



SC stays green tribunal's order in Visakhapatnam gas leak case

page 8



Shah holds all-party meet on COVID-19 situation in New Delhi

page 10



Odisha woman drags 100-year-old mother to bank on a cot

page 10



U.K.'s Johnson announces inequality review, but critics want more

page 12

State reports highest spike of 178 deaths

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

Maharashtra reported its highest rise in COVID-19 deaths on Monday, with the virus claiming 178 more lives to take its toll to 4,128. As many as 2,786 new cases took the tally to 10,477.

As per the State Health Department, the number of active cases has come down to 50,554. With the discharge of 5,071 patients, the number of recoveries till date is 56,049. State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said the recovery rate has increased from an average 47% in the last few days to 50.61%. The case fatality rate, too, has climbed to 3.70%.

Mumbai reported 1,067 new cases and 68 deaths. In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, 20 deaths were reported from Vasai-Virar, 13 from Mira-Bhayandar, 12 each from Thane and Navi Mumbai and seven from Kalyan-Dombivali. While 14 deaths were reported from Pune, 13 from Dhule, and more from Solapur, Nashik and Jalna.

All India GS Prelims Test Series (4500 Qs) Weekly Test crack IAS 8000/- ₹ 921-7070707

2 Indian High Commission staff abducted, released by Pakistan

Signs of assault on men; Delhi issues strong protest to Pak. High Commission

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Two Indian nationals, employed as drivers in the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, went missing for several hours on Monday, in a suspected case of abduction by local security agencies.

Paul Selvadhas and Dwimu Brahma were, however, later released by authorities in Pakistan after India lodged a strong protest.

Upon the release of Mr. Selvadhas and Mr. Brahma, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs claimed in a note that both the drivers were involved in a traffic accident in the morning and were arrested. The initial police report had claimed that the duo were involved in fake currency circulation, though the issue remains unconfirmed by the Pakistan foreign office.

Visible injuries
Informed Indian sources said visible injuries on the two show that they were beaten up in police custody. They underwent medical tests upon returning.

The two drivers went out on Monday morning but failed to return to the mission, prompting a frantic search amid concerns that

Case diary

A brief timeline of the case of Indian workers who went missing in Pakistan

- Paul Selvadhas and Dwimu Brahma, drivers at the High Commission, go missing on Monday morning
- Abduction by Pakistan security agencies suspected
- India summons Pakistan Charge d'Affaires Syed Haider Shah, demands release of the drivers
- Local police release both late in the evening
- Evidence of injury and physical assault being evaluated by the Indian mission's medical team
- Pakistani authorities accuse the two of hit-and-run case and fake currency circulation

two were possibly taken away by Pakistan's security agencies. In response, India summoned Syed Haider Shah, the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and handed over a strong note of protest.

"The demarche to the Pakistan CDA made clear that there should be no interrogation or harassment of the Indian officials. The responsibility for the safety and security of the concerned diplomatic personnel lay squarely with the Pakistani authorities," said informed sources.

The sources confirmed the Pakistanis had also taken possession of at least one



vehicle belonging to the Indian mission.

Diplomatic sources from Pakistan said their government would make further statements regarding the case.

Pak. staffers expelled

The incident comes a fortnight after India expelled two employees of the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi on espionage charges. Abid Hussain and Mohammed Tahir were accused of behaviour "incompatible with their status as members of a diplomatic mission" and were asked to leave India within 24 hours.

Since the expulsion, the Indian mission in Pakistan

has witnessed persistent harassment of diplomats and non-diplomatic staff. The daily harassment had become serious, and India had sent a note verbale last Friday to ensure its officials are treated according to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961, and the Code of Conduct of 1992 that ensures safety of Indian and Pakistani diplomats during hostile exchanges.

The note from Islamabad's MoFA states Mr. Brahma has been working at the Indian mission since September 8, 2017, and Mr. Selvadhas arrived soon after. The abduction of the drivers along with their vehicles, apparent physical assault and charging them with crimes, is part of the high tension diplomacy between the two countries.

Govt. U-turn
Just last Friday, Mr. Palaniswami had rejected speculation that a lockdown was likely for Chennai and its neighbouring districts. The Tamil Nadu government in its submission to the Madras High Court had also said

there was no such proposal.

When asked about the sudden rethink, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam told *The Hindu*, "The figures were going up. Medical experts, too, recommended restrict-

12-day complete lockdown in Chennai as cases spike

Tough curbs in T.N. capital, neighbouring districts from June 19

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

In view of the rising number of COVID-19 positive cases in the State capital, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Monday announced a further 12-day 'complete lockdown' in Chennai and certain parts of Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur districts between June 19 and 30. Certain essential supplies and services will be allowed to function.

Mr. Palaniswami's announcement followed recommendations by medical experts and a Cabinet meeting earlier in the day. He said that on June 21 and 28 (Sundays), the shutdown will be complete, except for milk supply and access to medical facilities.

Govt. U-turn
Just last Friday, Mr. Palaniswami had rejected speculation that a lockdown was likely for Chennai and its neighbouring districts.

Provision and grocery stores and petrol bunks would be allowed to function between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. by maintaining physical distancing norms.

"The general public are advised to buy essential supplies without using their vehicles and from stores that are located within 2 km from their residences," Mr. Palaniswami said.

Banks with 33% of staff would be allowed to operate


The general public are advised to buy essential supplies without using their vehicles and from stores that are located within 2 km from their residences
EDAPPADI K. PALANISWAMI
Chief Minister, Tamil Nadu

Karnataka changes rules

The Karnataka government has announced mandatory institutional quarantine of three days for those coming from Delhi and Tamil Nadu, followed by 11 days of home quarantine.

Secretary T.M. Vijay Bhaskar said those coming from Maharashtra would continue to have institutional quarantine for seven days, followed by seven days of home quarantine. ▶ PAGE 8

ing relaxations. We also want to control the movement of people going out of Chennai to other districts."

Provision and grocery stores and petrol bunks would be allowed to function between 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. by maintaining physical distancing norms.

"The general public are advised to buy essential supplies without using their vehicles and from stores that are located within 2 km from their residences," Mr. Palaniswami said.

Restaurants can operate only takeaway services, while tea shops will be shut again. Food delivery services are allowed and employees involved should get the necessary ID cards from their employers.

on June 29 and 30 alone. ATMs and related banking services and transport would function as usual. Though autorickshaw, taxi and private vehicles would not be allowed during the complete lockdown, they would be allowed if used for essential medical requirements.

Restaurants can operate

only takeaway services,

while tea shops will be shut again.

Food delivery services are allowed and employees involved should get the necessary ID cards from their employers.

Petrol, diesel prices highest since Oct. 2018

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The price of petrol and diesel was hiked for the ninth consecutive day on Monday. Fuel rates are now the highest since October 2018, when crude oil prices were at a record high. The price of petrol was hiked by 46 paise per litre and diesel by 59 paise a litre.

Since June 7, when oil firms resumed daily revision of prices following an 82-day hiatus, petrol prices have gone up by ₹4.98 a litre and diesel prices by ₹5.23 a litre.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

‘Nepal move on altering map is unilateral, talks difficult now’

We share close ties: Rajnath

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's move to bring a constitutional amendment that alters Nepal's map to include territory in India has "prejudged" any future discussions, said New Delhi, virtually ruling out talks with Kathmandu for the moment.

With the vote on changing the map depicted in the Nepali national symbol to include Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura being passed unanimously in the Lower House of the Nepal Parliament on Saturday, and another one expected to go through the Upper House

this week, the Modi government appeared to take a tougher stand with Kathmandu than it has in the past few weeks.

However, comments by sources, who refused to be identified, were at variance with Defence Minister Raj-

ties went beyond mere geographical or political ties to spiritual connections and a *roti-beti vyavahar* (consanguinity and inter-dining, a sociological term to describe close kinship relations). ▶ PAGE 9

nath Singh's comments, at a party address on Monday, that the issues would be resolved through dialogue.

"We have always conveyed our willingness to talk," sources said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

State reviews virus data as Oppn. cries cover-up

SHARAD VYAS

MUMBAI

With the COVID-19 pandemic completing 100 days in the State on Monday, the administration has ordered a full-fledged review of the official data on infections and fatalities – the highest in the country so far – even as the Opposition alleged that several deaths caused by the virus had been covered up.

Former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has alleged that 451 deaths from the virus in Mumbai have been labelled non-COVID-19 fatalities by the BMC death audit committee, while 500 more have not been presented before the committee as yet. This was a breach of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) norms, he said, and urged Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to punish those responsible for what he termed "not just unforgivable negligence but a criminal conspiracy."

Chief Secretary Ajoy Mehta, while admitting to "discrepancies" in the manual

loading of data to the ICMR website, said there was no deliberate suppression of figures. In several cases, the cause of death may have been shown as COVID-19, while the actual reason may have been cardiac arrest or renal failure, he said.

"There is no question of suppression of facts and figures, even as there are political allegations we have heard data. We will probe any instance where the mismatch has been deliberate. However, these have mostly been inadvertent errors, if any, during the manual phase of data uploading," Mr. Mehta told *The Hindu*.

"Now that the matter has come to light, the government and Chief Secretary have sent a letter to local bodies for a reconciliation drive, saying it wants to update the complete statistics on COVID-19. This is a deliberate attempt to hide what has happened, strict action needs to be taken," Mr. Fadnavis wrote to the CM.

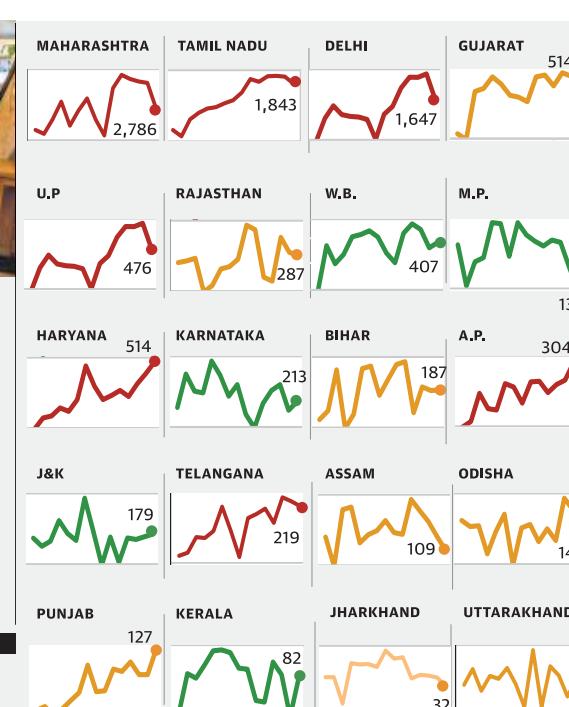
DETAILS ▶ PAGE 3



Virus tracker

Due to a drastic decrease in the number of samples tested on Monday, the number of new cases also fell significantly. The line graphs depict the new cases in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases in the latest seven days is much higher than the previous seven days, then the cases are rising in that State; if it is lower, then cases are dropping; if it is similar, then the cases are flattening.

NEW CASES AND DEATHS IN INDIA
CASES 9,982
DEATHS 394
7 DAY-CHANGE -2.1%
7 DAY-CHANGE +42.2%



THE FIGURES IN THE GRAPHS INDICATE THE NUMBER OF NEW CASES RECORDED AS OF 11 P.M. ON MONDAY



NEW TESTS CONDUCTED IN INDIA

In India, the number of new samples tested came down drastically on Monday. Only 1,15,519 samples were tested, a significant drop from the 1,51,432 samples tested the day before. All data as of 9 a.m. every day



1.6 lakh Jun. 9 Jun. 15

India, China military commanders hold talks

Stand-off along LAC enters 7th week

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

In continuation of the ground-level dialogue to resolve the ongoing stand-off on the border, India and China on Monday held talks at the Brigade Commander and Commanding Officer-level in the Galwan area of eastern Ladakh, defence sources said.

The talks were focused on

INTERVIEW | DR. SHASHANK JOSHI

'Mumbai may see a second peak after unlocking'

COVID-19 task force member says mortality rate in State came down due to some strategic interventions

JYOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

It has been 100 days since SARS CoV-2 hit Maharashtra on March 9, when a Dubai-return couple first tested positive in Pune. The State has now clocked 1,10,744 cases and 4,128 deaths, the highest in the country. A task force of senior doctors formed in mid-April has been the guiding force to tackle the deluge of infections. The Hindu speaks to Dr. Shashank Joshi, member of the COVID-19 task force, on the current scenario:

Three months down the line, what have been the crucial learnings about the disease?

■ The virus is predictably unpredictable and its transmission route is not just droplet but can be airborne and gastrointestinal, therefore masking becomes mandatory. Most treatments are supportive, and for asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic, home-based care is possible if a person has a room and toilet to quarantine and has digital connectivity with a doctor. Most people with COVID-19 recover and do well except the vulnerable groups. Obesity, diabetes, hypertension and chronic illnesses are the main co-morbidities for COVID-19. We all



Dr. Shashank Joshi ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

so learnt that patients can be discharged from the hospital if they are asymptomatic for three days and they don't need to do a test later as the virus becomes non-replicative in about 10 days.

You had been vocal about Mumbai being at its peak at the end of May. Why does the city continue to see an average of 1,300 cases every day if we are past the peak?

■ Mumbai was past the peak from May 14 to May 31. Many deaths now are of that time

who got infection then. A second peak may come after unlocking. It's now for people to cooperate, as the government and doctors have done their bit.

One of the key tasks of the task force was to bring down the mortality rate. However, the average deaths have gone up rapidly in Maharashtra as well as Mumbai. What are the reasons?

■ No, they have not gone up. In fact, if you notice, a lot of old records have been

streamlined and the numbers are of the last three months and during the peak. The mortality rate, which was around 10%, dropped to 3% by some strategic interventions. The task force's mandate to drop the mortality rate was ensured by aggressive treatment and judicious use of oxygen therapy, which emerged as the key intervention. A clear myth buster was ventilators don't save lives but high flow nasal oxygen and prone position do. The task force ensured that vulnerable populations from slums like Dharavi were checked for oxygen saturation and were taken to COVID care facilities if the saturation was below 92%. This helped save lives. Also, lifesaving medicines used in right time made all the difference like antivirals, IL6 blockers, and plasma therapy.

Are deaths being under-reported in Mumbai?

■ Deaths in Mumbai are under stringent audit and scrutiny. In fact some may be even over-reported. COVID-19 possibly and sadly shortened lives of some terminally ill patients like those suffering from cancer, chronic kidney disease, and

chronic liver disease.

What have been the key contributions of the task force so far?

■ The task force has focused on screening oxygen protocols, field hospitals protocols as well as mortality and standard of care protocols, which are adaptive to locoregional needs. Our primary aim is to save lives.

Has the task force started focussing on areas outside Mumbai which have a high mortality rate? For example, Jalgaon, Malegaon, Dhule and so on.

■ In Maharashtra hotspots, through regular videoconferences, the task force helps make the best of the currently available resources and the government has focused on ensuring they have the right medicine and equipment. The task force has a live document which is constantly updated on what's published globally and what's possible locally.

What is your prediction of the disease here on?

■ Clearly, we have to live with SARS CoV-2. We will get better treatment and vaccines in the next two years. We will mindfully gradually unlock and start fresh again.

Postmaster General lends staff, families a helping hand

Four dead; 29 COVID-19 positive employees are from Mumbai circle

ADITYA ANAND

MUMBAI

The office of the Postmaster General, Mumbai, has thrown its weight behind employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 and their families.

The postal department has lost four people to the pandemic, while nearly 40 employees and their family members have tested positive across Mumbai.

India Post Mumbai has put together Supporting Officials with Friendship and Treatment (SOFT) teams that are tasked with providing immediate support to infected officials by getting them admitted to hospitals, taking care of their families and supplying groceries, vegetables and medicines while they are quarantined.

A special focus is on the men and women who have worked tirelessly during the past few months delivering

medical equipment, personal protective equipment kits and agricultural commodities across the city and suburbs, along with ensuring food packets reached migrant workers when they needed it the most. "We started doing this about two months ago on realising this had come to our doorstep as well," said Swati Pandey, Postmaster General, Mumbai.

Liaison with corporators

The department's teams liaison with ward officers, local corporators and members of Parliament to get things moving in terms of testing and hospital admission, she said. "We have ensured that all our symptomatic staff have not had to struggle with identifying hospitals and available beds." While one team member looks after the hospitalisation, another takes charge of the patient's family's needs. "We ensure that there is proper handholding. Both the patient and his family's mental health and well-being are kept in mind," said Ms. Pandey, who, along with other officers, speaks to them directly.

Of the nearly 40 employees

who tested positive, 29 are from the Mumbai circle while the others are part of airmail sorting and other units.

7 deaths in State

Across the State, 74 employees have tested positive, seven of whom have died. All of these employees have been on the frontline during the lockdown, delivering essential supplies. Families of the deceased will receive ₹10 lakh each under a government of India scheme.

"They need to feel emboldened. Even after they are back home, we help them with their needs," said Ms. Pandey. The help was not a form of charity, which can become a habit, she said. "Most of those who have recovered have returned the money that was spent."

As Unlock I is opening up the city, the Postmaster General, Mumbai, has also made a request that postmen be allowed to use the local trains as they too are essential service personnel. Though not on the State government list, the department is hopeful its demand will be met and a backlog of letters and parcels can be delivered.

NMMC wants NOC of Delhi Public School cancelled after fee collection complaints

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) has requested the State Education Department to cancel the no objection certificate (NOC) granted to Delhi Public School, Nerul.

A letter in this regard was sent on June 11 by deputy municipal commissioner Nitin Kale, after many parents approached the civic body with complaints against the school.

"On May 20, the school sent us a notice that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the classes would be conducted online and they would provide the students quality education. Everything in the notice was as per the government guidelines, except that they were asking for the fees.

Mr. Kale said the government had issued a notification that schools should not levy fees during the lockdown period or coax parents to pay the fees. "Following complaints by parents that the school was charging the fees, we sent a notice to the school administration. Since

there was no reply to the notice, the administrator and the extension officer from the NMMC visited the school. The school, however, did not cooperate with the officers during their enquiries and the officers submitted a negative report of the school. Hence, we wrote to the State government urging it to cancel the NOC," he said.

Sunil Choudhary, a parent

whose children are in Classes VI and IX, along with 200 other parents, had been writing to the corporation, complaining against the school.

"On May 20, the school sent us a notice that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the classes would be conducted online and they would provide the students quality education. Everything in the notice was as per the government guidelines, except that they were asking for the fees.

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Despite several attempts,

the principal of the school, J. Mohanty, could not be reached for comment.

COVID-19 situation in State a 'tragedy of errors': experts

100 days after, experts dissect State and Centre's decisions to contain the virus

JYOTI SHELAR

MUMBAI

Maharashtra's COVID-19 crisis is the result of many factors – failure of collective action between the Centre and the State, lack of Mumbai-specific approach to fight against the virus, and a blanket implementation of lockdown without a plan to utilise the time effectively and prepare the health system.

These are some of the observations of health experts and activists who have closely analysed the turn of events over the last 100 days, since Maharashtra recorded its first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus on March 9. The State is now a red zone, accounting for nearly 32% of India's cases and 41% of the deaths.

While the healthcare system continues to crumble under the pressure, a new wave of cases is anticipated as the State begins to unlock in phases.

Tragedy of errors

Virologist Dr. T Jacob John termed Maharashtra's situation as a tragedy of errors. He said responding to such large-scale epidemics is the Centre's job, as per India's constitutional norms.

"I don't think Maharashtra was properly advised, warned, and given a blueprint by the Centre to follow. So, when the epidemic hit, Maharashtra was under-prepared," Dr. Jacob John said, adding the Indian government was too slow to react and it should have acted be-



Workers take a quick nap during a traffic jam on the Western Express Highway, Kandivali. ■ FILE PHOTO

fore the virus came into the country in January. "Our parliament was adjourned only on March 23. What message does this send to all States? That everything is normal?" According to Dr. Jacob John, Kerala managed to take independent decisions while most other States did not. "Maharashtra should have activated its think-tank as Kerala did."

He said that the lockdown gave a false impression of supreme confidence but the reality was that it was not going to work in extremely congested places like Mumbai. "Mumbai is the economic engine and the city had to be protected with extra care. But a Mumbai-specific approach was never taken," he said.

Long-term repercussions

Experts highlighted how the governments – the State as well as the Centre – had a casual approach about the upcoming threat.

"We knew about the possible threat since December end. Yet, at the airports, most people got a safe passage even as they were asymptomatic carriers of the virus. Why did we implement compulsory quarantining of passengers?" questioned Soumitra Ghosh, a

professor from the School of Health System Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

He said there continues to be a rise in cases because the epidemic could not be arrested in time. "In Wuhan, they managed to mobilise manpower of 43,000 in two weeks. How many doctors, intensivists have been brought to Mumbai from other parts? There is an absolute lack of collective action between the Centre and the State even as Maharashtra dabbles with the surge," Mr. Ghosh said, warning that the mishandling of the situation has caused great disruptions and the long-term repercussions, especially in patients requiring non-COVID-19 treatment, would be worrisome.

A crude instrument

Public health expert Dr. Abhay Shukla said the generalised lockdown had a dampening effect than a precise outcome. "Take the examples of South Korea or Kerala, where the entire focus was on intensive outreach, testing, contact tracing, isolation, and containment or micro containment," Dr. Shukla said, adding that with such strategies, the need for a blanket lockdown would have been less.

