



Uncertainty over extension of two Central food schemes
page 10



U.S. President Donald Trump's support eroding, show polls
page 12



North Korea cuts off all communication with South
page 12



Don't ignore bonded labour, SC tells Nitish Kumar govt. in Bihar
page 10

State tally now 90,787; death toll up to 3,289

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Maharashtra recorded 2,259 cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, taking its tally to 90,787. It also recorded 120 deaths, pushing its toll to 3,289. Nearly 56% of the cases and 54% of the deaths were reported from Mumbai.

In just nine days of June, the State had clocked 1,003 deaths but the officials have attributed the surge to book-keeping with many deaths recorded in May being counted now. Of the 1,003 deaths, 481 were recorded in Mumbai.

Of the 120 deaths, 83 were reported from Mumbai and its satellite cities like Navi Mumbai, Thane, and Palghar. Pune recorded 16 deaths, Aurangabad 10, Nashik 3, Solapur and Akola two each, and Ratnagiri, Amravati and Nagpur one each. State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said 80 of the victims were men and 40 women and nearly 91 of them had co-morbid conditions.

On Tuesday, 1,663 patients were discharged. In all, 42,638 patients have recovered and gone home so far, taking the recovery rate to 47%. The positivity rate is around 15.7%, and 26,470 people are in institutional quarantine.

OPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 11

India, China agree to ease stand-off

Troops of both countries begin partial 'disengagement' from some points along the LAC

DINAKAR PERI
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Indian and Chinese troops began a partial "disengagement" from some of the stand-off points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, defence sources said on Tuesday, in the first sign of moving towards resolution of the month long stand-off between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army there.

A series of ground level military talks are due to be held over the next 10 days, beginning Wednesday, to try and resolve most of the other issues at the local level.

"Partial de-escalation has happened from some points in the Galwan and Hot Springs areas. [The] Chinese side removed some of the tents and some troops and vehicles have been moved back, and the Indian side, too, has reciprocated," official sources said. At some points in the Galwan Valley, Chinese troops have moved back 2-3 km. However, there is no change on the ground situation at Pangong Tso.

While this is the first time officials spoke about the ground situation, no government statement was issued, either in Delhi or Beijing.

This is also the first time senior government officials have acknowledged the continued presence of Chinese

The way forward

A look at some fresh developments, and the future course of action by India and China

- India and China discuss de-escalation plan on five conflict points in Ladakh – Galwan area (PP 14, 15 and 17), Pangong Tso and Chushul
- Partial disengagement begins at Galwan area
- China removes some tents and some troops and vehicles moved back. India reciprocates

troops in these areas where India patrols, and the heavy build-up of vehicles and fire-power behind the LAC lines. Despite references to the major build-up that had taken place, officials insisted that there had been "no intelligence failure" and that the Indian Army stopped the PLA advances "quickly and strongly".

Outlining the plans for talks on de-escalation, the sources said Major General-level talks were scheduled on Wednesday at Patrolling Point (PP) 14 in the Galwan area as part of the series of talks at the rank of Colonel,



Border tension: A file photo of Indian Army vehicles near the Pangong Tso area in Ladakh.

- Talks at Major General level on Wednesday at PP 14
- Talks at other levels over the next 10 days at PP 15, PP 17, Chushul
- No talks decided yet at Pangong Tso

Brigadier and Major General, as had been decided at the Corps Commander-level meeting on Saturday at the LAC at Moldo-Chushul. Both the Corps Commanders had a one-on-one meeting for almost three hours before engaging at the delegation level where the main issues were discussed further, they said.

At the meeting, both sides agreed and identified five locations of conflict currently – PP 14, 15 and 17, North bank of Pangong Tso and Chushul. Of these, the Finger 4 area in Pangong Tso was a contentious issue and would take some time to be resolved,

ON THE TABLE

• Return to status quo ante pre-May 5

- Full withdrawal of PLA troops from the five conflict points, and away from the LAC

• Removal of tents, vehicles and equipment pitched at various points

- Drawdown of fighter bombers, rocket forces, air defence radars and jammers and troops build-up in the Chinese side of the LAC

focus for these talks was the Ladakh situation.

The sources stressed that India remained "firm" on restoring the status quo to pre-May 5 positions, and that apart from troops retreating from the "front lines", it was necessary to ensure a drawdown of troops and fire-power behind the Chinese lines where the PLA had deployed "fighter bombers, rocket forces, air defence radars and jammers among others".

"India will continue to have a major build-up until China withdraws the build-up done there. The Indian Army is fully prepared for a long and permanent deployment if the PLA doesn't retreat," the sources stated.

As reported earlier, the Indian side told the Chinese counterparts that it would not stop construction, including the DBO road, as it is well within Indian territory.

Underscoring the efforts to resolve the tensions, which they referred to as "episodic issues", the sources said that tactical level hotlines at border meeting points at Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO)-Tien Wein Dien (TWD) and Chushul-Moldo remain "on and open". It has also been proposed that the Corps Commanders should have formal meetings once or twice every year for better interaction between the two armies at a higher level.

Migrants should not be prosecuted: SC

'Send the stranded home within 15 days'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said migrant workers should not be prosecuted for trying to reach home amid the national lockdown.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan directed the Centre and the States to withdraw any complaint or prosecution lodged against migrant labourers who had set out on foot from big cities for their native villages to escape starvation, unemployment and disease during the pandemic.

The court said "society as a whole was moved by their miseries and difficulties".

"States/Union Territories to consider withdrawal of prosecution/complaints under Section 51 of the Disaster Management Act and other related offences lodged against migrant labourers who are alleged to have violated lockdown measures by moving on roads," it directed.

A migrant worker who walked home would have faced a year in prison or been fined or suffered both if found guilty of obstructing the law under Section 51 of the Act.

The Bench, also comprising Justices S.K. Kaul and M.R. Shah, ordered the States and the UTs to bring



the stranded migrants home within the next 15 days.

'Provide more trains'

It ordered the Railways to provide the States with 171 more Shramik Special trains within the next 24 hours to transport migrant workers

"The process of transportation by rail and road has to be completed by all the States and the Union Territories so that the next stage of attending the needs of the migrant labourers can be looked into, ie, source of employment, provision of food and ration for them," the 38-page order reasoned.

The court asked the Directors General of Police to direct their personnel to deal with the migrant workers humanely. It said there were instances of police excesses despite otherwise doing a "commendable job".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

+ 10 child deaths in State due to COVID-19

Children more resilient to virus, but malnutrition, existing illnesses pose a risk

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Ten minors have succumbed to COVID-19 in Maharashtra since the outbreak hit the State on March 9. The youngest fatality is a 13-month-old baby girl from Pune, who had megaloblastic anaemia and acute malnutrition. Similar to the global trend, children in the State have shown more resilience to the SARS-CoV-2 than adults, but experts warn that malnutrition and pre-existing illnesses may cause a high risk.

Underlying conditions
Of the 10 fatalities, four were below the age of 10, while six were between 11 and 18 years. At least half of the children had some underlying conditions, said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate.

"COVID-19 related complications in children are negligible and they bounce back very quickly. The mortality is also very

low," said Dr. Awate.

He said the State had reported 2,722 positive cases in the under-10 age group, and the case fatality rate was merely 0.1%.

While the State has not segregated data of positive cases in the 11-18 age group, there were 5,338 patients between the ages of 11 and 20, and the case fatality in this group was equally low.

Paediatrician and infectious diseases expert Dr. Tanu Singhal from Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital said that overall as a group, children tend to do well, but there is a small subset that

develops the severe disease. "They relatively do better than adults because of factors like innate immunity and healthier lungs," said Dr. Singhal. Absence of risk factors like obesity, smoking, drinking and co-morbid conditions like diabetes and hypertension also works for the young ones.

Mostly asymptomatic

Paediatrician and critical care expert Dr. Soonus Udani from SRCC Children's Hospital said most children have mild symptoms or are asymptomatic.

"They mostly present with symptoms like cough and fever. But we have had at least four children who came with abdominal pain and diarrhoea," said Dr. Udani, adding that of the 45 minors with COVID-19 they have treated so far, the condition of only one was serious and required intensive care.

"This 17-year-old boy had

been to many hospitals before he came to us. He required non-invasive ventilator support but has now gotten better," she said. Two other babies who tested positive were malnourished and also required heart surgeries, but both of them also bounced back, she said.

New concern

A new concern has now emerged with an inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID-19 seen in children. "It is a rare manifestation and two such cases have been reported in Tamil Nadu and one in Kerala," said Dr. Singhal. Clusters of such cases have been reported in the U.K. and U.S., where children have suffered from single or multi-organ failure. A paper published in *The Indian Journal of Paediatrics* on May 28 reported the case of a five-year-old boy from Kerala highlighting the atypical presentation.

10 child deaths in State due to COVID-19

With short lived content, company hopes to offer users more control

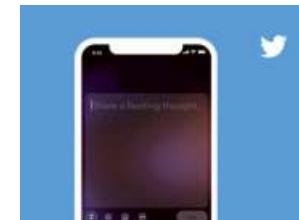
YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Social media giant Twitter on Tuesday said it will start testing its new feature 'Fleets' in India, allowing users to post "fleeting thoughts" that will disappear after 24 hours and cannot be retweeted or liked.

This functionality is similar to the popular 'story' features offered by social networks such as Instagram, Facebook and Snapchat.

"We learned from research that people don't tweet because tweets are public, feel permanent, and display the number of retweets and likes. We hope 'Fleets' will empower many more people to express themselves more freely," the company said.

India is the third market globally, after Brazil and Ita-



The feature was earlier rolled out in Brazil and Italy.

ly, where Twitter is rolling out this feature on a test basis.

Diversity of usage

"India is important for Twitter since it is one of our largest and fastest-growing audience markets globally. We are excited to bring the Fleets experiment to India

and make it one of the first three countries in the world to experience this new product," Manish Maheshwari, MD at Twitter India, said.

He added that from the test, Twitter will learn how adding a new mode of conversation changes the way Indians engage on Twitter. "It will also be interesting to see if it further amplifies the diversity of usage by allowing people to share what they're thinking in a way that is light-touch and light-hearted," he said.

'Fleets' from the accounts one follows will appear on the top of one's timeline. To create a new Fleet, users will need to tap on the profile picture on the top left corner, and then type in a message or add a photo or video and tap 'Fleet' to post.

To engage with followers

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To engage with followers

Cross-party backing in Nepal for new map

Lower House debates amendment

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

The Lower House of Nepal's Parliament on Tuesday expressed cross-party support for the new map which shows the disputed Kalapani region as part of Nepalese sovereign territory. During the discussion on the Second Constitution Amendment Bill, which will grant legal status to the updated map, Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali said India has undermined Nepal's sovereignty by building the Lipulekh link road in the area.

"According to the Sugauli Treaty (1816), the region of Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani are part of Nepal's sovereign territory and any unilateral change in our



borders is unacceptable to us. We regard the inauguration of the Lipulekh link road as a serious matter. This action has undermined Nepal's sovereignty," said Mr. Gyawali.

He addressed the Parliament and presented a detailed answer to questions on the updated map which was unveiled on May 20.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

India adds 8,827 cases, 246 fatalities

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**
Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Tuesday said India is in a much better position than the rest of the world in the fight against COVID-19, but there is "no time for complacency".

He said "social vaccine"—strict adherence to physical distancing, hand hygiene and using mask/face covers—is the need of the hour.

Speaking after the 16th meeting of the high-level Group of Ministers, Mr. Vardhan said as India enters the Unlock 1.0 phase where restrictions have been eased, "we need to be more disciplined".

India on Tuesday added 8,827 new cases and 246 deaths. These numbers do

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

A-BM-BME

Unlock 1: full working hours for shops

Now, BMC allows markets to remain open till 9 p.m.; alternate days restriction remains

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Shops in Mumbai can now stay open throughout the day, instead of from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., as per a revised order issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Tuesday.

The BMC had issued a circular on June 2, giving details on guidelines for unlocking sectors of the economy as part of the State's Mission Begin Again. The circular had mandated shops on one side of the road to stay open on certain days of the week while shops on the other side would stay open on other days. However, they were to operate only from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and remain shut on Sundays.

In its revised order, the BMC allowed all markets, market areas and shops, except malls and market complexes, to stay open for full working hours. However, the restriction on opening of shops on alternate days continues, and they will continue to stay shut on Sundays. Shop owners or markets associations are expected to involve themselves in coordi-



Spoilt for choice: Customers shop for sarees at a showroom in the city on Tuesday. The BMC has allowed shops to open on alternate days as part of the State's Mission Begin Again. ■ VIJAY BATE

nating the process. Although establishments in many parts of the city now have 24x7 licenses, the night curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. will remain in force as earlier.

This means shops can operate in the daytime but have to shut by 9 p.m.

The Federation of Retail Traders Welfare Association welcomed the decision and informed its members to

close by 7.30 or 8 p.m. so that staffers could reach home before curfew.

Staff shortage

However, shopkeepers have expressed concern over the shortage of staff. Rammikhai Chheda of Mumbai Grain Dealers' Association said,

"This order is of no use until our staffers return. Most

shops, retail stores have gone back to their native place. I had nine staffers in my shop in Kurla, now there are just two. It is difficult to stay open for 12 hours. Home delivery of groceries has also stopped."

Grocery shops stayed open even during the lockdown as they are part of essential services.

The BMC also made a few other amendments to its ear-

lier order. While it had earlier allowed outdoor physical activities, it has now made an amendment stating that equipment may not be used in gardens, open air gyms or play areas.

Like the State government, the BMC has also allowed private offices to function with 10% staff or 10 staffers, whichever is more. As instructed by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in his address, printing and distribution of newspapers, including home delivery is allowed. "It shall be with the knowledge of the receiver and for the delivery of newspapers, personnel shall wear masks, use hand sanitiser and maintain social distancing," the order states.

Even though educational institutions are not functioning, the BMC has allowed staff to operate only for non-teaching purposes such as development of e-content, evaluation of answer sheets and declaration of results. Inter-State and inter-district movement of persons will continue to be regulated. The order will remain effective till June 30.

BMC can start repairing Mahul buildings: HC

They could be used as quarantine centres

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday allowed the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) to start repair works in buildings at Mahul in case they need to be used as quarantine centres.

The BMC told the court that buildings in Mahul will be used as quarantine centres only as the last resort but they need to be kept ready with electricity and water supply. The court allowed the civic body to start repair work but said special permission will be needed to start using the buildings as quarantine centres.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice S.S. Shinde was hearing a petition filed by Sharda Tevar, mother of an undertrial prisoner lodged at Arthur Road jail, along with a public interest litigation (PIL) by a non-government organisation Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan that

works for the homeless, slum dwellers and marginalised communities on housing, food and water issues.

Ms. Tevar's petition stated that Mahul area in Chembur is unsuitable to quarantine and treat COVID-19 patients because of acute pollution around it. The residents in the area have reported a variety of health issues, in particular severe respiratory ailments like asthma and tuberculosis within a short period of moving to Mahul.

The petition stated that it will be counter-productive to quarantine COVID-19 patients here as the virus is linked to acute respiratory illness and three judicial forums have declared the colony uninhabitable because of the high level of industrial pollution. In September 2019, the high court too had restrained the State government from shifting slum dwellers or project affected people to Mahul.

Inmates at Arthur Road jail getting cured: State to HC

Government files reply to PIL on decongestion of prisons

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The State on Tuesday informed the Bombay High Court that COVID-19 infected inmates at the Arthur Road prison are getting cured due to unceasing efforts of the Prisons Department and medical authorities.

Sunil Ramanand, Additional Director General of Police and Inspector General of Prisons, filed a compliance report stating that swabs of 234 inmates of Arthur Road prison were taken on May 5 and 7 of these, 158 were found positive.

The report was filed in response to the High Court's direction to the State to file a response to three separate public interest litigations (PILs), including one by People's Union for Civil Liberties, which sought the court's intervention to decongest prisons in the State. The PIL also sought information on the health status of convicts and undertrials in the prisons, especially Arthur Road prison, which is the worst affected.

The report said, "On May 20, swabs of 220 inmates, including the 158 who had tested positive, were taken, and of these, only 96 were found



Arthur Road prison.
■ FILE PHOTO

positive. On June 5, swabs of 91 of these 96 positive inmates were taken and 60 were found to be positive."

It said, "It is clear from the aforementioned statistics that COVID-19 infected inmates are getting cured in the Arthur Road Correctional Home due to unceasing efforts of the Prisons Department and medical authorities."

According to the report, all 2,082 inmates of Arthur Road prison were screened for symptoms (pulse, oxygen, temperature) last week and none was found to be symptomatic.

The report also said, "The Prisons Department does not deem it necessary to obtain and test swabs of all the

inmates. The latest protocol issued by the Indian Council for Medical Research for COVID-19 testing, dated May 18, states that all asymptomatic high-risk contacts of a confirmed case should be tested between day five and 10 of coming into contact with the infected person."

The authorities said family members and relatives of the infected inmates of Arthur Road prison have been duly informed.

Other than this, the government has provided correctional homes across the State with 58 coin boxes and 32 smartphones. It is in the process of procuring additional smartphones to allow inmates communication, including video calls, with their family and lawyers. It also permits female inmates to communicate with their children who are in institutional care.

All correctional homes have made necessary arrangements to receive money orders or electronic transfer of money into the inmate's account. The bank account number and other requisite details in this regard will soon be on display on the official website of the Prisons Department.

Hybrid learning essential for reopening of schools'

Mumbai-based online school firm unveils post-lockdown handbook with best practices

ADITYA ANAND
MUMBAI

As the government looks to reopen schools after August 15, hybrid offline-online learning, alternate day school, minimal-contact games, and tie-ups with local hospitals will be essential. These suggestions have been made to the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, which is drawing up a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the reopening of schools.

Mumbai-based LEAD School, which runs 800 online schools across the country, has come out with a post-lockdown handbook to consider suggestions on reopening of schools. The handbook has been created after extensive surveys and discussions with schools across India, research on the recommendations, and best practices from WHO, UNICEF, U.K., Denmark, China and South Africa.

Key suggestions from the handbook include adopting a cloud-based system to help schools integrate online-of-



■ SURAJIT PATRO

line learning, alternate day school or double shift school to maintain social distancing and reduce operational cost. "Starting the academic year by June end online or increasing academic year duration to avoid learning loss during the year, and advanced planning of assessments and staggered evaluations are some of the points

BEST unions to start series of silent protests at depots

Workers say administration underplaying number of deaths

AJEET MAHALE
MUMBAI

Workers' unions of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) Undertaking have decided to stage a series of silent protests against the administration's handling of the COVID-19 crisis. The unions, under the umbrella of BEST Sanyukt Kamgaar Kruti Samiti (BSKKS), will protest at each depot starting June 11 at 3 p.m. while following physical distancing norms.



