war. Warmongering should strictly be curbed in the print, electronic, and social media. Nationalism that invites and celebrates war has always wreaked havoc in the world. We should not forget that both the world wars were the products of jingoism.

SUKUMARAN C.V., Palakkad

The government should act

responsibly by explaining to the public what really happened at the Ladakh border. This will also help unite the government and the Opposition on this particular issue and remove any doubts that the public may have. Transparency and communication are important when emotions are heightened.

AAMIR AMIN BHAT, Kupwara

Following the conflict in Ladakh, there are calls by citizens and even a traders' body to boycott Chinese goods. Indian manufacturing is dependent on supplies from China. Instead of calling for a boycott of Chinese goods, Indians should use this opportunity to think of ways to start

manufacturing certain goods domestically – goods for which we have manpower and the capacity to build infrastructure. It is time to work towards an 'Atmanirbhar' India.

JAYA THAMPI, Oachira

A system under strain

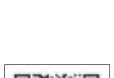
COVID-19 has exposed the loopholes in India's health institutions ("A prescription of equitable and effective care" and "Maternal health matters", June 18).

Government hospitals are under tremendous strain, while many private ones are taking advantage of the situation. The need for a more robust healthcare system has been underlined time and again since independence but we have overlooked this need. The

collapse of the healthcare system in the National Capital Region and the helplessness of health workers everywhere shows the ill-preparedness of the administration in tackling the crisis despite the imposition of several lockdowns. Everyone, irrespective of their socio-economic status, is entitled to the right to life and the right to health. Keeping in mind India's social structure, the public health system needs immediate upgradation, and the high-handedness of private organisations must be immediately controlled.

DEEPIKA JAIN, Delhi

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Can India decouple itself from Chinese manufacturing?

PARLEY

India faces challenges linked to infrastructure and skill sets; and its policies are unpredictable

The border clashes with China and the COVID-19 pandemic have reignited questions about India's dependence on Chinese manufacturing. India's imports from China in 2019-2020 reached \$65 billion, out of \$81 billion two-way trade. Is the pandemic, as Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said last month, a "blessing in disguise" for Indian manufacturing? Will companies be able to move deeply integrated supply chains out of China? In a discussion moderated by Ananth Krishnan, Biswajit Dhar and Amitendu Palit discuss the options and the challenges ahead in India's efforts to boost manufacturing. Edited excerpts:

It has been more than five years since India launched the Make in India initiative. If we look at India's dependencies on China as one barometer, how would you assess where we are now?

Biswajit Dhar (BD): I think that the Make in India initiative was a good opportunity for us to get our manufacturing sector back on track. I don't think that we have taken advantage of what we had planned. In the past five years, what we have seen is that the dependency on China has actually gone up.

Amitendu Palit (AP): What we are seeing is for a variety of reasons, India's dependence on imports is getting to be localised, in the sense that there is not a wide diversification of countries from which India is sourcing. For example, if you look at critical medical supplies which India has been importing for frontline healthcare workers in the COVID-19 battle, most of these come from China. Aside from China, there are probably three or four countries on which India's dependence is increasing. China is by and large widespread across different concentrations. To that extent, it's going to be a difficult choice for India to get out of this dependence.

What are some of the concentrations?

AP: First, regarding capital goods, Indian manufacturing is dependent

on supplies from China. This includes a wide variety of machineries, including electrical machinery, semiconductor-driven machinery etc. We import fertilizers from China. Limited value consumer goods have flooded the market. Where the criticality actually comes in is when there are a number of imports which are not really a matter of choice but which are essential. For example, if you look at humidifiers, which are being utilised in the COVID-19 battle, China is again the main source. For medical masks, China is the main source. Even for something like liquid soap, which is very much highly required across the country today, China again happens to be the main source of the supplies. We need to look at the whole situation very clearly and probably prioritise in terms of what are the areas where India can relatively more easily move back away from the dependency it has on China, and what are the areas where it will take much longer.

The conventional wisdom is we should aim to replicate what China did in the 1990s. But how different is the global environment from 30 years ago when China was opening up?

BD: Global value chains today are looking quite different. What the data suggests is global value chains are in fact becoming more local. Countries are depending more on their own economies rather than on global markets. This is an impact of the great recession of 2008. I don't think that the strategy that China followed, which was a global market-driven industrialisation strategy, an export-driven strategy, is going to be a reality anymore. Policymakers keep making these statements, that we are going to become more open and we are going to be relying more on the global markets. Unfortunately, that possibility has now passed.

AP: If one looks at why China is so central to a very large number of global and regional supply chains, there are two elements to it. The first is the fact that China does offer



the capacity to businesses to develop the supply chains by considerable lengths within itself. This is not just because of the geography that it has, but also because of the fairly wide broad-basing that it has developed over different sectors, and by and large in most products. China's biggest value comes as a final stage assembler. China has also become a major consumer for final products. So when we look at value chains today, let's say in post COVID-19 situation, the emphasis on the part of businesses is to make these chains shorter, more resilient, more durable, and locate them closer to the final demand markets. Now, this is where I think we often overlook the importance of China. China continues to remain a major source of the final demand market. As a result of which, shifting physically supply chains out of the Chinese geography and its connected arms – I refer to Hong Kong and Taiwan – is going to be pretty difficult because the geography offers a tremendous amount of what in economics we call agglomeration advantages.

We have seen companies moving out, although mainly to South-East Asia. Even assuming there is limited relocation that we can absorb, what should be our policy priorities?

BD: We need to ask why is it that there has always been a huge gulf between FDI inflows into China and into India, and why is it that we have been attracting so little despite being one of the most open economies, and despite being a country which offers very attractive terms to foreign investors. The Make in India

strategy talked about FDI in manufacturing, but if you look at the data and see which sectors have been preferred by the foreign investors, you'll see it's the service sectors. And many of these sectors are those where India does not need any investment, for instance IT services. I think the reason is clear, and that is there are skill set problems in India. Foreign investors get into the sectors where there are acknowledged skills, for instance in IT. But we don't have similar skill sets in manufacturing. The second issue is infrastructure. It's not just about having a good policy, but you need to have the infrastructure in place so that the foreign investor can make profits. There is a view that since the wage rates are low, investment is going to come here. That's not true. We all know that it's actually productivity-linked wages that matter, and productivity in India is pretty awful. We can talk about offering land, but I don't think that land is an issue because from 2005, after we announced our special economic zones policy, the government of India has gone and acquired land all over the place. There is also the red tape. It's not enough to say that we are going up the ease of doing business rankings. We know what the situation is on the ground.

We often hear industries calling for labour reforms, and complaints that in India labour

is there a contradiction between India aspiring to

unions are too powerful and it should be easier to hire and fire workers. Is that the issue, or is it a skills issue?

BD: It is actually easy for industries to hire and fire. If one lesson COVID-19 has taught everyone, it is that there's virtually no labour laws in this country. Labour was retrenched at the drop of a hat. The reverse migration we are seeing is because of this problem. This is a false kind of a narrative that has been parroted time and time again, that we need more flexibility.

AP: If you look at the kind of FDI that India has been getting over the last three to four years, and the big ticket FDI, whether it is Walmart's acquisition of a large stake in Flipkart, or that of Facebook in Reliance Jio, all of these are essentially intending to acquire existing assets. None of these are in the nature of building a boat from scratch in terms of the typical greenfield investment, which is capable of creating substantial jobs.

One thing India can probably offer that other countries in South-East Asia cannot to the same degree, is the market. Can we leverage that better?

BD: The unfortunate reality is we have not cared to harness the dominant domestic market adequately. And this is linked to our overall strategy of increasing the manufacturing sector, allowing the sector to absorb more labour, especially from agriculture, and so easing the burden of agriculture, and then having a more resilient manufacturing sector, and reducing the dependence on countries like China. What we are finding is that since none of these things have actually fallen in place, we find that the unemployment rate has actually gone up. And the direct implication of this increase in unemployment rate is that the domestic market has shrunk. And we've been seeing that growth was tapering off even before COVID-19. At the end of the day, if you have to create your own market, you got to have enough demand on the ground.

become a lynchpin in global supply chains and being wary about trading agreements?

AP: Even if we go by what India's stated objective is, that is reduce dependency on China and work towards relocation of supply chains with like-minded partners, countries like Japan, Korea, Vietnam, those are all members of RCEP [Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership], which is going to be concluded without India. And they're all going to work on the same rules of origin, which this agreement is going to give them. What I am trying to reconcile, and I am unfortunately failing to, are these contradictory sets of objectives, with India looking to position itself as a hub and working to relocate supply chains along with a group of countries, but with countries which are part of a completely different sub-regional understanding. The question India needs to answer upfront is, is it going to stay engaged with the trade agreements or not? There could be two elements to this – reduce dependency on China, and reduce dependency on the rest of the world. Just reducing dependency on China has one set of implications, but reducing dependency on the rest of the world is an approach that will drive you up the road of economic nationalism.