Bank staff denied access to local trains

Unions urge IBA to intervene as banking an 'essential service' too

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The resumption of suburban train services in Mumbai has caused a major controversy, with bank staff being denied access as they are not included in the list of essential services by the State government.

When the nationwide lockdown was imposed in March by the Centre, banking was part of the permitted essential services.

Bank unions have written to the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), asking it to take up the matter with relevant authorities so that bank employees can also avail the train services to reach work.

"On one side, the government expects banks to extend local railway travel facility to bank employees," the letter, addressed to the

chief executive of the IBA, said. Local trains for essential service workers such as health, civic and police personnel started on Monday morning.

Ticket windows were opened for commuters, but passes were issued only to those who furnished a government identity card.

Earlier, the bank unions had demanded transport facility and implementation of safety measures to bank staff as at least 11 employees lost their lives due to the deadly virus in Mumbai and surrounding areas.

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, has temporarily shut three branches – two in Mumbai and one in Thane – after eight staff members tested positive for COVID-19.

Smooth ride on locals after 84 days, but confusion prevails

CR, WR run 362 services; double checking of ID cards of essential staff before they are allowed to board trains



Day one: People engaged in essential services alight from a local train at Mumbai Central on Monday; (right) the Central Railway has marked circles to ensure physical distancing at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

■ EMMANUEL YOGIN ■ SALMAN ANSARI

CR, WR run 362 services;

double checking of ID cards of essential staff before they are allowed to board trains

AJET MAHALA

MUMBAI

After a gap of 84 days, Mumbai's lifeline – its local trains – was back on the tracks on Monday, though partially, with 362 suburban services resuming across the network to ferry essential staff.

The response on the first day was muted as many did not know of the decision to run trains which was taken late on Sunday night after a series of discussions between officials of the Railways and the State government.

Commuters were allowed entry into the station area only after their ID cards were checked. There was a second round of checking at the ticketing counter with tickets being issued only after ID cards were checked. Railways officials said the State government, through the Mumbai Police, was working on a QR code-based e-pass system for commuters. Sainath Rajadhyaksha, executive president of the Brihanmumbai Mun-

icipal Engineers' Union, said not many turned up on Monday because few knew about services running.

Some ambiguity

There was also some ambiguity over "essential services staff". Many bank employees turned up at the stations. Chetan Pandya, who lives in Kalbaudi and works in a cooperative bank in Vile Parle said, "The officials at the station were very helpful and supportive in the morning, and told me that trains were operating as per fast locals with few stops. I took a train from Mumbai Central and got down at Andheri. However, when I reached Andheri station to go back home in the evening, I was told that bank employees were not allowed.

If they are starting after such a long time, they should think about everyone and resume services properly," he said.

It was only by the end of the day that some clarity

came that staff of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and other municipal corporations in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the Mumbai Police, those working at Mantralaya and other central government institutions, as well as medical workers at government and private hos-

pitals would be allowed to travel on trains.

Western Railway (WR) earned ₹6 lakh during the morning peak time by issuing 3,521 tickets and 1,466 season passes. The Railways had allowed season pass holders to extend the validity of their passes to compensate for the days lost on the cur-

rent passes due to the lockdown. On WR, 190 persons availed this facility. CR and WR ferried around 30,000 people each through the day.

Services on both CR and WR started around 5 a.m. Ashok Tiwari was steering a train after nearly three months, when he reported for duty for the 5.30 a.m. lo-

cal from Virar to Churchgate.

"We had been doing daily revision sessions and keeping ourselves up to date with the signal placements and other technical aspects. Initially, there was little anxiety. After I made the first halt at Nallasopara, the confidence came back," he said. The Brihanmumbai Elec-

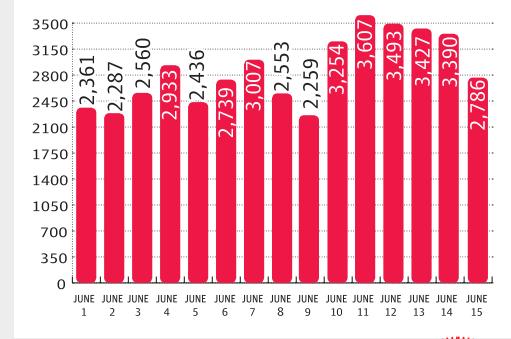
Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
1,0,744	2,786	50,554	56,049	4,128

DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	59,293	2,250	Hingoli	242	1
Thane	18,732	480	Sangli	246	7
Pune	12,411	494	Nanded	241	10
Aurangabad	2,786	135	Yavatmal	190	3
Nashik	2,006	104	Latur	181	8
Palghar	2,476	71	Osmanabad	150	5
Raigad	1,932	72	Sindhudurg	156	0
Solapur	1,889	133	Buldhana	125	3
Jalgaon	1,783	135	Parbhani	82	3
Akola	1,026	42	Gondia	71	0
Nagpur	1,046	12	Beed	75	2
Satara	752	28	Gadchiroli	49	1
Kolhapur	729	8	Chandrapur	50	0
Ratnagiri	435	17	Nandurbar	66	4
Dhule	433	39	Bhandara	50	0
Anhravati	351	21	Wardha	14	1
Jalna	260	8	Washim	53	2
Ahmednagar	246	9			

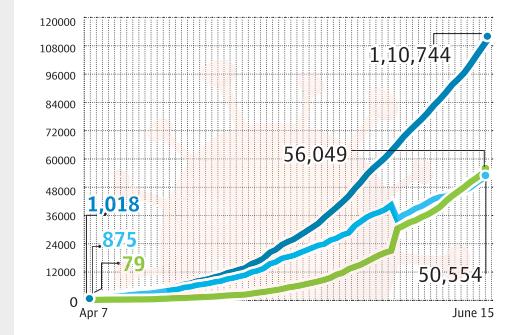
POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS



1,067 (38.29%) of Monday's cases are from Mumbai



CASES TREND

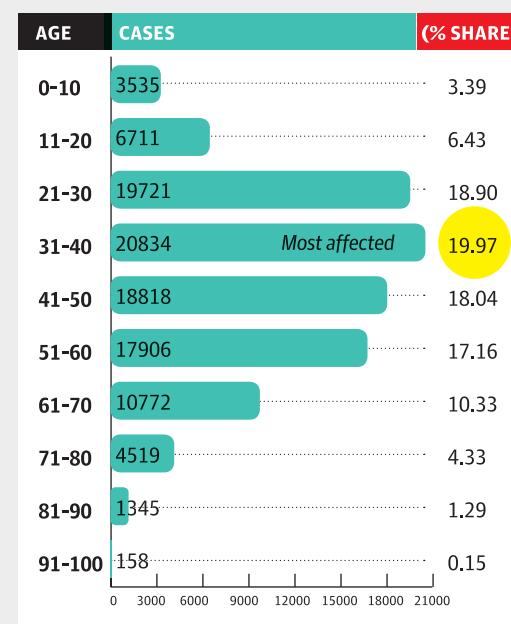


47.22% is the State recovery rate

MORTALITY RATE

Maharashtra 3.66%
India 2.86%

AFFECTED (AGE-WISE)



QUARANTINE NUMBERS



HELPLINE NUMBERS

Toll free number: 104/1075
Maharashtra: 020-26127394
National: 1075/1800-112-545/011-23978046
State helpline email id: ssumarashtra@gmail.com

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

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

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

State to reconcile COVID-19 data, detect glitches in reporting

'Discrepancies' in manual loading of data, no suppression of figures: Chief Secretary

SHARAD VYAS
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government is carrying out a large-scale data reconciliation exercise to remove glitches in the State's COVID-19 figures. Chief Secretary Ajay Mehta, while admitting to "discrepancies" in the manual loading of data to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) website, said there was no deliberate suppression of figures.

Mr. Mehta said on Monday that in several cases, the cause of death may have been shown as COVID-19, while the actual reason may have been cardiac arrest or renal failure.

"There is no question of suppression of facts and figures, even as there are political allegations we [State government] have buried data. We will probe any instance where the mismatch has been deliberate. However, mostly these have been inadvertent errors, if any, during the manual phase of data uploading," Mr. Mehta told *The Hindu*.

The State government is likely to release the final tally



Keeping track: Public health nurses update patient records at Pila Bungalow primary health centre in Dharavi. ■ FILE PHOTO

of the corrected figures on Tuesday, he said.

The State government had first started testing and screening for COVID-19 cases in January. The very first case in Maharashtra was detected on March 9, and while the testing facilities were limited to two labs at the time, currently 98 laboratories are conducting RT-PCR tests to detect the virus.

In the earlier phase of data collection, laboratories were informing swab results over email or phone to the Public Health Department, followed by a hard copy.

Subsequently, the Union

Ministry of Health provided direct access to ICMR portal, to which all ICMR-approved laboratories are entering data in real time, Pradeep Vyasa, principal secretary (health), said. In a letter to all district and municipal bodies, he wrote, "Now Chief Secretary has directed a data reconciliation drive to be completed at the earliest by June 15. In this, each district and municipal corporation should inform number of cases discharged, number of deaths and active cases, until midnight of June 6. Any data mismatch brought to notice after this would be viewed

very seriously."

The exercise is also necessary, officials said, to know the exact load of active cases and for better planning to utilise the health infrastructure. Government offices have also been asked to carry out data cleaning of all records directly sent to districts collectors and municipal commissioners.

The opposition parties have alleged the government's COVID-19 data collection has been poor. "I visited my constituency ward office today to demand data on patients admitted and funds the government may have used on quarantine facilities and treatment. But in 80% of these cases, the local ward could not provide me any data," said former BJP minister and suburban legislator Yashwant Sagar.

Mr. Mehta said the final report would be compiled in the next two to three days and all "discrepancies" would be addressed immediately. "There is no confusion from our end. We are just reconciling data by cleaning it from how it was stored manually earlier."

City sees over 1,000 new cases, 68 deaths

Total cases inch towards 60,000-mark

JYOTI SHELAR
TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Mumbai recorded 1,067 new cases of COVID-19 on Monday, taking the city's tally to 59,293. The city also recorded 68 more fatalities, pushing the death toll to 2,250.

Ward watch

Dharavi reported 25 new cases, taking its tally to 2,068. The area reported 77 deaths so far. G North, in which Dharavi lies, has reported 3,834 cases so far (second highest), of which 1,333 are active cases.

K East ward (Andheri East) crossed the 4,000-mark on Monday, the highest in Mumbai. It now has 4,076 cases of which 2,206 are active. The city now has nine wards with over 3,000 cases each. S (Bhandup, Powai) and N (Ghatkopar) wards were the latest to join this group.

The city's average daily case growth rate now stands at 2.65% while its doubling rate is 27 days.

F North ward has a doubling rate of 55 days while M East has a doubling rate of 53 days. There are four other wards in the city with a doubling rate of over 40 days each.

BMC ramps up contact tracing; home quarantine shows results

10.69 lakh contacts of over 55,000 cases traced

TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has ramped up contact tracing, especially in slums, and municipal wards with the most number of home-quarantined cases are showing fewer patients, besides a relatively small doubling rate.

The BMC has traced 10.69 lakh contacts of 56,740 COVID-19-positive cases. Of these, 7.97 lakh are low-risk contacts while 2.71 lakh are high-risk contacts.

The corporation started contact tracing after the first few cases were reported in Mumbai in March. Despite that, cases spiralled in April and May. Municipal commissioner I.S. Chahal had ordered officers to push the contact tracing ratio from 1:3 to 1:10. Many wards managed to ramp up their contact tracing and certain wards like F South (Parel), M West (Chembur) have placed the maximum number of high-risk contacts under home quarantine. They have a ratio of 1:8 or more in the high-risk category.

F South has 3,070 cases so far, of which 1,610 are active. M West has 2,115 cases so far,

of which 1,128 are active. F South has a case doubling rate of 26 days while M West has a rate of 21 days.

In comparison, R North

ward (Dahisar) has the poorest doubling rate of 11 days, with cases growing at 6.4%, the fastest so far.

E ward (Byculla) and K

West (Andheri West) have also fared poorly. So far, 7.69 lakh people have completed quarantine in Mumbai, 1.07 lakh of whom were in institutional quarantine. There are now 24,315 people in institutional quarantine.

"But in the slums, we are trying to maintain a ratio of 1:15. Sometimes, people here resist being moved to a facility but our staff has to convince them that it is for the best. It has been seen that 25% to 30% cases in Mumbai are detected from among close contacts. When these people are moved to our facility, we prevent further infection," Ms. Bhide said.

Generally, high-risk contacts for every patient is much higher in the slums due to congested living conditions.

NMMC nears 4,000-mark; death toll 121

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Ninety-five new COVID-19 cases were reported in Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) on Monday, taking its case tally to 3,998.

With three more people succumbing to COVID-19, NMMC's death toll is now 121. On the other hand, 66 more people were discharged, taking the total number of recoveries to 2,306. The NMMC has tested over 15,000 people till date.

NMMC's recovery rate, which had reached 60%, has fallen by two percentage points to 58% over the last three days due to a surge in new cases. However, the case mortality rate, which had earlier touched 4%, has now come down to 3%.

Meanwhile, the Panvel Municipal Corporation (PMC) reported 44 new cases, taking its total tally to 1,016. It also saw three more succumb to the virus, taking the death toll to 45.

WESTERN RAILWAY - BHAVNAGAR DIVISION

PROVISION OF AC COACH ATTENDANT IN VARIOUS TRAINS

For and on behalf of President of India, Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanics), Bhavnagar Para, Western Railway invites One Tenderers under 'TWO PACKET SYSTEM' in prescribed tender forms from reputed contractors with adequate experience and financial capability for the under mentioned work through IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in Tender Notice No. M 442/C&W/CACCA/PBR/18/2019/Re-1 (1) Name of work with its location: Provision of coach attendant for linen distribution work in AC coaches including ITR, Specials, Extra coaches, Extra trains running, new train or any other train at coaching depot Porbandar for two years. (2) Approximate Cost of the Work: ₹ 1,11,11,025/- (Rupees One crore Eleven Lakhs Eleven Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Five Only). (3) EMD: ₹ 2,05,600/- (Rupees Two Lakh Five Thousand Six Hundred Only). (4) Date & Time of closing of Tender and Opening of Tender: 15:00 hrs on 02-07-2020 and 15:30 on 02-07-2020 (5) Office Address : Divisional Railway Manager

KENNETH ROSARIO

Filmmaker Ram Madhvani is audibly frazzled over the phone. "We have a show to put on, music to give and we have been doing dubbing in the last three months during the lockdown," he sighs. As the pandemic continues and lockdown takes on a concomitant nature, the advertising veteran has busy at work with the post-production of *Aarya*, an upcoming original series starring Sushmita Sen. When we speak, it's barely a couple of weeks to the release. "Don't remind me, I'm going to have a panic attack," he says. "I have to meet my deadline or it will be the most embarrassing moment of my life."

Nine years since its inception, Madhvani is close to the finish line, and won't let a pandemic come in his way. Almost a decade ago, he had watched the Dutch drama series, *Penoza*, with his wife, Amita, and wanted to adapt it into a Hindi film, but it never materialised. "I was emotional and cried, and now I realised that God had a plan," he shares. *Aarya* is the first project under his newly launched production house, Ram Madhvani Films. Under the new banner, he plans to continue producing and directing feature films for theatrical release as well as content for streaming services.

Cultural context

Aarya chronicles the story of a



Master mind: Ram Madhvani insists that *Aarya* is not a crime thriller but a relationship drama • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mother compelled to pick up a gun to save her family. Adapting *Penoza* into a web series was relatively simpler as compared to rooting it in an Indian cultural context. Madhvani had a brainwave while working on a song

for Aamir Khan's television show, *Satyamev Jayate*. He was travelling on a train in Rajasthan, where he inquired about the flowers growing alongside the railway tracks. "It turned out to be poppy flowers, and

'In OTT, I am your prisoner'

Aarya, Ram Madhvani's foray into original digital series, brings Sushmita Sen and Chandrachur Singh back on screen in a relationship drama

that gave me an idea," he recalls. Gleaning from the show's trailer, Chandrachur Singh's character meddles with illicit substances derived from the flowers. "This is part of our culture. I have relatives who are Marwari and I know this urban milieu," explains the director.

Madhvani insists that the nine-episode series is not a crime thriller but a relationship drama. "Like *Neerja* wasn't a hijack film but a mother-daughter story," he shares. The Sonam Kapoor-starrer and his new project an obvious commonality of a titular female protagonist in trouble. But Madhvani insists he doesn't want to be stereotyped. "So the next one will be a male-centric comedy," he reveals. "Although, I have been surrounded by strong women and I owe a lot to them."

Back onscreen

Sen is one such woman who has impacted the director. Away from Hindi films for a decade, *Aarya* is her much-hyped return. "I worked with her on an ad film before, so I've known her and she's the definition of a true star because when she enters a room, the energy shifts," observes Madhvani. The series also marks Singh's return from a hiatus. "It's wrong when people call him a 90s actor and I feel so



Woman at war: A still from *Aarya* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

bad," continues the director. "I wanted to cast people who looked like they had nothing to do with any crime."

Even though *Neerja* was a commercial hit, Madhvani is happy that ticket sales won't determine his success this time. "With OTT, you know it's done well when they commission a

second season," he laughs. From advertising - famously known for his Happydien commercial - to feature films and now a webseries; it's been a natural but slow progression for Madhvani that spans over two decades. After *Let's Talk*, his debut feature film in 2002, *Neerja* arrived after a gap of 14 years.

And now four years later, Madhvani presents *Aarya*. "The audience for these mediums are the same. In theatre, I kept you captive and you were my prisoner. But in OTT, I am your prisoner, and you can ask me to leave with a remote," he concludes.

Aarya will premiere on Disney+ Hotstar on June 19

Ancient Kerala in paint

Kochi-based artist Manoj Mathasseri, through his YouTube channel, explores the charm and relevance of traditional Kerala murals

• ANASUYA MENON

Artist Manoj Mathasseri is painting curly wisps of a cloud on white paper. The sky is a deep red, a combination of burnt sienna and scarlet. The day's class is on how to paint clouds and the sky in a traditional Kerala mural. The Kochi-based artist's YouTube channel, Art with Manoj Mathasseri, has been garnering viewers.

Launched during the lockdown, the channel is Manoj's attempt at creating awareness on Kerala murals and helping aspiring artists learn basic techniques. "Mural is best learnt in a physical classroom. However, for artists who are just starting out, these sessions would be helpful," says Manoj.

He explains the processes and stories of the centuries-old painting style in a simplified manner and takes the viewers through basic strokes and shading. Over 21 episodes, the channel has



History through colours

Artist Manoj (below) YouTube channel has 1.32k subscribers • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

got 1.32k subscriptions. Manoj encourages his viewers to interact with him, clear doubts and share their works. "What I am trying to do is give the historical context," says Manoj.

Of old times
Having learnt mural art from the Indian School of Art in Kochi, Manoj says, "Kerala murals have a unique charm. Most of the murals in the old

temples of Kerala were done between the 15th and 19th centuries by unnamed artists," says Manoj. "We have lost many of these works of art over time as some of the structures that held it were destroyed or worn down. Many temple authorities have undertaken restoration of old murals, too. Apart from its artistic value, the old murals also reflected the life of those times," Manoj says.

Ancient traditional murals were done using natural colours on lime-plastered walls. The murals used only five basic colours – ochre red, ochre yellow, green, black and white – which were made using natural materials such as laterite, coal, patina and leaves. The brushes were made using grass and the fine hair in calves' ears. Over time, when synthetic paints came

about, artists started doing murals in acrylic on canvas or paper.

Manoj prefers water colour for his murals as he feels the effect is closest to the old-world mural. A lime-washed hard board works best as a canvas. However, for those who prefer paper, Manoj recommends smooth white paper or high quality chart paper. "Water colour is an easier medium; it does not have the sheen of acrylic and corrections are easier to make."

Over time, murals became mainstream. "Improvisations came in. Even the colour blue is being used now, which is traditionally not done," says Manoj. He reiterates that murals cannot be mastered online; and that it takes years of practice and learning. "My tutorials are just a guide to mural lovers and beginners," Manoj says.

The artist also does live sessions with Q and A. "There is so much to talk about murals, there is enough material to run a thousand episodes," he signs off.

Manoj's YouTube Channel is https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoownH4m9Cb2Ikyc3G_A

Reconciling with self

Artist Rohini Mani, who tackles colourism through her 'Dark is Beautiful' series, explains her love for portraits

• GOWRI S

An incomplete portrait, which trails off beyond a point, leaving a faint mark where once was the mouth; short, translucent foot prints, climb up the figure's neck. Chennai-based artist Rohini Mani's self portrait hints at her preoccupation with the concept of the rediscovery of self. Her more recent Dark is Beautiful series is a subset of the same, and specifically deals with the more topical theme of colourism.

Nearing 40, Rohini, has always been exposed to portraits and still life during her formative years as an artist, at Chennai's Government College of Fine Arts and Hyderabad Central University. This explains her expertise in the genre – her interest, however, comes from the fact that portraiture as a medium, helps her delve deep into her subject matter.

The genre has set her on a journey to rediscover herself. Her series of 50-odd works, titled 'Dark is Beautiful', therefore, comprises self portraits, line drawings and abstract representations of an inward reflection – of a person who has been discriminated against, on the



Reflections (Right) An untitled work by Rohini Mani (below) • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

basis of her skin colour from a very young age.

"Even as a school kid, I have been asked to step back multiple times. But back then, I didn't know why this was happening. However, the questions remained strong in my mind," reminisces Rohini, who also does illustrations.

The artist has illustrated TM Krishna's latest book, *Sebastian and Sons*, and has designed the book cover for Perumal Murugan's *Amma*.

