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Serum Institute to commence human trials of Oxford vaccine

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

The Serum Institute of India (SII), aiming to develop a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of the year, has said that it will be starting human trials of its Oxford vaccine in the country from August.

"We are working on the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine which is in Phase III of its clinical trial stage. We also plan to start human trials in India next month. Depending on the current situation and updates on the clinical trials, we are hoping that the AstraZeneca Oxford vaccine will be available by the year's end," said Adar Poonawalla, SII CEO.

The SII has entered into a partnership with AstraZeneca to manufacture and supply a billion doses of the vaccine being developed by Oxford University.

"These vaccines will be for India and middle and low-income countries across the world who are part of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI)," Mr. Poonawalla pointed out.

He said the company was also developing a live attenuated vaccine, with U.S.-based biotech firm Codagenix, which is undergoing pre-clinical trials. These vaccines will be for India and middle and low-income countries across the world (GAVI countries), Mr. Poonawalla added.

Preliminary results published in *The Lancet* on Monday said that the vaccine candidate developed at the University of Oxford was safe and induced immune reaction.

## U.K. vaccine prompts protective immune response in early tests

Oxford University trials that began in April show response lasted at least 2 months

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON

Scientists at Oxford University say their experimental coronavirus vaccine has been shown to prompt a positive immune response among participants who took the shot

### Major breakthrough

ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, Oxford University's experimental COVID-19 vaccine, has been shown to prompt a positive immune response among participants who took the shot

- Researchers began testing the vaccine candidate in April in as many as 1,077 participants
- According to a study published in the journal *Lancet*, the vaccine candidate produced neutralising antibodies and boosted the immune system as well
- It uses a modified virus known to cause infections in chimpanzees and the genetic information contained in SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19
- Around 70% of people on the trial developed either fever or headache as side effects, which researchers said could be managed with paracetamol
- High-risk people, such as health workers and the elderly, should be prioritised to receive vaccination, the study added

aged 18 to 55 that lasted at least two months after they were immunised.

"We are seeing good immune response in almost everybody," said Dr. Adrian Hill, director of the Jenner Institute at Oxford University.

ty. "What this vaccine does particularly well is trigger both arms of the immune system," he said.

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OVER 7 LAKH CURED ▶ PAGE 10  
104 DOCTORS DIED: IMA ▶ PAGE 10

## C.R. Patil appointed Gujarat BJP chief

A non-Gujarati, he is close to Modi and replaces Amit Shah protege Jitu Vaghani

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

C.R. Patil, a three-time parliamentarian, was on Monday appointed as president of the Gujarat BJP in place of Jitu Vaghani, a Patidar leader from Saurashtra, who completed his tenure. Mr. Patil is the Lok Sabha MP from Navsari in South Gujarat. Mr. Patil's appointment assumes significance since he is Marathi settled in Gujarat and has replaced Mr. Vaghani.

Considered close to PM Modi, Mr. Patil is in charge of the PM's Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi. He said there may be other changes in the next few weeks.

"What is more interesting is that a leader considered close to PM Modi has replaced Vaghani, a protege of Home Minister Amit Shah,"

said a BJP leader. Also his appointment has come just ahead of the crucial by-elections for eight Assembly seats necessitated by the defections of Congress MLAs during the recently held Rajya Sabha polls.

**Preparations for bypolls**  
Though the schedule for the byelections is yet to be announced, the ruling party has already started preparations for the same.

Secondly, Gujarat is also going for major round of municipal and district panchayat elections in November and December when six main municipal corporations in Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar will go for polls first and subsequently 33 district panchayats.

### Larger game plan

He said there may be other changes in the next few weeks.

"What is more interesting is that a leader considered close to PM Modi has replaced Vaghani, a protege of Home Minister Amit Shah,"

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## 6 months later, MHA yet to frame rules on CAA

House panel to seek status report

VIJAITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

More than six months after the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, was passed by Parliament, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is yet to frame rules or inform Parliament about the delay in doing so. Without rules being notified, the Act cannot come into force or be implemented.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Subordinate Legislation, which has not received any communication from the MHA, has de-

cided to write to the Ministry on the status of the CAA rules.

Chairman of the committee K. Raghu Rama Krishna Raju told *The Hindu*, "We will be writing a letter to the MHA as there is no request for extension of time (for notifying the rules), and will send them a reminder to give us a status [report]. As per norms, MHA should have framed the rules within six months or seek extension."

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## Expand panel probing Dubey death, SC tells U.P.

'Include former judge and ex-DGP'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to expand the committee probing the encounter deaths of history-sheeter Vikas Dubey and his associates to include a former judge of the court and a retired Director General of Police even as it reminded the Yogi Adityanath government about its responsibility to arrest and give a fair trial to an accused.

"You must understand that as a State government,

you should be capable of arresting, detention and trial of an accused till he is found innocent or guilty," Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh.

The present inquiry panel has a retired Allahabad High Court judge. The court directed the State to provide it with a draft notification with the names of a former judge and an ex-police officer proposed to the panel.

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## Offers of support pour in for T.N. tribal girl

VIT offers her free undergraduate education, others promise aid for books, expenses

SANJANA GANESH  
MADRASI/CHENNAI

A cascade of scholarships is coming the way of 17-year-old G. Dhevayani, the student from a nomadic tribe near Madurai, who topped her school in the Class 12 board exams.

After Ms. Dhevayani's achievement was reported in *The Hindu*, Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), a deemed university, offered her full free education in a course of her choice: B.Com or BBA.

"Considering her unique social background, we will offer her the course she



G. Dhevayani got calls from all over the State. ■ ASHOK

programme," G. Viswanathan, founder and chancellor, VIT, told *The Hindu*. He also spoke to Tirupurankundram MLA P. Saravanan and assured all support to her. Mr. Saravanan, who presented the student with a shawl, promised to financially back her education.

Ms. Dhevayani wants to study Commerce and work in a bank. "Since the day began, people have been calling and offering help. Besides contributing to my education expenditure, many said they would help with purchase of books and

provide my family with a phone as we don't have one," she said.

Virudhunagar MP B. Manickam Tagore, too, spoke and assured them of financial help, she said.

The student's uncle, M. R. Murugan, who is a leader of the community in which most men are fortune tellers, said her achievement was an inspiration.

"Nobody ever had to coax Dhevayani to study," he said. The family did not, however, want her to study in another district as it may be hard to commute in case of emergencies.

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## Gehlot launches another attack on Sachin Pilot

CM alleges deputy wanted to form third front in Rajasthan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday launched a fresh, personal attack on his former deputy Sachin Pilot, describing him as a "worthless person", who had been conspiring for the last six months to topple the State government despite the Congress promoting him at his young age.



Ashok Gehlot

Tuesday, when a direction is likely to be passed by the evening when the Speaker is expected to decide on the notices.

The remarks came even as the hearing in the Rajasthan High Court on a writ petition moved by Mr. Pilot and 18 other dissident MLAs challenging the Speaker's disqualification notices remained inconclusive. The hearing will continue on

party's interest. "But he betrayed the Congress... He wanted to form a third front in Rajasthan," Mr. Gehlot alleged.

In an unprecedented defiance, Mr. Gehlot said Congress leaders knew that Mr. Pilot was *nikamma* (worthless) and *naakaara* (good for nothing) and was only turning the people against each other.

"He used to tell people: I have not come here to sell brinjals. I am here to become the CM. You decide who you are with," he said.

"He has an innocent face. He has good command on Hindi and English. He has made a good impression on the media," the Chief Minister said.

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POLICE SENDS NOTICE ▶ PAGE 9

## For sustenance



Desperate measure: Villagers fishing in flood waters near a high-tension electric line on the outskirts of Guwahati on Monday. Over 110 people have died in floods and landslips across Assam this year. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

## Maharashtra sees another single-day surge of over 8,000 COVID-19 cases

State's total tally crosses 3.18 lakh; 1,035 more cases in Mumbai

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Maharashtra reported yet another spike of more than 8,000 new COVID-19 cases on Monday, adding 8,240 cases to take its total case tally to 3,18,695. Of these, 1,31,334 are active cases.



Health workers taking rest during a COVID-19 medical check-up at a residential area in Malad on Monday. ■ PTI

With 176 new deaths, the State's total death toll has risen to 12,030. With 5,460 patients discharged today, the cumulative recoveries till date has gone up to 1,75,029.

Mumbai reported 1,035 new cases on Monday, taking the total case tally to 1,02,423. Of these, only 23,728 cases are active. With 41 new deaths, the city's death toll has risen to 5,755.

As per State Health Department figures, Pune district reported a surge of more than 2,000 new cases and 42 fatalities as its total case tally surged to 57,024 while its death toll now stands at 1,401.

While State health authorities placed Pune's active cases at 35,312, District Collector Naval Kishore Ram maintained that the number of active cases in the district tally over the 28,000 mark.

Kalyan-Dombivli recorded another massive spike of 485 new cases, taking its total case tally to 18,600.

Navi Mumbai reported 301 new cases taking its total case tally to 13,230.

Raigad saw a big

spike of 318 fresh cases as its total touched 6,396. With four fatalities on Monday, the district's death toll has reached 114.

Both Nashik and Jalgaon districts – virus hotbeds in north Maharashtra – reported spikes of more than 300 cases each, with Nashik recording 388 fresh cases to take its total tally to 9,921 of whom 4,166 were active.

Jalgaon added 409 cases as its total tally reached 7,723 of whom 2,278 cases are active.

Aurangabad district, a virus hotspot in the Marathwada region, reported a spike of 258 new cases as its total case tally breached the 10,000 mark to reach 10,036 of whom 4,215 are active cases.

With three deaths on Monday, the district's death toll has now reached 372.

## Mumbai's Guardian Minister has COVID-19

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Congress leader and Mumbai's Guardian Minister Aslam Shaikh has tested positive for COVID-19, the fourth Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) minister to be infected.

Mr. Shaikh, who is the Minister of Fisheries, Textile and Ports, tweeted, "This is to inform that I've tested positive for #COVID-19. I'm currently asymptomatic and isolating myself. I request all those who have come in close contact with me to get themselves tested."

He said that even though he is isolating himself, he will continue to work from home and serve the people of Maharashtra.

Prior to Mr. Shaikh, Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad, Public Works Department Minister Ashok Chavan and Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde had tested positive. All of them have recovered and resumed duties.



## Timings

MUMBAI

TUESDAY, JUL. 21
RISE 06:12 SET 19:18
RISE 06:32 SET 20:05
WEDNESDAY, JUL. 22
RISE 06:12 SET 19:18
RISE 07:35 SET 20:55
THURSDAY, JUL. 23
RISE 06:13 SET 19:18
RISE 08:36 SET 21:41

Mumbai Weather max min

Mumbai Airport 33 26

Pune 32 23

Mumbai City 33 26

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

The sky will remain cloudy over the city.

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## IN BRIEF

## Couple jumps off building, hospitalised

NEW DELHI

A man and a woman allegedly jumped from fourth floor of a building in Dwarka on Monday, the police said. The couple was immediately rushed to a hospital where they are undergoing treatment, the police added.

## 41 arrested for violating lockdown guidelines

NEW DELHI

The police on Sunday arrested 41 persons, including a bar owner, for allegedly violating lockdown guidelines in Paschim Vihar, said officials on Tuesday. All the 40 persons have been released on bail and the bar owner was produced before the court after being charged under Excise Act.

## Interviews for post of district president over, says BJP

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ground surveys, including the interviews of candidates for the post of district president, have been conducted and an interim report has been prepared in regard to the reorganisation of the BJP's State unit.

The finalisation of the names for each district is expected to be delayed, said party insiders.

## 'More candidates'

"There were more candidates for the posts than expected; as many as 10 to 15 turned up for the interviews. As a result, three to four names have been forwarded for consideration instead of one," a party source said.

"Given the screening process involved as well as the fact that a national team is being formed by party president J.P. Nadda which will have leaders from across states, the announcement of names for Delhi is expected to be delayed," a senior party leader said.

## Two brothers held for trying to extort ₹2 crore

'They suffered huge losses in lockdown'

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two brothers have been arrested for allegedly trying to extort ₹2 crore from a man as they were facing huge financial losses due to the lockdown in Dwarka's Bindapur, the police said on Monday.

DCP (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said the accused – Ravinder and Devender – both from Uday Vihar, have been arrested.

The police said the 40-year-old victim – who runs a factory manufacturing electrical items in Haryana – was known to Ravinder. He reported the matter to police on July 14 alleging that he started receiving extortion calls from a man called

## INTERVIEW | SATYENDAR JAIN

## Was shifted to private hospital for plasma therapy'

My wife called up the Chief Minister to move me out of the govt. hospital for treatment, says Health Minister

## NIKHIL M BABU

NEW DELHI

*Back in office on Monday after recovering from COVID-19, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain talks to The Hindu about the time spent at the hospital, what helped him and why he was shifted to a private hospital after being first admitted to a government hospital.*

Since the virus outbreak, did you ever think that you would be infected?

■ A lot of people used to tell me that the way I was working, I should be careful. If I don't go visit hospitals, then how will things work? This is a professional hazard. I knew that at some point I would be infected. I used to meet a lot of people on a day-to-day basis.

What do you have to say about the whole process – from infection till recovery?

■ People are scared of death in case of COVID-19 infection. However, if you have a positive mind frame, then chances of recovery increases. You have to take care of your oxygen levels, hydration and digestive system.

Oxygen level is the most important thing. A person is serious when the oxygen level is low and to maintain it, the most useful thing is pranayama.

There was no major improvement in my health after coming back from hospital (on June 26). I had to take oxygen daily even at home. The doctor said to do pranayama and I have been doing it for the past 10-15 days and there has been drastic improvement since then. I did not have to take oxygen in the past four days.

What was the most difficult part?

■ The most difficult part was to remain in jail (in hospital) and without any work (the Minister said with a laugh). I never felt, even

once, that I was serious. Everyone, apart from me, used to feel that it was serious. The doctor used to enquire about my health and I used to say, "I am completely alright". I never felt.. When people test positive, they feel that it is serious and it may lead to death, but I never felt that there was any such chance. I was positive throughout.

One person who was with you throughout the process?

■ My wife was the one who was there throughout the process. I used to talk home over phone.

Any advice?

■ Firstly, keep a positive mind frame. This is the most important thing. Secondly, stay hydrated: drink lemon water, coconut water, shikanji. Eat light and exercise. We do everything, but forget to laugh. We need to laugh a little also. People should watch COVID-19-related news, but not too much. A lot of people are



Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain at his office on Monday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

stressed over the past three to four months.

When did you start monitoring Delhi's situation again?

■ That I used to do daily. Even in hospital, I used to check updates about Delhi over the phone.

Cases have come down in Delhi. What has changed?

■ We had expected that after July 31, cases will reduce drastically. Now, too, we feel that cases will decrease further after July 31.

Home isolation is the best option. We have also increased beds in hospitals. Now, no one in Delhi fears that they won't get a bed in a hospital. Cases have decreased in the Capital, but is increasing in other places of the country. Earlier, many States used to say that they got the virus from Delhi, So, now cases can come from other parts to Delhi.

Why did the Health Minister go to a private hospital for treatment?

■ I was admitted to Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality

This is a professional hazard. I knew that at some point I would be infected. I used to meet a lot of people on a day-to-day basis

Hospital (a Delhi government hospital). When my condition suddenly worsened, doctors said that plasma should be given. At that point, Rajiv Gandhi Hospital didn't have the permission for plasma therapy. It was expected to get it in two days, but later, it ended up taking 10 days as permission was needed from the Central government.

My father-in-law had passed away a day before (due to COVID-19), so my wife was adamant that if the doctors have said that we need to get plasma, then we cannot wait any further. Only because of that I was transferred. I was adamant to stay, but my wife directly called up CM (Arvind Kejriwal) saab and then he also asked to shift.



North civic body officials spray disinfectant at Hindu Rao Hospital. ■ FILE PHOTO

## Nurse tests positive after recovering from COVID-19

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A nurse, working at Hindu Rao Hospital, has tested positive for COVID-19 after having recovered from the virus, said a spokesperson of the North Corporation on Monday.

North body officials said the nurse tested positive likely due to "dead non-viable virus particles in the nasopharyngeal cavity" following an RT-PCR test, and added that concentration of antibodies in her blood is very high. "However, this does not mean she is infected again," the spokesperson said.

## DJ held for stabbing mother to death

Accused is a drug addict and seems to be upset, say police

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old youth disc jockey has been arrested for allegedly killing his mother at their residence in south Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar on Monday, the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said a call was received at 12 p.m. regarding a son stabbing his mother in Madangir Central Market.

"On reaching the spot, the woman was found in an unconscious state. She was taken to hospital where she was declared brought dead," he said.

