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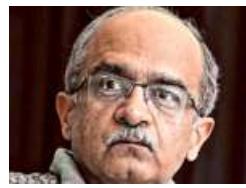
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**STEP**  
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EXAMS



SC initiates contempt proceedings against Prashant Bhushan  
page 9



Centre will wait for COVID-19 vaccine for fiscal push, says CEA  
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As tensions soar, U.S. tells China to shut its consulate in Houston  
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Supreme Court to hear BCCI appeal after two weeks  
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## NEARBY



MVA, Oppn. lock horns over GR on meetings

MUMBAI  
The State government and BJP have locked horns over the State's recent directions to district administration and officials saying it was not mandatory for them to attend meetings called by leaders of the Opposition in the State legislature.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

Pune's waste pickers demand life cover

PUNE  
Kagad Kach Kachra Panchayat has demanded that the 7,500 waste pickers working in Pune be provided with a life insurance cover of ₹2 lakh each for death due to natural causes or accident.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

## New high: 10,576 cases in a day

Maharashtra tally hits 3.37 lakh; Pune division gets 4,080 new cases — higher than MMR

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE  
Maharashtra reported an unprecedented spike of 10,576 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, making it the State's highest single-day surge till date — and possibly the highest single-day jump in any State — as the total case tally soared to 3,37,607. With over 280 deaths reported on Wednesday, the State's total death toll stands at 12,556.

Mumbai's total case tally has reached 1,04,678, with 1,310 new cases reported on Wednesday. Of these, only 23,393 are active. With 58 deaths, the city's death toll has risen to 5,875.

The State has reported a daily surge of more than 8,000 cases at least eight times in the last 12 days, with the previous high of 9,518 reported on July 19. Of the total case tally, 1,36,980 are active

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
MOHAMMED IQBAL

NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

A Supreme Court Bench, led by Justice Arun Mishra, is scheduled to hear on Thursday an appeal filed by the Rajasthan Speaker's office challenging the State High Court's order to defer anti-defection proceedings against former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and 18 Congress MLAs till July 24.

The other two judges on the Bench are Justices B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari. The virtual court hearing will begin after 11 a.m.

Mr. Pilot and the other legislators filed a caveat petition in the court, saying "nothing should be done" without notifying them first.

**Too early to review** | Speaker C.P. Joshi moved the SC against the Rajasthan High Court's order directing him to give 19 MLAs time to reply till July 24, when the court will deliver its verdict. His main contentions are:

- HC's intervention is premature because he is yet to decide the issue of disqualification but has only issued notices
- SC in the Kihoto Hollohan case specifically barred any judicial intervention prior to the decision-making stage
- SC has said no interference is permissible at interim stage of proceedings and
- Judicial review of final decision is available only on limited grounds
- HC cannot interfere in his designated power to decide questions of disqualification under the anti-defection law
- Judicial review cannot cover proceedings of the legislature under Article 212 of the Constitution

In another development, the Enforcement Directorate raided the premises of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's elder brother Agrasen Gehlot in Jodhpur in a fertilizer

case. The Congress accused the BJP-led Centre of using the ED to target the ruling party leaders in Rajasthan after failing in its conspiracy to "kidnap democracy" and

case.

topple the State government. The Centre was creating a "raid raj", it said.

Speaker C.P. Joshi expressed the hope that the top court would pass directions before July 24, when the High Court is scheduled to give its verdict on the writ petition filed by Mr. Pilot's camp. "Else, my special leave petition will be rendered infructuous and the Speaker's powers will be curtailed," he said. "I do hope that the dignity of the Speaker's office will be maintained. I respect the judges, but the roles of all constitutional authorities are well-defined," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
ANOTHER REPORT ▶ PAGE 11



Police taking away those convicted in Mathura on Wednesday. ■ PTI

ary 21, 1985, a day after he drove his vehicle into a stage set up for an election rally of then Rajasthan Chief Minister Shiv Charan Mathur, causing it to topple. The vehicle also damaged a chopper kept at the site for the CM. The Independent

legislator, seeking an eighth term, was furious after Congress workers tore his posters.

Narayan Singh, lawyer for Man Singh's family, said the 11 policemen sentenced included then DSP Kan Singh Bhati and Station House Officer Virendra Singh.

The court also directed the Rajasthan government to compensate the families of the three victims and the four injured with ₹30,000 and ₹2,000 each, respectively. Man Singh's daughter and former Bharatpur MP Krishnendra Kaur 'Deepa' said justice had finally been delivered.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

EDITORIAL ▶ PAGE 6

## 11 Rajasthan policemen get life term for ex-royal's killing

State told to compensate families of victims and the injured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW/JAIPUR

A Mathura court on Wednesday sentenced 11 policemen, including the then Deputy Superintendent of Police, to life imprisonment for the murder of 'Raja' Man Singh, the titular head of the Bharatpur erstwhile princely state in Rajasthan and seven-time legislator, and his two associates in 1985.

Sessions judge Sadhana Rani Thakur also found the accused, all retired members of the Rajasthan police and the Rajasthan Armed Constabulary, guilty of rioting armed with deadly weapons and unlawful assembly.

Man Singh, then 64, and his two associates were shot dead by the police on Febru-

Fresh and clean



Open for business: Vendors at a floating market on the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## Viral tracker

With 444 more additions to Tamil Nadu's numbers, India recorded 1,120 deaths due to COVID-19 on Wednesday

NEW CASES AND DEATHS

CASES 44,368

DEATHS 1,120

7 DAY-CHANGE +25.4%

7 DAY-CHANGE +65.7%

States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising (red); falling (green); or showing a mixed trend (orange)

MAHARASHTRA CASES 10,576

DEATHS 280

7 DAY-CHANGE +25.4%

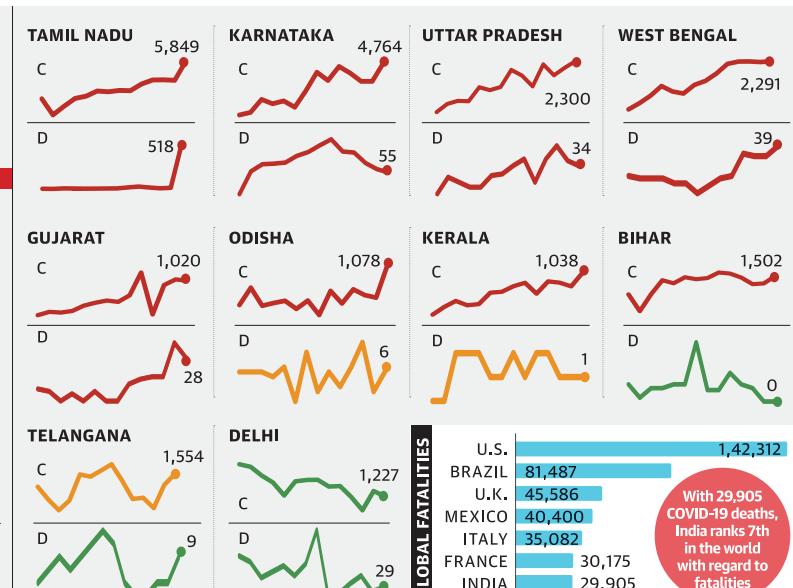
7 DAY-CHANGE +65.7%

Andhra Pradesh CASES 6,045

DEATHS 65

7 DAY-CHANGE +25.4%

7 DAY-CHANGE +65.7%



## How can authorities sit on files indefinitely?: HC

Raises the query on the issue of releasing Rajiv case convicts

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.

CHENNAI

Justice N. Kirubakaran of the Madras High Court on Wednesday questioned the delay in disposing of the State Cabinet's recommendation to the Governor on September 8, 2018 to release all seven life convicts in the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case. The seven were in jail for 29 years.

During the hearing of a case seeking a 90-day parole for one of the convicts, A.G. Perarivalan, the judge said: "Nobody, much less a constitutional authority, can sit

on a file like this. The makers of the Constitution did not prescribe a time limit because of the immense trust they had on people who may come to occupy high constitutional posts."

Leading a Division Bench along with Justice V.M. Velumani, he said: "The recommendation can be either accepted or rejected but the decision should be taken within a reasonable time. Otherwise, courts will have no option but to interfere." The views were expressed to Additional Public Prosecutor Prabhavati Ram representing the State.

## India, China not to use UAVs at friction points

'Move affects verification of pullout'

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Chinese and Indian armies have agreed to not use unmanned aerial vehicles at the friction points in eastern Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), other than for mutually agreed "short time periods".

The confidence-building measure has impacted real-time verification of the de-escalation process, as aerial objects cannot be used within 10 km of the face-off sites, a senior government official said.

Earlier, the two armies had agreed to a 30-day moratorium on foot patrolling

at all the friction points while they pulled back from their positions. The official said that as of now, they were not engaged in an eye-to-eye confrontation at any of the points, but a continuous verification was required and they were prepared for the long haul.

The Corps Commanders of both armies have held four rounds of talks so far — on June 6, 22, 30 and July 14 — to de-escalate from the build-up areas in Galwan Valley, Gogra-Hot Springs and Finger area along the Pangong Tso (lake).

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Five held for black marketing of remdesivir and tocilizumab

Accused caught selling injections at exorbitant rates

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The Anti Extortion Cell (AEC) of the Thane Crime Branch has arrested five people, including two medical representatives, for the alleged black marketing of remdesivir and tocilizumab injections, which are used in the treatment of COVID-19 and cancer respectively, the police said on Wednesday.

The police said a decoy approached the accused and placed an order for nine injections. While Remdesivir was being sold at a rate six times higher, Tocilizumab was being sold at double the rate.

Remdesivir injections were fixed at ₹25,000 per vial, while Cipla Ltd has priced Cipremi (the generic version of remdesivir) at ₹4,000 per 100 mg. The accused also charged ₹80,000

for one vial of Actemra (tocilizumab injection), while its MRP is ₹40,600.

A team of AEC and Food and Drug Administration officials learnt that the accused would arrive at Teen petrol pump at Naupada in Thane at 9 p.m. on Tuesday with three injections: two of remdesivir and one of tocilizumab. The team then laid a trap and nabbed three of the accused. During interrogation, the trio revealed the names of two of their accomplices. They were nabbed from Navi Mumbai on Wednesday," Pravin Pawar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime), Thane, said.

The accused have been charged under sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

This is the second arrest in the case. The police had arrested Umesh Jadhav (35), a resident of Parel in, on July 9 in connection with the case. On July 7, the two men allegedly entered the premises of the two-storeyed heritage bungalow in Hindu Colony and smashed potted plants and peeled stones at windows before fleeing.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had condemned the incident and said the government will not tolerate the "desecration of a pilgrimage centre like Rajgruha". The State government also provided round-the-clock police protection to the house.

## One more held for attack on Ambedkar's house in Dadar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Matunga police on Wednesday arrested a 20-year-old man in connection with the vandalising of Rajgruha, the house of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Dadar.

Vishal Ashok More alias Vitthal Kanya, a resident of Kalyan, was nabbed by a team of personnel from Matunga police station. An officer said Mr. More is the main accused in the case. Mr. More, who lives on a footpath outside Kalyan railway station, has admitted to the crime, the police official said.

The Matunga police on Wednesday arrested a 20-year-old man in connection with the case. On July 9 in connection with the case. On July 7, the two men allegedly entered the premises of the two-storeyed heritage bungalow in Hindu Colony and smashed potted plants and peeled stones at windows before fleeing.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had condemned the incident and said the government will not tolerate the "desecration of a pilgrimage centre like Rajgruha". The State government also provided round-the-clock police protection to the house.

station, jumped on to the tracks and stopped a local train heading to Virar.

The agitation ended after the police intervened and bus services resumed at 10.30 a.m., authorities said.

An office-goer said the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation stopped plying its buses for

Mumbai in the morning, leaving employees of private companies stranded.

They were not even able to board local trains as they do not fall in the essential services category, he said. "Security was later stepped up at the railway station and the bus stand," a Government Railway Police official said.

CM YK

M-B-M-E

# 'Sushant and I used to talk about the authors we love'

Making her debut as a lead actor in *Dil Bechara*, Sanjana Sanghi discusses her teenage obsession with *The Fault in Our Stars* and working with Sushant Singh Rajput

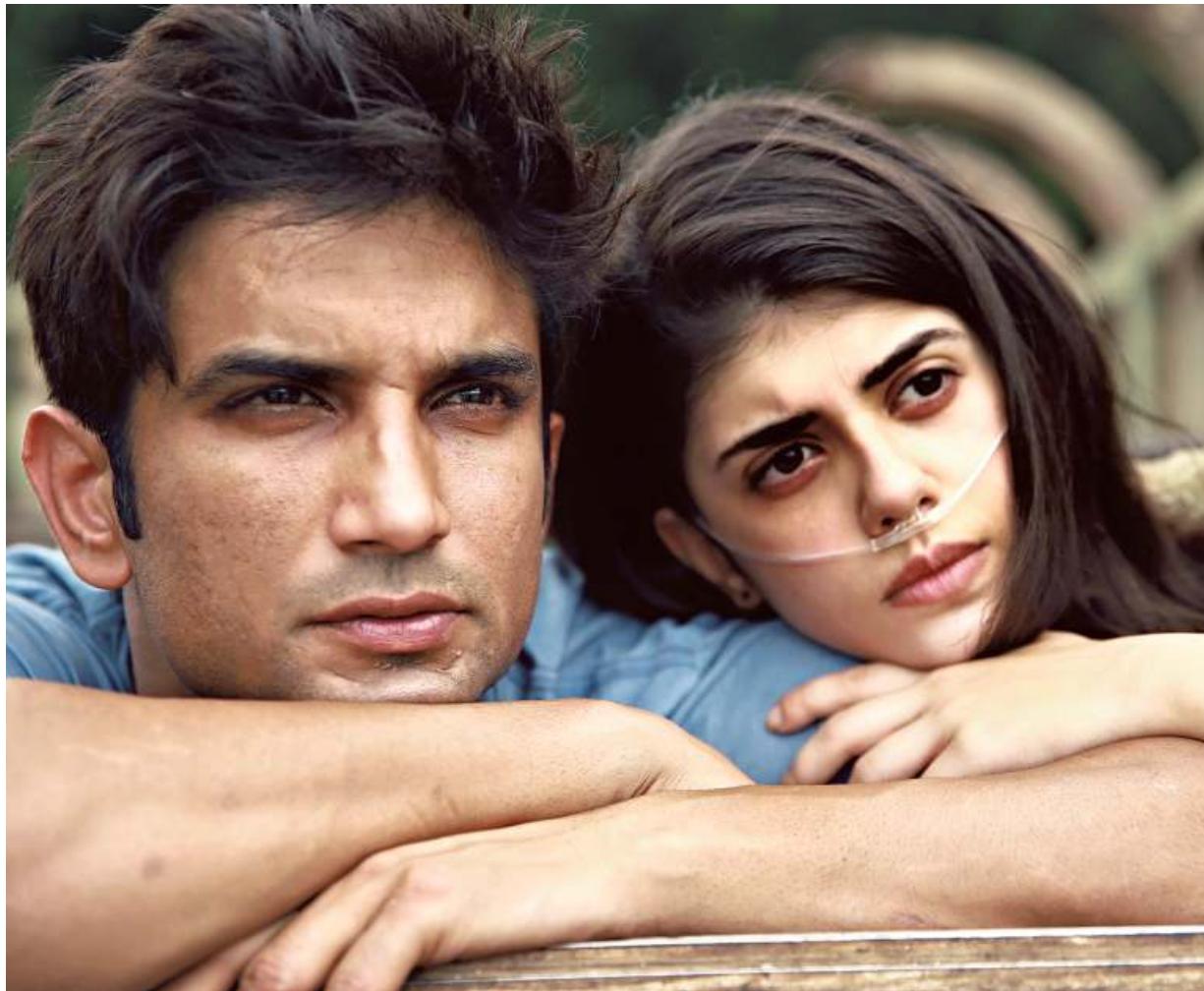
## KENNETH ROSARIO

Actor Sanjana Sanghi's Twitter bio reads: "cinema and academia are beautiful things". A topper in journalism at Delhi University and invested in grassroots education and development in the Capital, the 23-year-old chanced upon acting in films in school. Casting director Mukesh Chhabra had spotted her in a school play and asked her to audition for a supporting role in *Rockstar* (2011). Then 14, Sanghi quickly realised that the camera does not intimidate her, but the profession was not the end-goal in itself.

"We used to talk about the authors we love. He used to find it exciting that if he mentioned John Berger, I would say *Ways of Seeing*, or Yuval Noah Harari and I used to say *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, so he really loved that I actually loved those books... It was rare for him to find that [with fellow actors] and I hate that it is rare," she reminisces.

## Teenage favourite

*The Fault in Our Stars* was among the books Sanghi fawned over as a teenager in high school. "I was that 16-year-old who was obsessed with the novel and bunked school to watch the film," she recalls. When Chhabra approached her to audition for *Dil Bechara*, she was excited yet apprehensive of doing justice to a story that has already been told in two mediums. "But the writers have done a good job at culturally adapting it to Jamshedpur," she informs.