BD: I think we are going to go more towards the road of economic nationalism. There have been very clear signals in the last few years. India has gone more protectionist, and the average tariffs have actually gone up. There have been statements made by the major Ministers saying that we need to promote domestic goods, we need to shun imported goods, and even products made by foreign companies. That is very, very disturbing. If for everything, we start talking about indigenisation, that means we are trying to go down the path of import substitution. In this day and age, you can't really do that. There are practical problems, because in order to go down that path, you have to garner huge resources which India doesn't have. One thing which is very important for any country today is that policies must be predictable and transparent. Unfortunately, we seem to have neither.



Biswajit Dhar
is Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University



Amitendu Palit
is Professor at the Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore



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Trump's 'America-first' policy intensifies in an election year

9,500 troops are to be pulled out from Germany

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

U.S. President Donald Trump's move to draw down troops from Germany, months before his November re-election bid, marks the return to a lynchpin of his 'America-first' foreign policy rooted in a repudiation of multilateralism. The development shows persistent strains in relations between the two countries.

Under the move, 9,500 American defence personnel, about a quarter of those stationed in Germany – home to the largest contingent of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe – would be removed by September. The significance of the step may be gauged from the fact that the U.S. Army and Air Force headquarters for Europe and Africa are located in the country, which also hosts major American military training bases. These facilities serve as critical strategic and logistics centres to bolster Washington's security interests in West Asia and North Africa.

Jitters across the Atlantic Washington's decision has, however, caused consternation across the Atlantic. Leaders from Germany's ruling conservative Christian Democratic Party have highlighted the absence of consultations over the unilateral move as illustrative of the lack of cohesiveness within NATO. Germany's left-wing Die Linke party has called on the government to push for a further rollback of U.S. troops.

Conversely, over 20 Republicans from the House Arms and Defense Committee have written to the President opposing the troops pull-out, arguing that Russia under President Vladimir Putin continues to pose a real and present danger to the security of Europe and beyond.

A potential beneficiary from this stand-off could be Poland on NATO's eastern flanks, which spends 2% of its GDP on defence and has earmarked some \$48 billion to modernise its armed forces by 2026. The ultra-right government has already signed a contract worth billions of dollars for U.S. Patriot missiles and has expressed interest in the F-35 fighter jets. During the signing of a deal last year for the supply of additional 1000 troops to Warsaw, Mr. Trump indicated that they could be redeployed from Germany. Seizing the moment, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki has sounded optimistic about Washington's latest decision. His ultimate aim is for a permanent U.S. military presence on Polish soil to counter Russian influence.

Trump's displeasure at Berlin

The relocation of troops signals Mr. Trump's strong disapproval of Berlin, which he has repeatedly singled out for non-compliance with NATO's stipulation to spend 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence. The pressure he has exerted on the bloc has already resulted in substantial increases in expenditure from many member states. However, the German government reported a marginal increase last year and aims to meet the bloc's target only in a decade. Turning up the heat on Berlin, whose huge trade surpluses with Washington have roiled domestic industrial lobbies, works to Mr. Trump's advantage in an election year. Its backing for the Paris climate

deal, the Iran nuclear agreement and even its domestic 2015 policy to let in immigrants have similarly drawn Mr. Trump's ire. Washington's former Ambassador to Berlin Richard Grenell, a close Trump associate, played down the significance of the troop withdrawal when he alluded to similar steps being planned in South Korea and Japan. But there were overtones of Mr. Trump's stance of an isolationist America when Mr. Grenell remarked that there were costs to U.S. taxpayers from providing security for other countries.

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NOTEBOOK

First the blowout, then the stake-out

Memories of covering an oil rig accident in Andhra Pradesh, 25 years ago

K. VENKATARAMAN

As I read reports about the blowout at an Oil India natural gas well at Baghjan in Tinsukia district of Assam, I am beginning to wonder: How are reporters covering a blowout these days? From May 27, a massive fire is spewing out of the well mouth, and may take weeks to be capped. Are reporters waiting at the spot, as I did 25 years ago? It's not exactly a picnic and may turn out to be a frustrating and seemingly endless assignment. Over three spells in January-March 1995, reporting the blowout became a lengthy stake-out with slow progress and no more than a trickle of information.

Three stints

The unlikely assignment had come my way one evening as I was typing my reports after another humdrum day in court. I was asked to head to a village in

Andhra Pradesh I had never heard of until then. A day or two earlier, there had been a blowout at an ONGC drilling site in the Krishna-Godavari Basin. The next morning, I was on a train headed towards Rajahmundry, en route to Amalapuram. Pasarlapudi-19, as the well was called, would be an assignment that I thought would last a few days. But I had to stay in Amalapuram for 10 days; and return to the blowout scene for a 21-day stint. And then a third visit whose duration I can't recall. By the time the blowout was capped, over 60 days had elapsed, and I had wriggled out of the assignment and passed the baton to a colleague.

Initially, it was a learning experience on what exactly a blowout is and how it is capped. The painstaking process involves creating a shield of water from jet pumps to cool down the area and protect workers

going towards the mouth. A relief well had to be dug and efforts made to pump in huge quantities of slurry. If the spew of hydrocarbons was contained to some extent, the well would have to be capped with a metal head flange. If it was not possible, one would have to blow up the well-mouth so that the explosion would suck out all available oxygen and end the blaze.

Not much insight

As now, then too, foreign experts were called to contain the blaze that was burning gas worth lakhs of rupees a day. Crops for a radius of several kilometres were damaged. Renowned expert Neal Adams arrived amidst great hope of capping the inferno.

For the small band of reporters gathered there, working out of nearby lodges and using the local P&T office to send their despatches, there was some expectation that the visiting

experts would give us a better insight than the tight-lipped officials. But Mr. Adams and his colleagues were at their taciturn best. Much of the reportage was on local politicians questioning ONGC's capabilities and farmers lamenting their losses. Neal Adams quit, but we could not confirm the reason why. Ultimately, International Well Control, Houston, succeeded in capping the well. More than the reportage, my memories of Pasarlapudi-19 are the trips to the site on a borrowed bicycle, the upgrade from a lodge that cost ₹40 a day to one that charged ₹110; and the daily trip with my portable typewriter to the telegraph office.

And, yes, it did seem like a picnic sometimes, when we sat at night on the banks of the Gautami, shimmering with the reflection of the towering blaze, well away from its ear-shattering hum.



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FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 19, 1970

Veiled Signals from Peking

Veiled signals from Peking, indicating that China

Plea in SC seeks damages from China

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused a plea to direct India to drag China to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and demand \$600 billion in damages for "deliberately creating" the novel coronavirus.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde flipped through the pages of the case file before putting it aside with a comment, "we cannot do all this". Advocate Jaya Sukin, for Madurai resident and petitioner K.K. Ramesh, asked the court to convert the petition into a "representation" to be placed before the government. Justice Bobde said he could "very well do that on his own."

Farooq for diplomacy to ease tensions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

National Conference (NC) president and Member of Parliament Farooq Abdullah on Thursday called for "employing sober diplomatic channels" to ease the tensions on the Line of Actual Control between India and China in Ladakh.

Expressing concern over "the perilous and worst clashes" between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh, Dr. Abdullah said, "War is no solution; it will only aggravate the predicaments of the people living in Southeast Asia. Both countries should engage in a profitable dialogue and congregate their efforts to bring long-lasting peace to the entire region."

"I pray for lasting peace to the entire region. I also extend my sympathies to the families of jawans who have lost their lives on the LAC following a deadly face-off with Chinese troops," he said.

'Why were our jawans unarmed'

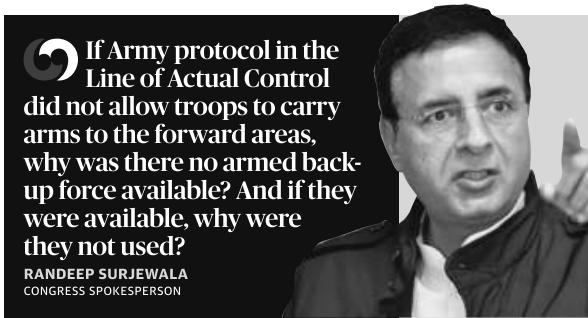
Rahul Gandhi says China has committed a big crime by killing unarmed soldiers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday asked "who is responsible for sending Indian soldiers unarmed to martyrdom" as the Congress once again raised the violent face-off between Indian and Chinese troops that killed 20 Indian soldiers.

"China has committed a big crime by killing unarmed Indian soldiers. I want to ask who sent these bravehearts towards danger without arms and why. Who is responsible for this?" Mr. Gandhi asked in a video message. In a tweet, he said, "How dare China kill our unarmed soldiers? Why were our soldiers sent unarmed to martyrdom?". The tweet comes a



If Army protocol in the Line of Actual Control did not allow troops to carry arms to the forward areas, why was there no armed back-up force available? And if they were available, why were they not used?

RANDEEP SURJEWALA
CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

day after he slammed Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for "taking two days" to condole the death of the soldiers.

Addressing a press conference in Jaipur, Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal and its chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the Ladakh face-off reflected the shortcomings of

the Central government. "If Army protocol in the Line of Actual Control (LAC) did not allow troops to carry arms to the forward areas, why was there no armed back-up force available? And if they were available, why were they not used?" they asked.