## Man arrested for killing neighbour after altercation over sharing liquor

Accused nabbed during search at lawns along Rajpath

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A man was arrested for allegedly killing his neighbour after the two had an altercation over sharing beer and a cigarette, the police said on Monday.

The accused has been identified as Prem Chandra from Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur, they said.

**Body found on July 18**

The police said the body of the victim – who was later identified as Justin – was recovered on July 18 from inside a shanty near National Archive, Janpath where the labourers lived. The victim worked at a construction site near Rajpath, the police

A neighbour, who didn't wish to be identified, said the man and his mother had come to stay in the rented accommodation sometime before the lockdown. The man, the sole breadwinner of the family, worked as a DJ in nightclubs. The accused's father is learnt to have passed away.

"In the morning, some strange sounds were coming from the house. A while later, when a neighbour entered, the accused was seen sitting next to his mother, who was lying in a pool of blood. He had no clothes on him at that time," he said.

The accused's medical examination was conducted on Monday evening and a case under section 302 (punishment for murder) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered. Further investigation is underway, the police added.

During interrogation, the accused said Justin had hit him with a beer bottle on his head. Following this, even he hit the victim with a brick and a hammer multiple times on the face. When the injured fell unconscious, he hid him under a bed and fled the spot, the DCP added.

The police claim to have recovered broken glasses of the beer bottle and blood-stained brick from the spot.

Since the accused did not have a mobile phone, he used to make necessary calls through other labourers' devices. However, during a combing operation on the lawns along the Rajpath, the accused was found hiding behind a tree near, he added.

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## A new Parliament building is prudent

CPWD tells SC total seats likely to increase after 2026

## KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

A new Parliament building is "prudent" as the total number of seats is likely to increase "substantially" after 2026, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has told the Supreme Court.

"The number of Lok Sabha seats has remained unaltered at 545 based on the delimitation carried out on the basis of the 1972 census. It is likely to increase substantially after 2026 as the freeze on total seats is only till 2026. The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha are packed to capacity and have no space," a 117-

page affidavit said.

The department, which is the project proponent, responded to a petition filed by Rajiv Suri, represented by advocate Shikhl Suri, questioning the multi-crore Central Vista renovation and development project.

It said the new Parliament building is designed to accommodate "more members in the future." It said the capacity of the Lok Sabha chamber would be three times the present heritage building, which is "distracted" by "over-utilisation." The Rajya Sabha chamber will have four

times' its present capacity. The Central Hall can hardly accommodate all.

The capacity of the Lok Sabha chambers will go up to 876 members. A Joint Session of the Parliament would accommodate 1,224 members. The Rajya Sabha chambers would accommodate 400 members.

The CPWD said the current heritage building, built between 1921 and 1927, was designed to house the Imperial Legislative Council.

"It was not planned for a bicameral national legislature, that is, the Parliament House," the affidavit said.

## HC declines to entertain plea to demolish slum cluster

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to entertain a petition to demolish a slum cluster, which has allegedly encroached upon a vacant government land behind the Majlis Park metro station in north-west Delhi.

The court said the land did not belong to someone who was poor or downtrodden and suggested to the petitioner to either withdraw the plea or "face an order of the court".

Sensing the mood of the court, the petitioner, a lawyer, sought permission to withdraw his plea. The petitioner said that there has recently been an increase in the encroachment of the land in question. The petitioner, who resides nearby the said land, told the court that if the slum's expansion was left unchecked, the area could turn into the next "Dharavi", which is considered to be Asia's largest slum cluster in Mumbai.

The petitioner that he had made several representations and complaints to authorities, including the Defence Ministry, which own the land, but no action has been taken till date to remove the encroachment.

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U.P. govt. to allow home isolation

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Asymptomatic patients of COVID-19 would be allowed to be under home isolation, the Uttar Pradesh government said on Monday as cases continued to rise sharply in the State.

The State has 18,245 active positive cases, the State health department said on Sunday, with 2,250 cases recorded in 24 hours.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that a large number of asymptomatic persons were concealing their illness, which could lead to spread in infection, a government spokesperson said.

The patients would be provided permission for home isolation on conditions as per the laid down protocol, the government said.

## Farmer organisations demand withdrawal of agri ordinances

They take out 'tractor march' in Haryana, Punjab to protest against Centre's move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Farmer organisations in Punjab and Haryana on Monday staged a "tractor march" to protest against the Centre's recently promulgated agricultural ordinances and demanded their immediate withdrawal.

In Haryana, farmers staged protests under the banner of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Chaduni) in Kurukshetra, Karnal, Yamunagar and Fatehabad districts, while in Punjab protests were largely led by the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Rajewal) and the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Lokhawal).

Farmers riding on their tractors shouted slogans against the ordinances and the recent rise in fuel prices.



Farmers participating in a 'tractor march' in Haryana's Yamunanagar on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Later, members of the outfits submitted memorandums to the local authorities.

"The Centre should immediately withdraw these ordinances, which are anti-farmer. Implementation of the ordinances will ultimately lead to exploitation of farm-

ers at the hands of big corporate houses. The BJP government has given a free hand to the private corporate houses to exploit the farmers," said Gurnam Singh, Haryana chief of the Bhartiya Kisan Union (Chaduni).

"If he government doesn't

pay heed to our demands, we will be forced to intensify our protests," he added.

**'Centre can't be trusted'**

Bharti Kisan Union (Lokhawal) general secretary Harinder Singh said the Centre could not be trusted on its promise to continue with the Minimum Support Price and procurement. The BJP had earlier backtracked on its promise to implement the Swaminathan Committee report. The Union government was out to ruin Punjab," he said.

Separately, Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja said the recent promulgation of ordinances was another conspiracy of the BJP-led government against the farmers.

## Badal not concerned about farmers, alleges Punjab CM

He is disconnected from the ground situation: Amarinder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday accused Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal of shedding crocodile tears over the plight of the farmers, whose very existence, he said, has been threatened by the farm ordinances passed by the Central government with the support of his party.

Mr. Badal, on the other hand, asked the CM to accompany him and the farmers' organisations to seek a blanket assurance on the Minimum Support Price and marketing from the Central government.

"Having given its full backing to the ordinances, the SAD had lost *locus standi* to

even pretend to care about the farmers," said Captain Sukhbir should not forget that as a Union Minister, his wife Harsimrat Kaur Badal was part of the Cabinet meeting that stamped its approval on the ordinances that will destroy Punjab's farming community."

**Against federal structure**

He said the SAD president's offer to lead a farmers' delegation made it evident that he was totally disconnected from the ground situation.

The Chief Minister said the ordinances, that were against the federal structure, were in line with the recommendations of the Shanta Kumar committee, which

had also suggested dismantling the MSP structure. The inference was logical that the MSP elimination would soon follow, he said.

Accusing the SAD of adopting double standards, he asked, "Why was Sukhbir not withdrawing his party's support to the BJP-led government at the Centre if he was really concerned about the farmers?"

Hitting back at Capt. Amarinder, Mr. Badal said, "Your lies on the MSP have been exposed by the Centre. It had announced that the MSP and assured marketing will remain in their present form... you should accompany me to get an assurance from the Union Agriculture Minister."

## 'Release Kafeel' campaign takes Twitter by storm

Doctor held under NSA by U.P. govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD

Ahead of the hearing of Kafeel Khan's case in the Allahabad High Court on Wednesday, a campaign to release the Gorakhpur doctor took the Twitter by storm on Sunday evening. With over a lakh tweets in four hours, ReleaseOurDrKafeel was the top trending hashtag.



The campaign demanding the release of the suspended paediatrician of Gorakhpur's BRD Hospital was announced by the All India Students' Association against the "witch-hunting of activists."

**'Provocative speech'**

Dr. Khan is lodged in Mathura jail after he was slapped with the National Security Act by the U.P. government for delivering a "provocative" speech during the Anti-CAA-NRC protests at Aligarh Muslim University.

He was arrested from Mumbai on January 29 and brought to Aligarh where a local court granted him bail on a bond of ₹60,000 on February 10. But hours before he was to be released on Fe-

bruary 13, the NSA was slapped on him and was again put behind bars.

"In April, the Uttar Pradesh Advisory Board confirmed the NSA invoked by the Aligarh administration and on May 12 his detention was extended by three months," said Irfan Gazi, Dr. Khan's lawyer.

"The Allahabad High Court was scheduled to hear the bail plea on July 15 but it was deferred to July 22, after its functioning was affected due to the COVID pandemic," he added.

Personalities from various fields such as poet Meena Kandasamy and actor Swara Bhasker tweeted in the favour of Dr. Khan's release.

## Green panel pulls up Centre

'Groundwater for industries against sustainable development'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal on Monday pulled up the Centre over its submissions that restriction on groundwater extraction would have an adverse impact on industrial production and employment opportunities and the GDP of some States.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel observed: "Exemptions for infrastructure projects, MSMEs or other in-

dustries or commercial purposes except drinking water, where supply is not otherwise available in water stressed areas, will be against sustainable development and public trust doctrine unless individual impact assessment is conducted and permitting such extraction found viable."

The green panel directed the Ministry of Jal Shakti and Central Groundwater Authority (CGWA) to ensure that no general permission is gi-

ven without an environmental assessment of each activity.

**CGWA flayed**

Coming down heavily on the CGWA, the Bench said: "No road map has been provided on how the new regime will check and neutralise falling groundwater levels. There is neither a claim that in the last 24 years of regulation by the CGWA, groundwater levels have improved nor any projection for future improved."

## Smuggling racket: Army jawan arrested

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab police on Monday said they have arrested an Army jawan and three others for alleged connection with an arms and drug smuggling racket busted last week.

Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta said the total number arrests in the case now stands at eight.

He said Ramandeep Singh, an Army jawan, was arrested from Bareilly.

## Financial incentives for doctors in Odisha

State govt.'s bid to boost morale of medical staff working in COVID-19 hospitals

STAFF REPORTER  
Bhubaneswar

In order to boost the morale of doctors and paramedic staff working in COVID-19 hospitals, the Odisha government on Monday announced financial incentives for them.

"Doctors, paramedics and other assistants working in COVID-19 hospitals and COV-19 health centres will get incentives of ₹1,000, ₹500 and ₹200 respectively per day for the number of days they will serve positive patients," said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

ASHA workers engaged in door-to-door survey and special surveys will be given ₹1,000 per month as incentive from July to October 2020.

Mr. Patnaik reviewed the State's strategy to tackle the

COVID-19 pandemic and approved a fresh approach especially for Ganjam district – the epicentre of the pandemic in the State.

As per the decisions, plasma therapy will begin at the Tata Covid Hospital, Sitalapalli, in Ganjam district from Tuesday.

A dedicated 100-bed COV-19 hospital will be set up at Amit Hospital, Berhampur, which will be operated

by Ashwini Hospital, Cuttack.

In order to strengthen manpower in Ganjam, two more IAS officers, 25 Odisha Administrative Service officers, 105 Odisha Revenue Service officers, 30 MBBS doctors, 100 Ayush doctors and 27 laboratory technicians have been asked to join duty in the district.

## Police deployment

Besides, 10 platoon of police personnel and three Deputy Superintendents of Police will be deployed in Ganjam. A fund of ₹25 crore has been sanctioned for the district from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Ganjam accounts for 30% of the total positive cases and 60% of the total deaths in the State.



A near-deserted national highway at the entry point of Bhubaneswar during lockdown on Monday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

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2.	HP-01-164	Up-gradation of road Harlog to Behal Nanawin Km.0/0 to 14/225.			
3.	HP-01-167	Up-gradation of road Kuthera to Talwara road Km.0/0 to 11/0.			

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Tata Covid Hospital, Sitalapalli, in Ganjam district from Tuesday.

A dedicated 100-bed COV-19 hospital will be set up at Amit Hospital, Berhampur, which will be operated

## Bed shortage crisis in Pune to be resolved soon: collector

Despite rise in cases, district's fatality rate down to 2.6%

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Amid increasing complaints of lack of beds to cater to critical COVID-19 patients in Pune city and the district, District Collector Naval Kishore Ram on Monday assured that the problem of bed shortage would be resolved by the end of the week.

He also said while the district administration had no plans to extend the lockdown beyond July 23, authorities were mulling over steps to discourage large gatherings of people, especially over weekends.

### Over 2,000 new cases

With the district reporting a staggering surge of over 2,000 cases today, and a spike of more than 2,500 cases on Sunday, the administration is scrambling to procure ventilators and ICU beds as Pune's medical infrastructure is on the verge of collapse.

A number of local MLAs and corporators have drawn attention to patients succumbing due to lack of ICU beds and ventilators in hospitals, while decrying the district's shambolic medical infrastructure. "Presently, we have 32 ventilator beds and 29 ICU beds (sans ventilators) in hospitals across the district. There have been issues with real-time data entry which has created confusion about the actual number of beds available. We will be resolving this glitch immediately," Mr. Ram said.

To cope with the surging cases in Pune city, the Collector informed that by Monday night, Sassoon General Hospital would have 40 more ICU beds, while 309 beds would be made availa-



**Rapid test:** Doctors look at the results of an antigen test, in Mumbai on Monday. Pune district officials have credited antigen testing for early detection of cases. ■ AADESH CHOURHARI

ble at Inlaks Budhrani hospital, 17 at Jupiter Hospital and six more at Dalvi Hospital.

"By next week, we are planning to convert some hospitals into dedicated COVID-19 facilities. Regarding the problem of shortage, one must bear in mind that 25% patients in the city's bigger hospitals are from other districts. So, the challenge is to cater to needs of patients from Pune city as well as those from outside," he said, stressing that the bed shortage issue would be under control by July end.

Mr. Ram said authorities were working round-the-clock to expand COVID-19 care facilities in rural areas, which were seeing a drastic rise in cases in order to reduce the burden on hospitals in urban pockets. "Patients from rural areas are still disposed to seek treatment in urban hospitals. So, we are greatly increasing facilities there by adding 1,000 beds to the covid care center in Manchar, and 16 ICU beds in Bhimashankar. We are also upgrading treatment facilities in Barwadi, Khed and Maval," he said, informing that by next

week, the administration would have 1,000 oxygen beds to cater to patients from rural areas, along with the requisite manpower.

At present, the district's total case tally stands at 53,450 of which 19,127 cases were active with 13,235 of them from Pune city. Prior to the imposition of the lockdown on July 14, the district's active case tally was a little over 13,000.

### Testing doubled

"While the number of active cases has certainly increased in the lockdown period, so have our testing capabilities, which have doubled. We have tested over 30,000 samples in the past few days while the district's recovery rate stands at a robust 64%," said Mr. Ram, expressing confidence that Pune would soon see a reduction in cases.

He observed that the district's mortality rate, as compared to other districts, had actually declined to 2.6%.

The death toll stands at 1,348. Mr. Ram said a high proportion of antigen testing had helped in early detection of cases.

The move comes close on the heels of a stern, week-long lockdown being imposed in neighbouring Kolhapur, which commenced on Monday.

Sangli reported 64 new cases on Monday, taking its total case tally to 1,009 of whom 542 are active ones. The district has reported 33

## Now, Sangli announces lockdown from July 22

Satara in Pune division likely to follow suit

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

In the wake of mounting COVID-19 cases, an eight-day lockdown from July 22 to 30 will be enforced in Sangli district in western Maharashtra, said senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and district Guardian Minister Jayant Patil on Monday.

"The lockdown will be in force from 10 p.m. onwards on July 22 and last till 10 p.m. on July 30 owing to a drastic spike in COVID-19 cases over the last few days. While we had not earlier planned to take such a measure, the recent rise in cases has compelled us to do so," said Mr. Patil, who is also the State Water Resources Minister.

He said the lockdown would be enforced in the district's municipal areas which come under the jurisdiction of the Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad civic body and in other municipal council areas. While the rural parts would be exempt, Mr. Patil appealed to people there to observe a 'Ja-na Curfew' and desist from stepping out of their homes without reason.

Earlier, Mr. Patil and Minister of State and Congress MLA from Palus-Kadegaon, Vishwajeet Kadam, had held a review meeting with senior officials of the Sangli district administration.

The move comes close on the heels of a stern, week-long lockdown being imposed in neighbouring Kolhapur, which commenced on Monday.

Sangli reported 64 new cases on Monday, taking its total case tally to 1,009 of whom 542 are active ones. The district's total death count has risen to 79.



**Sudden surge:** Medical personnel shift a patient to the COVID-19 ward of a hospital in Satara on Monday. The district has reported a massive spike of 273 new cases. ■ PTI

**C** The lockdown will be in force from 10 p.m. onwards on July 22 and last till 10 p.m. on July 30 owing to a drastic spike in cases

JAYANT PATIL  
Sangli Guardian Minister

deaths till date.