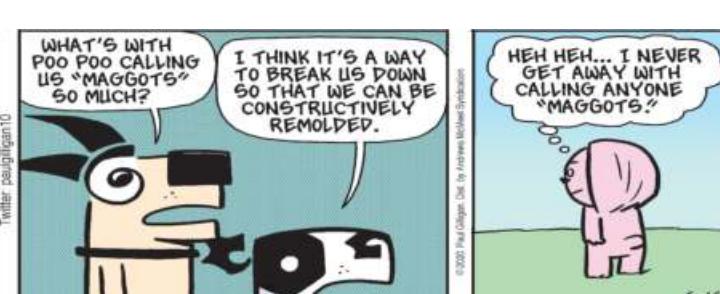
"People seem to have a mental block about those with dark complexion. Their achievements or accolades almost become invalid," she continues. Media's representation of people with a dark complexion, is another aspect that Rohini tries to address.

"I have never seen a woman who looks like myself, in any of the big hoardings that are seen while one travels. This has left a question mark in my mind since long," says Rohini. More than the output, what she holds dear in her self portraits is the opportunity it provides to reconcile with herself.

While reflecting on her own portraits, Rohini discovers the beauty in her own self, which changes at every glance. "It's almost like enjoying a landscape," says the artist who likes to experiment with the medium of charcoal. The dichotomy of black and white is something that interests her. "Black and white are two extremes, and I love to play within the grade."

To get in touch with the artist regarding the *Dark is Beautiful* series, visit her website, www.rohinimani-charcoal.com.

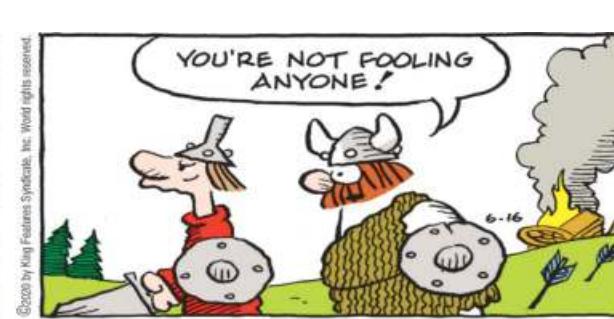
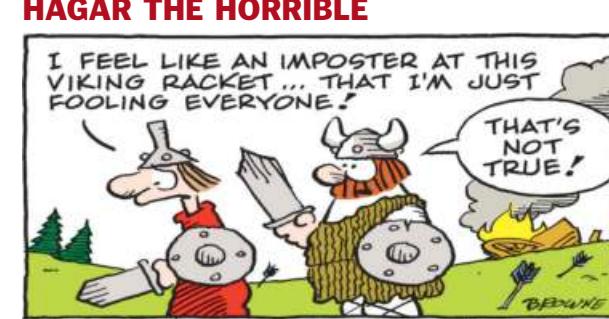
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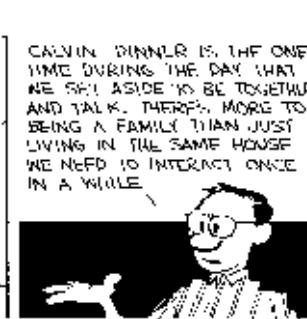
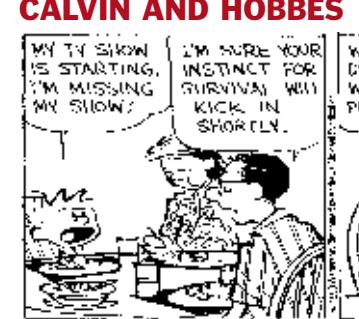
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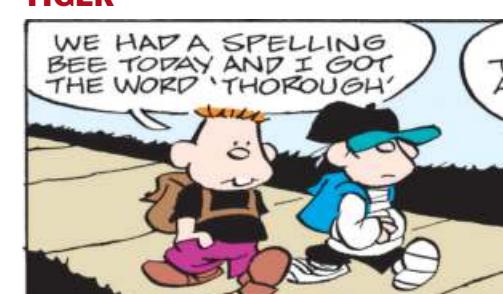
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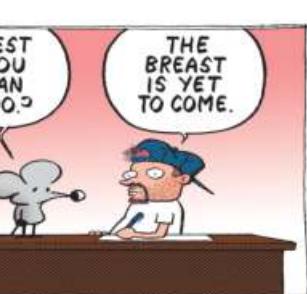
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER

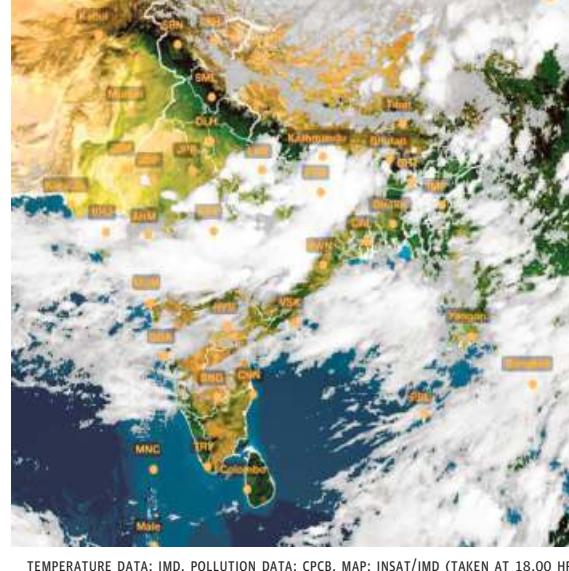


PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few isolated places Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, Gujarat, Saurashtra & Kutch, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, east Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.8	34.5	26.3	Kozhikode	28.5	31.2	23.4
Ahmedabad	9.7	35.8	26.1	Kurnool	—	—	26.8
Aizawl	8	27.1	19.2	Lucknow	2.8	35.6	26.0
Allahabad	—	39.0	30.0	Madurai	—	40.4	28.1
Bengaluru	—	29.0	21.2	Mangaluru	2.4	29.8	23.2
Bhopal	0.7	35.6	25.7	Mumbai	—	33.7	27.0
Bhubaneswar	2.9	30.6	27.0	Mysuru	4	28.4	21.8
Chandigarh	—	41.6	29.9	Patna	—	41.4	28.6
Chennai	—	40.1	30.8	Port Blair	1.1	30.5	26.9
Coimbatore	0.2	33.0	23.0	Puducherry	0.4	40.1	28.4
Dehradoon	0.6	34.8	21.6	Pune	—	32.4	23.6
Gangtok	0.2	21.6	16.3	Raipur	—	34.0	27.4
Goa	28.6	31.5	25.3	Ranchi	28	31.8	23.6
Guwahati	3.4	35.4	25.8	Shillong	0.7	25.7	—
Hubballi	—	28.0	23.0	Shimla	—	30.4	21.2
Hyderabad	0.2	33.5	25.2	Sriragar	—	30.0	11.8
Imphal	0.4	32.7	22.4	Thiruvananthapuram	0.8	32.6	26.0
Jaipur	—	41.9	27.9	Tiruchi	—	39.4	28.4
Kochi	0.6	32.4	25.4	Vijayawada	—	27.6	—
Kohima	11.4	26.0	17.7	Visakhapatnam	—	—	—
Kolkata	24.3	31.6	26.0	Visakhapatnam	—	—	—

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	25	39	43	32	—	—
Bengaluru	—	5	7	57	70	—
Chennai	—	2	25	94	56	—
Delhi	—	8	42	14	124	151
Hyderabad	16	19	14	28	48	—
Kolkata	13	6	18	21	37	—
Lucknow	—	3	3	64	120	—
Mumbai	47	26	14	17	42	—
Pune	—	—	—	—	—	—
Visakhapatnam	—	—	33	—	—	—

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Schools can open doors in areas with no cases

In areas with COVID-19 cases, academic year to begin with online lessons; classes to have a staggered start from July

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday sanctioned the start of academic year 2020-21 for schools amid the lockdown. While schools in areas with COVID-19 cases will have to use online and digital platforms for lessons, those in rural areas with no cases in the last one month can open for students while following safety guidelines.

Lessons for Class IX, X and XII will start from July, for Class VI to VIII from August, and for Class III to V from September. The decision to start lessons for Class I and II will be taken by school management committees. The date for Class XI courses will be declared after Class X results are announced.

Mr. Thackeray, in a meeting with School Education Minister Varsha Gaikwad and department officials, said teaching must begin irrespective of whether schools open or not.

The government has said online lessons should not be used for Class I and II students, who must instead be shown or made to hear edu-



Staying fit: A sports coach takes a virtual class at Vibgyor School at Hadapsar in Pune on Monday. ■ JIGNESH MISTRY

cational programmes on television and radio. For students of Class III to V and Class VI to VIII, online sessions should be capped at one and two hours a day, respectively. For Class IX to XII, the time limit will be three hours per day.

School management committees will have to ensure safety of students through

measures like operating schools in two shifts of maximum three hours each, arranging classes on odd and even days, making sure there is only one student on a bench and only 20 to 30 students in a classroom, and preventing crowding while students are dropped off and picked up.

In rural areas where the

government has allowed schools to open, the gram panchayat will be responsible for sanitisation of premises. Teachers, if coming from outside, will have to undergo medical check-ups, and students will be provided masks, sanitiser and soap. Parents have been advised not to send their children to school if they are unwell.

Multiple choices for Class X, XII students

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations informed the Bombay High Court on Monday that students of Class X and XII can either appear for final exams scheduled in July or opt for marks based on internal assessments.

Senior counsel Darius Khambata, appearing for the Council, said there were several options for Class X as well as Class XII examinees.

An examinee who is not willing to write the examination physically can go with marks obtained in the pre-Board examination or internal assessment. Marks awarded to examinees in papers they have already written will also be taken into consideration, said Mr. Khambata.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice S.S. Shinde was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by the father of a Class X child.

The PIL said the exams, scheduled for March 18, were rescheduled between March 19 and 30 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The dates were later revised to July 2-12 for Class X and July 1-14 for Class XII.

"The decision prima facie appears to be fair and reasonable," said the court, directing it to be forwarded to all school principals affiliated with the Council, with an instruction to share it with parents. The court also said a gist of the decision should be published in a Marathi, English and Hindi daily on Tuesday.

Okay to occupy middle seat if DGCA order is followed: HC

Health, safety of air passengers taken care of, says court

SONAM SAIGAL

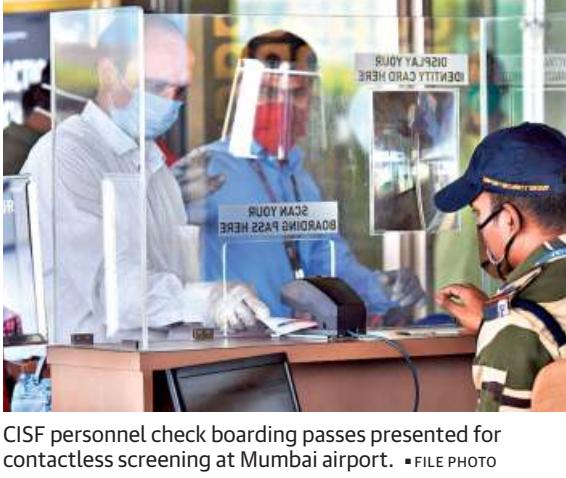
MUMBAI

The Bombey High Court on Monday said the safety and health of the passengers on board is taken care of even if the middle seats of aircraft are not kept vacant owing to passenger load.

A Division Bench of Justices S.J. Kathawala and S.P. Tavade was hearing a petition filed by Air India pilot Deven Kanani, who had complained that the national carrier had violated physical distancing norms while getting back stranded Indians on special Vande Bharat flights. He had sought enforcement of a clause of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) circular dated March 23 to ensure the middle seat is kept empty.

Air India and its subsidiary had previously informed the court that the circular does not apply to Vande Bharat flights (non-scheduled international flights) and applied only to scheduled domestic flights. They also told the court that all precautions are taken to prevent spread of COVID-19, while lifting these stranded passengers from abroad and bringing them to India.

An expert committee was formed to look into the matter. The committee said said



CISF personnel check boarding passes presented for contactless screening at Mumbai airport. ■ FILE PHOTO

er's contention.

The court, on hearing the arguments, said the petitioner had failed to appreciate that even if the middle seat is kept vacant, the passenger at the window seat is likely to come in contact with the person in the aisle seat when they go to the lavatory.

The court said, "We are of the prima facie view that the safety and health of passengers on board the aircraft is adequately taken care of even if the middle seat of the aircraft is not kept vacant on account of passenger load and seat capacity. However, flight operators shall ... strictly follow and implement the DGCA order passed on May 31."

The All India Cabin Crew Association told the court it supported the May 31 DGCA order and not the petition-

Chavan seeks cash refund for air tickets

'Not doing so abuse of consumer rights'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan on Monday said not refunding the cost of air tickets for flights cancelled during the lockdown was tantamount to an abuse of consumer rights.

The Karad South MLA said in a tweet, "I have written to [Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri] to direct the airline operators to provide cash refunds for air tickets cancelled during lockdown in a specific time frame."

In his letter, the former chief minister said an estimated 4.5 million flights had been cancelled across the world during the pandemic.

"Indian fliers, who were compelled to cancel air tickets following the nationwide lockdown announcement, are therefore entitled to cash refunds. According to the Consumer Protection Act, the contract between a consumer and an airline gives a right to the former to get a cash refund," he said.

Mr. Chavan said a number of airlines, including Air India, were not honouring this contract and compelling passengers to accept vouchers. "Not all consumers are willing to accept a voucher for future travel. In

some cases, airlines are misinforming them on refund policies," he alleged.

He said consumer rights organisation Mumbai Gramak Panchayat had recently sought the intervention of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) by drawing its attention to the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection.

"On June 4 this month, the UNCTAD called upon governments of member states (India being among them) to adequately protect consumers by enforcing protection laws against abusive business practices such as penalties and breach of refund rights," Mr. Chavan said. He has urged Mr. Puri to issue a clarification on refund policies and direct airline operators to prevent abuse of consumer rights.

A Vistara spokesperson said it would be adding a few flights to and from Mumbai for the next couple of days. "We are awaiting necessary government approvals. Further additions to the network will firm up over the course of the week."

CSMIA has been catering to just about 10% of flight operations as against 33% at Delhi and Bengaluru airports.

CSMIA has till date catered to 1,056 domestic commercial passenger flight movements, which include 531 departures and 525 arrivals. From May 25 until Monday, the airport has catered to 1,30,385 passengers, which include 91,593 passengers at departures and 38,792 at arrivals.

Uddhav's father-in-law no more

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Madhav Patankar, the father-in-law of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, died at a private hospital here on Monday, an official from the medical facility said.

A senior Shiv Sena leader confirmed the news of the 76-year-old's death after prolonged illness. His daughter, Rashmi Thackeray, is the editor of Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*.

State signs 12 MoUs in Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Kick-starting the Magnetic Maharashtra 2.0 initiative to draw investments to the State, 12 MoUs worth ₹16,000 crore were signed on Monday in presence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Mr. Thackeray, who was in attendance via videoconference, said the government will fulfil its commitment and business houses will face no hurdles to set up industrial units. "We are thankful to investors for choosing Maharashtra as their preferred destination. Today, we are signing MoUs worth ₹16,000 crore. Projects worth ₹60,000 are in the pipeline and will be a

reality soon," he said.



Building trust

India needs to re-engage with Pakistan and end the ceasefire violations along the border

The shelling and the retaliations along the Line of Control with Pakistan are a matter of consternation, because it has been allowed to go on so long as to become an everyday occurrence. The unfortunate death of Sepoy Lungabui Abonmli, and the airlifting of two other soldiers, Lienkothien Senghon and Sepoy Tangsoik Kwaniungar, to the Command Hospital in Udhampur because of injuries due to shelling in Poonch sector are the latest grim reminders of this phenomenon. Sepoy Abonmli is the third soldier to succumb to shelling in this area. All of May the Pir Panjal range, which fronts the Kashmir Valley, has seen mortar and small arms firing. On Saturday, splinter injuries from shelling in Haji Pir in Uri, claimed the life of Akhtar Begum, a civilian. This has been a worrying trend, as when the shells reach deeper they fall in residential areas, in villages such as Churunda and Silikote. When shells begin raining, villagers panic, leave their homes and run further, to temporary shelters. This additional disruption to life in the aftermath of the dilution of Article 370 last August and the COVID-19 lockdown, is something that should be addressed with urgency. Shellings should not be allowed to be a regular occurrence. Ceasefire with Pakistan along the Line of Control is obviously not working, and the government needs to build bomb shelters for civilians until normalcy returns.

Unfortunately, aspects of relations with Pakistan in other spheres are in poor repair as well. The two personnel from the Indian mission in Islamabad going suddenly missing for a while points to further breakdown in relations. It makes evident that India and Pakistan are unable even to adhere to reciprocal protocols regarding staff posted in the missions. Whether or not it is a tit-for-tat reaction for India having expelled two Pakistan High Commission officials, Abid Hussain Amid and Mohd Tahir Khan, on charges of espionage, India must take steps to ensure its diplomatic personnel are spared such harassment, which is always present and episodically on show. But with New Delhi studiously avoiding any serious engagement, is the staffing in Pakistan commensurate with the vastly shrunk bilateral relations? As the pandemic rages, with travel curbs and reduced face-to-face opportunities, it might be prudent to temporarily maintain only essential mission staff in Pakistan till India is able to obtain trust and stability in the ties.

Call for action

ICMR's antibody test study underlines need for more testing, and better contact tracing

The results of a serological test conducted across 69 districts by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have indicated that the confirmed numbers of COVID-19 infections reported from the RT-PCR tests are likely an undercount. Serological or antibody tests are not as accurate as the PCR tests, but they are useful indicators of the spread of the novel coronavirus among people. The ICMR study found that 0.73% of the population, examined for antibodies produced specifically for SARS-CoV-2 via an ELISA test, had evidence of past exposure to the virus. In a population with a low infection rate, there is a higher possibility of "false positives" being reported. A number of respondents could have been found to have released antibodies specific to coronaviruses, but without actual exposure to SARS-CoV-2 alone. But the ICMR in its methodology note in a paper in its online publication, *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, had said that the actual results would account for the limitations of the ELISA test. If this is accepted, then the number of people found to have been exposed to the virus would be 7 lakh people or more, if the overall population of these districts is considered, much higher than the 35,000 people who had tested positive in the entire country during this period. The full paper detailing the results of the study by the ICMR is still not out in the public domain. Serological tests, despite inaccuracies, can be a useful guide of the extent of the infections among vulnerable people and within hot spots, and periodic tests of this kind are a must amid the rise of cases that have now crossed the 3.2 lakh mark. The clear takeaway from this report is not what the Director-General of the ICMR claimed that there is no evidence of "community transmission", but that there has not been adequate testing by the more accurate RT-PCR method.

While the "lockdown" strategy might have slowed down the rise in cases and fatalities in the early period of the outbreak in the country, the severe effect it had on the economy, besides its uneven implementation in urban areas where physical distancing is a difficult proposition, made it an untenable strategy to pursue over the longer term. India continues to register among the highest daily rises in COVID-19 cases and fatalities world-wide and this has now burdened the health institutions in many urban centres following the easing of the lockdown. Yet, authorities continued to test at relatively low levels with a lot of variance across States. Some States such as Maharashtra and Gujarat have tested at a higher rate (tests per million population) than many others, but have not increased the overall testing to account for the relative rise in the size of the outbreak. Telangana has still not ramped up testing numbers adequately and has been opaque in the release of testing data. Testing, tracing and treatment at a higher order across the population besides measures such as mask wearing and practising hand hygiene, as the experience of several countries that have considerably slowed down the rise in the case count shows, is the clearest way to address the outbreak.

Remaining non-aligned is good advice

This is not the time for India to be seen as the front end of a belligerent coalition seeking to put China in its place



M.K. NARAYANAN

For weeks, the India-China stand-off dominated newspaper headlines, warning about the possibility of a major conflict along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors. With both India and China agreeing to step back marginally from positions adopted at the beginning of May, and "reaching an agreement", the newspapers and most other believe that tensions have abated. The reality is, however, very different.

Behind the statements

Confirmed facts about incursions during May are that Chinese forces came in sizeable numbers and crossed the undemarcated LAC at quite a few points in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors. These were in the vicinity of Pangong Tso (Lake), the Galwan Valley, the Hot Springs-Gogra area (all in Ladakh), and at Naku La in the Sikkim sector. Talks at the level of military commanders, from lieutenant generals to brigadiers and lower formations, have produced, to repeat the official jargon, a "partial disengagement". Both sides have also agreed, according to the same set of officials, to handle the situation "in line with the agreement" that had been reached.

The blandness of the statements conceals many a truth. This time, it would appear, the Chinese are here to stay in places such as the Galwan Valley. It is also unclear, as of now, whether the Chinese would withdraw from Pangong Tso, any time soon. Restoration of the status quo ante which existed in mid-April is thus nowhere on the horizon. Another bone of contention also seems unlikely to be resolved for quite some time, *viz.*, China's insistence that India stop road construction in the border area on the ground that it is

taking place in Chinese territory, which India contests, insisting that it is taking place within Indian territory.

Public attention has been deflected from China's sizeable military presence along the LAC, comprising armoured vehicles, artillery units and infantry combat vehicles in far larger numbers than at any time in recent years), and the partial disengagement may provide many in India an opportunity to claim that China "blinked" while India showed "steely resolve". This is not, however, the time for political grandstanding. There is a great deal at stake.