In a separate tweet, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at-

tacked the Centre's weak policy towards China.

'Kneeling down'

Citing a news report, she accused the government of 'kneeling' down before China by awarding a ₹1,126-crore contract for the Delhi-Meerut rapid rail to a Chinese company.

"Twenty of our soldiers have been martyred. In such a situation, the Central government should give a strong message. But it has adopted a weak strategy of kneeling down by handing over the contract of Delhi-Meerut semi-high-speed rail corridor to a Chinese company. All Indian companies are also competent to build this corridor," she said in a tweet.



The Railways cited 'poor progress' as the reason for the contract termination.

and MTNL – not to use gear by Chinese firms in its 4G upgrade.

The contract for 'signalling and telecommunication work' for the 417-km section from Kanpur to Mughalsarai on the Eastern Dedicated

Freight Corridor was awarded to Beijing National Railway Research & Design Institute of Signal & Communication Group in 2016.

According to the Indian Railways, despite passage of four years, only 20% of the work has been completed. An official added that the company showed "reluctance" in furnishing technical documents, as per the contract agreement, such as logic design of electronic interlocking. Additionally, the company's engineers or authorised personnel were not available at the project site which was a "serious constraint," the official said.

Railways to terminate ₹471 cr. contract of Chinese firm

DoT had recently asked BSNL, MTNL to bar Chinese 4G gear

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd. (DFCCIL), a special purpose vehicle under the Railway Ministry, on Thursday decided to terminate a ₹471-crore signalling contract given to a Chinese firm.

While the decision follows the violent clash between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, the Railways said the contract was being terminated due to "poor progress." The move also comes a day after the Department of Telecom decided to ask the two state-run telcos – BSNL

Hong Kong residents to be flown out

Special flight scheduled for June 20

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

Within days of 20 Indian soldiers having been killed in a clash with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh, a large number of Hong Kong residents in India would be evacuated because of the "emerging" situation.

Grief prevailed at the residence of Aman Kumar Singh, 24, at Sultanpur in Samastipur district. "At least the government should make our 18-year-old youngest son join the Army so that he can serve the country and take revenge," father Sudhir Kumar Singh said. Aman was married in February 2019.

Chandan Kumar, from Korai-Gyanpura in Bhojpur district, was the youngest among his siblings, and was to get married in April. But the ceremony was postponed because of the lockdown. Heartbroken yet proud, his father Hridanand Singh, a farmer, said all his four sons were in the Army.

Cong. says it has the numbers in Manipur

Party delegation meets Governor for ouster of Biren govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI/IMPHAL
The Congress in Manipur has staked claim to form a Secular Progressive Front (SPF) government after convening a special session of the 60-member Assembly to take up a no-confidence motion against the Ministry led by Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren.

Nine MLAs, including three of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had on Wednesday night withdrawn support to Mr. Biren and reduced the BJP-led government to a minority. The political upheaval has put the spotlight on the election for Manipur's lone Rajya Sabha seat on Friday. "We are confident of winning the election because the numbers are with us," said Congress spokesperson Ningombam Bupenda Meitei.

A team of Congress, Na-



Okram Ibobi Singh

kumar – had been disqualified earlier for defecting to the BJP, the effective strength of the House has been reduced to 49.

The present Ministry has 23 MLAs with four from the Naga People's Front and one of Lok Janshakti Party compared with 26 of the Congress with the support of four NPP, a Trinamool Congress and an Independent MLA, he added.

"In the event of the Speaker's Tribunal ruling in favour of the seven Congress MLAs [against whom the Congress had sought legal action for supporting the BJP], the strength of the House rises to 56 and the SPF will command 33 MLAs while the BJP will have 23," Mr. Singh said.

Meanwhile, the High Court issued a directive to the Speaker to not rule on the disqualification of the seven Congress MLAs before the RS election on Friday.

In Andhra Pradesh, five candidates – Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla, Nathwani Par-

cerned will also take part at the launch of the scheme.

'Skill sets mapped'

"The Central and State governments have very meticulously mapped the skill sets of the migrant workers who have returned in large numbers to the 116 districts in 6 States," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Workers will be employed in rural housing, rural connectivity including the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, national highways, railway works, community sanitation complex, gram panchayats, anganwadis, water conservation, digging of wells, plantation and horticulture. "Within 125 days, for 116 districts, nearly 25 schemes of the government will be brought together under the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan. We will reach saturation levels for each of those schemes within those 125 days," Ms. Sitharaman said.



Nirmala Sitharaman

Mr. Modi will launch this scheme through videoconference from Telihar village in Khagaria district of Bihar, where the Assembly election is due later this year. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi will join the event.

Apart from Bihar, the States that have been seen a rush of migrant workers returning are Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan. The Chief Ministers of these States and the Union Ministers of the Ministries con-

"This campaign of 125 days, which will work in a mission mode, will involve intensified and focussed implementation of 25 different types of works to provide employment to the migrant workers on the one hand and create infrastructure in the rural regions of the country on the other," a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMIYAPATH ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 008.

Tender Notice NIT.No.14/CW/DO/T.No.19/2020-21 Dt.17.06.2020

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited under "Two Cover System" for the following work from Civil Class-I State level Civil Contractors registered in State/Central or Quasi Government Organisations having experience in similar nature of works. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 PM on 22.07.2020 and the same will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM.

Name of Work	Approx. value of work	EMD
i)Formation of 18M wide road near plot No.H-11/18/H-11/2 & H/3 including street lights, b) Construction of RCC Side drain with paving blocks on road side berms, claveller blocks and Compound wall near main entry from OMR,d) Compound wall to OHT & pump room and fencing to open wells at SIPCOT IT Park, Siruseri,Chengalpattu District, Tamilnadu.	Rs.1697.60/-lakhs	Rs.8,59,000/-

In the form of Demand Draft drawn in favour of SIPCOT Ltd., payable at Chennai.

The tender Schedule can be Downloaded at free of cost from the website: www.tn.gov.in

DIPR/2344/TENDER/2020

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
SIPCOT, CHENNAI-8

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
Villupuram Highways (Construction and Maintenance) Circle

TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No.23/2020-21/HDO. Dated: 18.06.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received upto 29.07.2020, 13.30 hours by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Villupuram Circle Road Furniture works under CRIDP 2020-21, (Package No.111 & 112) pertaining to Kallakurichi & Ariyalur Concerned (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents and all other details are available from 26.06.2020 onwards in the Government website <https://tnitenders.gov.in>. If any Changes / Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

Superintending Engineer (H),
C&M Circle, Villupuram

DIPR/2346/Tender/2020

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
WESTERN IRRIGATION CIRCLE, BHAWANIPATNA

e-mail Address : sewic2012@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice No.(SEWIC) 02/2020-21

1. Name & address of the Officer inviting bid.

2. No. of works

3. Class of Contractor

4. Bid cost

5. Bid Identification No.

6. Date & Time available in Website & receipt of bids.

7. Date of opening of tender

8. Estimated cost

9. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only.

10. Further details can be seen from the website - www.tendersorissa.gov.in

11. Any corrigendum/ addendum will be displayed in the website - www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- (S.K.Satapathy)
Superintending Engineer

Western Irrigation Circle, Bhawaniapatna

OIPR-32178/11/0003/2021

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

The Transmission Corporation of Telangana Limited invites sealed bids for the following works. Name of the works:

Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of following works on turnkey basis: i)Spec-No.TST-CONST-e06/2020-21- Erection of (i) 132KV radial 2-phase DC/SC line (0.5Km) from proposed 220/132KV SS Traction to proposed 132/25 KV Janakpuri Railways Traction Substation (CMD of 10 MVA) ii) 1No. 132 KV Bay extension at proposed 220/132KV SS Renjal and iii) 1No.132 KV Bay along with metering bay at proposed 132/25 KV Janakpuri Railways Traction substation in Nizamabad District (ii) Spec-No.TST-CONST-e07/2020-21- LOT-I- Erection of (i) 132 KV radial 2-phase DC/SC line (0.5Km) from existing 220/132KV SS Kamareddy to proposed 132/25 KV Talamadda Traction substation (CMD of 10 MVA) and ii) 1No.132 KV Bay extension at proposed 220/132KV SS Renjal and iii) 1No.132 KV Bay along with metering bay at proposed 132/33KV SS Morhad to proposed 132/25 KV Morhad Railway Traction substation (CMD of 10 MVA) and iv) 1No.132 KV Bay extension at 132/33 KV SS Morhad in Nizamabad District. NOTE: - Further details can be seen @ <http://www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in>, PHONE NO. 040-23396000, Extn: 3356, 3351/ FAX NO. 040-23336171.

Managing Director-PTIETC

Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER,
CONSTRUCTION

RO No: 08/20

A-136:

Polls for 19 Rajya Sabha seats today

Jyotiraditya Scindia of BJP and K.C. Venugopal of Congress among those in fray

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Elections to 19 Rajya Sabha seats in nine States, including polling for 18 seats that had been deferred following the COVID-19 pandemic in March, will be held on Friday.