Meanwhile, the total case tally in Pune division – which includes Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur and Solapur districts – has now reached 64,914 while the total death toll has reached 1,886, as per Pune divisional office figures. Of the total division tally, 24,444 cases were active.

Satara reported a massive surge of 273 new cases as its total case tally shot to 2,551 of whom 1,165 are active cases. The district's total death count has risen to 79.

Pune Divisional Commis-

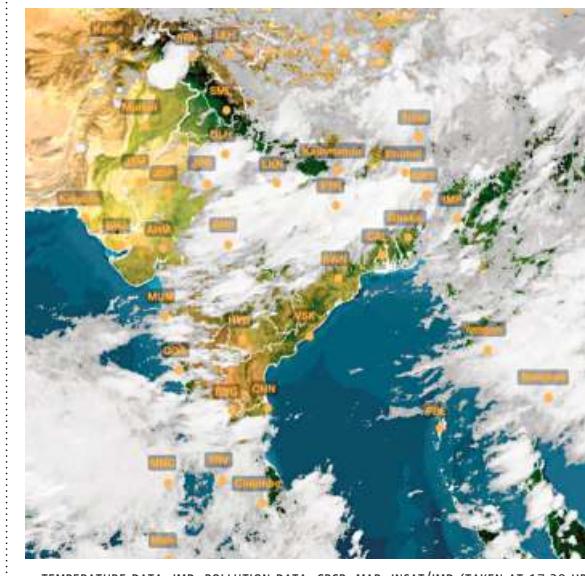
sioner Deepak Mhaisekar said given the grim situation developing in Satara, a lockdown was likely to be announced there anytime soon. He also said a lockdown was already under way in Solapur district, which is second only to Pune among the worst-hit districts in the division.

Solapur saw a big surge of 362 fresh cases today, taking its total tally to 5,627 of whom 2,385 cases are active. The district's death toll stands at 373.

"We have started a campaign for early detection of cases in Solapur. I have had a discussion with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray regarding rising cases and death there. A medical team comprising of doctors from Latur, Nanded and Pune is already working in Solapur for the past two weeks," Dr. Mhaisekar said.

### WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Rajasthan, west Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	24...	28.5...	24.6	Kozhikode	...	32.6...	32 MIN
Ahmedabad	...	35.8...	27.4	Kurnool	0.6...	33.1...	22.2
Aizawl	...	24.2...	27.4	Lucknow	3.4...	30.6...	25.4
Allahabad	16.8...	31.3...	25.0	Madurai	...	37.2...	27.1
Bengaluru	8.9...	29.6...	21.0	Mangaluru	...	30.7...	24.4
Bhopal	...	32.3...	25.4	Mumbai	6.2...	32.7...	26.5
Bhubaneswar	6...	33.8...	27.6	Mysuru	11...	30.9...	20.6
Chandigarh	5...	35.2...	27.8	New Delhi	2.2...	32.6...	25.6
Chennai	17...	34.0...	24.9	Patna	60.6...	27.0...	23.6
Coimbatore	...	34.5...	24.4	Port Blair	2.1...	31.3...	24.9
Dehradoon	4...	30.7...	24.8	Puducherry	...	34.6...	24.2
Gangtok	17.2...	18.9...	17.2	Pune	0.1...	32.3...	23.2
Goa	6.9...	30.4...	24.0	Raipur	25.8...	34.6...	25.0
Guwahati	16.5...	29.0...	23.6	Ranchi	13...	30.6...	24.2
HUBLI	...	28.0...	22.0	Shillong	58...	20.4...	18.4
Hyderabad	1.4...	32.6...	22.0	Shimla	...	27.2...	20.3
Imphal	4...	28.5...	22.0	Srinagar	...	33.2...	16.7
Jaipur	...	37.4...	27.6	Thiruvananthapuram	0.6...	31.0...	24.2
Kochi	2.2...	30.2...	25.6	Tiruchi	0.6...	34.3...	26.4
Kohima	...	26.0...	18.8	Vijayawada	66...	35.5...	26.5
Kolkata	9.1...	34.2...	26.6	Visakhapatnam	...	32.0...	28.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	20	.37	.42	58	70	■
Bengaluru	.9	.20	.40	9	70	■
Chennai	.3	.24	103	49	—	■
Delhi	.4	.24	114	42	55	■
Hyderabad	.7	.52	20	16	27	■
Kolkata	.2	.10	.16	15	41	■
Lucknow	.11	.16	.50	121	—	■
Mumbai	.59	.13	.4	28	46	■
Pune	.29	.11	.52	27	28	■
Visakhapatnam	.5	.48	.37	49	87	■

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

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

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

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

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## Village near Gir sanctuary opts for four-day lockdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JUNAGADH

Sasan Gir village in Junagadh district, renowned as the gateway to the Gir Lion Sanctuary and National Park, on Monday went into a self-imposed four-day lockdown in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The decision was taken at a meeting in the village on Monday which was attended by shopkeepers and hoteliers after two people tested positive for the virus, said Sasan village sarpanch Jumabhai Katiya.

"To stop further spread of the virus, we thought the

only way was to completely stop human interaction. So we have unanimously decided to observe a self-imposed lockdown for four days, starting Monday," he said.

Sasan Gir has a population of around 3,500, while some 5,000 tourists arrive every day during peak season to catch a glimpse of the magnificent Asiatic lion in its last abode.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that the scheme will continue till the last farmer on the list is benefited. "The remaining process needs to be implemented with pace. The district

has already urged all corporators in K-West ward to implement the concept of 'one ward-one Ganpati'.

He said as the height of Ganpati idols has to be restricted to four feet, ample number of artificial lakes

will be created in the ward for the immersion of idols.

Assuring to provide all facil-

ities at the artificial lakes,

he appealed to citizens to

perform immersion of idols

in those water bodies only.

"To avoid overcrowding and

for maintenance of social

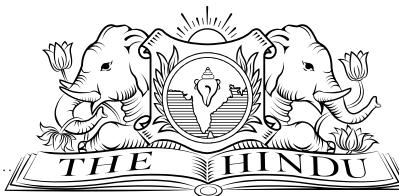
distancing, there is also a

plan of accepting Ganpati

idols at the society gates for

immersion," Mr. Mote said.

Mr



## No right answer

The decision to reopen schools must be guided primarily by epidemiological evidence

The course of the COVID-19 pandemic remains far from predictable, posing for the Central government the dilemma of salvaging part of the school academic year, while avoiding a fresh wave of infections. The school reopening question has not been resolved satisfactorily in other parts of the world, and the measures by many countries have been experimental. Yet, policymakers are aware of severe impacts to the education process, and the losses to students. The alternative, of remote and online learning opportunities, is skewed by economic status and geography. In India, the many divides – digital, rural-urban and rich-poor – have painfully come to the fore between regions and even within States. There are instances of children left behind, without computer access, Internet connectivity, TV sets and even electricity. The issue of reopening schools in a calibrated manner must, therefore, be addressed soon, but based mainly on epidemiological evidence. It is understandable that in the present confused situation, 21 out of 36 States and Union Territories including worst-affected Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have not taken a view yet on when to permit direct classes. States have also been asked to ascertain the opinion of parents on this issue, although it is unclear how they can do this in the short window given to them.

Among the Centre's responses to the problem, initiated through organisations such as the CBSE, is a reduction of the syllabus load for Classes 9 to 12 by 30%, although this ostensibly supportive decision has become controversial for its choice of topics for removal: democratic rights, federalism, citizenship and secularism, to name a few. There is a discernible trend of diminishing basic rights as a necessary sacrifice to fight the pandemic, but impoverishing the syllabus on these topics can only stunt social development. Such decisions should be vetted by academic experts, and not imposed by bureaucratic fiat. More fundamentally, if lessons are to be drawn from around the world on a back-to-school plan, a just-released large-scale study from South Korea would be useful. Research findings from that country, which worked hard to contain the pandemic early, show that older children, between 10 and 19, transmit the virus as much as adults do. The findings have been acknowledged by public health institutions in the U.S. as valuable, and offer a cautionary pointer to community spread among adults and vulnerable groups from older students. On the other hand, the European experience, instanced by Denmark as far back as April, is that containment in the community has to precede school reopening. The question is much more complex for India, as a society that has severe inequities, and where students live in multi-generational homes. Clearly, no early date can be set for a full reopening, and protocols on class size, distancing, ventilation of rooms, face coverings and even open air classes need to be evolved. Meanwhile, developing remote education for measurable outcomes should be pursued actively, since future disruptions cannot be ruled out.

## Rule of mob

Lynchings point to a breakdown of the rule of law in several States

The lynching of three people, alleged cattle thieves suspected to be Bangladeshi nationals, in southern Assam's Karimganj district on July 18 was the second such disturbing incident in recent weeks in the area. On June 1, a 43-year-old Bangladeshi national was lynched in Putni Tea Estate situated about 3 km from the India-Bangladesh border. According to reports, the district police are trying to hand over the bodies to the Bangladeshi authorities. Irrespective of whether they are thieves or smugglers, such killings point to a lack of faith in the rule of law, leading to a general lawlessness. According to the National Crime Records Bureau's 2017 data which was released in October 2019 a year behind schedule, Assam has one of the highest crime rates in the country. The State had 143 registered crimes per lakh of population, but such numbers can often be misleading due to the arbitrariness in the registration of crimes. The varying standards of prosecution of crimes across the country add further challenges to the rule of law. Anecdotal trends suggest a spike in mob lynchings in recent years, often incited by malicious dissemination of false accusations of cow slaughter, kidnapping of children and theft, through social media.

The NCRB did collect data on lynchings in 2017 but did not publish those for reasons best known to it. In 2019 there was also a controversy over the usage of the word 'lynching', after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat termed it as an attempt to defame India. Wild conspiracy theories spread fast on social media, but one cannot overlook the context of polarising diatribes, often initiated by political leaders, related to cow protection, movement of people across the border and religious issues. The victims are invariably from vulnerable groups. Whatever name one calls it by, lynchings are an abomination that must have no place in a democratic society, which India prides itself to be. Lynchings are a uniquely unsettling derailment of governance – while an act of mob violence is itself a sign of failure of law enforcement, it is committed in an apparent consideration that there can be no legal recourse. In a pathological subversion of principles, the police inaction in cases of mob violence is reciprocated by an apparent public sanction of extrajudicial punishments by the police. All this bodes ill for the country. Mob violence indeed defames the country and there must be stringent intervention by the police to bring an end to this. The political leadership also has a role to play in questioning the social consent that allows mob violence.

# More than a crisis, a chance to rebuild health care

Innovations in managing the COVID-19 pandemic can help India revolutionise care delivery and related outcomes



BOBBY JOHN

**O**n July 10, the Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, acknowledged the success of Mumbai's densely populated Dharavi slum in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru are among India's major metropolitan agglomerations and are also the current foci of the pandemic within the country. This points to both the speed and the scale of the epidemic moving within densely populated areas as well as success in the way sustained municipal efforts and community participation can together blunt the spread of the virus. The case of Dharavi is an example.

### Opportunity to act

On the previous day, nearly 100 days after the first 14-hour janata curfew day on March 22, the Minister of Health highlighted how 49 districts out of the 733 in India accounted for 80% of the nearly eight lakh cases, with eight States accounting for 90% of all the incident cases. Since then, the overall case numbers have moved steadily past the million mark and India is now third in global case standings. Despite this position, and the daily accretion of new infections that are upwards of 30,000 in the past few days, the distribution of cases also presents itself as the world's biggest opportunity to intervene and blunt the global toll of the epidemic.

Taking the given numbers at face value, there are on average roughly 250 cases per district in about 700 districts; many of these districts may be closer to having no cases, while others may be at a significantly higher incidence. Be

that as they may be, the low numbers in a large number of districts present officials the opportunity of stemming the epidemic and preventing morbidity, mortality and economic distress in a significant way.

### Key steps at ground level

The first step towards this would be to disaggregate the COVID-19 tracking mechanisms and the national level tables and graphs that are updated daily. Instead, there should be 733 district-level versions, where each one is updated and reported on a daily basis, at the district level. State and national summaries are important but are not as critical as ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of district-level tracking. The first output of such disaggregation will be to see, with great relief, the number of districts with extremely small or no incidence numbers. In order that they retain their low incidence status, such districts should be supported with all comprehensive testing kits and contact tracing know-how. The earlier scheme of designating districts as green, yellow and red will be strengthened with this disaggregated reporting.

A significant step in this direction would be to encourage District Magistrates (as they are already empowered), to use the full range of social support schemes available in support of the District Health Officer and team, to be able to prevent anyone from facing situations of hunger or economic distress. In addressing an epidemic, if better household nutrition and income outcomes can be obtained, then these would be a huge win – this has been an aim but on this, there has been widely variable achievement.

The testing capacity in the district can be scaled up dramatically by coopting the science departments of every college and university. Thus, chemistry and zoology-allied departments such as microbiology and biochemistry can lend



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

their laboratory services to carry out basic polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-based tests. This will require administrative imagination and collaboration from the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Department of Biotechnology as well as the University Grants Commission. Such a step can create the equivalent of the rush, as seen in the late 1990s, for information technology/computer training among students for better job prospects. Despite all the current uncertainty, one thing is certain – health care will be a reliable career opportunity (from the laboratory to the bedside, and all points in between and beyond). Not using emerging talents in educational institutions in tier 2 and tier 3 towns in many districts in India would be a wasted opportunity, both in terms of training and nurturing ambitions.

### On testing

For those who point to the complexity of current testing protocols, and difficulty in coopting college-level infrastructure and staff, it would be good to look at rapid innovations that have been surfacing within the past 12 weeks globally. It will not be very long before testing could become a self-administered process. One has to look at recent insights into using saliva as the start point for testing rather than using a nasopharyngeal swab for sampling.

Increased testing is not only necessary, indeed, it will be the single biggest contributor to stemming the tide of morbidity and mortality in India and the rest of

the world. Wherever testing has been constrained, incidence rates have risen. Epidemics are not to be treated as law and order situations with policing. Lockdowns, without on-demand testing, are administratively easy-to-administer exercises. But they are harsh, with possibilities of multiple collateral damage at the community and economy levels.

Freely available, quality assured testing, even without lockdowns, can achieve far more – they inspire confidence among the population, encourage early treatment seeking behaviour, and at a public health level, enable the understanding of disease dynamics within the community. Imaginatively expanding testing by coopting all colleges and technical institutions (till individual level test kits become available) represents the best opportunity to prevent the epidemic from becoming a surge in over 80% of the Indian population.

### Chance for biotech

Besides providing opportunities in the health-care and biotechnological spheres for young minds, the emphasis should also be to encourage innovators and entrepreneurs to bring out and scale up their products without making compromises on the standards or rigor of evidence needed for regulatory and manufacturing approval. India is the pharmacy to the world, and with a coordinated effort, the COVID-19 crisis can provide the Y2K equivalent for India's biotech and biopharmaceutical enterprises. At the moment, the world is increasingly looking at personalised diagnostics and therapeutics.

If with a positive test report, COVID-19 positive individuals were able to monitor their own oxygenation status at home, along with basic fever management medicines, and based on predetermined cutoffs, were able to seek and obtain care at oxygen equipped care facilities, we would

both be building on expanding the network of monitoring exponentially, and addressing morbidity earlier in its course. This requires two bold administrative leaps: ensure every positive diagnosis report is also delivered along with a pulse oximeter and phone number to call and report status on; and ensure that there would be enough oxygen-equipped beds in every nook and corner of the country.

Both are industry-supporting leaps. The availability of oxygen and its measurement in individuals have health and economic impacts, and the earlier both are made at significant scale, the better the outcome for a large number of individuals who just need additional oxygen support to make it to the other side of a COVID-19 illness.

For the roughly 3% to 5% of people who will need more than oxygen support, we need to ensure that our doctors, nurses, laboratory personnel and floor workers in hospitals are protected with everything they deserve – personal protective equipment to safety at home, and salaries on time. In tandem, critical engagement from Indian biopharmaceutical and biotech companies should be encouraged to produce validated and affordable antiviral drugs and monoclonal antibodies.

India's general health-care spending has been far below optimal. But if innovations to help manage the current crisis are suitably capitalised on, they can enable India to move far ahead in health-care delivery and related outcomes. COVID-19 is both a crisis and an opportunity for health-care reform as well as understanding the interplay of health outcomes with social and economic support interventions, and limitations of law enforcement in managing epidemics.

*Dr. Bobby John is an advocate for global health and the Editor of the Journal of Development Policy & Practice*

## Big reform on the wrong track

The planned privatisation of some services of the Indian Railways could impact maintenance, operations and welfare

**T. STANLEY BABU, I.P.S. ANAND & V. CARMELUS**

**T**he Indian Railways is the lifeline of India. With its vast network across the length and breadth of India, it is not just a mere transporter of passengers and goods but also a social welfare organisation.