More weightier reasons

India needs to undertake a detailed analysis of recent events to find proper answers to many vexed questions. To merely affirm that India's decision to strengthen its border infrastructure was the main trigger for the recent show of strength by China, would be simplistic. Both India and China have been strengthening their border infrastructure in recent years, and while the strengthening of the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road may have angered the Chinese, to ascribe China's recent show of strength to this would be misplaced.

Admittedly, Chinese President Xi Jinping despises Deng Xiaoping's aphorism, "to keep your head low and bide your time", but Mr. Xi is not known to act irresponsibly. A demonstration of military strength, merely because India was improving its border infrastructure, would fall into this category. Nor does this action fit in with western assertions that such steps demonstrate China's newly assertive post-pandemic foreign policy.

There have to be far weightier reasons for China's actions, and India needs to do a deep dive to discern whether there is a method behind China's actions, *viz.*, as for instance, the existence of certain geopolitical factors, an increase in bilateral tensions between India and China, economic pressures,



apart from China's internal dynamics. China's action clearly belies the code of conduct drawn up at the Wuhan (China) and Mamallapuram (Tamil Nadu) summits by the leaders of India and China, and the recent incursions do convey the imprimatur of the top Chinese leadership.

The American orbit

If we were to examine geopolitical factors, it is no secret that while India professes to be non-aligned, it is increasingly perceived as having shifted towards the American orbit of influence. India's United States tilt is perhaps most pronounced in the domain of U.S.-China relations. Quite a few instances could be highlighted to confirm the perception that India tends to side with the U.S. and against China whenever there is a conflict of interest between the two. An evident degree of geopolitical convergence also exists between the U.S. and India in the Indo-Pacific, again directed against China. India is today a member of the Quad (the U.S., Japan, Australia and India) which has a definite anti-China connotation. U.S. President Donald Trump's latest ploy of redesigning the G-7, including in countries such as India (India has conveyed its acceptance), but excluding China, provides China yet another instance of India and China being in opposite camps. A recent editorial in China's *Global Times* confirms how seriously China views the growing proximity between Delhi and Washington.

Coming next to bilateral relations, and notwithstanding the public bonhomie at the level of Mr. Xi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, relations between the two

countries have been steadily deteriorating. India is almost the last holdout in Asia against China's Belt Road Initiative (BRI). India also loses no opportunity to reclaim against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China further views India's assertions regarding Gilgit-Baltistan, as an implicit attack on the CPEC, China's flagship programme. More recently, India was one of the earliest countries to put curbs and restrictions on Chinese foreign direct investment. Adding to this, is the rising crescendo of anti-China propaganda within India. The *Global Times* has implied in one of its editorial pieces recently, that China's friendly policy towards India should be reciprocated, and that India "should not be fooled by Washington". On the eve of the recent high-level border talks between top military leaders, China again made an elliptical reference to the need for India to maintain equidistance between the U.S. and China.

Such sentiments do impact border matters. Almost all India-China border agreements are premised on the presumed neutrality of both countries. As the Special Representative for Border Talks with China (2005 to 2010), this sentiment was an ever present reality during all border discussions. The document, "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question" (2005), one of the very few documents relating to the India-China border, reflects this reality.

China's internal dynamics

One should also not ignore the impact of internal pressures that have been generated within China – in part due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in part due to other factors. Mr. Xi has, no doubt, accumulated more power than any other Chinese Communist leader since Mao, but there are reports of growing opposition within party

ranks to some of his policies, including the BRI.

As the full impact of the most serious health crisis that China has faced since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 becomes evident, and alongside this the Chinese economic miracle is also beginning to lose steam, the current Chinese leadership is faced with an unique crisis. The coupling of political and economic tensions have greatly aggravated pressures on Mr. Xi, and the situation could become still more fragile, given the rising tide of anti-China sentiment the world over. How the present crop of Chinese leaders led by Mr. Xi would react to this situation, remains to be seen.

History and the present

These are dangerous times, more so for countries in China's vicinity, and specially India. India is being increasingly projected as an alternative model to China, and being co-opted into a wider anti-China alliance which China clearly perceives as provocation. We cannot ignore or forget the circumstances that led to the unfortunate India-China war of 1962. Faced with the disaster of the Great Leap Forward, and increasing isolation globally (with even Soviet leaders like Nikita Khrushchev trading barbs), Mao chose to strike at India rather than confront Russia or the West.

A single misstep could lead to a wider conflagration, which both sides must avoid. This is not the time for India to be seen as the front end of a belligerent coalition of forces seeking to put China in its place – even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, now seems to be joining the anti-China bandwagon under prodding from the U.S. India has consistently followed a different policy in the past, and it is advisable that it remains truly non-aligned and not become part of any coalition that would not be in India's long-term interest.

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal

In pandemic crisis, bridging the gulf with West Asia

A strong, positive message by New Delhi to the region's investors is crucial as both are well-placed to help each other



NAVDEEP SURI & KABIR TANEJA

As the world continues to collaborate in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic which has shattered lives, economies and, arguably, even political and global institutions, the post-pandemic architecture may look drastically different from what we have been used to.

For India and its foreign policy, the West Asia/Gulf region holds a significant court for strategic, economic and even domestic political agendas, ranging from migration to energy security. The pandemic has initiated a reverse migration of Indian blue-collar workers as projects in oil-rich States stall, and infrastructure development halts amidst a contracting global economy that some say may be worse than the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The stakes in numbers

India's Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar has said that India would repatriate more than 100,000 of its citizens between May 17 and June 13 from 60 countries, a majority of whom are expected to be from the West Asia region. Between June 10 and June 16, there were around 20 flights scheduled to bring Indian citizens back between India and Saudi Arabia

alone. In neighbouring United Arab Emirates (UAE), more than 3.4 million Indians work. Overall, an estimated figure of close to nine million Indians work in West Asia, responsible for sending back more than 56% of India's annual infusion of \$80 billion in remittances. The UAE alone is responsible for \$19 billion in remittances, being the third largest trade partner of India after the United States and China.

Much of the impressive numbers above are now under stress, perhaps for the first time since the first Gulf War in 1991. The oil price crash, triggered by expectations of oversupply following a dispute on output caps between Saudi Arabia and Russia, exacerbated by the crash in demand due to COVID-19, will carry massive costs to the West Asian economies, and, by association, to foreign workers employed there. According to a Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry survey, more than 70% of businesses classified as small and medium-sized enterprises in Dubai, many owned by Indian nationals, may not survive over the months to come as labour critical industries such as tourism, conventions, hospitality and airlines bear the immediate brunt. To put it in perspective, according to a 2019 U.S.-U.A.E. Business Council report, the UAE's hospitality sector itself contributes 4.6% of the country's GDP, making nearly 600,000 jobs that are mostly fulfilled by foreign workers. Some reports suggest that up to 30% of these jobs could be lost.

Oil and investment
India gets around 60% of its hydrocarbon requirements from West Asia. On an annualised basis, India saves up to \$1.35 billion for each \$1 drop in oil prices. With Brent still hovering under \$40, the softening oil prices have helped cushion the impact of the national lockdown on the balance of payments. India has also taken advantage of the low prices to build up its strategic reserves and is looking at offshore storage options.

In Saudi Arabia, consumer spending for April 2020, compared to the same time last year, was reportedly down by 34.6%. However, beyond the immediate effects, the oil price crash is expected to have a significant blow on the reform plans initiated by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, specifically mega-projects such as the envisioned \$500 billion futuristic mega-city of Neom planned on the coast of the Red Sea, and other more structural efforts to open up the Saudi economy and move the country's financial ecosystem away from its overt dependence on petro dollars.

Oil and investment
India gets around 60% of its hydrocarbon requirements from West Asia. On an annualised basis, India saves up to \$1.35 billion for each \$1 drop in oil prices. With Brent still hovering under \$40, the softening oil prices have helped cushion the impact of the national lockdown on the balance of payments. India has also taken advantage of the low prices to build up its strategic reserves and is looking at offshore storage options.

The major sovereign wealth funds and other financial institu-

tions in West Asia have been hit hard by COVID-19 as well. Some have seen their real estate and retail portfolios shrink dramatically over the last three months. India is well-placed to attract a significant amount of capital from West Asia and reports of investment by UAE's Mubadala and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) are a case in point. The economic reforms announced by the Finance Minister in the week of May 13 bring much needed clarity to industrial and agricultural policy. A strong, positive message to West Asian investors from New Delhi is now the need of the hour.

Steps to take

As a starting point, working with the government of Maharashtra to expedite land acquisition for the \$50 billion mega-refinery project could be an important first step. Saudi Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company have committed to investing \$25 billion in the project. Fast-track resolution of endless litigation that has bedevilled the sale of a major stake in Mumbai airport by GVK to a consortium that includes the UAE sovereign fund, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) will also send out a positive signal to the markets. Some of the UAE's largest companies such as Etisalat, Emaar and Etihad have previously had a tough time with their investments in India. By creating a few immediate success stories, India has the opportunity to transform the landscape and attract the kind of long-term capital that the economy

needs. The government has announced that it has set up an empowered group headed by Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba to take necessary steps to attract FDI into India. Hopefully, this mechanism can take up West Asia on priority. If the economic prophecies come true till a certain degree, India will also share the brunt with West Asia, and both are well placed to help each other in this regard. Arguably, more than the loss of trade revenue and remittances, the return of semi-skilled and skilled workers alike into an economy already struggling with jobs may become a point of worry. To mitigate the same, the government has tried to soften the blow by launching the Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support (SWADES) which attempts to capture the skills profile of returning workers and house them in a central portal that can be accessed by Indian and foreign companies. However, much more needs to be done with regard to reverse-migration and the economics attached to it, as globally, bilateral and multilateral trade-diplomacy is set to witness a tectonic shift towards the unknown.

Navdeep Suri is Distinguished Fellow and Director of the Centre for New Economic Diplomacy, Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and former Indian Ambassador to the UAE and Egypt and High Commissioner to Australia. Kabir Taneja is Fellow, Strategic Studies Programme, ORF



graduates have been found to be unemployable for various reasons. If online education is encouraged for the sake of boosting Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), the employability of our graduates may soon touch its nadir. If online education goes mainstream, one would shudder to think about the quality of those graduates. KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI, Hyderabad

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.

On the margins
The physically and mentally challenged have always remained an unacknowledged underclass, permanently trapped in the peripheries of societal awareness, political mobilisation, and policymakers' concern (Page 1, 'Special' report, "In the pandemic, the disabled remain an invisible minority", June 15). The pandemic has exacerbated their misery. The makers of the Constitution seemed to have missed a group of

people that defied a typical classification. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, except for a token increase in the reservation of government jobs and in the number of disabilities from seven to 21 conditions, has neither materially improved the lives of the disabled nor has helped to create a new narrative of social responsibility to help them. What the disabled need is the elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers that

make their everyday lives miserable. The architecture of public spaces and public utilities is distinctly disabled-unfriendly. Nobody seems to have noticed the deadline of the two-year deadline set by the Disabilities Act to ensure that the disabled get barrier-free access to public infrastructure and transport systems. The biggest barrier the disabled face is not physical, it is attitudinal which is impervious to statutory exhortations.

There is no formal or informal system to check whether the enacted laws have achieved the professed objectives. The disabled have another 'handicap'. They are not a vote bank. V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN, Thiruvananthapuram

E-learning
Online education can never be a substitute for classroom education, however advanced the tools of learning employed in its teaching methodology may

be (Editorial page, "Streamlined education is diluted education", June 13). Even if streaming is interactive, it has its own limitations, and interactions cannot be as comprehensive as in a classroom. Imparting theoretical knowledge of any course, especially the sciences, without demonstrating the applications of theory in a laboratory setting would be nothing but a mockery of education. Already, the majority of Indian

CM YK
A BM-BME

Lessons for Yogi from Gandhi and Lee

The test of public policies must be not what is good for investors but what is good for the people



ARUN MAIRA

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is determined to bring all migrant workers back to his State. He says he does not want U.P.'s citizens to migrate in future. He has a vision of providing homes and jobs to all of them – in a State which has not yet been able to provide for the larger multitudes who stayed behind. Moreover, he will be competing with neighbouring States (Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, etc.) and also States further away, which will also be working harder to grow jobs. He needs a good plan. He would do well to take some lessons from Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of modern Singapore, and from Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation.

Developing Singapore

Lee declared that Singapore would become the first 'developed' country in Asia, when it was founded in 1965. His measure of development was the per capita incomes of Singaporeans which would rise to the same levels as citizens in more advanced economies. Singapore did not have any natural resources, like oil or minerals, which it could sell to the West to bring in money for its citizens. All that it could offer large Western companies to use was its strategic location on shipping routes between the East and West, and its people. Lee invited companies from the U.S., Europe, and Japan to set up manufacturing facilities in Singapore and use Singapore labour.

The companies were attracted by the large pools of low-cost labour in ASEAN countries. Amongst these countries, Singapore was the most attractive for its location. They welcomed his invitation. But Lee had a condition they were not prepared for. He did not want them to merely set up labour-intensive assembly factories. Lee wanted wages to rise in Singapore, so that per capita incomes would rise. Therefore, he wanted the companies to train Singaporeans to do higher-value work.

Global supply chains were form-



"Lee Kuan Yew declared that Singapore would become the first 'developed' country in Asia." A memorial portrait of Lee ahead of his funeral in 2015. ■ AFP

ing then: MNCs were on the lookout for lower-cost sources. MNCs could 'plug and play' in larger labour markets. If wages rose in Singapore, which Lee wanted, he feared they would move their assembly operations to the neighbouring countries. Lee promised the companies world-class infrastructure, an efficient administration, and low taxes. In return, he wanted the companies to help the government by investing in continuous upgradation of their employees' skills, so that Singaporeans would earn more and Singapore would become fully 'developed'.

The companies were not willing to make such long-term investments in Singapore's people. Lee turned to J.R.D. Tata to set up a training centre and a precision tool room in partnership with the Singapore government, and help build foundations for Singapore's industrial growth. Thus, the Tatas were pioneers in Singapore in the 1970s; other, much larger companies then came along.

The rules of globalisation have made life easy for migrant capital, not for migrant labour. They make it easy for migrant capital to come into a country, make profits, and leave when it wishes to. It has been hard for migrant labour to join the global party. They have died in hundreds while crossing the seas to Europe, and walls are shutting them out from the U.S. Tragically, even when they leave India's globalising cities to go back to their villages, after being used and discarded, they are dying on the way out too.

Governments must listen to and care for their citizens and workers

more than to investors. They must encourage only those investors who care as much for citizens and workers where they invest as for their own investors back home. Economists who advise governments must be clear that humans are not tools to produce returns for investors; rather, money is a tool to produce benefits for humans.

Gandhian economics

U.P. is more complex than Singapore. Singapore is a city state with about 6 million citizens, while U.P., with a population of more than 200 million, has dozens of towns and thousands of villages. Migrants are returning from India's cities to villages in U.P. and other States. They are returning to a world Gandhi knew well. Gandhi said that unless people in India's villages have economic and social freedom, India cannot be a free country. This was his vision of 'poorna swaraj'. For him, political freedom from the British was a step on the way. Gandhi is often dismissed as an impractical romantic. However, Gandhi and his economic advisers understood the economic and social problems in India's villages better than the economists in India's Planning Commission did. Gandhi also knew the potential of India's poorest people, who were merely statistics for the economists. Above all, he believed that the economy must serve human needs, rather than human beings becoming fodder for the GDP. This was a vision that Lee Kuan Yew had too: for him, the ultimate measure of Singapore becoming fully developed was not the size of its

GDP, but the incomes of its citizens. U.P. does not have a 'migrant' problem. It has a 'citizen' problem. All citizens of the State (and India too) deserve jobs, livelihoods and a good life with dignity, whether they are migrants or not. The test of public policies must be not what is good for investors and for the GDP, but what is good for the people, especially those who are the most powerless. In Lee's, Tata's, and Gandhi's books, diluting the rights of workers to make life easier for investors was not done.

The world has been 'deglobalising' since the financial crisis of 2008. Many countries have raised barriers against migrants from other countries. The World Trade Organization is very sick. COVID-19 has sharply accelerated a trend towards localisation that was already under way. Supply chains have broken up. Barriers against movement of people have gone up everywhere.

'Gandhian' economics, which E.F. Schumacher (author of *Small is Beautiful*) and J.C. Kumarappa (sometimes referred to as 'Gandhi's Planning Commission') articulated very well, is based on simple principles. One, human beings and local communities must be the means for human progress – and their well-being must be the purpose of progress too. Two, governance must be strengthened at the local level, in villages and cities. Three, wealth is good, but wealthy people must be only trustees of a community's wealth, and not its owners. Four, the alienation of owners from workers must be reduced with the creation of new models of cooperative capitalist enterprises, where the workers, not remote capitalists, or the state, are owners of the enterprises.

India had come to a fork in the road in 1947: it could run behind the West to catch up; or it could take a path less taken, using a 'Gandhian' approach for human development. It chose to run behind the others. Now, we are back at the crossroads. The health crisis and the economic crisis have made people everywhere consider what path we should take after this crisis. Back to the 'normal' economics of GDP or towards a more human and more local economics?

Arun Maira is former member, Planning Commission, and author, 'Transforming Systems: Why the World Needs a New Ethical Toolkit'

Helping the helpers

This is an opportunity to strengthen the mostly absent social protection nets of domestic workers



MEVA BHARTI

The fact that India's cities run on the backs of workers is known, but what is often unacknowledged is that so do many private homes. Domestic work is one of the biggest employers in India's large informal economy, especially in urban areas. It is also one of the largest employers for women. Yet, not enough focus has been placed on working women in our discussions on COVID-19 and the lockdown – there are no special economic packages for domestic workers unlike, say, for construction workers. Soon, the rhythms of domestic life will be faster and more consistent, just like before. And like always, an entire set of activities and hours of labour will escape the purview of lawyers, economists and politicians alike. To understand how COVID-19 and the lockdown have impacted domestic workers, we conducted a rapid, telephonic survey of 500 households in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in mid-May.

When the lockdown began, there were appeals to employers not to withhold salaries for domestic workers. Yet, in an informal workplace with no formal job contract, these appeals are unenforceable. In March, 51% of the respondents said they were not paid fully indicating some compliance by employers. However, 89% said they were not paid at all in April. Ground reports suggest that May was no different. This has had an immediate effect on worker households. The income of domestic workers is 50% of the total household income. It is the more regular form of income supplemented by other members who are generally daily wagers. So, what happened to these households?

No savings left

First, it is important to recognise that these households were vulnerable even before the COVID-19 outbreak. On the eve of March 25, the average holding of rice and wheat in each household was less than 8 kg. On an average households had operational savings worth barely 15 days with most households reporting only 10 days worth of operational savings. In the best cases women reported operational savings worth 23 days, far less than the time they had to ride out without income due to the lockdown. In the survey, 44% of women domestic workers reported having had to borrow money to ride through the lockdown period.

To make matters worse, according to the participants of the survey, rents have not been forgone but deferred. Dues (rent, water, electricity) that need to be immediately attended to following the lifting of the lockdown are far more pervasive and higher in value than borrowings. The average due across 500 households was about ₹8,700. Close to one-third of the households had dues worth ₹10,000. Only about 12% reported not having any dues at all. Non-negotiable expenses such as milk, vegetables, fuel, oil and masalas cost them ₹100 per day. These have been largely managed from savings, borrowings and incurring debts as also with forgoing meals at large. In short, loss of income has meant that households have lost the thin layer of savings they had, and have left the lockdown with debt.

Second, the related dimensions of job status and income are not very encouraging either, with 25% of the workers saying they were asked not to return to work. Another 25% were unsure if they would be called back. Job status and dues when seen together present a red flag. The average debt (excluding dues) in households where domestic workers were recently ousted from their jobs was about ₹6,800. It was ₹2,400 for those who still had their jobs. Hence, what we stare at is not just a plunge in economic condition but the withdrawal of the very means that can be a way to repair it.

These workers, despite the hardships, haven't left the cities and don't intend to do so. The city and the state will soon rely on them to restore normalcy. But can that be achieved if they continue to battle precarity of income, job, nutrition and housing on an everyday basis?

Need for health insurance

With the lockdown being lifted, many workers will be quietly let off, while others will slowly return to work – poorer, saddled with debts, their little savings wiped out. Recovery without compensating for wage loss and erosion of savings in the form of cash transfers is impossible. A health insurance against COVID-19 for every domestic worker is the only way the government can formally recognise the risks involved in their job and the problem that an infection can cause to their lives. But for all this to happen, they will first have to be recognised and workers have to be enrolled in government registers. It is both a need and an opportunity to extend and strengthen the frayed and mostly absent social protection nets to those who run our cities and our homes.

Meva Bharti is the convener of the Jaipur-based Rajasthan Mahila Kamaar Union

In search of the 'what' and 'why'

A. Vaidyanathan would pore over economic data and tease out the most interesting patterns

R. NAGARAJ & C. RAMMANOHAR REDDY

of water use. His recommendations were not always followed up on but he had an indefatigable energy and sense of curiosity.

From the mid-1970s onwards, Vaidy taught and conducted research first at the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum and later at the Madras Institute of Development Studies. He would have agreed that his best years were at the CDS, at the time one of the country's premier economic research centres. We feel that it was his interaction with students at CDS that gave him the greatest satisfaction. He had time for every student, whatever her interest, whatever the perspective and whatever the difficulty. In his seminar course on Indian Economy, students learnt to appraise the received wisdom from various perspectives and examine the underlying empirical tools and statistical data sets used. His critical but always positive comments in the classroom launched many a successful doctoral thesis.