Coming-of-age drama: Sushant Singh Rajput and Sanjana Sanghi play terminally-ill characters in *Dil Bechara*. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai	
E-Tender Notice	
Department	Public Health Dept.
Division	Dr. R.N. Cooper Hospital, Juhu
Bid No.	7100171438
Subject	The work of Erection SS Mosquito Mesh anodized with aluminum shutter openable at DR. R. N. Cooper Hospital & HBT Medical College Juhu, Vile Parle (W) Mumbai 400056.
E-Tender Sale	From 23.07.2020 from 11:00 Hrs to 30.07.2020 upto 12:00 Hrs
Date and Timing of Opening.	
Packet 'A'	04.08.2020 after 16:00 Hrs.
Packet 'B'	04.08.2020 after 16:10 Hrs.
Date and Time of Opening of Packet 'C'	07.08.2020 after 12:00 Hrs.
Website	<a href="http://portal.mcmg.gov.in">http://portal.mcmg.gov.in</a>
Contact Person A- Name	Shrikant Shinde- Sub Engineer
B-Telephone( office)	022-2824081 Extn. No-200
C- E-Mail Address	cooperhospitaljuhu@gmail.com
PRO/416/ADV/2020-21	sd/- Dean
Save Water! Avoid Misuse of Water	DR. R.N Cooper Hospital, & H. B. T. Medical College

The actor's interpretation of Kizie, a character battling thyroid cancer, involved going beyond her illness. "Initially, when a person is facing a debilitating disease, that disease defines them," she observes. "When we did several readings of the script, we realised that the disease cannot define them because there is so much more than they grew up with." Sanghi arrived at this understanding after spending time with young survivors at the Indian Cancer Society in Mumbai. "I chatted with them and understood their emotional reality, how they go to school with a cylinder and come back and do five blood tests," she recalls. "Initially, it was debilitating

**C** The journalism I learnt is one of honesty and objectivity. When I saw things that are so far from reality being written, it affected me but two years on, you adapt and as humans, we adapt."

**Hurdles and accusations**  
The actor came onboard the project freshly out of college at 21, and two years on, the film is ready to release on Disney+Hotstar on July 24. Although shot for the big screen, the pandemic compelled the producers to opt for a direct OTT release. Even before the pandemic, the film faced several hurdles and delays. In 2018,

Chhabra, who makes his directorial debut with this film, was accused of sexual misconduct as part of the #MeToo movement. He was suspended as the director but was reinstated reportedly after conducting an inquiry. Allegations of sexual harassment were also made against Rajput, which was dismissed by Sanghi as "baseless".

"That really breaks my heart when I look back at it," she confides. "The journalism I learnt is one of honesty and objectivity. When I saw things that are so far from reality being written, it affected me... I was so young and inexperienced that it used to really bother me but then I knew to terms with [it] but I have to adapt," she shares.

The biggest learning for Sanghi with *Dil Bechara* has been that filmmaking has several variables that can derail a project. "The pandemic and Sushant not being with us in post-production, these are not in my control and I'm struggling to come to terms with [it] but I have to adapt," she shares.

The actor is in no hurry to sign any new films and prefers "to be choosy" and be known for "quality over quantity" in the long-run. Based in Delhi and invested in the theatre, art, culture and educational landscape of the city, Sanghi says that "stardom doesn't excite her", but it's merely a tool for her to create visibility for the causes she believes in.



## A musical tribute

Film's music director shares video, dedicates album to late lead actor

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Composer A.R. Rahman, who is the music director of the upcoming film *Dil Bechara*, on Wednesday released a musical tribute – a montage of all his songs for the movie – to the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Almost a virtual audio launch of sorts in the wake of the pandemic, Rahman and several of his singers from the soundtrack of the album, such as Sunidhi Chauhan, Shreya Ghoshal, Mohit Chauhan, Hriday Gattani, feature in the video.

"The music of *Dil Bechara* will always remain special to me. The nine tracks I've composed for the film have a whole new meaning and life now. May the almighty give us hope and strength to brave these times. *Dil Bechara* is dedicated to the loving memory of Sushant Singh Rajput," said Rahman at the beginning of the video, that is interspersed with clips from the film and the singers performing the tracks in their respective homes.

Rahman also performed the title song in his studio in Chennai, accompanied by daughter Raheema Rahman, son A.R. Ameen and upcoming talent Hiraf Viradia for the track.

Sunidhi Chauhan then joined from Mumbai and followed it up with the track *Maskhari* along with Gattani. "I think this song connects Sushant of

real and real life. Perhaps this is a small glimpse of his off-screen playful and mischievous self," Sunidhi said.

Next up was Mohit Chauhan, who crooned the ballad *Tare Ginn* with Ghoshal. "Sushant was fascinated with space, stars, astronomy. He had even bought a plot on the moon! He had a telescope and would often look out for stars and the moon through that. So this song is dedicated to his passion," Mohit said.

Singer Shashaa Tirupati joined the tribute video from Vancouver and performed the track *Kulke Jeene Ka*. Later, Jonita Gandhi, along with Gattani, sang the slow-paced *Main Tumhara*, which many have called the theme song of the film.

"Though Sushant isn't with us physically, he shall forever be with us, through his memories, through his promises. I'm so glad to be a part of a soundtrack that will help us all remember Sushant forever," Gandhi said from Toronto.

The tributes came to an end with a slate, reading 'Sushant Singh Rajput 21/01/1986 - Forever'.

## POOCH CAFE



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



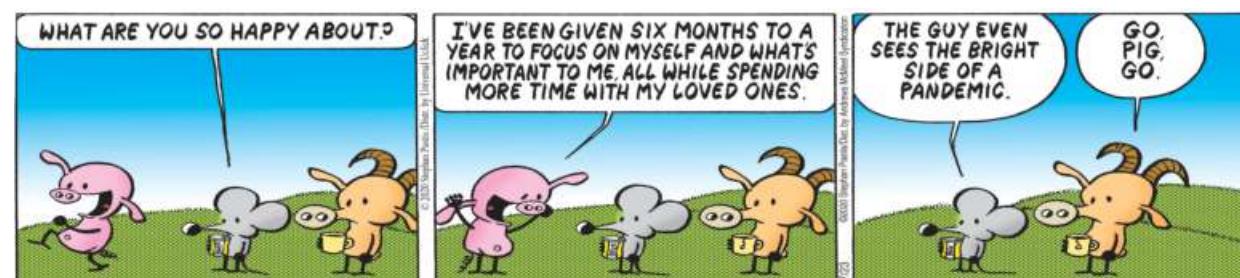
## TIGER



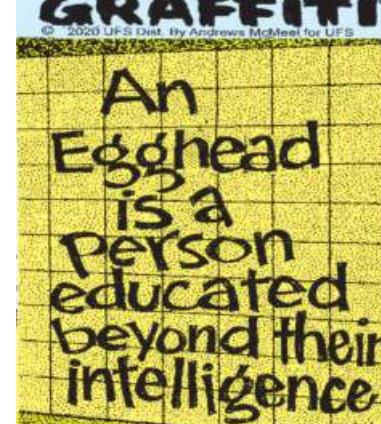
## WUMO



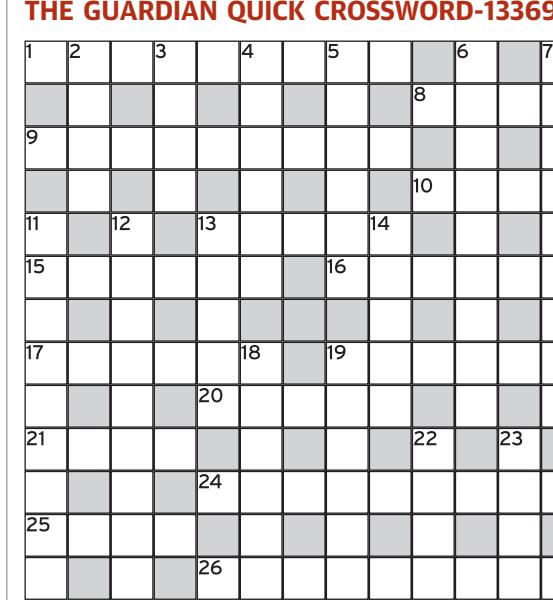
## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## GRAFFITI



## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13369



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7 Perfectly pure – fairytale heroine (4,5)

11 Hermit (9)

12 Wordiness (9)

13 Miller's product (5)

14 Upper leg (5)

18 Straw hat (6)

19 Exit (6)

22 Affectionately quaint (4)

23 Expression of dawning comprehension (1,3)

Solution will appear on July 30, 2020.

Solution No. 13368

C	O	N	S	I	D	E	R	A	T	O	N
O	E	N	I	D	N	O					
A	I	C	A	T	H	A	R	S	I		
S	S	E	H	M	I	W					
T	R	O	U	N	C	D	A	G	U		
N	S	R	S	N	A						
P	U	M	E	L	S	P	O	I	L	T	
A	A	D	M	H	F						
L	A	N	T	I	A	U					
A	D	S	C	G	C	O					
C	R	E	S	T	A	R	U	N	D	O	
E	L	A	O	U	N	C					
S	L	A	G	I	N	G	M	A	T	C	

■ Across  
1 Astronomer's instrument (9)  
2 Stratagem (4)  
3 Right to another's property, if an obligation is not discharged (4)  
4 Captivated (9)  
10 Pygmalion playwright (4)  
13 Swift (5)  
15 Pointer (6)  
16 Protective covering (6)  
17 Confused sound of many voices (6)

■ Down  
2 Paradise (4)  
3 Vile (anag) – really bad (4)  
4 Unpleasant laugh (6)  
5 Bits (6)  
6 Baltic country (9)

Timings  
MUMBAI

THURSDAY, JUL. 23
RISE 06:13 SET 19:18
RISE 08:36 SET 21:41
FRIDAY, JUL. 24
RISE 06:13 SET 19:17
RISE 09:37 SET 22:24
SATURDAY, JUL. 25
RISE 06:13 SET 19:17
RISE 10:35 SET 23:07

Mumbai Weather max min  
Mumbai Airport 33 26  
Pune 33 23  
Mumbai City 33 26

Mumbai Today  
33°C A warm morning. Light rain will occur over the city. The sky will remain cloudy over the city.

Mumbai Tomorrow  
33°C Light rain are possible over the city. The morning will be comfortable. A mostly cloudy sky is expected over the city.

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THE HINDU

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## AAP seeks probe against EDMC Mayor

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Wednesday wrote to L-G Anil Baijal and the Central Vigilance Commission to initiate a probe against East Delhi Municipal Corporation Mayor Nirml Jain and other officials of the BJP-led civic body for awarding an extension of licence to Allenia Pvt. Ltd. to operate slaughterhouses in Ghazipur.

Alleging corruption in the process, AAP Political Affairs Committee member Durgesh Pathak said Mr. Jain had taken a "dangerous decision". "In 2009, the East MCD gave tender to Allenia to run slaughterhouses. The tender was for 10 years, which ended on August 3, 2019. Within one year, the civic body first extended the tender for six months, then another three months," an official statement read.

Mr. Pathak said the Mayor had claimed that the EDMC followed due process in tendering and extension as there were no applicants other than Allenia. "AAP has, however, exposed Mr. Jain's lie and submitted that three other companies along with Allenia had applied for the tender," the statement read.

# Delhi to hold sero-survey every month, next one from August 1

More samples will be collected this time around, says Health Minister

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Wednesday said the government will conduct a serological survey every month to know the percentage of people in the city who have developed antibodies against COVID-19.

The next survey will be conducted between August 1 and 5.

Mr. Jain, while addressing a press conference, also commented on the results of a similar serological survey, which was released on Tuesday by the Central government. "Yesterday, the result of the sero-survey came out, and according to it, about 24% people, that is a quarter of Delhi's total population, have antibodies. That means a quarter of Delhi's population was infected and has recovered. Most of these people didn't know that they were infected," he said.

"Now the government has decided that the sero-survey will be conducted every



A health worker collects blood samples for a serological survey to analyse spread of COVID-19 in Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

month. From 1st to 5th (August) and sample will be taken again for the survey," he said.

In a serological survey, blood samples of random people across different age groups and areas of the city are collected from their houses and later tested in labs using antibody testing

conducted in both containment and non-containment zones.

He also said that the city is yet to attain herd immunity. "Experts have different views on this. They say herd immunity is developed when 40%-70% of the population has recovered from COVID-19. We have received the results for 24% of the population, and therefore we cannot say that in Delhi herd immunity has developed within the population," the Minister said.

He also reiterated that it is up to the Central government to declare if there is community transmission of the virus in the city. "There has been a spread (of the virus) in the community. I have been saying this for the last two months. Community spread is a technical term and NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) or Central government will have to take a decision whether it is community spread or not," Mr. Jain said.

Mr. Jain said more samples than the previous survey will be collected for the next one. He said the Delhi government is working on making a detailed protocol of the survey, which will be

kits. A positive result means that the person has developed antibodies against the novel coronavirus.

Mr. Jain said more samples than the previous survey will be collected for the next one. He said the Delhi government is working on making a detailed protocol of the survey, which will be

## Councillors seek subsidy at hospitals

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Councillors of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and their dependants ought to be allowed to pay subsidised rates for services at labs and hospitals empanelled under the civic body, a House meeting resolved on Wednesday.

Since municipal councillors and their wards are given no medical benefits via

the corporation, they are forced to pay arbitrary rates for healthcare, the resolution read.

In the case of municipal staff and officials, they are charged rates set by the Central Government Health Scheme or the Directorate General Health Services at certain empanelled hospitals/labs, where their bills are later reimbursed by the civic body, the resolution

states.

It proposed that councillors be charged similar rates at such labs and hospitals. This way the corporation will not have to bear any additional cost in the form of medical reimbursement as in the case of municipal staff and officials, it added. Officials were instructed to draft and implement procedures regarding the same at the earliest.

why waterlogging is taking place, he said.

Congress leader Mukesh

Goel said that his request to allow discussion over desilting of drains and COVID-19 situation was accepted, but AAP "did not allow the subject to be raised" leading to a temporary suspension of the meeting, despite which discussions were blocked.

Leader of Opposition Vikas Goel stated that AAP was not opposed to discussions on the issues. He added that AAP councillors had protested when a matter brought up by him was not taken up for discussion in the House.

## AAP blocked talks on waterlogging

Party's councillors created ruckus, says north body Mayor

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party councillors blocked a discussion on desilting of drains in Delhi and consequent waterlogging at a House meeting of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Wednesday, the BJP and Congress have alleged.

Discussions were to be held over waterlogging and the COVID-19 situation, but none could take place as a result of a ruckus created by members of AAP, said Mayor Jai Prakash. He added that the responsibility to stop waterlogging laid with the Irrigation and Flood Control De-

partment, the Public Works Department, the DSIIDC, and the civic body. However, lack of desilting at most major drains falling under the Delhi government's jurisdiction is

particular, the Public Works Department, the DSIIDC, and the civic body. However, lack of desilting at most major drains falling under the Delhi government's jurisdiction is

## Uncle, accomplice arrested for trying to kidnap 4-year-old girl at Shakarpur

Accused wanted to extort money from girl's father: police

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

A man, who tried to kidnap his niece, was arrested along with his accomplice on Wednesday from east Delhi's Krishna Nagar, the police said. They are trying to arrest the other accused who are absconding.

The arrested accused were identified as Dheeraj (26), a resident of Jagatpuri, and Upender, a resident of Krishna Nagar, they said. Upender, the girl's uncle, planned to kidnap her in order to extort ₹30 lakh to ₹35 lakh from his brother. However, his plan was foiled by the girl's mother, a senior police officer said.

The police received a tip-off regarding an attempt of abduction of a four-year-old girl at Shakarpur on Tuesday. After reaching the spot, they found a bike and a bag containing a countrymade pistol with four live cartridges that were left behind by the accused.

The police said that the accused first came to the girl's house around 4 p.m. and asked for some water. When the girl's mother went inside to bring water, they tried to abduct the mi-



The accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nor. However, she saw it and managed to foil the bid and saved her daughter.

The victims had been conducting a search of the area since last week. They have been spotted in a CCTV footage, they said.

The entire incident was also captured on CCTV cameras installed near the spot and the clip went viral on social media.

During interrogation, Dheeraj said Upender had hatched the plan. Upender had promised Dheeraj ₹1 lakh. At his instance, Upender was arrested, the DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh said.

In the video, the woman is seen trying to free her daughter. She pushes the bike rider, following which the bike falls on the ground and the pillion rider starts running. Later, the rider speeds away with his two-wheeler. A neighbour is also seen chasing the accused.

Another neighbour parks his scooter to intercept the accused, but they manage to escape.

During investigation, the police found that the bike was bearing a fake number plate. The owner was identified as Dheeraj through the chassis and engine numbers. "Dheeraj was arrested from Jagatpuri," DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh said.

During interrogation, Dheeraj said Upender had hatched the plan. Upender had promised Dheeraj ₹1 lakh. At his instance, Upender was arrested, the DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh said.

Upender told the police that he is in debt and that his brother is quite well-off.

## New data show fewer Delhiites tested for virus

Till recently, daily test figures in official bulletin comprised city residents as well as people from other States whose samples were analysed in Delhi

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

The actual number of Delhiites tested daily for COVID-19 using RT-PCR test is lesser than the city government's official daily bulletin data by about 3,000 tests a day, at least in the first 10 days of July, a new set of data accessed by *The Hindu* shows.

When asked about the discrepancy, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said: "There is an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) website from where we take the data. They reconciled their data and we changed it accordingly."

The data on testing in the daily bulletin till July 12 was under the heading 'RT-PCR tests conducted today'. But it was actually the total number of tests done by government and private labs in Delhi, which had samples of people from outside the city as well. This was never disclosed in the bulletin.

The new set of data for July 1-10, which gives the number of Delhiites tested using RT-PCR, is less by an average of 3,000 every day compared to the official daily bulletin data for the same period.