While the addition of more trains with high technology coaches to meet passenger expectations is a welcome feature, it is the way of privatising these trains that is the problem.

The Railway Board says the objective of the initiative was to introduce modern technology rolling stock with reduced maintenance, reduced transit time, boost job creation, provide enhanced safety, provide world class travel experience to passengers, and also reduce demand supply deficit in the passenger transportation sector".

But this is a step which will lead to conflict as it is a daily exercise.

Only where adequate facilities are not available, the concessionaire has to invest in creating the required facilities.

The project entails a total investment of ₹30,000 crore by private enterprises.

The cost of investment at each of those stations varies from ₹2,300 crore to ₹3,500 crore.

the bidding process.

The main criterion is procurement of coaches by the concessionaire and form them into rakes of 16 coaches each, with maintenance at 10 major stations from where the trains will operate to their destinations.

For maintenance, existing depots and yard facilities at different stations will be made use of.

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# The meaning of the azan at Hagia Sophia

It will be a milestone in the retreat of secular nationalism that we are seeing across the world



VIVEK KATJU

As the muezzin summons the faithful to prayer at the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul on July 24, a sense of jubilation will suffice Muslim hearts in Turkey and in the *ummah*. Equally, it will cause anger among the world's orthodox Christians and disappointment among Catholics and Protestants. This is borne out by the welcome in Turkey and dismay in the Christian world, especially in Europe, of President Recep Tayip Erdogan's announcement to turn what has been since 1935 the Hagia Sophia museum once again into the Ayasofya mosque.

#### The question of secularism

This *azan*, which will reverberate for a long time, can be viewed from many perspectives: ideological contestations within Turkish society and politics stretching over the past century, the contradictions between Islam and Christianity in Europe for over a millennium, and a milestone in the retreat of secular nationalism. Ankara's attempts to project this decision as having no impact on the country's secular principles put in place by Mustafa Kamal Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey, are futile. The Turkish state, dominated by Mr. Erdogan for almost two decades, has decisively turned its back on secularism though it is desperately trying to project otherwise. In doing so it is tying itself in knots. This was illustrated in the letter of the Turkish Ambassador to India to this newspaper on July 16. He stated that his government's decision was based on its respect for the rule of law for it was merely following a court decision annulling a 1934 cabinet decision to convert an endowed mosque into a museum. Comparing it to the Indian Supreme Court's decision in the Ayodhya case he noted, "Neither the decisions has anything to do with the secular characters of our democracies". It is strange then that Turkey neither opposed the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation for its concern about the Supreme Court judgment nor does it oppose the organisation's



Turkish President Recep Tayip Erdogan visits Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, on July 19. • AFP

regular criticism of India's treatment of its Muslim minority.

#### A brief history

Friction and contradictions between Christianity and Islam in Europe have continued since the conquest of Spain by the Arabs in the second decade of the 8th century. It was only at the close of the 15th century that the last enclave in Spain was lost by the Muslims. Forty years earlier, the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, the famed capital of the Byzantines, in 1453, and converted the Hagia Sophia cathedral into a mosque. Over the next two centuries, the Ottomans expanded in Europe and at their height held, as Professor Malcolm Yapp records, "most of southeastern Europe to the gates of Vienna, including present-day Hungary, the Balkan region, Greece and parts of Ukraine". By the end of the 17th century, Ottoman vigour was spent and the Christian states of Europe gradually gathered together to begin to push the Turks out of Europe. But that process was only over after the First World War.

It is necessary to recall this brief history for its memory has not entirely receded in European consciousness. This history still motivates attitudes and action as seen in the bloodletting in the Balkans after Yugoslavia's collapse. More relevant to Turkey is that these memories have contributed to the strongly-held view in some European circles that Turkey's entry into the European Union

(EU) is incompatible with the Christian roots of Europe. Former French President Valery Giscard d'Estaing alluded to this in 2002 when he said Turkey, which had "a different culture, a different approach, a different way of life", should never be allowed to become an EU member. Becoming an EU member has been a major aim of Turkish foreign policy for decades. Such attitudes contributed to the weakening of Turkish secularism. Europe never embraced the country. That strengthened Islamic forces who have always wanted the return of the Ayasofya mosque.

#### A progressive outlook

Secular nationalism was an important ideological marker of the 20th century. States wedged to Marxist ideologies wished to root out religion from public spaces and also as a factor in the lives of their citizens. Other polities, whether liberal and democratic or authoritarian, were committed to reducing the salience of religion as an ingredient in nationalism and in public life even if they were reconciled to its continuing significance in the private sphere. These were elements of a progressive outlook which influenced political elites not only in the developed world but also in de-colonised countries. Ataturk and his attempts at propelling Turkey into the modern era won him admirers including Jawaharlal Nehru. Now the secular impulse is under challenge everywhere.

While the progressive view fa-

voured secular nationalism in the Islamic world, its political elites were fractured on accepting it as the dominant idea in nation-building. This was witnessed in important countries such as Egypt under the charismatic Abdel Gamal Nasser whose promotion of the idea of Arab nationalism was stoutly opposed by the Islamic Brotherhood as a conspiracy against the Islamic faith. Having secured a homeland for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, the Pakistani elite was initially ambivalent about the extent of the role of faith in constructing the new country's national ethos. But it fought a losing battle against the clergy and against those who wondered what the rationale of Partition was if Pakistan was not to become an Islamic state. The case of Pakistan is important in the Turkish context because of the close relations that came to be established between the armies of the two countries. The Turkish army was at the vanguard of defending Ataturk's secularism till it was outmanoeuvred by Erdogan. The Pakistani army under Zia-ul-Haq became the votary of the Nizam-e-Mustafa. Public affairs were increasingly infused with religiosity. Pervez Musharraf, an ardent admirer of Turkey, and a professed votary of 'moderate' Islam, could not reverse the course set by Zia-ul-Haq.

In Iran, Shah Reza Pahlavi too championed a polity which did not emphasise the country's Islamic credentials. He was overthrown in 1979. The Islamic Revolution that followed was in direct opposition to the principles of secular nationalism. It established a faith-based Shia polity dominated by clerics. That exacerbated the ancient contradictions between Shia and Sunni states but it did compel the Sunni states to gradually move towards granting greater space to the Sharia in governance.

But in Turkey, the generals who staged a coup in 1980 reasserted the tradition of secular nationalism. Now Mr. Erdogan has contained the army's influence and the generals are instruments of his will.

The public cultures of almost all countries are going to increasingly be based on the faith of majorities even if some symbolically seek to incorporate a few elements of minority religions. The Ayasofya mosque will clearly point in that direction.

Vivek Katju is a former diplomat

# A template to manage temples

The Supreme Court order on the Padmanabhaswamy temple suggests a template for administrative probity and efficiency



K. JAYAKUMAR

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court has held that the erstwhile Travancore royal family is the "human ministrant" or the sheba (manager) of the properties belonging to Sri Padmanabha, chief deity of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram. The judgment also makes it clear that the temple is a public temple and needs to be administered with due consideration of the interests of the devotees. The Court has directed the setting up of an administrative committee and an advisory committee to carry out these functions.

#### Protecting the trust of devotees

This judgment has not only settled an old dispute, but has also unwittingly brought to public attention some of the larger sociopolitical dimensions that have always affected administration and ownership of places of worship. In Kerala, Devaswom Boards, comprising members of both government and community, manage temples and their properties. The Padmanabhaswamy temple was kept outside the purview of the Travancore Devaswom Board as it was the family temple of the royal family. The Covenant of May 1949 and the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950, make it clear that the temple is "vested in trust". This presupposes a beneficiary whose trust needs to be protected. In order to uphold the trust of the devotees, the temple administration is obliged to ensure that the rituals and ceremonies of the temple go on unimpeded. The Devaswom Boards, which are mandated to administer temples, have no scope to tinker with temple rituals or introduce 'reforms' with regard to temple rituals. However, they have the freedom to create facilities for the devotees.

This arrangement is not only peculiar to Kerala. When India became a democratic Republic wedded to secular values, these boards or trusts became necessary for managing public religious institutions, without governments directly dabbling in their administration. They were conceived as arrangements of knowledgeable devotees who were expected to run the show with care. In many parts of India, there are highly prosperous private and public trusts that administer popular shrines and temples with remarkable professionalism. Several trusts do commendable service by offering free food and

providing facilities to the pilgrims. As long as the trust of the devotees is upheld, these arrangements go on well. However, many public trusts and boards have often ignored the welfare of devotees. Arrogance and high-handedness have surfaced in many instances. When there is congruence of interests between the devotee and trustee, trust is upheld. When extraneous considerations like politics, ideology, power, wealth etc. creep in, the trust of devotees is betrayed.

#### Political interests

In a democracy is it possible to keep political interests outside the domain of temple administration? The present judgment is an indicator that the coming together of individuals of integrity, devotion and professional commitment to administer places of worship could be a preferred mechanism. The order suggests a template for administrative probity and efficiency. I am not suggesting that this model should be replicated everywhere, but the principles underlying the composition of the committees suggested to administer the Padmanabhaswamy temple could very well be employed in other instances too.

The Devaswom Boards and trusts that have been constituted as per specific legislation have veered from their lofty ideals underpinning those legal provisions. Though the provisions are adhered to in letter, they are often violated in spirit. It cannot be otherwise. Politics is an art of compromise; it has to accommodate diverse interests. Regardless of the contributions of such persons in other areas, their suitability to administer places of worship will often be doubtful as their choice is owing to political affiliations and not spiritual orientation. While such nominations are legally correct, they are often morally untenable. If several of these boards and trusts have forfeited lands belonging to the temples for flippant purposes, or have been unable to protect the values of a temple, or have become corrupt or inefficient, it is all because of the non-suitability of people occupying those positions.

This accounts for the large number of cases around religious institutions. It is not the interest of the devotee that is at the core of many of these disputes, but disagreement over authority, and allegations of corruption and misuse of authority. The Padmanabhaswamy temple verdict raises the need for moral cleansing, professionalising the administration of places of worship, and urges us to reinstall trust in the sanctum.

The mixing up of politics and other considerations with worship can be deleterious for both politics and faith and ominous for society at large.

K. Jayakumar is a former Chief Secretary of Kerala

## Community canteens 2.0

They can provide food security for migrant workers, create jobs and help save fiscal resources

ABHISHEK JAIN & SHANAL PRADHAN

In his recent address to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a three-month extension to the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana. The government would provide 5 kg of grains and 1 kg of chickpea monthly to about 800 million beneficiaries across the country. Alongside, he highlighted the implementation of the 'One Nation, One Ration' (ONOR) scheme to improve access to subsidised grains for migrant workers. Lack of access to food drove millions of them to their native villages during the lockdown period.

While these measures are welcome, they may fall short of reaching all sections of this vulnerable population. Most migrant workers do not live with families; many do not cook their meals. Instead, a significant number rely on roadside vendors and dhabas. Without access to cooking arrangement or fuel, only subsidised grains are not a sufficient solution to ensure nourishment. Neither would it be sufficient to attract them back to the urban areas as access to affordable food remains a major concern. Instead, is there a way to ensure safe, nutritious and affordable food for all urban poor, while saving fiscal resources, creating jobs, and furthering sustainability goals?

#### Nutritional security

The solution lies in tweaking an existing approach – community canteens. More than 10 States have run community canteens. Some notable examples include the Amma Canteens in Tamil Nadu and Indira Canteens in Karnataka. However, a drawback is that most of these canteens rely on continuous government support for their sustenance as meals are usually priced unsustainably low at ₹5-10 per plate. However, our preliminary analysis suggests that such canteens could be operationally self-sustainable by pricing the nutritious meals at ₹15-20 per plate. This would still be lower than what most dhabas and roadside vendors charge for a meal. While the Central government should extend the initial capital support, the implementation at the State level should be led by urban local bo-

dies or municipal corporations, in collaboration with private entities as service providers.

Our analysis suggests that with an initial social investment of ₹26,500 crore towards 60,000 canteens and about 8,200 kitchens, we could serve three nourishing meals a day to the 30 million urban poor workers, primarily migrants. If all urban migrant workers rely on community canteens instead of ONOR, the investment pays back itself in less than six years, as it helps avoid the potential food subsidy outlay due to ONOR, leading to annual savings of about ₹4,500 crore thereafter.

**Jobs and growth**  
Community canteens could also contribute to jobs, growth and sustainability. The 60,000 canteens, each serving about 500 beneficiaries on average, would generate more than 1.2 million jobs to serve 90 million meals a day. These canteens would also help bridge the nourishment gap among poor urban workers. Further, the government should leverage community canteens to shift diets and agriculture production towards more sustainable and sustainably harvested food crops. These canteens must incorporate low-cost yet nutritious and environmentally sustainable food items in the plate – bringing in coarse grains such as millets and sorghum into the dietary patterns. These canteens would create the demand signals for the farmers to diversify their crops and focus on sustainably harvested produce.

Under extreme circumstances, the lack of access to food is a matter of survival. But even in regular times, access to nutritious food is essential. Pandemic or not, access to affordable and safe food should not be an uncertainty for any section of the society. A renewed approach to community canteens would not only achieve nutritional security for migrant workers but would also create new jobs, save fiscal resources, support economic growth and promote sustainable diets and agriculture.

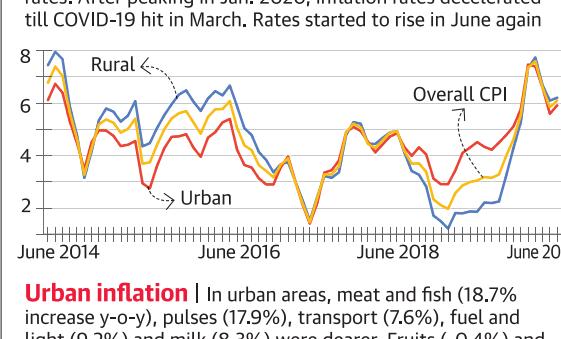
Abhishek Jain and Shanal Pradhan are researchers at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water



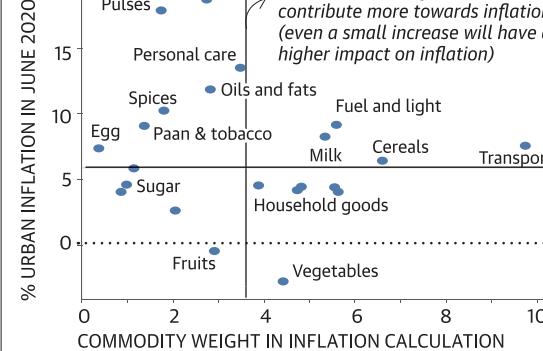
#### DATA POINT

### A bit more steep

**Inflation rises again** | The graph shows the y-o-y change in India's overall retail inflation rates. After peaking in Jan. 2020, inflation rates decelerated till COVID-19 hit in March. Rates started to rise in June again

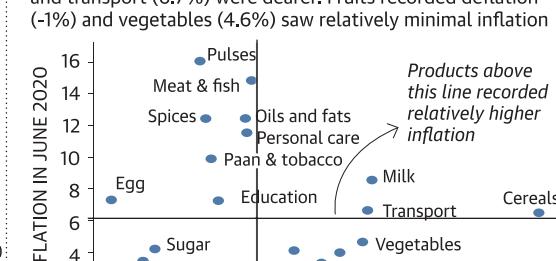


**Urban inflation** | In urban areas, meat and fish (18.7% increase y-o-y), pulses (17.9%), transport (7.6%), fuel and light (9.2%) and milk (8.3%) were dearer. Fruits (-0.4%) and vegetables (-2.7%) recorded deflation. So, in both rural and urban areas, unlike in Dec. '19/Jan. '20, vegetables did not contribute to inflation. In fact, they moderated the price rise

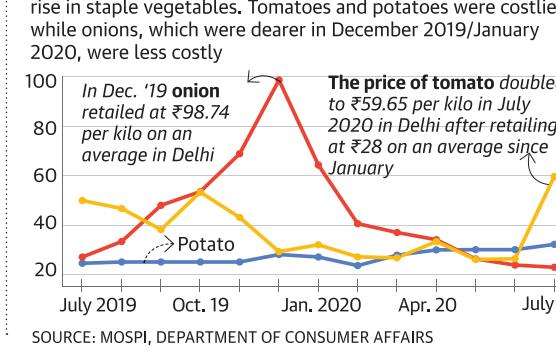


Retail inflation showed signs of acceleration again in June 2020, according to the first such data released since March. In contrast to the inflation peak attained in Dec. '19/Jan. '20 due to a rapid surge in vegetable prices, this time the cost increase in meat, fish, pulses (all protein sources), milk, electricity and transport fuel led to the spike. By **The Hindu Data Team**

**Rural inflation** | In rural areas, pulses (16.1% increase y-o-y), meat and fish (14.9%), milk (8.6%), cereals (6.5%) and transport (6.7%) were dearer. Fruits recorded deflation (-1%) and vegetables (4.6%) saw relatively minimal inflation



**Unstable staple** | July 2020 data suggest a definite price rise in staple vegetables. Tomatoes and potatoes were costlier, while onions, which were dearer in December 2019/January 2020, were less costly



#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 21, 1970

Film Censorship  
(From an editorial)

At the recent Bombay meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee attached to his Ministry, Mr. Satyanarayana Sinha, Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, voiced grave concern over the undue emphasis on sex and violence being laid in Indian films and said that the Government had instructed film censors to cut out such offending scenes ruthlessly. He warned producers that an entire film might be refused clearance if necessary. Mr. Sinha's concern is well-founded. In the cut-throat competition among the Indian film producers for the cinema-goer's rupee, conservative standards of decency have been a grievous casualty and objectionable scenes have often been introduced with an eye entirely on the box office. But is "tough" censorship the answer? The Khosla Committee, which went into the question of film censorship and whose report the Bombay meeting was called to discuss, has itself warned against the harm that censorship could cause to the artiste's creativity and right of free expression and has recommended flexibility in judging the merits and demerits of a film. There is a strict code of decency already in the censor's hands now and its enforcement has often led to a film being haphazardly cut to the detriment of continuity and artistic merit.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 21, 1920

The Fiji Despatch  
(From an editorial)

The despatch from the Governor of Fiji to the Colonial Office on the recent riots of the Indians in that Colony is published in the recent Gazette of India. The riots occurred in, and were suppressed by, the middle of February last. The despatch is dated March 20th. Thus, an interval of more than a month elapsed between the occurrence of the riots and the writing of the official account of it for the information of the Colonial Office. The delay in publishing in this country an account of the riots and the way in which it was suppressed is to be greatly deplored, for it makes it difficult for us now to conduct an independent investigation of the causes that led to these riots, the story of its progress and the manner in which it was handled. We have sadly to note that the Fiji Governor's despatch on the subject is neither adequate nor impartial. It is a partisan document, couched in a tone almost of hostility to the Indian population in the island.

