

on Sunday



Rajnath Singh visits forward posts in Kupwara sector
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Dubey's house was razed as it had become unsafe, U.P. tells SC
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35 million Iranians may contract COVID-19, says Iran President Rouhani
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Hamilton clinches pole position for Hungarian Grand Prix
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NEARBY



State tally crosses 3 lakh with 8,348 new cases
MUMBAI
The COVID-19 tally in Maharashtra crossed the three lakh mark on Saturday, with the addition of 8,348 cases. The State recorded 144 more deaths, including 86 fatalities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, to raise its toll to 11,596. Mumbai reported 1,186 new cases, pushing its case load to 1,00,350, while its toll rose by 65. The State's recovery rate stands at 55.05%, while its case fatality rate is 3.85%.

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Pandemic leaves Uttarakhand's pilgrimage industry gasping

Suspension of Kanwar Yatra and travel curbs have hit Haridwar hard

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

With the governments of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana suspending the annual Kanwar Yatra this year, Shravan (July) is turning out to be a dry month for those involved in the pilgrimage and religious tourism industry.

Under normal circumstances, crores of devotees visit the pilgrimage city of Haridwar through the month to carry back with them waters from the Ganga, which is then offered at

“Now, with the temples shut, donations have reduced to almost nil. Around 200 people, including priests and students, used to stay on the temple premises before the lockdown. That number has come down to 50. This is apart from the ancillary businesses that thrived on the arrival of de-



No stopping them: In Madhya Pradesh, some Kanwariyas wore PPE suits and collected water from the Narmada to be carried back to Shiva temples. ▶ ANI

votees,” the Mahant said.

Social activist Prem Bahukandi, chairman of Friends of Himalayas, said

that though the Kanwar Yatra was not seen as a great revenue generator in Uttarakhand, it did bring busi-

ness worth around ₹30 crore-₹35 crore as two to three crore pilgrims reached Haridwar during the month.

“It [the yatra] is a temporary job creator for millions. It's as if the father has a grocery shop, the unemployed son would set up a table outside and sell flowers or corn. Many also made money by selling ganja (hemp),” Mr. Bahukandi said.

Not just Hindus, he said, but Muslim families too were supported by the pilgrimage as many in the Jwalapur area in Haridwar were involved in making the *kanwars* that the devotees carry on their shoulders.

Chain reaction

The president of the Hotels and Restaurants Association of Uttarakhand, Sandeep Sahni, likened religious tourism to a chain. “If one link of the chain is affected, the

others feel the pinch too. From the camps set up by the local Kanwar *samitis* (organisation) to the temporary dhabas to feed the thousands of devotees, the Yatra is crucial for the lowest segment of the tourism business in Haridwar and it has completely collapsed this year,” Mr. Sahni said.

The faithful are finding ways to worship their gods during the pandemic. Mahant Giri said this year on the occasion of Shivaratri, Ganga water would be drawn from the Upper Ganga Canal in Muradnagar, popularly called Chhota Haridwar. “The municipal corporation has promised help,” he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Source of worry



No lessons learnt: People thronging the Kasimedu fishing harbour in Chennai on Saturday in violation of the COVID-19 restrictions. Despite the presence of police personnel, none bothered to follow physical distancing norms. ▶ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Mumbai's recovery rate 7% more than national average

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI
At 70%, Mumbai's COVID-19 recovery rate is 7% more than the national average and 15% higher than that of Maharashtra (55.62%), official data has revealed.

There were 3,42,756 active cases in the country till Friday and the number of recovered patients was 6.35 lakh, which is 63% of the reported cases, the Press Information Bureau said. According to the Maharashtra Medical Education and Drugs Department, there are 24,307 active cases in

Mumbai, while 67,830 patients have been discharged.

The recovery rate in Mumbai stood at 50% in mid-June, when the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) launched Mission Zero under its Rapid Action Plan to contain the virus. The rate improved to 57% on July 1 and 70% on July 15.

No religious gatherings

Ahead of Eid and Ganesh Chaturthi, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday reiterated that religious, social and political gatherings will remain prohibited

in view of COVID-19. “Care should be taken to ensure that new containment zones are not created,” he said.

The Chief Minister also asked officials to appoint auditors at COVID-19 hospitals to ensure that patients are not fleeced. He also told them to monitor the implementation of the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya scheme and availability of beds in hospitals.

“At present, 540 patients are on ventilator support in the State,” he said, adding that every district will now have a nodal testing officer.

Govt. mulls Australia's entry into Malabar drill

Naval exercise delayed this year

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

A key meeting of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Friday discussed the issue of inviting Australia for the tri-lateral Malabar naval exercise with Japan and the United States.

However, a final decision has not been taken yet, two defence sources said.

The issue was discussed and an understanding has been reached but no final decision has been taken yet,” a defence source told *The Hindu* on condition of

anonymity. There is increasing consensus at the official level that Australia should join the naval war games.

The final decision has been delayed in view of the ongoing standoff with China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), it is learnt.

The final decision is likely before the exercise, which could take place towards the end of this year.

The naval exercise has been delayed this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Mobile app KURMA helps save turtles in India

Collaborative citizen science initiative provides database, helps identify species and lists rescue centres

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA
On May 23, 2020, World Turtle Day, a number of conservation agencies launched a citizen science initiative, a mobile-based application called KURMA, aimed at turtle conservation.

The application, developed by the Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN) in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and the Conservation Society-India, not only provides users a database to identify a species but also provides the

location of the nearest rescue centre for turtles across the country.

“The KURMA App is free to download. It serves as a digital database, with a built-in digital field guide covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India, and information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats,” Shailendra Singh, director of Turtle Survival Alliance-India, said.

200 smuggled a week
Tortoise and freshwater turtles are among the most trafficked in the country. A



A number of experts are also registered on the app.

report released in 2019 by TRAFFIC, an international wildlife trade monitoring organisation, showed that at least 200 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every week, or 11,000 each year, adding up

to over 1,11,130 turtles poached or smuggled between September 2009 and September 2019.

One of the major challenges for freshwater turtle conservation in the country is that wildlife crime prevention agencies are not sufficiently equipped to know how to distinguish one species from the other, or their protection status in accordance with CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and the Wildlife Protection Act.

“Suppose turtles are recovered at Kolkata Airport, then KURMA will

help you reach five places in Kolkata that one can approach for help. Different rescue centres are also registered on the app, and also a number of experts who can provide more information on the species,” Mr. Singh said.

Within only a few weeks, 90 assistance facilities have been registered on the app. If anyone reports a turtle from any part of the country using KURMA, he or she receives advice about the species and its conservation. The organisations that have developed the app said it was generating a good response.



Give a Call, Dispel Worries



- Any Symptoms of Covid-19?
- Any Queries about 'Safe Home'?
- Want Information Related to Admission in Hospitals?
- Need an Ambulance?

Government of West Bengal introduces special helplines for Covid-19 patients

Integrated Helpline:
1800 313 444 222

Direct Telemedicine Line:
033 2357 6001

Ambulance Service for Covid-19 Patients:
033 4090 2929

Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal

ICA-862(17)/2020

A BIM-BE

The power of positivism

As the pandemic split the world into pre- and post-COVID-19 eras, people turned away from anxiety, anger, angst, and anguish, to embrace productive, positive changes

■ SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

In an irony that does not escape her, Roseliz Francis began keeping a gratitude journal when the pandemic hit. A tutor living in the UK, she says: "For an ambivert like me, it has not been easy staying home 24/7, for days together. I was looking for ways to make this experience tolerable. I realised that there is so much to be thankful for and wanted to document that; little things that make a big difference, but are often taken for granted and lost on us in the 'busyness' of life."

She hopes to continue the practice once things return to how they were.

Strength warriors

Keeping a journal is one of the best ways to tap into that ray of sunlight in everyone, says Shaarika Menon, a consultant psychologist from Thiruvananthapuram. She says that we subconsciously practise positive psychology, which is the pursuit of emotional, physical, and mental well-being. However, circumstances, our thoughts and perceptions could drag us down.

"Then we have to consciously find a way out to catch that glimmer of light and let it blaze. Write down what makes you happy and what causes unhappiness. But the most important attribute is to be appreciative and grateful," she says.

However, it is not just the theme of gratitude: Optimism and hope were other doctrines people turned to, through fitness programmes, meditation and rekindling a connection with Nature. Giving, to help artisans or migrant workers was another choice people made. All of these fed into the overarching theme of positivism.



ble fashion is evident. It has given me an insight on how 'less is more' from a business perspective. All my cotton fabric scraps are made into face masks and a certain percentage of the sale proceeds go towards face mask donations for the elderly and children in and around Chennai," says Chiu.

As we exit lockdown, we asked people what they would take away from these testing times and the corresponding strengths they would enhance, to bring positivity to the fore.

Bare necessities

As an Associate Partner at EY in Bengaluru, Rajesh R Nair realised that the most positive space for him was home. "Before the lockdown, I was travelling nearly every day between cities and clients. The first thing I realised during lockdown was that a lot of that travel could have been avoided. Going forth, we will look at travel with a closer lens and avoid what is unnecessary," he says. The main thing is to take a lesson from these testing times and develop a strategy to stay upbeat in life.



Chennai-based fashion designer Samantha Chiu is turning to her strength of humanity. "The value of sustaina-

LIFE LESSONS

Dr Arun B Nair, psychiatrist, Medical College, Trivandrum gives us a few guidelines to ensure our sunny side does not take a beating.

Maintain sleep hygiene by staying away from digital equipment two hours before your sleep time.

Keep yourself engaged through the day to prevent overthinking, by engaging in meaningful work: gardening as a family, for instance

Stay away from information glut related to COVID-19 and statistics on social media. Plan to check the news only at specific times.

Have conversations with all family members participating. Let children speak their mind.

Exercise daily between 7 am and 9 am or 4 pm and 6 pm so you get some sun to enhance production of vitamin D. Exercise increases dopamine and endorphins in the brain, giving us a sense of well-being and happiness.

Develop an artistic pursuit or innate talent.

COULD IT BE THAT...



Digital well-being will have its own vertical?



■ SUNALINI MATHEW

During the lockdown, people have proactively taken to baking, pottery, even crochet, seeing value in using their hands to form and create. Adult colouring books took off a few years ago; now there are sure to be many more hobby kits that encourage us to rekindle a childhood hobby or begin a new one. We've come to realise we live too much in the head, whether it's with number crunching or generating ideas, even meditating.