MLAs who have been hospitalised with COVID-19 will be allowed to vote by postal ballot, said an Election Commission of India (EC) instruction issued on Wednesday.

Apart from the 18 seats which were vacated in April, the EC had on June 1 announced polls for six seats that would be vacated in June and July. Of these, five seats went uncontested, leaving one seat in Mizoram to go to the polls on Friday.

Single largest party

With Friday's elections, the BJP's position of the single largest party in the Upper House, with 75 members out of 245, is likely to get a boost.

In Andhra Pradesh, five candidates – Ayodhya Rami Reddy Alla, Nathwani Par-

Seat equation

Polling for 19 Rajya Sabha seats, spread across nine States, is set to take place on Friday. A State-wise split of the seats:

ANDHRA PRADESH	4
GUJARAT	4
MADHYA PRADESH	3
RAJASTHAN	3
JHARKHAND	2
MEGHALAYA	1
MANIPUR	1
MIZORAM	1

= NDA currently has 90 members in the Upper House, which includes 75 MPs from the BJP

= MLAs hospitalised for COVID-19 are allowed to vote using postal ballots

Sumar Singh Solanki are the two BJP candidates, while the Congress has fielded Digvijay Singh and Phool Singh Baraiya for the three seats going to the polls in Madhya Pradesh.

Meghalaya & Manipur

Kennedy Cornelius Khyriem of the Congress and Wanweiroy Kharlukhi of the National People's Party are in the fray for one seat in Meghalaya.

The contest for one seat in Manipur will be between the Congress candidate Tongbram Mangibabu Singh and BJP's Maharaja Sanajaoba Leishembra. The contest for one seat in Mizoram would be between three candidates – Lallianchhunga of the Congress, K. Vanlalvena of the Mizo National Front and B. Lalchhanzova of the Zoram People's Movement.

Polling will be held for three seats in Rajasthan, with the BJP's Onkar Singh Lakhawat and Rajendra Gehlot, and the Congress's Neeraj Dangi and K.C. Venugopal in the fray.

Reply to plea on postal ballots: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Election Commission (EC) to reply to a petition filed by Gujarat Legislative Assembly Opposition leader Pares Dhanani, challenging the use of postal ballots in the elections to the Rajya Sabha on June 19.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde heard the urgent oral mentioning made by senior advocate A. M. Singhvi and advocate Varun K. Chopra on behalf of Mr. Dhanani and initially asked them to approach the Gujarat High Court. However, the lawyers persisted that a direction issued by the poll body on June 17 allowing postal ballots dated June 17 issued by the EC allowing postal ballots in the Rajya Sabha elections was violative of various provisions of the Conduct of Election Rules of 1961. The court scheduled the case for hearing in July.

₹50,000 crore scheme for migrants'

25 public work projects will create job opportunities in 116 districts: Nirmala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan on June 20 to offer immediate employment opportunities to migrant workers who have returned to their villages because of the COVID-19 lockdown, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Thursday.

Out of an estimated 1 crore migrant workers who have returned to their villages, 67 lakh workers are expected to benefit from this scheme, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

At a press conference here, she said 116 districts across six States had been identified as those having the highest number of workers returning home after the lockdown. Public works worth ₹50,000 crore would be carried out in these districts to provide immediate relief to these workers.

'Decide on plea on Rule of Law Index in 6 months'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the government to treat a writ petition filed by lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, for setting up expert panels to boost India's prospects in the Rule of



Nirmala Sitharaman

Law Index, as a "representation" and decide on the issue within six months.

Mr. Upadhyay sought a direction to the government to constitute expert committees to examine the practices of the top 20 countries in the Rule of Law Index-2020.

The Finance Minister said each of the 116 districts had a minimum of 25,000 migrant workers, but the number varied from district to district. The scheme will see a coordination between 12 different Ministries/Departments, such as Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport and Highways, Mines, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum and Natural Gas, New and Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture.

"This campaign of 125 days, which will work in a mission mode, will involve intensified and focussed implementation of 25 different types of works to provide employment to the migrant workers on the one hand and create infrastructure in the rural regions of the country on the other," a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

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Umifenovir to undergo clinical trial

Central Drug Research Institute will test efficacy, safety and tolerability of the antiviral drug

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow, a constituent lab of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has received permission for carrying out Phase III trials for the use of Umifenovir against COVID-19. The randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial will test the efficacy, safety and tolerability of the drug.

"This drug has a good safety profile and acts by preventing entry of virus into human cells and also by priming the immune system," a release issued by the Central government on Thursday said.



Gruelling process: Swab samples are collected in a COVID-19 testing facility in New Delhi. ■ PTI

Umifenovir, mainly used for the treatment of influenza, is available in China and Russia, and has recently come into prominence due to its potential use for COVID-19 patients.

The Health Ministry added that to evaluate its efficacy in Indian patients, CSIR-CDRI has taken up the clinical trial. The trial will be

carried out at King George's Medical University (KGMU), Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences (RMLIMS) and Era's Lucknow Medical College & Hospital.

"Further it has developed the process technology for Umifenovir in record time and licensed the economical process technology for manufacturing and marketing the drug to M/s. Medizest Pharmaceuticals Private Ltd. Goa, who have already received test license from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI)," it added.

Tapas Kundu, Director of CSIR-CDRI, said that all the raw materials for the drug are indigenously available

and if the clinical trial is successful, Umifenovir can be a safe, efficacious, affordable drug against COVID-19. Prof. Kundu also added that this drug has the potential for prophylactic use.

Shekhar Mande, Director General of CSIR, said that the clinical trial was an integral part of the CSIR strategy of repurposing drugs for COVID-19.

The Ministry added that the clinical trial application was processed on high priority in keeping with the DCGI's initiative against COVID-19. The next steps of the trial are being fast tracked to enable the availability of the drug to patients as soon as possible, it said.

Punjab looks to export PPEs

Amarinder Singh writes to PM seeking permission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

With 128 manufacturers in Punjab approved for production of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking permission to export the surplus.

The Chief Minister said these manufacturers had risen to the occasion in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak to make Punjab self-reliant.

"Permitting them to export the PPE coveralls would also give an impetus to the 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' recently launched by government of India under



Punjab has 128 approved manufacturers of PPE.

your leadership," he said in his letter.

Captain Amarinder said it appeared that there was not enough domestic demand of PPE at present. These manufacturers are finding it difficult to obtain orders from HLL, he pointed out, adding that of the 128 approved ma-

nufacturers, only 18 units have received orders from the Government of India.

The Chief Minister recalled that on May 21, 2020, the State Industries and Commerce Minister had written to Chief Ministers of all States to consider directing their health departments to place orders on Punjab's PPE body coverall manufacturers at HLL rates.

The 128 approved manufacturers have a cumulative current capacity to manufacture 5,21,050 coveralls every day. They can also further scale up the total capacity, and thus the potential for exports is massive, said Additional Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan.

Pay health workers on time, Ministry tells States

Action will be taken against defaulters'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday directed States and Union Territories to ensure the timely release of salaries to doctors and healthcare workers.

The Ministry, in its order, invoked provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Chief Secretaries of States/UTs are directed to ensure compliance with the order, the Ministry said, adding that violation would be treated as an offence and action would be taken against defaulters.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday gave the Centre a day to issue an order to ensure that the States pay their



Full salaries must be paid to health care workers, the Supreme Court has said.

doctors and healthcare workers full salaries, provide them with appropriate accommodation and implement quarantine guidelines uniformly among medical staffers and doctors regardless of the nature of their exposure to COVID-19 patients.

Mobile lab to improve access to testing

It can be deployed in remote areas:
Health Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan on Thursday launched the country's first mobile I-Lab (Infectious disease diagnostic lab) for last mile COVID-19 testing access.

The lab will be deployed in interior, inaccessible parts of the country and has the capability to perform 25 RT-PCR tests a day, 300 ELISA tests a day and additional tests for TB, HIV as per CGHS (Central Government Health Scheme) rates.

"Double set of machines can help increase the capacity to about 500 a day in 8 hours shift. It can be deployed in remote areas and



Roving unit: The lab can be transported on trains to towns and villages. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

can be lifted from automotive chassis and put on goods train for sending to any location in the country," the Minister said.

The Infectious Disease Diagnostic Lab (I-LAB) is supported by the Department of

Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, under the COVID Command strategy, the Health Ministry said.

The number of government labs had now increased to 699 and private labs to 254

as of Thursday. "In the last 24 hours, 1,65,412 samples were tested. The total number of samples tested thus far is 62,49,668," it said.

The National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) has licensed the ma-

Supreme Court stays Puri Rath Yatra

Lord Jagannath won't forgive us if we allow procession during this period: CJI

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the annual Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri scheduled on June 23.

"We direct that there shall be no 'rath yatra' anywhere in the temple town of Odisha or in any other part of the State this year. We further direct that there shall be no activities secular or religious associated with the rath yatra during this period," the court ordered.