Listening to all sides

In a field where viewpoints could be extreme and debates acrimonious, Vaidy had the remarkable ability to listen to all sides and be open to all viewpoints. He would have his opinions but he was never closed to ideas from the 'opposite' side. It is perhaps this capacity that saw him interact with people across political divides. Vaidyanathan held many official positions including as member of the Planning Commission in 1989-90 and then as a member of the central board of the RBI. But nothing gave him greater pleasure than poring over economic data to tease out the most interesting patterns and stories. Vaidyanathan acknowledged the shortcomings of India's official data system but he also recognised its strengths. He was unhappy with the deterioration in recent years of the methodology of GDP estimation and the weakening of the Central Statistics Office and the National Sample Survey. If you did not have good data how could you answer the questions 'what' and 'why'?

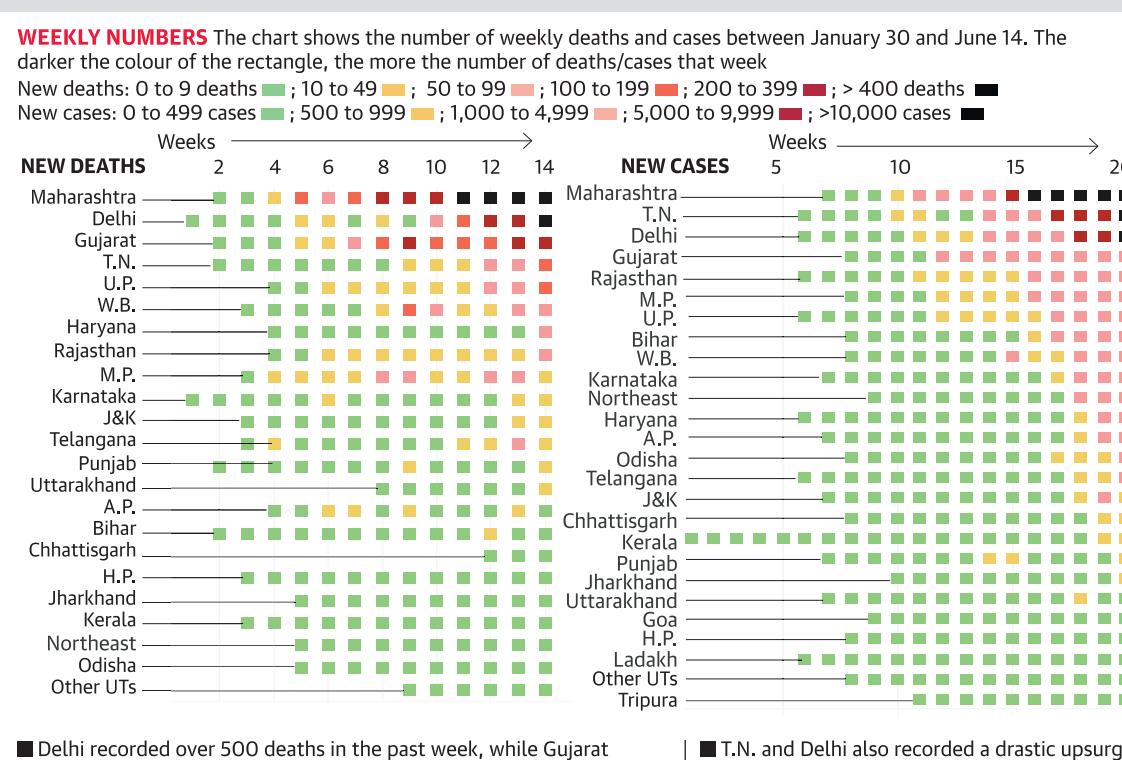
R. Nagaraj is Professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research; C. Rammanohar Reddy is Editor, 'The India Forum'



DATA POINT

Rising fatalities

In the past two weeks, 4,122 new COVID-19-related deaths were recorded in India, up from 2,380 deaths in the preceding two weeks. While Maharashtra continues to record the highest number of new deaths, Delhi, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh registered significant increases in the past week. Tamil Nadu and Delhi also recorded a surge in the number of new cases in the past week. By The Hindu Data Team



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 16, 1970

The Politics of Communalism (From an editorial)

Certain unhappy trends emerging from the frantic attempts at image-building during the Congress (R) session in New Delhi are too unmistakable to escape notice. No one expects a political party to be an altruistic do-gooder, out to establish the moral verities. Its business is of course to pursue power for its own reasons and keep out its political opponents. Nor can there be any doubt that honest and patriotic Indians are grieved over and ashamed of the ugly communal clashes that erupt from time to time. But is harping upon communalism, emotionalizing it out of perspective, the best way of eradicating it? Or fixing the guilt by subtle or even inadvertent suggestion on one community or those supposed to represent part of it the ideal way to promote that harmony which has been disturbed by past political gambles? Mrs. Indira Gandhi's rhetorical question whether a man who killed four children, while the mother, cried, was a Hindu is unfortunate, however well meant it might have been. The same question could be asked about infanticidal maniacs of all religions. Such rhetoric can rouse raw passions among the communities, rather than assuage them, whatever the immediate advantage to one political party in chastising by implication certain other political or quasi-political groups.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 16, 1920

The Coal Committee.

(From an editorial)

On the recommendations of the Indian Coalfields Committee which was appointed to advise, among other matters, on the question of the conservation and the economic exploitation of Indian coalfields, by far the most important is certainly that relating to the question of the nationalization of the mines. A high authority on the subject of coal-mining created a sensation some months ago by his deliberate statement that, under the methods of exploitation at present adopted in Indian mines, an amount of coal worth an incredible sum was being annually wasted in the country. The inquiry of the Committee establishes that at present there is undoubtedly a deplorable wastage. To prevent this wastage, the Committee say either the coal must be nationalized, or without interfering with the private ownership of coal, a controlling authority should be constituted by the State to prevent further waste.

FROM PAGE ONE

'Nepal move is unilateral, talks are difficult now'

They refuted Mr. Oli's allegation that the Modi government had not responded to calls for Foreign Secretary-level talks on the Kalapani dispute and claiming that it had even offered talks last month.

"We had offered talks and a video-conference before the tabling of the [constitution amendment] bill (on June 1) also. However, the unilateral act of PM Oli has created a difficult situation and prejudged the outcome of any future talks. It is now for Nepal to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue," the sources added, claiming that the Nepal PM had hidden India's offer from his parliament and party colleagues.

The sources, however, declined to give precise dates of the offer made by New Delhi. An official in the Nepali government "outrightly rejected" the Indian claim that there had been any offer.

Visibly upset by Mr. Oli's suggestion during the debate in parliament that "85% of Nepal's COVID-19 cases had come from India", the sources said the accusation was "false and distorted".

Petrol, diesel prices highest since Oct. 2018

Following the latest price revision, a litre of petrol costs ₹76.26 in Delhi, ₹83.17 in Mumbai, ₹79.76 in Chennai and ₹78.10 in Kolkata. Similarly, a litre of diesel costs ₹74.62 in Delhi, ₹73.21 in Mumbai, ₹72.69 in Chennai and ₹70.33 in Kolkata.

Around 70% of the retail price of fuel comprises taxes (excise duties, VAT, cess, etc). The current spike in auto-fuel rates can be attributed to the excise duty hike of ₹10 per litre on petrol and ₹13 per litre on diesel last month. Besides, several State governments have also hiked VAT or cess on fuel but its impact was immediately passed on to customers.

The state-owned oil marketing companies (OMC), Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL)

of 8 million Nepalese people who live and work in India, only a small number had returned over the India-Nepal border given the lockdown in both countries, they said, and they entered Nepal with the permission of their government.

Hence, it was Nepal's responsibility to ensure any returning citizen was quarantined and treated for the virus.

India had provided overflight to flights to Nepal from several other countries, including China as well, the sources pointed out, and it was unfair to single out just one country for the spread of the virus.

Meanwhile, the sources questioned Mr. Oli's motives for bringing up the dispute over Kalapani, saying it proved "the intention is to politicise the boundary dispute". They also claimed that Nepal has itself encroached on Indian territory in Narsahi and Susta by settling its own population in disputed areas, and asked why all the claims over issues settled during the 1815 Treaty of Sugauli (Article V) were being raked up after "200 years".

The fatality was that of a 67-year-old, residing at Vanchiyoor in the capital, with a history of respiratory and heart ailments, the Health department said. However, he did not have a travel history or contact with anyone with a travel history and the

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Two deaths each due to COVID-19 were reported by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, while one more fatality was reported in Kerala, taking the toll in that State to 20.

COVID-19

In Kerala, COVID-19 was confirmed in 82 more persons, while 73 were reported to have recovered from their disease on Monday. The number of active cases in the State was 1,348.

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Of the cumulative 20 deaths, seven involved infection acquired through "contact" or unknown source. All cases were reported to have co-morbidities.

Of Monday's new cases, 72 were imported infection among people who arrived from abroad or from other States. Nine were infected through contact with known or unknown sources.

A total of 2,543 persons in Kerala were infected since the outbreak began. Of this, 1,174 persons had recovered so far.

Till Sunday, Kerala had nearly 2.5 lakh people on the State's surveillance and quarantine list. On Monday, 1,29,971 people were cleared from this list, as they completed the 14-day home/institutional quarantine.

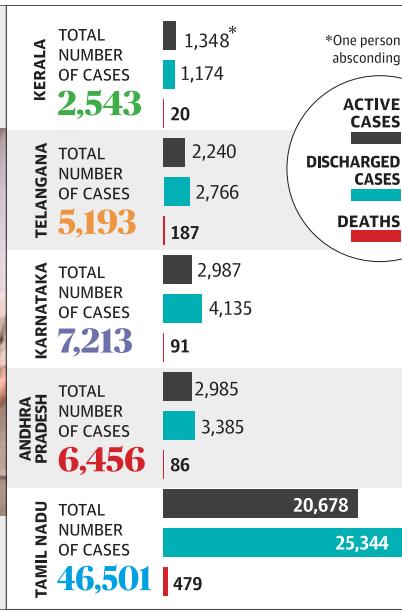
Bengaluru city on Monday recorded 35 new COVID-19 cases. Of these, 13 were related to Influenza-like illnesses (ILI). The State war room estimated that the ILI positivity rate across Karnataka remained low, but in Bengaluru it had gone up since June 3. The positivity rate (positive cases per 100 tests) for ILI across districts was being tracked. Officials said an increase in ILI positivity rate (where no other known history or source of infection

Safety gear

The demand for personal protective gear has surged as COVID-19 cases spiked in the country



Dotted up: Mannequins with personal protective equipment and masks displayed at a store in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY



Bengaluru.

Of the two deaths reported, one patient was a 65-year-old man from Dharwad district who had passed away on June 14, and another a 75-year-old male from Bengaluru district. This patient was diagnosed with ILI, diabetes mellitus and hypertension. The total number of deaths stood at 88.

Meanwhile, 180 patients were discharged on Monday. With this, the total discharged was 4,135.

The 5,362 samples tested on Monday was consistent with a reducing trend seen over the last couple of days.

(With inputs from Bengaluru and Vijayawada bureaus)

Andhra Pradesh records new high of 304 cases

In Bengaluru, more influenza-like illness cases are now positive for virus

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

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meant that it was spread by someone not tracked.

On Monday, 213 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Karnataka, taking the total to 7,213. The highest was from Kalaburagi district with 48 new cases, followed by

SC stays green tribunal's orders in Vizag gas leak case

LG Polymers has sought suspension of disbursal of ₹50 cr.

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a National Green Tribunal (NGT) order of June 1, which directed the appropriation of ₹50 crore deposited by LG Polymers for the restoration of environment and payment of interim compensation to victims of a gas leak from its factory at Visakhapatnam on May 7.

A Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit stayed the tribunal order for the next 10 days.

On June 1, the tribunal also directed the framing of a "restoration plan", final quantification of the compensation to be paid to victims and action against officials responsible for allowing the company to function with-



Twelve people died after gas leaked from the factory.

out statutory clearances. All of these directions have been stayed for the time being.

The stay order came after senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, for LG Polymers, argued that the company cannot mount a defense against the charges as its records were sealed.

He contended that the

NGT's enquiry committee report into the gas leak was published only on May 28, hardly three days before the June 1 order. This gave the company inadequate time to respond. Mr. Rohatgi had sought suspension of the disbursal of the ₹50 crore.

The Bench asked the High Court to decide the various disputes in connection with this case by the end of next week. The Bench scheduled the case for hearing after two weeks.

Meanwhile, TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu wrote letters to the victims. "I had planned to personally meet you and hand over ₹50,000 as financial assistance, but the government is not giving me permission to visit Visakhapatnam," he wrote.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa chaired a high-level meeting of Ministers and senior officials to deliberate on measures to

stem the spread of COVID-19.

The Chief Minister pointed out that out of the total 7,000 cases reported, 4,386 were travellers from Maharashtra and 1,340 were their contracts. Further, 216 people who tested positive were those who came from abroad.

Karnataka-A.P. buses from tomorrow

Effort on to reduce expenses, ease pension burden

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has decided to resume inter-State service to Andhra Pradesh from Wednesday after over two months.

The services will resume in a phased manner. In the first phase, buses will be operated between Bengaluru and destinations such as Tirupati, Vijayawada, Puttaparthi, and Nellore. For the time being, only non-AC services will be operated.

A KSRTC official said that 160 buses would be operated from Karnataka and the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) will operate an equal number of buses to different destinations in Karnataka, including Bengaluru.

The next round of Corps Commander-level talks have not been decided yet.

N.J. NAIR

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Raising the retirement age of government employees from 56 to 58 years and abolition of redundant posts have been mooted to bail out Kerala from the current fiscal crisis.

An expert panel headed by Sunil Mani, director, Centre for Development Studies, which explored various options for mopping up resources and paring down government expenditure in the wake of the resource crunch deepened by COVID-19, has said raising the retirement age would help save ₹5,265.97 crore annually in terms of benefit outflows and ease the pension burden in the long term, given the high life expectancy in

It has mooted a review of temporary posts and cau-

tioned against creation of new and regularisation of existing posts.

The maximum period of leave without allowance should be capped at five years and unauthorised absence beyond that time-frame should be treated as resignation.

This proposal has been put forward on detecting a blatant misuse of the Kerala Service Rules provisions to avail of 20 years of leave in spells of five years for taking up overseas assignments or joining spouse.

and stage conventions.

Under the changed circumstances due to the lockdown, many Yakshagana artists and Yakshagana-related organisations are hosting the virtual 'talamaddale' live programmes on the Facebook, YouTube since past over a fortnight. Their links are shared on social media platforms, including on WhatsApp, leading the art lovers to enjoy them on their mobile phones.

Virtual live streaming is not a new trend in case of Yakshagana performance. Hence it is an art form minus dance, costumes. But for 'talamaddale' it is

and catching up. If some used virtual meeting apps and then streamed it live on social media, many others streamed the conventional 'talamaddale' (where all artists had a 'baithak' in a place) live on social media.

A senior 'arthadhar' ('talamaddale' artist who is an orator) Radhakrishna Kalchar told *The Hindu* that in virtual 'talamaddale' an 'arthadhar' will have to speak keeping the wider audience in mind. The audience comprised both who are familiar with the art form and those who are not.

The government has said that all kinds of virtual classes should be stopped till the

Amid pandemic, traditional art of 'talamaddale' goes digital

A performance of the variant of Yakshagana theatre was streamed live on social media on June 13

RAVIPRASAD KAMILA

MANGALURU

The traditional art of 'talamaddale', a variant of Yakshagana theatre, too has gone virtual in times of COVID-19. A performance was streamed live on social media on June 13 and more such are in store.

Vasudeva Ranga Bhat, the artist who enacted the role of Rama in an episode of Ramayana performed from Upadi, while his counterpart Sripathi Hegde, who played the part of Lakshmana, was in California in the U.S. Another artist Ganapathi

Bhat Sankadurgi, who was Bharata, was in Mysuru. The musicians – Anantha Hegde Dantlige, the 'bhagavatha' (singer-cum-director), and Ganapathi Bhagvat Kavale, the 'maddale' player – were in Yellapur in Uttara Kannada.

Two hours

The episode titled 'Paduka Pradhana' was streamed live for more than two hours from 8.45 p.m. on YouTube and Facebook using a virtual meeting app. The hosts were Sanathana Yaksha Ranga Cultural Centre and North-

rent streams to explore digital platforms and social media to reach out to art lovers. 'Talamaddale', an ancient art form, is not an exception.

Unlike the Yakshagana performance, in the conventional 'talamaddale', the artists sit across a place without any costumes and engage in testing their oratory skills based on the episode chosen. If music is common for both Yakshagana performance and 'talamaddale', the latter has only spoken word without any dance or costumes. Hence it is an art form minus dance, costumes.

Virtual live streaming is

not a new trend in case of Yakshagana performance. But for 'talamaddale' it is

Karnataka schools make do with worksheets

Online sessions banned till Class V

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

With the Karnataka government banning online classes till Class five, schools are giving assignments, worksheets and homework to students. Some schools are even getting students to come online for classes without any video. These require students to log in at a specific time every day when the teacher will explain the tasks for them.

The government has said that all kinds of virtual classes should be stopped till the

committee formed to deliberate on the guidelines for online classes submits its recommendations.

India, Nepal share close ties: Rajnath

Differences over construction of Lipulekh-Dharchula road will be resolved through talks, he says

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said whatever differences had arisen between India and Nepal over the construction of the Lipulekh-Dharchula road would be resolved through talks and that India and Nepal ties went beyond mere geographical or political ties to spiritual connections and a *roti-beti vyavahar* (consanguinity and inter-dining, a sociological term to describe close kinship relations).

Mr. Singh was addressing the Uttarakhand unit of the BJP as part of a series of Jan Samvad virtual rallies organised by the party.

I want to state unequivocally that no Indian can ever harbour bitterness about Nepal, our relationship is beyond the ordinary relationship between countries

RAJNATH SINGH,
Defence Minister

nection between Baba Pashupatinath and Baba Amarnath? We have a *roti-beti ka vyavahar*. The Indian Army's Gorkha regiment has the war cry "Jai Mahakali, Aayo ri Gorkhal", Ma Kali is worshipped in Bengal, in Poorvanchal, in Uttarakhand, how can ties like this be bitter? I want to state unequivocally that no Indian can ever harbour bitterness about Nepal, our relationship is beyond the ordinary relationship between countries," the Minister said.

Spiritual connections
"The construction of the Lipulekh-Dharchula road which is on Indian territory, will reduce the length of the

Kailash Mansarovar Yatra by six days. We are hearing of some misunderstanding by the Nepalese government over the construction of this road, whatever that misunderstanding is, it can be resolved through talks. India and Nepal's ties go beyond mere geographical or political ties, these are spiritual ties. Can we forget the con-

Map fallout
Mr. Singh's comments come at a time when the Nepalese Parliament has endorsed

certain changes in the country's map, including areas that India claims as its own. Nepalese Prime Minister K.P. Oli has, in his address to the people, blamed India for inflicting a particularly virulent strain of the coronavirus to the Himalayan country.

A couple of days ago, the Nepalese police opened fire on Indian villagers, killing one, for being on Nepalese soil in Bihar's Sitamarhi.

The Ministry of External Affairs has disapproved of the Nepalese Parliament's decision on endorsing the new map, but Mr. Singh's statements point to a more proactive move of talking things out.

Deferred Bihar MLC polls on July 6

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

All nations that have nuclear weapons continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals, while India and China increased their nuclear warheads in the last one year, according to a latest report by Swedish think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

"China is in the middle of a significant modernisation of its nuclear arsenal. It is developing a so-called nuclear triad for the first time, made up of new land and sea-based missiles and nuclear-capable aircraft. India and Pakistan are slowly increasing the size and diversity of their nuclear forces...," according to the findings of SIPRI Yearbook 2020, released on Monday.

The report said China's nuclear arsenal had gone up from 290 warheads in 2019 to 320 in 2020, while India's went up from 130-140 in 2019 to 150 in 2020.

Pakistan's arsenal was estimated to be between 150-160 in 2019 and has reached 160 in 2020. Both China and Pakistan continue to have larger nuclear arsenals than India.

The nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-armed states other than the United States and Russia were considerably smaller but all these states were either develop-



War games: Nuclear-capable Agni missiles being fired during an IAF exercise in 2016. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

ing or deploying new weapon systems or had announced their intention to do so, it noted.

Low transparency

Together the nine nuclear-armed states – the U.S., Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea – possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020, which marked a decrease from an estimated 13,865 nuclear weapons at the beginning of 2019.

The decrease in the overall numbers was largely due to the dismantlement of old nuclear weapons by Russia and the U.S., which together possess over 90% of the glo-

bal nuclear weapons.

The availability of reliable information on the status of the nuclear arsenals and capabilities of the nuclear-armed states varied considerably, the report noted. "The governments of India and Pakistan make statements about some of their missile tests but provide little information about the status or size of their arsenals," it said.

The U.S. had disclosed important information about its stockpile and nuclear capabilities, but in 2019, the administration ended the practice of publicly disclosing the size of its stockpile, the report stated.

The U.S. and Russia have reduced their nuclear arse-

nals under the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) but it will lapse in February 2021 unless both parties agree to prolong it.

However, discussions to extend the New START or negotiate a new treaty made no progress with the U.S.'s insistence that China must join any future nuclear arms reduction talks, which China has categorically ruled out.