While sensory marketing has become the norm, and brands tap into all aspects of the way a customer experiences its physical stores (including the aroma and music), we will very soon realise the health benefits of spreading our interactions with the world through all our senses.

Digital smell technology will allow us to smell the flowers of a tropical country in a white-winter land. Only recently, Ayballe, a digital olfaction startup raised 7.89 million dollars – a sign of where the industry is headed.

Perhaps gustatory tech will develop to the extent that we can taste and smell home; the sharpness of axon or the heady sweetness of jackfruit. They will take us away from just viewing, and will be marketed as tech that's good for our overall well-being. After all, a technology that helps partners touch across miles, keeping off loneliness for just a little while longer, can help our mental health.

It is in human nature to problem solve, and a whole new industry is likely to spring up to get information and entertainment across to us in ways other than screens. These ways will probably use our other sensory organs – touch, smell, hear, taste. Google recently launched its Podcast Manager, while Audible launched a campaign that encouraged people to "fly Audible" to "get away" by listening to a book being read.

Maybe though, if we kept things simple, we will make things simple and choose to be with each other more – indulging in each other's company, walking through a garden brought alive by the rains, cooking and tasting together, holding hands, touching someone's cheek, ruffling hair. Because technology aside, these shared sensory experiences make up a balanced life.

WHAT IS IT?

Pulse oximeters

■ DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Back when TikTok reigned strong in India, there were hundreds of videos of people showing that wearing a mask did not inhibit oxygen saturation. One user Emily Lyons, who has moderate persistent asthma, recorded herself wearing a spectrum of masks – from a reusable fabric mask to a P100 mask – and tested her oxygen levels by clipping a pulse oximeter to her index finger. The oxygen reading on the device varied between 98 and 99.

People with COVID-19 often need oxygenation support, so this tool, a staple for many doctors, has become something of a necessity for the layperson. Oximeters have been flying off the shelves for many households' first aid kits, largely because they are non-invasive, low-cost, easy to use, and effective at detecting hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels). It comprises a monitor which contains the batteries and display; a probe, which consists of light emitting diodes or LEDs and a light detector called a photo-detector. This probe senses the user's pulse.

There are two important readings: the pulse rate, recorded as beats per minute (60 to 100 is the safe range); and the oxygen saturation of haemoglobin in arterial blood, the reading of which is recorded as SpO₂. Normal readings range from 95% to 100%; anything less, and the user should get medical assistance from a doctor. If your oximeter has alarms, atypical readings will set them off. The mechanism clips onto the user's forefinger, though some oximeters have been known to be clipped onto one's big toe or even the ear, depending on the model. According to the World Health Organization's *Pulse Oximetry Training Manual*, one must use the oximeter with patience. Once clipped on, it requires about 10 seconds to get an accurate reading.

A pulmonologist based in Jaipur and chief editor of *Lung India*, Dr Virendra Singh points out that pulse oximeters are not COVID-19 detectors. "One cannot use the pulse oximeter as a sole detector for any respiratory issues. It is only meant to give readings for a small time interval," he explains. He adds, when buying an oximeter, do be wary of the brand names. There are oximeters selling on e-commerce platforms that will work for a month at most before giving out, and may cost as much as about ₹2,000. "Go to your pharmacy," he suggests. "Most Indian pharmacies have partnered with legitimate names in the medical device sub-industry to provide cost-effective and reliable pulse oximeters." Those who want to support India-made pulse oximeters can look to AmbiTech, OxySat, or Home Medix.

In this column, we decode the buzzwords in health and wellness

HOW ABOUT A KUNG FU PANDA WORKOUT?

■ SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

Until March this year, nine-year-old Avika Gupta, a student of Phoenix Greens International School, Hyderabad, used to attend Taekwondo and Bharatanatyam classes.

As schools and activity centres closed due to COVID-19, the school alerted students and parents about Fitbee, a fitness app for school-going children and teens. Avika's mother Arti, an HR manager, gave it a try. "I was keen that my daughter continues some form of physical activity. Initially I would monitor to see if she could follow the videos. Now she uses the app independently," says Arti.

Avika reels off the names of exercises she does: "mountain climbers, leg raises, planks, push ups, cobra and table top." She also enjoys participating in walking contests on the app.

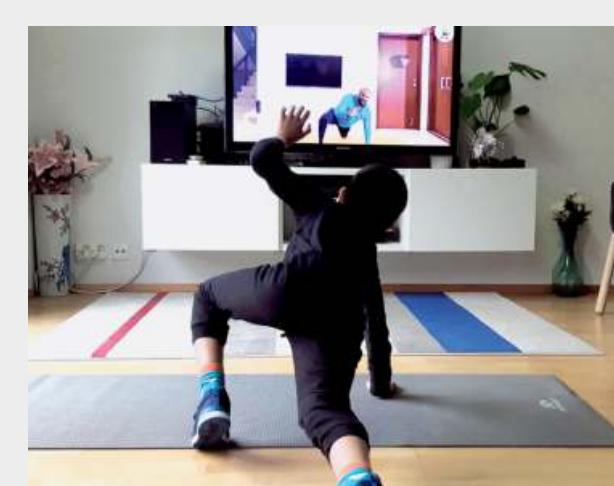
60,000 and counting

In January 2020, Hyderabad couple Avinash Rajapet and Prathima Koppolu launched the Fitbee app for kids and teens. They founded the Fitbee gym in Hyderabad in 2017, to encourage the 4-16 age group to take up fun fitness programmes, and stave off childhood obesity. The gym is temporarily closed, in keeping with the COVID-19 guidelines. However, the free app had 3,000 users in the first few weeks. Now, there are over 60,000.

Hyderabad couple Avinash Rajapet and Prathima Koppolu's app tries to make fitness a fun activity for children and teens

Prathima and Avinash have a four-year-old son, Akira. But their interest in children's health and fitness goes back to when Avinash was studying in the UK, where he assisted his cricket coach in training children. "I observed how fitness and diet plans were being chalked out for children as young as five. This was different from the approach we have – that children will burn off whatever they eat," says Avinash.

Children are sitting more and more. With lockdowns, are unable to attend the tennis or basketball classes they once had. Add the pressure of academics, and kids just don't move



enough. "The space for playgrounds and parks is diminishing in many cities and children aren't spending enough time outdoors," says Prathima, talking of how apps-based routines could help.

Avinash is a certified fitness professional with a specialisation in youth fitness from the International Sports Science Association, and a black belt in Kung Fu. When he returned to Hyderabad, he saw the potential in opening a fitness centre for children.

Fitbee has 200 workouts for different age groups, developed with the help of US-based Sifu Harsha Dandamudi of White Dragon Martial Arts. Its advisors include Dr Gurava Reddy of Sunshine Hospitals, managing director and Chief Joint Replacement Surgeon in Hyderabad. "The app is programmed such that specific workouts are accessible according to the child's age," says Prathima.

Thursdays and Sundays are recovery days and an exercise routine suggested for the day lapses in 24 hours, only after which a child can access the next routine. "This is to negate the tendency to overdo many routines on a few days of the week," they state.

Fitbee has Harry Potter and superhero-themed workouts that can

Fit and fun: A user tries a Fitbee workout; (below) Avinash Rajapet and Prathima Koppolu.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

be done with parental guidance.

The app offers different sets of workouts. "We have workouts inspired by animal movements for young children. For instance a leopard strike or a tiger move routine to target the lower portion of the body. Different routines target specific muscle groups," says Avinash.

Panda moves
A 14-minute Kung Fu panda workout is based on the moves of panda Po and The Furious Five, and gives a full body workout. For older teens, kickboxing and calisthenics are incorporated into the workouts for speed and agility.

Recipe suggestions are available on their Instagram and YouTube channel. On the app, dietary plans are worked out on a paid, custom basis for teens with obesity, thyroid or PCOD/PCOS.

"The diet is charted in consultation with doctors. We encourage families to look at significant lifestyle changes that will act as preventive health care in the long run," says Prathima. In the future, she says they would like to build programmes based on the data they collect.

Fitbee is available on Google Playstore for Android and Apple Store for iPhone, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube; fitbee

EASTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
5-2020-21, dated : 26.06.2020.
E-Tender is invited by the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD, Sealdah, Eastern Railway, Control Building, 1st Floor, DRM office, Kaiser Street, Sealdah, Kolkata-700014. Tender No. : ELD-300-WC-5-2020-21, Name of Work : 25 KV OHE and allied electrical works in connection with Conversion of Diesel Loco Shed to Electric Loco Shed at Beliaghata-SDA. Tender Value : Rs. 1,25,97,653.04. Earnest Money : Rs. 2,13,000.00. Date of closing : 29.07.2020 at 13.30 hrs. Details of Tender notice and corrigendum issued from time to time will be available at website www.ireps.gov.in
SDAH-5/2020-21
Tender Notice is also available at websites : www.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
Disciplinary proceedings were initiated against Sh. R. Chaitanya, JTO (HRMS No. 201001475) who remained absent from duty wilfully and unauthorisedly w.e.f. 05.05.2013, by GMTD BSNL Shimla. The DE(T) Shimla-Cum-Inquiry Officer had submitted the Inquiry Report on Dated 27.03.2019, wherein charges leveled against him were fully proved. In compliance to Rule 37(2) (a) of BSNL CDA Rules 2006, the Inquiry Report was sent at his last known home address by registered post in India. The registered letters sent at his address were received back undelivered. Now, through this notice Sh. R. Chaitanya, JTO is afforded an opportunity to appear in the O/o AGM (HR/Admn) o/o GMTD Shimla Block No-35 SDA Complex, Kasumpati, Shimla Within 15 days of the publication of Notice to receive the Inquiry Report and submit the representation, if any, against the Inquiry Report failing which disciplinary proceedings will be concluded, ex parte as prescribed under BSNL CDA Rules-2006.

CM YK

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Timings		
MUMBAI		
SUNDAY, JUL. 19		
RISE 06:11	SET 19:19	
RISE 04:36	SET 18:16	
MONDAY, JUL. 20		
RISE 06:12	SET 19:19	
RISE 05:33	SET 19:12	
TUESDAY, JUL. 21		
RISE 06:12	SET 19:18	
RISE 06:32	SET 20:05	

Mumbai Weather	max	min
Mumbai Airport	32	25
Pune	30	23
Mumbai City	32	25

Mumbai Today
30°C A warm morning.
Moderate rain will occur over the city. The sky will remain cloudy over the city.