Uncertain times: According to BEST sources, deaths due to COVID-19 may be as high as 30 so far. ■ FILE PHOTO

ministration has not planned for the lifting of the lockdown, which has led to chaos in the past two days. The administration has started issuing show-cause notices to those who are absent, many of whom have gone to their hometowns.

"In several such cases, the administration has gone to their homes in BEST quarters and pasted the notices on their doors, when they were not there. Many of those who have left the city are over 55 years of age and have a pre-existing health issue. It is under such circumstances that the administration is calling them back to work," Mr. Rao said.

Many workers who lived in the far-off suburbs such as Virar, Uran and Karjat find it extremely difficult to report to work and often take hours to travel, he said.

"It's not like the ST depot is right next to their homes. Many of them have to walk five to seven kilometres every day to catch a bus to get to work," Mr. Rao said.

Two deer rescued in Thane society

One was stuck in building gate; hunt for group yields no results

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A Thane housing society was witness to a rescue mission of two deer, one of whose heads was stuck in an iron gate. The deer were attacked by stray dogs.



Rescue operations: The deer that got stuck in the main gate of Rutu Enclave Society; (left) forest department employees search for the group of spotted deer in a storm water drain in Thane on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT ■ VIBHAV BIRWATKAR

Both the deer were rescued within a span of six hours, while a hunt for a group of deer spotted in an adjacent storm water drain did not yield results. While the first deer was rescued at around 1 a.m., the second was seen stuck at the gate at around 7.30 a.m.

The animals were rescued from the Rutu Enclave Society by Thane Regional Disaster Management Cell and NGO Wildlife Welfare Association. Members of the Resink Association for Wildlife Welfare were also present.

Senior Forest Officer, Thane range, Sanjay Pawar, said the injured deer are undergoing treatment at the animal hospital in Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), where one of them that had been attacked by dogs required surgery due to severe blood loss.

"The deer's head was stuck in the society's gate. At first, we wanted to cut open a portion of the gate for the operation. However, by moving the deer slightly, we were able to untangle the antlers that were making it difficult for the deer to move," said Aditya Patil, president, Wildlife Welfare Association, Thane. The deer was sent for first aid to the Thane SPCA Hospital after which it was taken to SGNP.

Mr. Patil said residents claimed to have spotted a group of deer in an adjacent storm water drain. "We went into the drain and walked a considerable distance but there were only signs of pug

marks and no deer. The drain is open-ended, running from Ghodbunder Road to Kolshet Road, making it difficult to look into the multiple chambers," he said.

The location where the deer were spotted is 50 m from the main road and about 300 m from the SGNP boundary wall. Leopard-spotted, Mr. Patil said, was regular, unlike deer venturing out.



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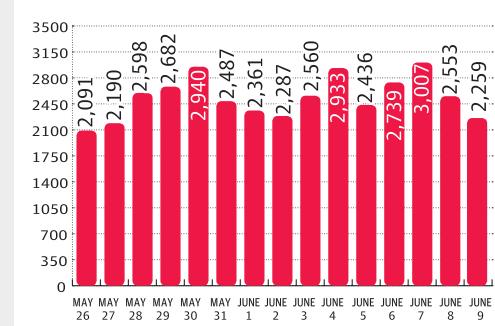
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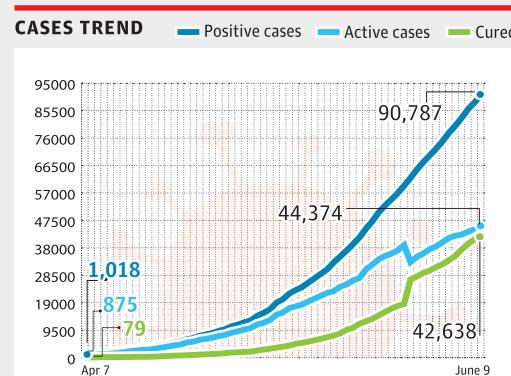
Mr. Patil said residents claimed to have spotted a group of deer in an adjacent storm water drain. "We went into the drain and walked a considerable distance but there were only signs of pug

Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

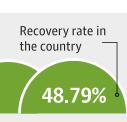
TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS	
90,787	2,259	44,849	42,638	3,289	
DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35					
DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	51,100	1,760	Jalna	209	5
Thane	14,063	355	Yavatmal	164	2
Pune	10,073	429	Nanded	171	8
Aurangabad	2,085	110	Sangli	180	4
Nashik	1,660	95	Latur	139	4
Raigad	1,500	58	Osmanabad	125	3
Palghar	1,636	43	Sindhudurg	130	0
Solapur	1,468	112	Buldhana	97	3
Jalgaon	1,149	115	Parbhani	78	3
Nagpur	788	12	Gondia	68	0
Alkola	848	38	Beed	63	1
Kolhapur	670	8	Gadchiroli	45	0
Satara	658	27	Nandurbar	40	4
Ratnagiri	378	14	Bhandara	42	0
Amravati	303	19	Chandrapur	42	0
Hingoli	214	0	Wardha	11	1
Dhule	290	25	Washim	12	2
Ahmednagar	210	9			

POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS

1,015 (44.93%) of Tuesday's cases are from Mumbai

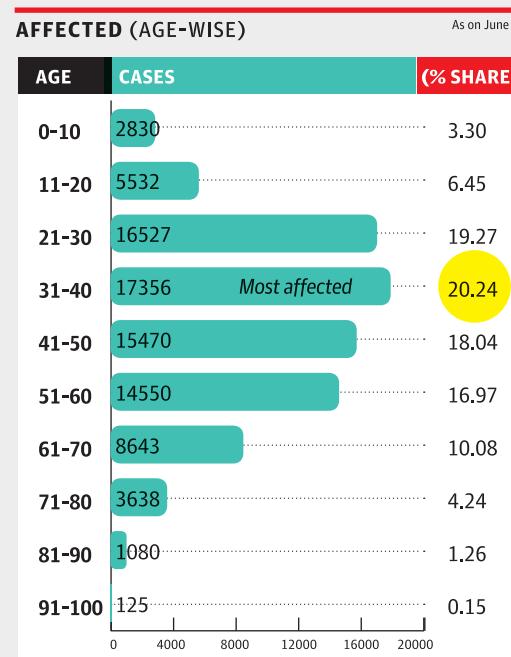


46.96% is the State recovery rate

**MORTALITY RATE**

Maharashtra 3.62%

India 2.76%

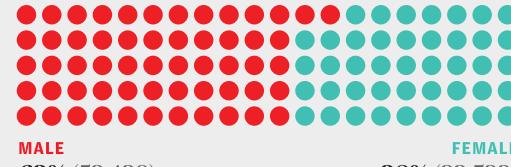
**QUARANTINE NUMBERS**

5,68,073 | 26,470



Home quarantine

Institutional quarantine

CASES (GENDER-WISE)

69% of deaths due to co-morbidities

HELPLINE NUMBERS

Toll free number: 104/1075

Maharashtra: 020-26127394

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

State helpline email id: ssumarashtra@gmail.com

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

Mumbai city: 022 22664232

Mumbai suburbs: 022 26556799 / 26556806

Thane: 022 25301740

Palghar: 02525 297474

Raigad: 02141 222118

Ratnagiri: 02352 226248

Sindhudurg: 02362 228847

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

Now, home packages on offer for 'mild' patients

From medical kits to dedicated nurses, various facilities rolled out for those who don't need hospitalisation

JIYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

With home isolation for mild and asymptomatic COVID-19 patients becoming the new norm, healthcare providers are innovating with special packages that offer medical care kits, video consultations with doctors and nurses and even diet plans during the quarantine period.

Civic health officials have said nearly 80% of patients have mild or no symptoms, and do not require hospitalisation. "As per the guidelines from the Centre, patients who have mild symptoms,

no co-morbidities and have enough space in their home to remain quarantined in a separate room can consult their physicians while being under home isolation," said an official.

Some patients may develop serious manifestations of the infection due to undiagnosed underlying ailments.

"The patients who are advised home isolation need a sense of security. It calms them down if they are under some kind of clinical supervision," said Dr. Tarang Gianchandani, chief executive officer of H.N. Reliance

Foundation Hospital, which has launched home care packages in Mumbai starting at ₹375 per day. "We offered the services to a few patients and got good feedback. Patients get to talk to the doctors on video chat, and nurses and paramedics are also available for video consultation," she said.

Many hospitals in Delhi have started similar services. For example, Max Healthcare has started offering the service at ₹333 per day, including a medical kit consisting of thermometer and SpO2 probe to check oxygen

saturation. The facility has even offered an 'on-site' package, which consists of a dedicated nurse at home.

Home healthcare provider Portea Medical has started offering such services in Chennai and Delhi. "All patients under home isolation are monitored remotely through a comprehensive tracking system involving government doctors and experts from Portea for the entire mandated isolation period of 14 days in Chennai and 17 days in New Delhi," said chief executive officer Meena Ganesh.

Comfort zone: Health officials put a home quarantine stamp on a patient's hand after thermal screening. ■ FILE PHOTO



Mumbai tally crosses 51,000 mark; 58 deaths take toll to 1,760

908 more patients recover; slight dip in growth rate

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Mumbai crossed the 51,000-case mark on Tuesday, reporting 1,015 new COVID-19 cases and 58 more deaths due to the virus.

The cumulative death toll in the city is now 1,760. Of the total 51,100 patients, 22,493 have recovered so far, with 908 people being discharged on Tuesday alone.

According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), of the 58 deaths reported on Tuesday, 47 had co-morbidities. While the maximum deaths (30) were of those above the age of 60, two of the deceased were under 40.

The BMC has screened 3.12 lakh senior citizens for blood oxygen concentration and referred 1,834 for oxygen therapy. The city has conducted 2.33 lakh COVID-19 tests so far.

Senior officer dead

A 54-year-old deputy municipal commissioner (in charge) in the BMC died of COVID-19 on Monday – the first senior civic officer claimed by the virus. He was involved in setting up the isolation facilities at the NSCI dome and Mahalaxmi Race Course.

The officer felt unwell a few days ago and was directed to a Mahim fever clinic to submit his swab sample. The



A policeman screens passengers arriving to catch a train at Borivali station on Tuesday. ■ ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

test report saying he had tested positive arrived on Monday, when he had come to his office at the civic headquarters.

Since he was asymptomatic, he requested ward officials to allow him to quarantine at home and get a second test done, suspecting a false positive. Much to the shock of civic officers, he died the same night.

P North grows fastest

Meanwhile, the city's case growth rate dipped under 3% on Tuesday, and now stands at 2.93%.

The P North ward (Malad) continued to have the fastest growth in cases at 6.1%, while G North ward – consisting of Dharavi, Dadar and Mahim – became the first ward to hit the 3,500-case mark. Of these, 1,240 cases are actively.

There are only three wards in the city with fewer than 1,000 cases now, while

(With inputs from Raina Assaimar)

Dedicated facility set up for personnel

district. This will be the second COVID-19 care facility for the police force, which already has a similar facility at Marol in Mumbai.

Taking note of the difficulties faced by infected policemen in seeking treatment, a dedicated facility was set up at Posheri village in Wada taluka, said Palghar district police chief Dattatreya Shinde.

At least 50 beds in the care centre will be used for hospitalisation, while 50 more will be reserved for patients in quarantine, the officer said. The facility was set up with the help of district collector Dr. Kailas Shinde and civil surgeon Dr. Kanchan Vanera, he said in a statement.

Meanwhile, a dedicated COVID-19 care centre for police personnel has become operational in the dis-

Missing patient found dead on tracks, Mayor seeks probe

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

After a COVID-19 patient, who went missing from Shatabdi Hospital, was found dead on railway tracks nearby on Monday, Mayor Kishori Pednekar has called for an inquiry into the security lapses.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), meanwhile, has ordered an inquiry into the body of a patient going missing from Rajawadi Hospital.

A senior doctor from the public health department has been directed to submit a report within five days, including measures to prevent such incidents.

There have been six incidents of bodies of COVID-19 patients going missing from hospitals.

The BMC, in a statement on Tuesday, cited inability to trace relatives as the reason.

"Even though these incidents have happened due to relatives being incommunicable or late communication, the BMC has never justified these incidents," it said.

The Shatabdi patient, a senior citizen from Kurar village in Malad (East), was

admitted on June 6 with fever and stomach ailments, according to a letter written by his grandson Pravin Raut to BJP corporator Vinod Mishra. He tested positive soon after. The family has alleged that he was kept near COVID-19 patients and bodies before testing positive.

Lax security

Mr. Mishra said, "This is not the first incident of a COVID-19 patient trying to flee. Patients are under a lot of stress. When a person in home quarantine is kept under such a tight watch and if isolation centres have such stringent security, why can't the BMC ensure security for patients in hospitals?"

Government Railway Police (GRP) officials said around 7 a.m., a man was run over by a workmen special train Western Railway runs for its staff. "The site was on the section of the track behind Shatabdi Hospital. It is yet to be ascertained whether it was

The body missing from Rajawadi Hospital has still not been found. "Who took it out of the morgue? The security agency's role needs to be investigated there as well," she said.

</div

NAMRATA JOSHI

Anushka Sharma is happy that her fourth production *Paatal Lok* has connected with audiences. The series, which dropped on Amazon Prime Video, three weeks ago still has viewers talking about it. It is the fourth and the most successful production till date for Clean Slate Filmz, the company she co-founded in 2013 with her brother Karnesh Sharma.

In an email interview with The Hindu, Sharma talks about being a producer while early into her acting career, the kind of subjects that attract her and confesses how, though she may have acted in all her previous productions, the thought of casting herself in *Paatal Lok* never crossed her mind. Edited excerpts from the interview...

Your fourth production, *Paatal Lok*, has got an unanimous thumbs up from critics as well as the audiences. How does it alter the bigger picture for you in your onward journey into films and filmmaking?

● It doesn't change anything; we have always chased different, interesting ideas right from *NH10*, our first film as producers. Of course the success is extremely reassuring and makes us feel that we are heading in the right direction. We started six years ago, and, through this journey, we are learning as we move along from our mistakes; we are refining what we have done well in the past. We have managed to keep our vision of the company intact, which was to always push the envelope and chase fresh ideas. We will continue doing that in the future as well. Even as an actor I have always chosen unique roles, haven't done similar roles.

You've become a producer early in your career as an actor and when you were peaking in popularity. Was this an instinctive decision?

● I have built a position for myself as an actor. I wanted to leverage that for myself, to be able to back content and ideas, which are truly phenomenal and path-breaking in the stories that we tell as

INTERVIEW | ANUSHKA SHARMA

I'm drawn to edgy, clutter-breaking subjects'

Even as Anushka Sharma basks in the success of the crime thriller show, *Paatal Lok*, she reiterates a commitment as producer to out-of-the-box content

producers. Indeed, it is not something people do very early on in their career, I am aware it's a unique thing that I did but then I am someone who has always done things, which are different from the norm. And that's only because I don't want to second guess when my instincts are very strong about doing something.

Did you take to production because you felt something was amiss in terms of content? Did you want to be a more active stakeholder in creating content?

● I did not start producing films

for myself per se. I just wanted to tell good stories. I would be sitting and talking to writers, discussing things with them and I would wonder why a certain type of film was not being written. Then I realized, that it is not very common in our industry for great roles to be constantly written for women. So, I wanted to



A different beat: Anushka Sharma became a producer in order to tell good stories. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

take this step and create roles for actors who would be the right fit for the projects.

All the four productions have been out of the box. What is the decisive factor in picking up the ideas that Clean Slate Filmz chooses

to back?

● Karnesh and I would watch such amazing stories and shows and felt inspired. We would always talk about how content is everything and we are reaching a stage where content is above even stardom. We were very clear about our vision. I'm very grateful for the work that we've managed to do and the appreciation we have got for it. I know for a fact that people see Clean Slate Filmz as the ones who back stories that people have not seen before.

NH10. Paatal Lok. Pari address

the heart of darkness. In both urban and rural spaces.

Phillauri, despite the lightness, also had a strong, dark emotional anchor in the past.

Does this theme fascinate you ?

● I'm definitely drawn to edgy, clutter-breaking subjects, I am drawn to human stories. I endeavour to be able to present them in a way that entertains thoroughly. The most amazing part as a producer and as a creative person is to back films and series, which are different and progressive yet thoroughly engaging and entertaining. The story should be so-

mething, which evokes an emotion. We've always gone behind bold, interesting ideas, and we've made sure that the treatment is as true to the idea as possible, because that's what made us green light the content in the first place.

What was most rewarding about the success of *Paatal Lok*?

● It means a lot to us, when many of our colleagues are feeling inspired after watching *Paatal Lok*.

A lot of the credit goes to the team that worked on the project – from the writers to the directors to the actors and even the technicians. All of them are being appreciated. This is a victory of the

People see Clean Slate Filmz as the ones who back stories that people have not seen before.

ANUSHKA SHARMA
Actor/ Producer

pect of the show is being spoken about and this is what makes me the happiest as a producer.

What is coming up next as a producer?

● *Bulbul* is a film with Netflix, which will be out next month. Apart from that, we are working on a lot of things as producers, few things which have been greenlit already, so we will start the process of writing those. Our slate is quite full and I think it's a great time for Karnesh and me at the moment.

Lastly, the dog love in *Paatal Lok*... How much is it inspired from your own care and affection for street animals?

● I wish I could take credit for that; it was all Sudip [Sharma, the series creator], he came up with it. But I absolutely loved the idea when I read it. I think the dog lover in me was ecstatic.

Meet your planet heroes

Authors Bijal Vachharajani and Radha Rangarajan's book tells the tale of people who have been creating a real ecological difference on the ground

■ MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

Dharavi Rocks is a music band comprising children in Dharavi, who perform with instruments made of waste material they pick over the course of their day.

Minal Pathak is a senior scientist with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Rohan Arthur studies coral bleaching in Mysuru, the Andamans, and Lakshadweep.



Leading the fight Co-author of the book, Bijal Vachharajani
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

What does it mean, for someone who works with rivers and writes so beautifully about the sights, sounds and smells associated with them, to come to this deafening silence?" There was a lot to learn for the authors, as there will be for readers who pick up the book. Some other people covered by the duo are Kavitha Kuruganti of the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, environmental journalist Jay Mazoomdaar and cartoonist Rohan Chakravarty.