"Lord Jagannath won't forgive us if we allow the yatra," Chief Justice of India (CJI) S.A. Bobde observed orally. Chief Justice Bobde, leading a Bench, said the restraining order arose out of the court's concern for public health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Do you know the word



Wheels halted: Wooden chariots under construction for the Rath Yatra, which was stayed by the court. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

'juggernaut' comes from 'Jagannath'? 'Juggernaut' means something that cannot be stopped," Chief Justice Bobde said.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta quipped "Your Lordships have stopped it today."

The court's order was vehemently objected to by several parties, who said the rituals at least should be allowed to be conducted.

The Centre, represented by the Solicitor General, first sought a day or two to file a

reply, before leaving it to the State government to decide, even as it said a blanket injunction would be an "extreme position". Finally, Mr. Mehta suggested allowing certain rituals without any room for a gathering.

But the court was firm.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, representing the Odisha government, agreed with the court, saying, "The moment there is any celebration, people will congregate on the streets."

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for petitioner Odisha Vikas Parishad, which sought an injunction on the 'rath yatra', submitted that "the religious fervour is usually so much that people will throng the streets".

He said, "Even the Olympics have been postponed this year."

Only minor savings due to cut in legislators' pay, says study

Several States had reduced allowances in view of pandemic

T. RAMAKRISHNAN

CHENNAI

The reduction in salaries and allowances of legislators of six States, effected with the intention of supplementing the States' resources in tackling the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, is likely to lead to only "negligible savings" in the annual budgeted expenditure of the States, according to a study.

Carried out by the PRS Legislative Research, a New Delhi-based think tank, the study has covered Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh. After the outbreak of the pandemic in late March, the States had promulgated ordinances, envisaging cut in salaries

and certain allowances ranging from 15% to 30%.

The reduction, which came into effect from April, touched upon several components such as basic or fixed salary and sumptuary allowance. In Gujarat, the basic salary of ₹88,500 for Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Leader of the Opposition, has been reduced to ₹68,950.

In Karnataka, this has been lowered from ₹50,000 to ₹35,000, which is for Chief Minister and presiding officers of the legislature. In Himachal Pradesh, the fixed salary of Chief Minister is now ₹66,500 from ₹95,000. In Kerala, even the constituency allowance has not

been spared – from ₹40,000 it is down to ₹28,000.

As for the total amount of annual savings, it has been assessed as ₹2.1 crore for Bihar; ₹5.8 crore for Gujarat; ₹4.3 crore for Himachal Pradesh; ₹15.9 crore for Karnataka; ₹3.1 crore for Kerala and ₹17.4 crore for Uttarakhand.

In terms of proportion of the total budgeted expenditure of the States, this ranges from 0.001% for Bihar to 0.002% for Kerala and 0.003% each for Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh to 0.007% for Karnataka and 0.009% for Himachal Pradesh.

The study also referred to the practice of some countries in appointing independent authorities to determine the pay of legislators.

States seek extension of grains scheme

SOBHA NAIR

NEW DELHI

Ten Chief Ministers, from both the BJP and the Opposition, have demanded an extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana, which was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as part of the first rescue package to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme covers the 80 crore ration cardholders provided 5 kg of rice or wheat each month and one kg of pulses, for each of the households. The States that are demanding an extension include Assam, Karnataka, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Punjab, Kerala, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. They have demanded an extension of three months.

"The demands made by these States have been forwarded to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I have written to him too. We are all aware of the situation and a decision will be taken at an appropriate time," Union Food Minister Ramvilas Paswan said after a meeting with Food Ministers and Secretaries of 14 States and Union Territories who are yet to enrol under the One Nation One Ration Card scheme.

According to sources, an extension of three months will cost the government ₹46,000 crore. "The States have argued that the purchasing power of people, those who returned to their villages have reduced drastically. They are now largely dependent on 100 days of work promised under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act," a senior Ministry official said.

CROSSWORD + 12966

(set by Anon)

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ACROSS

- These beers have strong finishing flavours (6)
- Folds torn pleats (6)
- Harmful to return, dwell (4)
- Advertising support for Imam with confidentiality document (10)
- Woodlouse dead in Salvador boundaries (6)
- Wait! He is returning from famous art gallery (8)
- German Chemist to run and deal in small wares (9)
- Past, for one, is stressful (5)
- A communion returns from Indian state (5)
- Odd podium at vicarage has address book (9)
- A raw mash cooked is a Middle Eastern dish (8)
- Prejudiced one in headquarters started dating (6)
- Firm amplification device for partial performances at musical drama (5,5)
- Piece starts off proclaiming unsung soldiers (4)
- Visitors start escaping in blasts (6)
- Comment about cross (6)
- Regularly seek house in Spanish city (7)
- Towel wrapped around hooter (5)
- Pointed record for revolutionary (7)
- Go by circuits in Erode outskirts (6)
- Neat tramp tidied flat (9)
- Tranquillises Oriental escort in ship (7)
- Doctor ditches patois for something cultured (13)
- At one time, reels with surprise (9)
- Mag John edited has game (7)
- Anon returns to support clasp (7)
- Loudly quarrel, resist deer (7)
- Taste bit of yam in fish (6)
- Scent of a gypsy? (5)

DOWN

- German Chemist to run and deal in small wares (9)
- Odd podium at vicarage has address book (9)
- Prejudiced one in headquarters started dating (6)
- Firm amplification device for partial performances at musical drama (5,5)
- Pointed record for revolutionary (7)
- Go by circuits in Erode outskirts (6)
- Neat tramp tidied flat (9)
- Tranquillises Oriental escort in ship (7)
- Doctor ditches patois for something cultured (13)
- At one time, reels with surprise (9)
- Mag John edited has game (7)
- Anon returns to support clasp (7)
- Loudly quarrel, resist deer (7)
- Taste bit of yam in fish (6)
- Scent of a gypsy? (5)

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



SUDOKU

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'Trump asked Xi to help win re-election'

Ex-NSA Bolton claims in book that foreign policy was driven by the President's aim for a second term

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON U.S. President Donald Trump pleaded with China's leader Xi Jinping for help to win re-election in 2020, former National Security Adviser John Bolton writes in an explosive new behind-the-scenes book, according to excerpts published on Wednesday.

Mr. Bolton alleges in a blistering critique that Mr. Trump's focus on winning a second term was the driving principle of his foreign policy, and that top aides routinely disparaged the Republican leader for his ignorance of basic geopolitics.

In excerpts published by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, Mr. Bolton also claims Mr. Trump repeatedly showed a readiness to overlook Chinese human rights abuses – most strikingly telling Mr. Xi the mass internment of Uighur Muslims was "exactly the right thing to do".

"I am hard-pressed to identify any significant Trump decision during my White House tenure that wasn't driven by re-election calculations," Mr. Bolton

writes of the real estate magnate-turned-President, who was impeached in December for seeking dirt from Ukraine on his 2020 Democratic election rival Joe Biden.

In a key meeting with Mr. Xi last June, Mr. Trump "stunningly turned the conversation to the U.S. presidential election, alluding to China's economic capability to affect the ongoing campaigns, pleading with Mr. Xi to ensure he'd win," Mr. Bolton claims in his upcoming tell-all.

Bid to block book

Mr. Bolton writes that Mr. Trump stressed the importance of U.S. farmers and how "increased Chinese purchases of soybeans and wheat" could impact the U.S. electoral outcome.

In a sign of Mr. Trump's anger over the memoir, the Justice Department filed an emergency order late Wednesday seeking a halt to publication, the second time in as many days it has tried to block the book.

Arguing that Mr. Bolton failed to allow completion of vetting of the book as required, the department urged the court to take action to "prevent the harm to



Insider account: Former NSA John Bolton, right, with President Donald Trump in Washington. • AFP/FILE

national security that will result if his manuscript is published to the world".

Mr. Bolton "broke the law" by divulging "highly classified information," Mr. Trump said in a late Wednesday interview with Fox News' Sean Hannity.

He also derided his former adviser, a veteran Washington insider, as "washed up" and mocked Mr. Bolton's past support for the war in Iraq.

Arguing that Mr. Bolton failed to allow completion of vetting of the book as required, the department urged the court to take action to "prevent the harm to

"A disgruntled boring fool

who only wanted to go to war. Never had a clue, was ostracized & happily dumped. What a dope!"

Personal favours

In the released excerpts Mr. Bolton said that by intervening in cases involving major firms in China and Turkey, Mr. Trump appeared to "give personal favours to dictators he liked."

He describes "obstruction of justice as a way of life" in the White House, and says he reported his concerns to Attorney General William Barr.

The bombshell book, *The Room Where It Happened*, is due for release next Tues-

day, in the thick of a presidential campaign against Democrat Joe Biden.

"If these accounts are true, it's not only morally repugnant, it's a violation of Donald Trump's sacred duty to the American people to protect America's interests and defend our values."

The conservative Mr. Bolton, himself a controversial figure in U.S. politics, spent 17 turbulent months in the White House before resigning last September.

He declined to testify during the December impeachment process in the House of Representatives, then said in January he would testify in the Senate trial if he were issued a subpoena.