"Earlier, the data given [in official bulletin] was of tests done by labs in Delhi. The new data is of people of

DATA CRUNCH

Around 70% of the people who underwent RT-PCR test were Delhiites, the rest were from other States



People waiting in line to be tested for COVID-19 in Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Date	RT-PCR tests conducted (as per bulletin)	RT-PCR tests of Delhiites (as per new data)	Difference	Difference in %
July 1, 2020	10,978	7,490	-3,488	-31.8
July 2	10,577	7,232	-3,345	-31.6
July 3	9,925	6,844	-3,081	-31
July 4	9,873	6,502	-3,371	-34.1
July 5	5,327	3,767	-1,560	-29.3
July 6	8,795	6,022	-2,773	-31.5
July 7	9,461	6,409	-3,052	-32.2
July 8	9,719	6,793	-2,926	-30.1
July 9	10,129	6,719	-3,410	-33.7
July 10	9,767	5,964	-3,803	-38.9

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT

CBNAAT/True NAAT Tests conducted today'.

No mention of switch The government never officially mentioned the switch in data.

Though in the earlier set of data the number of tests included people from other States, the number of positive results mentioned in the bulletin were only for people of Delhi. This means that the total number of tests in Delhi was 6,92 lakh.

From July 13, the Delhi government started providing the new set of data in its daily bulletin, which is the total number of Delhiites tested, under the heading 'RT-PCR/

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## Active cases fall below 15,000

Capital registers 1,227 new COVID-19 cases in a single day

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

As many as 1,227 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 1,26,323, according to the health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday.

Also, 29 more deaths were reported in a single day, taking the toll to 3,719.

Of the total cases, 1,07,650 people have recovered and there are now 14,954 active cases. Active cases have been decreasing since July 1.

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases 1,26,323

Total deaths 3,719

New cases in the past 24 hours 1,227







## Justice, slow but sure

Conviction of police for passing off murder as an 'encounter' is welcome, though delayed

**I**t is not often that policemen involved in shooting people dead and seeking to cover up the incident as an armed encounter are convicted for murder. The verdict of the Sessions Court in Mathura sentencing 11 police personnel, including a DSP, to life for murdering Raja Man Singh, the head of the princely state of Bharatpur in Rajasthan, and two of his associates, in 1985, is one such rare instance. While welcoming this rare blow for accountability and justice, it is inevitable that one must lament the tardiness of the criminal justice system. Even accounting for the usual or expected delay in prosecuting police personnel, the 35 years that it took for the case to complete the trial stage is further evidence that justice moves in slow motion in this country. There are several long-delayed trials that spanned generations. The trial of the men who assassinated Railway Minister L.N. Mishra in January 1975 ended in conviction in 2014, a good 39 years later. The Hashimpura case, in which nearly 40 Muslims were massacred in 1987, ended with an en masse acquittal in 2015, but the Delhi High Court restored some faith in the judicial process by slapping lifelong prison terms on 16 men three years later. While convictions in heinous crimes ought to be welcomed regardless of the long delay, those administering criminal law will have to explain how far finding old and infirm people guilty after letting them enjoy decades of impunity really serves the cause of justice. Fortunately, the delay did not affect the outcome in this case, but it does not mean there is no truth in the old axiom that delay amounts to denial of justice.

The election-time murder of Raja Man Singh at Deeg on February 21, 1985, was initially sought to be passed off as an 'encounter'. The previous day, the titular head, a seven-time independent legislator, had apparently felt insulted on hearing that his family flag had been damaged by Congress supporters. In a fit of rage, he drove his jeep into the stage put up for then Congress Chief Minister Shiv Charan Mathur's rally, and went on to damage a helicopter used by the Chief Minister. The next day, as the Raja was on his way to surrender, his jeep was surrounded by a party led by the DSP and others. Eye-witnesses said they fired at the vehicle's occupants, killing Man Singh and his two elderly associates. Later, top police officials admitted the former ruler was not armed. The then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, asked Chief Minister Mathur to step down. The investigation was transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation. Later, the Supreme Court shifted the trial to Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. It may not be known if Congress leaders conspired with the police, but the incident remains a blot on the party's record in the 1980s.

## Another front

India and Bhutan must have complete understanding on dealing with China's claims

**F**or the third time since early June, China on Tuesday repeated its claim that Bhutan's eastern boundary was a "disputed" area with Bhutan. Its first claim was at a UNDP-led Global Environment Facility conference on June 2-3, when the Chinese representative tried to stop funding for the Sakteng forest reserve in Bhutan's eastern district of Trashigang, which abuts Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang district. The claim was surprising for several reasons: China has not objected earlier to funding provided to the sanctuary at the GEF. Second, the Trashigang area does not share a boundary with China. Finally, whatever the origins of the claim, Chinese officials have not raised the eastern boundary in 24 rounds of talks with Bhutan, that began in 1984. Thus far, talks have been only about the Pasamlung and Jakarlung valleys in Bhutan's north, and Doklam and other pasturelands to the west, that come up to the tri-junction point with India. On Wednesday, China referred to a "package solution" for the dispute, that is believed to refer to an offer made in the 1990s to swap the northern and western areas, something Bhutan rejected given India's concerns. Bhutan's response at the start was to reject China's claim at the GEF, and it was able to secure the funding. Subsequently the Bhutanese Embassy in Delhi served a *démarche* to the Chinese Embassy (Bhutan does not have diplomatic relations with China), but the Chinese MFA repeated the claim in early July, and then again this week. Bhutan has now appeared to take a sober view of China's claims by saying that all disputes would be taken up in the next round of China-Bhutan talks. Talks – the last round was in 2016 – have been put off due to the Doklam stand-off in 2017, elections in 2018, and the pandemic this year.

Despite Beijing's repeated statements on the boundary issue, both Thimphu and New Delhi have chosen not to react in a rash manner. For Bhutan, the Chinese claim may be seen as a pressure tactic: an attempt to hurry the scheduling of the next meeting, or to gain leverage in the boundary talks. For India, that is already dealing with Chinese aggression across the Line of Actual Control, the Sakteng claim could be a diversionary tactic, or one aimed at driving a wedge between India and Bhutan. More significantly, by claiming Bhutan's eastern boundary, China is attempting to double down on its claims over Arunachal Pradesh, neither of which it has lien on or control of. The repetition of its "package" offer is worrying as it implies that Beijing is not giving up its push for the Doklam plateau, where it has consolidated its military infrastructure and would like to inch towards India's Chumbi valley, a strategically sensitive location. No matter what Beijing's designs are behind its new claims in Bhutan, New Delhi and Thimphu must stay the course, with the close cooperation and complete understanding they have shared for decades, in order to respond to them purposefully.

# Statues as deeply contested heritage

Preserving or removing a person's statue must rely on shared judgment of his contribution to collective life



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

**A**cross the globe, people in large numbers have been seen toppling statues that stood as icons of their past oppression and continuing humiliation. The most recent example is the tearing down in Bristol, U.K., of the statue of Edward Colston, a slave owner. Not long ago, statues of imperial rulers were removed in India too. Once considered heritage, symbols of a past to be celebrated, they are now viewed as being erased from public memory.

Not surprising, because heritage is almost always contested. It is not naturally given but what humans imagine and construct. What we call 'heritage' is not everything we happen to inherit from our ancestors. It necessarily involves a selection of what we presently consider significant in this inheritance. Every society decides what is and isn't heritage. Since every collective decision involves politics, the construction of heritage too is deeply political, a field of power not among ruling elites alone but all people whose concern it is.

### The past in the present

Why care for heritage? Because it contributes to and enhances our collective self-understanding. Heritage affirms our collective identity, is a source of pride. It is important also because it is that part of history which is continuously brought to life by artefacts, integrated with our lived collective experience. It is a part of the past that we live and with which we live. And because it directly touches identity, it evokes strong feelings.

Heritage construction involves ethics too. It is the valued past of societies: intangible, preserved

say, in narratives, music or performances but also tangible, materially embodied in monuments and statues. Not a value-neutral term, 'heritage' is saturated with ethical evaluation, a judgment of what is worth remembering and preserving. Conversely, it pushes some features of our history into the background, fit for forgetting or dispassionate historical reflection. Integral to the construction of heritage then is an assessment of what must be remembered and forgotten, what calls for respect and celebration and what is a 'stain' remembered only to be prevented in future, an object of recurring regret that it happened at all, mourned publicly. Raj Ghat is not only a place where we remember Gandhi but also where we mourn his assassination by one of his own countrymen. Heritage is a way of addressing and rectifying past wrongs. The Holocaust memorial in Berlin and Washington's Vietnam memorial are both gestures towards reparation, monuments of public apology.

### Reactions in diverse societies

In complex, stratified, and diverse societies, the part of history that is self-affirming to some can be a source of self-denial to others. The same thing which provides recognition and pride to some ignites misrecognition and shame in others, be offensive, hurtful and disrespectful. Even when it does not such thing, it may simply not speak to them. Public display of the heritage of only a few is a source of profound estrangement and exclusion for others. Heritage is often linked to cultural domination that invites resistance. It follows that heritage is that which brings comfort or unease, to which people are either attracted or repulsed. Wherever symbolic power is unevenly distributed, artefacts that manifest this accumulated power provoke passionate disputation. Is it surprising then that a statue of a slave-owner or member of the imperial ruling elite provokes indignation among



those who were formerly enslaved or colonised? Likewise, in societies where caste hierarchies abound, the continual denial of public recognition to Dalit symbols leads to demands of greater inclusion of their heritage. And when after struggles for recognition, Ambedkar's statues finally make their way into public spaces, why would they, indeed we, not be outraged if an Ambedkar statue is vandalised?

### Inescapably public

For the rest, I confine myself to inescapably public statues – not hidden away, or installed in special parks and museums with restricted access, but installed in public squares, at crossroads, unavoidably open for all to see. Who then decides what will be on such public display and why? As differences are inevitable, as indeed are attempts to influence and pressure key decision makers, how should such collective judgments be reached? How must differences be prevented from turning into interminable disputes, even violence? To see statues of oppressors being torn down is understandable but why reach that tipping point? Why not decide what to do with them after collective deliberation among all stakeholders? Why leave heritage, a matter of long-lasting importance, solely to elected governments that come and go? While politics around heritage is unavoidable, is it not best to have dialogue, consultation, deliberation among people at large, includ-

ing with artists, philosophers, historians, architects and alert guardians of cultural memory? Didn't public discussion yield a fine decision in the 1960s to remove George V from under the Imperial canopy near India Gate but leave it empty, a gentle reminder that monarchs and dictators have no place in our republic?

### The Mahatma and Mohandas

Take the example of Gandhi's statues on account of their obvious global significance, complexity and, since they are surrounded by controversy, their current relevance. Some strongly feel that the Mahatma must be off the pedestal because of his alleged collusion with the Empire, more so for his racism. Assume the worst. Shall we then allow the violent removal of his statues? Now, Gandhi was neither born a Mahatma nor became one overnight. He began life as a very ordinary man, a child of his social milieu with straightforward middle-class aspirations. It is easy to imagine him inheriting caste prejudices in his childhood and, after arrival in London to study law, imbibing the prejudices of his colonial masters, to see himself as close to educated British elites than to Indian peasants or the 'untouchables', and when in Johannesburg, to the oppressed black community.

The real question worth addressing is whether he continued living this way, consolidating his racist and casteist views or struggled to jettison these prejudices. Not just superficially, but by confronting his deepest self, the kind of bad person he had been and then transforming it into something altogether different. By all accounts, Gandhi struggled with his demons all his life and eventually became the Mahatma that he was – a global figure of immense ethical significance, admired by his adversaries, inspiring great men like Martin Luther King, even Nelson Mandela. The statues erected globally honour and celebrate the struggle embodied by this self-re-

flective Mahatma and not Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the parochial, upper caste Gujarati or the barrister loyal to the British Empire. Those who want to demolish his statues are simply going by an early fragment of his life that he himself disowned with great effort. There can be nothing more absurd or tragic. Imagine a statue of Valmiki torn down because of his perceived criminal past! Imagine further the fate of statues of all great men of the past on the sole ground that they fail the 'patriarchy test'. Who in the past would pass it? Not Marx, the revolutionary, not Ambedkar, our greatest Dalit leader, not Mandela or Martin Luther King, icons of Black struggles, nor I am afraid, all the male gods worshipped by many. The general lesson to be drawn is this: a decision to preserve or remove statues cannot be based on current stereotypes of historical figures or narrow standards of political correctness that highlight a general flaw characteristic of an entire era but must instead rely on complex, collective judgment of a person's overall contribution to social, political and intellectual life. Gandhi, in my view, passes this test. Colston or Cecil Rhodes do not. We must carefully avoid anachronism in our judgments of the past.

### Bring some statues up

At a time when statues are being brought down, why not talk of bringing some up? I am puzzled by our persistent obsession with political power, even when used for good purpose. Why is there no movement to erect statues of M.S. Subbulakshmi, Kumar Gandharva, or Begum Akhtar for their massive contribution to our cultural heritage? Won't it be most appropriate to have a statue of Mohammad Rafi or Kishore Kumar in busy public squares near metro stations or bus terminals?

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

## Set up a High Court for Puducherry

The administration must highlight the need to streamline expenses, the case volume and constitutional rights as factors



NIRMALKUMAR MOHANDOOS

**I**n 1962, when Puducherry was merged with India, the jurisdiction of the Madras High Court was extended to it. After several decades, in 2017, the Puducherry legislature unanimously resolved to have its own High Court, and the Madras High Court was informed on July 7, 2017. Prior to this, in April 2017, the Pondicherry Bar Association also passed a resolution seeking establishment of the High Court.

In August 2019, while addressing a State-level conference on legal services and Motor Accident Mediation Cells, Puducherry Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy said that "a Bench of the Madras High Court at Puducherry on the lines of the one set up in Madurai" was a felt need and sought the support of the Supreme Court.

### Sound reasons

So, why should there be the need for a High Court at Puducherry? The Puducherry government spends exorbitant sums of money towards expenses of the large High Court. With not much of a population, this amount can be reduced to less than a quarter of the amount spent with a much smaller High Court for Puducherry.

In fact, according to the Constitution, when a common High Court is established for more than

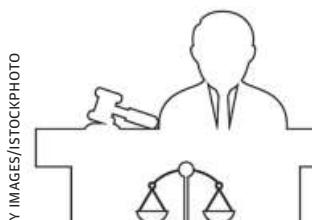
one State, administrative expenses have to be paid only from the consolidated fund of the 'State' in which the principal seat of the High Court is situated. However, this provision is breached with respect to Puducherry which shares the disproportionately exorbitant expenses with Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, administrative expenses of a High Court at the Union Territory shall be drawn from the 'Consolidated fund of India' under the Constitution.

A Puducherry High Court, with four to five judges, can ensure quick action on pendency of matters of the High Court matters, at least at Puducherry. In the All India Judges Association And Others vs Union Of India (UoI) And Ors, the Supreme Court observed that the "time has now come for protecting one of the pillars of the Constitution, namely, the judicial system, by directing increase, in the first instance, in the Judge strength from the existing ratio of 10.5 or 13 per 10 lakhs people to 50 Judges for 10 lakh people". This was also discussed in the Law Commission of India Report titled 'Arrears and Backlog: Creating Additional Judicial (wo)manpower', in 2014.

However as of 2016, the ratio is only 12 judges for one million population. This ratio at Puducherry can be increased if a separate High Court with four to five judges is established.

### A data comparison

The number of cases filed and disposed of at Puducherry in 2010 is four times higher than the numbers at Sikkim, Manipur and Goa



(with High Courts) put together. Therefore, the size of population and territory is irrelevant. Bigger States have more judges and staff, smaller States have lesser numbers of these.

The data collected by this writer show that in terms of the number of cases filed in 2010, the figures are: Sikkim (1,117), Manipur (637), Goa (4,984) and Puducherry (24,159). In terms of the number of cases decided, the numbers are: Sikkim (1,174), Manipur (495), Goa (3,646) and Puducherry (24,336).

Similarly, the memorandum provided by the All India Bar Association to the Chief Minister in 2017 shows that the number of cases disposed from Puducherry (28,631 cases) is three times more than the number of cases (9,031 cases) disposed by four High Courts (Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya and Sikkim) put together in 2016.

The presence of the Constitutional Court in the capital city acts as a check on the executive and legislature. Even the exercise of safeguarding fundamental rights involves travel, time and expenses. Several people often cite that litigants from western districts travel the long distance to Chennai. It defies logic why litigants from Puducherry need not be benefited

merely because other litigants are not benefitted, especially when the Constitution permits Puducherry to have its own High Court under Article 241.

### Aiding Statehood demand

A High Court for Puducherry will also strengthen voices seeking Statehood. The Constitution enabled establishment of a legislature and Council of Ministers for certain Union Territories with the intent of providing them Statehood gradually. Out of the seven Union Territories originally placed under Article 239A, all except Puducherry were granted Statehood by 1989. Most Union Territories under 239A at least had Benches of High Courts when they attained Statehood. Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya had Benches of the Gauhati High Court before they got their own High Courts. Interestingly, the Delhi High Court was established in 1966 before Delhi got its legislature in 1993.

Even a Bench of the Madras High Court as against a separate High Court at Puducherry is unfavourable because: Puducherry will still have to share the expenses of such a large High Court; judges might not prefer shuttling between Benches at Chennai, Puducherry and Madurai frequently; the protests against the setting up of the Madurai Bench a decade ago should be borne in mind. In fact, the presidential order establishing the Bench was challenged before the Madras High Court in 2004, just before commissioning the work; demand for a Bench of the High Court has always been met with stiff resistance from the Bar

practising in the Court having jurisdiction. For instance, on December 12, 2019, Meerut MP Rajendra Agarwal pointed out in the Lok Sabha that "the U.P. Government had recommended a bench in 1955 but it's the HC lawyers who always exert pressure not to allow the bench in Western UP". Unlike Meerut, the advantage that Puducherry enjoys is that the Constitution enables Parliament to establish separate High Courts in Union Territories.