Mutual understanding
"Rohan gave us a lot of insight into how the local communities have been affected, not only by overfishing but also because of reef bleaching. Once a reef gets affected, the reef fish are also gone. Those are the fish that the local people usually eat," ex-

plains Rangarajan.

The connections between local population, the wildlife and their ecology, is an unsurprising refrain that comes up in many of these conversations. For instance, Rangarajan brings up ecologist Vidy Athreya's work with farmers around Pune, as part of her leopard conservation efforts. "The farmers have been there for generations, and they have lived with leopards. She has very funny incidents to tell, about farmers taking selfies with a leopard sitting on a tank behind him. The leopard's very chill, and the man's very chill too. When they set up camera traps for leopards, they would often find villagers crawling in front of the camera traps and taking funny selfies. They are comfortable with leopards around them – they say, 'They [le-

opards] have kids to feed and so do we."

And then, of course, there is Madras Crocodile Bank Trust and Centre for Herpetology founder Romulus Whitaker, and his admiration for the Irula tribe that he works with. Rangarajan still sounds a bit starstruck by that particular meeting, that had happened months ago. "He told me how the Irulas can identify if a snake that went by was venomous or non-venomous just by the markings on the sand it left behind. When I asked him how, he said, 'I don't know! They can do it, I cannot.'

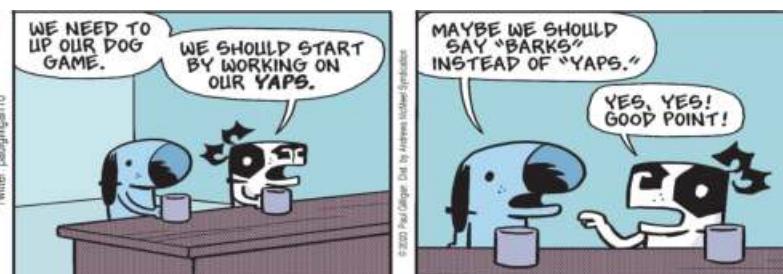
There are dynamics of different kinds to be observed in each ecology. Vachharajani points out another kind of relationship, "Aparajita Datta has been

working for hornbill conservation in Arunachal Pradesh since the late 1990s. She told us how hornbill breeding season was always in sync with the fruiting of the trees, so their chicks would have enough to eat. She told us how, as the trees' fruiting cycles change because of climate change and global warming, hornbills are also breeding earlier in the year. This is something she has observed: the study is still underway and the correlation is yet to be established."

Amid such diverse areas of work, what is the one thing that all their subjects had in common? Says Rangarajan, "We had done our research and decided that their work is worth highlighting: but each of them was surprised at being approached. They all said, 'Why me? There are so many others doing so much more!'"

10 Indian Champions Who Are Fighting to Save the Planet, is priced at ₹199.

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



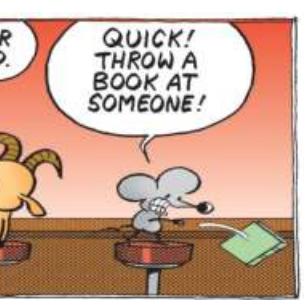
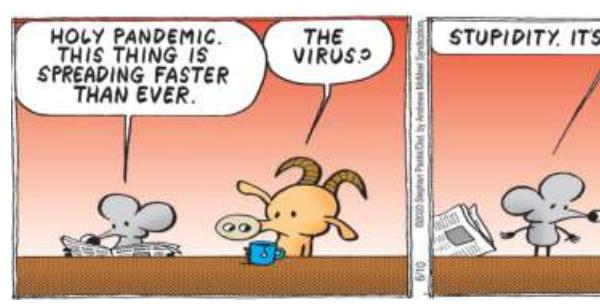
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE





Wrong priorities

By opening up religious places for worship now, India risks high community transmission

Some things are better kept for later during a pandemic. And, public worship is certainly one of them. When epidemiologists were recently polled in the U.S. on when they would think of attending religious service, 43% of about 200 respondents said they would consider that in three months to a year, and an equal number said not for one year. Their caution on mass religious gatherings, which do not lend themselves to physical distancing and have a history of amplifying the COVID-19 pandemic in more than one country, should sober down governments that are keen to open religious places early in the unlock phase. Even with online registration, e-passes, distance marking and use of personal protective equipment by staff, gatherings in confined spaces go against the grain of infection prevention principles. It is heartening that some temple boards, churches and Islamic religious bodies have wisely decided to remain closed. As among the top five virus-affected nations, India cannot afford to create conditions that lead to mass transmission. The priority today is to refloat a crippled economy safely, while postponing all optional activities to a time when there is better disease control, and prevention and treatment courses are available. The compulsion to unlock when infections have not peaked has already placed the onus of remaining safe on people, a significant section of whom have health vulnerabilities such as diabetes. Going by ICMR-linked studies, the disease burden for diabetes alone has grown 80% since 1990, highlighting the enormous risk of virus exposure. Millions of such citizens now face aggravated community transmission.

After pursuing a lockdown strategy that had low impact on the infection curve, but many negative outcomes, India needs to draw up its unlock priorities carefully. It must show the political will to enforce norms on public behaviour such as mask wearing and physical distancing. Yet, the scenes from many cities coming out of lockdown, including hard-hit ones such as Mumbai, show anxious crowding in many situations, including on public transport. Night curfews are weakly enforced. This is worrying, considering the limited medical capacity that exists to care for a large number who might suffer the worst effects of COVID-19. Getting unlocking wrong could mean an explosion of cases, which, WHO has warned, remains a possibility in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. National policy should not put the cart before the horse, by prioritising activities such as worship at public places. All available resources must be devoted towards productive and essential work. The Centre has to also explain what it is doing to assess the prevalence of infection at the community-level at a suitable scale, which is crucial to identify focus areas and decide the course of further unlock phases.

Crossing the line

Delhi should not hide failures by limiting health-care access to just its residents

The decision announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to restrict COVID-19 treatment in Delhi's private hospitals and those run by the government of NCT only to those with proof of residence in the city was ill-thought-out. As Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal noted in his order overruling the decision, 'Right to Health' is an integral part of 'Right to Life' under Article 21 of the Constitution. While health care is far from being universal in India, positively denying that to someone on the grounds of residency is insensitive and irresponsible. The Lieutenant-Governor has now directed that treatment should not be denied to anyone. Mr. Kejriwal depicted a scenario of "people of the whole country" overwhelming hospitals in the city as justification for his nativism. After the LG's intervention, the Chief Minister and his deputy, Manish Sisodia, reiterated the argument and preemptively sought to wash their hands of the worsening situation. They expect 5.5 lakh COVID-19 cases by July-end for which 80,000 beds could be needed. The 10-week lockdown was meant to ramp up health infrastructure, and if the AAP government has not done that, it has only itself to blame. In fact, it must come clean on what it has done.

Restriction of movement is a crucial tool in pandemic management, but it has to be justifiable. The NCT is functionally contiguous with Gurugram in Haryana and Noida in Uttar Pradesh. Thousands cross these borders for work and other needs including health care. People contribute to tax revenues in three different jurisdictions. This makes Mr. Kejriwal's rhetoric unreasonable as much as Karnataka's decision to prevent residents of Kasargod in Kerala from accessing hospitals in Mangalore earlier. The AAP government's approach is contentious for more reasons, however, as it is using it also as a diversionary tactic. While the city is recording an exponential growth in infections, the government is trying to deflect attention from its inadequacies by hiding the numbers. It has reduced testing dramatically – on June 2 it was 6,070, on June 7, 5,042, and on June 8, 3,700. The AAP government accused private labs of flouting ICMR guidelines and discouraged testing of asymptomatic people. The high positivity rate – the proportion of positives to total tests – indicates that the NCT is not testing enough. The ICMR's May 18 strategy directed testing of direct and high risk contacts of confirmed coronavirus individuals even if asymptomatic. The government revised this by removing "asymptomatic" from the clause, which was also overturned by the LG who ordered that guidelines must be adhered to in their entirety. Delhi is testing more than the national average for per million population but that does not say much given that it has a population density 30 times the national figure. Delhi needs to get its act together.

The anatomy of anti-black racism

Only a peaceful and sustained movement can break the back of this evil, which is institutionalised and hidden



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

Racism has raised its ugly head in full public view once again. It was revolting to see an adult gasping for breath, writhing in pain as the knee of the white policeman crushed his neck, and, within minutes, dying – the umpteenth time that a black life has been barbarically taken away by police brutality in America. Despite the civil war over slavery, and the civil rights movement for dignity and equality, systemic discrimination and violence against blacks persists. Racism continues unabated.

My sole focus here is coming to grips with what racism is. In a nutshell, and with slight, only slight oversimplification, it is this: one can tell everything important about a person, his group, its past and future, by noting the colour of his skin.

Of course, noticing the physical characteristics of a person, say the colour of her skin, is not itself racist. Good writers are expected to provide a vivid description of a character's physical features, including skin-colour. This need not imply the idea of race, leave alone racism. For instance, Indian epics describe Krishna as having *shyam varna*, being the dark-skinned one. This description has no evaluative connotation. Being conscious of the colour of a person, your own or that of the other may be pretty innocent.

Idea of race

However, when specific bodily features (colour, shape of nose, eye, lips) are permanently clumped together and human beings are classified in terms of these distinct biological clusters, and if, further, it is

believed that these shared features are inter-generationally transmitted, then we possess the idea of race, i.e. a group with a common biological descent. Every single human being is not only seen then to be assigned to separate biologically-determined groups but also as born with traits directly inherited from biological ancestors. Each race is then believed to be fundamentally, permanently different from others – differences that are innate and indelible, for one can neither cease to have what one has inherited nor acquire characteristics which one does not already have.

The idea of race is deeply problematic. Despite many attempts, particularly in the 1930s to demonstrate its scientific basis, race or racial classifications have virtually no scientific foundation. If anything, the only conclusion from available evidence is that the whole of humanity has the same lineage, that there are no races within humans but only one single human 'race'. Yet, while scientifically speaking, race is a fiction, a large number of people believe in the existence of races. Race is very much a cultural and social reality.

The classification of humans into different races is a necessary but far from sufficient ingredient of racism which depends on two additional, deeply troublesome features. First, a given set of biological characteristics is believed to be necessarily related to certain dispositions, traits of character and behaviour. Biological descent fixes a person's culture and ethics. Our capacity for reasoning, for 'civilization', our propensities towards sexual lasciviousness or ability to make money, can all be read off by examining our face and body. Second, these racial cultures and ethical systems are hierarchically arranged. Those on top are intrinsically superior to those at the bottom.

Racism, then, is a systematic ideology, a complex set of beliefs



and practices that, on the presumed basis of biology, divides humanity into the 'higher' us and a lower 'them'. It not only sustains a permanent group hierarchy but deeply stigmatizes those designated as inferior. This sense of hierarchy provides a motive for say, whites to treat blacks in ways that would be viewed as cruel or unjust if applied to members of their own group. For instance, contact with them is often regarded as contaminating, polluting. It should therefore be avoided or kept to a minimum.

To prevent sexual contamination through inter-marriage, the southern States of America had the severest laws sanctioning public lynching. How else could the 'colour line' be scrupulously maintained? This explains something important. Though colour-consciousness should not be problematic in theory, in reality, an acute awareness of colour is almost always a symptom of racism lurking somewhere unnoticed.

Racism distinguishes even inferior races into two kinds. One inferior race is considered so much beyond the pale that it cannot be lived with, and must be exterminated. This is infamously illustrated by the virulent anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany that led to the final solution, the Holocaust. The second type of race is fit only to be controlled, subordinated, enslaved. Anti-black racism, our main concern here, is an obvious example. Closer home, some Varanasi-related ideologies (in the Dharmashastras from 1st ACE onwards) that stigmatized the *pratiloma*

For example, in a number of southern States in America, once declared a felon, a person is disqualified from voting. So, once the

castes, particularly the 'Chandas', function as virtual equivalents of racism as do the now somewhat scarce Christian anti-Judaism or contemporary Islamophobia.

An ideology on display

Racism naturalizes a person's belief, character and culture. For example, being uneducated is seen not as socio-economic deprivation but a sign of inherited low IQ; blacks are predatory and are also seen to have an innate streak of savagery, which unless kept down by brute force from time to time, might explode and destroy civilization. It is this ideology of anti-black racism that was brazenly on show in the 9-minute video clip of the merciless, life-extinguishing force used by the police on George Floyd.

Some Americans notice and seem shell-shocked by racism only when such violence occurs. Hasn't the civil rights movement been successful in damaging racism, they ask? Is it not good reason to justify any act by explicit reference to race? Is this not good reason to believe that racism will disappear from America by good laws, education and rational argument?

Alas, the very success of the movement that helped develop a motivated blindness to how open discrimination of blacks has been displaced by another system of hidden discrimination. A systematic constraint on avenues for improving the quality of life forces their descent into pretty crime, incarceration, stigma attached to imprisonment and the severe discrimination and exclusion that follows the charge of felony. All these, as scholars such as Jane Hill have shown, have made the criminal system produce results as vicious as generated by colour-based slavery and racial segregation.

Race is a complex issue. Some Americans notice and seem shell-shocked by racism only when such violence occurs. Hasn't the civil rights movement been successful in damaging racism, they ask? Is it not good reason to justify any act by explicit reference to race? Is this not good reason to believe that racism will disappear from America by good laws, education and rational argument?

As mentioned, the current criminal system that awards unfair advantage and privilege to whites, while inflicting unmerited and unjust disadvantages on blacks exemplifies this invisible monster. Only a peaceful movement to end institutional racism, with both blacks and white participants, quite like the recent protests after Floyd's murder, can break the back of this evil. But can such a movement be sustained? Will it be allowed to?

criminal justice system labels people of colour as "criminals", whites have the sanction to engage in all the practices of subordination that they had apparently abandoned. The United States now has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, surpassing those in highly repressive regimes such as China and Iran. The figures related to African-Americans are shocking. In several States, they are 10 times more likely to go to prison than whites. According to the Death Penalty Information Center of the U.S., between 1976-2019, black defendants sentenced to death for killing whites numbered 291, while white defendants killing blacks were only 21, a staggering figure close to 14 times more! (For a quick overview, also see the Netflix film, "13th").

Racialised criminal system

It is amply clear that the feel-good anti-racism of some Americans that views racism as an aggregate of mistaken beliefs held by individuals that can be dissipated by education and rational argument simply does not work. True, good education helps in dismantling racism but the fact remains that much of it lies hidden within the social structure, in habits, practices and institutions. Vulnerabilities amassed over centuries of anti-black racism leave African-Americans facing multiple, intersecting hurdles to a good life. As mentioned, the current criminal system that awards unfair advantage and privilege to whites, while inflicting unmerited and unjust disadvantages on blacks exemplifies this invisible monster. Only a peaceful movement to end institutional racism, with both blacks and white participants, quite like the recent protests after Floyd's murder, can break the back of this evil. But can such a movement be sustained? Will it be allowed to?

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, CSDS, Delhi

Being vocal on the right local

India has the capacity to refocus on the right choice; it only has to agree on the vision



ROHINI SOMANATHAN

On May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon Indians to be "vocal for local". The way in which we, as citizens and professionals, interpret the local will have far-reaching effects on the country's landscape and prosperity.

We could transform ourselves into a greener and more humane society, with access to affordable health care, functioning public schools, choices over where we work and live, and support for those who cannot work. Cities could breathe again and families could move to opportunity rather than be forced out of their homes by drought and desperation. Or, we could rapidly roll backwards, buying umbrellas with easily broken frames, toasters whose levers have to be held down, office chairs with castors that grip rather than slide, researchers who find it difficult to equip their laboratories and avoid reading research at the disciplinary frontier because they are too far from being able to produce it.

And most importantly, there will be people with experience and skills who cannot find the capital, the designs, or the markets to

use them. Thousands of them continue to return to their villages each day.

A pointer

COVID-19 has brought many countries to an unexpected fork in their development trajectories. It has made visible new facts, figures and the feelings of citizens towards these facts and figures.

In my quotidian, pre-COVID-19 life, I passed women in their colourful Rajasthani *lehangas* with plates of wet concrete on their heads, chatted with home and office staff about their villages and their parents, visited my tailor to find he had gone away for a wedding to Medinipur (West Bengal), waited for my carpenter to fix the door handles after he came back from dropping his wife at her parent's house in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, and asked the security guard whether he had managed to buy his cow in Jharkhand and arrange for a new ration card for his family. I got the latest news on radio cab contracts and local politics in Bihar when I drove back from the airport with my (inevitably) Bhopal taxi driver.

These everyday encounters and conversations made India what it was, they brought colour to my life and warmed my heart. I just did not see the flip side. That for all these people, their minds and hearts were elsewhere much of the time, in places they would have liked to be if they could have earned a living and educated their

children. The pandemic, with its fears and lockdowns, has shown us, in painful and graphic detail, the massive numbers who would have liked to be in their ancestral homes in such circumstances. These images, of those who reached and those who did not, should guide our conception of the local.

Village demographics have changed dramatically. Pockets of virtually empty villages in the Himalayan foothills have become repopulated and many of the poorest parts of the country have experienced the largest inflows. After the trauma of the last two months, re-united families would like to stay together. They will search for local livelihoods and they desperately need immediate and substantial social transfers. Strengthening these communities would show a real commitment to the right kind of local. This requires making our safety nets wide, accessible and fair. It involves building schools, clinics and hospitals within easy reach, and opening windows of credit to those with ideas without first asking them to label them-

selves as farmers or micro-entrepreneurs. If we imagine villages as consisting only of farmers and labourers, hit periodically by cyclones and drought, our support to them will not move beyond Kisan credit cards and employment guarantees. Those returning home are from many walks of life and have travelled far and wide. Development policy should help them use their skills and new perspectives to reimagine their communities while they earn a living.

How to get it right

The wrong kind of local would be to promote goods that are made in India through tariffs, quotas and new government procurement rules. We have attained global competitiveness over the last two decades in many new fields such as software development, pharmaceuticals and engineering products. All of these have flourished through international collaboration and feedback from foreign consumers. It would be shortsighted to imagine that we would reach these consumers if we restricted access to our own markets. I am reminded of a conversation with a friend a few years ago. She said she wanted to design products that were bought in the international market because they were simply the most beautiful; not because they were cheap or supported artisans. She subsequently succeeded in doing just that, and, in the process, probably taught many of the elements of good

design.

Many of our sustainable energy initiatives have also depended on government action elsewhere. For example, solar energy was subsidised in Germany and in California when it was far more expensive than fossil energy. China mass produced solar panels and costs of production came down enough for other countries, including ours, to start adopting them. The pandemic should have made us aware, like never before, of our interdependences, of the limits of our knowledge and the need for global engagement.