Senate Republicans blocked such an effort by Democrats.

Mr. Bolton did not explicitly say whether Mr. Trump's newly revealed actions amounted to impeachable conduct, but argued that the House should have investigated them.

He also said Democrats committed "impeachment malpractice" by limiting their inquiry to "the Ukraine aspects of Trump's confusion of his personal interests."

President can't shut down DACA, says U.S. top court

The programme protects about 7,00,000 young immigrants

ADAM LIPTAK
MICHAEL D. SHEAR
WASHINGTON

The Supreme Court ruled on Thursday that the U.S. government may not immediately proceed with its plan to end a programme protecting about 7,00,000 young immigrants known as Dreamers from deportation.

The court's ruling was a blow to one of President Donald Trump's central campaign promises – that as president he would "immediately terminate" an executive order by former President Barack Obama that Mr. Trump had called an illegal executive amnesty for hundreds of thousands of young immigrants.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion, joined by the court's four more liberal members in upholding the program, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA.

"We do not decide whether DACA or its rescission are sound policies," the Chief Justice wrote. "We address only whether the agency complied with the procedural requirement that it pro-



Ruling relief: Young supporters of the DACA programme in front of the Supreme Court in Washington on Thursday. • AP

vide a reasoned explanation for its action."

After contentious debates among his aides, Mr. Trump announced in September 2017 that he would wind down the programme. He gave only a single reason for doing so, saying that creating or maintaining the program was beyond the legal power of any president.

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vide a reasoned explanation for its action."

The programme was announced by Mr. Obama in 2012. It allows young people brought to the U.S. as children to apply for a temporary status that shields them from deportation and allows them to work. The status lasts for two years and is renewable, but it does not provide a path to citizenship.

The ruling means the government will have to provide a lower court with a more robust justification for ending the programme. That process is likely to take many months. NY TIMES

U.S. Bill to sanction China over Uighur rights

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump signed legislation on Wednesday calling for sanctions over the repression of China's Uighurs, as excerpts from a book by his former National security adviser John Bolton alleged he had approved of their mass detention. The Bill was intended to send China a strong message on human rights by mandating sanctions against

those responsible for oppression of Muslim minority.

The UN estimates that more than a million Muslims have been detained in camps in the Xinjiang region.

Stop interference

China, which denies mistreatment and says the camps provide vocational training and are needed to fight extremism, responded to the Bill with anger, saying it "vilified" the human rights

situation in Xinjiang and was a malicious attack against China.

The UN estimates that more than a million Muslims have been detained in camps in the Xinjiang region.

China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"Otherwise, China will resolutely take countermeasures, and all the consequences arising therefrom must be fully borne by the

United States," it added, without giving details.

China and the United States are already at loggerheads over everything from China's handling of the coronavirus pandemic to U.S. support for Chinese-claimed Taiwan.

U.S.-China meet

Mr. Trump signed the Bill as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo held his first face-to-face meeting since last year with

China's top diplomat, Yang Jiechi.

Mr. Trump issued a signing statement that some of the Bill's requirements might limit his constitutional authority to conduct diplomacy so he would regard them as advisory, not mandatory.

Mr. Trump did not hold a ceremony to mark his signing, which came as newspapers published excerpts from the new book by former NSA John Bolton.

said, taking the total to 158 since a fresh cluster was detected last week after months of no confirmed local transmissions.

One case was also recorded in the neighbouring city of Tianjin and two more in Hebei province – which surrounds Beijing – prompting travel restrictions on Anxin county, home to nearly half a million people, banning most traffic.

Essential service vehicles

are allowed into Anxin, about 150 km from Beijing, while private and government cars can enter and leave only if they have permission, state media said.

Beijing is collecting around 4,00,000 samples a day for testing amid fears the new outbreak could trigger a second wave of infections in China, which had largely brought the contagion under control since it emerged in Wuhan late last year.

France slams 'provocation' as U.S. halts digital tax talks

European countries say tech giants are exploiting rules

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS

France and the U.S. locked horns on Thursday over taxing digital giants such as Google and Facebook, after Washington said it was breaking off talks aimed at establishing a global framework for making the companies pay larger levies where they operate.

"This letter is a provocation," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said, confirming receipt of the announcement by U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

France, Britain, Italy and Spain have already sent a reply expressing their desire to agree on a fair digital tax at the level of the OECD as quickly as possible," Mr. Le Maire said.

We were a few centimetres away from an agreement on a tax for digital giants, who are perhaps the only people in the world to have benefitted immensely from the coronavirus," he told France Inter radio.

In January, 137 countries agreed to negotiate a deal on how to tax tech multinationals by 2020-end, under the auspices of the OECD.

European countries in particular say the so-called GAFA – Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon – are unfairly exploiting tax rules that let them declare profits in low-tax havens, depriving them of a fair share of their fiscal payments.

Meanwhile, France as well as U.K., Spain, Italy and others have imposed taxes on the largest digital firms.

U.S. officials have slammed the moves as discriminating against American firms, and say any new levies should come only as part of a broader overhaul of international tax rules.

Paolo Gentiloni, the EU commissioner for economic affairs, said that he hoped U.S.'s decision to stop the negotiations would not be permanent.

Turkey early Wednesday launched a cross-border operation into the mountainous regions of northern Iraq where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), considered by Ankara to be a "terrorist" group, is thought to be hiding out.

Iraq's Foreign Ministry summoned the Turkish Ambassador Fatih Yildiz on Thursday and handed him a strongly-worded memorandum calling for a halt to such provocative actions".

We stress that Turkey must stop its bombardment and withdraw its attacking forces from Iraqi territory,"

the Ministry said in a statement.

We affirm our categorical rejection of these violations."

Iraq on Thursday also summoned Iran's envoy Iraj Masjedi in protest over its shelling of Kurdish areas on Tuesday.

The Foreign Ministry statement urged Iran to "respect Iraq's sovereignty and

stop these types of actions".

This Ministry affirms Iraq is keen to maintain and develop the historical ties between the two countries, and also stresses its condemnation of these actions," the ministry said.

Tehran has cultivated close political, military and economic ties with Iraqi leaders over decades, in-

cluding with top Kurdish officials.

Iran, which has its own minority Kurdish population, has also been fighting Kurdish rebels who use neighbouring Iraq as a base to mount attacks inside the country.

Its Revolutionary Guards last month mounted an operation against rebels in Iran's western province of Kurdistan.

Turkey doubles down

After that meeting, Yildiz said he had told Iraqi officials that if Baghdad did not take action against the rebels, Ankara would continue to "fight the PKK wherever it is".

The PKK has fought an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, using the rugged mountains of neighbouring northern Iraq as a rear base.

Iranian Navy test-fires cruise missile'

REUTERS

DUBAI

Iran said on Thursday its navy had successfully fired a locally made cruise missile during war games in the northern Indian Ocean and near the entrance to the Gulf.

The test-firing comes as the United States is seeking an extension of a U.N.-imposed arms embargo against Iran, which is due to expire in October under Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. Washington withdrew from that pact.

During the exercises, short-range and long-range coast-to-sea and sea-to-sea missiles were successfully fired from the coast and from decks of ships, hitting their targets with great precision," the semi-official Tasnim news agency reported.

Juneteenth: when slaves in Texas heard of their freedom

On June 19, 1865, slaves in Galveston learned from the Union army that they were free; the day is a holiday in most American States

SIRIRAK LAKSHMAN

Juneteenth is a holiday to mark June 19, 1865, when slaves in Galveston, Texas, learned – from the Union army – that they were free. The Union army fought to keep the U.S. a union during the American Civil War (1861-65), which was fought between the U.S. and eleven southern States that had seceded from the union, forming the Confederate States of America. The Confederate states were against the abolishing of slavery, on which their economies were built.

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared that all who were held as slaves within the "rebellious" states "are, and henceforth shall be free". There were some four million slaves at the time.

It took years for slavery to end in reality. The proclamation did not apply to border States which were loyal to the Union, nor to some parts of the Confederacy.

Second, even after the fall of a Confederate State, such as Texas, plantation owners decided to withhold the announcement until after the harvest.

Two and a half years after the proclamation and two months after the end of the war, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, marched into Galveston, reading out the proclamation.

Texas officially made Juneteenth a holiday in 1980. Forty-seven of 50 States and the

District of Columbia either officially observe Juneteenth or have recognised it as a holiday, as per the Congressional Research Service. U.S. Presidents, including George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, have issued messages of observance on the day.

Special significance

With the recent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta by white policemen

and the continuing protests over the treatment of African Americans by law enforcement, there is much discussion and introspection about race in America. Consequently, Juneteenth is likely to have a special significance this year.

Virginia and New York are giving State employees a holiday on Friday and their Governors said they would propose legislation making Juneteenth a fully paid holiday in their States.

Several high profile companies and organisations like Twitter, Nike and the National Football League have also declared Juneteenth a holiday this year.