In March 2016, the Government of India had suggested to the writer that the establishment of a High Court will be taken up if the Puducherry government proposes the idea. However, the decision of the Puducherry legislature has still not been conveyed to the Central government.

Interestingly, though the 2017 resolution of the legislature seeks a High Court, authorities have on multiple occasions spoken of establishing a Bench of the Madras High Court. There is a popular notion that the establishment of a Bench of High Court is easier and economical as against the reality pointed out in this article. Therefore, the territorial administration should have clarity on this point.

The Puducherry government should now form a committee to prepare a comprehensive report and a draft Bill backing its proposal and forward it to the Central government. In this the nominated Lieutenant Governor and the elected Chief Minister must work in tandem.

Nirmalkumar Mohandoos is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

## 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.

### Wheels of justice

As I read the report, "35 years on, 11 policemen convicted of royal's killing" (Page 1, July 22), I was left confused – on whether to rejoice or deplore the verdict or the situation. In India, many cases are getting prolonged and unduly delayed in courts for years and years. As a result, those guilty, including those in authority who are vested in devising and implementing policy decisions, go scot free. The damage they cause cannot

be undone even if the judiciary pronounces a verdict. Judicial reformation is the urgent need of the hour. Time-bound trials depending upon the gravity of the crime and filling judicial vacancies are some steps that are needed.

M.B. MADHUSUDAN, Chennai

**Countering China**  
As a rising Asian power, India should be more assertive in its dealings with China. It was Mao who said

"political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" and China respects power, be it economic, military or technology. It is interesting that the writer (Editorial page, "The main planks in a counter-China policy", July 22) suggests recognising the relevance of the Dalai Lama. Surprisingly, India has gone neutral on the Dalai Lama and should now harness the global goodwill that the spiritual leader commands. He could play a role in our soft diplomacy in highlighting Chinese

aggression. If China does not hesitate to use its "wolf-warrior" diplomacy, India should shed its timid outlook, which till now has reinforced Beijing's view that India can be coerced to accept its point of view.

H.N. RAMAKRISHNA, Bengaluru

**I am disheartened,** as a retired major general, by the former NSA suggesting the use of "subterfuge" tools of power by India. China defeated us comprehensively in 1962 and has now heaped

ignominy on us. As common military logic dictates, based on the terrain, force levels and equipment profile in the areas concerned, most of the actions will be at a tactical level and with very little scope for manoeuvre by mechanised forces. Therefore, the stress will be

# Are people in J&K citizens or subjects?

It's nearly a year since they have had 4G Internet and the Supreme Court has done little to enforce its writ



GAUTAM BHATIA & SUHRIT PARTHASARATHY

The Internet is often spoken about as a great equaliser. Its evolution was meant to herald a more equal society. But the ravages wrought by COVID-19 have taught us that the web is also capable of creating new and more insidious barriers to basic goods. Across the world, despite the structural hurdles to access, the Internet has become indispensable to human freedom. School children take their lessons online, businesses cannot work without accessing the web, our courts have moved virtual, and even our leisure is inextricably bound by the system.

What this has also meant is that those without access to the Internet have suffered more than others. The pandemic has shown us a smidgen of just how reprehensible the digital divide is. There was a report, for example, of a student taking her own life, because of a lack of access to online school. Therefore, a stanching of the gateways to the web invariably strikes at the dignity of individuals.

**A complete ban, and a challenge**  
Yet, the government feels no compunction in doing precisely just this in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Since August 4 last year, people in the region have not had access to 4G Internet. The authorities see the restriction, which was placed in the lead-up to the dilution of Article 370 of the Constitution, as unassailable. But by all means – even by the Supreme Court's own concession – a complete ban of this kind is disproportionate. It impinges on the liberty of an entire populace. Yet the Court has done little to enforce its writ, to do what the Constitution demands of it: act as an independent check on majoritarian power.

To begin with, this move to restrict 4G Internet in the region was part of an array of measures limiting communications and movement. These moves were made ostensibly out of a concern for national security, with the aim of thwarting terror-



NISSAR AHMAD

rism. The blockade though, imposed as it was indiscriminately on the whole region, was challenged in the Supreme Court, in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020).

The petitioner there made two primary arguments. First, she pointed out that the government had refused to make public its orders blocking the Internet. This, she said, violated a basic tenet of the rule of law: that people have a right to know why their freedoms have been constrained. Second – and more substantively – she argued that empirical evidence demonstrated that there was no link between shutting down the Internet and the state's objective of protecting security. Indeed, available materials pointed the other way: that the Internet was a valuable tool that could be used to counter the spread of incendiary rumours and fake news. Moreover, the government had at its disposal less restrictive options, such as the blacklisting of specific websites and targeted surveillance measures. It is unclear if these alternatives were even considered. Thus, the petitioner claimed that there was no justification for a blanket Internet shutdown that impacted a territory of eight million people, a vast majority of whom had nothing to do with terrorism.

In response, a second challenge was mounted in the Supreme Court, this time by the Foundation for Media Professionals. This petition pointed out that it had been eight months since the web was restricted in J&K, and now the combination of the pandemic and a lockdown had made Internet deprivation even more unconscionable. Specific evidence was placed before the Court to show how 4G Internet was indispensable for adequate access to education, medi-

ation placed on the web must be necessary and proportionate to the goal that the State seeks to achieve. This meant that the government now had to produce the orders on the basis of which it was shutting down the Internet. But promising as this might have looked at first blush, the Court did not hold the government accountable. It simply didn't test the blockade on the touchstone of the very constitutional principles that it said were applicable. Instead, it ordered a weekly review by a committee set up under the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services Rules, 2017.

The aftermath of the judgment brought about some alleviative measures. The prohibitory orders were published, although a perusal of those showed that the reasons remained brief and cryptic (and sometimes contradictory). In time, a few websites, through a process of "whitelisting", were made available for access. But the rest of the Internet was still out of bounds. Eventually, a few months after the verdict, 2G Internet alone was restored. But even the onset of the pandemic, which has shown us just how instrumental the Internet is in accessing critical services, didn't lead to a lifting of the ban on 4G.

In response, a second challenge was mounted in the Supreme Court, this time by the Foundation for Media Professionals. This petition pointed out that it had been eight months since the web was restricted in J&K, and now the combination of the pandemic and a lockdown had made Internet deprivation even more unconscionable. Specific evidence was placed before the Court to show how 4G Internet was indispensable for adequate access to education, medi-

cine, and to the courts, and how – without it – the people of J&K were placed at a significant disadvantage compared to the rest of the country.

The Supreme Court gave a ruling on May 11. Once again, it dodged the issue before it. Quite opposed to deciding on the validity of the government's actions and its impact on rights, the Court wound up creating a new three-member special committee headed by the Union Home Secretary – an exercise wholly outside the legal framework – to take stock of things. The irony here speaks for itself. The executive that was responsible for restricting access to the Internet in the first place was now tasked with reviewing its own actions.

But there's more irony to come. More than two months have passed since the judgment, but, at least ostensibly, no committee has been formed. And 4G Internet remains banned. Early in June, the petitioner again moved the Court, this time seeking to hold the government in contempt. After more than a month, the petition finally came up for hearing. In it, the government claimed that it had, in fact, constituted a committee whose decision, it said, was ready to deliver in a "sealed envelope" to the Court. But even assuming this exercise has indeed been carried out, it still runs in the teeth of the judgment in *Anuradha Bhasin*, which demands a publication of orders restricting Internet access.

**Transformation of basic rights**  
By the time the case comes up for hearing again, the government is expected to file an affidavit explaining itself. But what the Court surely must now see is that the Internet restrictions in J&K are fast approaching their first anniversary. Not only has its intervention thus far been energetically, in that it has failed to answer the constitutional questions at stake, but even the few directions that it has issued have not been complied with. In the process, basic rights have been transformed into government largesse. The question that the Court must now ask itself is, therefore, this: are the people of J&K subjects to be ruled over, or are they citizens who possess rights against the State?

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer and Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

# Puncturing a culture of silence

India needs a pro-Constitution, pro-facts, pro-inclusivity Gandhi Project analogous to the Lincoln Project in the U.S.



ATUL K. THAKUR & ABHIMANYU CHANDRA

For a long time, a defining question of the Trump presidency was whether, and when, Republicans would speak up against President Donald Trump's disregard for women, the constitution, the armed forces, racial justice, facts, and much else. Formed by a group of stalwart Republicans in December 2019, 'The Lincoln Project' is the most prominent of the cracks in the Republican Party so far. It seeks to "Defeat President Trump and Trumpism at the ballot box." Its founders are opposed not just to Mr. Trump, but to his cult following: of people living in fear that if they speak, he might tweet against them and they might lose their Senate or House seat. The Lincoln Project's founders also seek to challenge the larger culture of disregard for the constitution, of exclusion, of cruelty that has come with Mr. Trump. Through videos such as 'Truth', 'Betrayed', 'Shrinking' and 'Making China Great Again', The Lincoln Project has achieved a prized goal: getting under Mr. Trump's skin. He has tweeted against them, as a result only contributing to their reach and fundraising. They now have 1.5 million followers on Twitter.

The U.S.'s problems are different from India's, the Republican Party's flaws are not the same as those of the BJP, and Mr. Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are different figures. Yet, there are similarities: the majoritarianism, the misinformation, the weakening of institutions. India needs an analogous initiative: 'The Gandhi Project'.

## Hope and reality

In 2014 and 2019, many voters chose the BJP and Mr. Modi hoping for economic growth, strong national security and robust foreign policy. As it stands, the economy is on the downside; unemployment is high; national security is imperilled amidst the clash with China, issues with Bangladesh, and cross-border terror from Pakistan; and foreign relations with some of India's closest allies, such as Nepal, are in tatters. Many of these problems were evident before the pandemic, but the government's blundering response to the pandemic made matters worse.

A lot of BJP and Mr. Modi's supporters remained steadfast behind the party and the leader for years. Gradually, some former supporters began to criticise him. Even so, while in the U.S. criticism of Mr. Trump's many failed policies is robust, by way of the me-

dia and a strong Opposition, in India, Modi worship remains widespread. The Opposition is weak and much of the media is without a spine. Meanwhile, the BJP social media fake news factory is alive and well. And a widespread fear of even asking questions of the government, let alone criticising it, remains.

The Lincoln Project's key achievement has been to have punctured the Republican Party's silence and servility around Mr. Trump. It showed that Republicans could, and should, critique Mr. Trump, as well as his blind political lackeys.

## Distinctly Indian

If the need in the U.S. for something such as the Lincoln Project was great, the need in India is only greater. Such an initiative would need to be distinctly Indian. Through videos, advertisements and events, it should challenge the culture of silence and servility. It should infuse more facts and accountability in public debate: accountability, for instance, for the skirmish with China, for the failure to forecast the migrant workers' challenge, for the Pulwama attack, for the misery caused by demonetisation. It should aim to break the pattern of liberals finding themselves largely only responding to the BJP, rather than setting the terms of the debate. It should draw in average Indians, operating in multiple languages. It should call out the misinformation, the Goebbelsian tactics, the "alternative truths", the false narrative setting such as around the anti-CAA protests fostered by the BJP and its IT cell. It need not necessarily be an anti-BJP effort; but it must be pro-facts, pro-accountability, pro-inclusivity, pro-Constitution. It should aim to broaden the sphere of debate in India. Such an initiative must operate with the support of a broad base. The Gandhi Project should build on the path shown by the peaceful modes of anti-CAA protests. Some such efforts have emerged, but they need to be broadened and become more resourced, sophisticated, and scaled. The Gandhi Project might, for instance, bring together the Rashtriya March founded by Yashwant Sinha, Baat Bihar Ki led by Prashant Kishor, Constitutional Conduct led by retired civil servants.

Like Lincoln, Gandhi was not a perfect figure. But like Lincoln in the U.S., Gandhi remains a rallying symbol in India. The Lincoln Project has framed the option before Americans as one between America and Mr. Trump. The Gandhi Project can pose the choice before Indians as that between constitutionalism and anti-constitutionalism, between Gandhi and Godse.

Atul K Thakur is a Delhi-based policy professional and columnist; Abhimanyu Chandra is a PhD student at the University of Chicago

## Transforming higher education

This is a time to bridge the gulf between the university curriculum and actual job requirements

JAYESH RANJAN

Much of the discourse on resuming higher education during the pandemic revolves around home-based learning – more specifically, the tools to deliver home-based learning. The merits and demerits of online learning and, in some measures, of broadcast-based learning, are being debated. There is a sense of heightened anxiousness and urgency to find solutions to tide over the pandemic-induced crisis.

This is not to suggest that the anxiety and urgency are misplaced. But instead of getting bogged down by the challenges of identifying the best solutions to provide an inclusive and affordable home-based education, we can think of the enormous possibilities presented by the pandemic to the education sector.

### Ideal learning outcomes

There are three ideal learning outcomes of higher education. The first is to provide knowledge in the relevant discipline to the students. Second, since higher education students are on the verge of joining the workforce, it is expected that their education will also impart them with the skills needed for their jobs/enterprises. Finally, students are expected to play a constructive role in shaping the society and the world at large using the values and ideals of a modern, progressive society; the teaching-learning process is expected to mould their character accordingly.

We should reflect on how many of India's higher learning institutions, and the students within them, are able to fulfil any or all of these ideal learning outcomes. The reality is that apart from a handful of institutions in the technology, management and liberal arts streams, and a small number of extremely self-motivated students, a vast majority of other students just meander through college and acquire a degree.

That there is a huge gulf between the curriculum taught in the colleges and actual job requirements is universally known. It is common to hear even the brightest of students men-

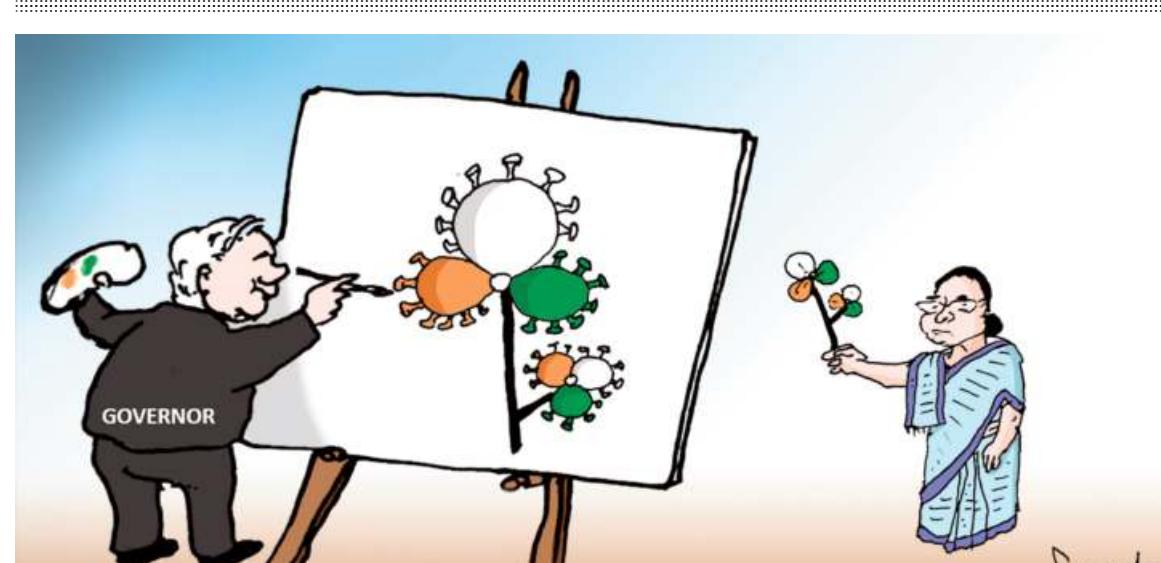


tion that they learnt more on the job than through their curriculum in college. If this is indeed the universal reality, why should we bestow so much importance on a syllabus? Why is there such enormous pressure on the higher education system to complete every bit of that syllabus within prescribed time? And why do we take such massive efforts to evaluate students' knowledge of that syllabus through exams? Why not completely re-evaluate the syllabus every now and then? Why not have substantive industrial internships, while retaining only a very basic outline of essential concepts? The evaluation too can be a mix of regular assignments, performance in the internship as rated both by the industry and the college, and a light, home-based proctored exam. The time saved in attending regular classes in the institution can be compensated for by spending time on the development of skills and prosocial attitudes and values that will help the student lead an enriching life. This component can again be a guided teaching process using videos, films and books.

### A big opportunity

India is uniquely positioned in the world today to benefit from its demographic dividend. Yet, in many contexts, it has been pointed out that this dividend can actually turn into a liability since those in the population bracket that are ready to join the workforce have practically no skills or knowledge that add to their employability. The higher education sector has multiple stakeholders (and multiple vested interests). In normal times, maintaining the status quo or implementing incremental and marginal reforms was all one could hope for. The pandemic has opened the doors for ushering in massive, bold and transformational reforms. As John Lewis said, "If not now, then when?"