Sustainable and resilient communities cannot be built on a fiscal and regulatory structure that is highly centralised. The Centre would have to devolve to the States and the States to locally elected representatives. If we adequately fund, support and trust local governments and remain open to absorbing both the knowledge and products that others produce better than us, we can create a society where all, not just a few, matter. If we insist that everything can be "made in India" and close borders because a crisis sealed them temporarily, we open ourselves to mediocrity and isolation, continued mass poverty and greater vulnerability to future pandemics. We have the capacity to refocus on the right local, if only we could agree on the vision.

Rohini Somanathan is Professor, Delhi School of Economics

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.

India's CFR

A letter here, of June 8 ('Letters to the Editor', "India's CFR"), by Dr. T. Jacob John, correctly points out that the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) for COVID-19 in the strict sense must be calculated by the number of deaths caused by COVID-19 during a specific time divided by those proven to be infected during a specific time. The point about the need for denominator and numerator sharing a comparable time period is well taken.

However, Dr. John seems to

confuse CFR with Infection Fatality Rate (IFR) and vice versa, when he says: "The total number, 226,713, are not all 'cases' (COVID-19)

but 'coronavirus infections' (lab-confirmed); hence the derived rate will be Infection-fatality rate (IFR), not CFR." CFR is normally taken to be deaths divided by known cases, and the IFR, deaths divided by known plus unknown cases. Known cases will only be a subset of the overall cases, and hence the IFR will always be less than or equal to CFR. Here, what is implied is the opposite. Surprisingly, Dr. John contradicts himself when he says, "IFR is a fraction of CFR, since cases are a fraction of infections", which is correct. He then goes on to calculate what he calls IFR using current death numbers and past

case numbers, accounting

for the time lag. However, the IFR he calculates is actually CFR, because it uses the number of known cases alone. After erroneously establishing India's "IFR" to be "6.43%", he claims that it is much higher than the global IFR. This is primarily wrong because he is comparing apples and oranges; if his methodology was followed on the easily available global data, he would have reached a global "IFR" much higher than India's. However, a much lower, seroprevalence survey-based IFR was conveniently used.

Calculating CFR in the middle of a pandemic is a

challenge. One way of sidestepping the time-lag problem is to focus on known outcomes – deaths and recoveries. The number of known deaths divided by the number of known outcomes should give us a more robust proxy to CFR, if needed. Calculated using current numbers, the global CFR is 10.4%, and India's CFR is 5.5%. Midway through a pandemic, what is commonly called CFR, warts and all, is a matrix that is useful across the globe, and comparisons are indeed made by researchers because flaws are mostly across the board. In the letter, it is a case of confusing IFR for

CFR, and reaching wrong conclusions.

Reportedly, results from the

ICMR's seroprevalence survey suggest that hotspots in India show up to 30% population infected. This, if true, will pull down the Indian IFR to very low levels. However, it is known that due to systemic constraints, India may be severely under-reporting deaths as well as cases, even more than many other countries. Debates should not be based on arbitrary definitions that lead to erroneous conclusions.

Oommen C. Kurian,
New Delhi

Rethink needed

Though the Centre has

given the green signal to

throw open the doors of places of worship from day before yesterday (Page

Flattening the climate curve

Leaders should act on the climate crisis with the same alacrity they have shown towards COVID-19



R. SUKUMAR



"Climate change involves not just a change in temperature but every other component of weather, including rainfall, humidity and wind speed." People relocate as a precautionary measure against Cyclone Nisarga in Mumbai. • AP

Two interrelated curves began their upward trend two centuries ago with the advent of the industrial age. The first curve was the atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (or, more generally, all greenhouse gases, GHGs) and the second was the average global temperature curve.

An upward trend

Actually, the CO₂ curve began its upward march about 18,000 years ago when it was a little under 200 parts per million (ppm) and earth was much colder. By the time it reached 270 ppm about 11,500 years ago, the warmer conditions accompanying this curve made it possible for the emergence of agriculture. Over the past million years, CO₂ levels never exceeded 280-300 ppm. They always went back to 200 ppm before rising again in a cyclical fashion. They remained steady at close to 280 ppm for 10,000 years until, beginning in the mid-19th century, they began to rise again as humans burnt coal and oil to fuel the industrial revolution, and burnt forests to expand agriculture and settlements. From a mere 0.2 billion tonnes of CO₂ emissions in 1850, annual emissions increased to 36 billion tonnes by 2018. If all this CO₂ had accumulated in the atmosphere, we can say that human life would have been altered beyond recognition. Nature has been rather kind to us so far – about one-half of all CO₂ emissions have been sanitised from the atmosphere, equally by growing vegetation on land and by absorption in the oceans. Thus, the levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere reached 407 ppm in 2018, a level last experienced by earth some three million years ago.

The second curve of direct consequence to us is the global average temperature curve. From 1850 onwards, for over a century, the global temperature showed a slight warming trend. But there was nothing suggestive of anything serious. From 1975 onwards, the temperature graph has shown a distinct, upward trend. By 2015, the globe had heated

by a full degree Celsius relative to a hundred years previously. Climate modellers unequivocally project that under the current trends of emissions the globe will heat up by 4°C by the end of the century.

Climate change involves not just a change in temperature but every other component of weather, including rainfall, humidity and wind speed. Indirect effects follow, such as a rise in sea levels from melting glaciers. Globally there have been several extreme weather events such as hurricanes, heat waves or droughts. While no single event can be directly attributed to climate change, the collective trends are consistent with climate change predictions.

For the sake of illustration, let us focus only on temperature change. The 2003 European heat wave killed over 70,000 people. The years 2015-19 have globally been the warmest years on record. Leave aside the Amazon fire of 2019, the bush fires of 2019-20 in Australia were unprecedented in their scale and devastation. While our attention has been on COVID-19, news has just come in that March 2020 has been the second warmest March on record.

The Climate Impact Lab at the University of Chicago put out a warning for India last year that if global CO₂ emissions continue to gallop at the present rate, average summer temperatures would rise by 4°C in most States. Extremely hot days (days above 35°C), which were only five days in 2010, would increase to 15 days by 2050 and to 42 days by 2100 on average across all districts. A more moderate emissions scenario,

as a result of countries largely fulfilling their commitments under the Paris Agreement, would keep average global temperature rise below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

Tackling the climate crisis

The most common excuse is that the world cannot afford to curb GHG emissions for fear of wrecking the economy. An article in *Nature* in 2019 highlighted the financial dimensions of tackling the looming climate crisis. Apparently, the wealthy nations are spending over \$500 billion each year internally on projects aimed at reducing emissions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, however, estimates that a sustained annual investment of \$2.4 trillion in more efficient energy systems is needed until 2035 in order to keep warming below the more ambitious 1.5°C relative to pre-industrial levels. To put this in perspective, that is about 2.5% of the global GDP.

Some of the wrangling over money relates to the amounts that the wealthy nations, which have caused most of the GHGs resulting in global warming, agreed to pay other countries to cope with climate change. At the UN Climate Conference in 2009, the richest nations had pledged to provide \$100 billion in aid each year by 2020 to the poorer countries for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In 2017, for which data are available, only \$71 billion had been provided, with most of the money going towards mitigation and less than 20% towards climate adaptation. Such numbers had been challenged prior to the 2015 Paris Sum-

mit by many countries, including India, because much of the so-called aid provided did not come out of dedicated climate funds but, rather, development funds or simply loans which had to be repaid. It thus seems unlikely that the rich countries will deliver \$100 billion in tangible climate finance during 2020.

COVID-19 has unwittingly given humanity a brief respite from the climate change curve. Carbon emissions from fossil fuels have surely reduced in recent weeks. How long this respite will last ironically depends on the extent to which the global economy has been wrecked by COVID-19. Commentators are already talking about a paradigm shift in the structure and functioning of societies once the pandemic subsides. This is also a make-or-break moment for the climate trajectory which has to be flattened within a few years if we are to avoid dangerous climate change. Nature's kindness is not expected to last beyond a 2°C rise in temperature as the carbon sequestered into vegetation will be thrown back into the atmosphere. Also remember that earth has already warmed by 1°C and we really have only another 1°C (or 0.5°C if we are concerned about island nations) as a safety margin.

COVID-19 has elicited an unprecedented response worldwide. Only cognitive psychologists can explain why the spectre of dangerous climate change impacting human civilisations has not yet evoked a comparable response. There seems to be wishful thinking that technology can be used to suck out billions of tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere and store this safely somewhere, but available ones are extremely slow and expensive. Harebrained schemes to regulate solar radiation by geo-engineering are bound to bring nasty surprises. There is no substitute to reducing GHG emissions. Technologists, economists and social scientists must plan for a sustainable planet based on the principles of equity and climate justice within and across nations. It is the responsibility of leaders to alter their mindset and act on the looming climate crisis with the same alacrity they have shown on COVID-19.

R. Sukumar is professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences and Divya Centre for Climate Change, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru

Johnson's adviser, a veritable Thomas Cromwell in influence

Democracy will be in danger if leaders elected through demagoguery choose aides like Dominic Cummings



AMIR ALI

ies and other special occasions. Mr. Cummings's influence in Westminster seems almost akin to that exercised by the ruthless Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chief minister, especially as this has been depicted in Hilary Mantel's *Bring up the Bodies*.

A ruthless politician

Mr. Cummings's ruthlessness was evident in the manner in which the previous Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, resigned. In his resignation speech, Mr. Javid punned on the "comings and goings" of the cabinet, making it clear that he had resigned on account of differences with Mr. Cummings. Rishi Sunak, who replaced him, initially garnered praise for the manner in which he loosened government spending in response to the pandemic, especially through his furlough scheme that guaranteed up to 80% of the salary of individuals across the U.K. However, in an extraordinary display of fealty to Mr. Johnson and Mr. Cummings, Mr. Sunak tweeted in support of the chief adviser when newspapers reported the details of the latter's violation of lockdown rules. This confirms the slide in British politics that has been on for some time and which Brexit has only made more precipitous.

Mr. Cummings's ruthlessness was again seen in his involvement in the sacking of Mr. Javid's media adviser, Sonia Khan, who was apparently humiliated by Mr. Cummings and escorted out of Downing Street by armed police. Ms. Khan then brought a sex discrimination claim against Mr. Cummings and Mr. Johnson. The government tried to protect Mr. Cummings by removing his name as a respondent in the case, but ultimately failed.

When leaders such as Mr. Johnson are elected to powerful positions through demagoguery and then surround themselves with unelected, shadowy chief advisers such as Mr. Cummings, it is a clear danger to democracy. We saw this in the U.S. too, when President Donald Trump elevated Steve Bannon as chief strategist and adviser. Mr. Johnson's approval ratings have fallen on account of his bumbling ineptitude in handling the COVID-19 crisis and, more so, in his brazen defence of Mr. Cummings. Mr. Johnson's slogan that won him the December 2019 parliamentary election was 'Get Brexit Done'. He certainly won't achieve that, whatever it may have meant, but the Prime Minister certainly seems to be doing in the British people, with Mr. Cummings's unsmiling visage watching from behind.

Amir Ali is Assistant Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi

Pincer provocations?

India should not conflate the various threats to its security in the Kashmir-Ladakh region

Mohammad Ayoob

Although the latest news on the Ladakh front suggests that Chinese and Indian forces have begun to disengage in select areas, this does not detract from the reality that in the past few weeks Beijing and Islamabad are making coordinated efforts to challenge India's presence in the Kashmir-Ladakh region. There is stepped-up activity on Pakistan's part to infiltrate terrorists into the Valley. China has undertaken provocative measures on the Ladakh front to assert control over disputed areas around the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Overlapping interests

In Pakistan's case the intensification in its terrorist activities is related in part to the dilution of Article 370 that it perceives as undercutting its claims on Kashmir with finality. China seems to have calculated that the division of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir, that delinks Ladakh from the Kashmir problem, allows India a freer hand in contesting China's claims in the region. Increasing road-building activity on India's part close to the LAC augments this perception.

In addition to bordering on China's most restive provinces of Xinjiang and Tibet, Ladakh is contiguous to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Gilgit and Baltistan, where the Chinese have invested hugely under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. When completed, the CPEC will connect Xinjiang with Gwadar port in Balochistan. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's remark last year that India expects to have "physical jurisdiction over (PoK) one day" has alarmed Beijing which sees any such Indian move as threatening the CPEC project.

These factors demonstrate the overlapping interests that Beijing and Islamabad have regarding India in this region. Both would like India to be so preoccupied with taking defensive measures in Kashmir and Ladakh as to have little time and energy left to attempt to alter the status quo in PoK or in Aksai Chin.

However, there are major differences in Pakistani and Chinese objectives regarding India that are relat-

ed to their divergent perceptions of their disputes and their different force equations with India. For China, Ladakh is primarily a territorial dispute with strategic ramifications. China also believes it is superior to the Indian militarily and, therefore, can afford to push India around with limits as it has been attempting to do in the recent confrontation. For Pakistan, its territorial claim on Kashmir is based on an immutable ideological conviction that it is the unfinished business of partition and as a Muslim-majority state is destined to become a part of Pakistan. Islamabad also realises that it is the weaker power in conventional terms and therefore has to use unconventional means, primarily terrorist infiltration, to achieve its objective of changing the status quo in Kashmir. China is a satisfied power in Ladakh having occupied Aksai Chin and wants to keep up the pressure on New Delhi to prevent the latter from trying to change the situation on the ground.

Changing the status quo

It is true that China is agitated about the recent vociferous revival of India's claims on PoK but its primary concern with regard to Kashmir is to prevent any Indian move from threatening the CPEC project. It does not challenge the status quo in Kashmir. Pakistan, on the other hand, is committed to changing the status quo in Kashmir at all cost. It has been trying to do so since Partition not only through clandestine infiltration but also by engaging in conventional warfare. Therefore, while it is possible to negotiate the territorial dispute with China on a give-and-take basis this is not possible in the case of Pakistan which considers Kashmir a zero-sum game. India should, therefore, distinguish the different objectives on the part of Beijing and Islamabad and tailor its responses accordingly without conflating the two threats to its security. Lumping the two threats together because of a tactical overlap between them makes it difficult to choose policy options rationally.

Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University



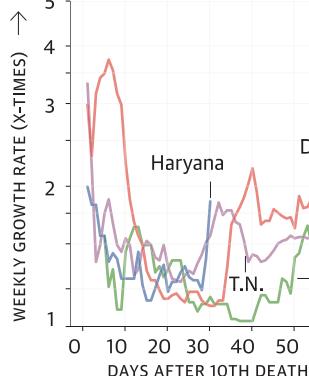
DATA POINT

Tracking fatalities

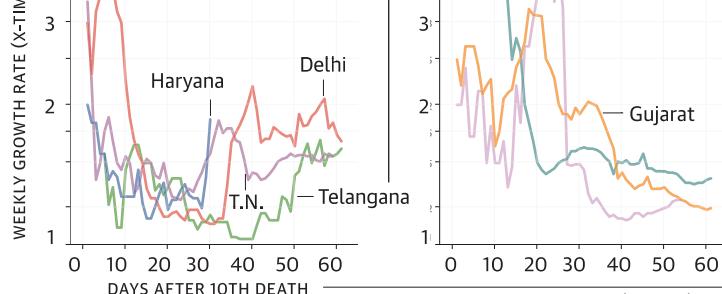
Comparing the COVID-19 case curves of different nations is the most widely used tool to measure the effectiveness of a particular country's response to the pandemic. However, as the rate of testing differs widely across countries, case curves may not be a sufficient tool. The growth rate of deaths may present a better picture.

By The Hindu Data Team

GRAPH 2 The chart shows the States where the weekly growth rate of deaths has lately moved upward after recording a downward trend

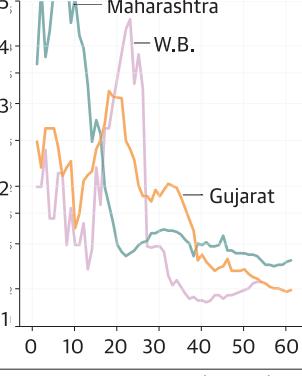


GRAPH 3 The chart shows the States where the growth rate of deaths increased once or twice after recording falls, before finally settling on a downward trend

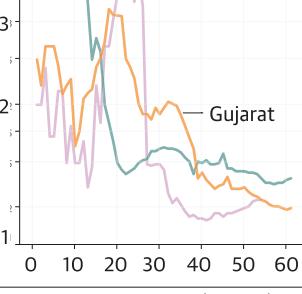


GRAPH 1 The chart depicts the no. of times deaths grew in a particular day compared to a week ago, after the 100th death, in select countries. For instance, on the day India crossed 100 deaths, the total fatalities stood at 103 from 25 a week ago, a four-time increase. So, India's curve begins at around the 4 mark. In the U.S., Spain, and Italy, the curves are sloping downward after the 100th death. India's and Mexico's are flat after the initial dip

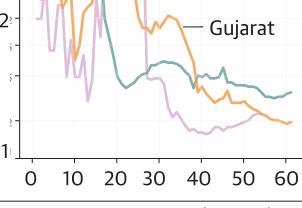
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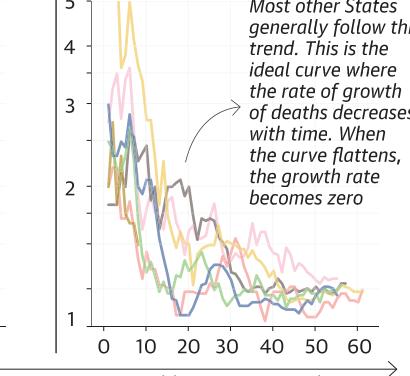


GRAPH 4 The chart shows the States where the weekly growth rate of deaths has mostly been on a downward trend

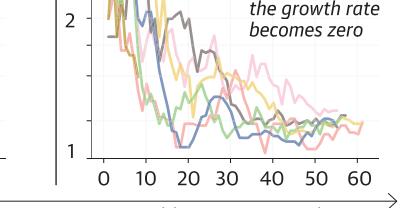


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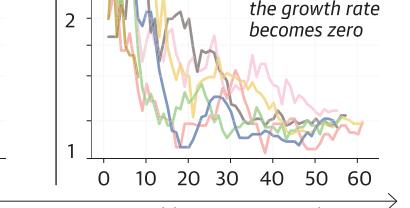
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FROM PAGE ONE

Cross-party backing in Nepal for new map

The legislative discussion on *Saidhantik Chhalpati* on the amendment commenced on Tuesday morning as the government of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, helped by the main opposition Nepali Congress, pushed for fast clearance of the bill. The Madhesi block, which had earlier urged for a "package amendment" including some of their concerns, also extended support with the Janata Samajvadi Party joining hands with the Nepal Communist Party-led move.