FROM PAGE ONE

## U.K. vaccine prompts immune response

The experimental COVID-19 vaccine caused minor side effects like fever, chills and muscle pain more often than in those who got a control meningitis vaccine.

"There's increasing evidence that having a T-cell response as well as antibodies could be very important in controlling COVID-19," Dr. Hill said. He suggested the immune response might be boosted after a second dose; their trial tested two doses administered about four weeks apart. "Even two billion doses

may not be enough," he said, underlining the importance of having multiple shots to combat the coronavirus.

Numerous countries including Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy, U.S. and the U.K. have all signed deals to receive hundreds of millions of doses of the vaccine – which has not yet been licensed – with the first deliveries scheduled for the fall. British politicians have promised that if it proves effective, Britons will be the first to get it.

## AIIMS to start phase-1 testing of Covaxin

ICMR is a collaborator on the Covaxin vaccine project.

"Safety of those recruited will be a prime concern during the study. We should be able to make available the data within about two to three months. And we expect that if everything goes well the vaccine should be ready by the end of this year or early next year," said AIIMS director Randeep Guleria at a press conference.

Stating that there is not much evidence of community transmission at national level, Dr. Guleria said certain areas, like Delhi, seem to have hit their COVID-19 case peak.

**Trials at Hyderabad**  
Phase-1 human trials also

began at the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad, with two healthy volunteers administered the first dose of Covaxin. "Health condition of the volunteers will be monitored for six months," doctors said.

They said the main focus of monitoring will be to check whether antibodies are generated in the volunteers, amount of time it took for the antibodies to kick-in, and how long they last in the body. A second dose of the vaccine will be given after a gap of 14 days.

NIMS is one among the 12 institutions involved in the vaccine trials. Dr Prabhakar Reddy is the principal investigator at NIMS.

## Gehlot launches another attack on Pilot

"He gave an impression as if it was he who worked hard to bring the Congress back to power [in 2018]. People actually know how little was his contribution... Even then, we never questioned him," Mr. Gehlot said. Rajasthan was the only State where no demand was raised to change the PCC president in seven years, he added.

The Chief Minister said nobody would have ever heard in history that a party's State chief was busy toppling his own government. He also claimed that some MLAs of the Pilot camp, whose phones were snatched away, wanted to return. Asked about a floor test in the State Assembly, he said "all decisions" would be taken in due

course. A source close to Mr. Pilot, speaking to *The Hindu*, questioned the language used by Mr. Gehlot. "The central leadership of the Congress gives an impression of reaching out but Mr. Gehlot's language borders on abuse. His statements clearly prove what Mr. Pilot had to go through in the past 18 months," he said.

Responding to allegations levelled by a Congress MLA that Mr. Pilot had offered him money before the Rajya Sabha election to switch to the BJP. Mr. Pilot said the baseless allegation was made "solely to malign me and to stifle the legitimate concerns that I had raised against the party leadership of the State, as a member and MLA of Congress."

## Expand panel probing Dubey death, SC tells U.P.

The court will consider their names and pass orders on Wednesday (July 22).

The three-judge Bench led by the CJI found "substance" in arguments made that there has been "as many as 6,126 police encounters in which 122 persons have killed" in the State since Mr. Adityanath took over charge as Chief Minister. Senior advocate Sanjay Parikh, for NGO People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), drew the court's attention to the police en-

counter death statistics from the State. "There is substance in what Parikh is saying... What is at stake is not one incident [of Dubey] in Uttar Pradesh, what is at stake is the whole system," the CJI stressed. He then asked Mr. Mehta "whether it is possible to have a general enquiry into the cause of Mr. Parikh..."

The court also chastised the State administration that allowed Dubey to get bail "despite 64 criminal cases" against him.

## 6 months later, MHA yet to frame rules on CAA

The CAA was passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019, and given the President of India's assent the next day, December 12, 2019. The MHA had issued a notification that the provisions of the Act will come into force from January 10.

The Manual on Parliamentary Work states that, "statutory rules, regulations and by-laws will be framed within a period of six months from the date on which the relevant statute came into force."

## A.P. test numbers three times that of Telangana

Andhra Pradesh adds over 4,000 cases, conducts 33,580 tests; Telangana tests 11,003, new cases stand at 1,198

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

7,611. So far, 5,618 persons had recovered.

Disease transmission was high in Thiruvananthapuram district.

The district reported 182 cases on Monday, of which 175 were due to local transmission. The Government Medical College hospital, the designated COVID-19 hospital in the district, was a site of transmission.

The disease spread from the non-COVID sections in the surgery wards, where one patient in the post-operative ward tested positive, resulting in over 100 hospital staff, including several doctors and nurses, going into quarantine.

Among other districts, 74 out of the 79 cases in Kollam, 62 out of 72 cases in Ernakulam, 45 out of the 92 cases in Kozhikode were attributed to local transmission.

The number of samples tested in the last 24 hours

### Uphill fight

As the number of cases increase, the States have started reimposing lockdown measures to contain the virus. The graphic shows the spread of COVID-19 in the southern States



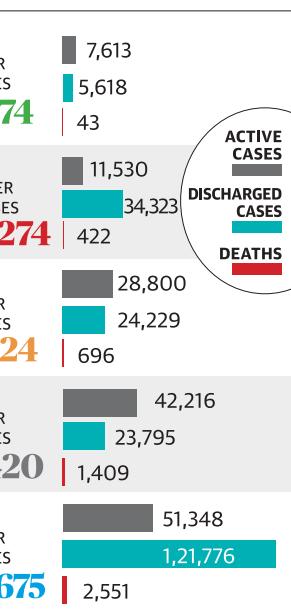
Thorough check: A barricaded road at Nagarbhavi Circle in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

was 14,640.

Andhra Pradesh, for the second consecutive day, reported over 4,000 new cases and 54 deaths. The overall total rose to 53,724 and the

death toll to 696. More than a quarter of the 4,074 new cases were reported in East Godavari district.

More than half of the new deaths occurred in four dis-



tricts with East Godavari and Guntur reporting nine each. Krishna reported seven new deaths and Anantapur six. Chittoor, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam reported five

deaths each, Kurnool and West Godavari three deaths each and Kadapa and Vizagamaram one death each.

Over a 24 hour period, 33,580 samples were tested.

Telangana maintained a gradual drop in cases as 1,198

positive cases were detected till date. Of these, 11,530 were active, 34,323 recovered, and 422 patients died.

On Monday, 11,003 samples were tested. Till June 20, 2,76,222 tests were conducted.

On Monday, Karnataka recorded 3,648 new cases and 72 deaths. Among new cases, 1,452 were from Bengaluru.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad and Bengaluru bureaus)

## Father, three others held for sexual abuse of teen

POCSO case filed on her complaint

STAFF REPORTER  
KASARAGOD

The girl had lodged a complaint at the Neelesarwaram police station alleging that her father had been sexually abusing her at home and in other places from the time she was a Class 8 student.

### Mother aware

The girl in her statement had said that her mother was aware of the abuse. She too might be charged, the police added.

The girl's uncle, who knew that she had had an abortion, told her to lodge a complaint with the police. After a medical examination, her statement would be recorded before the Hosdurg magistrate. The girl is now in the care of her uncle.

## Hyderabad case panel hit by pandemic'

COVID-19 has hindered work of commission set up to probe police encounter: CJI

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Monday revealed that the pandemic has hindered the work of the Supreme Court-appointed Justice V.S. Sirpurkar Commission of Inquiry into the Hyderabad police encounter of the four accused in the rape and murder of a veterinarian in December last year.

The CJI remarked this while hearing a batch of petitions seeking an impartial probe into the gunning down of history-shooter Vilas Dubey by the Uttar Pradesh police on July 10. The Justice Sirpurkar Commission, through advocate K. Parameshwar, has asked the court for a six-month extension to complete its work. It was set up initially with a six-

month deadline on December 12 last year.

The application filed by the commission said they live in different cities, none of which is Hyderabad. They said their work is thus hampered by travel restrictions and the quarantine regime in place. These pandemic travails of Justice Sirpurkar Commission prompted the CJI on Monday to express the court's keenness to appoint

work till April 14.

The commission members said they live in different cities, none of which is Hyderabad. They said their work is thus hampered by travel restrictions and the quarantine regime in place. These pandemic travails of Justice Sirpurkar Commission prompted the CJI on Monday to express the court's keenness to appoint

the four accused – Mohammed Arif, Chintakunta Chennakeshavulu, Jollu Shiva and Jolla Naveen – were taken to the scene of the crime around 60 km from Hyderabad on December 6. The Telangana government has stuck to its version that the accused men surprised their police escort, grabbed their guns and tried to kill the policemen to escape custody. The four were killed in the cross-firing.

persons hailing from the same place in the inquiry commission for the Dubey case.

However, the Justice Sirpurkar Commission said that despite the pandemic restrictions they had received a whopping 1,365 affidavits from the Hyderabad police officers allegedly involved and families of the accused.

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Harichandan promised to take a call after studying issue'



N. Ramesh Kumar

29 High Court judgment and the status of the Special Leave Petition filed against it by the government in the apex court.

He observed that he was entitled to function as the SEC as per the High Court judgment and the Supreme Court's refusal to stay it, made his case stronger.

Speaking to presspersons after his interaction with the Governor, Mr. Ramesh Kumar expressed the hope that his Special Leave Petition is pending disposal in the apex court.

would be in his favour.

He said the Governor promised to take a decision after having a detailed look into the issue, while claiming to have the right to join the post which he is supposed to hold for five years. His tenure as SEC was curtailed to three years through Ordinance Number 5 of 2020.

**A.P. files plea in SC**  
The Andhra Pradesh government filed an application before the Supreme Court on Saturday appealing for a stay on the contempt proceedings initiated by Mr. Ramesh Kumar in the High Court. It is likely to be listed for July 21 or 22.

The government's contention is that it is not proper on the part of the High Court to hear Mr. Ramesh Kumar's contempt petition when its Special Leave Petition is pending disposal in the apex court.

Observing that the government's inaction amounted to criminal negligence", the Bench passed a

## COVID-19: Telangana HC summons six top officials

Our orders not implemented: Bench

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Expressing dissatisfaction over the State government not enforcing its orders on PIL pleas related to COVID-19, the Telangana High Court on Monday directed six top officials, including the Chief Secretary, to appear before it on July 28.

Principal Secretaries of Medical and Health and Municipal Administration, Public Health Director, Director of Medical Education and GHMC Commissioner were the other officers told to be present before the court. The direction was issued by a Bench of Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijay Sen Reddy, after hearing a batch of 10 PIL petitions on different issues connected to coronavirus.

Observing that the government's inaction amounted to criminal negligence", the Bench passed a



A mannequin with face shield on display at a shop in Hyderabad. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

slew of directions. Terming as vague the reports filed separately by the Public Health Director, the GHMC Commissioner, superintendents of Government hospitals and the Principal Secretary of Medical and Health, the CJI sought to know why the officials were not implementing the court directions on pandemic-related petitions. The Bench told Advocate General B.S. Prasad to ask the government to enforce the orders.

Meanwhile, the CPI(M) has decided to have a meeting of the personal staff of all Ministers of the party on July 23.

Though this is being dubbed as a routine meeting, it has evoked curiosity against the backdrop of the present controversy. The Chief Minister and CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan are expected to address the meeting.

### IN BRIEF



SC declines to stay IT case against Shivakumar

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday declined to stay criminal proceedings initiated by the Income Tax authorities against Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar for alleged recovery of undisclosed wealth in a search and seizure operation conducted at his premises in 2017.

### Heavy rain likely in Kerala, says IMD

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Heavy rainfall is likely in Kerala over the next few days due to an upper air cyclonic circulation over Kanyakumari, which is expected to move towards the Lakshadweep-Maldives region, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday. Kerala can expect strong winds along and off its coast till July 22.

### Former TTD chief priest passes away

TIRUMALA  
Former TTD chief priest P. Srinivasa Murthy Dikshitulu, 75, passed away at the Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences on Monday. Dikshitulu developed severe respiratory congestion on Saturday night and was rushed to the hospital where on admission he had reportedly tested positive for COVID-19.

### Reduce delay in swab test results: HC

BENGALURU  
Observing that the delay in laboratory test results has a direct connection with the spread COVID-19, the Karnataka High Court on Monday directed the State to take steps to reduce time for obtaining the swab test results and the time gap in shifting patients to COVID Care Centres or hospitals.

## LDF meet to take stock of political developments

Gold smuggling case top on agenda; focus will be on strategy for cementing unity among allies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) State committee will meet on July 28 to take stock of the current political developments in the wake of a gold smuggling case and the political dimensions the case has gained during the past fortnight.

The meeting will gauge the impact of the row on the government's image and the opposition United Democratic Front's (UDF) attempts to put the Chief Minister's Office in the dock following the

inter

## Advani, Joshi to depose in Babri case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

A special CBI court here on Monday set July 24 for recording the statement of former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani in the 1992 Babri mosque demolition case.

The 92-year-old BJP leader's statement under Section 313 of Cr.PC will be recorded through videoconference.

Special judge S.K. Yadav also fixed July 23 for recording the statement of BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi.

The court is recording the statements of the 32 accused under Section 313 to enable them to plead their innocence, if they so want.

The court, which is conducting day-to-day hearings to complete the trial by August 31 as directed by the Supreme Court, set July 22 for former Shiv Sena MP Satish Pradhan to depose before it through a video link.

## SOG serves notice on Shekhawat

Union Minister asked to record statements on his alleged role in Rajasthan crisis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Rajasthan police have served notice on Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, asking him to get his statement recorded in connection with his alleged role in a conspiracy to topple the Ashok Gehlot government that was "revealed" in some audio tapes last week. The subpoena asked Mr. Shekhawat to give his voice sample.

Additional Director-General, SOG, Ashok Rathore said here on Monday that the notice had been served on the Minister through his personal secretary. The SOG had registered two separate first information reports on Friday in connection with the audio tapes on a complaint lodged by Congress chief whip Mahesh Joshi.

One of the FIRs, registered under Sections 124-A (sedition) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code, names Mr. Shek-



At the helm: Ashok Gehlot addressing presspersons outside a hotel in Jaipur on Monday. •PTI

hawat, a rebel Congress MLA and a middleman. The tapes purportedly contained conversations between three persons on strategies to topple the government.

The complainant alleged that one of three persons was Mr. Shekhawat. The alleged middleman, Sanjay Jain, has since been arrested

and is being interrogated.

The notice was issued under Section 160 of the Criminal Procedure Code, dealing with the power of a police officer making an investigation to require the attendance of any person who may be acquainted with the facts and circumstances of a case. In a statement issued in

New Delhi, Mr. Shekhawat – who was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jodhpur – said the police should first clarify about the authenticity of the tapes. "Who recorded it and where did the SOG get it from? Investigation should be carried out to find out if these tapes are genuine or not," he added.