Jayesh Ranjan is an IAS officer in the Telangana government and the officiating Vice-Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru Technology University, Hyderabad. Views are personal

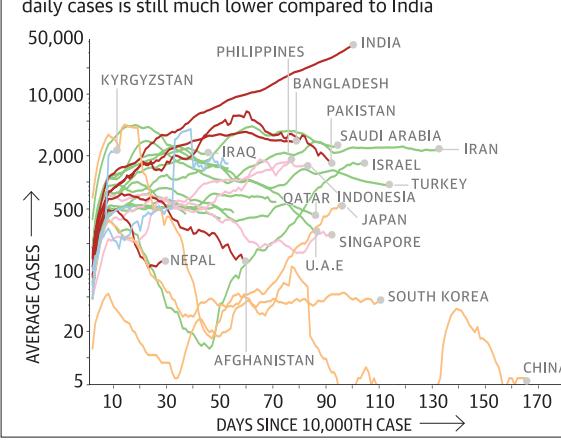


### DATA POINT

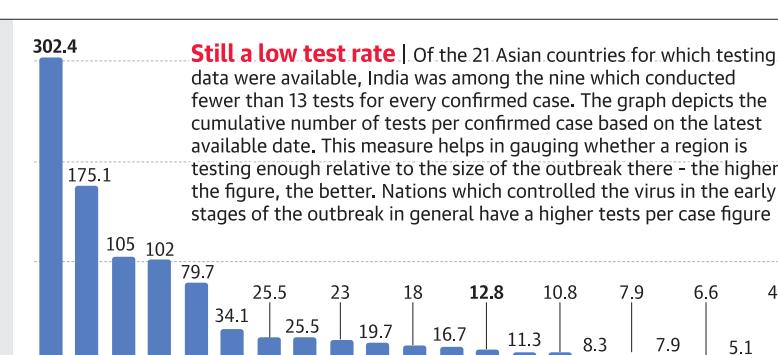
## The worst in Asia

India is the only country in Asia which has not bent or flattened its COVID-19 case curve among nations with a significant daily case load. India's daily fatality rate is also much higher than that of other countries. Moreover, India's tests conducted per confirmed case are low compared to many Asian nations. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Suman Sen and Naresh Singaravelu

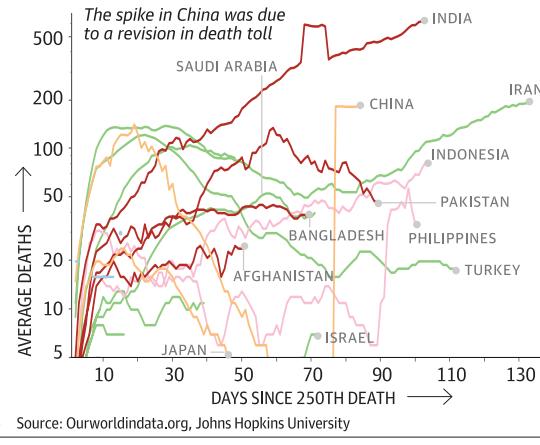
**Cases** | The graph shows the seven-day average of daily cases since the 10,000th case in Asian countries. Compared to most other countries in Asia, especially those with a high case load, India is the only nation where infections are rising at an exponential rate. Most neighbours such as Pakistan and Afghanistan have bent the curve, while Bangladesh has flattened it. Cases are going up in Kyrgyzstan, Israel (seeing a second wave), Japan and Indonesia, though the number of daily cases is still much lower compared to India.



**Still a low test rate** | Of the 21 Asian countries for which testing data were available, India was among the nine which conducted fewer than 13 tests for every confirmed case. The graph depicts the cumulative number of tests per confirmed case based on the latest available date. This measure helps in gauging whether a region is testing enough relative to the size of the outbreak there - the higher the figure, the better. Nations which controlled the virus in the early stages of the outbreak in general have a higher tests per case figure



**Deaths** | The graph shows the seven-day average of daily deaths since the 250th death in Asian countries. In this measure too, India's curve is far ahead than that of other nations; the trajectory too is comparatively steeper. Most neighbours have successfully bent the curve or have at least flattened it once. The curves of Iran (seeing a second wave), Indonesia and the Philippines continue to grow, though the daily fatalities in these places are still fewer compared to India.



The vast majority of people in the rural areas live in huts of mud and thatch, though in villages near the bigger cities, houses of brick and mortar have made their appearance. The traditional materials have certain advantages, being cool in summer and warm in the cold season, and even the prosperous farmer prefers to invest his money in land or farm machinery rather than in buildings. Mud houses cannot, however, be easily electrified or provided with modern household appliances or good furniture. They enforce the simple life on the occupant. As education grows, the demand for pucca houses increases and hence the need to promote the building of modern houses in the villages. In 1957, the Government announced that cheap loans for building or reconstructing houses in the villages would be provided upto a maximum of Rs. 3,000. The Union Minister for Housing, Mr. K. K. Shah, has pointed out at the conference of the State Ministers at Jaipur that, during the past twelve years, only 43,500 houses had come up with the help of these loans. This is a very poor performance in view of the enormous backlog which runs into millions.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 23, 1920

## Mr. Gandhi's movement

(From an editorial)

In his address as President of the Bellary District Conference, Mr. V. P. Madhava Row, C.I.R., whose reputation as a successful administrator and shrewd observer of men and matters lends considerable weight to his views, pictures, with becoming sense of responsibility and gravity, the serious crisis which has been developed in the country by the bankruptcy of British statesmanship and the failure of British justice. The whitewashing down of the Reform Scheme, shadowy as it was even at the inception, the betrayal of the Punjab, the mishandling of the Khilafat question, and the threat of repression – all these are factors in the situation which leave us nothing but despair. Mr. Montagu's statement in the Commons regarding Mr. Gandhi's movement practically holds out to us the threat of repression in case non-co-operation is adopted. But, unfortunately, much as the public would like not to resort to it if they could help it, there is no other remedy open to the country to make its opinion effectively felt; and Government cannot ignore this aspect of the question when they think of blindly resorting to repression.

FROM PAGE ONE

## SC will hear Rajasthan Speaker's plea today

In a steady progression of events on Wednesday, Speaker C.P. Joshi's office filed the special leave petition in the apex court, through advocate Sunil Fernandes, three minutes to noon on Wednesday and within a day of the High Court order. Shortly after the petition was filed, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, while appearing in another case, happened to complain to Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde about the lack of a proper mechanism to mention cases for urgent hearing in the current virtual court system. He said his team had been trying hard, but without success, to mention the Rajasthan Speaker's case for an early hearing.

The CJI told Mr. Sibal that he would apprise the court Registry and see if the case could be put up before a Bench. By evening, the case was listed before Justice Misra's Bench.

**Lakshman Rekha'**  
The petition referred to the Constitution Bench judgment of the top court in the Kihoto Hollohan case in 1992 in this context.

"Judicial review cannot be available at a stage prior to the making of a decision by the Speaker/Chairman and a *qua* *timet* action would not be permissible. Nor would interference be permissible at an interlocutory stage of the proceedings," the Speaker's office quoted from the 28-year-old verdict.

## 11 policemen get life term for ex-royal's killing

Three of the 18 persons initially accused – Kuldeep, Nekiram and Sitaram – died during trial, while one Mahendra Singh had been discharged, said Mr. Singh. Three policemen, who were accused of forging the general diary entries and facing charges under Section 218 of the IPC, however, were acquitted.

Apart from Bhati (now 82) and Virendra Singh, the other persons convicted by the Mathura court are Bhanwar Singh, Padma Ram, Ravi Shekhar Mishra, Jeevanram, Sukhram, Hari Singh, Sher Singh, Chattar Singh, and Jagmohan, all aged above 60.

**Long stint**  
Man Singh, who was the third son of 'Maharaja' Krishn of Bharatpur, was first elected as an MLA from Rajasthan in 1952 and was undefeated till his death as an Independent MLA, even resisting the waves of 1977 (Indira Gandhi) and 1980 (Janata Party).

On February 20, 1985, Man Singh – furious after Congress workers pulled down his banners – damaged a stage set up for them

High Court's interim order granting extended time to Mr. Pilot and the other MLAs to file their replies to the July 14 anti-defection notices amounted to violation of Article 212 (courts not to inquire into the proceedings of the legislature).

"The notice dated July 14 is a proceeding in the House and immune from judicial interference at that stage. The notice was only limited to inviting comments from the Respondents [Mr. Pilot and other MLAs] and there was nothing adverse against them at that stage. A notice is much prior to any final determination or decision on disqualification. The proceedings, including the notice, are in the realm of the legislative proceedings under Paragraph 6(2) of the Tenth Schedule," the Speaker's office argued.

It said judicial review of an ongoing anti-defection proceedings was limited.

### Kihoto Hollohan case

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The Speaker said the

## Kerala, A.P. report big rise in new virus cases

839 of 1,038 fresh infections in Kerala linked to community transmission; A.P. records 6,045 cases and Karnataka 4,764

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala reported a markedly high 1,038 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the State's total case load to 15,032. Intense community transmission across all districts was cited as the likely cause. Five more COVID-19 deaths were reported in the State.

Approximately 80% of the

### COVID-19

cases – 839 out of the 1,038 – were locally acquired infections. In 57 cases, the source of infection could not be established.

Till July 20, COVID-19 positive tests among health workers stood at 267, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said.

On Wednesday, 24 health care workers tested positive, 18 in the capital city. In Thi-

ruvananthapuram, where community transmission was declared earlier, 208 of 226 cases (92%) reported on Wednesday were attributed to local transmission, with 15 having no epidemiological link. The district had the highest load with 2,421 cases.

With 272 recoveries, there were 8,818 patients undergoing treatment in the State. Total recoveries were 6,162. Mr. Vijayan said that of the active patients in hospitals, 53 were in ICUs and nine patients on ventilators.

While the death at Idukki was added to official data, four confirmed COVID-19 deaths in Kollam, Kozhikode, Kasaragod and Kannur were yet to be added because of reporting time cut-off. The State death toll was 45.

With 55 new deaths due to COVID-19 in Karnataka on Wednesday, the total toll touched 1,519. The number of new cases was 4,764, tak-

### Tough measures

To prevent COVID-19 infections from spreading, some States are implementing a complete lockdown. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



**Lone rider:** A scene in Mangalore during the lockdown in Karnataka on Wednesday. ■ H.S. MANJUNATH

ing the total to 75,833. There was a huge spike in cases and deaths compared to a month ago. While there was a 70.6% increase in positive cases, there was a 96.9% increase in

deaths compared to June 22.

The Department of Health and Family Welfare said 11 of the 55 deaths included patients who either died at home or were brought dead

to hospitals. Of 4,764 new cases, 2,050 were from Bengaluru Urban. Of 47,069 active cases in Karnataka, 618 were in ICUs. Meanwhile, 1,780 patients left hospitals

after treatment, raising recoveries to 27,239.

Andhra Pradesh saw a big rise in cases and deaths, at 65 deaths and 6,045 cases on Wednesday. The tally jumped to 64,713 and toll to 823. Also, 6,553 patients were discharged, making up 32,127 recoveries, with a recovery rate of 49.65%. Active cases were 31,763. For the first time, 49,553 samples were tested in a day. Of these, 30,018 were RT-PCR, TrueNat and NACO tests and 19,535 rapid antigen tests.

Among new deaths Guntur (15) and Krishna (10) districts had the most, with the rest in West Godavari (8), East Godavari (7), Chittoor (5), Kurnool (5), Vizianagaram (4), Prakasam (3), Sri-kakulam (3), Visakhapatnam (3), Kadapa (1) and Nellore (1).

(With inputs from Bengaluru and Vijayawada bureaus)

### IN BRIEF



#### Water to Chennai: KRMB to constitute panel

VIJAYAWADA  
The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) has decided to constitute a six-member High Power Committee, comprising representatives (irrigation officials) of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The proposed committee will discuss Tamil Nadu's request to release water stored at Kandaleru to meet the drinking water requirements of Chennai.

#### 3 Railway employees die as engine runs into them

HYDERABAD  
Three South Central Railways employees were killed on Wednesday near Vikarabad in Telangana, after a train engine ran into them. Police said that around 12 workers of the Bridge Management System were engaged in painting a bridge. The engine driver did not know that work was being done on the bridge neither were the workers warned. The victims were identified as Pratap Reddy, 58; Naveen, 34 and Shamsheer Ali, 25.

#### Case of custodial death registered in A.P.

ONGOLE  
A Dalit youth allegedly died in police custody after he was picked up by the police for not wearing a mask in Chirala town in Andhra Pradesh. A case of custodial death was registered after Y. Kiran Kumar died in a private hospital in Guntur late on Tuesday. While the relatives of the youth claimed that he was beaten up for not wearing a mask, Prakasam district police said that he had jumped out of the jeep on the way to the station, which resulted in a head injury.

#### TTD senior pontiff moved to Chennai

TIRUMALA  
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Pedda Jeeyar (senior pontiff), who tested positive for COVID-19, was shifted to Chennai on Wednesday for better medical care. The Jeeyar was admitted to Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences super hospitality hospital last Friday. After primary treatment there, he was in self-isolation at the mat in Tirupati. Sources said his health condition was stable.

#### SI arrested for tonsuring Dalit youth in A.P.

RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM  
Sub-inspector of Seethanagaram police station Sk. Feroz Shah was arrested on Tuesday on charges of tonsuring a 23-year-old Dalit youth in the police station. Feroz was taken into custody following a review into the incident that took place in Rajamahendravaram. A case under the SC&ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, has been registered against Feroz and two constables. All of them were suspended from service on Tuesday.

## ED launches probe into gold smuggling case

Air Cargo shipments were addressed to the UAE consulate in Kerala; financial trail to be pursued

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI



A file photo of Sandeep Nair being taken away by the police after a hearing at a special court in Kochi. ■ PTI

The agency suspects that the proceeds might have been used to finance terror

activities. Those involved in the case are suspected to have smuggled in about 250

kg of gold since July 2019. According to the NIA, K.T. Ramas has been identified as the kingpin of the racket. The businessman from Malappuram was arrested by the Customs Department earlier this month.

**Four suspects held**  
The NIA has so far arrested four suspects, while the Customs Department has arrested 13 persons in connection with the smuggling racket, after the seizure of 30 kg of gold at Thiruvananthapuram airport on July 5.

Accused Sarith P.S., a

#### Chelluboyina, Seediri join Jagan's Cabinet

Krishna Das made Deputy CM of A.P.

### STAFF REPORTER VIJAYAWADA



Dharma Krishna Das

Members of the Legislative Assembly Chelluboyina Srinivas Venugopalakrishna and Seediri Appalaraju were sworn in as Ministers at a simple ceremony at the Raj Bhavan on Wednesday.

Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office and secrecy in the presence of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

Dharma Krishna Das, a senior member of the Cabinet, has been elevated to the post Deputy Chief Minister. He will now hold the portfolio of Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries.

The Roads and Buildings portfolio has been allocated to Malagundla Sankaranarayana who earlier held the portfolio of Backward Classes Welfare.

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## Osmania hospital in-patient block sealed

Speculation rife over its demolition

### K. SHIVA SHANKER HYDERABAD

Around a week after rainwater flooded into Osmania General Hospital's century-old in-patient block, orders were issued to vacate the building and seal it on Wednesday. Though there was widespread speculation that this is a step to bring down the in-patient (IP) block – built in 1917 by the seventh Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan – sources in the know of things said that the orders were issued to avoid any illegal activities in the vacant building.

General flying is not allowed and ground commanders have been asked to assess and constantly keep a vigil on the ground. The agreement allows use of UAVs, but not in an indiscriminate manner and only at mutually agreed time periods," said the official.

As reported by *The Hindu*, Chinese troops are yet to fully move out of Patrolling Point (PP) 15 of Hot Springs area and continue to occupy positions within 1.5 km of the India's perception of the LAC. "The two armies have agreed to not take any step that could derail the ongoing talks. No foot patrolling and not flying UAVs within 10 km of the friction points are among the measures to build confidence, but it also adversely affects real-time monitoring," said the official.

"General flying is not allowed and ground commanders have been asked to assess and constantly keep a vigil on the ground. The agreement allows use of UAVs, but not in an indiscriminate manner and only at mutually agreed time periods," said the official.

"There is a very small

window when UAVs can be used. The topography in some places is such that UAVs cannot be used, and foot patrolling is not allowed... this is why the physical verification is slow and takes time," said the official. After the Galwan Valley incident, the flashback of June 15 violent clashes when 20 soldiers were killed, the Corps Commanders had agreed to disengage and withdraw fully from other face-off sites along the LAC.

"General flying is not allowed and ground commanders have been asked to assess and constantly keep a vigil on the ground. The agreement allows use of UAVs, but not in an indiscriminate manner and only at mutually agreed time periods," said the official.

The OGH has three blocks: IP Block, OP (out-patient) block and Quli Qutb Shah block. The IP block has been in the news from 2015. Because of years of neglect,

## Deputy Collector's post, house site for slain Colonel's wife

KCR orders posting for her in and around Hyderabad

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD



Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao handing over the letter of appointment to Ms. Santoshi on Wednesday.

about the well-being of the Colonel's family.

Earlier, Hyderabad Collector Swetha Mohanty handed over documents pertaining to a 71 sq yd plot on Road No. 14 near K.B.R. Park at Banjara Hills to Ms. Santoshi. The piece of land, costing ₹20 crore, was among the three sites in Shaikhpeta mandal that were offered to Ms. Mohanty, Ms. Santoshi and other officials visited the place.

The family was already offered ₹5 crore as ex gratia. The family was already offered ₹5 crore as ex gratia.