Mr. Gyawali said Nepal does not feel happy while recollecting the Sugauli treaty as it was part of a compromise deal with the colonial rulers of India, however, that is the basis of Nepal's present territorial identity. He said despite repeated efforts, Nepal's request for a

resolution of the disputes at Kalapani in the west and Susta on the U.P.-Bihar border were not resolved in the past. "India acknowledged these two issues as unresolved and pending in 1997," the Minister said.

Following the legislative discussion, the bill is ready for passing in the lower house though further discussions are required as per procedural rules. The discussion in the Pratinidhi Sabha saw passionate speeches from MPs of various political parties who urged Prime Minister Oli to protect Nepal's geographical integrity, sovereignty and independence.

Speaking on the bill, Defence Minister Ishwor Pokhrel said Nepal is confident of regaining the territory from India through diplomatic dialogue.

Migrants should not be prosecuted, says SC

"Migrant labourers are forced to proceed to their native place after cessation of their employment. They are already suffering. They have to be dealt by the police and other authorities in a humane manner," it observed. The court squarely placed the onus on the Centre, the States and the UTs to provide details of employment and benefits schemes to the returned workers.

The Bench directed that counselling centres should be set up to reach out to them and explain the various schemes framed for their rehabilitation and employment. The centres should freely provide information and even "extend helping hand" to those

workers who want to return to their places of past employment. The States and UTs were directed to conduct extensive skill-mapping of the returned workers. The court passed the order after *suo motu* taking cognisance of the migrant workers' exodus. The next hearing is on July 8.

In a retort to the government criticism of High Courts running a "parallel government" with their orders on migrants, the top court said, "High Courts, as constitutional courts, were well within their jurisdiction to take cognisance of violation of fundamental rights of migrant workers and we have no doubt that those proceedings shall proceed."

'Social vaccine' is need of the hour: Minister

The Minister said more than 12.55 crore people in the country have downloaded the Aarogya Setu app so far.

"GoM was also apprised about the growing medical infrastructure in the country and was informed that as of June 9, 2020, the COVID

related health infrastructure has been strengthened with the availability of 958 dedicated COVID hospitals with 1,67,883 isolation beds, 21,614 ICU beds and 73,469 oxygen supported beds," noted a release issued by the Ministry.

Tuesday being the last

of the month, the Minister said the last date for filing nominations is June 18.

Mr. Gowda filed his papers in the presence of his sons – former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and former Minister H.D. Revanna – and JDS State president H.K. Kumaraswamy.

On Tuesday, BJP candidates Eranna Kadadi and Ashok Gasthi, besides JD(S) candidate and former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda, filed their nominations. Congress candidate Mallikarjun Kharge filed his papers on Monday.

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Tuesday being the last

Not an inch ceded, says Minister

In retort to Rahul, Reddy quotes Nehru from a debate on China in Parliament

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said on Tuesday that the government "has not, and will not, cede an inch" of territory to China.

In retort to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's tweet asking if the Chinese had occupied Indian territory in Ladakh, Mr. Reddy tweeted, "One morning Congress Shahzada woke up in the night thinking India was still under his great-grandfather. Pt. Nehru on Sep 10, 1959 admitted in Parliament that a road was built in Ladakh many years later & he was unaware. This @narendramodi Govt has not and will not cede an inch."

Several skirmishes have



G. Kishan Reddy

the standoff. The government is yet to call an all party meet or brief the Opposition on the ongoing standoff.

In his tweet, Mr. Reddy attached a copy of the 1959 debate in Rajya Sabha where former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who also held the External Affairs portfolio, presented a white paper on the difference of perception along the China border.

White paper

The motion on India-China relations was moved by Rajya Sabha member Dr H.N. Kunzru, who said in his opening remarks that the "differences regarding certain border areas between India and China along the India-Tibet border have existed for some time, and the

white paper that has been supplied to us shows that these differences have existed for at least seven years. They are along the frontier from Ladakh to NEFA (present day Arunachal Pradesh)."

A part of the debate shared by Mr. Reddy on Twitter quoted Mr. Nehru that the government discovered a year ago (in 1958) that a road had been built across Yehchong in the north-east corner of Ladakh and it did not know where it was. Mr. Nehru replied that the area was uninhabitable and there was no administration within hundred miles and "it is a territory where not even a blade of grass grows, about 17,000 feet high. It adjoins Sinkiang."

Mamata is blocking govt. benefits: Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

Accusing the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal of stopping benefits from the Centre to reaching people, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said people would remove the party from power in the next Assembly election.

"We want to send money to the farmers but we do not have the list of beneficiaries. There should be a limit to politics. The entire country, including Arvind Kejriwal, has accepted the Ayushman Bharat scheme, but Mamataji is still opposing it," Mr. Shah said at a virtual rally while launching the BJP's "election campaign".

'Parliament doesn't have space to ensure physical distancing'

Secretaries-General brief LS Speaker and RS Chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Both Houses of Parliament do not have space to accommodate members while strictly adhering to physical distancing norms, Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla were told by the Secretaries-General of the Houses at a meeting here on Tuesday, sources said.

According to the sources, by a review done by the Parliament Secretariat, the Rajya Sabha hall can have 60 MPs while keeping enough distance between each member, and the Lok Sabha hall has space for a little over

100 members. The secretariat had been weighing on moving the Raja Sabha to the Lok Sabha hall, while moving Lok Sabha members to the Central Hall, which is used for the joint sittings of Parliament. "Even if the members are accommodated in the visitors' and press galleries, the total seating capacity would be much less than that required..." an official said.

Both Mr. Naidu and Mr. Birla now have ruled out using webcast for holding virtual meetings of the parliamentary committees, saying it would need change of rules, which has to be approved by both Houses of Parliament.

Rahul's direct poser on border crisis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Moving away from poetic engagement, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday posed a direct question to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh asking if Chinese troops had occupied Indian territory. "Once RM [Raksha Mantri] is done commenting on the hand symbol, can he answer: Have the Chinese occupied Indian territory in Ladakh," he asked on Twitter.

A tweet from Mr. Gandhi on Monday started off an exchange between Congress leaders and Mr. Singh on social media, with both sides referring to famous Urdu couplets.

Killing of sarpanch a targeted move'

Police say two Hizb militants identified; family claims he had sought police protection

VIAJITA SINGH

NEW DELHI

A day after a Kashmiri Pandit sarpanch (village headman) was gunned down in Anantnag district of south Kashmir, Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh said it was a "targeted killing".

Mr. Singh told *The Hindu* that Ajay Bharti Pandita, 40, was targeted for two reasons – being part of the democratic process and a member of the minority community. The DGP said the police had identified two local Hizb-ul- Mujahideen terrorists who killed Pandita at Lokbawan village on Monday.

Pandita, who was elected unopposed as the sarpanch from the Larkipora area in Anantnag, was a member of the Congress.



Tragic incident: Kashmiri Pandits protesting against the killing of Ajay Pandita in Anantnag district on Tuesday. #PTI

He used to live in Jammu with his family and often visited Anantnag. He was one of the few to return to his village six years after the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley in the early 1990s.

"The terrorists have done this

deliberately. He was targeted because he was part of the government machinery and democratic process and a member of the minority community ... it shows the communal mindset of our neighbour," Mr. Singh said.

The newly-formed The Resis-

tance Front (TRF) has said it had done the killing. "The TRF is nothing but a front of the Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Taiba [LeT]. Mr. Singh said. The TRF was created in August last after the revocation of Article 370.

Pandita's family said that he had been seeking police protection but his requests were not acted upon by the police. The DGP said he was not aware of the request.

G.A Mir, president, J&K Pradesh Congress committee, said, "For the past seven-eight months, he had been saying that since he is the lone member from the minority community in the area he has sought police security ... Had he got police protection, this incident wouldn't have occurred."

Plea cites order on J&K Net curbs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A contempt of Supreme Court petition has been filed, making Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory B.V.R. Subrahmanyam parties, for their "willful disobedience" of a May 11 order of the court to "immediately" establish a special committee to determine the necessity of continuing

"blanket restrictions" on 4G Internet in Jammu & Kashmir, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Foundation for Media Professionals said in its plea that there is no record in the public domain about the formation of the committee. In fact, it said, the authorities issued a new order on the very evening of May 11, directing service providers to continue restrictions on mobile internet speed to 2G.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU - PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT	
BUILDING ORGANIZATION OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD, BUILDINGS (CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE) CIRCLE, SALEM - 7	
NOTICE - PRE-QUALIFICATION APPLICATION AND PRICE TENDER - FORM OF CONTRACT : LUMPSUM (TWO COVER SYSTEM)	
TENDER NOTICE No.01/2020-2021/SE/C&M/C/S/LN-Dated : 08.06.2020	
For and on behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (Construction and Maintenance) Circle, Salem - 7 invites tender for the following works, at his office upto 11.00 P.M. on 15.07.2020 in accordance with the conditions of tender (i) Form of Contract and EMD in para 11 and (ii) Tender Schedule in another sealed cover and put into one common sealed cover for the experienced and competent contractors / firms as detailed below. The tender schedule can be downloaded at fee of cost from the Govt. designated website (http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in). The tender schedule can also be available in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (Construction and Maintenance) Circle, Salem - 7 Any changes in tender condition will also be published in website www.tenders.tn.gov.in .	
Construction of school buildings including electrification in GHS / GHSS in under NABARD schemes in Salem District - PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - V Mettupalayam, Slice No.2 - Vellaiyur	
PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - Kunjamparam, Slice No.2 - Saviriyar	
PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - Edappal, Slice No.2 - Chettikamurkudi	
PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - Konganapuram (Girls), Slice No.2-K.A.N. Konganapuram (Boys)	
PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - Gundalam, Slice No.2 - Kalapuzar	
PACKAGE NO.1: Slice No.1 - Ramreddypatti, Slice No.2 - Periyavadupatti	
Approximate Value of work - Package I = Rs.269.00 Lakhs, II = Rs.275.00 Lakhs, III = Rs.313.00 Lakhs,	
IV = Rs.231.50 Lakhs, V = Rs.301.00 Lakhs, VI = Rs.334.50 Lakhs.	
The E.M.D. remittance and other details can also be available from the Government designated website (http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in) and office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (C&M) Circle, Salem - 7 Any changes in tender condition will also be published in website www.tenders.tn.gov.in	
DIPR/2135/TENDER/2020	

Online travel agencies caution against booking GoAir flights

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A prominent travel booking portal has stopped selling GoAir tickets while another online travel agency (OTA) said they caution passengers on their website against booking flights with the low-cost carrier. These OTAs have been forced to take the drastic steps after flak from passengers due to sudden flight cancellations, a lack of response from the airline's customer care and a failure to receive cash refunds on certain tickets despite an order from the government.

"We decided to stop selling GoAir tickets from Monday because of customer flak due to a high number of cancellations, the airline being slow on refunds and not responding to complaints," said a spokesperson of a leading OTA.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT TENDER NOTICE		
Date : 09.06.2020		
T/1/1316/2020		
Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender for the supply of
		EMD (Rs. in lakhs)
1		16 Nos. of Bull Dozer
2		4 Nos. of Total Station
3		1 No. of Mobile Service Unit
4		50 Nos. of Tractor 4 Wheel Drive
5		10 Nos. of Paddy Combine Harvester (Track Type)
6		10 Nos. of Tractor Operated Laser Leveller
7		20 Nos. of Tractor PTO operated Pump
8		10 Nos. of Tractor Operated Roto Puddler
9		20 Nos. of Design, Fabrication and Mounting of Boom Type Coconut Hoist in the Truck to be supplied by AED
10		4 Nos. of Air Compressor
		Rs.15,000 + 12% GST
The tender documents with detailed specifications are available at the Office of the Chief Engineer (AE), 487, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 600 035 on date of notification on payment from 10.30 AM to 4.00 PM on all working days till the date mentioned below. The EMD should be paid vide Demand Draft in the name of Chief Engineer (AE), payable at Chennai.		
Last Date and Time for issue of Tender Document		
Last Date and Time for receipt of Tender Document		
Tender Opening		
The tender documents are not transferable. The tenders will be opened in the presence of the respective tenderers who are present with due authorization letters on the date and time mentioned above at the office of the Chief Engineer (AE), Nandanam, Chennai.		
Tender documents can also be downloaded from the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in at free of cost.		
Chief Engineer (AE)		
DIPR/2158/TENDER/2020		

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD

INVITATION OF BIDS - TENDER SYSTEM

IFB No.: 05/F/WSS/1 to Mecheri(DO)/(TS)/CE/CBE/2020 Dated: 08.06.2020

Name of work: Providing WSS for Mecheri Town Panchayat Ujjala water supply under CWSS No.25-Panchayat, Nangaval and Mecheri Unions in Salem District;

Value of work put to tender including GST: Rs. 34.50 Crore

Bid Security: Rs.259,000/-

Eligible Class: Class-I

Tender Invite: The Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, No.30, Siruvani Nagar, Bharathpuri Road, Coimbatore-641 043, Downloading: www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.twadboard.tn.gov.in (free of cost)

Date and time of Pre bid meeting: 16.06.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Cost of Tender Document: From the Chief Executive Engineer, TWAD Board, RWS Division, No.25-Siruvani Nagar, Salem-630 036 by Cash or Demand Draft Payable at Salem for Rs.1000/- + GST and additional Rs. 500/- by Post (Each)

Period of Sale: From 10.06.2020 to 23.06.2020

Last date for submission of Bid and opening: 25.06.2020 up to 15.00 Hours @ Office of the Chief Engineer, TWAD Board, Coimbatore and opening at 15.30 Hours on the same day.

Chief Engineer(I/c), TWAD Board, Coimbatore.

DIPR/2165/TENDER/2020

Chief Engineer(I/c), TWAD Board, Coimbatore.

Date: 05-06-2020

No.: KSRLPS/DDUGKY/37/2017-18 (Part 2)

SHORT TERM - EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

'Opposition trying to derail appointments'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday accused the Opposition of politicising the appointment of 69,000 assistant teachers so as to hold up the process.

Minister of State for Basic Education Satish Dwivedi said allegations were being made at the cost of the "future of the candidates". "Some people are running a political campaign," he told presspersons.

His statement came a day after the Allahabad High Court reserved its order on a government petition against the stay that the court ordered on the process to recruit 69,000 teachers. The court stayed the process after several candidates who had fallen short by one or two marks challenged the results, citing discrepancies in the questions and answers.

"We will act as per the orders of the court," said Mr. Dwivedi.

Central teams deployed in over 14 States, Delhi

Will provide support to areas with high COVID-19 case loads

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has deployed high-level multi-disciplinary teams in 14 States and a Union Territory (UT) with more than 50 districts/municipal bodies that are witnessing a high COVID-19 case load to provide technical support for containment and management of the pandemic.

The States are Maharashtra (seven districts/municipalities), Telangana (four), Tamil Nadu (seven), Rajasthan (five), Assam (six), Haryana (four), Gujarat (three), Karnataka (four), Uttarakhand (three), Madhya Pradesh (five), West Bengal (three), Bihar (four), Uttar Pradesh (four), and Odisha (five) and UT Delhi (three).

These teams would address the challenges faced by the authorities such as testing bottlenecks, low tests/per million population,



Cautionary steps: A health worker checking the temperature of a man in Mumbai on Tuesday. ■ VIJAY BATE

high confirmation rates, high testing confirmation rate, risk of capacity shortfall over the next two months, potential bed shortage, growing cases fatality rate, high doubling rate, sudden spike in active cases, etc., the Ministry said on Tuesday.

The three-member teams are composed of two public health experts/epidemiologists/clinicians and a senior joint secretary level nodal officer for administrative

hand-holding and improving governance," noted a release issued by the Ministry. This was announced after the 16th Group of Ministers meeting headed by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Tuesday.

An official said the Central teams were working visiting health care facilities to support the State health departments in implementing the containment measures and efficient treatment/clinical management of cases.

Call for focus on symptomatic cases

Role played by asymptomatics has been a matter of intense debate since March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India ought to be focussing on symptomatic patients, epidemiologists and public health experts told *The Hindu* a day after an official at the World Health Organization (WHO) said asymptomatic patients are responsible for a small percentage of the infections spread.

Maria Van Kerkhove, Head, WHO emerging diseases and zoonosis unit, said at a press briefing on Monday: "It still appears to be rare that an asymptomatic individual transmits onwards. What we really want to be focussed on is following the symptomatic cases. If we followed all of them, traced their contacts and isolated them we would drastically reduce transmission."

The role played by asymptomatics – those who carry the virus but never show symptoms – has been a matter of intense debate since March. Policy decisions such as the wearing of masks, stringent lockdowns, re-



Testing times: Health workers taking samples of suspected COVID-19 patients to a lab at a hospital in New Delhi. ■ PTI

stricting movement and restarting economic activity, are in part guided by the role of asymptomatics in spreading infections. A statement by the Harvard Global Health Institute on Tuesday accused the WHO of "creating confusion" by reporting that asymptomatic patients rarely spread the disease. "All of the best evidence suggests that people without symptoms can and do readily spread SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19." In their estimate, about 20% of people infected with COVID-19 never develop symptoms and they cited modelling studies to show that 40-60% of spread is from people before they had any symptoms.

In March, India began by testing only those who showed symptoms – cough, difficulty breathing and respiratory infection – and had a travel history. It expanded the criteria to gauge the extent of community spread but now several States have reverted to a more stringent testing criteria. The Health Ministry maintained that 69 out of 100 COVID-19 patients are "asym-

tomatic" in India. However this also includes those who show mild disease and could include another category called presymptomatics. The latter are those who eventually show symptoms, but asymptomatics are those who never manifest symptoms. Both categories are capable of being infectious and the debate is about the degree to which both categories do so.

"It's true asymptomatics don't spread much and that it is the symptomatics who are the drivers of clusters," Dr. Giridhar Babu, physician and epidemiologist, said. "WHO should be commissioning studies to understand spread within the categories of asymptomatics and presymptomatics."

"For India, the asymptomatics can range from 28% to 68%. What we'd found was that the contact tracing data of nearly 40% of patients couldn't be traced," Manoj Murhekar, Director, ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, said.

Uncertainty over food scheme extension

Ministry awaiting word from PMO

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Two Central schemes started during the extended lockdown to provide additional foodgrains end by June 30, but so far the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution has not taken any steps to review whether they should be extended and are awaiting word from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, in a letter to Union Minister for Food and Public Distribution Ramvilas Paswan on Monday, urged the Centre to extend the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY), which covers the 80 crore ration card-holders, providing 5 kg of rice or wheat each month and one kg of pulses for a household.