## India will never be a part of an alliance system: Jaishankar

'Global shifts opening spaces for middle powers like India'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Non-alignment is an old concept today, but India will never be a part of an alliance system, according to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

Speaking about the consequences of global shifts, including the United States and the assertiveness of China, he said they were opening spaces for middle powers like India, Japan, the European Union and others.

"Non-alignment was a term of a particular era and geopolitical landscape. One aspect was independence, which remains a factor of continuity for us," Mr. Jaishankar said at a virtual conference organised by CNBCTV18 on the "Geopolitics of opportunity: as the world rebalances, how should India capitalise?"

"The consequence of repositioning of the United



S. Jaishankar

States, that the big umbrella is now smaller than it used to be, has allowed many other countries to play more autonomous roles. It doesn't affect us as much because we were never part of an alliance system and we will never be. But countries who depended more on the U.S. are finding they have to take a call themselves on many issues," he noted.

"India must now take more 'risks', as the world expected it to take a more proactive

stance on the "big issues" of the day, including connectivity, maritime security, terrorism, climate change and terrorism, he stated.

While he didn't comment on the ongoing tensions over the Line of Actual control (LAC), the Minister said that India had moved slowly in comparison to China on the economic front, and that China's economy was now five times that of India's despite them being the same size in 1988.

"In comparison with China and with South East Asia, we could have done better. We didn't intensively industrialise and push manufacturing, we opened up much later, a full decade and a half after China, and then didn't commit to full reforms the way China did," Mr. Jaishankar said, speaking with Singapore-based academic C. Rajamohan and businessman Sunil Munjal.

## IAF to induct five Rafales on July 29

The delivery was delayed by 2 months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Amid continuing tensions on the border with China, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is scheduled to induct the first batch of five Rafale fighter jets from France at the Air Force Station, Ambala, on July 29, subject to weather conditions. The final induction ceremony will take place in the second half of August, the IAF said on Monday.

"In recent years, be it Doklam or the present, @RahulGandhi Ji prefers briefings from the Chinese instead of believing India's armed forces. Why does one dynasty want a weak India and a strong China? Many leaders in Congress also disapprove of one dynasty's shenanigans!" he stated.

Hitting back at Mr. Nadda, the Congress posed a series of questions, including why did the IAF send a delegation to the Communist Party's 'The Party School' and why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi meet the Chinese President 18 times in 6 years.

range stand-off attack air to ground missile, and MICA multi-mission air-to-air missiles into the IAF's inventory will give the force an edge in the neighbourhood. According to its manufacturer, MBDA, Meteor has a no-escape zone many times greater than any other air-to-air missile.

The Rafale induction and operationalisation will be on top of the agenda during the Air Force Commanders' Conference (AFCC) to be held from July 22 to 24 with the theme "IAF in the Next Decade".

"During the three-day conference, the discussions would take stock of the current operational scenario and deployments. The plan of action for operational capability enhancement of the IAF in the next decade will also be discussed," the IAF said in another statement.

After Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacks the PM on India's handling of the LAC crisis, BJP chief J.P. Nadda hits back

## 'PM's fake strongman image now India's biggest weakness'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In one of his most direct attacks on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday said Mr. Modi had come to power with the help of a "fabricated strongman image" but now that image was under attack from China.

Mr. Gandhi alleged that "the Chinese are sitting in our territory but Mr. Modi has publicly said they are not, because he is worried about his image and defending his image".

He said if the Prime Minister allowed "the Chinese to understand that they can manipulate him because of his image, the Indian Prime Minister will no longer be worth anything for India".

In a new video on the border crisis, Mr. Gandhi



Rahul Gandhi

claimed that China may be thinking on a larger scale of "doing something with Pakistan in Kashmir" and wanted to improve its tactical position in areas such as Demchok, Galwan and Pangong lake.

"PM fabricated a fake strongman image to come to power. It was his biggest strength. It is now India's biggest weakness," Mr. Gandhi tweeted with the video.

Commenting on the face-

off in the Ladakh region, he claimed it was not just a border issue but designed to put pressure on Mr. Modi.

"And what they are doing, is that they are attacking his image. They understand that it in order for Mr. Narendra Modi to be an effective politician; in order for Mr. Narendra Modi to survive as a politician, he has to protect the idea of "Chappan Inch" [56-inch chest]. And this is the real idea the Chinese are attacking," he said.

"They are basically telling Mr. Narendra Modi that if you do not do what we say, we will destroy the idea of Mr. Narendra Modi as a strong leader. Now the question is, how will Mr. Narendra Modi react. Will he take them on?... The worry I have so far is that the Prime Minister has succumbed."

Mr. Nadda did not mince words in taking on Mr. Gandhi. "We saw yet another (failed) edition of 'Project RG Relaunch' today.

@RahulGandhi Ji was, as usual, weak on facts and strong on mudslinging. At-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Monday launched a scathing attack on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his second video on India's handling of the border situation with China, terming it as "attempts to politicise defence and foreign policy" due to "one dynasty's desperation to wash their past sins of 1962 and weaken India".

In a series of tweets, Mr. Nadda rubbished Mr. Gandhi's contention that the government's handling of China was found wanting.

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J.P. Nadda

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ven them rich dividends. Remember 1962, giving away of a UNSC seat, losing lot of land to China in the UPA years, MoU Signed with much fanfare in 2008, funds to RGF and more," he said.

"In recent years, be it Doklam or the present, @RahulGandhi Ji prefers briefings from the Chinese instead of believing India's armed forces. Why does one dynasty want a weak India and a strong China? Many leaders in Congress also disapprove of one dynasty's shenanigans!" he stated.

Hitting back at Mr. Nadda, the Congress posed a series of questions, including why did the IAF send a delegation to the Communist Party's 'The Party School' and why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi meet the Chinese President 18 times in 6 years.

## Malicious comments, says Omar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

National Conference leader and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's comments in an interview with *The Hindu* drawing a connection between the political events in Rajasthan with his release from detention as "downright malicious and false".

Mr. Abdullah said in a tweet, "I am fed up of the downright malicious and false allegation that what Sachin Pilot is doing is somehow linked to my or my father's release from detention earlier this year. Enough is enough. Mr. @bhupeshbaghel will be hearing from my lawyers."

Mr. Pilot is married to Mr. Abdullah's sister Sarah Pilot. The National Conference said in its statement that Mr. Baghel's comment, apart from being false, was defamatory to the reputation of Mr. Abdullah.

The two sparred over Twitter following Mr. Abdullah's threat to take legal action. "Please do not try to turn this tragic demise of democracy into an opportune moment @OmarAbdullah ji. The 'allegation' was only a question asked, and we will keep asking it," Mr. Baghel said.

Mr. Abdullah said the Congress did not know friends from foe. "You can send your answer to my lawyers," he said.

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

BJP MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, who burst into national fame after his spirited defence in Parliament of the Modi government's move to dilute Article 370 that accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was on Monday appointed president of the Ladakh unit of the party.

Mr. Namgyal, 35, who won the Ladakh seat in 2019 with a margin of 11,000 votes, is one of youngest leaders to head a local unit, especially as sensitive as Ladakh, where India is locked in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with China.

got the ticket and won with a handsome margin.

Mr. Namgyal, 35, won the Ladakh seat in 2019 with a margin of 11,000 votes.

He is known for speech on Article 370

Ladakh MP Namgyal made BJP local unit chief

He is known for speech on Article 370

NISTULA HEBBAR  
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He is known for speech on Article 370 and according the Union Territory status to Ladakh provided him a good opportunity to showcase his oratory, with even Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciating the young MP, whose exhortations to protesting Opposition MPs to "have patience to hear the other side" (*sunne ki kshama rakhye*) became a hit meme on social media.

Mr. Namgyal's appointment is not without resentment, with national general secretary Ram Madhav having visited Ladakh for a fire-fighting operation a few weeks back, but the decision reflects a continuation of an aggressive political line in places (like the north-eastern States) where the BJP had not, in the past, got much traction.

## IN BRIEF



Stay proceedings against me, Vinod Dua urges SC

NEW DELHI Senior journalist Vinod Dua on Monday urged the Supreme Court to stay the proceedings in a sedition FIR registered against him by the Himachal Pradesh police. The request from senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing from Mr. Dua, was made before a Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit immediately after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the State, sought an adjournment.

## SC dismisses plea to protect Ayodhya artefacts

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed as "absolutely frivolous" a plea to protect ancient remains and artefacts recovered during excavation and levelling of land at Ramjanmabhumi in Ayodhya for Ram temple construction. The court ordered petitioners, including Satish Chindhuji Shambharkar, to pay ₹1 lakh each in costs.

## Dubey's close aide Bajpai, his associate arrested

LUCKNOW

Jaikant Bajpai, who allegedly helped slain history-sheeter Vikas Dubey's finances, was arrested on charges of providing financial and logistical help to the gangster in executing the ambush of policemen in Bikru village and escaping from there, police said on Monday. Along with Bajpai, police also arrested his associate, Prashant Shukla, for allegedly helping Dubey.

## I am curious why Omar was released'

The BJP can go to any extent to form a government, says Chhattisgarh CM

SOBHANA K. NAIR

**Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel speaks on the latest scheme 'Godhan Nyay Yojana', where the State will buy cattle dung, the political events in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh's own political situation as the last of the three States (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh) were won by Congress in 2018) so far standing untouched by political upheaval:**

In 2018, the Congress won three States – Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. The party has already lost Madhya Pradesh to the BJP, Rajasthan has been seeing political upheaval for the past few weeks now, Chhattisgarh is the only State that remains standing so far and there are indications of dissatisfaction within the Congress in your State that threatens to boil over?

See, in Madhya Pradesh Jyotiraditya Scindia lost the Lok Sabha election. He wasn't used to living a life without having any public post. This just made him restless.

And as far as Sachin Pilot is concerned, not that I have been tracking the Rajasthan events so closely, but it does make one curious why Omar Abdullah was released? He and Mehbooba Mufti were booked under the same Sections of the law. While she is still languishing, he

**Haryana reports 694 cases, 6 COVID-19 deaths**

CHANDIGARH  
Haryana on Monday reported 694 fresh cases of COVID-19, taking the tally of cumulative cases to 26,858. The State also reported six deaths, taking the tally to 355. The major chunk of new cases, 109 and 103, were reported from Gurugram and Faridabad districts respectively. The active cases are 6,277 and 20,226 patients have so far been discharged. State Health Minister Anil Vij said the recovery rate in the State is about 75%. Punjab recorded 411 new cases and reported eight more deaths, taking the tally to 262, according to an official statement.

**ED probing illegal liquor supply racket in Punjab**

NEW DELHI  
The Enforcement Directorate is initiating investigations into a liquor bootlegging racket active in different parts of Punjab. The liquor, packed in bottles bearing branded labels, was sold in huge quantities during the lockdown period. Several distilleries have come under the agency's scanner for illegal production and supply when it was prohibited. The case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act is being registered on the basis of the findings of the State police. According to reports, the State police registered about 900 cases and made close to 1,000 arrests pertaining to the sale of liquor during the lockdown period.

**P. Amudha appointed Joint Secretary in PMO**

AHMEDABAD  
P. Amudha, a 1994-batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre, has been brought to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as Joint Secretary in a reshuffle involving 16 officials. She has been brought from the Lal Bahadur Shashtri National Academy of Administration, where she is serving as a professor. Varsha Joshi, serving in the Delhi government, has been brought in the Central administration as Joint Secretary in the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying while Keshav Chandra has been made the Director, Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO).

**Veteran Odia actor Bijoy Mohanty passes away**

Bhubaneswar  
Veteran Odia film actor Bijoy Mohanty passed away at a private hospital here on Monday. He was 70 and is survived by wife Tandra Roy, an actress, and daughter Jasmin Mohanty. The actor was suffering from multiple ailments. Last month, he was brought back to Bhubaneswar by a special ambulance from Hyderabad, where he was undergoing treatment following a heart attack. Subsequently, doctors at Care Hospital here were treating him. He was allowed to go home in the first week of this month.

# Iran to continue work with India on Chabahar line: Railway chief

Turnaround follows meeting with Indian Ambassador in Tehran

**SUHASINI HAIDAR**

NEW DELHI  
In the latest twist to Iran's Chabahar-Zahedan railway project, Iran's Railway Minister said Iran and India are "determined to continue" cooperation on the railway line. The remarks contradict Iranian officials who had previously said India was not a part of the project.

"Considering the history of cooperation between the two countries and the existing potentials and capacities, Iran and India are determined to continue their cooperation in the field of rail transport, especially the Zahedan-Chabahar railway, because the development of cooperation between the two countries in this area," said the Iranian Railways head Saeed Rasouli, after a meeting with Indian Ambassador to

# Case fatality rate falls further

Over 7 lakh discharged, recovery rate at 62.6%, says Health Ministry

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

More than 7 lakh persons have recovered from COVID-19 and been discharged till now and the case fatality rate in the country continues to register a steady drop, according to a statement issued by the Health Ministry on Monday. The Ministry said India's case fatality rate now stands at 2.46%.

"India has one of the lowest case fatality rate in the world and medical attention is being provided to all the 3,90,459 active cases in hospitals and home isolation currently. 22,664 COVID-19 patients have recovered in the last 24 hours and this has further expanded the difference between those who are active COVID patients and the recovered persons and the recovery rate as of now is at 62.62%," said the Ministry statement.

**e-ICU programme**

Stating that the Centre was supporting the State/UT governments in combating the pandemic, the Ministry cited

**Viral tracker**

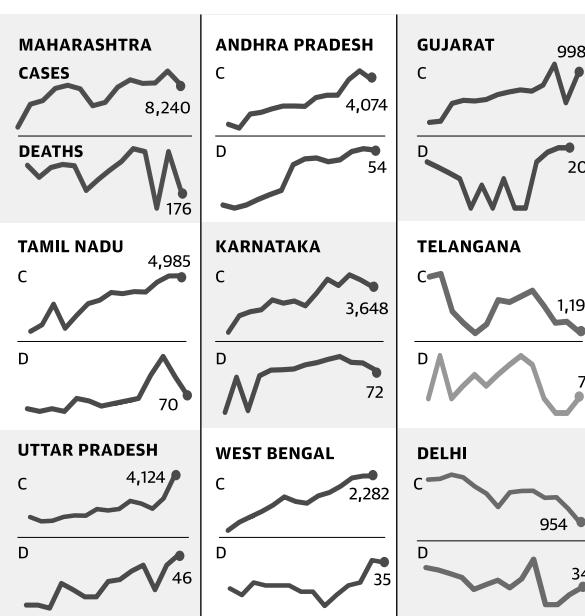
India recorded 35,705 new COVID-19 cases on Monday taking the total infections to 11,53,726. Between July 13 and 19, India recorded 34,088 cases daily on average, the second highest in the world, after U.S., surpassing Brazil (33,387)

**CASES**  
**35,705**  
**7 DAY-CHANGE**  
**+16%**

**DEATHS**  
**601**  
**7 DAY-CHANGE**  
**+3.6%**

States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising ■; dropping ■; or showing a mixed trend ■■■■■

FIGURES IN THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED ON MONDAY



the e-ICU programme of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (Delhi) aimed at reducing mortality. AIIMS has mentored 43 big hospitals in 11 States through "technical advice from domain experts in clinical management of ICU patients" the release said. The programme has covered hospitals across India

with Mumbai (10), Goa (3), Delhi (3), Gujarat (3), Telangana (2), Assam (5), Karnataka (1), Bihar (1), Andhra Pradesh (1), Kerala (1), Tamil Nadu (13).

"Each of these sessions conducted through video conference span over 1.5 to 2 hours and some of the important issues stressed upon

are the need for rational use of 'Investigational Therapies' like Remdesivir, convalescent plasma and Tocilizumab. The treating teams have discussed the current indications and possible harm due to their indiscriminate use and the need to limit social-media pressure based prescriptions," it said.

# NIA, State seek time to reply to Rao's bail plea

Varavara Rao, 81, is being treated at Nanavati Hospital

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Maharashtra government on Monday sought time from the Bombay High Court to reply to the interim medical bail plea filed by poet-activist P. Varavara Rao, 81, admitted to Nanavati Hospital.

A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and S.P. Tavade was hearing a criminal appeal filed on behalf of Mr. Rao, accused in the Bhima Koregaon case, through advocate R. Sathyanarayanan. He has appealed against rejection of his bail by the sessions court.