Mumbai Tomorrow
30°C The morning will be comfortable. Moderate rain are possible over the city. A mostly cloudy sky is expected over the city.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF



AAP leader Atishi donates plasma
NEW DELHI
AAP leader and Kalkaji MLA Atishi, who has recovered from COVID-19, donated her plasma to the 'plasma bank' of a State-run facility here on Saturday, and urged others to also do it. The step by the AAP legislator also drew praise from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. AAP spokesperson Akshay Marathe also donated plasma. PTI

City reports more than 1 lakh recoveries from COVID-19

There are now 16,711 active cases left in Delhi; 1,475 fresh cases reported in 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A total of 1,475 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Capital in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 1,21,582, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Saturday.

Also, 26 more deaths were reported, taking the toll to 3,597. Of the total cases, 1,01,274 people have recovered and there are 16,711 active cases.

Fewer cases
On June 23, the new virus cases almost touched 4,000, the highest so far.

However, since then, the number of new cases has been dropping and it has been less than 2,000 for the past eight days.

The number of cases is less compared to the spike in June, but of the total 21,658 tests done in the past 24 hours, over 71.1% of the tests were rapid antigen tests, which have shown a low positivity in the city compared to RT-PCR tests.



A civil defence worker checks the temperature of a commuter at a bus stand near Akshardham. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

The active cases have been decreasing since July 1 and it has decreased from 27,007 on July 1 by 38.12% to reach 16,711 on Saturday.

Also, the number of people admitted to COVID-19 hospitals has been steadily decreasing for the past 17 days.

On July 1, a total of 5,892 beds in COVID-19 hospitals were occupied and it has decreased steadily to 3,635 on Saturday.

The number of COVID-19 positive people under home isolation has also decreased from 16,703 on July 1 to 9,132.

Also, the positivity rate, which is the percentage of people who test positive, has dropped from 12.2% on July 1 to 6.8% on Saturday. The number of containment zones in the city was 678.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government has issued an "office memorandum" that specific attention should be given to reduce COVID-19-related mortalities," the memorandum issued by principal secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department of the Delhi government dated Friday read.

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases

1,21,582

Total deaths

3,597

New cases in the past 24 hours

1,475

New deaths in the past 24 hours

26

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

lated deaths, since committees formed after Supreme Court orders are inspecting all hospitals.

"Since the committees constituted for inspection of all hospitals in Delhi, consequent upon orders passed by Supreme Court on 19 June, 2020, are already carrying out their mandate in a continuous manner, it would be appropriate that specific attention may now be focused upon aspects which have a bearing on reduction of COVID related mortalities,"

the memorandum issued by principal secretary of Health and Family Welfare Department of the Delhi government dated Friday read.

The ambulances have been stationed at gurdwaras under the DSGMC across the city, including Gurdwara Moti Bagh, Gurdwara Nanak Piao and Guru Harikrishan Public School Hari Nagar.

12 ambulances stationed at gurdwaras

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Saturday said that a free medical transportation facility has been launched for COVID-19 patients requiring assistance with mobility.

Under the first phase, 12 ambulances equipped with modern medical facilities have been rolled out in the Capital, it said.

Safe services

DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, "The ambulances have been rolled out so that needy people can be provided convenient, reliable and safe transport services at the earliest for all COVID-19 medical trips, besides other emergencies such as accidents, injuries, natural calamities or scheduled check-ups."

The ambulances have been stationed at gurdwaras under the DSGMC across the city, including Gurdwara Moti Bagh, Gurdwara Nanak Piao and Guru Harikrishan Public School Hari Nagar.

MANJINDER SINGH SIRSA
DSGMC president

While helpline numbers have been set up, a central control room has also been set up by the DSGMC for free medical facilities.

Free taxis

Stating that there will also be available free taxis equipped with essential protective gears, Mr. Sirsa said: "They will be operated by a specially trained driver following proper sanitary, safety and hygienic measures as per the government guidelines with mobility."

The government has directed all gyms to remain closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Man booked for opening gym, 10 others fined

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The owner of a gymnasium in Shahdara's Shivpuri area was booked under Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code for opening his gym in violation of Delhi government orders, the police said on Saturday.

The government has directed all gyms to remain closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

No masks
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) Amit Sharma said that information was received regarding a gym being open in Shivpuri. "When a police team reached the spot, they found the gym's shutter half open. There were 11 people exercising inside... none of them were wearing masks," Mr. Sharma said.

The owner, Raheesh (33), a resident of Brijpuri, was booked and also sent for COVID-19 test. Ten others, including seven men and three women, were challaned for violating COVID-19 guidelines.

Gautam Buddha Nagar residents adapt to weekend lockdowns

They try to get all their essential shopping done by Friday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NOIDA

The weekend lockdown imposed in Gautam Buddha Nagar district to contain COVID-19 has shifted the Sunday grocery stocking trips to Fridays, confined morning

walkers within the boundaries of their housing societies and slightly increased waiting times at liquor shops.

Having already experienced a series of nationwide lockdowns, residents said they prefer to stay indoors between 10 p.m. on Friday and 6 a.m. on Monday rather than risk being questioned and issued fines by the police; or stand in queues at essential commodities stores, given the possibility of contracting COVID-19.

Stocking up
"My husband and I take turns to visit the grocery stores on alternate days to stock up on what we need," said Sucheta Bhati, a resident of Omega I in Greater Noida.

"For the second week running, we have bought most vegetables and provisions till Friday. We cook enough to last us till Saturday and then

order food on Sunday. A lockdown is in place but this time it is more manageable than the previous ones," said her husband Ravi, a real estate agent.

Rajveer Pradhan, an avid morning walker, said: "I normally walk 2 km to and from a public park near my housing society but have had to compromise as I can't move out of the main gate and have to walk inside," he said.

Issues related to the entry

of house helps at some apartment complexes have made the weekend lockdowns inconvenient.

"There are no issues that we face except the entry of house helps; the rules, left to local RWAs, are arbitrary," said Bela Choudhary, who stays in a high-rise apartment complex in Pocket 7.

Sunil Kumar Gupta, who runs a pan shop in Alpha I, said he does most brisk business on Fridays with both his usual customers as well as "walk ins". "It is just two days but customers still stock up," he said.

Raghunandan Singh, whose AC maintenance services are much in demand given the time of the year, has added a few more slots to his working hours during the week. "I work two hours extra every day so that I can attend to all my clients and don't have to venture out on the weekends," he said.

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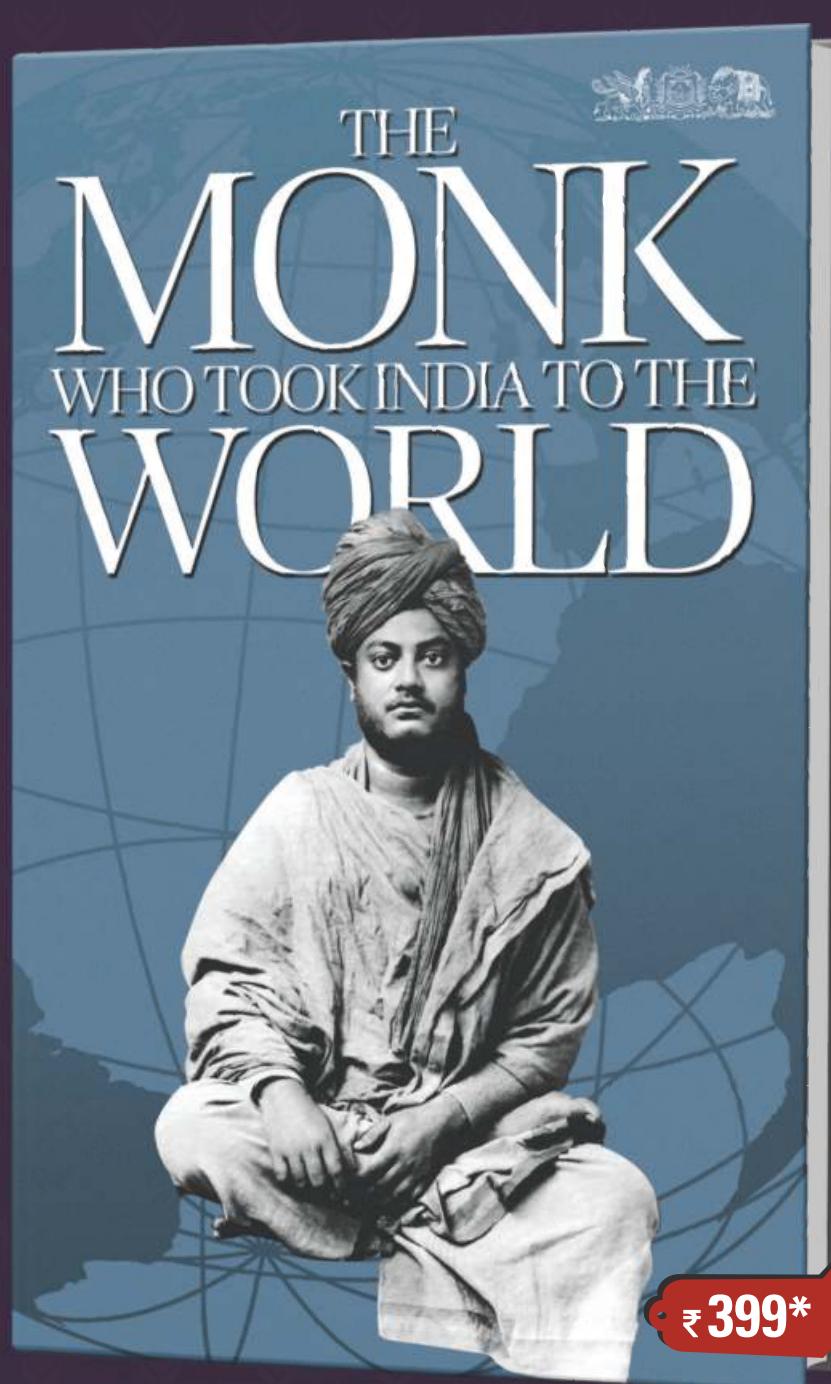
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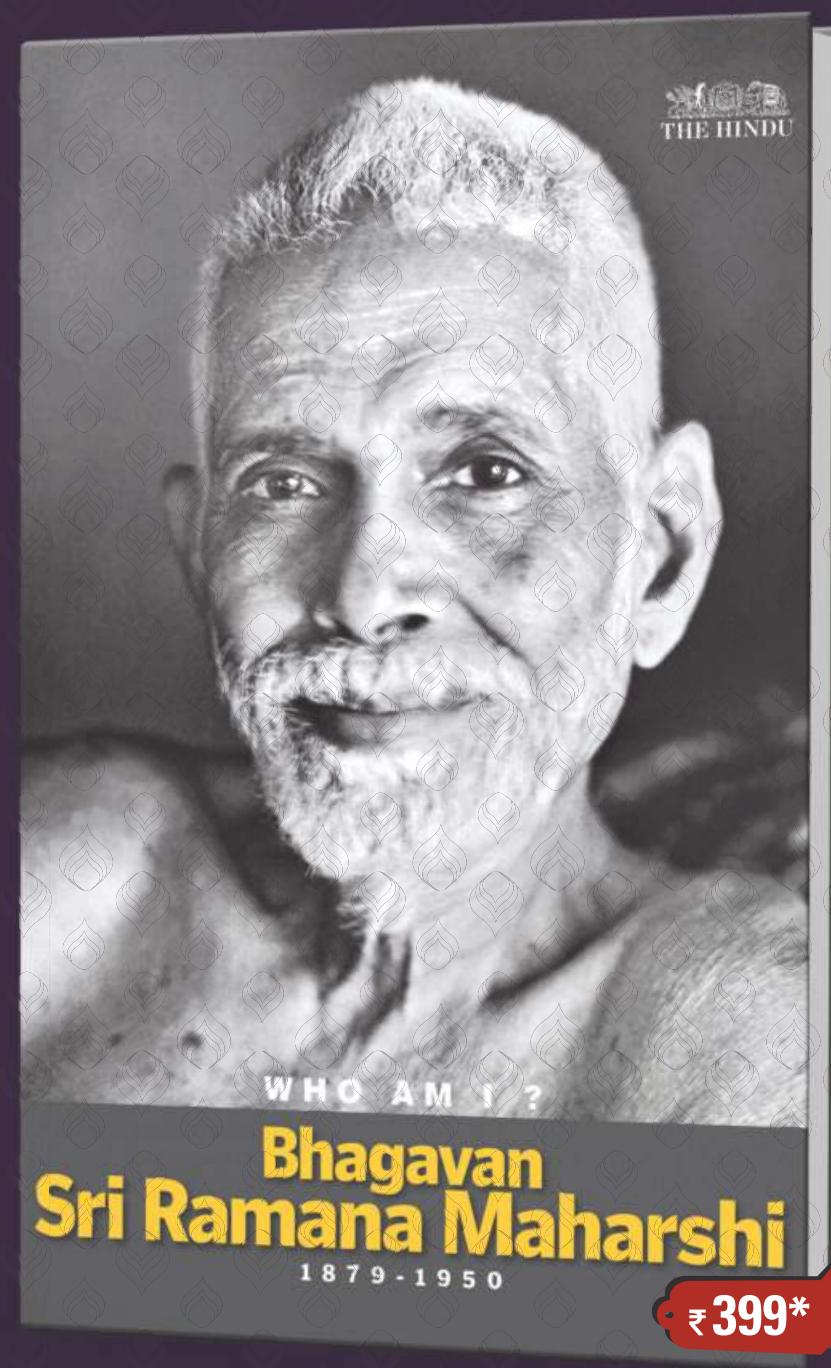
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'One-stop' scheme to fast-track investments