"The deadlock over the New START and the collapse of the 1987 Soviet-U.S. Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) in 2019 suggest that the era of bilateral nuclear arms control agreements between Russia and the U.S. might be coming to an end," the report cited Shannon Kile, Director of SIPRI's nuclear disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation programme, as saying.

Russia and the U.S. have already announced extensive plans to replace and modernise their nuclear warheads and delivery systems. "Both countries have also given new or expanded roles to nuclear weapons in their military plans and doctrines, which marks a significant reversal of the post-Cold War trend towards the gradual marginalisation of nuclear weapons," the ECI said.

The ECI also announced that by-election to one seat in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council that fell vacant with the resignation of Dokka Manikya Varaprasad, would take place on July 6. Mr. Prasad's term was till March 29, 2023.

Adequate measures for close monitoring of the election process by appointing observers shall be taken to ensure free and fair election. Commission has also directed the Chief Secretary of the State to depute a senior officer from the State to ensure that the extant instructions regarding COVID-19 containment measures are complied with while making poll arrangements," the ECI said.

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI**

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday announced the schedule for elections to nine Bihar Legislative Council seats that had been deferred in April due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Polling and counting would take place on July 6, the ECI said.

The terms of Ashok Choudhary, Krishan Kumar Singh, Prashant Kumar Shahi, Sanjay Prakash, Satish Kumar, Radha Mohan Sharma, Sonel Mehra, Md. Haroon Rashid and Hira Prasad Vind ended on May 6.

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Karan Singh faults India and Nepal for map imbroglio

Cong. leader calls it 'serious diplomatic lapse by New Delhi'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Rajya Sabha member Karan Singh on Monday said the Nepal government's decision to include parts of India by redrawing its map is an "irreversible confrontational act but also called it a diplomatic lapse on India's part".

In a statement, Dr. Singh slammed Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli for redrawing the boundary. Dr. Singh belongs to the former royal family of Kashmir and is married into Nepal's former royal family.



Karan Singh

described as an irreversible confrontational posture vis-a-vis India despite the profound social, cultural, religious, economic and political relations that go back many centuries," Dr. Singh said.

"Whatever impact this move may or may not have on India, I fear the consequences for Nepal will not be favourable for the people of its beautiful country."

Dr. Singh's statement

comes after Nepal's lower house of Parliament last Saturday passed a constitutional amendment Bill to include parts of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district in its updated map.

The veteran Congress leader also asked why the government of India had allowed things to reach such a pass. "...We should have never allowed the situation to deteriorate like this." He said though Nepal had raised it in November last, India "surprisingly" didn't take it seriously.

"We should have immediately initiated Foreign Secretary level talks and then, if necessary, raise it to the level of Foreign Minister or even the Prime Ministers. Prima facie, this appears to have been a serious diplomatic lapse, the consequences of which are before us," Dr. Singh said.

Javadekar, Jairam spar over notification on coal

Ministry had dropped requirement to supply washed coal

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar defended his Ministry's recent notification scrapping the mandatory requirement of supplying washed coal to all thermal units more than 500 km away from the coal mine.

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Prakash Javadekar

did the government's 2016 order, which made coal washing mandatory for supply to all thermal units more than 500 km from the mine as part of its climate-change commitments.

Pollution load
Mr. Ramesh, in his letter to Mr. Javadekar dated 13th June, had said that the notification would "undo whatever limited progress" was made so far in reducing pollution load at coal-based power plants. This notification un-

The Hindu, said, "The fact that coal washing is not required till 500 km distance. How coal is not dirty within 500 kms, and how it becomes dirty after 500 kms?"

Shooting off another e-mail to Mr. Javadekar, Mr. Ramesh explained that from January 2014, the Environment Ministry had been working towards "progressive reduction" of distance that unwashed coal would travel, keeping in view that ultimately all coals, irrespective of distance from supplying mines, will have to be washed and comply with less than 34 per cent ash limit. He quoted four orders by the Environment Ministry since 2014 to this effect.

The Minister put the onus of washing coal on thermal plants, rather than Coal India which is the monopoly producer of coal in India. In his reply to Mr. Ramesh, Mr. Javadekar said, "[power] plants are free to wash coal. It is not banned."

'There will be no conflict if Indian Army doesn't enter our actual line of control'

A slice of history reveals that Beijing will be unyielding on post-1962 status quo

AMIT BARUAH
NEW DELHI

The Chinese have literally stuck to their guns since the 1962 border conflict when it comes to approaching a border settlement with India and reaching a common position on who sits where along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

A slice of history from the archives reveals that Beijing would be unyielding if India tried to disturb the post-1962 status quo, something that could shine a light on current border incidents with China.

In December 1963, a year after the November 1962 border conflict with India, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai told Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser that there would be "no conflict between the two sides if the Indian army does not again enter our actual line of control."

Chinese assessment

Given the recent impasse along the LAC and fistfights between Indian and Chinese soldiers, Mr. Zhou's dictum holds good – all would be well as long as the Indian side did not assert itself. A record of the Zhou-Nass-



PM Jawaharlal Nehru with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in 1954. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

er conversation, available on the Wilson Center Digital Archive, showed the Chinese assessment of New Delhi's position: "India's attitude is:

for the eastern border, we must accept the McMahon line; for the western border, India wants it where it has never been, an area where

and 1957 – but the Indian side never put forth any proposals.

The Chinese side seems stuck on this even today – they have not agreed to share maps on their perception on the eastern and western sectors. "Advance demarcation" still appears to be a problem for the Chinese side, although the contours of a possible settlement referred to by Mr. Zhou is no longer Beijing's official position.

NEWS ANALYSIS

agreement," Mr. Zhou told Mr. Nasser.

Over the years, India and China have agreed on a number of mechanisms to enhance confidence at the military level, but their inability to agree to a border settle-

ment have led to consistent problems – troops coming into conflict with each other – and continues to be a pressing issue.

Mercifully, there have been no fatalities on either side for the past 45 years – since the two countries restored full diplomatic relations in 1976.

Tejashwi continues attack on 'missing' Nitish Kumar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Continuing his attack on Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for his long absence from public life during the coronavirus crisis, Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly and Tejashwi Yadav on Monday released a poster that said: "The whole of Bihar is asking: where has Nitish Kumar been hiding?" Mr. Kumar, meanwhile,

came out of his residence on Monday to attend the 72nd State-level bankers' meet at Patna's Adhiveshan Bhawan. "Why has Bihar's Chief Minister been missing for the last 90 days?" asked the huge poster unveiled by Tejashwi Yadav outside the Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) headquarters at Patna's Beherchand Patel Marg. It said: "He spent 77 lakh 76 thousand seconds in hiding and yet he is traceless...

...and, above all, calling labourers goons, *lootere* (robbers) and criminals...neither do you take care of poor people, labourers, farmers or youth...what did you do? Only rest, rest, rest and rest." Addressing mediapersons at the party office, Mr. Yadav said such posters would be put up at every block and district headquarters. Later, he also tweeted: "Shouldn't the chief minister

Kishor too took a jibe at his former party boss. "Despite the lowest testing rate, 7.9% positive case rate and more than 6,000 cases, Bihar is discussing more of elections than corona. Nitish Kumar who had not come out of his residence for last three months due to fears of corona, thinks there is no danger for people in stepping out of their home to participate in polls," Mr. Kishor tweeted.

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL TAMIL

(An Autonomous Institution, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India)

No.40, 100 Feet Road, IRT Campus, Taramani, Chennai – 600 113

CORRIGENDUM TO ADVERTISEMENT NO 1.DATED 12-5-2020

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS OF CICT

2019-20

It is hereby informed that the last date for Submission of nominations/recommendations for the Presidential Awards for Classical Tamil of "Tholkappiyar Awards, Kuralpeedam Awards and Young Scholar Awards" in Classical Tamil is hereby extended up to 15th July, 2020. For more details, please visit website www.cict.in.

Director

Centre, Delhi team up to fight pandemic

Union Home Minister calls all-party meeting of Delhi-based political parties to discuss situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Delhi government are planning to rope in members of political parties and those who have recovered from COVID-19 to volunteer, as they looked for ways to contain the rising number of cases in Delhi.

On Monday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah called an all-party meeting of Delhi-based political parties to discuss the situation. Delhi has recorded more than 41,000 COVID-19 cases and around 1300 deaths so far.

Ruling Aam Aadmi Party's Sanjay Singh, who attended the meeting, said that from June 20, testing (per million) would be increased to 18,000 a day from 14,390 tests conducted on June 14.

"The Home Minister said that all political parties will have to fight the infection together, keeping differences aside. We will appeal to people



Action plan: Home Minister Amit Shah holding a meeting with Delhi-based political parties at North Block on Monday. ■ PTI

people who have recovered from COVID to come forward and assist the system, this also includes doctors who have recovered. Since there is no known case in India of a person being infected again, their services will be of immense help", Mr. Singh, a Rajya Sabha member, said.

As on June 14, the number of patients who had recovered from the infection stood at 15,823.

Members of political parties would also be used as volunteers. Beds numbering 1,900 were being added in the Delhi government-run hospitals and 1,178 and

2,000 in private and Central government hospitals respectively. If need arose, additional 500 railway coaches that have 8,000 beds would be added. Currently, the Delhi government has 9,993 beds dedicated for COVID-19 patients. Of them, 4,477 were vacant as on June 14.

On Sunday, Mr. Shah met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal and it was decided to provide 500 railway coaches for COVID-19 patients.

Shah visits LNJP hospital
On Monday, Mr. Shah visited the Delhi government's LNJP hospital, a dedicated COVID-19 facility.

Delhi State Congress chief Anil Chaudhary said the party had submitted 11-point suggestions to the Home Minister recommending that sports stadiums be used for treating COVID-19 patients.

"We have been told about a test that will give results in 15 minutes. It costs ₹450 and will be used soon for mass testing. Senior IAS officers are being appointed to coordinate between the State and Central governments", Mr. Singh said.

No lockdown again

There was no talk of imposing the lockdown again, he said.

When asked if lockdown had failed to stop the spread of infection, Mr. Singh said, "the condition is worse in Delhi and Mumbai as they received the maximum number of international flights".

Home Ministry in a statement said, "Mr. Shah appealed all parties to rise above political differences in the interest of people. Political unity will create confidence among the public and lead to improvement in the situation in the capital".

ICMR recommends use of faster COVID-19 testing kit

Nasal swab is used for testing in this procedure

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recommended the use of Standard Q COVID-19 Ag antigen detection test in containment zones and healthcare settings in combination with the RT-PCR test. Collected nasal swab is used for testing in this procedure.



The test can be interpreted as positive or negative in 15 to 30 minutes. ■ ISTOCKPHOTO

"Sample is nasopharyngeal swabs in this test, while blood is collected in the antibody test. The kits will allow faster diagnosis," he stated.

The Standard Q COVID-19 Ag detection kit is a rapid chromatographic immunoassay for qualitative detection of specific antigens to SARS-CoV-2. It has been developed by SD Biosensor, a South Korea based compa-

ny, having its manufacturing unit in Manesar, Gurugram.

An advisory released by the ICMR stated that in view of the high specificity (ability to detect true negatives) and relatively low sensitivity, the Council recommends the use of this test in containment zones or hotspots to test symptomatic persons with influenza-like illness and asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts with co-morbidities of a confirmed case. "They should be tested once between day five and day ten of coming into contact with such individuals," the ICMR said.

"The test can be interpreted as positive or negative after 15 minutes... The maximum duration for interpreting a positive or negative test is 30 minutes," the ICMR said.

ICMR distances itself from study

The study, which is not yet peer-reviewed, had forecast pandemic peak in Nov.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has disassociated itself from a modelling study, co-authored by at least two of its in-house scientists and the chairman of a government-appointed National COVID Task Force, and that was reported in several newspapers including *The Hindu*.

The study that is not yet peer-reviewed but appears on the medrxiv pre-print server since June 12, a repository for scientific communication, shows that an eight-week lockdown along with public health measures would still mean a minimum of 40 million infected by the virus.

It forecast different scenarios of different levels of



Ready for battle: Beds at a banquet hall, converted into isolation wards for COVID-19 patients, in New Delhi. ■ PTI

lockdown effectiveness: 20%, 40%, 60% and 80% – the latter being the most effective – and cases peaking as late as January and most likely in November. It also calculated that the overall economic health system cost of the pandemic is estimated to be 6.2% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is much more than what's ostensibly allocated. The study isn't critical and rather commends the government's actions.

"The findings of our study validate the steps taken by the Indian government to use the lockdown to buy time for preparing the health system," the authors note.

However, Rajnikant Srivastava, head of ICMR's research management, policy planning and coordination cell, said on Monday on an ICMR-administered WhatsApp group that "...News reports attributing this study to ICMR are misleading. This refers to a non-peer-reviewed modelling, not carried out by ICMR and does not reflect the official position of ICMR." He didn't respond to calls for additional clarification.

The study, 'A Model Based Analysis for COVID-19 Pandemic in India: Implications for Health Systems and Policy for Low- and Middle-Income Countries', lists as its first author Dr. Shankar Prinja, Additional Professor of Health Economics, PGIMER, Chandigarh.

Rahul targets govt. on lockdowns

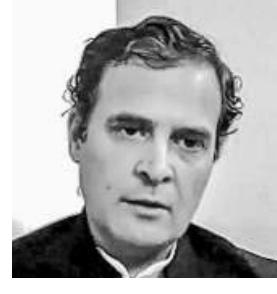
He takes to Twitter and quotes Albert Einstein to attack the BJP-led regime

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meetings with Chief Ministers on Tuesday and Wednesday to decide the road map for India's future COVID-19 strategy, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday targeted the government on the previous stages of lockdown.

Mr. Gandhi took to Twitter and quoted scientist Albert Einstein to attack the



Rahul Gandhi

government. "This lockdown proves that: 'The only thing more dangerous than

ignorance is arrogance.' Albert Einstein," the former Congress chief tweeted and tagged a videographic that claimed the lockdown flattened the wrong curve.

Using retail activity as a 'proxy for the economy' the graph showed the economy going from zero in Lockdown 1 to almost -90 (on a scale of 0 to -100) between Lockdown 2 and 3.

On the other hand, the COVID-19 infections grew from 100s in the first week of

March to 1,000s.

From initially supporting the nationwide lockdown, the Congress changed its position and described the measure as being a case of 'the cure being worse than the disease.'

The Congress had been particularly critical of the government's handling of the migrant workers' issue and the government's refusal to go for direct cash transfer to the Jan Dhan accounts of the poor.

Woman drags 100-year-old mother to bank on a cot

Manager suspended for insisting on physical verification

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUBANESWAR

The manager of a bank in Odisha's Nuapada district was suspended after a 60-year-old woman dragged her 100-year-old mother on a cot to the bank for withdrawing money from a Jan Dhan account.

The manager of the Baragaon branch of the Utkal Grameen Bank (UGB), identified as Ajit Kumar Pradhan, had sought physical verification of Labhe Baghel, a centenarian. She is a resident of the same Baragaon village.

Ms. Baghel had received ₹1,500 under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package announced by Centre. Monthly assistance of ₹500 (April to June) had been deposited to her account.

On June 9, Punjimati Dei, her daughter, visited the bank to withdraw the amount since her mother was bedridden. When physical verification was needed, having no option, Ms. Dei placed her mother on a cot and dragged her along the



Pain of rigmarole: Punjimati Dei dragging her mother on a cot to a bank at Bargaon in Odisha. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

road to the bank for about 400 m. She was then able to withdraw her money. A video of Ms. Dei dragging her mother on a cot has since gone viral.

'Communication gap'
"This unfortunate incident was taken seriously by the State government and the Chairman of UGB was requested on Sunday to take stern action after inquiry. Based on the request, the bank authorities issued a statement.

Mr. Pradhan, pending disciplinary action," a government statement said.

The bank, however, clarified that the manager had offered to visit the woman's house, but could not do so as there was a rush at the branch, which has only a single officer assigned to it. "In her anxiety to get the money early and avoid rush the next day, she [Ms. Dei] had come to the branch on June 10 before business started....," the bank said.

Engage with private sector to provide care, Centre tells States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked States to engage with the private sector for augmenting healthcare infrastructure, and provisioning of critical care at reasonable rates.

This direction, issued on Monday, according to the Health Ministry, comes following several reports indicating an emerging shortage of healthcare infrastructure,

including hospitals with ICU beds, ventilators, oxygen supported beds, etc., for the management of COVID-19 patients. "There have also been reports of overcharging by healthcare providers for COVID-19 treatment," the Ministry said.

"In order to ensure that patients receive prompt, good quality care at reasonable rates, it has been suggested to States to have consulta-

tions with the local private healthcare providers and arrive at reasonable rates, while factoring in cost elements for personal safety equipments for healthcare providers," a release noted.

The Ministry has suggested that the rates, once fixed, must be widely publicised so that both the patients and service providers are fully aware and capacities are used optimally.

Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration

5th Floor, Krishna Enclave, Gorantla, Guntur.

Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, A.P Guntur invites proposals for Personal Protective Clothing - Apron Coats, Trousers, Long Gowns, Reflective Safety Jackets & Cloth bags. Full details are available at

<https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/>. Tender Document Download Starting Date and time in <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in/> is 15-06-2020, 10:30 AM, Last date & time of submission of Tenders is 29-06-2020 3:00 PM and Bid Opening date is 29-06-2020, 4:00 PM. For any Tender related details, contact the O/o CDMA, Guntur, Email-injection@cdma.gov.in, Ph: 7993317000 Sd/- Commissioner & Director

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

(Consulting Services-Firm Selection)

The Government of Uttarakhand is being financed from the World Bank toward the cost of Public Financial Management Strengthening Project in Uttarakhand and intends to apply part of the proceeds for following consultancy service:-

SN Consultancy Services

1 Consultancy Services for Designing an E-Governance system for the Department of Excise, Government of Uttarakhand

The Project Director, UtkPFMS, Government of Uttarakhand now invites eligible consulting firms (Consultant) to indicate their interest in providing the services. Interested consultants should provide information demonstrating that the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform these services. The Term of Reference (TOR) for these assignments can be found at Audit Department Website <http://www.uttarakhandaudit.uk.gov.in> and Excise Department Website <https://excise.uk.gov.in>. The Consultant will be selected as per relevant World Bank Regulations. The consultancy firm will be selected in accordance with QCBS method set out in Consultant guidelines. Further information can be obtained during office hours from 10:00-17:00hrs IST. EoI's must be delivered in a document form (hard copy or electronic pdf) at the address or e-mail id given above (in person, by post or by e-mail) by 1700 hours on 2nd July 2020. All documents must be signed, stamped and certified by the authorised person of the firm.

PROJECT DIRECTOR

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, R.R. Nagar Zone, No. 144, 2nd Main, Jagajyothi Layout, Bangalore - 560 056.

No. : BBMP/EE/KEN/TEND/06/2020-21 Date : 15-06-2020

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (IFT)

(Two Cover System)-1st CALL (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers for the Construction of works detailed in the table below.

SL. No. Name of the Work Approximate Value of Work (Rs. in Lakhs) Amount put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs) EMD (in Rs.)

1. Comprehensive Development of Roads and Drains in Jnanabharti Layout 2nd Block, Nagadevanahalli, Vinayaka Layout, Ramnath Layout, Valagerehalli, Doddagollarahatti and Surrounding Area in Ward No. 130 (Package-2). 995.00 805.92 12,10,000/-

2. Comprehensive Development of Roads and Drains in Bhairaveshwara Layout, Bala Ashrama, Kalyani Layout, Nagadevanahalli and Surrounding Area in Ward No. 130 (Package-3). 995.00 805.92 12,10,000/-

3. Comprehensive Development of Roads and Drains in Bandemata Arunachalam Layout Shirke in Ward No. 159, (Package-1). 499.00 419.32 6,30,000/-

(1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-Procurement portal of Government of Karnataka from 22-06-2020, 4.00 pm onwards. (2) Pre Bid meeting will be held on 26-06-2020 at 4.00 pm. Venue : Office of the Chief Engineer, RR Nagar Zone, RR Nagar. (3) Tenders must be submitted online through e-Procurement portal on or before 4.00 pm on 02-07-2020 and the opening of tenders will be as per the e-Procurement portal guidelines. (4) Bids will be opened on the Website : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division on 04-07-2020 at 4.00 pm. The details regarding participation for this tender can be obtained by logging on to : <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, R.R. Nagar Zone.

Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA<br

60 lakh migrants took 4,450 Shramik trains

Most workers back home: Railways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Since May 1, 60 lakh migrants had taken 4,450 Shramik specials at an average ticket price of ₹600, of which the Railways had recovered 15%, Railway Board chairman V.K. Yadav said on Monday.

At a virtual press conference, Mr. Yadav said most migrants had gone back to their States but the Railways had asked the governments if they wanted more trains. The Railways had started the specials on May 1 for migrant workers hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

The Railways had also readied its train coaches to be used as the pandemic



The Shramik trains were started on May 1.

care centres in case medical infrastructure in any State is exhausted. Mr. Yadav said Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana had shown interest.

The Centre has said the Railways was charging only 15% of the cost of operations from the originating State governments and 85% of the cost was being borne by the Centre.

Bank denies money due to 2 Assam girls

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI
The Congress in Assam has complained against officials of the State Bank of India (SBI) for denying two underprivileged girls money due to them as scholarship amount even 18 months after the maturity of the fixed deposits.

Rimpy Thapa and Purnima Thapa of Nazira in eastern Assam's Sivasagar district had received a scholarship of ₹5,000 each from then Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi in 2012 for excellence in school. The amount was placed as a term deposit in the SBI's Dispur Branch.