Mr. Rao was hallucinating

and feeling giddy at Taloja Central jail and was taken to J.J. Hospital, where he tested COVID-19 positive on July 16. Advocate Sudeep Pasbola appearing for Mr. Rao said that his condition was criti-

cal. The court wanted to know if it wouldn't be counterproductive to move him out of the hospital. Also, the court asked, how can the family meet him if he has COVID-19?

Mr. Pasbola said the family would take precautions. Public prosecutor Deepak Thakare said videoconferencing could be arranged at the hospital for the family to see Mr. Rao. However, Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh representing NIA said what was known is that COVID-19 patients could not be permitted to meet anyone.

Mr. Thakare and Mr. Singh sought some time to file their reply.

The statement says, "Varavara Rao, poet, writer, activist and long-time speaker of truth to power has been imprisoned for two years now, along with 10 other scholar-activists. ... The conditions in the jails in which these prisoners of conscience have been kept are said to be unhealthy and the threat of spread of infection has grown." The statement has been signed by scholars Noam Chomsky and Jan Breman, among others.

The statement says, "Varavara Rao, poet, writer, activist and long-time speaker of truth to power has been imprisoned for two years now, along with 10 other scholar-activists. ... The conditions in the jails in which these prisoners of conscience have been kept are said to be unhealthy and the threat of spread of infection has grown." The statement has been signed by scholars Noam Chomsky and Jan Breman, among others.

May 29 had rejected Ms. Bharadwaj's interim bail plea on medical grounds.

**NIA opposes plea**

On July 1, the NIA opposed her bail in the HC and said, "Ms. Bharadwaj under the garb of the current situation on account of the COVID-19 pandemic is trying to take an undue benefit in seeking bail on the grounds mentioned in her application."

NIA said the "evidence on record established" Ms. Bharadwaj, along with other accused, encouraged cadres to join banned Maoist organisations.

Sudha Bharadwaj

jail before being moved to Byculla jail.

On July 10, the HC directed the Byculla jail authorities to submit a report on the conditions inside the prison. A report was submitted on

**ODISHA STATE MEDICAL CORPORATION LTD.**

(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking) Phone No.: (0674) 2380608, Website: www.osmcl.nic.in, E-mail: proc.osmcl.od@nic.in

Notification No. 9396

Dated: 18/07/2020

**SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE**

Sealed Tenders in prescribed format are invited by the Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd.(OSMCL) from intended bidders for "Supply & Installation of BSL2+ Laboratory Facility" at SCBMCH-Cuttack, MKCGMCH-Berhampur, VIMSAR-Burla, IDH-Puri, DHH Angul, DHH Keonjhar & DHH Jharsuguda as detailed in the enclosure "Annexure-A" which can be downloaded from the "Tenders" selection of OSMCL's official website , i.e. <http://osmcl.nic.in> free of cost.

The Technical bid and financial bid must be enclosed in two separate sealed envelopes titled "Technical bid for Supply & Installation of BSL2+ Laboratory facility" and "Financial bid for Supply & Installation of BSL2+ Laboratory facility" (Format-B). These two envelopes must then be placed in the third sealed envelope titled "Setting up of BSL2+ Laboratory facility" which must be addressed to "MANAGING DIRECTOR, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd. (OSMCL), Convent Square, Bhubaneswar - 751007, Odisha". The sealed bids should reach to the above mentioned address by Speed Post / Registered Post / Courier only on or before 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 upto 05:00 PM.

No bid will be entertained after expiry of the prescribed date and time. The bids will be opened on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 at 11:00 AM in the Tender Hall of OSMCL, Bhubaneswar.

**Note :** All further notification, corrigendum or addendums (if any) related to this tender shall be floated in OSMCL website. Bidders are advised to follow the websites timely during tender process.

Sd/- GM, Operation (Equipment)  
OSMCL, Bhubaneswar

OIPR-10112/11/0016/2021

CAD-284

# 'Virus has claimed lives of 104 doctors across country'

Workplace common source of contracting infection: study

**BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN**  
NEW DELHI

A total of 104 doctors have died due to COVID-19-related complications till July 13 across the country, a paper written by Dr. Rajeev Jayadevan, president of the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Cochin, stated. Another four deaths of doctors – three of them in road accidents – were also linked to COVID-19, taking the total number to 108.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Gujarat have the largest share of deaths – these States have the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases in the country. Most of the doctors who died were below 60 years of age.

Ten nurses too lost their lives during this period, with their average age being 49.6 years. A total of 15 deaths occurred among other healthcare workers.

"Of the 108 COVID-19-linked deaths (data till July 13) among doctors, there were four pandemic-related violent deaths, including three road accidents and a suicide. Of the 104 non-violent deaths, 55.5% were below 60 years of age, while 29.6% and 21% were below the age of 50 and 40, respectively. The average age at death was 56.3 (range 22-96). Over half of the deaths occurred among general practitioners, while surgical specialties accounted for 27% of the mortality," Dr. Jayadevan's paper stated.

Ravi Wankhedkar, past national president, IMA, said that the paper was indi-



**Frontline victims:** Doctors and health workers keeping children engaged at a COVID-19 care centre in New Delhi. ■ AP

cative of the trend and that the actual numbers of doctors who succumbed to COVID-19 could be higher.

**Data unavailable**

"There is no official government mechanism to collect correct data for medical staff. IMA has one-third members from 11 lakh doctors registered with the Medical Council of India, and we also need to take into account Ayush, Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and Unani physicians, who are among frontline general practitioners to whom the patients with suspected symptoms may go first. They run small clinics in crowded areas with no safety measures. We suggest that the Government should officially maintain a separate registry of all healthcare givers who succumbed to COVID-19," he said.

According to Dr. Jayadevan's paper, it was not clear whether all infections were work-related but the most common reported source of contracting the infection was the workplace.

Dr. Azizuddin (43), a paediatrician at the Veerangana Avanti Bai Government Hospital for women and children in Lucknow, died of COVID-19 on July 15. He was admitted to the Lok Bandhu hospital here for treatment of a lung infection on June 27, but a day later his family shifted him to the reputed King George Medical University. As his condition deteriorated, Dr. Azizuddin's family took him to Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences, but he could not be saved.

(With inputs from R. Sugatha in Chennai, Mahesh Langa in Ahmedabad and Omar Rashid in Lucknow.)

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY	
YELAHANKA, BENGALURU - 560 064	
Website: rwf.indianrailways.gov.in	
<b>Tender Notice No. RWF/S/146/2020-21/01 Dated: 20.07.2020</b>	
<b>E-TENDERS:</b> On behalf of the President of India. The Principal Chief Materials Manager invites electronic tender for the following work online through the website <a href="http://www.reps.gov.in">http://www.reps.gov.in</a> from experienced / reputed contractors in the field.	
<b>Tender No.</b> RWF_S_TPT_FW_2000_2020-21	
<b>Due Date &amp; Time</b> 10.08.2020-Tender closing at 14.15 hrs.	
<b>Scope of Work</b> Carriage of Finished products i.e., Railway Wheels from Rail Wheel Factory (RWF), Yelahanka, Bangalore - 560 064 to Various Consignees in India.	
<b>Distance Slab</b> Above 1000 kms.	
<b>Quantity</b> 10,700 MT	
<b>Estt.Tender Value</b> Rs. 3,61,66,000/-	
<b>Cost of Tender Document</b> Rs. 10,500/-	
<b>EMD Amount</b> Rs. 3,30,800/-	
<b>Contract Period</b> 12(Twelve) months from the date of commencement of Work	
<b>PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER</b>	

NOTICE	

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## MoD signs deal for T-90 mine ploughs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Acquisition Wing of the Defence Ministry on Monday signed a ₹557-crore contract with Bharat Earth Movers Ltd. (BEML) for the procurement of 1,512 mine ploughs for T-90 Tanks.

"These mine ploughs will be fitted on T-90 Tanks of the Indian Armoured Corps which will facilitate individual mobility to the tanks while negotiating a minefield. The mobility of the tank fleet will enhance manifold which in turn would extend the reach of the armoured formations deep into enemy territory without becoming a mine causality," the Ministry said in a statement. The induction is expected to be completed by 2027.

As per the procedure, the contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorisation with a minimum of 50% indigenous content in the Make portion, the statement said.

## Warships meet U.S. strike group

It comes amid high alert in the Indian Ocean Region due to stand-off with China

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



**Passage exercise:** Indian naval ships rendezvous with the USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tunity to improve interoperability on the high seas. USS Nimitz, the U.S. Navy's largest aircraft carrier, is returning from the South China Sea through the Malacca Straits.

There, it recently conducted integrated operations along with the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group to support what the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said, "A free and open Indo-Pacific and promote an internation-

al rules-based order wherein each country can reach its potential without sacrificing national sovereignty."

"The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group is transiting through IOR. During the passage, Indian Navy units undertook PASSEX with the U.S. Navy. The Indian Navy had conducted similar PASSEX with the Japanese Navy and the French Navy in the recent past," the Navy said.

Last week, ships under

the Eastern Naval Command had conducted exercises in the Bay of Bengal off the A&N islands.

While operating together, the two Navies conducted "high-end" exercises designed to maximise training and interoperability, including air defence," a statement by the U.S. carrier strike group II said.

On June 27, JS Kashima and JS Shimayuki from the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) training squadron had conducted a PASSEX with INS Rana and INS Kulish in the Indian Ocean.

In a message on Twitter, the JMSDF had said it had "promoted mutual understanding with the Indian Navy through this exercise".

The Navy is keeping a close watch on the movement in the IOR of Chinese naval ships, whose presence has gone up considerably over the years in the name of anti-piracy patrols. In 2017, China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

## Tough, new e-commerce rules kick in next week

Time-bound grievance redressal is mandatory: Paswan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Details of importers have to be published for goods sold through e-commerce sites.

gin which are necessary for enabling the consumer to make an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage on its platform," the draft rules say.

Under the rules, sellers cannot refuse to take back goods or withdraw services or refuse refunds, if such goods or services are defective, deficient, delivered late, or if they do not meet the description on the platform. The rules also prohibit the e-commerce companies from manipulating the price of the goods or services to gain unreasonable profit through unjustified prices.

These rules, Mr. Paswan

said, are mandatory and not merely advisories as issued earlier. This is the first time that such detailed rules have been published by the Government of India for e-commerce entities.

Mentioning the country of origin is equally essential. "Where an e-commerce entity offers imported goods or services for sale, it shall mention the name and details of any importer from whom it has purchased such goods or services, or who may be a seller on its platform," the draft rules say.

The e-commerce entities will have to provide every detail relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty and guarantee, delivery and shipment, modes of payment, grievance redressal mechanism, payment methods, security of payment methods, charge-back options and so on.

"They will also have to mention the country of ori-

## PDP says it will fight to restore J&K's special status

Party issues resolution calling for a dialogue

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR  
With its president behind bars, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Monday passed a resolution in Jammu, the first since the Centre's August 5, 2019 decision to revoke J&K's special status, and "pledged to fight for the restoration of special constitutional and legal status of the erstwhile State."

"J&K should be made a bridge of peace and friendship instead of a battleground between neighbouring countries. There is no alternative to the roadmap and the vision of [PDP patron] late Mufti Muhammad Sayed, who advocated dialogue and reconciliation between communities, within regions, between the State and the rest of the country, and even across the Line of Control," said former MLC



Mehbooba Mufti

Surinder Choudhary, who chaired the meeting in Jammu.

Former MLC Firdous Tak said all the legislations in the last one year clearly indicated that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was on a mission to grab land, instead of working for the welfare of the masses in J&K. "Our party is committed to the Gupkar Declaration, where re-

gional parties in J&K have unanimously resolved to fight abrogation of the constitutional provisions that guarantee its special status," Mr. Tak said.

The PDP resolution described August 5, 2019 order as "the darkest chapter in the history of J&K."

"The manner in which the Parliament of India was misused to betray the people of this erstwhile State by abrogating Article 370 and 35A and downgrading the State into Union Territory shall always be a blot on the highest democratic institution," the resolution said.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti has been behind bars since August 5 last year. The resolution assumes significance as the revocation of J&K's special status is set to complete one year on August 5.

the morning and the other in the afternoon, with enough time in between to sanitise both the halls.

This plan was arrived at following a meeting between Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Rajya Sabha chamber and its galleries can accommodate 127 members ensuring

physical distancing, while the Lok Sabha chambers and its galleries can accommodate about 290 members.

Members of each of the two Houses, who cannot be accommodated in the chambers and galleries of the respective House, would be seated in the chamber and galleries of the other House.

Opposition leaders have pointed fingers at Ms. Krishna Poonia, MLA from Sadulpur, and alleged that the station house officer was being harassed.

</p



## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	37,419	1.08
US Dollar	74.91	0.15
Gold	49,916	0.38
Brent oil	43	0.00

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	317.30	4.30
Asian Paints	1751.60	33.70
Axle Bank	434.00	0.90
Bajaj Auto	3002.55	7.55
Bajaj Finserv	6620.15	258.55
Bajaj Finance	3441.50	140.20
Bharti Airtel	575.75	9.00
BPCL	437.30	-6.50
Britannia Ind	3982.65	197.65
Cipla	674.35	-14.75
Coal India	133.00	2.40
Dr Reddys Lab	4092.10	-26.65
Eicher Motors	19187.65	376.85
GAIL (India)	100.20	-0.65
Grasim Ind	603.15	11.05
HCL Tech	648.60	25.45
HDPC	1806.05	0.20
HFDC Bank	1133.05	34.60
Hero MotoCorp	2860.15	96.10
Hindalco	160.90	-1.25
Hind Unilever	2330.95	-3.60
ICICI Bank	363.00	9.20
IndusInd Bank	528.75	7.95
Bharti Infratech	203.15	5.05
Infosys	934.30	31.15
Indian Oil Corp	88.30	1.40
ITC	192.70	-1.35
JSW Steel	206.80	0.05
Kotak Bank	1319.05	-8.40
L&T	919.60	-5.95
M&M	594.00	5.20
Maruti Suzuki	5867.50	-52.00
Nestle India Ltd.	17247.00	17.05
NTPC	87.15	-1.15
ONGC	80.30	-0.05
PowerGrid Corp	163.50	0.20
Reliance Ind	1919.90	8.20
State Bank	190.75	2.55
Shree Cement	22266.10	-3.85
Sun Pharma	483.80	-19.80
Tata Motors	105.05	-1.35
Tata Steel	352.40	1.45
TCS	2207.90	7.15
Tech Mahindra	622.85	23.15
Titan	1001.70	3.85
UltraTech Cement	3865.10	2.25
UPL	453.65	17.20
Vedanta	108.10	-1.05
Wipro	270.80	9.45
Zee Entertainment	154.75	-2.65

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 20		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.72	75.04
Euro	85.57	85.94
British Pound	94.06	94.47
Japanese Yen (100)	69.70	70.00
Chinese Yuan	10.69	10.74
Swiss Franc	79.52	79.86
Singapore Dollar	53.73	53.98
Canadian Dollar	55.05	55.29
Malaysian Ringgit	17.52	17.61
Australian Dollar	52.26	52.49

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## LIC increases stake in TVS Motor Company

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has increased its stake in TVS Motor Company Ltd. to 3.3% through market purchase of 95 lakh shares. Earlier, the state-owned insurer held 63 lakh shares, representing 1.3% stake, in the two-and-a-half-wheeler manufacturing firm, it said in a regulatory filing. The additional shares were purchased between April 7, 2015, and July 16, 2020, via open market transactions.

## NSE-backed CAMS gets SEBI nod to float IPO

NEW DELHI Computer Age Management Services (CAMS), backed by Warburg Pincus LLC and the National Stock Exchange (NSE), has received markets regulator SEBI's go-ahead to raise an estimated ₹1,500-₹1,600 crore through an initial share sale. The IPO will see sale of 1.22 crore equity shares through offer-for-sale by Great Terrain Investment, NSE Investments, Acsys Investments, HDFC and HDB Employees Welfare Trust, as per the draft papers filed with SEBI. PTI

## Reliance Jio seeks spectrum for 5G trials

NEW DELHI Reliance Jio has sought spectrum in certain frequencies from the Department of Telecom for holding 5G trials. According to sources, Reliance Jio on July 17 requested for 800 megahertz of frequencies in the 26 gigahertz (GHz) and 24 GHz band as well as 100 MHz in 3.5 GHz band for running field trials in "urban centres like Delhi and Mumbai". The auction for these high frequency bands is expected to be held next year. PTI

# IL&FS board unveils road map to settle ₹57,000-crore debt

Revised value accounts for 57% of overall debt; ₹50,500 cr. to be settled by March

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) has announced a road map to address debt of ₹57,000 crore out of the total borrowings of more than ₹99,000 crore it had when the Centre superseded the board to take control of the scam-hit company in October 2018.