Bureau of Investment Promotion will give 98 types of clearances to industries in Rajasthan

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

A "one-stop shop" scheme approved in Rajasthan is set to fast-track investments and help revive industries in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic by giving as many as 98 types of clearances under one roof to the potential investors through the Bureau of Investment Promotion (BIP).

The new scheme will expedite all the processes for investment proposals above ₹10 crore.

The Cabinet approved amendments to the Rajasthan Enterprises Single Window Enabling and Clearance

Act, 2011, and gave a go-ahead to the constitution of a Board of Investment earlier this week. All industries, including the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), will receive due facilitation.

Transparent, hassle-free

Principal Secretary (Industries) Naresh Pal Gangwar said here on Saturday that the new scheme was the latest step to evolve a transparent and hassle-free environment for investments coming to the State. The industrial development policy and investment promotion scheme were formulated last year, he



Ashok Gehlot. ■ FILE PHOTO

said. While the MSME (Facilitation of Establishment and Operation) Act, 2019, exempted small industries from the necessity of securing the State government's clearances for initial three years, the one-stop shop

scheme will make the process easier for all investment proposals above ₹10 crore.

Officers from 14 major departments, including industries, energy, labour, urban development, local self-government, State Pollution Control Board, consumer affairs, tourism, revenue, public works, health and Rajasthan State Industries Development & Investment Corporation, will be deputed hereat the one-stop shop.

Mr. Gangwar said the pandemic had prompted the State government to seek new opportunities and strengthen the system. "A comprehensive centralised

repository of manpower and the Raj Kaushal web application acting as a bridge between the manpower and the potential employers have been established for the first time," he said.

The Board of Investment will be headed by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

Confederation of Indian Industry-Rajasthan chairman Vishal Baid said the decision would motivate investors to come to the State. He said the CII had earlier requested the State government to make the BIP a single window and post the nodal officers there to give all approvals at one place.

Punjab may go for urban local body polls in October

Final decision would be subject to the COVID-19 situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab government is likely to recommend to the Election Commission that polling to the 126 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the State be held in the second week of October. The final decision would be subject to the COVID-19 situation.

Though as per the provisions of the Punjab Municipal Act, these elections are due by September 2020, it was felt at a videoconference meeting of the Ministers, chaired by Chief Minister

Amarinder Singh, on Saturday that the final decision in the matter should be taken only after seeing the COVID-19 developments over the next few weeks.

May peak in Sept.

An official statement said the Chief Minister pointed out that the pandemic was projected to peak in the State in September, and it would be better to take all developments on that front into account before finalising the recommendation to be made to the Election Commission.

The meeting ruled out the possibility of conducting the polls next month, given the increasing number of virus cases in the State.

It also took note of the fact that the procurement and festival season would start in mid-October, and it would not therefore be feasible to hold the elections during that period.

All the Ministers agreed that the ULB elections should be held at the earliest possible, taking all these factors into account, added the statement.

BJP leader seen with accused in Bulandshahr violence

Party distances itself from the PJYA event, threatens action

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

In a photograph that went viral on the social media on Saturday, the district president of the Bulandshahr unit of the BJP could be seen felicitating Shikhar Agarwal, one of the accused in the Bulandshahr violence of December 2008. A mob had allegedly killed inspector Subodh Kumar Singh after cow carcasses were found in the Syana area of the district. The party has distanced itself from the organisation behind the event.

Out of the 38 accused, police charged five with murder while Yogesh Raj and Mr. Agarwal, who are said to be associated with the BJP and its affiliate groups, were charged with inciting violence and arson.

In the event organised by the Pradhanmantri Janka-



Anil Sisodia presenting the letter to Shikhar Agarwal. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

political organisation, featuring BJP's election symbol on it.

Denying any association with the organisation, Mr. Sisodia told reporters that he was invited as the chief guest and didn't know Mr. Agarwal by face. He said the party believed in clean politics and steered clear of people facing such serious charges.

Iyankari Yojana Abhiyan (PJYA), BJP district president Anil Sisodia could be seen giving a letter to Mr. Agarwal affirming his appointment as general secretary of the Abhiyan (campaign) in the district. The letter mentions names of Union Cabinet Ministers Narendra Tomar, Giriraj Singh and Dharmendra Pradhan, among others, in the 'Margdarshak Mandal' in bold letters. The Facebook page of PJYA describes it as a

A person claiming to be PJYA national president Aneet Kaushik said the letter and the Facebook page were fake.

Volunteers helping fight virus and flood in Assam district

'Protirodh Bondhu' was roped in during OIL well fire

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A 'resistant army' of volunteers has been helping an eastern Assam district combat a pandemic and two concurrent disasters – flood and a blazing blowout natural gas well untamed for almost two months.

Tinsukia Superintendent of Police Shiladitya Chetia had to take some of his men off COVID-19 duty for crowd control at Baghjan where an Oil India Limited well burst into flames. Protests over the accident and resultant ecological damage also warranted protection of other sites of the oil major.

He looked no further than Protirodh Bondhu, meaning Resistant Friends, a community-based volunteer force the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) had formed soon after the nationwide lockdown began. "They have been a force multiplier, helping the administration and the police in controlling crowds, enforcing COVID-19 protocols, rescuing flood-affected people and providing other non-medical services,"



Protirodh Bondhu members salvaging the belongings of people in the flood-hit areas in Tinsukia district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Chetia told *The Hindu*.

The volunteers also stepped in when 35 police personnel and homoguards tested COVID-19 positive. "We have 245 volunteers, 30 of whom are girls, providing an array of services from checking people's temperature and adherence to COVID-19 protocols at an entry point for buses and trucks to regulating the movement of people at Tinsukia's Siding wholesale market and banks," said ASDMA District Project Officer Ruby Gogoi.

The authorities had doubts about the ability, attitude and sincerity of the volunteers when applications were sought in April. Some 16,000 registered but 14,000 were selected with 5,500 presently engaged in different activities. "These young people exceeded our expectations," Ms. Gogoi said.

On July 15, five volunteers cremated Pradip Kumar Sharma, a 75-year-old doctor who died of COVID-19, after the municipal workers refused.

Pratirodh Bondhu is the brainchild of Pankaj Chakraborty, ASDMA's State Project Coordinator.

Unlocking process in Guwahati from Monday

Restrictions have not delivered, claims Opposition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Saturday announced relaxation of the three-week lockdown in Guwahati from July 20 with critics pointing out that the restrictions did not serve the purpose of checking COVID-19 positive cases.

But the lockdown on Saturdays and Sundays, across urban and semi-urban centres, will continue to be imposed in the city.

The lockdown was initially imposed for two weeks from June 29, a day after the State recorded 7,492 positive cases with more than 700 of them having been infected through community transmission. It was extended by a week till July 19.

From June 29 to July 17, 14,372 positive cases were recorded and more than 45% of them were from Guwahati. The figures, the Opposition Congress and some residents of the city had pointed out, made it apparent that the lockdown was not effective.