According to sources, he is the first Chief Minister to make this request.

A second scheme was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to cover 8 crore migrant workers who do not have ration cards and are supposed to get 5 kg of rice or wheat and 1 kg of chana or other pulses free. "We ourselves don't know whether the schemes will be extended or not and are awaiting instructions from the PMO," a top official at the Food Ministry said.

As per government data, nearly 74 crore ration card holders in April, 71 crore in



Ramvilas Paswan

May and nearly 8 lakh so far in June have got additional foodgrains.

Under the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, only 59% of the allocation had been lifted by the States.

It was critical to extend both the schemes, for primarily three reasons, Associate Professor of Economics, IIT Delhi, Reetika Khera, who has been involved with food security issues told *The Hindu*.

Ms Khera said, "The severe hit people have taken because of an unplanned lockdown and its adverse economic impact would be felt for some time to come. Ideally for next six months, the government should universalise public distribution. If not, the schemes should be extended for a minimum of three months at the very least. Two, because the monsoon months are known to be hungry season since food supplies from any previous harvest are likely to have run out, and three, because the government had 80 million tonnes of food grains at the end of April, far in excess of its buffer stock requirement."

COVID-19 patient travels 700 km, dies in Bhopal

He was refused care by health facilities in Delhi; screening at railway stations failed to detect condition

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

When his father, showing COVID-19-like symptoms, was turned away by two government dispensaries, one hospital and three private doctors in New Delhi, 18-year-old Sanjay Singh pinned his hopes on Bhopal, their hometown, and booked his father's train ticket online.

"We thought if not at a hospital, then at least at railway stations his illness will be caught during medical examination," said Mr. Singh.

But the 42-year-old's illness went undetected at the railway stations in both the cities. And within a day of making the 700-km journey, he died at Hamidia hospital

here of COVID-19 on June 7. The Bhopal administration is now tracing 13 of the deceased man's contacts. "We will collect their samples," said Tarun Kumar Pithode, Bhopal Collector.

When the man, who worked in the electronic media in New Delhi, stepped outside the Habibganj sta-

tion here, his condition shocked his brother. "He was getting breathless while talking... A lot of time had been wasted in Delhi," said the brother, a staff member at Hamidia Hospital.

First, the man went to the government-run J.P. Hospital.

When doctors sensed his situation had deteriorated

on the delay on the part of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in implementing a May 11 order of the National Human

Rights Commission (NHRC) to rescue and repatriate 187 bonded labourers working in brick kilns under inhuman conditions.

The Bihar government explained that the administration was busy addressing the

considerably, they referred him to the Hamidia Hospital, where he tested positive and died while on a ventilator.

"Only after the government woke up," said his brother, who started getting numerous calls from the police, district authorities and the Railways after that. "The Bhopal administration even declared a containment area where my house is located, although my brother stayed in New Delhi," he said.

Mr. Singh said his father had approached three doctors in Mayur Vihar phase 3 of New Delhi when he turned feverish on May 29.

The teenager recalled his father telling him on the phone that no doctor would touch him. Then the man

had approached a dispensary, which turned him away too. He drove to a hospital in Anand Vihar and was told by doctors there he must immediately get tested for COVID-19. At the GTB Hospital, the man was told they hadn't begun testing yet. "I called them from Bhopal, confronted them, told them it's mentioned on their website that they are a COVID-19 hospital but they refused to budge," said the son.

On hearing the news of the man's death, his wife suffered an asthma attack and is admitted to a hospital in New Delhi. The man is also survived by a daughter, 15, who has tested positive.

(*Name changed to protect identity)

Don't ignore bonded labour, SC tells Bihar

State and U.P. failed to implement NHRC order to rescue 187 workers: petition

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Nitish Kumar government not to "turn a blind eye" to the problem of bonded labour in Bihar merely because the administration was focussed on handling the migrant workers' influx amid the COVID-19 lockdown.

A Bench, led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao, was dealing with the delay on the part of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in implementing a May 11 order of the National Human

Rights Commission (NHRC) to rescue and repatriate 187 bonded labourers working in brick kilns under inhuman conditions.

Uttar Pradesh Additional Advocate-General Aishwarya Bhati said the victims had already been released. FIRs had been registered against the owners of the brick kilns and the workers

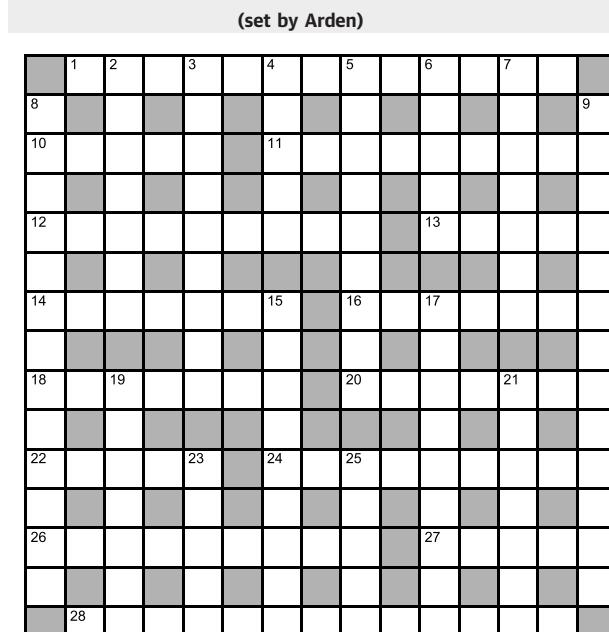
had been repatriated to Bihar, their home State.

The court, disposing of the petition filed by activist Zahid Hussain, asked the NHRC to consider drafting guidelines for repatriation and protection of bonded labourers keeping in mind the conditions arising out of the pandemic.

Mr. Hussain, represented by senior advocate Anitha Shenoy, said the District Magistrates of Samjhauta in Uttar Pradesh and Rohtas in Bihar did not take prompt action to aid the 187 victims.

CROSSWORD + 12958

(set by Arden)



ACROSS

- 1 Coppers stride out showing camaraderie (6,2,5)
- 10 Finally, all the data collected points to these clues (5)
- 11 Scientist ready to accept supply current (9)
- 12 With laws restricting entry he made his fortune (4,5)
- 13 Cowboy film centred around a compound (5)

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



SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12957

M	H	P	I	P
C	A	O	F	I
O	R	C	L	H
C	H	T	E	L
A	T	T	E	A

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

6	2	5	3	4	1	9	7	8
7	8	4	5	6	9	3	2	1
1	3	9	7	2	8	6	5	4
5	6	1	4	7	3	8	9	2
4	7	3	2	5	6	1	8	0
2	6	9	8	4	7	5	3	1
7		4						
8	6	5	3	2	1	7	4	9
9	1	8	6	7	5	4	3	2

Fuel prices go up for three days in a row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The price of petrol was hiked by 54 paise a litre and that of diesel by 58 paise on Tuesday in the third consecutive daily increase after public sector oil firms ended an 82-day hiatus in rate revision.

Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to ₹73 a litre from ₹72.46, while the diesel rate was increased to ₹71.17 from ₹70.59, according to a price notification issued by state oil marketing companies.

Prices were raised by 60 paise a litre each on both petrol and diesel on Sunday and Monday.

In all, petrol price has gone up by ₹1.74 a litre and diesel by ₹1.78 a litre in three days.

Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum Corp had put the daily price revisions on hold soon after the Union government, on March 14, raised the excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹3 per litre each.

After blowout, OIL well on fire

One injured in the eastern Assam site, where clearing operations are on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The natural gas well of Oil India Ltd (OIL) in Tinsukia district of eastern Assam that had a blow-out on May 27 caught fire on Tuesday.

The "accidental fire" happened 13 days after the well started spewing gas and associated elements and a day after three disaster control experts reached the spot at Baghjan, near the Dibrusaihkhwa National Park, to work on taming the blowout.

Machinery failure usually leads to a blow-out, which is an uncontrolled release of crude oil or gas from a production well.

OIL officials said the cause of the fire, which broke out at 1.40 p.m., was yet to be ascertained. A fireman of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. was injured, they added.

Protests held

"The well caught fire while the clearing operations were on. There are violent protests around the site. A request has been made to the



Raging inferno: Smoke billowing from a fire at the Baghjan oil field in Tinsukia district of Assam on Tuesday. ■PTI

State government for maintaining law and order so that experts are allowed to enter the site and start well control operations," an OIL spokesperson said.

"The blow-out will take

four weeks to control once the fire is contained," the statement said.

Local people said some houses were damaged in the vicinity of the well, but OIL officials said the threat was

minimal since all the 1,610 families in villages around the spot have been shifted to a safe distance.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal alerted Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to the fire, and sought the Centre's urgent intervention. He directed the Tinsukia district administration to take urgent steps to provide safety and relief to the affected people.

The blow-out occurred when a Gujarat-based firm, given the task of exploration and production, tried to extract gas from a depth of 3,729 metres.

FIR against OIL

An environment activist at Golaghat in eastern Assam on Monday filed a police complaint against OIL.

In the FIR registered at the Baghjan police outpost electronically, Apurba Ballav Goswami said OIL's statements made it clear that drilling operations had been outsourced without any arrangement to prevent a blow-out.

74% claimants 'low-wage earners', says EPFO

COVID-19 advance given in April, May

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Tuesday said over 74% claimants during the lockdown were "low wage earners", or those who earn less than ₹15,000 a month.

"Despite the lockdown restrictions, the EPFO settled a staggering 36.02 lakh claims thereby disbursing ₹11,540 crore to its members during April and May. Of this, 15.54 lakh claims, disbursing ₹4,580 crore, were related to the recently introduced COVID-19 advance under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana," the organisation said in a statement.

"Apart from commitment of staff, use of artificial intelligence played a big role in achieving new benchmarks in claim settlement. EPFO launched its first fully automatic claim settlement system in a record time of just five days. Almost 54% of the COVID-19 claims are now being settled through the auto mode," the EPFO said.

It added that 80,000 claims were being settled every day.

Move to ban 27 pesticides opposed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Pesticide manufacturers have pointed out that the Agriculture Ministry is now using – in the fight against locusts – some of the very same pesticides that it proposed to ban in a draft notification last month. They appealed to the Centre to drop the plans for a ban.

If the Centre does not heed their plea, they plan to go to court against the proposed ban of 27 pesticides, which they claim will increase prices four-fold for Indian farmers, and result in business losses worth ₹16,000 crore.

All these 27 molecules have been registered in India by the regulatory authority, meeting all scientific evaluations for safety and efficacy. These... include Malathion that was extensively used by the government during the recent locust attack," Pesticides Manufacturers and Formulators Association of India's Pradip Dave said at an online media conference.

THE HINDU

OPPORTUNITIES

WEDNESDAY • JUNE 10, 2020

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

Is outplacement the right option now?

While agreeing that it can be a reassuring gesture, staffing and branding professionals question its effectiveness and suggest alternatives

PRINCE FREDERICK

Outplacement sounds like salve to lacerated skin. The irony is that the healing is being offered by those very hands that have caused the wound, wittingly or unwittingly. So, animosity may be simmering under the surface, and that can queer the pitch. Assuming the laid-off employee gets past that emotional hurdle, the "good-will exercise" may still run out of steam due to a mismatch between expectations and opportunities.

Skills mismatch; salary mismatch; location mismatch; and lack of timing, which is mismatch between availability of a job and the candidate's readiness to step into it can derail a job search or an outplacement exercise even during those times when the job market is stable. Now, with the COVID-19 crisis leading to job losses across industries, these factors can prove even more challenging. The options for getting the matching game right have shrunk. Candidates may be flexible in terms of salary, but the other factors can be arrayed against them," says Kamal Karanth, co-founder, Xpheno, a specialist staffing solutions organisation.

"Outplacement enjoys just a 25 per cent success rate in



favourable conditions. The current situation having made the wicket sticker, its strike rate would have now plummeted."

An unsuccessful outplacement exercise can result in increased frustration for the outgoing employee, and animosity towards the organisation, a scenario that doesn't do much for workforce morale now.

Good severance package
Kamal believes that in the current scenario, a good severance package would be the best bet in softening the blow.

"There are cases where outgoing employees have been given six months' to one-year's pay as severance package, but these are outliers, and the vast majority of the companies wouldn't give more than what is the formula, which wouldn't be suffi-

cient," says Kamal.

Even where the will is present, the quality of a severance package can be determined by an organisation's health.

Rituparna Chakraborty, president, Indian Staffing Federation, agrees outplacement support may be far from effective in the current context, but acknowledges that it may be just the life-raft someone may be hoping to latch on to.

"The relevance of outplacement differs from circumstance to circumstance. As a service model, it has not worked much in India, where I have not seen it happen in a big way over the last 18 years. However, those reference points are not relevant to the current situation. As a concept, outplacement support is offered by staffing agencies as a paid service, for compa-

nies. It is different in the current scenario, where it is being offered as a free and added help."

So, the idea suggested here is that it could be tried out as an additional measure to mitigate the widespread unhappiness resulting from job losses.

Kamal points out that during the current COVID-19 scenario, "outplacement" exercises – which he calls a misnomer, and settles for "career transition services" as it is outsourced to agencies – are reduced to "counselling exercises", as that is all one could do. Matching jobs just don't show up on the horizon.

"If a company's outplacement exercise turns out hollow, that can erode its brand value, and given the current scenario, where all businesses are in the doldrums, the odds are high that it will turn out hollow," Harish explains.

Harish believes companies

would be doing their reputation and workforce morale a world of good by avoiding layoffs and settling for a furlough arrangement that comes paired with a reskilling and upskilling programme during the period the employees would go without pay, so that they are ready for the job of the future.

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GENERAL

BANKS BOARD BUREAU invites application for the position of MANAGING DIRECTOR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER in IFCI

The Institution: Established in 1948 as a statutory corporation, IFCI Ltd is currently a Non-Banking Finance Company in the public sector, listed on BSE & NSE. It manages 6 subsidiaries and 1 associate. The MD&CEO, to be appointed for 3 years (extendable for further 2 years) is expected to define and shape the Vision, Mission and Values of IFCI Ltd.
Eligibilities: (A) Candidate, not be more than 57 years of age as on July 15, 2020 with a Post-graduate degree or equivalent in specified subjects/ Courses or a Graduate degree with specified professional qualifications; and having worked for more than 25 years in Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs)/ Financial Institution (FIs)/ Other Public Sector Organisations in financial/ banking sector, without least 3 years operational experience/ exposure to project financing/ project appraisal/ domestic fund raising; and at least 2 years of experience at level of Whole-time Director/ Director in the board of SCBs/ FIs; or as GM in nationalised banks. Executive Director (ED) in IDBI Bank Ltd; or as CGM in IFCI Ltd/ SIDBI/ EXIM Bank/ SBI; or as ED or equivalent in RBL(B) Government Officers serving as Joint Secretary or above in Government of India; OR at equivalent level in state governments/ regulatory bodies can also apply 'On Deputation' basis (for full details of eligibility, please visit website). The cut-off date for above eligibilities shall be July 15, 2020. For details of the other eligibility terms and conditions, please see the advertisement on <https://www.banksboardbureau.org.in> under the "Vacancies" tab.

How to apply: Interested candidates can apply online through the link available on <https://www.banksboardbureau.org.in> under the "vacancies" tab or directly on <https://www.researchnet.in/MDCEOIFCI>

Last date of application: 5:00 pm on 15-July-2020

Note: Further details including corrigendum, if any, shall be published only on the Bureau's website.

GENERAL

SRI VENKATESWARA COLLEGE
(University of Delhi)
DHARLA KUAN, NEW DELHI -110020
Ph.No. 2411 2196, Fax: 2411 8535, www.svc.ac.in
Ref. No.SVC/Principal/2020/advt/2020
Dated 08.06.2020
Online applications are invited in the prescribed Application Form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Principal, in the Academic Pay Level 14 of 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the College. The last date for receipt of application is 5th July, 2020 or two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News, whichever is later.
The web link of online application form is <http://rec3.svc.ac.in>
For details regarding qualifications, publications, experience, screening guidelines and indicative proforma etc. are available on the College website, www.svc.ac.in along with this advertisement. The applicants are required to read these details before filling up the form.
Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the College website.
Y.V. SUBBA REDDY
CHAIRMAN
S.V. College Governing Body

SBI State Bank of India
CENTRAL RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION DEPARTMENT
CORPORATE CENTRE, MUMBAI
RECRUITMENT OF SPECIALIST CADRE OFFICERS
Applications are invited from Indian Citizen for appointment to the following posts on Contract Basis

Post	Advertisement Number	Vacancy
Chief Financial Officer	CRPD/SCO-CFO/2020-21/01	1
Data Protection Officer	CRPD/SCO-DPO/2020-21/02	1

Eligibility criteria (age, educational qualification, experience etc.), requisite fees and other details are available under detailed advertisements available on Bank's website <https://bank.sbi/careers> OR <https://www.sbi.co.in/careers>. Candidates are advised to go through the detailed advertisement, ensuring their eligibility and other details before applying online.
Please see detailed advertisement for date of filing online application & payment of fee
For any query, please write to us through link "CONTACT US" → "Post Your Query" which is available on Bank's above-mentioned website.
Place: Mumbai
Date: 09.06.2020
General Manager (CRPD)

Skill mapping of returnees under way

Two exercises, one by the Centre and the other by the States, seek to find jobs for a workforce that has returned home

LIFFY THOMAS

Recently, the Government of India launched SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support) to harness the skills of Indians returning home from abroad under the Vande Bharat Mission. The returning citizens are required to fill an online 'SWADES Skills Card' available on www.nsdcindia.org/swades.

As per a recent estimate, over 16,000 citizens have regis-

tered with the portal that creates a database of qualified citizens, having them classified on the basis of skillsets and work experience. The collated information is later shared with companies for suitable opportunities.

The SWADES data shows Oman, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are countries from where Indians have arrived in huge numbers, and they had been largely employed in oil and gas, construction, tourism and hospitality, automotive and aviation industries.

The states governments have launched similar drives, thereby covering not only those returning from abroad, but also those from other Indian states, which include migrant labourers. Uttar Pradesh is among the first to have launched a skill-mapping exercise for those returning to the

state. Tamil Nadu has started out a similar exercise on www.tnskill.tn.gov.in/. Orissa has a reskilling programme for its returning migrant labourers.