# SC issues notice to lawyer Prashant Bhushan over tweets

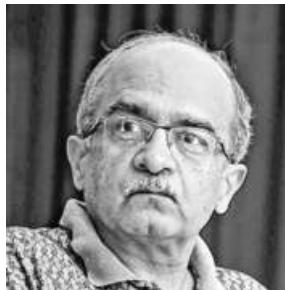
Court initiates *suo motu* contempt proceedings against him

## LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday initiated *suo motu* contempt proceedings against noted civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan, saying his tweets on its "role" in the "last six years" and a photograph of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on a motorbike undermines its dignity and the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) in the public eye.

"We are, *prima facie*, of the view that the aforesaid statements on Twitter have brought the administration of justice in disrepute and are capable of undermining the dignity and authority of the institution of Supreme Court in general and the office of the Chief Justice of India in particular, in the eyes of public at large. We take *suo motu* cognisance of the aforesaid tweet also apart from the tweet quoted above



Prashant Bhushan

and *suo motu* register the proceedings", a three-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra recorded in a written order.

The court issued contempt notice to Mr. Bhushan. It also issued notice to Attorney General K.K. Venugopal to assist the court in the proceedings. The case is scheduled for hearing on August 5.

Senior advocate Sajan Povvaya, appearing for social media platform Twitter, said the cause title of the

case showed 'Twitter Communications India Pvt Limited' as the respondent party. He said the correct description is 'Twitter Incorporated, California, USA'. The court asked the social media platform to file a reply.

## 2009 case

Meanwhile, another *suo motu* contempt case against Mr. Bhushan, dating back to 2009, is listed on July 24 before the same combination of judges. Former *Tehelka* magazine editor Tarun Tejpal is a respondent party in the case with Mr. Bhushan.

The case was initiated on the basis of an interview given by Mr. Bhushan, in which he made remarks about the presence of former CJI S.H. Kapadia on the Forest Bench of the apex court that decided the Ni-yangiri mining lease case in Odisha in favour of Sterlite Industries.

## PM Modi invites U.S. firms to invest in India

'Indian economy is reform-oriented'

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday invited U.S. companies to invest in India's healthcare, infrastructure, defence, energy, farm and insurance sectors, saying the country offers openness and opportunities.

"Today, there is global optimism towards India. This is because India offers a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options. Let me elaborate. India celebrates openness in people and in governance," Mr. Modi, said while addressing the U.S.-India Business Council.

## Economic resilience

He said the COVID-19 pandemic had shown the importance of economic resilience, which can be achieved by stronger domestic economic capacities.

"This means improved domestic capacity for manufacturing, restoring the health of the financial system and diversification of international trade," he added.

"India is emerging as a land of opportunities. Let me give you one example of



**C** India offers a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options

NARENDRA MODI  
Prime Minister

the tech sector. Recently, an interesting report came out in India. It said for the first time ever, there are more rural Internet users than even urban Internet users," he said.

Stating that open markets mean more opportunities, Mr. Modi said during the last six years the government had made many efforts to make the Indian economy more open and reformed.

Reforms have ensured increased competitiveness, transparency, digitisation, innovation and policy stability, the Prime Minister said.

## 45 RS members take oath

36 are first-timers to the Upper House

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Forty-five of the 61 newly elected members took oath on Wednesday, and for the first time, the ceremony was held inside the Rajya Sabha hall when Parliament is not in session. Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaia Naidu urged the new members "not to fall prey to the temptation of disrupting the proceedings of the House for short-term gains".

The BJP now stands at 85 members, more than double of the Congress, which is down to 40. Hence, the Rajya Sabha is no longer a road-block to any legislation proposed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

A little before the oath-taking ce-

remony commenced, BJP MP Jyoti-raditya Scindia walked across the aisle to greet members from his former party, including Congress MP Digvijaya Singh.

Mr. Scindia won't be the only former Congress MP to be sitting in treasury benches after joining the BJP. He will be accompanied by the former chief whip of the Congress in Rajya Sabha, Bhubaneshwar Kalita, who recently joined the BJP.

Out of the 45 who took oath, 36 members were first-timers to the Upper House, and 12 members have been re-elected, including NCP leader Sharad Pawar, Congress leader Digvijaya Singh, and Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and Janata Dal United leader Harivansh Narayan Singh.

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Sd/- DIRECTOR

# Rajnath lauds 'rapid use' of IAF assets

Quick deployment in forward locations sent a strong message to adversaries, says Defence Minister

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A rapid deployment of the Indian Air Force (IAF) assets in forward locations in response to the prevailing situation in eastern Ladakh sent out a strong message to India's adversaries, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at an Air Force Commanders (ACC) conference that began on Wednesday.

"Mr. Singh said that the nation's resolve to defend its sovereignty stands firm on the faith its people have in the capability of its armed forces. He alluded to the ongoing efforts for de-escalation on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and urged the IAF to stand ready to handle any eventuality," the IAF said in a statement.

Mr. Singh assured the commanders that all requirements of the armed forces, whether financial or otherwise, would be fulfilled, it stated.

Addressing the ACC, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal



Crucial meet: Rajnath Singh at the Air Force Commanders Conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ PTI

R.K.S. Bhaduria said the IAF was well-prepared to counter short-term as well as strategic threats and the units were evenly poised to counter any aggressive action by the adversary.

"He noted that the response by all Commands in ensuring deployment and readiness of forces was prompt and laudable. He emphasised on the need to focus on the ability to handle

situations at a short notice for ensuring a robust response," the statement said.

Last week, addressing troops at Lukung near Pangong Tso, Mr. Singh said the progress in the talks with China should lead to a resolution of the issue but stressed that there was no guarantee to what extent the issue would be resolved.

While some initial progress has been made in the

disengagement from the stand-off areas, its second phase has been held up despite talks at the military and diplomatic levels.

Since the beginning of the stand-off with China along the LAC in early May and the combat fatalities in the Galwan clash on June 15, the IAF has raised its alert level and forward deployed its front line fighters along the LAC. Its new inductions, the AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and CH-47F(I) Chinook heavy lift helicopters, have also been deployed in Leh.

According to a defence source, Mr. Singh also said it was incumbent on the armed forces to be prepared to respond both at a short notice as well as build and sustain military capabilities to deter any adversary in the long run.

"IAF's role in some of the most challenging circumstances is well-regarded by the nation. Their contribution during the nation's res-

ponce to COVID-19 pandemic has been highly praiseworthy," he said on Twitter.

## Rafale induction

Bolstering its capabilities amid the ongoing stand-off, on July 29, the IAF is scheduled to induct the first batch of five Rafale fighter jets from France at Air Force Station, Ambala.

The IAF had stated that its aircrew and ground crew had undergone "comprehensive training" on the aircraft, including its highly advanced weapons systems and were "fully operational now."

Post arrival, efforts would focus on operationalisation of the aircraft at the earliest, it said on Monday.

In the three-day ACC, discussions would take place on the current operational scenario and deployments. The action plan for operational capability enhancement of the IAF in the next decade would also be discussed, the IAF said.

## U.S. needs to 'go beyond' alliances, says Jaishankar

It has to learn to work with a more multipolar world, says Minister

## SIRRAM LAKSHMAN

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said that the U.S. needs to learn to work with a more multipolar world and "go beyond" alliances. His comments, made at the U.S.-India Business Council's India Ideas Summit, echoed remarks he made earlier this week that India would never be part of an alliance.

"I think the U.S. really has to learn to work ... with a more multipolar world, with more pluri-lateral arrangements, go beyond alliances with which really it has grown up over the last two generations," Mr. Jaishankar said.

"I am now specifically referring to India, given our history of independence and the fact that we really are coming [from] different places. There will be issues on which our convergence would be more, somewhere it would be less. I think the quest in the last 20 years, and I see that continuing into the future, is really to find more common ground," he said.

day, by working together to shape the world...We are working on maritime security, counter-terrorism, connectivity, how to respond to the case of corona to pandemics...even issues like climate change, the knowledge economy. So, I think a large part of it is how do we actually, while strengthening our bilateral agenda, shape a larger agenda," he said.

"Innovation-tech partnership

Mr. Jaishankar was optimistic that the trade differences between India and the U.S. could be resolved and the relationship be shifted to a "higher gear".

"This ability to work together in the world of innovation and technology, I think that is really what will set our relationship apart. There, it is vital that we have a ...very strong conver-

gence on the big picture."

Mr. Jaishankar said India was changing and the conversations India and the U.S. were currently having as, "rebalancing of the world economy conversations" where "up and coming players" have some different concerns from "established players".

"Established players obviously want, in many cases, the advantages which work for them currently to continue in the long run. I think it will be fair to accommodate the legitimate concerns of emerging economies, emerging companies, emerging technologies. And that harmonisation, how will we do that? I think that's a very important part of our relationship building," he said.

Mark Warner, Democratic Senator from Virginia and Co-Chair of the Senate India Caucus, a dissident in the panel with Mr. Jaishankar, called for a technological "alliance of the willing" to counter China's domination in the field.

"I think this idea of countering the Communist Party of China's rise and desire to dominate new technologies may be a chance for a new set of cooperation [sic] between India, the United States, based on these technology alliances," he said.

"It's important that democracies like ours work together, especially as we see more clearly than ever the true scope of the challenge posed by the Chinese Communist Party," Mr. Pompeo, currently tra-

ining in Europe, said via a recorded video message.

"Our infrastructure projects, our supply chains, our sovereignty, and our people's health and safety are all at risk if we get it wrong. The recent clashes initiated by the PLA are just the latest examples of the CCP's unacceptable behaviour. We were deeply saddened by the deaths of 20 Indian service members. I am

confident that with our concerted efforts, we can protect our interests," he said, commending India for banning 59 Chinese apps following the clashes in Ladakh.

Mr. Pompeo also said India was key to U.S. President Donald Trump's foreign policy.

"India too, is an important partner and a key pillar of President Trump's foreign policy: multi-lateralism that actually works," he said.

The Secretary listed examples of India and the U.S. working together including the Quad and the World Intellectual Property Organisation elections earlier this year in which a Singaporean candidate for director won against a Chinese candidate.



Mike Pompeo

willing in Europe, said via a recorded video message.

"Our infrastructure projects, our supply chains, our sovereignty, and our people's health and safety are all at risk if we get it wrong. The recent clashes initiated by the PLA are just the latest examples of the CCP's unacceptable behaviour. We were deeply saddened by the deaths of 20 Indian service members. I am

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## IN BRIEF



## Post-law, 82% fall in triple talaq cases: Naqvi

NEW DELHI

There has been about 82% decline in triple talaq cases since the law against the "social evil" was put in place, Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said on Wednesday, terming August 1, when the legislation came into being, "Muslim women's rights day."

## Bihar MLC Sunil Kumar Singh dies of COVID-19

PATNA

Bihar BJP MLC Sunil Kumar Singh, 69, died of COVID-19 late on Tuesday. He is the first legislator from Bihar to die of COVID-19. The BPL MLC from Darbhanga district was admitted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences here on July 13 after his sample test report was found positive. Bihar, so far, has reported 198 deaths due to COVID-19 and 28,564 positive cases.

## Punjab reports six more COVID-19 deaths

CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 414 fresh COVID-19 cases on Wednesday and reported six more deaths, taking the death toll to 269, according to an official statement. The number of positive cases has reached 11,301. The major chunk of the new cases, 81 and 73, were reported from Hoshiarpur and Ludhiana districts. Chandigarh reported 29 new COVID-19 cases.

Will discuss all disputed areas with China: Bhutan  
'Border talks delayed due to pandemic'SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

A day after China repeated its claims over Eastern Bhutan, Bhutan issued a rare statement, asserting that "all disputed areas" will be discussed when the Bhutan-China boundary talks, which have not been scheduled for four years, are held again.

"The boundary between Bhutan and China is under negotiation and has not been demarcated. Twenty-four rounds of ministerial level boundary talks have been held," a statement from the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Delhi, made available to *The Hindu*, said.

"The 25th round of boundary talks has been delayed by the coronavirus pandemic. All disputed areas will be discussed during the next round of boundary talks, which will be held as soon as it is mutually convenient," it added.

## Key statement

The statement is significant as Bhutan's government rarely comments on foreign policy issues or gives details of its talks with China, that were started formally in 1984. It also indicates that despite China making new claims on Bhutan's eastern boundary, the Sakteng forest sanctuary on the border with Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan is prepared to



Wang Wenbin

discuss these in the dialogue between them.

On Tuesday, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) had responded to questions over its assertion that Sakteng was disputed, made at the Global Environment Facility (GEF) meeting first in early June. In response, the MFA had said Bhutan's "Middle (Northern), Eastern and Western sections of the border are disputed".

Reviving reference to an earlier "swap proposal" between the Northern and Western sections of Bhutan's border, the MFA spokesperson Wang Wenbin had added, "China has proposed a package solution to these disputes. China is opposed to making an issue of such disputes at multilateral forums and China remains in communication with the relevant parties regarding this issue".

The Ministry of External Affairs has made no statement on China's claims on areas bordering Indian territory. This is showing a progressively growing upward trend.

## India records highest single-day recoveries

28,472 discharged as recovery rate mounts to 63.13%; govt.



Daily grind: A health worker screening inmates at a building in Mumbai. ■AADESH CHAUDHARI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India reported its highest ever number of recoveries on a single day, with 28,472 COVID-19 patients having been cured or discharged from hospitals in 24 hours, according to a statement from the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday.

"With this, the number of patients recovered stands at 7,53,049. This has strongly boosted the recovery rate to 63.13%", said the Ministry. It said the constantly increasing number of recovered patients had further widened the difference with active cases. "This difference is showing a progressively growing upward trend.

While the national recovery rate has improved, 19 States and union territories are posting a recovery rate higher than the national average," said the Ministry.

## Oxygen concentrators

Meanwhile, India on Wednesday received the first tranche of 4,475 oxygen concentrators from the Temasek Foundation, Singapore. The Foundation has offered to donate 20,000 concentrators to India. The remaining concentrators will be received next month and these devices will be made available to States and union territories for use in management of moderate COVID-19 cases.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, said these concentrators were helpful in the management of patients classified as moderate cases, who might require low oxygen support.

"They convert atmospheric air to therapeutic oxygen that has a concentration of 90-95%. As the machine obviates the need for transportation and refilling of heavy oxygen cylinders, they can be placed in the wards where such patients are provided care. These machines can be used at COVID Care Centres and railway coaches that have been re-purposed as COVID Care Centres," he said.

## Ghaziabad journalist dies of bullet injury

Shot days after he lodged a complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GAZIABAD

Ghaziabad journalist Vikram Joshi, who was shot at by assailants on the night of July 20, died of bullet injury on Wednesday at a private hospital, police said.

Mr. Joshi was shot four days after he lodged a complaint in the Vijay Nagar police station against three persons for harassing and making objectionable comments against his niece.

Nine persons, including two of the three main accused, Ravi and Shehnoor Mansoor alias Chhotu, were arrested on Tuesday.

Mr. Mishra said Ravi lived near Ms. Payal's residence, and the two families had a history of acrimony.



Vikram Joshi

of Pratap Vihar, who was suspended on Tuesday, was directly involved in the murder of her brother.

Superintendent of Police (City) Manish Mishra said the inquiry would look into all aspects.

Mr. Mishra said Ravi lived near Ms. Payal's residence, and the two families had a history of acrimony.

## People were promised Ram raj, got goondaraj'

Law &amp; order in U.P. has collapsed: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

was of giving 'Ram raj' but gave 'goondaraj'; Mr. Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi.

At a press conference, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said there had been a complete collapse of law and order in U.P. She said the assailants had similar criminal charges against them in other police stations too.

## 66% of private schools using WhatsApp: survey

'80% of teachers unpaid since March'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The popular image of private school education in the time of COVID-19 is the affluent child using a laptop for Zoom classes. In actual fact, over two-thirds of private schools assessed in a preliminary survey by the Central Square Foundation (CSF) are using WhatsApp, probably on a shared phone, as the main mode for teaching and learning during the pandemic. More than 80% of teachers in these schools have not been paid after March, it found.

The preliminary survey of about 90 stakeholders to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the private school system was part of a wider report on the status of the sector by CSF and Omidyar Network, released through a webinar on Wednesday.

## Budget schools

"Almost half of all students are enrolled in private schools in India today. Most of these are not elite schools; 70% of students pay less than ₹1,000 per month and 45% pay less than ₹500 per month. About three-fourth of children in urban India go to private schools," said CSF founder and chairman Ashish Dhawan.

Given that many low-income parents wait until March-April, at the time of



New normal: A student attending an online class using a phone.

## Trinamool backs virtual panel meets

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress, in a letter to both Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, has requested that meetings of parliamentary committees be held via videoconference, and that the presiding officers of both Houses have the freedom to decide the procedures for functioning of the panels.

In the letter, the party pointed out that the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Rajya Sabha and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha established that the decision of the presiding officers was final when deciding the procedure of functioning of the committees.

Both Houses have maintained that the rules have to be amended by the Rules Committees and then approved by them.

The year-end examination, to pay annual fees for the previous year, the lockdown meant that more than half of the school owners surveyed have uncollected fees ranging from ₹4 lakh to ₹4.8 crore due from the previous year. "Out of about 3,900 budget schools that I have been tracking, 58% say they have not received one paisa in fees since the lockdown," said Kulbhushan Sharma, president of the National Independent Schools Association, which has 70,000 private schools as its members.

He urged the Centre and State governments to give parents of school-going children direct benefit transfers (DBT) in order to pay fees.

Releasing the report, NITI Aayog Chief Executive Amitabh Kant said States must ensure that the reimbursements for students of Economically Weaker Sections must be paid promptly to private schools.