No response
The two beneficiaries were to have received ₹7,806 each as maturity amount on December 8, 2018. However, bank officials allegedly did not respond to their applications for withdrawal or to several follow-up questions.

Drawing attention to the "completely unprofessional and unjust" conduct of officials of the bank, Congress MLA Debabrata Saikia on Monday sought the intervention of Thotngam Jamang, RBI's Banking Ombudsman in Guwahati.

"I, too, requested the Branch Manager in question to release the scholarship amount to the beneficiaries on October 31, 2019. I had further enquired whether there was any impediment in releasing the funds, but the Branch Manager did not have the courtesy to respond," he said in the complaint.

Mr. Saikia sought the RBI's intervention and disciplinary action against the errant bank officials.

Van Dhan Yojna helps tribals beat odds

In less than a year, 1,205 units have been set up to employ 3.6 lakh people

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

A few years ago, tribal communities in Langleng, one of Nagaland's poorest districts, used to sell their unique hill broom grass for just ₹7 a kg. Today, by making the brooms themselves with support from the Van Dhan Yojna, they now earn ₹60 a broom, making four or five brooms from a kg of grass.

"Broom grass coming from the hills is in demand because it is much sturdier and finer quality, but it was the middlemen and traders who were making all the money," says Anungla Imdong Phom, Joint Director of the Nagaland's Department for Development of Underdeveloped Areas.

"Two years ago, after a partnership with TRIFED [Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India], we started buying the grass for ₹30 per kg, and there was



Clean sweep: Brooms are made from hill grass by villagers to be sold in urban centres. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

huge supply. But the real gains came over this last year with the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs), which enabled people to start making the brooms themselves," she told *The Hindu* in a telephonic interview. "Today, the villagers sell each broom for ₹60. They are sold in Guwahati for up to ₹170 each."

The hill broom project is one of the biggest success stories of the Van Dhan Yojna.

na, launched nationwide on Independence Day 2019 to ensure that *van dhan*, or forest wealth, stays in the hands of forest dwellers, by providing local platforms for processing, value addition, marketing and sale of minor forest produce.

Ten months later, 1,205 tribal enterprises employing 3.6 lakh people through 18,000 self-help groups have been set up under the

scheme. About ₹3.5 crore worth of sales have taken place through these platforms, TRIFED managing director Pravir Krishna told journalists at a webinar on Monday. He hopes to treble participation to 10 lakh people and 50,000 SHGs under the COVID-19 relief plan. A digital procurement platform is expected to be in place by month-end.

The products range from hill brooms, wild honey, candles and ointments made of rock beeswax, bamboo bottles, aloe vera soaps and gooseberry wine in the north east, to *hawan* [incense] sticks, *moha laddu* and, *amla murabba* [preserved gooseberries] in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, and tamarind blocks, dried tendu leaves, processed mahua, lac bangles and eco-friendly leaf plates from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh.

NCW records spike in domestic violence amid lockdown

Minister had dismissed concerns about rise in numbers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown, according to official data. The sharp spike belies Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani's remarks that there was no increase in such incidents and that NGOs were

"scaremongering". Between March 25 and May 31, the NCW received 1,477 complaints of domestic violence. Nearly 727 of these complaints were received on its WhatsApp helpline (+91217735372) set up in April to ensure women, who couldn't access emails or send complaints by post, could receive help.



Smriti Irani

The total complaints during the 68-day period were 1.5 times the 607 of complaints received between March and May last year.

'Scaremongering'

Despite the numbers, Ms. Irani dismissed concerns over the rise in incidents of domestic violence. News reports last week said that during a webinar, the Minister

instances in other countries wherein methanol has been used for preparing spurious hand sanitisers. The *modus operandi* has been devised to exploit the huge demand for sanitisers.

Spurious sanitiser

"Methanol can be highly toxic and dangerous for the human body," said the CBI in a statement.

Based on information received from the Interpol, the CBI last month sent alerts to all the States, Union Territories and the Central agencies.

The banking Trojan, Cerberus, sent messages using the lure of COVID-19 related content to download the embedded malicious link.

IIT-Kharagpur bans staff from speaking to media

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

The Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) has issued a notice barring its employees from speaking to the media, quoting from the institute's Conduct Rules.

The notice was issued recently by the Registrar of IIT-KGP and it has noted that some of the employees are causing "embarrassment" to the institute by talking to the press.

An internal communication from the Dean's office has also advised the faculty to "seek permission" for

'It will lead to bondage and trafficking'

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

The relaxation of labour laws across 11 States combined with closure of schools and reverse migration to rural areas due to the nationwide lockdown will force lakhs of children into child labour, while those already employed will be forced to work longer hours for meagre wages and under hazardous conditions, warn activists and labour law experts.

The changes made to la-



More vulnerable: Adolescents may be forced into work during the pandemic. ■ V. GANESAN

bour laws by various State governments can be broadly divided into two categories – allowing longer working hours and suspending labour rights resulting in lax

enforcement – explains Rahul Sapkal, Assistant Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

"The easing of norms will lead to an overall increase in

insecurity and informalisation of labour, loss of bargaining power among labourers and deterioration in working conditions, but the impact on children and adolescents will be more severe. There will be an increase in hazardous work," said Mr. Sapkal.

India contributes to nearly 15% of the global child and adolescent labourers. There are over 10 million working children in the age group of 5 to 14 years and 22.87 million adolescents.

"Even in the absence of these relaxations, children were extremely vulnerable as witnesses of food and livelihood insecurity resulting in

them falling out of the safety net," says CRY's Preeti Mahara. "It is possible that adolescents may willingly drop out of school to help their families improve their financial resources."

Her organisation is working with partners in 19 States to collaborate with local administration to maintain a headcount of children who are returning to rural areas so that they can be linked with social protection schemes.

Ms. Mahara says in the days to come it is imperative that governments work on a vulnerability analysis and reach out to those children who have not returned to schools.

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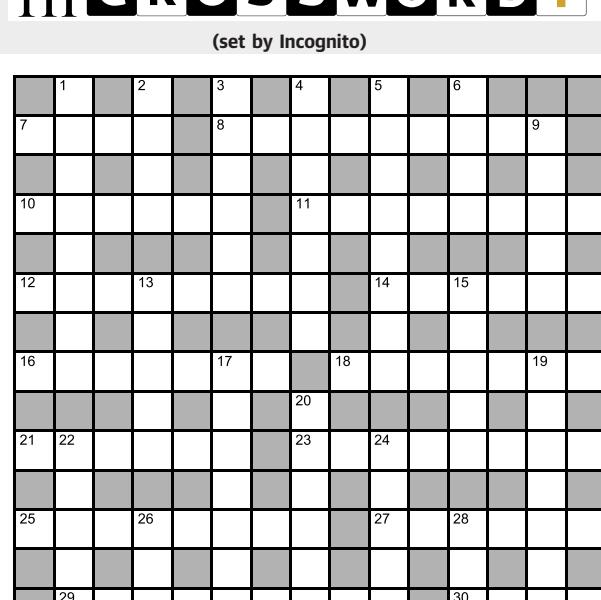
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(set by Incognito)

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



ACROSS

- 7 Commissioner of Police's subordinates, for instance (4)
- 8 Moon-walker like Bahubali or Bhujbal in India? (9)
- 10 After 10, communist revolutionary gives offer (6)
- 11 Oz lemons squeezed? It can help you produce great shots! (4,4)
- 12 Record nine returning and eavesdrop (6,2)
- 14 Put money into under-shirt (6)

16 Grumpy Saint Roy collected two-pence (7)

18 Beach's disease's developing (7)

21 Power to confiscate bad spice (6)

23 Seer's old student's batman? (8)

25 Period post was destroyed after being filled chock-a-block (4,4)

27 Endlessly, Pooh led astray dog (6)

29 Where one may dive in the Mariana Trench or Australia... (4,5)

30 Police informer's new on ship (4)

■ DOWN

1 Author in love dances on street (8)

2 Took advantage of American edition (4)

3 Unyielding sappers besieged in shed (6)

4 Chinese dynasty hides first and final letters. Surprising? (7)

5 A protein synthesised into medication (8)

6 Throw ball and vessel (4)

9 Girl sang badly for organised groups of criminals (5)

13 Bad-tempered dwarf fish (5)

15 Consultant releases advertisement for face-guard (5)

17 Adjust pin and turn to cover primary roller in part of newspaper production process (5,3)

19 Germany has water source earning money for residents (8)

20 Missile to drop explosively around stern of frigate (7)

22 Harry's dog (5)

24 Initially, puzzle in rebus design was very good (6)

26 The French women's starting to neglect part of garden, perhaps (4)

28 Has title to snow mixer (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12962 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

I	I	M	S	K	R	N

Europe reopens border, while China carries out mass testing

Belgium, France, Germany lift restrictions; Beijing responds to second wave

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BRUSSELS
A raft of EU nations reopened their borders to fellow Europeans on Monday after months of coronavirus curbs, but China was battling a new outbreak that has stoked fears of a second wave.

As caseloads have declined in recent weeks across many parts of Europe, governments have been keen to ease painful lockdowns that have saved lives but devastated economies and wearied confined populations.

Belgium, France, Germany, Greece and Ukraine were among those lifting border restrictions on Monday, while shops and outdoor attractions in England were set to welcome their first customers since March and in Paris cafes and restaurants were allowed to fully reopen.

"We're desperate about tourists, we need them and we want them. If we don't have the people, how will we survive," says Michalis Drosos, who works in a souvenir shop in Fira, capital of the Greek island of Santorini.

However, the pandemic is gathering pace in Latin America, and Iran and India have reported worrying increases in deaths and infections – adding to concern over challenges the world will face in the long fight against COVID-19.

China, where the virus emerged late last year, was the first country to implement extreme restrictions on movement early this year, forcing local transmission down to near-zero as the crisis hammered the rest of the world.



Pedalling up: French State Secretary Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne talking to cyclists in Wervik during the symbolic reopening of the border between Belgium and France on Monday. ■ AFP

But health officials on Monday reported 75 cases of the respiratory illness in Beijing where the fresh cluster has been linked to a wholesale food market.

Streams of people queued in a Beijing stadium as mass testing was carried out, and a strict lockdown was extended across 21 Beijing neighbourhoods.

Lowest daily toll

More than 4,30,000 people worldwide have died from COVID-19, nearly halfway through a year in which countless lives have been upended and the global economy ravaged by the crisis.

The U.S. – by far the hardest-hit country with more than 15,700 recorded fatalities – on Sunday reported its lowest 24-hour death toll since its infection rate peaked in mid-April.

President Donald Trump's administration has noted

that some States have seen new flare-ups, but insists there will be no shutdown of the economy even if a new wave arises.

But stock markets tumbled again on Monday on fears that an upsurge of infections could put the brakes on the easing of lockdowns and dash hopes of economic recovery.

West Asia's worst-hit country, Iran, reported an uptick on Sunday, recording more than 100 new virus deaths in a single day for the first time in two months.

There have also been two new outbreaks in Rome, with 109 infections including five deaths diagnosed at a hospital and 15 cases detected at a building inhabited by squatters.

"It means the virus hasn't lost its infectiousness, it isn't weakening... we shouldn't let down our guard," World Health Organization deputy

director Ranieri Guerra told journalists.

"Such micro-outbreaks were inevitable, but they are limited in time and space. And today we have the tools to intercept them and contain them."

Despite fears over fresh clusters, many countries are making moves towards semi-normality.

In Paris, restaurant and cafe owners were cheering after the government said they could once again open their dining rooms, three months after being shut to blunt the COVID-19 outbreak.

Until now, restaurants in and around the capital could only serve clients on outdoor terraces. In England, thousands of non-essential retailers such as bookshops and electronics outlets will be welcoming their first customers since halting in-store business in late March.

Russia sentences former U.S. marine to 16 years on charges of spying

Paul Whelan was detained in a Moscow hotel room in 2018

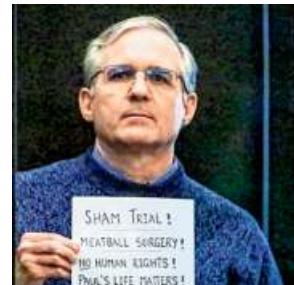
REUTERS

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON

A Russian court convicted former U.S. marine Paul Whelan of spying for the United States on Monday and sentenced him to 16 years in jail, a ruling that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said outraged Washington.

Whelan, who holds U.S., British, Canadian and Irish passports, was detained by agents from Russia's Federal Security Service in a Moscow hotel room on Dec. 28, 2018 as he prepared to attend a wedding.

Caught with a flash drive
Russia says Whelan, 50, was caught with a computer flash drive containing classified information. Whelan, who pleaded not guilty, said he was set up in a sting operation and had thought the drive, given to him by a Russian acquaintance, contained holiday photos.



Paul Whelan in Moscow, Russia, on Monday. ■ AP

as a "sham trial" and asked for U.S. President Donald Trump and the leaders of Britain, Canada and Ireland to take "decisive action".

Whelan's lawyer, Vladimir Zhrebchenko, said an appeal would be made against the verdict.

Mr. Pompeo said Washington was furious and wanted Moscow to immediately free Whelan.

John Sullivan, U.S. Ambassador to Russia, told reporters that no evidence had been produced to prove Whelan's guilt during what he called a mockery of justice. The ruling would not have "a good impact" on ties between Moscow and Washington – already strained by a range of issues – but that dialogue would continue, he said.

"This is all political theatre," said Whelan, who watched proceedings from a glass box inside the Moscow city courtroom.

Whelan had held up a piece of paper on which he denounced the proceedings

IAEA begins meet over Iran's n-programme

UN body to discuss access to 2 sites

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

VIENNA

The UN nuclear watchdog's governing body began meeting on Monday as a row brews over Iran's refusal to allow access to two sites where nuclear activity may have occurred in the past.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) expressed "serious concern" in a report earlier this month that Iran has been blocking inspections at the sites.

The Board of Governors, one of the agency's policy-making bodies, is expected to discuss the report during its meeting. If they pass a resolution critical of Iran, it would be the first of its kind since 2012.

Even though the two sites are not thought to be key to Iran's current activities, the

agency says it needs to know if past activities going back almost two decades have been properly declared and all materials accounted for.

Iran told the agency the report was a source of "deep regret and disappointment" and hinted the queries were based on "fabricated information" from "intelligence services".

In a statement to the Board of Governors opening this week's meeting, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi called on Iran "to cooperate immediately and fully with the Agency, including by providing prompt access to the locations specified by us".

The latest row over access comes as a landmark deal between Iran and world powers in 2015 continues to unravel.

Trump's niece to publish book with 'harrowing' revelations

It is to be released in Aug., ahead of Republican nomination

NEIL VIGDOR

A niece of President Donald Trump will divulge a series of "harrowing and salacious" stories about him in an upcoming book. It would be the first time that the President could be forced to grapple with damaging revelations by a member of his own family.

The niece, Mary Trump, will release the book, *Too Much And Never Enough*, on August 11, less than three weeks before Mr. Trump accepts the Republican nomination for a second term, *The Daily Beast* reported on Sunday.

Source for reports
The report said that in the book, Mary Trump, 55, will say she was a primary



U.S. President Donald Trump. ■ AFP

source for *The New York Times*'s coverage of Mr. Trump's finances and provided the newspaper with confidential tax documents.

Three journalists from *The Times* received the Pulitzer Prize for explanatory reporting last year for their work providing an unprecedented look at the Trump fa-

mily's finances and contradicting Mr. Trump's image of a self-made billionaire.

Mary Trump is the daughter of Fred Trump Jr., the President's older brother, who died in 1981.

Several former White House aides and Trump administration members have written books that have been problematic for the president. One of the most glaring examples is a memoir written by Mr. Trump's former National Security Adviser, John Bolton, which Mr. Trump has sought to prevent from being published.

The White House is expected to give Mr. Bolton a redacted version of his manuscript by June 19, which would be four days before the book's current publication date. NY TIMES

Australian PM concerned over China verdict

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SYDNEY

Australia's Prime Minister expressed concern on Monday for an Australian man sentenced to death in China in a case that could further inflame tensions between Beijing and Canberra. A Chinese court revealed on Saturday that Karm Gilespie, who used to work in Sydney as an actor and then an investment coach, had been condemned to death on drug-smuggling charges.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Australian authorities had been in touch with their Chinese counterparts on multiple occasions over his case. "I and the government are very sad and concerned that an Australian citizen, Mr. Karm Gilespie, has been sentenced to death in China," he said.

U.S. gripped by deep internal crisis, says Vladimir Putin

Russian President compares COVID-19 situation in the two countries, says Moscow is handling it much better



Facing the nation: Russian President Vladimir Putin delivering a speech in Crimea in March. ■ REUTERS

Philippine journalist critical of Duterte found guilty of libel

Maria Ressa slams the campaign to stifle press freedom

REUTERS

MANILA

Veteran Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, whose website has put President Rodrigo Duterte under tough scrutiny, was convicted of libel on Monday and faces up to six years in jail, in a ruling widely seen as a blow to media freedom.

Ms. Ressa, chief executive of *Rappler* (www.rappler.com) and a former CNN journalist, was charged with "cyber libel" over a 2012 article that linked a businessman to illegal activities.

After the verdict, Ms. Ressa vowed not be silenced and accused the judiciary of becoming complicit in a campaign to stifle press freedom in the Southeast Asian nation.

"We're at the precipice, if we fall over we're no longer a democracy," she told reporters.

The decision fuelled concern over human rights in a



Philippine journalist Maria Ressa in Manila on Monday. ■ AFP

country where Mr. Duterte's war on drugs has left thousands dead and he recently renewed a threat to kill drug dealers, despite condemnation in a UN report.

He is soon expected to sign an anti-terrorism law his opponents fear could target them, but which he says is needed to fight extremism.

To the shock of many, leading broadcaster ABS-CBN Corp, which had criticised Mr. Duterte, had to

stop broadcasts last month after its licence expired.

In handing down the verdict against Ms. Ressa, 56, a dual U.S.-Filipino citizen, Judge Rainelda Estacio-Montes said the exercise of a freedom "should and must be used with due regard to the freedom of others".

Ms. Ressa faced up to six years in jail, the judge said.

Reynaldo Santos, a former *Rappler* researcher and writer, was also found guilty. Both were granted bail pending an appeal.

President spokesman Harry Roque said Mr. Duterte supported freedom of speech and it was a previous administration that pushed for the "cyber libel" law. Mr. Duterte had never filed a libel case against a journalist, he added.

Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney, part of a legal team representing Ms. Ressa, called the conviction "an affront to the rule of law".

Watchdog hails White House scribes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS

A watchdog has hailed the White House press corps as "information heroes" alongside 30 journalists, whistleblowers and media outlets struggling against the odds to get the truth out about the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reporters Without Frontiers praised the correspondents for their persistence in grilling U.S. President Donald Trump in a roll of honour that included Li Wenliang, the doctor from Wuhan Central Hospital who was questioned by police for "spreading false rumours" and who later died from COVID-19 infection.

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MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	33,229	-1.63
US Dollar	76.03	-0.25
Gold	47,900	-0.51
Brent oil	38.59	-1.53

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	339.75	-5.55
Asian Paints	1618.20	-19.15
Axis Bank	389.60	-18.40
Bajaj Auto	2728.55	-53.60
Bajaj Finserv	5103.60	-182.35
Bajaj Finance	2351.40	-98.75
Bharti Airtel	550.70	-9.40
BPCL	361.00	-12.90
Britannia Ind	3357.20	-8.85
Cipla	643.65	0.05
Coal India	132.10	-2.55
Dr Reddys Lab	4012.30	4.35
Eicher Motors	16481.95	-375.35
GAIL (India)	99.65	3.30
Grasim Ind	581.90	-20.05
HCL Tech	578.95	8.20
HDFC	1751.65	-40.55
HDFC Bank	949.85	-32.90
Hero MotoCorp	2348.15	-53.70
Hindalco	145.80	-0.25
Hind Unilever	2084.30	-22.95
ICICI Bank	331.10	-13.10
IndusInd Bank	490.55	-37.90
Bharti Infratel	222.90	-2.10
Infosys	687.55	-4.50
Indian Oil Corp	86.20	-2.10
ITC	187.20	-6.70
JSW Steel	183.75	-5.20
Kotak Bank	1248.90	-30.90
L&T	899.90	-26.50
M&M	508.15	-0.30
Maruti Suzuki	5475.75	-86.00
Nestle India Ltd.	16400.30	-96.00
NTPC	93.20	-3.70
ONGC	84.10	0.20
PowerGrid Corp	163.25	-3.05
Reliance Ind	1614.55	-25.75
State Bank	173.70	-5.45
Shree Cement	22117.25	-275.40
Sun Pharma	485.80	5.70
Tata Motors	100.50	-4.80
Tata Steel	306.20	-11.40
TCS	2029.90	-9.60
Tech Mahindra	548.80	-5.90
Titan	948.40	-29.30
UltraTech Cement	3744.80	-43.75
UPL	405.00	-6.65
Vedanta	102.40	-0.90
Wipro	213.80	5.90
Zee Entertainment	165.50	-3.05

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.82	76.14
Euro	85.31	85.70
British Pound	94.97	95.38
Japanese Yen (100)	70.62	70.95
Chinese Yuan	10.68	10.73
Swiss Franc	79.80	80.13
Singapore Dollar	54.35	54.59
Canadian Dollar	55.54	55.80
Malaysian Ringgit	17.71	17.80
Australian Dollar	52.17	52.40

Source: Indian Bank

+ IN BRIEF



Wholesale prices plunge to a 4.5-year low

NEW DELHI Prices in the wholesale market fell to a 4.5-year low in May, recording a deflation of 3.21% following a sharp decline in fuel and power items even as food articles turned expensive. "The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI, stood at (-3.21%) (provisional) for the month of May, 2020 as compared with 2.79% during the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

EV maker Ampere says investments 'on track'

CHENNAI Ampere Vehicles Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned electric mobility subsidiary of Greaves Cotton Ltd., will continue to invest in people, technology and capacity during the current fiscal. "In the new normal, people might shift from shared mobility to personal and affordable mobility," said Nagesh Basavanhalli, MD and CEO, Greaves Cotton Ltd. "Our investments for current fiscal are on track and we will keep investing in people, technology and capacity."