Trump and Juneteenth? Donald Trump had scheduled his first MAGA (Make America Great Again) rally since the lockdown began for June 19 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The city was the site of one of the worst cases of racial violence in American

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	34,208	2.09
US Dollar	76.14	0.03
Gold	48,305	0.18
Brent oil	41.23	1.35

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	343.80	2.50
Asian Paints	1597.80	2.40
Axist Bank	405.40	15.80
Bajaj Auto	2678.35	-11.10
Bajaj Finserv	5427.55	390.60
Bajaj Finance	2525.95	129.95
Bharti Airtel	560.90	-2.55
BPCL	370.25	5.65
Britannia Ind	3404.25	2.80
Cipla	642.05	1.70
Coal India	137.60	8.15
Dr Reddys Lab	4007.00	21.80
Eicher Motors	17116.05	319.20
GAIL (India)	97.05	0.80
Grasim Ind	598.10	14.25
HCL Tech	578.95	3.10
HDPC	1855.95	61.30
HFDC Bank	1019.95	40.70
Hero MotoCorp	2364.95	1.65
Hindalco	150.80	2.80
Hind Unilever	2065.35	-12.90
ICICI Bank	352.00	10.05
IndusInd Bank	499.20	8.05
Bharti Infralet	209.30	3.05
Infosys	713.90	10.25
Indian Oil Corp	84.85	0.50
ITC	186.60	5.40
JSW Steel	193.40	1.55
Kotak Bank	1303.35	59.55
L&T	896.65	11.85
M&M	506.60	9.00
Maruti Suzuki	5714.40	-11.80
Nestle India Ltd.	16178.95	-19.20
NTPC	92.70	1.20
ONGC	83.60	-0.60
PowerGrid Corp	165.45	5.95
Reliance Ind	1655.90	40.55
State Bank	179.65	6.70
Shree Cement	21866.10	230.70
Sun Pharma	484.25	-1.40
Tata Motors	96.35	0.95
Tata Steel	318.10	9.90
TCS	2038.10	-9.70
Tech Mahindra	535.90	0.35
Titan	976.00	13.00
UltraTech Cement	3844.25	35.05
UPL	427.90	7.10
Vedanta	107.00	4.90
Wipro	218.15	0.35
Zee Entertainment	174.40	9.40

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.94	76.26
Euro	85.36	85.72
British Pound	94.98	95.38
Japanese Yen (100)	70.97	71.27
Chinese Yuan	10.72	10.77
Swiss Franc	80.02	80.36
Singapore Dollar	54.53	54.77
Canadian Dollar	56.03	56.29
Malaysian Ringgit	17.75	17.84
Australian Dollar	52.20	52.42

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF

Retail subscription at 82% in HDFC AMC offer
NEW DELHI
HDFC Asset Management Company's offer-for-sale by promoter Standard Life Investments closed on Thursday, with retail investors subscribing 82% of the portion reserved for them. Retail investors bid for 9,87,191 shares on Thursday as against 12 lakh scrips on offer, according to data available with the NSE. Standard Life offered to sell 60 lakh shares, representing 2.82% stake, through the OFS. The floor price was fixed at ₹2,362 each. PTI

Moody's downgrades Tata Motors' rating

Pandemic adds to cash flow pressures



Moody's expects a 25% drop in wholesale unit sales in FY21.

sentiment, Moody's said. Although the company commands a 43% market share in the domestic commercial vehicle segment, Moody's said it expected about 25% decline in its wholesale unit sales in fiscal 2021 on the back of a 34% decline in fiscal 2020.

Credit profile
"Such weak demand prospects put additional pressure on its credit profile as this segment has subsidised the loss-making passenger vehicle operations for several years," it noted.

The domestic passenger vehicle business continues to lose market share and reported losses in fiscal 2020, the agency said.

Moody's expects Tata Motors to curb the unit sales decline to about 10% in fiscal 2021 from 37% the previous year, reflecting the new model launches compliant with the transition to Bharat-VI emission norms from April 1.

CM YK

Indian economy to contract by 4% in 2020-21, forecasts ADB

China projected to post growth of 1.8% in 2020, sharply down from 2019's 6.1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian economy is expected to contract by 4% during the current financial year, the ADB said in a supplement to its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) on Thursday.

Countries in 'Developing Asia' will 'barely grow' in 2020, the ADB forecast.

China, however, is expected to record a positive growth of 1.8% in 2020, sharply down from 6.1% in 2019, the lender said.

"Growth in Indian GDP slowed to 3.1% in the last quarter...its slowest since early 2003. Economic growth slowed to 4.2% in the whole of" the last fiscal year as both exports and investment started to contract, the ADB said.

"High-frequency indicators such as purchasing managers' indexes fell to all-time



Tundling along: India's GDP grew at 3.1% in the last quarter, its slowest since early 2003. ■REUTERS

lows in April, reflecting the bleak outlook. Migrant workers have gone home to their villages after losing their jobs in the cities and will be slow to return even after containment measures are relaxed. GDP is expected to contract by 4% in FY2020 before rebounding by 5% in FY2021," it said.

In its annual flagship ADO published on April 3, ADB had projected that India's economic growth rate would

slip to 4% in the current fiscal on account of the global health emergency created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the countries in Developing Asia, ADB forecasts growth of 0.1% in 2020.

This is down from the 2.2% forecast in April and would be the slowest growth for the region since 1961.

"Growth in 2021 is expected to rise to 6.2%, as forecast in April. Gross domestic product (GDP) levels in 2021 will

remain below what had been envisioned and below pre-crisis trends."

'Developing Asia' refers to a group of over 40 countries that are members of the ADB.

No V-shaped recovery'
"Economies in Asia and the Pacific will continue to feel the blow of the COVID-19 pandemic this year even as lockdowns are slowly eased and select economic activities restart in a 'new normal' scenario," said ADB chief economist Yasuyuki Sawada.

"While we see a higher growth outlook for the region in 2021, this is mainly due to weak numbers this year, and this will not be a V-shaped recovery," Mr. Sawada said.

"Governments should undertake policy measures to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 and ensure that no further waves of outbreaks occur."

AGR demand from non-telco PSUs withdrawn, govt. tells SC

Court had hauled up Centre for 'misusing' its October verdict

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

The Union government on Thursday informed the Supreme Court that it had withdrawn 96% of its ₹4 lakh-crore demand in adjusted gross revenue (AGR) from non-telecom public sector undertakings (PSUs).

The turnaround comes days after the court pulled up the government for "misusing" its October 2019 judgment to get money from PSUs such as DMRC.

A Bench, led by Justice Arun Mishra, had made it clear its verdict last year was only limited to AGR dues owed by telecom companies and not PSUs that had nothing to do with the sector.

"Since these PSUs are not in the business of providing telecom services, we are withdrawing 96% of the ₹4 lakh-crore demand..." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta



informed the court on Thursday.

Meanwhile, telecom major Vodafone said it was in no position to give a fresh bank guarantee for repayment of its AGR dues. The court is considering the viability of the government's proposed 'formula' to stagger the repayment of the dues over a period of 20 years.

In the previous hearing, the court asked the telcos to respond to whether they could provide any bank guarantee

for ensuring the repayment of AGR dues without fail for the next 20 years.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for Vodafone, said Vodafone had ₹15,000 crore worth bank guarantee with the government for licence fee and spectrum. Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for Bharti Airtel, also referred to the guarantees given on spectrum and licences.

Justice M.R. Shah asked, "This is guarantee given on licence and spectrum... What will happen to AGR?" He said telecom was the only sector making money during the pandemic. The government needs funds to fight the pandemic.

The court said the firms would have to make a "down payment."

It sought their financial documents by the next hearing which was scheduled for July third week.

City Union Bank slips into the red in Q4

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

City Union Bank has reported a standalone net loss of ₹95 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2020 after making COVID-19 related provisions of ₹102 crore.

Last year, the bank had posted a net profit of ₹175 crore. Provisions and contingencies stood at ₹430 crore against ₹163 crore.

Gross non-performing assets rose to 4.09% from 2.95%. Net NPAs rose to 2.29% from 1.81%. The provision coverage ratio stood at 65%. Net interest income contracted to ₹4,195 crore from ₹4,206 crore. Net interest margin dropped to 3.91% from 4.4%, the bank said in a presentation.

Total income grew to ₹1,221 crore from ₹1,131 crore. The bank said it had extended the moratorium benefit to all borrowers, of which 48% had paid two or more instalments.

Engineering major cuts capital expenditure, slashes staff salaries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Rane (Madras) Ltd. (RML) is revisiting its strategy and is looking to limit investment in its U.S. subsidiary as the planned goals could not be achieved, according to a top official.

RML had reported a loss of ₹34 crore for the fourth quarter of FY20. The company plans to 'keep a close watch' on its business performance over the next 12 months and take 'appropriate' decisions to safeguard the long-term interest of shareholders, said L. Ganesh, chairman, Rane Group, in a communication to shareholders.

In 2016, RML had acquired Rane Light Metal Castings America (earlier known as Rane Precision Die Casting) to establish a global manufacturing footprint. However, the desired results could not be achieved in the planned time frame.