"We have decided to start the unlocking phase from Ju-

ly 20 with certain restrictions. Night curfew will remain in force from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. while inter-district movement will open for only two days till July 22," Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna said.

Wine shops to reopen

According to an order by the State Disaster Management Authority headed by Mr. Krishna, wine shops, wholesale and retail outlets can open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

But the lockdown on Saturdays and Sundays, across urban and semi-urban centres, will continue to be imposed in the city.

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"We have decided to start the unlocking phase from Ju-

kend footfall has reduced to 20% of normal.

In an attempt to stay afloat in such a tough situation, many store owners have started offering home delivery, virtual tour on WhatsApp, and attractive discount offers. Many are advertising online while others are calling up regular customers to inform them that stores are now open.

"We have been offering 50% off on fresh stock to lure customers. The mall management has asked store owners to facilitate virtual tour of the shop on WhatsApp to reach out to the customers at home," said Shyam Kannuji, assistant store manager of a shoe shop at Ambience Mall. "This week, the store saw an average of 44 customers... we used to see at least 150 people before the lockdown," he added. Three of the 11 store employees were told to go on leave without pay to cut costs.

Many shops have not called back their workers who travelled to their home States.

Focus on the positive

Amid the gloom, Mr. Bajaj has decided to focus on the positive. "Footfall has increased since the day malls reopened... the numbers will go up further in the coming days," he said, adding that local markets had opened two months earlier and had till now been taking care of the demands of shoppers.

"But the customers will return to the malls soon. There is talk of theatres opening soon, though there is no confirmation. If the multiplexes open, the footfall will increase," said Mr. Bajaj.

Many, however, believe that the situation is unlikely to improve till the end of this year.

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REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

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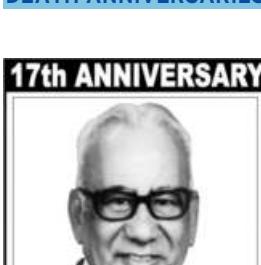
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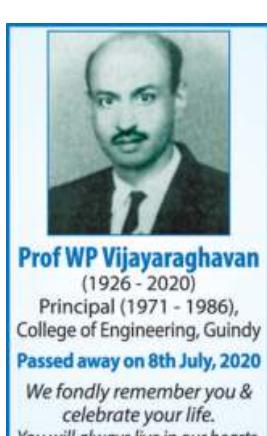
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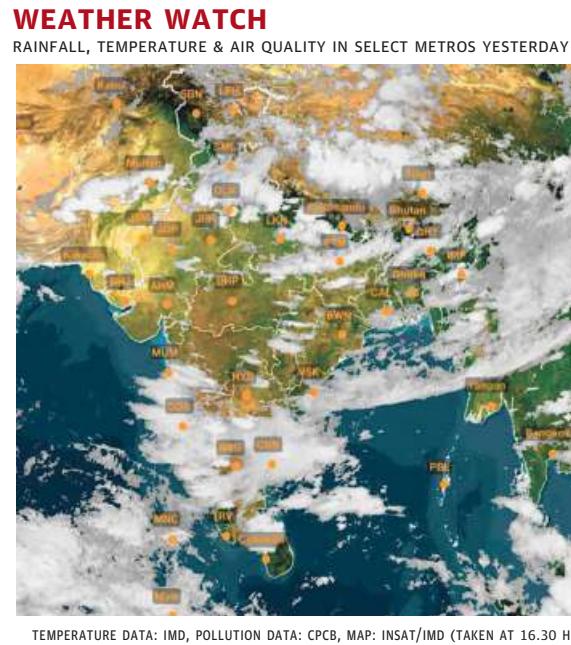
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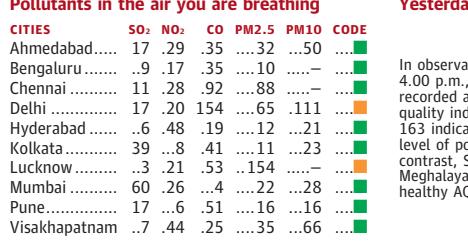


TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.30 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Thunderstorm accompanied by lightning and gusty winds (speeds reaching 30-40 kmph) likely at isolated places from Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Odisha, Meghalaya, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.1	33.7	27.2	Kozhikode	28.2	29.6	23.6
Ahmedabad	—	35.0	26.4	Kurnool	—	33.9	24.7
Aizawl	—	24.0	19.2	Lucknow	—	36.2	28.6
Allahabad	—	37.8	29.8	Madurai	—	35.0	26.4
Bengaluru	—	26.0	20.9	Mangaluru	56.6	27.0	23.0
Bhopal	—	2.1	33.8	Mumbai	39.8	31.9	25.0
Bhubaneswar	—	35.4	27.1	Mysuru	0.5	26.0	21.1
Chandigarh	—	34.2	30.0	Patna	3.9	36.4	29.3
Chennai	—	34.0	26.6	Port Blair	12.5	30.8	23.7
Coimbatore	1.3	33.0	22.2	Puducherry	—	34.0	26.6
Dehradoon	3.5	30.8	24.8	Pune	0.9	30.8	23.3
Gangtok	25	21.2	17.1	Raipur	—	33.4	27.0
Goa	108.3	27.0	24.1	Ranchi	—	31.8	24.9
Guwahati	—	31.0	25.7	Shillong	6.5	24.0	18.5
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shimla	43.8	32.0	20.1
Hyderabad	—	32.0	23.1	Srinagar	—	36.4	28.2
Imphal	0.2	30.0	23.1	Thiruvananthapuram	0.5	33.1	25.1
Jaipur	—	39.9	29.6	Tiruchi	—	33.0	25.9
Kochi	5.8	31.6	24.0	Vijayawada	11.8	33.8	24.2
Kohima	1.2	25.0	18.7	Visakhapatnam	—	32.1	27.0
Kolkata	0.2	35.2	27.0				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)



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NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Apologise for crimes against women: BJP

Day after rape, Kirit Somaiya visits Covid care centre in Panvel

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Former Bharatiya Janata Party MP Kirit Somaiya on Saturday asked Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh when he would apologise to women for the crimes against them.

On a visit to the Indiabulls Covid Care Centre at Kon village in Panvel – where a 25-year-old COVID-19 patient is alleged to have raped a 40-year-old woman in quarantine on Thursday – Mr. Somaiya said, "This is shameful. Previously we heard of body missing from hospital, then COVID patients going missing, and now this. I really want to know when does Mr. Deshmukh intend to apologise."

Mr. Somaiya was accompanied by other party leaders including Chitratai Wagh, Prashant Thakur, MLA, and Panvel Mayor Kavita Choutmol.

The Indiabulls facility is being used by Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation and



Kirit Somaiya

the Panvel Municipal Corporation (PMC) as a quarantine centre for suspected coronavirus cases as also for isolating COVID-19 patients.

The rape accused and the victim had been admitted by PMC. As per the complainant, the accused had posed as a doctor and approached the lady to offer her a massage for her body ache.

The swab test of the victim, who was quarantined on July 14, was reported negative on Saturday while the accused, quarantined on July 15, has tested positive. A guard has now been posted

there. "We will arrest the accused after seeking advice regarding his treatment," said senior police inspector Ashok Rajput from Panvel Taluka police station.

Mr. Wagh demanded, "Not just the accused, but each officer whose negligence led to this crime should be penalised and strict action taken against them. How did that man end up in the women's section?"

Condemning the incident, Ms. Choutmol said, "All patients are kept in separate rooms for their safety and we never thought something like this could happen. Security will be increased and men and women will be put up in different buildings."

Speaking about the political developments in Rajastan, Mr. Somaiya said that the BJP was being unnecessarily dragged into the issue. "It's an internal issue of Congress, where they are alleging corruption against each other," he said.



Vijay Wadettiwar

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court on Friday issued a notice to Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation Vijay Wadettiwar on a plea that he had not disclosed the criminal cases pending against him while twice applying for a passport in Nagpur.

A Division Bench of Justices A.S. Chandarkar and Amit Borkar was hearing a

petition said Mr. Wadettiwar did not disclose he had over 10 criminal cases pending against him when he applied for a passport in May 2001 in Nagpur.

'Misled authorities'

The petitioner also said that Mr. Wadettiwar "knowingly suppressed necessary information with a view to mislead the authorities in order to procure a passport in his favour and gave false information that there were no criminal cases pending against him".

The petition added, "It is apparent from the above act that the respondent was

aware that if the passport office gains knowledge about the criminal cases pending against him, passport may not be issued to him."

The petitioner said Mr. Wadettiwar applied for a passport for the second time in January 2007, but again did not disclose the criminal cases pending against him and misled the authorities.

The petitioner has requested the court to direct the Nagpur Commissioner of Police, and the passport offices in Mumbai and Nagpur to register an FIR against Mr. Wadettiwar under Sections 120b (criminal conspiracy), 406 (punishment for criminal breach of trust), 41 (when police may arrest without warrant), 420 (cheating and dishonesty inducing delivery of property), 426 (punishment for mischievous acts), 465 (punishment for forgery), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

The court has adjourned the matter for four weeks.

Retailers association urges State to take steps to reopen malls

5 million people will suffer in case of delays: SCAI

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) has urged the Maharashtra government to take concrete steps for urgent reopening of malls in the State.

In a letter to State Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray, SCAI said five million people involved in modern retail

would suffer if the State delays the reopening of malls any further.

Maharashtra has over 75 malls with 50% in Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan, Navi Mumbai and Dombivli. Pune has over 20%, while the rest are in Amravati, Aurangabad, Kolhapur, Nasik and Nagpur.

The lockdown has also put work on over 30 malls, which are under construction, on hold. Retailers and owners of Shopping Centres said it was becoming difficult for them to meet day to day

expenses, including employee salaries, due to zero revenue since closure of the establishments in March.

Cash reserves drying

Cash reserves are also drying up, and the first big impact could be seen in August 2020. SCAI in its letter said stocks worth crores of rupees are getting damaged and their value would be lost if not sold immediately.

The industry has already seen losses exceeding ₹1 lakh crore. Maharashtra is a criti-

cal market for shopping centres and a delay in opening malls will prove to be a death knell", said Amitabh Taneja, chairman, SCAI.

Citing examples of States

where malls have been allowed to open, SCAI said it has developed and rolled out

stringent standard operating procedures (SOPs) in over 500 shopping malls across the country, and have successfully implemented physical distancing and other necessary measures.