The current board headed by banker Uday Kotak said they were likely to address debt of ₹50,500 crore by March 31, 2021, including the ₹17,640 crore already addressed in June, and the rest thereafter. The amount settled accounts for 18% of the total external debt of IL&FS.

IL&FS MD S.C. Rajan said



**Shoring up funds:** IL&FS has proposed to set up an InvIT with a target gross value of ₹13,000 crore. ■ REUTERS

the plan was to address a debt of about ₹8,800 crore by the second quarter of FY21, ₹8,000 crore by Q3, and over ₹6,000 crore in Q4. He said the aggregate value of debt being addressed

would exceed ₹57,000 crore, including ₹6,650 crore that would be realised beyond March 2021. "The revised value accounts for over 57% of overall debt and is significantly higher than the aver-

age realisation, till date, for financial creditors under the IBC," Mr. Rajan said. "The balance debt will be recognised as unrealised and that amount will be the haircut to be taken by the lenders."

"We are committed to the road map and will achieve it," Mr. Kotak said.

The board has developed a 'group resolution framework' and the firm has been adopting an approach of equitable distribution of the proceeds.

As part of the resolution efforts, IL&FS has proposed to set up an InvIT with a target gross value of ₹13,000 crore, which includes 3 SPVs where debt of ₹5,000 crore has been restructured.

# India aims to pare PSU bank count to just five: sources

Plan entails privatising lenders including Bank of India, IOB

## REUTERS

NEW DELHI/

MUMBAI

India is looking to privatise more than half of its state-owned banks to reduce the number of government-owned lenders to just five as part of an overhaul of the banking industry, government and banking sources said.

"We are committed to the road map and will achieve it," Mr. Kotak said.

The board has developed a 'group resolution framework' and the firm has been adopting an approach of equitable distribution of the proceeds.

As part of the resolution efforts, IL&FS has proposed to set up an InvIT with a target gross value of ₹13,000 crore, which includes 3 SPVs where debt of ₹5,000 crore has been restructured.

said one senior government official. At present, India has 12 state-owned banks.

**New privatisation plan**

The official said that such a plan would be laid out in a new privatisation proposal the government is currently formulating, and this would be put before the Cabinet for approval.

India's Finance ministry declined to comment.

The Centre is working on a privatisation plan to help raise money by selling assets in non-core companies and sectors when the country is strapped for funds due to lack of economic growth caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The idea is to have 4-5 government owned banks,"

Several government pa-

nels and the RBI have recommended a maximum of five state-owned banks.

"The government has already said that there will be no more mergers (between PSBs) so the only option for them is to divest stakes," a senior official at a state-owned bank said.

Last year, the government had merged 10 state-owned banks into four.

The divestment may not happen in this financial year due to unfavourable market conditions, the sources said.

India expects bad loans at its banks could double after the crisis brought the economy to standstill.

As a result, the Centre may need to pump in nearly \$20 billion into the PSBs.

# SEBI plans to verify margin collections

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has released a framework to enable verification of upfront collection of margins from clients (stock buyers) in cash and derivatives segments. The move, requiring clients to maintain higher margins for intraday trades, may lead to a substantial drop in such trades, analysts said.

Mr. Gadkari added the Centre was mulling a policy to help small loans reach MSMEs. "We are planning for social microfinance... RBI will give out the licence, [microfinance firms] will only finance... up to ₹10 lakh."

trepreneurs... what type of requirement, choice, quality and preference there is globally. There is a huge potential for a win-win situation for both," the Minister said.

He was speaking at the

# NCLT permits restoring 2 firms struck off from RoC

Move on I-T dept. plea to pursue action

## SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR

CHENNAI

Audit regulator National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has constituted a technical advisory committee (TAC) under the chairmanship of R. Narayanaswamy, Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore.

This TAC, which comprises seven members including the chairman, would among other things aid and advise the executive body of the NFRA on issues relating to drafts of accounting standards and auditing standards.

It would also provide inputs from the perspectives of users, preparers and auditors of financial statements.

The committee's terms of reference include advice on development of measures of audit quality.

The companies were struck off since they were not carrying on business/operations for a period of two immediately preceding financial years and had not made any application within the specific period for obtaining the status of dormant companies under Section 455 of the Companies Act, 2013.

In the case of the erstwhile Flying Circus Events and Promotions Private Ltd., the department said assessment/reassessment notice for the assessment year 2012-13 was issued on March 23, 2019, and the proceedings are continuing and pending.

Similarly, for Sitara Entertainment, notice for the assessment year 2014-15 was issued on March 27, 2019 and the proceedings are pending, it added.

# Britannia mulls ₹700-cr. capex plan

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA

FMCG major Britannia Industries has planned a capital expenditure (capex) of about ₹700 crore over the next two-and-a-half years for its new facilities and is bullish on rural demand, a top company official said.

The rural demand remained stable during COVID-19 outbreak and the firm will focus more on its core products, its MD Vaun Berry said.

"The company is looking at some capex of more than ₹700 crore over the next two-and-a-half years," he said. Britannia plans to set up manufacturing facilities in U.P., Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Odisha, he said.

Since the future is uncertain for the next six to nine months, the firm will give priority to core products, he said.

# NFRA sets up advisory committee

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

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## TV PICKS

**Premier League:** Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m. & 12.45 a.m. (Wednesday)  
**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.10 a.m. (Wednesday)

## IN BRIEF



Rahm wins Memorial; becomes World No. 1

LOS ANGELES  
Jon Rahm became the first Spaniard since Seve Ballesteros in 1989 to hold golf's World No. 1 ranking, winning the US PGA Memorial tournament on Sunday. He fired a three-over 75 in the final round to finish on nine-under 279, three ahead of Ryan Palmer. Matthew Fitzpatrick was third on 283. Tiger Woods finished in the 40th spot. AFP



No Ballon d'Or this year

PARIS  
The prestigious Ballon d'Or will not be awarded this year because the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the football season. Awarded by France Football magazine, the Ballon d'Or has been given out every year since Stanley Matthews won the first one in 1956. AFP



de Gea blunders put Chelsea in FA Cup final

LONDON  
Chelsea was gifted a place in the FA Cup final as Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea made a series of costly blunders in the Blues' 3-1 win on Sunday. Frank Lampard's side will face London rival Arsenal in the final on August 1 due to another nightmare display in a horrendous season for de Gea.

**The result:** Chelsea 3 (Giroud 45+1, Mount 46, Maguire 74-0g) bt Manchester United 1 (Fernandes 85-pen). AFP

## Australia's England tour from Sept. 4: Report

MELBOURNE  
Australia's "bio-secure" tour of England comprising three T20s and as many ODIs will begin on September 4, according to a report. The Daily Telegraph reported that the tour will start with the T20s to be played on September 4, 6 and 8, followed by the ODIs on Sept. 10, 12 and 15. PTI



Mohd. Amir available for Pakistan's England tour

KARACHI  
Left-arm pacer Mohammad Amir is set to replace Harris Rauf in the Pakistan T20 squad currently in the UK after originally pulling out of the tour in order to be with his wife for the birth of their second child. After the child was born on July 17, Amir has made himself available. He can board a flight only after he returns negative in two successive COVID-19 tests. PTI

# England draws level with thumping win

Broad, Woakes, Stokes and Curran dictate terms as West Indies loses its way in pursuit of 312



Setting it up: Stuart Broad, right, put England on its way with two quick dismissals. AP

## WI IN ENGLAND

REUTERS

MANCHESTER

England bowled out West Indies for 198 in the final session on day five to win the second Test by 113 runs and level the three-match series 1-1 at Old Trafford on Monday.

England had declared its second innings at 129 for three in the first session after

all-rounder Ben Stokes smashed 78 off 57 deliveries, setting the tourists a target of 312 with 85 overs left in the day.

## Recovery stand

England's fast bowlers struck early to reduce the visitors to 37 for four but were left frustrated when Shamar Brooks stitched together a 100-run partnership until

Stokes dismissed Blackwood at the stroke of tea for 55.

Brooks' resistance was ended by Sam Curran who trapped him leg before wicket for 62 while Dom Bess castled a stubborn Jason Holder for 35.

West Indies lost its final two wickets for just 15 runs, with Ollie Pope taking a stunning catch at short leg to dismiss Kemar Roach.

Earlier, England resumed

## SCOREBOARD

**England — 1st innings:** 469 for nine dec.

**West Indies — 1st innings:** Kraigg Brathwaite c & b Stokes 75, John Campbell lbw b Curran 12, Alzarri Joseph c Pope b Bess 32, Shai Hope c Buttler b Curran 25, Shamar Brooks lbw b Broad 68, Roston Chase lbw b Woakes 51, Jermaine Blackwood b Broad 0, Shane Dowrich lbw b Broad 0, Jason Holder c Root b Woakes 2, Kemar Roach (not out) 5, Shannon Gabriel b Woakes 0; Extras (b-1, lb-12, nb-2, w-2): 17; Total (in 99 overs): 287.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-17, 3-90.

**West Indies bowling:** Roach 6-0-37-2, Gabriel 7-0-43-0, Holder 4-0-33-0, Joseph 2-0-14-0.

**West Indies — 2nd innings (Target 312):** Brathwaite lbw b Woakes 12, Campbell c Buttler b Broad 4, Hope b Broad 7, Brooks lbw b Curran 62, Chase lbw b Broad 6, Blackwood c Buttler b Stokes 55, Dowrich lbw b Woakes 0, Holder b Bass 35, Roach c Pope b Bass 5, Joseph c Bass b Stokes 9, Gabriel (not out) 0; Extras (lb-3): 3; Total (in 70.1 overs): 198.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-16, 2-70, 3-123, 4-199, 5-242, 6-248, 7-252, 8-260, 9-287.

**England bowling:** Broad 23-7-66-3, Woakes 21-10-42-3, Curran 20-4-70-2, Bess 21-3-67-1, Root 1-1-0-0, Stokes 13-3-29-1.

**England — 2nd innings:** Ben Stokes (not out) 78, Jos Buttler b Roach 0, Zak Crawley b Roach 11, Joe Root run out 22, Ollie Pope (not out) 12; Extras (b-1, lb-1, nb-1, w-3): 6; Total

(for three wkts. decl. in 19 overs): 129.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-17, 3-90.

**West Indies bowling:** Roach 6-0-37-2, Gabriel 7-0-43-0, Holder 4-0-33-0, Joseph 2-0-14-0.

**West Indies — 2nd innings (Target 312):** Brathwaite lbw b Woakes 12, Campbell c Buttler b Broad 4, Hope b Broad 7, Brooks lbw b Curran 62, Chase lbw b Broad 6, Blackwood c Buttler b Stokes 55, Dowrich lbw b Woakes 0, Holder b Bass 35, Roach c Pope b Bass 5, Joseph c Bass b Stokes 9, Gabriel (not out) 0; Extras (lb-3): 3; Total (in 70.1 overs): 198.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-1, 2-19, 3-23, 4-37, 5-137, 6-138, 7-161, 8-183, 9-192.

**England bowling:** Broad 15-5-42-3, Woakes 16-3-34-2, Curran 8-3-30-1, Bess 15-1-3-59-2, Stokes 14-4-4-30-2, Root 1-2-0-0.

**England won by 113 runs to level series 1-1.**

**Third and final Test:** July 24-28, Manchester.

on its overnight score of 37 for two and Stokes got straight into the action, carting the West Indies bowlers all around the empty stadium to bring up his half-century in only 36 balls.

Skipper Joe Root also scored a quick-fire 22 and was run out as he sacrificed himself to get Stokes back on strike.

# T20 WC put off to 2022

Deferment clears decks for IPL 2020

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

The T20 World Cup, scheduled to be played in Australia in October-November this year, has formally been postponed to 2022.

The announcement after Monday's International Cricket Council (ICC) Board meeting has cleared the decks for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to reschedule the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the same window.

Besides deferring the T20 World Cup to October-November, 2022, the ICC Board also decided to push the 2023 ODI World Cup in India to October-November that year from February-March.

"Moving the Men's World Cup (2023) to a later window is a critical element of this and gives us a better chance of maintaining the integrity of the qualification process," ICC chief executive Manu Sawhney said in a statement.

## Venues not specified

Interestingly, the ICC statement didn't specify the venues for the T20 World Cups in 2021 and 2022.

India was awarded the

2021 tournament, but its host status was threatened after it did not meet the first deadline for securing tax exemptions from the Central government. As of now, India still retains hosting rights, with the ICC extending the deadline to Dec. 31.

India would want to keep the 2021 edition, given it's the host of the 2023 ODI World Cup; it would rather space the big events out than stage them in successive years.

## IPL plans to take shape

Monday's announcement will result in the BCCI and the franchises switching to IPL mode. The BCCI has shortlisted two windows (Sept. 26 to Nov. 7 and Sept. 26 to Nov. 14) and will approach the Central government for clearance once the IPL governing council, set to meet on Friday, formally proposes UAE as the venue.

"Now that the T20 World Cup in Australia has been postponed, something that should have happened much earlier, we can try and explore whether the IPL can be staged," IPL governing council chairman Brijesh Patel told The Hindu.

## Kane double hits Leicester's CL hopes

REUTERS

LONDON

Harry Kane struck twice as Tottenham Hotspur dealt a huge blow to Leicester City's hopes of a top-four finish with a 3-0 victory in the Premier League on Sunday.

Leicester remains fourth but is level on 62 points with fifth-placed Manchester United which has two games left to play to Leicesters' one. They meet on the final day of the season.

## The results:

**Premier League:** Bournemouth 0 lost to Southampton 2 (Ings 41, Adams 90+8); Tottenham 3 (Justin 6-0, Kane 37, 40) Leicester 0.

**Serie A:** Parma 2 (Gervinho 18, Beresynski 40-0g) lost to Sampdoria 3 (Chabot 48, Quagliarella 69, Bonazzoli 78); Fiorentina 2 (Lyanco 15-0g, Cutrone 75) bt Torino 0; Brescia 2 (Zmrhal 69, 90+3) bt SPAL 1 (Dabo 42); Genoa 2 (Sanabria 7, Gabriel 81-0g) bt Lecce 1 (Mancuso 60); Napoli 2 (Milik 31, Politano 90+5) bt Udinese 1 (De Paul 22); Roma 2 (Spinazzola 45+1, Mkhitarian 57) drew with Inter Milan 2 (de Vrij 15, Lukaku 88-0).

**Europa League:** Leganes, Real Mallorca and Espanyol were relegated.

**Champions League:** Atletico Madrid 2 (Griezmann 18, Beresynski 40-0g) vs Liverpool 2 (Van Dijk 10, Sadio Mane 20+1) draw.

**Europa Conference League:** Leganes 2 (Garcia 10, Sanchez 11) bt Villarreal 1 (Ceballos 10).

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## Legends have their reputation to protect

Carlsen-led quartet favourite to reach semifinals; Anand takes on Svidler

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

Without being among the favourites, six seasoned practitioners bring in a fresh flavour to the penultimate event of the million-dollar Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour.

Such being the scenario on the eve of the \$150,000 Legends of Chess event, beginning on Tuesday, the point of interest will be whether at least one of the 'legends' deny the four younger players from monopolising the semifinal-spots.

If Magnus Carlsen (aged 29), Anish Giri (26), Ding Liren (27) and Ian Nepomniachtchi (30) advance following a nine-round preliminary phase, it will be a repeat line-up of the Chessable Master held earlier this month.

Even if one, among Viswanathan Anand (50), Vla-

dimir Kramnik (45), Boris Gelfand (52), Vassily Ivanchuk (51), Peter Svidler (44) and Peter Leko (40) makes it to the semifinals, it will be big news.

Anand starts his campaign as favourite against eight-time Russian champion Peter Svidler.

He meets the young quartet of Carlsen, Giri, Nepomniachtchi and Liren in alternate rounds. Since Anand plays Gelfand and Ivanchuk spread over the last three rounds, he can change gears, if required, in order to reach the semifinals.

## First-round pairings:

Viswanathan Anand (India)-Peter Svidler (Russia); Anish Giri (Netherlands)-Magnus Carlsen (Norway); Vladimir Kramnik (Russia)-Ian Nepomniachtchi (Russia); Peter Leko (Hungary)-Vassily Ivanchuk (Ukraine); Boris Gelfand (Israel)-Ding Liren (China).

needed significant improvement was cricket equipment for women.

**Using boys' gloves** "Even now, I use boys' gloves as men's gloves are really huge for me. Shoes too were often big and I had to use double or triple socks to fit into [the shoes]," she added.

Vijay Shankar, who has a five-year-old niece interested in playing cricket, concurred. "I hope they get exclusive stuff for women soon. If someone like my niece wants to pick up the game, we should be prepared for that."

cricketer now plays a lot of matches and to withstand a very strenuous season, she needs personalised support staff." At the same time, one area Thirush Kamini felt that

## Row erupts as IOA EC ratifies sub-committees

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