LVB board vets proposal from private investors

CHENNAI The board of private sector lender Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd. (LVB) on Monday considered a proposal for possible capital infusion from two entities. "Today, at the board meeting, we accepted the preliminary and non-bidding bid submitted by Clix Capital Services Pvt. Ltd. and Clix Finance India Pvt. Ltd., on June 12, 2020" said S. Sundar, managing director and CEO, Lakshmi Vilas Bank. The RBI had earlier rejected its merger proposal with Indiabulls Housing Finance.

Tata Motors speeds to Q4 loss, sales fall

Automobile major charts out plan to cut costs, conserve cash; lowers capital expenditure target

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Tata Motors Ltd. has revealed aggressive cost reduction and deleveraging plans after it reported a consolidated net loss of ₹9,894.25 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, compared with a profit of ₹1,117 crore a year earlier. Lower vehicle sales and the impact of COVID-19 on its domestic and the Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) luxury car unit hurt the business.

JLR recorded a loss of £501 million while the domestic business of Tata Motors witnessed a loss of ₹4,871 crore.

The losses include an exceptional item of ₹2,500 crore related to asset write-downs in the domestic business. Revenue during the quarter declined 28% to ₹62,493 crore.

For the year ended March 31, the company reported a



Finance head Balaji says the current quarter is likely to be significantly weaker for both JLR and its parent firm. ■ AFP

consolidated net loss of ₹12,071 crore compared with a loss of ₹28,826 crore in the previous year.

The domestic business reported a loss of ₹7,290 crore for the year, compared with a net profit of ₹2,021 crore. The company's consolidated revenue for the financial year declined 14% to

₹2,61,068 crore.

During the year, JLR vehicle sales fell 12% while Tata Motor's commercial and passenger vehicle sales declined 22% and 25%, respectively.

P.B. Balaji, Group CFO, said JLR's fourth quarter results were significantly impacted by the pandemic. Despite this, the business im-

proved its earnings before interest and tax by 60 basis points over the previous year, he said.

"Project Charge has delivered cumulative savings of ₹3.5 billion. [The target] has been increased to ₹5 billion for March 2021. We see improvement in JLR's performance because of recovery in China, the U.S. and Europe," Mr. Balaji said.

"Steep volume decline, particularly MHCV, and resulting negative operating leverage impacted profitability and cash flows" at the domestic business, he said.

The CFO said the first quarter of this fiscal too was expected to be significantly weaker for both JLR and the parent firm.

He also said that the company was taking steps to significantly deleverage the Tata Motors Group, with JLR

set to become 'sustainably' cash positive from fiscal 2022.

He asserted that the company would focus on conserving cash. "The company has called out a cost savings program of ₹1,500 crore and a cash improvement program of ₹6,000 crore. As part of this, company has deferred or cancelled lower margin and non-critical investment and is targeting capex spending of ₹1,500 crore in FY21, substantially lower than the ₹5,300 crore in FY20 and FY19," he said.

"We make it clear that no registration of any BS IV vehicle will be made without our permission because our order is very clear. We request A.N.S. Nadkarni, Additional Solicitor General of India, to collect the details from all the road transport officers throughout India and furnish information that how many vehicles of BS IV category are sold and registered after the lifting of the lockdown."

With peak lockdowns in the first quarter, the company expects significantly lower sales in the quarter and negative free cash flow of about ₹5,000 crore in the first quarter, about ₹3,500 crore of which is related to one time working capital outflows, the company said.

It is made clear that now

no registration and sale of BS IV vehicles is permitted," the order by a Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra read.

The court said its March 27 order giving leeway for the sale of 10% of unsold BS IV stock was "misused."

The Supreme Court said it was started by the turn of events.

It further sought details of the BS IV vehicles sold up to March 31. The dates of the sales should be specified.

Pipeline tariff policy coming, to raise share of gas in energy basket

Pipeline authorisation regime on anvil with eye on investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

In a bid to raise the share of natural gas in the energy basket, India will soon have a new tariff policy that will help bring down the cost of transporting the environment-friendly fuel.

Also, oil regulator PNGRB is working on a new regime for authorisation of gas pipelines that will make it more investor friendly. Speaking at the launch of India's maiden online gas trading platform by IGX – aimed at market-driven pricing and to boost consumption by improving availability – both Oil Minister Dharmendra

Pradhan and regulator PNGRB Chairman Dinesh Kumar Sarraf spoke of a new pipeline tariff policy that will replace the existing practice of seven different pipeline operators charging separate rates and customers farther from a gas source paying more than those nearer.

"PNGRB is also working on rationalisation of tariffs to make natural gas affordable in every part of the country. It will facilitate development of the gas market in eastern and north eastern parts of the country," Mr. Pradhan said. Mr. Sarraf hinted at a single rate across pipelines so as to make the

price of fuel uniform for customers across the country. A draft regulation for the new tariff policy will be issued in the next few weeks, he said. The share of natural gas in India's energy basket is 6.2% and the Centre aims to raise this to 15% by 2030 to replace some of the polluting liquid fuel and coal with this cleaner alternative.

Mr. Pradhan also said GAIL had come up with a proposal to have pipeline and gas marketing business in separate divisions. "There will be an infrastructure company for pipelines."

(With inputs from Piyush Pandey in Mumbai)

Oil prices slip as COVID-19 cases spike

REUTERS

NEW YORK

Oil prices fell on Monday as new COVID-19 infections hit the U.S. and China, feeding worries that renewed lockdowns could hamper economic recovery and dent fuel demand.

U.S. WTI crude fell 1%, to \$35.91 a barrel. Brent crude prices fell earlier in the day but were 6 cents higher at \$38.61 a barrel at 8:36 pm IST. More than 25,000 new cases were reported on Saturday in the U.S. "As a trader you can't see the number of new infections rising in key markets and ignore it," said Bjornar Tonhaugen, Rystad Energy's head of oil markets.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Oil prices fell on Monday as new COVID-19 infections hit the U.S. and China, feeding worries that renewed lockdowns could hamper economic recovery and dent fuel demand.

Market participants are of the view that investors will continue to be jittery as there are increasing concerns relating to another lockdown and its potential impact on the already anaemic economic growth.

The 30-share Sensex lost 552.09 points, or 1.63%, to close at 33,228.80. The losses came primarily on the back of heavy sell-off in financial stocks such as Indiabulls, Axis Bank, Bajaj

Finance, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank, among others.

As many as 26 of the Sensex constituents ended in the red even as the broader market breadth was slightly positive. The broader Nifty settled the day at 9,813.70, down 159.20 points, or 1.6%. Further, the India VIX index surged by more than 6% on Monday, hinting at height-

Chola Financial net profit dips 26%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Cholamandalam Financial Holdings Ltd.'s (CFHL) standalone net profit for the fourth quarter ended March 2020 contracted 26% to ₹25.36 crore following COVID-19 and macroeconomic conditions.

Total income stood at ₹28.66 crore against ₹36.47 crore in the year-earlier period.

CFHL said the pandemic had a consequential impact on the regular operations of the company, including its lending and collection activities.

During February, the company declared an interim dividend of 65 paise per equity share for FY20.

The board has recommended the same to be confirmed as the final dividend for FY20.

'Most firms see need to update IT infrastructure'

Survey shows 81% reskilling workforce

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Pralay Mondal, executive director and retail banking head, Axis Bank, has quit 14 months after joining the third largest private sector lender.

In a notification to the stock exchanges, Axis Bank said

IN BRIEF



Jadeja best fielder in the game currently: Smith

MELBOURNE Star Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja is the best fielder in the game right now, according to Australian batting star Steve Smith, who also rated K.L. Rahul as the most impressive among the younger crop. Smith, who answered questions sent in by his fans on Instagram on Sunday, also said the Indian Premier League is his favourite tournament to play in. Asked about M.S. Dhoni, Smith responded saying the former Indian skipper is a "Legend! Mr Cool", while calling the current captain Virat Kohli a "freak" when it comes to batting ability. PTI

US Open to go ahead as planned: reports

NEW YORK The US Open tennis tournament is to go ahead as planned pending formal government approval, the *New York Times* reported on Monday. It cited four tennis officials speaking on condition of anonymity as saying that the Grand Slam event would take place without fans in its usual slot from August 31 to September 13. AP

Barty also has concerns over US Open timing

Brisbane World No. 1 Ashleigh Barty has joined the ranks of high-profile players concerned over the staging of the US Open while there's still so much uncertainty around the coronavirus pandemic. Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal have aired reservations about the potential restrictions on players, limits on player entourages and other changes being considered. AP

Acosta's association with EB ends on sour note

Kolkata Costa Rican World Cupper Johnny Acosta's association with East Bengal ended on a sour note as he left for his home on Monday morning, disappointed by the club's "apathetic" attitude after his contract was terminated by former investor Queso Corp. He had played a key role in its runner-up finish in the I-League in 2018-19. PTI

Daniel Berger has the last laugh

Takes the honours at Charles Schwab Challenge after a playoff with Morikawa

GOLF

REUTERS

FORT WORTH (TEXAS) Daniel Berger emerged from a tightly-bunched leaderboard to win the PGA Tour's first tournament back after a three-month COVID-19 break with a playoff victory at the Charles Schwab Challenge here on Sunday.

Berger, who needed a birdie on the final hole of his regulation round to make the playoff, sealed the win on the first extra hole with a rock-solid par moments before fellow American Collin Morikawa watched his putt from in close cruelly lip out.

When Berger sealed the win there was a brief handshake and hug with his caddie but no roars to be heard since Colonial Country Club was closed all week to the general public.

"I grinded so hard the last two months to be in this po-



That's huge! Daniel Berger with the reward for his triumph in the first PGA Tour event post the pandemic break. AP

sition and I am just so thankful that all the hard work paid off," said Berger, who had top-10 finishes in his three starts before the PGA Tour halted action in mid-March.

Berger, who began the action-packed day two shots off overnight leader Xander

Schauffele, carded a four-under-par 66 to reach 15 under for the week.

Missing out

Schauffele (69) missed the playoff by one stroke after his par putt from two feet at the 17th also lipped out. Among the others who fin-

ished one shot back of the playoff was Britain's Justin Rose (66) and Bryson DeChambeau (66).

Three-times Major champion Jordan Spieth started the final round one shot off the lead but hit just five of 14 fairways and 10 of 18 greens in regulation en route to a one-over-par 71 that left him in a tie for 10th place.

World No. 1 Rory McIlroy began the day three shots off the lead but struggled over the front nine en route to a four-over-par 74 that left him nine shots adrift and in a share of 32nd place.

Final scores: 265: Daniel Berger (65-67-67-66), Collin Morikawa (64-67-67-67). Berger wins on first playoff hole; 266: Jason Kokrak (67-70-65-64), Bryson DeChambeau (65-65-70-66), Justin Rose (63-69-68-66), Xander Schauffele (65-66-66-69); 267: Bubba Watson (68-66-68-65), Patrick Reed (68-69-63-67); 268: Gary Woodland (65-67-66-70).

Hima Das nominated for Khel Ratna



Hima Das. ■ FILE PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

India's top sprinter Hima Das, who had a stellar 2018, has been nominated for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna by the Assam government.

Assam sports secretary Dulal Chandra Das sent the letter of recommendation to the Sports Ministry on June 5. Hima is the first track athlete to win a global title, at the U20 World Championship in Finland in 2018.

Roberts to quit as CA chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA SYDNEY

Cricket Australia (CA) is set to part ways with its chief executive Kevin Roberts, at a time when it is under severe financial stress in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Roberts' departure would be announced later this week. The 47-year-old was contracted until the end of 2021 but has fallen out of favour with the CA Board.

CA, which stood down more than 200 staff on 20 percent pay until June-end, secured a loan of \$50 million last month to cover the losses if India doesn't tour Australia in the summer. It is also the host of the T20 World Cup in October-November but the ICC has not taken a final call on the tournament.

that an interim replacement would be made soon.

CA has been at the receiving end ever since financial issues came to light in the wake of the pandemic. It has faced stiff opposition from The Australian Players' Association and a few State bodies over its cost-cutting and financial projections during the health crisis.

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Carlsen's Clutch show

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

The climax to even the most exciting chess tournaments could sometimes be anti-climatic. It could all end with a quick, dull draw. Even a hard-earned victory in the final round may not be enough to stop the overnight leader.



Clutch chess, however, could spice up the finale of a tournament. Magnus Carlsen of Norway and Fabiano Caruana of the United States – the World No. 1 and 2 – showed how last weekend at the Clutch Chess International, organised by the US-based Saint Louis Chess Club. And they took home considerable money, too.

The matches are spread over two days and the last two games of each day are worth more points.

It remains to be seen if this system will find favour in other tournaments, but the fact is that the first two events - there was a US tournament before the international one - provided plenty of excitement.

The Carlsen-Caruana final alone produced nine decisive results, and only three draws. To reach the final, Carlsen had defeated Levon Aronian of Armenia, while Caruana had outwitted fellow-American Wesley So.

Those four had knocked out Jeffery Xiong (US), Leinier Dominguez (US), Alexander Grischuk (Russia) and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra).

Real Madrid defeats Eibar

Schalke's winless run continues



Marksman: Kroos, centre, Ramos, left, and Marcelo, the three who were on target, celebrate the first strike. ■ REUTERS

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MADRID

Marcelo celebrated by taking the knee as Real Madrid returned from three months away following the coronavirus suspension by beating Eibar 3-1 on Sunday. After scoring Madrid's third goal in the 37th minute, Marcelo dropped onto his left knee and raised his right fist into the air, apparently in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Madrid's win may have come at a cost as Eden Hazard and Sergio Ramos were

both substituted early in the second half and were seen with ice packs strapped to them while sitting in the stands.

Bayer Leverkusen moved back into the Bundesliga's Champions League places with a 1-1 draw on Sunday at injury-hit Schalke, which set a new club record of 13 league games without a win. **The results:** LaLiga: Real Madrid 3 (Kroos 4, Ramos 30, Marcelo 37) bt Eibar 1 (Bigas 60); Real Sociedad 1 (Oiarzabal 61) drew with Osasuna 1 (Adrian 29-pen). **Bundesliga:** Schalke 1 (Caligiuri 51-pen) drew with Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Miranda 81-og).

Addressing an online media conference, Campriani and Bindra talked about the five-part video series 'Taking Refuge: Target Tokyo 2020', shot by the Olympic Channel and released on Monday, and the manner in which they had been preparing the three for competitions.

Mentoring three aspiring crack shots

Campriani and Bindra on moulding refugee shooters for Tokyo

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

World and Olympic champions Niccolo Campriani and Abhinav Bindra have overcome many challenges in their lives and fabulous sporting careers.

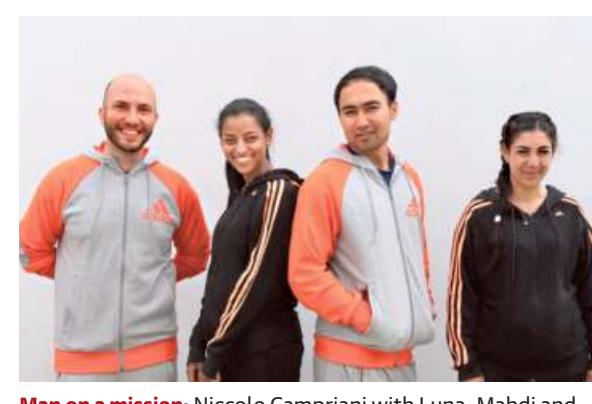
But they are currently engaged in a task arguably more demanding than any they have faced previously: helping three refugee shooters, Mahdi, Khaoula and Luna, compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

Three-time Olympic champion Campriani started the project and Bindra opted to support the venture on hearing about it.

"Seeing the resolve, determination and commitment, I volunteered to help," said Bindra.

Addressing an online media conference, Campriani and Bindra talked about the five-part video series 'Taking Refuge: Target Tokyo 2020', shot by the Olympic Channel and released on Monday, and the manner in which they had been preparing the three for competitions.

Bindra has borrowed the rifle that he had donated to



Man on a mission: Niccolo Campriani with Luna, Mahdi and Khaoula. ■ OLYMPIC CHANNEL

the Olympic museum for use till the Tokyo Games.

Mahdi and Khaoula had the experience of training in Bengaluru with some of the best Indian shooters, and got to use the high-performance equipment at the Abinav Bindra Centre.

Mental support

Campriani said that it was much more than giving the new shooters a chance to compete in the Olympics.

Giving an insight into the various challenges for the selected shooters, including the exposure straightaway at international competitions, Campriani said providing mental support

through experts would help them in both sport and life.

"They are training well to reach a competitive level. They have one more year to train," said Campriani.

"They are the best-prepared athletes in terms of media training, as they have faced the camera so much," said Bindra on a lighter note.

"Your last shot in the Olympics is not going to define who you are. Sport is not the only thing in life."

"It is interesting to see my sport through their eyes," summed up the Italian on the fascinating journey of becoming Olympic athletes in such a short span.

From Tendulkar Drive to Dev Terrace and Kohli Crescent

Housing estate in Melbourne to have streets named after Indian cricket greats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MELBOURNE

A new housing estate being developed on Rockbank suburb here will have streets named after Indian cricket greats including Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Dev and Virat Kohli.

The estate, developed by Accolade Estate, is luring buyers with a Tendulkar Drive, Kohli Crescent and Dev Terrace.

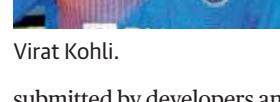
It has also named streets after other international cricketers such as Waugh Street, Miandad Street, Ambrose Street, Sobers Drive, Kallis Way, Hadlee Street and



Kapil Dev.



Sachin Tendulkar.



Virat Kohli.

of Resi venture, the developers, "the response from the Indian community has been exceptionally good and high ever since the launch of the H&L packages".

Street names are usually

submitted by developers and approved by the city council if they meet Office of Geographical Names guidelines.

Resi Ventures director Khurram Saeed said there were 60 names submitted to

the council for approval including a street named after the great Don Bradman but the body refused it as there was already a street named after him here.

"We didn't get Kumar Sangakkara, Rahul Dravid, M.S. Dhoni and a few others as council knocked them back for one reason or another," he said.

"We did get Tendulkar and Kohli over the line with council. Kohli is one of my favourite batsmen of the current era and I named the most expensive street after him, overlooking the future wetlands," Khurram added.

Submitted by developers and approved by the city council if they meet Office of Geographical Names guidelines.

Resi Ventures director Khurram Saeed said there were 60 names submitted to

Last rites of Sushant Singh Rajput performed

Close family members and colleagues from the industry among those who attended funeral



Remembering the hero: A street vendor sells protective masks, with a tribute to Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput printed on them, in Kolkata on Monday. ■ PTI

in the afternoon, following a post mortem at the Cooper Hospital in Vile Parle.

A provisional post mortem report has been submitted by the doctors to the Bandra Police. A team of three doctors conducted the autopsy and gave a provisional cause of death," Zone IX Deputy Commissioner of Police Abhishek Trimukhe said.

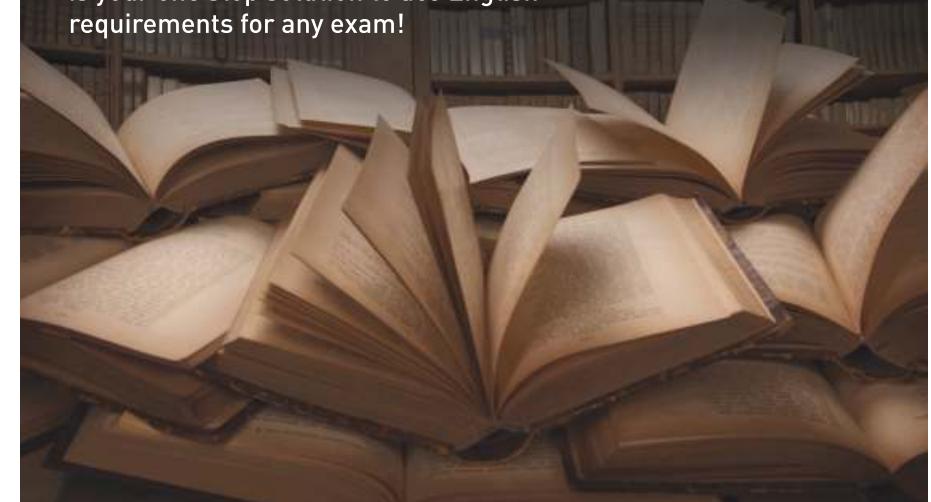
An officer with the Bandra

Police said that a final report will be sent by the Forensic Sciences Laboratory (FSL), and is expected within 10 days. "We have also turned over Rajput's cell phone and other electronic devices for a forensic analysis to the FSL," the officer said.

Rajput, who turned a household name with the serial *Pavitra Rishta* on Zee TV, made his debut in Bollywood in 2013 with *Kai Po Che!*, and is best remembered for films like *Shuddh Desi Romance*, *M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story* and *Sonchiriyaa*.

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