While malls have opened

guidelines and provide a safe shopping experience." He added, "We have urged the Maharashtra government to give us the opportunity to at least start operating in a controlled manner and help the industry's survival."

Malls that have opened have been capping the number of visitors along the lines of SCAI and Health Ministry's guidelines. SCAI in its letter to Mr. Thackeray also recommended guidelines that should be implemented once malls reopen.

Two held for Navi Mumbai bank robbery

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The Koparkhairane police on Saturday arrested two men in the case of a robbery occurred at Saraswat Bank at Sector 19, Koparkhairane, 30 hours after the robbery on July 16.

Swapnil Sapkal (18) and Bhushan Choudhary (26), both from Chembur, were unemployed, investigations so far have revealed. Mr. Choudhary planned the robbery after his plans to start a shoe shop were foiled by the lockdown, and asked Mr. Sapkal to join him.

The accused reced the area for two months and finally conducted the robbery with pistol look-alike lighter and a knife. "Five minutes before they robbed the bank, a cash van had just collected ₹80 lakh from the bank and left while they were sitting there as customers," assistant police inspector Wasim Shaikh said.

+ Rapid antigen tests may be behind surge in Pune

City has emerged as a new urban hotspot like Hyderabad and Bengaluru

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE

The surge in COVID-19 cases in Pune district over the last few weeks can be attributed to the use of rapid antigen detection tests, district officials said on Saturday.

Simultaneously, the case recovery rate has gone up to 65% while the mortality rate has fallen to 2.65%, according to a report released by the district health officer this week. As per reports, Pune has emerged as a new urban COVID-19 hotspot like Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

Hospitals located under Pune Municipal Corporation and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, villages and the Pune Cantonment Board have sent 1,88,066 samples for testing so far.

Civic officials said the surge in number of patients can be attributed to rapid antigen tests being conducted by various laboratories.

The Pune civic body had decided to conduct the rapid antigen detection tests for diagnosis of COVID-19 earlier



A Pune Municipal Corporation worker brings mattresses to Fergusson College Boys Hostel which will be converted into an isolation ward. ■ P.T.I.

this month, with an objective to reduce burden on labs. It is a test on swabbed nasal samples that detects antigens (foreign substances that induce an immune response in the body) that are found on or within the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Informing about various measures to check transmission of the infection, the report stated that a 10-day lockdown has been imposed in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad township. The district

administration has also enhanced healthcare infrastructure and human resources. The number of labs has been increased from 2 to 25, officials said.

Saurabh Rao, former

Pune civic chief and Officer on Special Duty (OSD) at the office of the Pune divisional commissioner, said five deputy collector-rank officials have been posted at private hospitals which have been directed to post details on availability of beds on an online dashboard, he said.

According to Pune Zilla Parishad CEO Ayush Prasad, public and private funds have been used for enhancing health infrastructure. "We are also hiring medical staff as per requirement at the taluka level. We have around 91 ambulances (in the district) and have asked

district Collector and Disaster Management Authority chairman Naval Kishore Ram said testing and contact tracing has been increased and healthcare infrastructure strengthened. "We have also sent our teams to private hospitals to check for any asymptomatic patient occupying a bed. We are counselling such patients to vacate beds for the needy patients," he said.

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

Maharashtra has become the first State in the country to get the go-ahead to use drones for aerial surveillance and inspection of extra-high voltage power transmission lines and towers.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Director General of Civil Aviation have permitted the Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Company Ltd (MSETCL) to deploy drones to inspect faulty lines, reducing the risk posed to its staff.

Workers who otherwise use ladders and chairs to inspect transformers can now use drones. The risk was higher in the hilly areas of the State. With the onset of



Call of duty: A Home Guard helps an elderly woman enter a building in Dadar, where a COVID-19 testing camp was organised by the BMC on Saturday. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

Firm will initially occupy 1.4 lakh sq.ft. in Vikhroli

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Godrej Fund Management (GFM), the real estate private equity arm of Godrej Group, has leased 2 lakh sq.ft. office space to A.P. Moller-Maersk's business units at Godrej Two, a commercial office building in Vikhroli.

Godrej Two is jointly owned by GFM and Godrej Properties Ltd.

A.P. Moller-Maersk, the Denmark-headquartered integrated container logis-

FROM PAGE ONE

COVID hits Uttarakhand pilgrimage industry

With even priests now wearing PPE kits while performing the temple rituals, Mahant Giri suggested a new normal where faith meets science. "I have been telling devotees that they have to give this year to the coronavirus. Pray at home."

Lovedeep Singh, a pharma company executive posted in Haridwar, said it was only people dressed in saffron, as Kanwariyas, and walking to the temples were being stopped at the border of the States.

"I hail from Bulandshahr and many of my relatives and friends come every year to fetch the Ganga water. This Shivratri, I can take the holy water to them," he said.

Palpable fear
Mr. Bahukhandi, was part of a study on the impact of the 2013 Kedarnath floods on devotees, said, "Most of the devotees I spoke to at that time had said *pralaya* (the myth of a great flood) and Lord Shiva are connected and hence were able to come to terms with the disaster. But, this time, there is a palpable sense of fear."

This, he said, was reflected in the very small number of people from Uttarakhand who joined the Char Dham Yatra though the authorities opened it for the State's residents.

The fear of the lockdown regulations have also been used to overcharge the faithful, including those who come to the Ganga to immerse the ashes of their kin.

"After much bargaining, the boatman charged us ₹1,000 to take us to the mainstream even as the police were making an announcement that people should clear the ghats," said Pushpendra Kumar, who immersed his father's ashes at Garh Mukteshwar in Hapur district in western U.P., which has always been an alternative site to Haridwar, and has gained more traction with strict travel restrictions.

Rajasthan Congress claims majority

ACB Director-General Alok Tripathi said the audio clips would be sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for testing. Separately, a Judicial Magistrate's court remanded Sanjay Jain, alleged to be a middleman in the efforts to lure MLAs, to the SOG's custody for four days. The SOG had arrested him on Friday on the basis of his purported voice appearing in the tapes.

Meanwhile in Delhi, the BJP sought an inquiry into alleged illegal phone tapping that resulted in the audio tapes, which have been touted by the Congress as an admission of the BJP's involvement in horse-trading.

The Gehlot government also won back the support of the Bharatiya Tribal Party

Govt. mulls Australia's entry into Malabar drill

The decision, if taken, will bring all Quad countries together as part of the annual war games and also mark a major shift for India's Indo-Pacific plans.

As reported by *The Hindu* on June 3, after years of reluctance due to Beijing's sensitivities, India said it was open to Australia's inclusion in Malabar, which began as a bilateral exercise between India and the U.S. in 1992 and was expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of Japan in 2015.

The exercise has also grown in scope and complexity over the years further boosted by India signing three of the four foundational agreements with the U.S.

In record rise, A.P. reports 3,963 cases, 52 deaths

Kerala data show local spread responsible for 60% of total cases; Karnataka logs 93 deaths, 4,537 more test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In a big rise in incidence, Andhra Pradesh reported 3,963 fresh COVID-19 cases and 52 deaths on Saturday, during a 24-hour period. Both single-day tally and deaths were at a new high.

Local transmission in Kerala accounted for over 60% of the total cases, with a significant rise in cases that had no clear epidemiological

COVID-19

link. New patient clusters were reported from most districts in coastal areas as well as urban areas.

Kerala reported 593 new cases, taking cumulative cases to 11,659.

While there was a marginal drop in new cases on Saturday, the proportion occurring through local transmission remained unchanged, with 385 out of the

593 reported from the community. No epidemiological link was found in 36 local transmission cases. These included 19 health workers.

Two deaths were reported from Thiruvananthapuram district, taking the toll in the State to 40.

The number of recoveries on Saturday was 204. Of the 11,659 cases reported so far, recoveries stood at 5,201. Active cases in hospitals totalled 6,841.

Thiruvananthapuram, with 173 new cases, again accounted for the maximum incidence. Of this, 157 were linked to local transmission.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that the Health, LSG departments and the district disaster management authorities were setting up more COVID-19 first line treatment centres to handle the huge volume of patients who seemed to be asymptomatic.

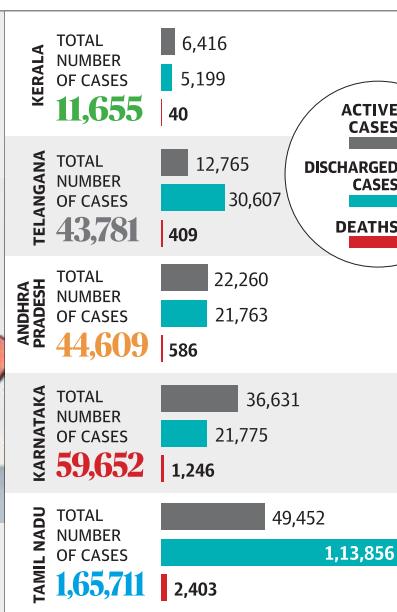
As Andhra Pradesh re-

Saying it in style

With the number of positive cases on the rise throughout the country, the government has stepped up measures to contain the virus. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



The right way: A graffiti explaining the need to wear face masks, drawn in front of the Government Hospital in Ernakulam, on Saturday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT



ported high rise in fresh cases and deaths, the State tally rose to 44,609 and the toll to 586. The number of active patients was 22,260 and with 1,465 new discharges, recoveries went up to 21,763. Ho-

wever, the recovery rate was down to 48.7%.

The positivity rate for tests conducted in the past day was 16.6%, the highest for daily positivity. The overall positivity rate was 3.47%, the

Health Department said. In the past day 23,872 samples were tested and 12,84,384 lakh samples overall, attaining a tests per million ratio of 24,052.

New deaths were reported

in 11 districts and East Godavari reported 12 in a single day. Eight deaths each occurred in Guntur and Krishna and Anantapur recorded seven deaths. West Godavari reported five, Prakasam four, Nellore three and Visakhapatnam two deaths. Chittoor, Kadapa and Vizianagaram had one death each.

East Godavari district turned into a hotspot and reported 994 new cases.

Karnataka's surge continued on Saturday with 4,537 new positives, taking the total number to 59,652. With 93 more deaths, the toll touched 1,240.

In Bengaluru Urban area 2,125 people tested positive. Forty-nine of the fresh deaths were from Bengaluru Urban.

At least 11 districts in the State had reported more than 100 cases.