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Chief Medical Officer  
PPT/PR/137/2020-21 DL/22/07/2020

Mysuru District Co-Operative Milk Producers' Societies Union Ltd., Mega Dairy Complex, Bannur Road, Alanaian Post Mysuru-570028. Phone: 0821-2474475  
Mail: purum@gmail.com

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Sd/- Managing Director

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4	Improvements of roads and drains in 1st Main and surrounding areas in Rajendra Nagar Slum in ward No. 147	99.00	198000/-
5	Improvements of roads and drains in Shastrinagar main and surrounding roads in Rajendranagar slum in ward No. 147	99.00	198000/-
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7	Providing Developmental works and Improvements to SWM Properties in ward No. 151	55.00	83000/-
8	Improvement works at HT Line SWM Unit and Providing Cobble Pavers other works in 5th Block Koramangala in ward No. 151	55.50	83500/-
9	Providing and Laying Separate water Meter Each Blocks and 300mm, 200mm and 100mm dia DI water supply line to Improve water supply facility to National Games village KHB Quarters, Koramangala Coming under Koramangala S-Stn-1, of AEE SE-3 Sub Division ward No. 151	72.50	145000/-



# U.S. orders China to close Texas consulate; Beijing may retaliate

'Houston office was shut to protect intellectual property, private information'

REUTERS  
BEIJING/WASHINGTON

The United States has told China to close its consulate in Houston, both countries said on Wednesday, further deteriorating bilateral ties, and a source said Beijing was considering shutting the U.S. consulate in Wuhan in retaliation.

Washington "abruptly demanded" closure of the Houston consulate on Tuesday, China's Foreign Ministry said. The editor of an official media outlet said China had been given 72 hours to do so.

Beijing condemned the order and threatened retaliation, but did not say what measures it might take.

The State Department confirmed the decision and said the move was made "to protect American intellectual property and America's private information."

## National security cited

Speaking on a visit to Denmark, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo offered no specifics, but repeated accusations about Chinese theft of U.S. and European intellectual property, which he said were costing "hundreds of thousands of jobs."

"President Trump has said enough — we are not going to allow this to continue to happen," he told a news conference.

"We are setting out clear expectations for how the Chinese Communist party is going to behave. And when they don't, we are going to take action to protect the American people, protect our national security and also protect our economy and jobs."

"That's the actions that



**Dip in ties:** A view of the Chinese consulate in Houston, Texas, U.S., on Wednesday. • AP

you're seeing taken by President Trump, we'll continue to engage in this," said Mr. Pompeo.

The deterioration in U.S.-China ties comes in the run-up to the November U.S. presidential election, in which President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden have appeared to compete over who can look tougher in response to China.

Late on Tuesday in Houston, local media reported that documents had been burned in a courtyard at the consulate. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the consulate was operating normally, declining to comment further on those reports.

State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said the consulate was ordered shut "in order to protect American intellectual property and Americans' private information."

Under the Vienna Con-

vention, states "have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs" of the receiving state, Ms. Ortagus said.

The State Department also said China has engaged in massive spying and influence operations throughout the United States for years. "These activities have increased markedly in scale and scope over the past few years," it said.

## Violation of sovereignty'

"The United States will not tolerate the PRC's violations of our sovereignty and intimidation of our people, just as we have not tolerated the PRC's unfair trade practices, theft of American jobs, and other egregious behaviour," Ms. Ortagus said in a statement, using an acronym for China's official name, the People's Republic of China.

It was not immediately clear why China's Houston consulate had been singled out. "The unilateral closure of China's consulate general

in Houston within a short period of time is an unprecedented escalation of its recent actions against China," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular news briefing.

"We urge the U.S. to immediately revoke this erroneous decision. Should it insist on going down this wrong path, China will react with firm countermeasures."

Mr. Wang said the U.S. government had been harassing Chinese diplomats and consular staff for some time and "intimidating and interrogating Chinese students and confiscating their personal electrical devices, even detaining them."

He said the United States had interfered with China's diplomatic missions, including intercepting diplomatic pouches and confiscating Chinese items for "official use". He did not specify whether the actions were related to the Houston consulate.

The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the Chinese charges.

A source with direct knowledge of the matter said China was considering closing the U.S. consulate in Wuhan, where the State Department withdrew staff and their families early this year amid the COVID-19 outbreak that first emerged in the central city. China's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether it would shut the consulate.

Last month, the U.S. embassy in Beijing said that the United States would resume operations at the Wuhan consulate soon.

# Pandemic will get worse before it gets better, says Donald Trump

Australia reports a daily record of more than 500 infections.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The COVID-19 death toll in the United States has spiked again with President Donald Trump conceding the pandemic crisis will get worse, as record infections in Australia underscored second-wave dilemmas globally.

Nearly 15 million cases have been confirmed and 6,15,000 lives lost since the virus was first detected in China late last year.

Almost a quarter of those deaths have been in the U.S., the worst-hit nation after a scattershot response from Mr. Trump that has been dominated by him repeatedly downplaying the severity of the crisis.

With authorities reporting on Tuesday the highest daily nationwide death toll in weeks of nearly 1,000, Mr. Trump adopted a newly serious tone. "It will probably, unfortunately get worse before it gets better," the President told reporters during his first formal pandemic briefing for nearly three months.



**Work goes on:** A gardener goes about his tasks near a mural of a health worker in Mexico City on Tuesday. • AFP

Other nations, which had eased crippling lockdowns after the virus had appeared to fade, are struggling to combat second waves.

## Second wave fears

Australia on Wednesday reported more than 500 infections in a day, posting a record high nearly four months after cases appeared to have peaked. In Melbourne, Australia's second-biggest city where most of the new infections have occurred, wearing face masks will be mandatory from Thursday.

Second wave fears were

also growing in Japan's capital, with hundreds of new cases reported each day over the past week, prompting authorities to urge people to stay home during an upcoming national holiday. France also said transmissions were increasing again over the summer holiday season, after the country suffered one of Europe's worst outbreaks during the spring.

Countries with fragile health systems have yet to enjoy even a brief respite from the virus, with Mexico on Tuesday passing 40,000 deaths — the pandemic's fourth-highest national toll.

# U.S. to buy 100 million doses of vaccine

REUTERS

The U.S. government will pay \$1.95 billion to buy 100 million doses of Pfizer Inc and German biotech firm BioNTech SE's COVID-19 vaccine candidate if they are able to successfully develop one, the companies said on Wednesday.

The agreement allows the U.S. government to acquire an additional 500 million doses, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Defense said.

## Two injections

In clinical trials, Pfizer and BioNTech have been testing vaccines that require two injections.

Pfizer will deliver the doses if the product receives emergency use authorisation or licensing from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, after demonstrating safety and efficacy in a large Phase 3 clinical trial. The companies said they expect to be ready to seek some form of regulatory approval as early as October if the ongoing studies are successful.

# 'WHO's handling of COVID-19 caused deaths in Britain'

Secretary Pompeo accuses global health agency of striking a 'deal' with China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

The World Health Organization (WHO)'s actions during the COVID-19 pandemic led to "dead Britons", U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told lawmakers during a trip to London, British media reported on Wednesday.

Mr. Pompeo told a private meeting of MPs on Tuesday that the WHO had become a "political" body, alleging

that its decisions were influenced by a deal struck between chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and China that helped him become its head, according to quotes in *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph*.

"When push came to shove, when it really mattered most", people died "because of the deal that was made", he said.

Mr. Pompeo was in Britain for meetings with Prime Mi-

nister Boris Johnson and Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab focused on China, and met some Conservative party MPs during a private morning event.

The WHO said it rejected

"ad hominem attacks and unfounded allegations".

"WHO urges countries to remain focused on tackling the pandemic that is causing tragic loss of life and suffering," a spokesperson for the

organisation said on Tuesday, according to *The Telegraph*. The U.S. announced earlier this month that it would be withdrawing from the WHO, accusing it of being controlled by China.

Ties between the U.S. and China have worsened sharply this year over a range of issues, from COVID-19 and telecommunications gear maker Huawei to China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.

# Pak. journalist freed hours after abduction

Some kidnappers wore police uniforms



Matiullah Jan. • REUTERS

A top Pakistani court on Wednesday expressed alarm at the abduction of prominent journalist Matiullah Jan, who was later freed, noting that kidnappers wore police uniforms and wanted to "scare" other people too.

The Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the *habeas corpus* petition against Mr. Jan's abduction filed by his family on Tuesday. The court took prompt action and ordered Secretary Interior, Commissioner, Islamabad and Inspector General, Islamabad to produce the journalist on Wednesday or personally appear before the court.

Mr. Jan, who is highly critical of the government and the security institutions of the country, was freed on Tuesday, hours after he was abducted.

Chief Justice Minallah noted that CCTV footage showed that some kidnappers were in police uniforms. "Someone has the nerve to do such a thing in police uniforms. What impression will the public get that people are roaming around freely in police uniforms," he said.

# Imran Khan raises Kashmir issue in phone call with Sheikh Hasina

Pak. PM stressed on peaceful resolution to the dispute

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday briefed Bangladesh leader Sheikh Hasina about the Kashmir issue, Pakistan's official news agency has reported.

During a telephonic conversation, Mr. Khan discussed the COVID-19 scenario and assured the Prime Minister of Bangladesh that his country wished to have bilateral ties with Dhaka based on sovereign equality.

According to the Associated Press of Pakistan, Mr. Khan invited Ms. Hasina to visit Islamabad and drew attention to the situation in Kashmir and "stressed the importance of peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute for a safe and

prosperous region". Dhaka's official news agencies have, however, maintained silence on the Kashmir issue.

"The Pakistan Premier phoned Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at around 1 p.m. and wanted to know from her about the coronavirus situation in Bangladesh and how her government is combating the deadly disease," Bangladesh Prime Minister's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told official news agency Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha.

This was the second phone call in a year from Mr. Khan, who had earlier discussed the regional situation with Ms. Hasina before she arrived on an official visit to Delhi in October 2019, two months after India ended the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir.

Subsequently, to deal

with public anger after India stopped export of onion, Bangladesh turned to Pakistan and other countries for supplies.

## Fight against virus

During Tuesday's discussion, Mr. Khan also expressed Pakistan's condolences regarding the loss of lives in Bangladesh because of the pandemic and praised Ms. Hasina's initiatives to counter the spread of the disease.

He also sought Dhaka's support to maintain the spirit of regional cooperation under the umbrella of SAARC.

The conversation was held weeks after Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen hosted Pakistan's High Commissioner Imran Ahmed Siddiqui in the Foreign Ministry in Dhaka.

She tapped on this experience to introduce work-

# Indian-origin nurse in Singapore gets award

Service during pandemic draws praise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SINGAPORE

A 59-year-old Indian-origin nurse in Singapore has been conferred with the President's Award for Nurses for serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kala Narayanasamy was among the five nurses given the award, the Ministry of Health announced on Tuesday. Each recipient was awarded a trophy, a certificate signed by President Halimah Yacob and SGD 10,000 (\$7,228).

Ms. Narayanasamy, who is the Deputy Director of Nursing at Woodlands Health Campus, was awarded for using infection control practices she learned during the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak, in the current pandemic.

She tapped on this experience to introduce work-

flows and standard operating procedures to convert wards at the Yishun Community Hospital to care for COVID-19 patients. She is currently involved in planning for the Woodlands Health Campus, scheduled to open in 2022, drawing on almost 40 years of experience to lead the development of nursing services for the division of medicine at the campus.

She is currently involved in planning for the Woodlands Health Campus, scheduled to open in 2022, drawing on almost 40 years of experience to lead the development of nursing services for the division of medicine at the campus.

## INTERVIEW | ANDREW POLLARD

# 'India will have to deliver COVID-19 vaccine on a scale never seen before'

Even if you have a vaccine and enough doses, the logistics of preventing infection in everyone is going to be a mass vaccination programme, says Oxford scientist

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

*The remarkable progress on a COVID-19 vaccine made by Andrew Pollard, director of the Oxford Vaccine Group and chief investigator on its COVID-19 trials, and his team, holds out hope that an effective and safe vaccine might be available earlier than originally assumed, during 2021. In an interview, he shared insights into the COVID-19 endgame scenarios that might now be on the table. Edited excerpts:*

Could you explain the vaccine development process of your group, including how the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 vaccine works, and what phase the trials are in?

■ The way the vaccine works is rather similar to most of the other vaccines in development. What we are trying to do is induce immune responses to spike protein. The spike protein is the protein that decorates the surface of the coronavirus and the virus uses it in order to enter

people around the world getting vaccinated.

On the question of efficacy of the vaccine, is it possible that mutations of the virus might render the vaccine less effective than what was seen in the trials?

■ We do not know the answer to that yet. So far, we do not see evidence that the spike protein itself has mutated so that the vaccine would not work. But that is something that has to be monitored, because these viruses, as they pass on from person to person, they do make mistakes in their genetic code. That could allow these mutations to arise and for new forms of spike protein to develop. One of the reasons why this may not

have happened so far, as far as we can see, is that if they have big mutations in the spike protein, they would not be able to infect our cells any more and it would be a dead end for the virus.

How strong was the immune

response that you observed in the vaccine trials, and is it something that would inspire hope?

■ We do not know how strong an immune response is needed for protection. All we can say is that we are seeing immune responses that are better after a second dose. They are also not so bad after a first dose. We do not know if those are enough for protection, which is why we have to do these trials.

How much protection will the vaccine offer? Will the effect be uniform across the population?

■ It is likely that there will be differences in immunity between people. A particular hurdle is for older adults, especially those over 70 years of age, where we know that their immune systems just do not crank up as much when they are vaccinated.

India is expected to have possibly the world's largest number of COVID-19 cases by early 2021 — once the vaccine has been rolled out to scale, how long will it take to bring the pandemic to a halt?

■ We need to have enough doses of the vaccine availa-

ble, and then we need to be able to vaccinate enough people to stop the virus in its tracks. But that is quite a big deal.

First of all, you have got to manufacture it at an enormous scale, for a country like India, to be able to vaccinate a large proportion of the population.

Then you actually have to get out and deliver the vaccine on a scale that has never been seen before. That is also a big hurdle. Even if you have a vaccine and you have enough doses, the logistics of preventing infection in everyone is going to be a huge, mass vaccination programme.

Many countries are thinking, initially, about how to protect those at greatest risk, like hospital workers, older individuals, and those with

## MARKET WATCH

	22-07-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	37,872	-0.16
US Dollar	74.75	0.00
Gold	50,920	1.41
Brent oil	43.94	-1.94

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	312.00	-2.70
Asian Paints	1695.75	-28.50
Axist Bank	478.95	32.75
Bajaj Auto	2985.40	-18.90
Bajaj Finserv	6347.40	-36.95
Bajaj Finance	3252.00	-39.45
Bharti Airtel	569.15	1.40
BPCL	450.60	-13.60
Britannia Ind	3805.05	-75.35
Cipla	661.70	-0.60
Coal India	134.10	1.00
Dr Reddys Lab	4061.60	28.05
Eicher Motors	19890.55	-226.10
GAIL (India)	101.95	-1.85
Grasim Ind	601.80	-1.30
HCL Tech	650.15	-2.20
HDFC	1881.05	-2.60
HDFC Bank	1126.35	-12.20
Hero MotoCorp	2768.00	-101.15
Hindalco	159.90	-0.10
Hind Unilever	2248.50	-69.50
ICICI Bank	381.10	2.30
IndusInd Bank	513.55	-9.95
Bharti InfraNet	200.55	1.70
Infosys	917.90	-18.85
Indian Oil Corp	92.00	-1.45
ITC	196.55	4.30
JSW Steel	207.00	-2.95
Kotak Bank	1342.35	-16.65
L&T	920.90	-17.15
M&M	592.00	3.70
Maruti Suzuki	6003.40	-127.45
Nestle India Ltd.	17151.85	-23.75
NTPC	90.35	2.00
ONGC	82.60	0.15
PowerGrid Corp	179.65	6.00
Reliance Ind	2004.00	32.45
State Bank	192.00	-2.40
Shree Cement	21979.45	-461.30
Sun Pharma	474.30	-2.95
Tata Motors	105.15	-3.30
Tata Steel	350.05	-9.10
TCS	2190.95	-34.10
Tech Mahindra	617.95	-2.75
Titan	1057.70	42.55
UltraTech Cement	3862.65	-0.65
UPL	460.25	1.85
Vedanta	112.10	1.30
Wipro	266.00	-5.35
Zee Entertainment	157.00	3.25

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 22		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.56	74.88
Euro	85.89	86.27
British Pound	94.31	94.72
Japanese Yen (100)	69.66	69.96
Chinese Yuan	10.64	10.69
Swiss Franc	79.80	80.16
Singapore Dollar	53.78	54.02
Canadian Dollar	55.32	55.56
Malaysian Ringgit	17.50	17.60
Australian Dollar	53.09	53.36

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



BSE delivers 16,000 kg 'almonds in shell' futures

MUMBAI BSE has announced the maiden delivery of 'almonds in shell' futures at its designated warehouse in Navi Mumbai. The delivery of 16,000 kg of 'almonds in shell' was successfully completed despite the lockdown, BSE said in a statement. "For the first time, 'almonds in shell' were priced and delivered on a forward looking, market-driven basis based on the BSE futures, offering stakeholders greater transparency and certainty," said Sameer Patil, chief business officer.

**Piramal arm, Medivant in U.S. market supply pact**  
MUMBAI Piramal Critical Care (PCC), a business unit of Piramal Enterprises Ltd., has announced a strategic partnership with U.S.-based pharmaceutical outsourcing facility, Medivant Healthcare, to meet the shortage of injectable drugs in hospitals across the U.S. PCC and Medivant will work together to distribute single-dose injectable drugs in approved states for COVID-19 patients that have fallen dangerously short in supply. PCC has a marketing and sales team in the U.S., serving nearly all hospitals and surgical facilities nationwide.