The American subsidiary could secure only limited new business, which resulted in widening of losses and limiting the capacity to invest in operational improvements. Besides, COVID-19 also hampered its business fortunes, he said. Based on current projections, an impairment of ₹37.58 crore had been recognised for the fourth quarter of FY20.

Pointing out that the domestic business was affected due to the slowdown in the auto sector, he said export revenue had also de-

clined. In the steering business, RML's export order book remained 'healthy' and in the light metal casting products, the company was pursuing both new customers and new applications he said.

He added that it was difficult to predict the duration of the pandemic and the extent of the slowdown both in India and globally. The company anticipates significant decline in revenue this fiscal, he said.

RML's report for the fourth quarter includes an impairment of ₹37.58 crore compared with a profit of ₹9 crore a year earlier, following a decline in sales to Indian original equipment customers, international customers and in Indian aftermarket sales.

Total revenue for the period was ₹259 crore versus ₹356 crore.

"RML had a challenging year with a significant drop in sales on account of the demand environment in India and lower export volumes. Operational performance continued to improve in the steering and light metal casting business in India, helping partially offset the volume-related impact."

"COVID-19 has significantly affected the business and the company has drafted measures to minimise the impact. This includes a management salary reduction of 10-35% from junior to senior level employees, respectively," he said.

Govt. allows export of HCQ, formulations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

TV PICKS

Premier League: Star Sports 1, SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 10.20 p.m. & 12.35 a.m. (Saturday).
Royal Ascot: Eurosport (SD & HD), 6 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

QUICK SINGLES



CA hands batting coach

Hick the pink slip

MELBOURNE
Batting coach Graeme Hick became the biggest casualty of Cricket Australia (CA)'s cost cutting drive as the body grapples with a financial crisis. Hick is the most notable among those handed the pink slip. "It's more the impact of the cost cutting that we're doing because of the COVID situation,"

Australia coach Justin Langer was quoted by Cricbuzz. PTI



Strauss in the running for CA top job

MELBOURNE
Former England skipper Andrew Strauss has emerged as a surprise candidate to become CEO of crisis-ridden Cricket Australia (CA) following the resignation of Kevin Roberts. According to a report in *The Australian*, an influential figure in CA has asked 43-year-old Strauss to apply for the post. PTI



Sreesanth could be included in Ranji camp

KOCHI
The Kerala Cricket Association plans to include medium-pacer S. Sreesanth in the Ranji probables camp when his seven-year ban ends in September. "We will conduct a fitness test and based on his performance, we will take a call on whether to take him in the team," said KCA secretary Sreev Nair.

Suspended CSK doctor tenders apology

NEW DELHI
The suspended Chennai Super Kings team doctor Madhu Thottappillai, on Thursday, took to Twitter to tender an unconditional apology for his controversial tweet after the death of the Indian soldiers in eastern Ladakh. Madhu said he understands that his post may have hurt sentiments of thousands of people. PTI

No Malinga in Lanka's second residential camp

COLOMBO
Sri Lanka's T20 captain Lasith Malinga will not be part of team's second residential training camp, starting June 22 in Kandy, as a 24-member squad was announced on Thursday. A six-member unit of coaches and other support staff will work with the players during the camp. PTI

Man City's sterling display

Guardiola's men prove too good for Arsenal

EURO LEAGUES

REUTERS
MANCHESTER

Raheem Sterling scored the first goal of Premier League's return to action, after the first match between Aston Villa and Sheffield United had ended goalless, as Manchester City outplayed Arsenal 3-0 behind closed doors at the Etihad stadium on Wednesday.

The result means Liverpool, whose lead has been cut to 22 points by second-placed City, cannot now win the title on Sunday at Everton in the Merseyside derby.

City's opener came at stroke of half-time after Arsenal substitute David Luiz failed to deal with a ball into the box and allowed Sterling on goal.

The Brazilian was at fault again as City widened the margin. Riyad Mahrez got to the wrong side of Luiz as he burst into the box and the latter put his hand on the Algerian's back. Luiz was sent off and Kevin de Bruyne converted the spot-kick.

City was forced to end the game with 10 players when defender Eric Garcia was carried off after a collision with keeper Ederson. City was not able to replace him as manager Pep Guardiola had used all five available substitutes.



The opener: Manchester City's Raheem Sterling lines up to fire in Premier League's first goal after the restart on Wednesday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

The host wrapped up the win in stoppage time through Phil Foden who slotted home.

Boosting chances

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid hammered Osasuna 5-0 away from home in LaLiga to secure its biggest win of the season and give a huge boost to the chances of qualifying for the Champions League.

In the Bundesliga, Mainz stunned host Borussia Dortmund 2-0 to take a big step towards remaining in the top league for another season.

The results:

Premier League: Aston Villa 0 vs. Sheffield United 0; Manchester City 3 (Sterling 45+2, de Bruyne 51-pen, Foden 90) bt Arsenal 0.

LaLiga: Eibar 2 (Kike 19, Orellana 78) drew with Athletic Bilbao 2 (Garcia 8, Villalibre 81); Real Valladolid 0 drew with Celta Vigo 0; Osasuna 0 lost to Atletico Madrid 5 (Joao Felix 27, 56, Llorente 79, Morata 82, Carrasco 88).

Bundesliga: Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Silva 28, Abraham 50) bt Schalke 1 (McKenzie 59); Borussia Dortmund 0 lost to Mainz 2 (Burkhardt 34, Mateta 49-pen); RB Leipzig 2 (Kampl 60, Werner 63) drew with Fortuna Dusseldorf 2 (Skrzybski 87, Hoffmann 90+2); Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Bender 7, Havertz 39, Diaby 83) bt Cologne 1 (Bornauw 59); Augsburg 1 (Vargas 70) lost to Hoffenheim 3 (Dabbur 59, 62, Bebou 90).

polio he had a quick-arm action. He was not a big spinner of the ball but could do considerable damage because of his pace off the pitch and also he could both get the ball to bounce or skid off the surface. And he had the repertoire – the top-spinner, the googly and flipper. His googly was very difficult to pick.

2. Erapalli Prasanna would be the second. He used to really spin the ball and if you were standing at silly-point, short-leg or silly mid-off, you could hear the bee-like sound as the ball sliced through the air. Prasanna top-spun the ball. So someone like Tiger Pataudi understood his worth. Once Chandra hit the groove, he was unstoppable. Because of



Array of legends: While Chandrasekhar is Kumar's top pick, Prasanna, second from right, Bedi and Venkataraghavan follow in that order. ■ FILE PHOTO

perfect parabola, and forced the batsman to get on to the front foot. Deception was the key. Prasanna invariably bowled over the wicket, spin-

ning the ball big into the batsmen and backing himself to hit the stumps. These days, off-spinners bowl round the wicket, which takes leg-be-

Happy to see Grand Slams back: Djokovic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

World No. 1 Novak Djokovic appeared to row back on scepticism over plans to stage the US Open, saying on Thursday he was "extremely happy" the Grand Slam had escaped the coronavirus cull which claimed Wimbledon and much of the season.

"I'm extremely happy and excited to see that all the tournaments, especially Grand Slams, are organising their events," the Serb said in reference also to the French Open, rescheduled to start in late September.

"We are very glad that the Slams are happening, of course, and it is very important that we provide opportunities, we provide jobs, we provide opportunities for the players to compete," said Djokovic.



Djokovic. ■ FILE PHOTO

Mangaonkar assisting Finland squash team

Says safety protocols being followed

NANDAKUMAR MARAR
MUMBAI

Mahesh Mangaonkar is back on the squash court, as sporting activity resumed in Helsinki following a relaxation of lockdown restrictions.

The 26-year-old Indian is working with the Finland Squash Federation as sparring partner for national team members and is among early pros to get a taste of sporting action. He has begun training with the Finns, after focusing on fitness during the past lonely months.

Mahesh Mangaonkar.
■ FILE PHOTO: R. RAGU

gym equipment. We all followed the protocol. Now there are fewer restrictions. This doesn't mean the pandemic is over. We still need to keep following those rules until there is a cure," he said.

Chomping at the bit
"Everyone has been waiting to get on court or get to the gym and break a good sweat," he said in a chat from Helsinki.

World No. 49 Mangaonkar plays in the European club leagues and shifted base from The Hague (Netherlands) to Helsinki after accepting the Finland offer.

The current Indian National men's squash champion spars with the Finland team at the Taihiali Squash Club, incidentally one of the clubs he plays for in the European league.

"Every venue had rules like not more than 10 people in the gym or facility, hand sanitisation and disinfecting

Spin the ball, he learnt to roll the ball. Bedi had a smooth easy action and he too had the parabola and the variations. Plus Bedi had a brute of an arm-ball that fetched him plenty of wickets. He too top-spun the ball, forcing batsmen to use their feet.

4. S. Venkataraghavan: He had a wonderful action for an off-spinner. He was tall, had a high-arm action and got natural bounce. Because of his height, he did not get the same parabola as Prasanna and Bedi. On a conducive pitch, he could be dangerous. Along the way, he learnt to drift the ball away from the right-hander. He too top-spun his off-spinners which explains the bounce he could achieve.

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