The challenge of job creation has to be met to absorb extra labour capital, says Amar Tulsiani, FICCI co-chairperson Uttar Pradesh State Council. A bigger challenge obviously in states where jobs are scarce.

Real estate is an area of focus in terms of job creation, says Tulsiani, adding that essential goods market is another area showing promise. "It is also trying to revive dormant industries; this is possible but takes time. Even if we provide jobs to 25-30% of the migrants who have returned home it will be a good record."

Anindita Das, COO, e-Fasal, says migrant data mapping is vital, and takes the example of

Madhya Pradesh. Finding jobs for them would be a Herculean task, as the number of those who have returned is huge. She says the government must look beyond connecting employers and employees. e-Fasal, for instance, has launched Karma Sethu, a non-profit initiative to build an online employment exchange platform where those working in the unorganised sectors, employers and Karma Sathis (people who would help getting them on to the platform) are onboarded. The mobile app has been launched as a pilot in MP.

"In MP, the mapping is done three ways. One, employees are connected to the nearest industrial units, but that's a small percentage, say 20%", says Anindita. "Two, we connect them with local enterprises. Three, by helping them create local businesses."

Chennai Metro Rail Limited entrusted with the implementation of Chennai Metro Rail Project requires Efficient and Competent persons for the under mentioned posts.

S. No	Name of the Post	Employment Notification No.	Nature of Employment	Pay	Age Limit (in Yrs.)
1	Director (Finance)	CMRL-HR-06-2020	Contract	Pay Scale: Rs.1,80,000 – 3,40,000	58
2	Chief Vigilance Officer	CMRL-HR-07-2020	Deputation / Contract	Deputation: (i) Pay being drawn plus deputation allowance & project allowance at 10% of Basic Pay. (ii) Option to draw pay & allowances as per the parent organization or to draw equivalent cadre IDA pay scale in CMRL	50
3	DGM /JGM/AGM (Civil)			Contract: Consolidated pay of Rs.1,20,000/- to Rs.1,50,000/-.	

Moscow eases lockdown restrictions

Although the situation in Europe has shown improvement, it is worsening globally, warns WHO chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

Moscow emerged from a strict COVID-19 lockdown on Tuesday despite Russia seeing thousands of new cases every day, as the World Health Organization warned the pandemic was "worsening" worldwide.

Muscovites flocked to streets and parks after authorities in the Russian capital lifted restrictions in place since March 30, even as the country registered 8,595 new cases and its total death toll surpassed 6,000.

Walking in central Moscow under sunny skies, 33-year-old marketing manager Olga Ivanova said that after weeks stuck at home it felt good to have her city back.

"It's nice out and there are a lot of people on the streets. It's a beautiful day, in every sense of the word," she said.

With more than 4,85,000 cases as of Tuesday, Russia has the third-highest number of confirmed infections after the United States and Brazil.

Officials say the high number is the result of a huge testing campaign, with more than 13 million tests carried out so far, and point to Russia's relatively low mortality rate as evidence it is safe to ease lockdowns.

Toll under-reported

Critics have accused authorities of under-reporting deaths and say officials are rushing to lift restrictions for political reasons, after President Vladimir Putin rescheduled a high-profile military parade for June 24 and a vote on constitutional reforms for July 1.

But as large parts of Europe and the U.S. reopen, the WHO reported a record number of new coronavirus cases globally.

Director-general Tedros



Freedom to move: People enjoying a sunny day in downtown Moscow on Tuesday after a range of restrictions were lifted in the Russian capital. ■ AFP

Nepali police clash with lockdown demonstrators

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KATHMANDU

Police fired water cannon at about 500 people who staged a demonstration in Kathmandu on Tuesday against the Nepali government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Protesters, carrying banners reading "enough is enough", demanded better testing and quarantine facilities for returning migrant workers and greater transparency in government spending.

Ten demonstrators who

gathered near the Prime Minister's residence were arrested, police said.

Nepal imposed a nationwide lockdown on March 24 when the country had two confirmed infections. The number of cases currently stands at 3,762 with 14 deaths.

"The economy is in shambles, the government has pushed our health and the health system in crisis and they have been ineffective and incapable," Jagannath Lamichhane, a mental health expert said.

Ahdanom Ghebreesus said on Monday that 1,36,000 cases had been reported in the previous 24 hours, "the most in a single day so far," with the majority of them in the Americas and South Asia.

"Although the situation in Europe is improving, globally it is worsening," he told reporters.

'Complacency a threat'
Mr. Tedros said that in countries where the situation was

More than 100 deaths in Pak. in a single day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has recorded over 100 deaths in a single day for the first time due to COVID-19, health officials said on Tuesday.

Another 4,646 patients were diagnosed in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 1,08,317, the Ministry of Health Services said. A total of 105 deaths were reported on Monday in the country, taking the total number of fatalities to 2,172.

getting better, "the biggest threat is now complacency".

"More than six months into this pandemic, this is not the time for any country to take its foot off the pedal," he said.

COVID-19 deaths have

passed 406,000 worldwide, with more than seven million infections, since the disease emerged in China late last year before sweeping the globe, subjecting billions to some form of lockdown and paralysing economies.

Governments around the world are cautiously peeling back those restrictions to resuscitate their economies while trying to avoid a resurgence of infections.

A study by Imperial College London published on Monday estimated that lockdowns prevented 3.1 million deaths in 11 European countries.

'Lockdown saved lives'
Cyprus on Tuesday welcomed its first tourists after nearly three months on lockdown, with flights scheduled from Israel, Greece and Bulgaria.

Desperate to save its summer tourism season, the Mediterranean island's government has pledged to cover the medical costs of any visitor who tests positive for the coronavirus while on holiday.

Other countries have been more cautious.

The Health Minister in Spain, one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe, said that wearing face masks in public will be compulsory "until we permanently defeat the virus" with an effective treatment or vaccine.

And Britain, which is nearing almost 50,000 suspected and confirmed deaths, has imposed a two-week quarantine for anyone coming into the country, British nationals included.

New York City – the epicentre of America's coronavirus outbreak – began partially reopening its shattered economy on Monday after almost three months of lockdown.

While advocating change to how policing is done, moderate Democrats in Washington stayed clear of

Democrats unveil police reforms after Flyod's death

Bill seeks to restrict use of lethal force, end racial profiling

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

Just two weeks after George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was killed by a white police officer, Democrats in Washington unveiled a Bill that sought to lower immunity standards for police officers, ban racial profiling in federal law enforcement agency and restrict the use of lethal force.

The Bill, called the Justice in Policing Act, also bans chokeholds and carotid holds; creates a national police misconduct registry; does away with "qualified immunity" for police and correctional officers; requires federal law enforcement officers to wear body cameras; enhances the ability of the Justice Department to investigate patterns of police misconduct.



Paying respects: Democratic lawmakers take a knee in a moment of silence for George Floyd on Capitol Hill. ■ REUTERS

the call to defund police departments, a position being adopted by some local governments and with support from the more progressive wing of the party.

"That is a local decision, a local level," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said, according to the *Washington Post*. "But to do so that doesn't say we're going to pile more money on to further militarise the police," Ms. Pelosi said.

Presumptive Democratic nominee for the presidential race, Joe Biden, also said he was not in favour of defunding police departments.

"No, I don't support defunding the police," Mr. Biden told a CBS journalist on Monday. "I support conditioning federal aid to police, based on whether or not they meet certain basic standards of decency and honorableness."

Trump slams move

Republicans, including U.S. President Donald Trump, have characterised the call by some Democrats to defund police as it is outlandish and radical.

"We won't be defunding our police. We won't be dismantling our police," Mr. Trump had said on Monday,

when he held a roundtable with representatives of law enforcement. "LAW & ORDER, NOT DEFUND AND ABOLISH THE POLICE. The Radical Left Democrats have gone Crazy!" he had tweeted on Monday.

"We're already seeing outlandish calls, defund the police. Abolish the police," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said on Monday. "Call me old-fashioned. I think you may want a police officer to arrest a criminal before you try to work through his feelings." He compared the distinction between peaceful protesters and rioters and looters to the distinction between the "vast majority" of police officers and the "worst examples of heinous behaviour."

On the Democratic side, progressive lawmaker Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez had asked her colleagues not to dismiss calls for defunding police departments, as per a *Politico* report. "Defund" means that Black & Brown communities are asking for the same budget priorities that White communities have already created for themselves: schooling, police, etc., Ms Ocasio-Cortez tweeted on Tuesday.

China cautions its students on Australia plans

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BEIJING

China told students on Tuesday to be "cautious in choosing to study in Australia" citing concerns about the COVID-19 and racism, further ramping up tensions between Beijing and Canberra.

The advisory was the latest in an escalating spat, ignited by Australia's call for an independent inquiry into the origin and handling of the coronavirus in central China last year.

Beijing reacted furiously to the demand, targeting Canberra on a number of fronts, including tourism, trade and now Chinese students, the biggest overseas group in Australian universities.

The Ministry of Education reminds all overseas students to do a risk assessment and be cautious in choosing to study in Australia or return to Australia to study," it added.

'Won't ignore anger over racial injustice'

Johnson says he understands the depth of emotion, but won't tolerate violence



Protesters throwing barriers towards the gates of Downing Street, the official residence of PM Johnson, on June 3. ■ AFP

build the city but played a leading role in slavery.

Years of local debate over what to do with the statue came to an end when it was thrown in the harbour – an act that has stirred debate about other historical monuments.

In Glasgow, activists pasted the names of civil rights leaders and victims of racist attacks on streets named after tobacco and sugar traders in the 18th and 19th centuries.

In Edinburgh, graffiti was daubed on a 150-foot monument to 19th century politician Henry Dundas, who opposed the immediate abolition of slavery.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan on Tuesday announced a review of London's landmarks and street names.

"It is an uncomfortable truth that our nation and city owes a large part of its wealth to its role in the slave trade," he said.

"We who lead and who govern simply can't ignore those feelings because in too many cases, I am afraid, they will be founded on a cold reality," he said in a video message Monday.

But he warned he would not tolerate violence, after clashes in central London near his Downing Street office left 35 police officers injured and public monuments vandalised.

Instead, he urged those who wanted change to

"stand for election, or vote for someone who will".

Uncomfortable truth

On Sunday, protesters defaced a central London monument to Second World War leader Winston Churchill, citing policies blamed for the death of millions during famine in the Indian state of Bengal in 1943.

In the southwestern city of Bristol, crowds toppled a statue of 17th century trader Edward Colston, who helped

build the city but played a leading role in slavery.

Years of local debate over what to do with the statue came to an end when it was thrown in the harbour – an act that has stirred debate about other historical monuments.

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"We who lead and who govern simply can't ignore those feelings because in too many cases, I am afraid, they will be founded on a cold reality," he said in a video message Monday.

He leads the President by around 10 percentage points in an average of recent live-interview telephone surveys of registered voters, down from negative 6.7 points on April 15, according to FiveThirtyEight estimates.

New polls show Joe Biden with a significant national lead, placing him in a stronger position to oust an incumbent President.

His approval rating has fallen to negative 12.7 percentage points among registered or likely voters, down from negative 6.7 points on April 15, according to FiveThirtyEight estimates.

New polls show Joe Biden with a significant national lead, placing him in a stronger position to oust an incumbent President.

Women were supposed to carry the first female major-party nominee to victory

Trump's support eroding, show new polls

With his approval rating in negative zone, Biden appears poised to oust President



President Donald Trump in Washington. ■ AP

four years ago, as many assumed that Mr. Trump's treatment of women, including allegations of sexual assault, would prove to be his undoing. But women might be his undoing this time. Mr. Trump trails Mr. Biden by 25 points among them, far worse than his 14-point deficit four years ago. He still leads among men by 6 points in the most recent polls, about the same margin as he led by in the final polls of registered voters in 2016.

The erosion has been fairly broad, spanning virtually all demographic groups. But in a longer-term context, the President's weakness is most stark in one respect: his deficit among women.

Women were supposed to carry the first female major-party nominee to victory

Hong Kong cannot afford further chaos, says Carrie Lam

City marks the first anniversary of the start of protests

REUTERS

HONG KONG

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam warned on Tuesday the city could not afford further "chaos" as it marked the first anniversary of the start of rolling mass pro-democracy protests.

More than a million people flooded the streets a year ago to protest a Bill by the government that would have allowed people to be extradited to mainland China, where courts are controlled by the Communist Party, for trial. After wide protests, Ms. Lam withdrew the Bill.

"All of us can see the difficulty we have been through



in the past year, and due to such serious situations we have more problems to deal with," Lam said during her weekly media conference, which coincided with the anniversary.

"We need to learn from

mistakes, I wish all lawmakers can learn from mistakes – that Hong Kong cannot bear such chaos."

Activists have called for people to gather at lunchtime and later on Thursday to mark the anniversary of last year's mass rally. They have also announced plans to hold a referendum on Sunday about whether to launch a city-wide strike against national security laws proposed last month.

That legislation, which authorities insist will focus on "troublemakers" who pose a threat to national security, has ratcheted tensions higher.

Trump's support eroding, show new polls

With his approval rating in negative zone, Biden appears poised to oust President

NATE COHN

WASHINGTON

The coronavirus pandemic, a severe economic downturn and the widespread demonstrations in the aftermath of the death of George Floyd in police custody would pose a serious political challenge to any President seeking reelection. They are certainly posing one to President Donald Trump.

His approval rating has fallen to negative 12.7 percentage points among registered or likely voters, down from negative 6.7 points on April 15, according to FiveThirtyEight estimates. New polls show Joe Biden with a significant national lead, placing him in a stronger position to oust an incumbent President. Since then, Bernie Sanders has left the Democratic race, the pandemic has become

severe, and Mr. Trump's standing has eroded.

The erosion has been fairly broad, spanning virtually all demographic groups. But in a longer-term context, the President's weakness is most stark in one respect: his deficit among women.

Women were supposed to carry the first female major-party nominee to victory

MARKET WATCH

	09-06-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	33,957	-1.20
US Dollar	75.61	-0.08
Gold	47,235	0.59
Brent oil	40.62	-0.95

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	346.05	2.75
Asian Paints	1642.05	7.80
Axis Bank	420.05	-10.20
Bajaj Auto	2791.15	-9.90
Bajaj Finserv	5310.80	-130.15
Bajaj Finance	2443.60	-63.65
Bharti Airtel	567.80	-17.35
BPCL	381.50	-12.60
Britannia Ind	3415.70	-11.10
Cipla	640.05	4.95
Coal India	144.30	-2.40
Dr Reddys Lab	4123.80	156.20
Eicher Motors	17026.85	132.00
GAIL (India)	101.10	-3.65
Grasim Ind	611.90	-5.25
HCL Tech	572.85	-5.40
HDFC	1772.10	11.30
HDFC Bank	987.30	-28.60
Hero MotoCorp	2387.30	3.00
Hindalco	142.60	-3.75
Hind Unilever	2106.50	-5.20
ICICI Bank	348.55	-11.25
IndusInd Bank	463.90	12.30
Bharti Infratel	233.00	2.80
Infosys	717.60	-3.25
Indian Oil Corp	90.65	-2.45
ITC	198.50	0.85
JSW Steel	190.05	-4.90
Kotak Bank	1304.15	-32.60
L&T	953.30	-8.05
M&M	478.75	7.90
Maruti Suzuki	5662.30	-72.50
Nestle India Ltd.	16552.55	-283.65
NTPC	98.00	-0.55
ONGC	90.00	-0.95
PowerGrid Corp	170.55	-1.80
Reliance Ind	1537.15	-32.35
State Bank	184.45	-2.35
Shree Cement	21009.80	-171.10
Sun Pharma	500.75	11.75
Tata Motors	111.45	-4.00
Tata Steel	332.20	-1.40
TCS	2072.05	0.30
Tech Mahindra	586.20	-3.80
Titan	997.10	-27.90
UltraTech Cement	3791.35	13.15
UPL	430.60	-6.20
Vedanta	104.60	-0.50
Wipro	218.35	-8.10
Zee Entertainment	192.40	-4.65

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 09		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.41	75.73
Euro	84.94	85.30
British Pound	95.32	95.73
Japanese Yen (100)	69.89	70.20
Chinese Yuan	10.64	10.68
Swiss Franc	78.99	79.33
Singapore Dollar	54.15	54.39
Canadian Dollar	55.95	56.19
Malaysian Ringgit	17.62	17.72
Australian Dollar	52.14	52.41

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Flipkart's AI-driven voice assistant for shopping

E-commerce player Flipkart has introduced voice assistant capability on its platform, to make buying experience simpler and natural. Introduced in Flipkart's grocery store, Supermart, the Voice Assistant, built by an in-house technology team, will enable consumers to discover and buy products easily using voice commands in multiple languages, said a company statement.

Johnson Lifts deploys contactless technology

Chennai: Johnson Lifts has come out with an innovation that enables users to operate lifts without touching the buttons. "Our team has developed a smartphone app EyeRIS that allows users to have a contactless lift usage experience, crucial in these times when COVID-19 is forcing us to look at our lives differently," said the firm's ED V. Jagannathan.

Maruti cuts production by 98% in May

New Delhi: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Tuesday said it cut production by 97.54% in May at 3,714 units amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a regulatory filing by the company. The company had produced a total of 1,51,188 units in the same month last year. PTI

Vivek Gambhir resigns from Godrej Consumer

New Delhi: Godrej Consumer Products Ltd. (GCLP) has announced changes to its leadership team, effective July 1, 2020, after its MD and CEO Vivek Gambhir resigned on personal reasons. Nisaba Godrej, currently the executive chairperson, will take up additional role of MD and CEO, the company said.

'Can dilute 10-15% more in Adani Green'

Talking to 2 investors, says group chairman; renewable arm wins \$6 bn order for 8 GW solar capacity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

After French energy major Total SA, more foreign investors have shown interest in partnering Adani group in its renewable energy business, its chairman Gautam Adani said on Tuesday.

In April, Total invested about ₹3,707 crore for 50% partnership with Adani Green Energy in a joint venture that will house 2,148 gigawatts (GW) of operating solar power projects across 11 States in India.

"We have headroom for diluting 10-15% stake in Adani Green Energy," he said on a call to announce Adani Green Energy winning the world's largest solar order to build an 8 GW photovoltaic (PV) power plant along with a domestic solar panel manufacturing unit at an investment of ₹45,000 crore. The execution of the order is expected to create 4 lakh direct and indirect jobs.

Total, he said, was "very much interested" in expanding partnership with Adani.



The first 2 GW of generation capacity will be up by 2022 and the rest will be added in 2 GW increments through 2025.