**Mylan gets DCGI nod for anti-TB drug pretomanid**  
HYDERABAD Mylan on Wednesday said the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved its anti-tuberculosis drug pretomanid for conditional access under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme. Pretomanid has been developed by non-profit organisation TB Alliance and is part of a 3-drug, 6-month, all-oral regimen for treatment of pulmonary extensively drug-resistant TB and non-responsive multi-drug-resistant TB. Initially, Mylan will make the drug available via a donation of 400 courses to the NTEP.

# Tyagi calls for unified bond market, moots G-Secs in demat

SEBI chief urges first-time retail investors to invest in government debt

## LALATENDU MISHRA

MUMBAI

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairman Ajay Tyagi on Wednesday called for unification of the financial markets, adding that the corporate bond market needed reforms without any further delay.

"Unification of financial markets is an idea whose time has come. The market infrastructure for corporate bond and G-Secs markets should be integrated," Mr. Tyagi said in his inaugural address at the FICCI Capital Market Conference 'Atmanirbhar Bharat: Role of Capital Markets'.

"Having two separate ecosystems results in artificial segmentation of investors and divergent governance and regulatory norms for institutions in the two markets performing similar functions," the SEBI chief noted. The market infrastructure institutions dealing with



One to tango: Two separate ecosystems result in divergent governance, regulatory norms, says SEBI chief Ajay Tyagi. • PTI

these two types of securities should follow the same rules and regulations, he said, adding that the economies of scope and scale would also dictate such unification.

Observing that the equity markets had seen a big surge in participation of retail investors in the last few months, he said that the rise in new demat accounts indicated the entry of first-time retail investors.

He said it would be ideal for first-time investors to begin their capital markets journey by investing in risk-free government bonds. "I would suggest that, to achieve this, the G-Secs may be issued in demat form," Mr. Tyagi added.

"These new demat account holders, after gaining experience of investing in G-Secs could then gradually add other securities to their

demat accounts," he added.

Observing that the government planned to borrow an additional ₹4 trillion this year on account of COVID-19, he said the issuance of G-Secs in demat form would facilitate easier borrowing.

**Corporate bond market**  
Stating that the corporate bond repo market had not taken off as expected, he said SEBI was examining policy options to make it work, including a central clearing facility for tri-party repo trades in corporate bonds.

He said development and deepening of the corporate bond market ought to be one of the topmost agendas of the policymakers, more so considering the problems with the banking sector.

Since the market was getting restricted to top-rated corporate bonds, there was a dire need to move down the rating curve, he said.

## Bajaj Auto Q1 net halves on COVID-19 challenges

Total income declines 58% to ₹3,417 cr.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Bajaj Auto Ltd.'s first-quarter standalone net profit declined 53% to ₹528 crore for the period ending June 30, 2020, from ₹1,126 crore in the same period last year on account of challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The company's total income also declined 58% to ₹3,417 crore compared with the ₹8,197 crore in the same period last year.

"The first quarter of FY21 has been extremely challenging due to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdown and other containment and precautionary measures have resulted in disrupted supply lines and a sharp decline in overall demand," Bajaj Auto said in a statement.

"Impact of this pandemic was experienced in India and in countries that we export to. While we have res-



tarted operations, sporadic localised lockdowns are disrupting the supply chain," and impacting the return to normalcy, it added.

## Low volume

For the quarter, the company's sales volume was low at 4,43,103 units, including exports, compared with 12,47,174 units a year earlier.

As of June 2020, the company's surplus cash and cash equivalents stood at ₹4,232 crore. It was ₹4,322 crore on March 31, 2020.

## Prospects of early turnaround in commercial vehicles dim: SFL

'Sustained economic activity, infra projects may spur sales'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The prospects of an early turnaround in the commercial vehicles segment (CV) appear dim and will depend heavily on a sustained revival in economic activity. However, infrastructure projects could provide a boost to CV sales, a top executive of Sundaram Finance Ltd. said.

"While demand in the first two months of the current financial year has been virtually non-existent, supply chains have been severely

affected as well," S. Viji, chairman, Sundaram Finance Ltd. said, addressing the 67th AGM of the company. He said that the infrastructure sector could offer a big opportunity. "Budgetary allocations for this sector are significant and if various projects get under way, they could provide a boost to CV sales, a top executive of Sundaram Finance Ltd. said.

According to him, the switch-over to BS-VI norms could not have come at a worse time for the Indian automotive industry.

"Some business models of

our customers could undergo changes, which could open up new hitherto unknown opportunities for us," T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd., said. "Given the heightened uncertainty, we are aligned to opportunities that may open up in the coming months and are constantly scanning the landscape to see what new opportunities might arise," he added.

He said that there may be opportunities to acquire portfolios of NBFCs in need of funding.

## LIC Home Finance offers new loans at 6.9% interest

'Lower EMIs to help lift home demand'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

In probably the lowest in the market, LIC Housing Finance Ltd. has announced a 6.9% rate of interest on new home loans. The rate of interest for home loans up to ₹50 lakh starts from 6.9% for borrowers with a CIBIL score of 700 and maximum up to 30 years, whichever is earlier. This product caters to retired or serving employees of PSU insurers, government, railways, defence and banks entitled to pension under Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

Home loan interest rates are at an all-time low for the company, thereby resulting in low EMI payment. Attractive price points and affor-

## Tea Board to try out new auction system

'It will ensure transparency in pricing'

## STAFF REPORTER

UDHAGAMANDALAM

The Tea Board of India will soon unveil a new system to auction tea on a pilot basis at Coonoor in the Nilgiris.

Known as the "ascending" auction system, this is currently in place in Japan for fish auctions and in the Netherlands for floriculture.

Based on the recommendations of the Indian Institute of Management - Bangalore, the new platform has been developed for tea auctions.

Virtual training sessions are on for stakeholders.

The board may start the trial session in two or three weeks, M. Balaji, executive director of Tea Board said in Coonoor.

Explaining the benefits of the new system, he said that it would ensure transparency in pricing and fair play between buyers and sellers.

Sellers will have a say in the price fixed for the auction and buyers will have a choice. When the base price is fixed for a particular lot, the system will keep increasing the price at regular intervals till just one buyer is left to buy that lot.

# L&T Q1 profit plunges 79% as revenue declines 28%

Company expects more orders in next two quarters

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Larsen & Toubro reported first-quarter consolidated net profit declined 79% to ₹303 crore from ₹1,473 crore in the year-earlier period mainly on lower revenue, ₹500 crore credit provisions in financial services business and under-recovery of overheads.

**Corporate bond market**  
Observing that the corporate bond repo market had not taken off as expected, he said SEBI was examining policy options to make it work, including a central clearing facility for tri-party repo trades in corporate bonds.

He said development and deepening of the corporate bond market ought to be one of the topmost agendas of the policymakers, more so considering the problems with the banking sector.

He said development and deepening of the corporate bond market ought to be one of the topmost agendas of the policymakers, more so considering the problems

## TV PICKS

**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 11.10 a.m. (Thursday)  
**PGA Tour:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 12 a.m. (Thursday)

## IN BRIEF



Villa moves out of the relegation zone

BIRMINGHAM  
Aston Villa climbed out of the Premier League's relegation zone with one match to play after beating Arsenal 1-0. Trezeguet netted the winning goal in the 27th minute on Tuesday.

**The results:** Premier League: Watford 0 lost to Manchester City 4 (Sterling 31, 40, Foden 63, Laporte 66); Aston Villa 1 (Trezeguet 27) bt Arsenal 0.  
**Serie A:** Atalanta 1 (Muriel 62) bt Bologna 0; Sassuolo 1 (Caputo 42-pen) lost to AC Milan 2 (Ibrahimovic 19, 45+2).

## Contracts of 32 foreign coaches extended

NEW DELHI  
The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Wednesday extended the contracts of 32 foreign coaches in 11 disciplines till September-end next year to ensure continuity in the training of athletes till the Tokyo Olympics. PTI



Ali's 1996 Olympic torch donated to IOC

LAUSANNE  
On the occasion of a visit to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) headquarters on Tuesday, former Formula One Chief Executive Bernie Ecclestone donated the iconic original torch, with which Muhammad Ali lit the cauldron at the 1996 Atlanta Games, to the IOC. ANI



JEREZ  
MotoGP champion Marc Marquez could be back in action next month after his Repsol Honda team reported successful surgery to his right arm on Tuesday. Marquez suffered the injury when he crashed four laps from the end of the season-opening Spanish Grand Prix here on Sunday. REUTERS

**Indian Super League joins World Leagues Forum**  
NEW DELHI  
The Indian Super League (ISL) has been inducted into the prestigious World Leagues Forum (WLF), the association of professional football leagues which includes the likes of Premier League, LaLiga and Bundesliga. The ISL said in a release that it has become the first league from South Asia and seventh in Asia to join the WLF. PTI

# SC to hear BCCI appeal after two weeks

Board seeking extension of tenure for president, secretary

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday agreed to hear after two weeks a bunch of petitions, including one filed by the BCCI for an amendment in its constitution which may decide the tenures of its president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah.

The BCCI has urged the court to revise a rule in its new constitution which mandates that administrators have to serve a three-year cooling-off period after six successive years in the BCCI or State association.

The cooling-off period was a major recommendation by the Lodha committee to reform cricket administration in the country. A Bench of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde and L. Nageswara Rao said the court cannot hear the appli-



Wait continues: The fate of Sourav Ganguly, right, and Jay Shah, holding BCCI posts, is yet to be decided. ■ FILE PHOTO

cations next week as it would be busy with the Maratha reservations case. The BCCI application was not listed for hearing, but was mentioned.

The CJI said the separate applications by the cricket

associations of Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh would also be heard after a fortnight. TNCA's petition pertains to release of funds withheld by the BCCI during the tenure of the Committee of Administrators (CoA).

## NDTL's suspension extended for six months

The lab can move CAS within 21 days

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has suspended the accreditation of the country's National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) for another six months.

The NDTL was originally suspended in August last year for six months due to non-conformities with the International Standard for Laboratories (ISL), includ-

ing in relation to the laboratory's isotope ratio mass spectrometry (GC/C/IRMS) analytical method.

"In February 2020, when the six-month suspension period elapsed and some outstanding non-conformities had not been addressed successfully, WADA's Laboratory Expert Group (LaBEG) recommended the initiation of further disciplinary proceedings against the laboratory. These disciplinary proceedings were carried out by an independent Disciplinary Committee... while the lab-

oratory remained suspended. The disciplinary process is now complete and the second six-month suspension began on July 17, 2020," said a WADA statement.

The NDTL can move the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the decision within 21 days of receipt of the notice.

"During the period of suspension, if the laboratory satisfies the LabEG in meeting the requirements, it may apply for reinstatement prior to the expiry of the six-month suspension period. Should the laboratory not address the non-conformities by the end of the six-month suspension period, WADA may extend the suspension of the laboratory's accreditation for up to an additional six months," said WADA.

Following the suspension of NDTL, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has been sending the samples abroad for testing.

## 'No regrets but it could have ended better'

Kumble talks about his India coaching stint in an online chat with Mbangwa



Kumble. ■ FILE PHOTO

Stokes the best allrounder I have played with: Anderson

### WI IN ENGLAND

AYAN ACHARYA

James Anderson has hailed teammate Ben Stokes as the best all-rounder he has ever played with, after the 29-year-old's match haul of 254 runs and three wickets helped England level the three-match Test series in Manchester on Monday.

"It is hard to say how good he [Stokes] is because it is difficult to find the words... Joe Root said the other day that 'we are in the presence of greatness' and he is spot on," said Anderson.

"The fact that he could get into any team as a batsman... and with that his bowling and fielding speak volumes about the kind of player he is."

#### Doing everything

"After a week where he has done everything – chasing balls off his own bowling,



Anderson and Stokes. ■ FILE PHOTO

batting and getting wickets as well – it [the workload] can take its toll."

"We got to look after him and make sure we can keep getting the best out of him for as long as possible because he is becoming the best all-rounder England has ever had and there is no reason why he can't go on to be even better."

The third Test between England and West Indies will be live on Sony Six channels from July 24, 3.30 p.m.

Will be a real test for West Indies: Lloyd

'England will come through strongly'

S. DIPAK RAGAV

Former England player and coach David Lloyd feels the West Indies faces an uphill task in the deciding Test that starts on Friday at Old Trafford.

"It will be a real test for the West Indies," Lloyd said. "England will come through strongly because lads like Shannon Gabriel were suffering. He is a fast bowler and you can't do that in three back-to-back matches, whereas England rested Anderson and Archer will come back."

"England's coach said they were going to play the strongest [team] and I suppose that as Anderson, Broad, Archer and Woakes. I would play the left-arm spinner Jack Leach because the West Indies has [like] 10 right-handed batsmen," Lloyd said on the Sony Ten Pit Stop Facebook chat.

On the constant comparison of how all-rounder Ben



Stokes stacks up against former England great Ian Botham, Lloyd said, "All the talk now is 'is he better than Botham'. Well, it doesn't matter. What matters is that he changes the game."

#### Fitter and better

"Let's not forget the lad had an off-field problem that ended up in court. But he has gone away and redressed the situation and come back better, fitter and more determined."

My journey mirrored ancient paths of chess: Anand

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

KOZHIKODE  
Chess has actually grown in popularity during the coronavirus crisis.

Recently, some of the legends of chess and representatives from the UN exchanged ideas online on the occasion of the International Chess Day (July 20).

Anand, who had logged in from his home in Chennai, was asked to trace the history of chess, which was fitting given that it had originated in India.

"When I won in Iran, my journey mirrored the ancient paths of chess," he said. "I was living in Spain at that time. The two venues of the championship were New Delhi and Teheran. These were the first three countries where chess seems to have been played first."

He said he was happy that so many people had discovered chess during the pandemic.

## Anand defends well to hold Carlsen

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

Troubled in the middle-game, Viswanathan Anand defended accurately to split the point in the first game against Magnus Carlsen in the second round of chess24 Legends of Chess on Wednesday.

After surrendering the first round to Peter Svidler

1.5-2.5, following a one-move blunder in the fourth game, Anand was under pressure between moves 21 and 34, when Carlsen's rook and bishop-pair threatened to prove superior to Anand's rook, knight and bishop.

But the Indian managed to trade his knight for a bishop on the 35th move and thereafter, Carlsen could not ex-

ert any pressure. Nine moves later, draw was agreed following repetition of moves.

World No. 3 Ding Liren, stunned by Boris Gelfand in the first round, lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi in the only decisive game of the round before Vladimir Kramnik let Anish Giri off the hook.

**Second round results: Game One:** Magnus Carlsen (Nor) drew with Viswanathan Anand; Vassily Ivanchuk (Ukr) drew with Boris Gelfand (Isr); Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus) bt Ding Liren (Chn); Peter Svidler (Rus) drew with Peter Leko (Hun); Vladimir Kramnik (Rus) drew with Anish Giri (Ned).

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## We are among the favourites: Vidit

India starts its campaign in the FIDE Online Olympiad on Aug. 21



Vidit Gujrathi. ■ FILE PHOTO

the format once India finishes with its engagements in the 25-team top division.

"When I checked on Tuesday, there were 40 teams in the Top division, divided into four groups of 10 each. Now I discover the number of countries stands reduced to 25. As per the email from FIDE, the timings of the final phase of matches will be decided after ascertaining the time zones of the qualified teams."

Getting to lead the Indian team that includes seniors like Viswanathan Anand, P. Harikrishna, K. Humpy and D. Harika, Vidit saw it as an honour, and an opportunity

to return with a medal.

"Without doubt, we are among the favourites. Our juniors are most talented and grossly under-rated (as per rapid ratings). The average rating of the team (2419) does not reflect our true playing strength. With Anand around, it will be a big plus for India."

"With Anand busy playing in the Legends of Chess, Hari away in Biel, and Humpy and Harika involved in speed chess, I am in touch with the junior members of the team."

He charges ₹50 apiece for his three-layered cotton masks featuring Madhubani motifs. "We also have masks with catchy slogans like 'go corona' and 'namaste karna hai, haath nahi milana hai' (greet each other with folded hands, don't shake hands)," he said.

He orders his cotton fabric from Warangal in Telangana. "I am quite particular about choosing the right fabric. My first priority is the safety and satisfaction of my customers," the artist said. He can be contacted at 8789183527 or 9899429912.

## Madhubani artist turns 'mask man' of Bihar

Turning his traditional skills to the need of the hour, Remant Kumar Mishra makes trendy safety wear



Practical art: Remant Kumar Mishra with his creations.

comfortable to wear but also look ethnic and trendy," Mr. Mishra, who has been a Madhubani artist from the age of 10, told *The Hindu*. His grandmother, mother, wife and other family members al-

so paint in the Madhubani style. "In every household here, you can find a Mithila painting artist," he said.

Ranti under the Rajnagar block is another hub for this craft tradition. Mythological

characters, and aspects of nature are central motifs in this style of painting, originally rendered only with fingers and natural colours. "But now we use brushes, nib-pens and synthetic colours as well to paint Mithila art," said Mr. Mishra.

Mr. Mishra's phone has been ringing constantly with orders after photos of his masks went viral on social media. "I heard that social activist and writer Adwaita Kala tweeted about my masks, which helped other people all over the country find out about them. I am thankful to her," he said, adding that he now engages nearly 300 villagers, including 15 tailors from his locality, in painting masks.

He has been receiving or-

ders from all over the country and in the past three months, has sent over 14,000 masks in sanitised packages on a first come-first served basis.

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