(With inputs from Vijayawada and Bengaluru bureaus)

PSO to UAE consulate official on NIA radar

Officer worked in consulate with gold smuggling case accused Sarith and Swapna

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the security implications of the smuggling of gold via air cargo shipments addressed to the UAE consulate here appeared to be closing in on at least two State police officers on Saturday.

"We are in discussion with all the stakeholders. In Unlock 2, we have allowed tourists who have a COVID-19 negative report, taken in the last 72 hours, to enter the State. Those who don't have a test report could also enter, but they should have a seven-day booking at a hotel and should not venture out during that period," Ms. Chand said.

With the Haridwar Kumbh Mela just six months away, stakeholders in the religious pilgrimage industry are hoping that the virus would be annihilated by then, allowing normal arrival of devotees to the religious sites.

The Customs has also



In the net: Swapna Suresh being taken to her flat in Thiruvananthapuram by the NIA on Saturday.

evinced interest in the former PSO because he had worked in the consulate alongside P.S. Sarith and Swapna Suresh, the first and second accused in the smuggling case respectively.

Sivasankar angle
Meanwhile, the NIA escorted Ms. Swapna and Mr. Sandeep Nair, another accused in the case, to the capital. The NIA agents took them to

several premises, including a highrise in which former Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan M. Sivasankar, held a rented apartment.

The Customs had inspected the place earlier on suspicion that the accused could have used another apartment on the same floor to open shipments containing contraband gold.

The NIA's presence here

triggered speculations that the agency might question Mr. Sivasankar, is allegedly associated with the smugglers.

An inquiry by a committee headed by Chief Secretary Vishwas Mehta had found that Mr. Sivasankar had "made a reference to appoint a person (Swapna)", working at the time as secretary to the Consul General, UAE, as operations manager, Space Park.

The committee had also pointed out that "such association and frequent contacts with a foreign consulate official" violated the All India Service Conduct Rules, 1968.

It said it had recommended Mr. Sivasankar's suspension from service "in view of the wider ramifications of this case".

A senior official said the committee's finding could open the door for the NIA to examine Mr. Sivasankar.

Top consultancies under the scanner

Face allegations of non-transparency

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Leading firms that have bagged consultancy for infrastructure, mobility and development initiatives in Kerala are likely to come under scanner in the wake of the controversy over the awarding of consultancies for the e-mobility and Space Park projects.

Close on the heels of the steps initiated to terminate PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Limited (PwCPL) from the consultancy service for the proposed Space Park, the government is learnt to be planning to end the services of the firm for the e-mobility project.

The PwCPL was tasked with preparing a Detailed Project Report on electric vehicle manufacturing as part of a ₹4,500-crore e-mo-

bility project to put one million electric vehicles on the road by 2022.

Official sources said the agreement is yet to be inked with the government as the firm had not returned the pact for vetting despite reminders. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Saturday he was not "aware of the move to remove the consultancy firm from the e-mobility project".

The Kerala State IT Infrastructure Ltd, entrusted with the Space Park, has already served a notice on PwCPL, which is the first step of contract termination.

Swapna Suresh, second accused in the Kerala gold smuggling case, was appointed as operations manager for the project through PwCPL.

Vatican tells Bishops to report to police abuse of minors by clerics

Recommendations of the document will be implemented

K. A. MARTIN
KOCHI

Pope Francis has told bishops across the world to report sexual abuse of minors by clerics to the local police and not to ignore even anonymous or doubtful claims.

In its July 16 *vademecum* (handbook or guide), the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Church said: "Even in cases where there is no explicit legal obligation to do so, the ecclesiastical authorities should make a report to the competent civil authorities if this is considered necessary to protect the person involved or other minors from the danger of further criminal acts."

The guideline is meant to help dioceses, institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, episco-



pal conferences, and other ecclesiastical establishments and institutions "to better understand and implement the requirements of justice regarding a *delictum gravissimum* (grave wrong) that constitutes for the whole Church a profound and painful wound that cries out for healing", the *Vademecum* said.

However, this is a guide-

line and not part of the Canon law. "While not issuing new norms or altering current canonical legislation, this manual seeks to clarify the various stages of the procedures involved. Its use is to be encouraged, since a standardised praxis will contribute to a better administration of justice."

Wider study

"We are studying the document, which will be translated into Malayalam too for its wider study and discussions," said Fr. Varghese Vallikkatt, deputy secretary general of the Kerala Catholic Bishops Council (KCBC), the apex body of the hierarchy in Kerala.

He said the document would be discussed thoroughly and its recommendations implemented.

'Maoists' Telangana plans will be foiled'

DGP holds high-level review meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDU

The sinister designs of Maoists to make a re-entry into the State from Chhattisgarh to carry out disruptive activities and hamper its development will be foiled with firm resolve, said Director General of Police M. Mahender Reddy on Saturday.

"The State is marching on the path of progress amid a peaceful atmosphere devoid of Maoist activities," he noted, saying that the Communist Party of India-Maoist State committee leaders based in Chhattisgarh were making desperate attempts to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere in the State.

The DGP held a high-level

review meeting with police officials of the district and also neighbouring Mahabubabad district on anti-Maoist operations in Manuguru town late on Saturday afternoon.

The top cop's visit to Manuguru assumed significance in the aftermath of Wednesday's encounter, in which Maoists and police exchanged fire, resulting in injury to a special police party constable at the Mallepallithogu forest area in Karakagudem mandal of Manuguru sub-division.

Operational strategies to contain the renewed attempts by Maoists to gain foothold in the Agency areas of the district reportedly figured in the deliberations of the meeting, sources said.

IN BRIEF

Private hospitals told to allocate 50% beds

BENGALURU
As private medical institutions continue to dilly-dally on allocation of beds for COVID-19 patients, Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Saturday held another round of talks with managements of private medical college hospitals and sternly directed them to provide 50% of the beds from Sunday. Mr. Yediyurappa told private medical college hospitals to cooperate with the government.

TTD senior seer tests positive for COVID-19

TIRUMALA
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Pedda Jeeyar (senior pontiff) was on Friday rushed to the Padmavati State COVID hospital in Tirupati with high temperature, sources said.

He returned to his Math on Saturday night. According to sources, the health condition of the pontiff, who reportedly tested positive for coronavirus, is said to be stable and has been advised to remain in isolation.

Venkaiah urged to ensure release of Varavara Rao

CHITTOR
Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy on Saturday urged Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu to intervene and ensure the release of jailed and hospitalised revolutionary writer Varavara Rao. In a letter addressed to the Vice-President, Mr. Karunakar Reddy said the plight of Mr. Varavara Rao in ill-health and under confinement at the age of 81 disturbed him a lot.

Students with disabilities struggle with online classes

Survey highlights need for more accessible material

K. C. DEEPIKA
BENGALURU

A majority of students with disabilities, in response to a survey, have said that online learning was proving to be a big hurdle to them.

About 56.5% of students with disabilities said they were "struggling, yet attending classes" irregularly, while around 77% of students said they would not be able to cope and would fall behind in learning due to their inability to access dis-

I am with BJP and its ideology, says Vasundhara

It is unfortunate that the people in Rajasthan are paying for discord within the Congress, says former Chief Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

Putting at rest speculation about her support to Congress MLAs of the Ashok Gehlot camp, senior BJP leader and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje on Saturday said she had been serving as a "loyal worker" of the party for three decades, and she stood with the BJP and its ideology.

Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal, convener of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party whose three MLAs support the Opposition BJP in the State As-

sembly, had recently alleged that Ms. Raje had thrown her lot with the Congress MLAs owing allegiance to Mr. Gehlot.

Raje takes to Twitter

Ms. Raje said, in a Twitter post, that some people were trying to spread confusion on political developments in the State without ascertaining facts.

"I have been serving the public for the last three decades, and I stand with the party and its ideology," she said.



Firm stance: Vasundhara Raje talking to Congress leaders after casting her vote in the Rajya Sabha polls in June. ■ FILE PHOTO

Mr. Beniwal had alleged that Ms. Raje was trying to save the "minority government" of Mr. Gehlot and had

even called up Congress MLAs, who were close to her, asking them to support the beleaguered Chief Minister.

The 67-year-old two-time Chief Minister broke her silence earlier in the day on the political turmoil, following Congress leader Sachin Pilot's rebellion.

Ms. Raje said it was unfortunate that the people in the State were paying for the discord within the Congress.

Shifting blame'

"The Congress is trying to shift the blame on the BJP and the party's leadership," Ms. Raje tweeted, adding there was no point in trying to drag the BJP and its lead-

ers' names through the mud.

While asking the ruling Congress to pay attention to people's issues, she listed the difficulties being faced by the common people.

"At a time when the CO-VID-19 pandemic has claimed more than 500 lives and positive cases are close to 28,000... locusts are attacking farmers' fields... crimes against women are at an all-time high... when there is a problem of electricity across the State... And I'm only naming a few of the problems faced by people."



On guard: Army personnel near the encounter site in Shopian on Saturday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Three militants killed in Shopian operation

3 of family killed in firing along LOC

India lodges strong protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Three militants were killed in an operation by security forces in south Kashmir's Shopian on Saturday.

"Three militants have been killed in the operation and their bodies were recovered from a cowshed where they were hiding," a police official said. A gunfight erupted in Amshipora on Saturday when security forces launched an operation based on a tip-off about the presence of militants in the area.

3 of family killed

In a separate incident, three civilians, all from one family, were killed in Pakistan Army's firing and shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Pir Panjal Valley's Poonch on Friday.

Police identified the victims as Mohammad Rafiq, 58, his wife Rafia Bi, 50, and son Irfan, 15, from Karmara village near the LoC. "A mortar shell landed on the

BJP demands CBI probe into 'phone tapping'

Rajasthan crisis is a mix of conspiracy and illegalities: Patra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The BJP on Saturday demanded a CBI probe into all aspects of the alleged phone tapping in Rajasthan a day after the State government lodged a case against Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on charges of trying to destabilise the Ashok Gehlot government by attempting to buy MLAs.

At a press conference, party spokesperson Sambit Patra said the events unfolding in Rajasthan were a mix of "conspiracy, lies and illegalities" by the Congress go-

vernment in the State.

"We heard yesterday through the Chief Minister's own words that he hadn't spoken to his deputy [Sachin Pilot] in 18 months. It points to a clear situation of a cold war at the heart of the Congress government in Rajasthan," he said.