Promoters hold 75% of Adani Green Energy. Foreign investors are interested in investing in renewable energy in India with local partners, he added.

15 GW under the belt

"A couple of more partners are also talking to us (for Adani Green Energy)," he said, without giving details.

"With this win, AGEL will have 15 GW capacity under

operation, construction or under contract, thereby accelerating its journey towards becoming the world's largest renewables company by 2025. This award will take the company closer to its target of achieving an installed generation capacity of 25 GW of renewable power by 2025 which, in turn, will see it committing an investment of ₹1,12,000 crore in the renewable energy space over

the next five years," the company said in a statement.

Based on the award agreement, 8 GW of solar development projects will be implemented over the next five years. The first 2 GW of generation capacity will come online by 2022 and the subsequent 6 GW capacity will be added in 2 GW annual increments through 2025.

Multi-location project

The projects will include a variety of locations, including a 2 GW single-site generation project that is tied for the rank of the largest single-site project announced globally.

"The solar cell and module manufacturing capacity of 2 GW will be established by 2022 and along with the existing 1.3 GW of capacity, will further consolidate the group's position as India's largest solar manufacturing facility," the statement added.

The Adani group has committed to invest over 70% of its budgeted capital expendi-

ture into clean energy and energy-efficient systems so as to become the largest solar player in the world by 2025 and the largest renewable player in the world by 2030.

Mr. Adani said the investment for the latest contract would be funded through a combination of debt and equity.

He expressed confidence in procuring debt for the project over the next five years.

Investment in gas arm

Total had previously bought a 37.5% in the group's other company, Adani Gas Ltd.

The two companies plan to invest in infrastructure and assets worth over ₹1 billion, which span LNG infrastructure and marketing and the fuel retail business.

AGEL shares rose 4.98% to their 52-week high of ₹312.75 on the BSE on Tuesday, valuing the company at ₹48,914.5 crore.

(With inputs from Piyush Pandey in Mumbai)

Franklin Templeton MF suspends e-voting

HC declined to vacate stay on process

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund has put on hold the e-voting process that was scheduled to commence on Tuesday after the Gujarat High Court declined to vacate the stay on the process.

On Monday, Justice Gita Gopu dismissed the plea filed by Franklin Templeton MF, which sought the lifting of the stay that was granted by the court on June 3 after three entities that had invested money in the fund house filed a petition in the court.

"Pursuant to the order dated 8th June 2020 issued by the Honourable High Court of Gujarat, the e-voting scheduled for 9-11 June 2020 and unitholders' meeting on 12 June 2020, related to the schemes under winding up, stands suspended till further communication," said a spokesperson for the Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund.

This assumes significance

as the e-voting process was the first step in getting the unitholders' nod to proceed with winding up of the schemes that was abruptly announced by the fund house in April.

At the time of announcing the winding up, the six debt schemes had cumulative assets under management (AUM) of about ₹26,000 crore.

Meanwhile, the investors who filed the petition have stated that that the e-voting process should be done only after the forensic report, mandated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), was completed and made public so that investors can make an informed decision.

The SEBI counsel, however, said during submission that the forensic audit was being done for internal purposes thereby hinting that while the capital market regulator could act on the basis of the report, the contents won't be made public.

No more long-term bundled cover for new cars, two-wheelers

IRDAI to withdraw such packages of TP, OD effective Aug. 1

Distribution of such policies has challenges due to affordability factor for a large section of owners

T.L. ALAMELU,
IRDAI Member (Non Life)

for such products, IRDAI Member (Non Life) T.L. Alamelu said distribution of such package policies had challenges due to affordability factors for a large section of owners of vehicles.

In the event of deficiency in services, policyholders would be saddled with a long-term product with no flexibility to change options. Since the 'no-claim bonus' structure is not uniform among insurers, it could lend itself to confusion and dissatisfaction among the policyholders. Also, actuarial pricing has been a challenge for insurers for long term OD cover.

The introduction of the long-term package cover came in the wake of a Supreme Court directive to the insurers concerned to offer, with effect from September 1, 2018, only three-year TP policies for new cars and for five years in the case of new two-wheelers.

The direction of the apex court resulted in IRDAI permitting the insurers to offer long-term packages offering both TP and OD cover for three years, or five years, as the case may be. The other option it gave the insurers was to offer a bundled cover with a three-year or a five-year term (as applicable) for the third party component and one year for the own damage.

Effective September 1, 2019, it also permitted the insurers to make available standalone annual OD covers for both new and old vehicles.

BSVL gets nod for trial of Ulinastatin for COVID-19

Study for use with ARDS patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

In such a case, Ulinastatin can be administered as a remedy to combat the underlying inflammatory condition related to ARDS in COVID-19 patients.

Sanjiv Navagul, MD and CEO, BSVL said, "Identifying effective antiviral agents and therapies to combat underlying pathology of COVID-19 is the need of the hour."

"As one of the leading biopharmaceutical companies in India we are channeling our efforts towards the ongoing fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," he added.

Parent had infused €35 mn in MKTSN

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Minda KTSN Plastic Solutions GmbH & Co. KG (MKTSN), the German subsidiary of auto components maker Minda Corporation, has filed for bankruptcy protection in Germany after its Indian parent decided not to infuse any future capital into the company.

"Thereafter, MKTSN has filed for insolvency in Germany," the statement added.

Earlier in the day, the company's board had met to review the request to infuse further capital in MKTSN.

The debt and other financial details as well as the employee base of the company have not been made available on the company's website.

in MKTS

IN BRIEF



West Indies team arrives in England

The West Indies squad arrived in England on Tuesday ahead of a three-Test tour behind closed doors. Every member of the 39-strong touring party, including 25 players, tested negative for the coronavirus before they set off on a charter flight to Manchester airport. Southampton's Ageas Bowl will stage the series opener from July 8.

ACC puts Asia Cup decision on hold

NEW DELHI The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has deferred a decision on this year's Asia Cup T20 amid speculation that it might be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event is scheduled in September and while it is the Pakistan Cricket Board's turn to host, it will be shifted to another country as India travelling to Pakistan is not possible. It is learnt that ACC will wait for the ICC's decision on the T20 World Cup before taking a call. PTI

Man United legend Dunne passes away

LONDON Former Manchester United defender Tony Dunne, who played in its first European Cup-winning side in 1968, has died at the age of 78. The Ireland left-back was part of the team that defeated Benfica 4-1 at Wembley in the 1968 final alongside George Best and Bobby Charlton, and under the great United manager Matt Busby. AFP

Indian deaf cricket team to participate in ODI WC

NEW DELHI The Indian deaf cricket team is set to take part in the 'DICC Cricket ODI World Cup 2021', scheduled to be held in UAE from October 19 to 29. The Indian team under Indian Deaf Cricket Association (IDCA) has been invited by Deaf-ICC, South Africa, to be part of the tournament. The invitation was received after DICC took cognisance of the team's stellar performances in the previous T20s and ODIs. PTI



Younus is batting coach, Mushtaq to handle spin

KARACHI Pakistan on Tuesday appointed former captain Younus Khan (in pic) as the national team's batting coach and also roped in Mushtaq Ahmed as spin bowling coach for the upcoming tour of England. Pakistan is scheduled to take on England in a three-Test series from July 30 and in a three-match T20 series from August 29. Former leg-spinner Mushtaq will also be mentor of the side. PTI

Top IITs and IIStc slip in global rankings

IIT-Bombay maintains its position as the top institution in India in the rankings

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ NEW DELHI The top five Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science have all dropped in this year's QS World University rankings, released on Wednesday. Only the newer IITs in Guwahati and Hyderabad were able to show improvement.

The total number of Indian institutions in the top 1,000 global list has also fallen from 24 to 21, despite the Centre's flagship Institutes of Eminence scheme, launched two years ago in a bid to boost the Indian presence in these global rankings.

Up in research

"The slight drop in rankings of some institutes is because of the parameter of internationalisation," a senior HRD Ministry official told *The Hindu*. India performs poorest on this parameter, while

BCCI seeks clarity on T20 WC

Hopes to squeeze in the IPL if the 2020 event in Australia is deferred

ICC MEETING

AMOL KARHADKAR MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) finds itself in a tricky spot ahead of Wednesday's crucial Board meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC), which will discuss the staging of the forthcoming editions of the T20 World Cup.

While Australia is scheduled to host the T20 World Cup in October-November this year, India has been awarded next year's event. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has forced the ICC to consider alternative arrangements, such as deferring the two editions to 2021 and 2022.

Although Cricket Australia, the Australian government and the ICC are likely to wait another month before making a decision – considering the improve-



Sourav Ganguly. • AFP



Ehsan Mani. • AP

ment in the pandemic situation in the country – the BCCI is eager for a quicker resolution. "We are hoping that a decision will be made soon about the 2020 edition," BCCI treasurer Arun Dhimal said on Tuesday.

The IPL angle
The BCCI is desperate for clarity – if the 2020 T20 World Cup is deferred, the BCCI hopes to squeeze in the IPL, which was postponed, in some form in October-November.

Batra reaches out to Bach, refutes forgery allegations

UTHRA GANESAN NEW DELHI

Days after asserting he would formally reply to allegations of forgery and illegality in his 2017 election only after resuming office, IOA president Narinder Batra has reached out to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

In a communiqué to IOC president Thomas Bach on Tuesday, Batra has refuted allegations levelled by IOA vice-president Sudhanshu Mittal in his mails to the IOC and the FIH.

'Self-motivated'
Terming the mails by Mittal self-motivated and an attempt to "damage my image and reputation as a means



Narinder Batra. • PTI

to project himself... as a candidate for president in the 2021 IOA elections", Batra reiterated that "I have at no stage flouted any of the Rules and Regulations of the Indian Olympic Association or the International Hockey Federation in my election as president of the Indian Olympic Association which was held on 14 Dec. 2017."

Meanwhile, on Earth, Sergey Karjakin could afford not to worry about things like gravity, as he sat in front of the chessboard at the Memorial Museum of Cosmonautics. He did have to think about his reputation, and of the planet. He was representing Earth in the chess

Nothing to separate Earth and Space

CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

It was a scene straight out of a science-fiction movie.

There they were, floating and trying to remain stationary. From the International Space Station, Anatoly Ivanishin and Ivan Vagner made quite a picture – especially when the microphone went away on its own after the cosmonauts finished speaking.

Meanwhile, on Earth, Sergey Karjakin could afford not to worry about things like gravity, as he sat in front of the chessboard at the Memorial Museum of Cosmonautics. He did have to think about his reputation, and of the planet. He was representing Earth in the chess

dent Sourav Ganguly, who is set to represent the BCCI as an ICC Director – had a conference call on Tuesday evening.

Mani enters fray

Wednesday's meeting is also set to chalk out the procedure for electing Shashank Manohar's successor as ICC chairman.

While Ganguly remains a rank outsider for the post, it is understood that Pakistan Cricket Board chief Ehsan Mani has emerged as a contender to take on the England and Wales Cricket Board's Colin Graves.

Interestingly, the agenda of discussing the scheduling of the T20 World Cup and the chairman election was deferred on May 28 owing to the directors being anguished by the leaks of internal documents to the public domain.

A team can be issued up to two warnings per innings but repeated use of saliva on the ball will result in a five-run penalty to the batting side. Whenever saliva is ap-

ICC committee ratifies interim changes

COVID-19 player replacement allowed, use of saliva to shine the ball banned

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

ICC's Chief Executives' Committee (CEC) has ratified the interim changes to playing regulations proposed by the Cricket Committee which include the ban on the use of saliva to shine the ball, allowing home umpires in international series and permitting COVID-19 player replacements.

Teams will be allowed to replace players displaying symptoms of COVID-19 during a Test match and in line with how concussion replacements operate, the Match Referee will approve the nearest like-for-like replacement. However, this regulation will not be applicable in ODIs and T20s.

The requirement to have neutral match officials will be temporarily removed for all formats owing to the prevailing logistical challenges instances will be penalised.

An additional unsuccessful DRS review for a team in each innings is permitted "keeping in mind that there may be less experienced umpires on duty at times."

Sammy seeks apology

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

An old social media post by India pacer Ishant Sharma lent credence to Darren Sammy's allegation that a racist nickname was used to address him during his IPL stint with Sunrisers Hyderabad. The former West Indies skipper is now demanding an apology.

Ishant had shared a group picture on May 14, 2014, using *Kalu* to identify the West Indian. The same year, Sammy called himself *Kalu* in a social media post while offering birthday wishes to V.V.S. Laxman, SRH's mentor then.

"All those who used to call me that, you guys know yourselves, some of you have my numbers, you have me on Instagram, Twitter, wherever. Reach out to me, let's have a conversation," said Sammy.

Sammy reiterated that he is very disappointed as he thought of his teammates as family.

NIS proposes to drop tennis from curriculum

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

It is considered one of the best tennis coaching courses in the country, but the National Institute of Sports (NIS), run by Sports Authority of India (SAI), has a proposal to drop it from the curriculum from the next academic year.

Lack of response is cited as a reason, but the stringent eligibility criteria may have proved a stumbling block for aspirants.

SAI had been reducing the number of students over the years and the current batch has only three.

There have been two demands to sustain the course.

One was to revise the syllabus, even though it has been

generally agreed that the fundamentals remain the same. Second, to relax the criteria so that players at the State or zonal level get to study the course.

At the moment, a player should have competed in the National championship or in two editions of the All-India inter-University championship.

"It was a wonderful course. We had allied subjects like general training, sports psychology, kinesiology and sports medicine.

"There were classes to teach us how to massage, operate ECG and gauge lung capacity," said former National coach T. Chandrasekaran, who did the course in 1984-85.

It is time we took racism seriously on and off the field



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

So now we know that Darren Sammy was called "kaalu" by his teammates in the IPL. There's no way around it; this is a racially charged nickname, and no right-thinking person can condone it.

Even if it is hard to believe that Sammy wasn't aware of meaning and context.

Still, he has brought to light an issue that we don't feel comfortable dealing with.

Sammy is the first cricketer from the little island of St Lucia -- its other famous son is the poet and Nobel laureate Derek Walcott -- to play for and then captain the West Indies. He is a man with a ready smile and a gentle air about him.

The International Cricket Council has

tries like England have organisations and sensible rules to deal with racism. The ICC code applies to the Board of Control for Cricket in India and from March 2019, the IPL has adopted it too.

If a player makes a racist remark and is reported, he will pay a price. I am not sure if a statute of limitations applies in the Sammy case. Ishant Sharma's Instagram post referring to "kaalu" is from 2014. Doubtless there will be others. Casual racism disguised as affectionate name-calling is not new.

For racism has never been taken seriously in India. Even Gandhi was a racist early in his life. It was the prevailing orthodoxy then.

As his biographer Ramachandra Guha wrote, "In his twenties, Gandhi was unquestionably a racist. He believed in a hierarchy of civilizations, with Europeans at the top, Indians just below them, and Africans absolutely at the bottom. He spoke of the native inhabitants of Africa in patronizing and even pejorative language."

But, as Guha also pointed out, "(Gandhi) outgrew his racism quite decisively,

and for most of his life he was an anti-rac-

cist, talking for an end to discrimination of all kinds."

School children often called mates "blackie" or local versions of respective physical handicaps. Teachers didn't always correct them, and sometimes called the students by such nicknames themselves. It is horrifying to think of that now.

Players from the West Indies have had insults hurled at them on Indian grounds. Sometimes with affection (as with some Indian cusswords), often in anger or frustration since these words and their variations are a part of the everyday vocabulary. "Tera kya hogा kaaliya?", a famous line from a popular movie, was used indiscriminately.

Colour of skin
The misguided saw these as being descriptive rather than insulting. Dark-skinned Indians themselves had to put up with it, as internationals Abhinav Mukund, Doddha Ganesh and Laxmipathy Balaji have said.

The issue in India isn't racism per se, but colour of skin regardless of race. You only have to read our matrimonial adver-

tisements to understand just how much importance we place on skin colour.

Things may be changing slowly, but a generation or two ago it didn't matter whether a person was intelligent or smart or good-looking or well-salaried so long as he (or she) was fair complexioned.

The marriage market seemed to be flooded with the fair (there were shorthand expressions to indicate just how fair or dark a prospective bride or groom was).

But a refusal to acknowledge the hurt it causes and ignorance of the fact that the world has moved on, has meant that for many Indians, especially those guaranteed a degree of anonymity in big crowds, all is fair game.

Crowds can be brutal. At least one Indian player had a promising career cut short because he couldn't handle offensive crowds when he fielded near the boundary. The chant was seen as part of the fun of attending a cricket match.

Players have been abused on the basis of colour, religion, home life; this was social media trolling in the days before social media. Players haven't been innocent

either. Australia's Darren Lehmann used an expression against Kumar Sangakkara that should have called for a bigger punishment than a five-ODI ban.

Pakistan's Sarfraz Khan's diatribe against a Zimbabwe player was caught by the stomp mike.

And Harbhajan Singh either did or did not use a racial slur against Andrew Symonds, depending on whom you believed, an act that nearly precipitated a crisis in Indo-Australia relations.

No crossing the line

It doesn't need a knee on the throat that killed a man to remind us that colour does not matter. As more stories of demeaning conduct emerge, the ICC – and the BCCI – have the responsibility to ensure that behaviour, by players or fans, doesn't cross a line.

For players, the consequences are laid out. For spectators, arrests, fines, and prison are ways to get the message across.

Racism has no place on the field or in the dressing room. There is no such thing as "affectionate racism."

I can't wait to return to work, says Paromita

With Kolkata's studios set to open, the actor reflects on the lockdown

BISHWANATH GHOSH
KOLKATA

"I can afford being without work for maybe another six months, not longer, but what about my hairdresser?" asked actor Paromita Mukherjee, who last reported on the sets – to shoot for a TV serial and also a Bengali film – on March 17.

She was in the studios throughout the night and worked till 5 a.m. on March 18, when the entertainment industry in West Bengal shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, shooting is expected to resume for TV serials and that should come as a big relief to industry professionals who have remained without income for more than three months now.

"The moment I finish this call with you, I am going to



Paromita Mukherjee.

transfer some money into the account of my hairdresser. Her home was damaged in the cyclone, she desperately needs money," Ms. Mukherjee said.

"I can't wait to return to work (for the serial she was shooting, titled *Joy Baba Lokenath*). My production

house has told me we will be shooting from tomorrow but I have not been given a reporting time yet, so I can't be sure," said Ms. Mukherjee, who used the lockdown period to take acting classes on Zoom because "acting is a skill that needs to be honed constantly".

Depressing moments
"I read books on acting during this period. I cooked, I did household chores. But there were depressing moments ... , so depressing that one felt like