Authorisation needed

"Phone tapping can only be done by authorised agencies as per due process of law and subject to approved safe-guards and SOPs. Each case is also reviewed by a committee chaired by a Ca-

binet Secretary in case of Central and State Secretary in case of a State government," he said.

"...Was phone tapping done? ...Secondly, is it not a sensitive and legal issue, if phone tapping has been done? Assuming that you've tapped phones, was the SOP followed? Did the Congress government in Rajasthan use unconstitutional ways to save themselves when they found themselves cornered? And finally is the phone of any person who is related to politics being tapped?" asked Mr. Patra.

BJP has openly admitted to murdering democracy: Cong.

'It misused the Khattar govt. to thwart probe'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hours after the BJP demanded a CBI enquiry into the alleged phone tapping of Rajasthan legislators, the Congress said the BJP had admitted, in front of the entire nation, of its role in the 'conspiracy' to topple the Ashok Gehlot government.

Party spokesperson Pawan Khera said at a press conference that BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra had openly admitted to his party's part in "murdering de-



Pawan Khera

mocracy" in Rajasthan. "Their only grievance is that when they were murdering democracy why were they getting recorded," Mr. Khera said. The party evaded questions on the alleged phone tapping.

He said that for the first time in history, the Haryana police actively blocked their

Rajasthan police counterparts and allowed the MLAs to escape. "The BJP openly misused official machinery of the Manohar Lal Khattar government to thwart an ongoing investigation" he said.

He said rebel leader Sachin Pilot and the MLAs supporting him might be taken to Karnataka from Manesar.

Reacting to BSP president Mayawati's tweets recommending President's rule in the State, Mr. Khera said, "I don't think we should discuss and comment on the helplessness of a leader; she has her own reasons, fears, compulsions that force her to come out with comments that help the BJP."

Resort politics is now a *de rigueur* feature of Indian political life

There are 'clubs within clubs' among the herded legislators, and parties gauge their mood on a daily basis

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

With rebel Congress MLAs owing loyalty to former Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan Sachin Pilot holed up in a resort in Haryana (with an imminent move to another in Karnataka, sources say), resort politics seems to have become a *de rigueur* feature of Indian political life.

The sight of the MLAs being herded and sequestered into various five-star (and lesser star) resorts is becoming unfortunately all too familiar. Pictures of MLAs trying out the gym in these places or watching movies together surface from time to time to assure constituents

and family that they are well, but what actually happens when a group of MLAs are bunched together?

In his book on the formation of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, titled *Checkmate: How the BJP Won and Lost Maharashtra* (Penguin, 2020), Sudhir Suryawanshi goes into major details on just how the Congress MLAs, sequestered (ironically in Jaipur) spent their time.

Apart from a daily roll call, the MLAs were everyday asked about their political stance by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) observer staying with them. Soon enough, writes Mr. Su-



Packed tight: Congress leaders on a bus headed to a hotel in Jaipur on July 14. ■ PTI

ryawanshi, MLAs broke into various "clubs within clubs", as he calls it.

For example, industrialists and well-off persons like Amit Deshmukh, Rohidas Daji Patil from Dhule, Rutu-raj Patil and Vishwajeet Ka-

each other. Many missed home food and raised protests, like MLA Hemant Khoskar who had a hankering for *Pitala* (also called *Jhunka* in Marathi) and with the right YouTube video got a five-star chef in Jaipur to prepare it for him.

Community living

The community living is never voluntary and is enforced when poaching of MLAs is feared. Even those not in danger of being poached are often herded with those of whom floor crossing is feared, just to keep the *esprit de corps* alive.

When Congress MLAs from Karnataka got into a

bus right after the Assembly elections of 2018, a senior Congressman, who had been a Minister in the Siddaramaiah government, also had to go along "just to ensure there was no discrimination in terms of perception".

"I was told I had to go as my not going would send the message that I was somehow more trustworthy and others were not," he said.

Keeping the MLAs together is a combination of salubrious resorts in States with a friendly government, communication and daily psy ops against attempts by other parties to raid your numbers. Parties have geared up suitably, it seems.

Rajnath Singh visits forward posts along LoC in Kupwara

This comes amid a growing number of ceasefire violations



Boosting their morale: Rajnath Singh interacting with soldiers at a forward post near the LoC in Kupwara. ■ PTI

India will pay a heavy price for Centre's cowardly actions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's assertion that "no country in the world can touch or occupy even an inch of India's territory", Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said India will have to pay a "huge price" because of the government's "cowardly actions".

He equated the government of India to former U.K. Prime

Minister Neville Chamberlain, who let Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler have his way in the run-up to the Second World War.

Earlier, Congress leader P. Chidambaram tweeted that Mr. Singh's statement was just rhetoric, considering that the Chinese troops were still 1.5 km inside the Indian side of the LAC, as per the assessment of the security agencies.

ter praying at the Shri Amarnathi Holy Cave in Jammu and Kashmir," he tweeted.

An official said the Minister stayed for around an hour at the

cave shrine.

Mr. Singh was accompanied by Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat, besides other senior Army officials.

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF T.S.LTD.

Tender Notice 02/2020-21

TSSPCL intends to float tenders are invited from various contractors having experiences for (1) Shifting of 11KV and LT line from Sri Krishna Udip Restaurant to National Institute of MSME near Yousufguda Metro Station, Banjara Hills under DC works (2) Erection of 11KV 5-Way RMU and Laying of 11KV 300sq.mm UG Cable for extending supply near Smasan Vatika opp. Chutney's near Nagarjuna Circle, Banjara Hills under DC works (3) Erection of 11KV 5-Way RMU and Laying of 11KV 300sq.mm UG Cable for extending supply near Chutney's Nagarjuna Circle, Banjara Hills under DC works (4) Supply to 11KV Non-Domestic load of 25KV to the EEGHMC at road no.45 Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad in operation Jubilee Hills Section of Jubilee Hills Sub-Division on Banjara Hills Division under Capital works. For further details please visit www.tsspower.com.

R.0. No: 749-PP/PLC-AGENCY/ADVT/120/2021

Sd/- Superintending Engineer Operation, Banjara Hills Circle

REGISTRAR

ANNA UNIVERSITY

CHENNAI - 600 025

TENDER NOTICE - Tender Ref No. 18/CPO4/ET/PAC/CGC/2020

On-line Tenders in Two Bid System are invited for Supply and Installation of following equipment for the Director, Crystal Growth Centre, Anna University, Chennai - 600 025.

Sl. No. Tender Ref. No. Name of the equipment Qty. Approx. cost

1. 18/CPO4/ET/PAC/CGC/2020 "Precision Air Conditioner (5.5 OR 6 TR)" 1 Set ₹12,00,000/-

2. 27/CPO4/ET/CGC/2020 "Electrochemical Workstation and Accessories" 1 Set ₹18,00,000/-

The tender documents can be downloaded by registering in the website <https://tenders.gov.in> using Digital Signature Certificate and E-Token from 05.30 p.m. on 18.07.2020. The filled-in tender documents can be submitted by uploading in the website up to 03.00 p.m. on 11.08.2020 and will be opened at 03.00 p.m. on 12.08.2020. EMD is to be submitted through the website <https://tenders.gov.in> BY ONLINE MODE ONLY. Other detailed tender conditions, future corrigenda etc., please visit the website (<https://tenders.gov.in>) and any press advertisement will not be published in this regard.

DIPR/2691/Tender/2020

REGISTRAR

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY PORT DEPARTMENT

No.3128/PORT/EE/Sagarmala/2020-21/915 Puducherry, the 17.07.2020

INVITATION TO POST QUALIFY

On behalf of the President of India, online Tenders are invited through the Government e-Procurement website of U.T. of Puducherry <https://puttenders.gov.in> from the eligible Firms/ Contractors by the Executive Engineer, Port Department, Puducherry for the following work.

Sl. No. Tender No. Name of work Approximate cost (Rs.) Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.) Eligibility

1. 2 3 4 5 6

1. 2020_PORT_6401 Dredging in the Entrance channel and Harbour mouth 32,32,88,00/- 64,65,760/- As in NIT

(i) Availability of NIT on website : From 10.00 A.M. on 24.07.2020 to 3.00 P.M. on 24.08.2020

(ii) Date and Time of Pre-bid meeting : 10.08.2020 at 10.30 A.M.

(iii) Closing date & time for submission of e-Tender : 24.08.2020 at 3.30 P.M.

(iv) Date & Time of Opening of e-Tender : 25.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

The tender schedule may be downloaded from the website <https://puttenders.gov.in>. Bids will be accepted only online.

For free Training & Technical support, visit e-Procurement Cell, 3rd Floor, Chief Secretariat, Puducherry-1.

West Bengal sees 2,198 cases in a day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

The daily number of COVID-19 infections in West Bengal crossed the 2,000 mark on Saturday with a highest single day spike of 2,198 cases. The total number of infections in the State rose to 40,209 and the active cases increased to 15,594.

The State recorded 27 more deaths, taking the number to 1,076. Twelve deaths were recorded in Kolkata, followed by four in Hooghly and North 24 Parganas districts.

The number of cases now stands at 3,00,937 while the tally of active cases has reached 1,26,926.

The discharge of 5,306 patients in the day took the count to 1,65,663, an official statement said. The number of people tested so far stood at 15,22,564.

Mortality rate

Maharashtra's recovery rate now stands at 55.05% while the mortality rate is 3.85%.

Mumbai crossed the one-lakh mark with the addition of 1,186 cases in the day. The number of the cases in the city now stands at 1,00,350 while the toll rose by 65, it said. Pune city overtook Mumbai by reporting 1,589 cases while neighbouring Pimpri Chinchwad township saw 642 cases.



Reduced to rubble: Policemen deployed at the demolished residence of Vikas Dubey at Bikru village in Kanpur. ■ PTI

Earthmover was needed at Dubey's house: U.P.

Building had become insecure, it says

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

An earthmover was used to carry out a search operation in slain history-sheeter Vikas Dubey's house in Bikru village of Kanpur as the building had become "insecure" in the process of excavating arms and weapons from its walls, the Uttar Pradesh government has said.

Dubey's house was demolished by the Kanpur administration a day after he and his associates shot dead eight policemen in an ambush.

In an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court, the State government justified the use of the earthmover in the recovery process due to safety concerns.

Upon receiving inputs about "deadly weapons" being kept inside "hollow chambers" inside the roof and ceiling of the house, the

Maharashtra cases go past 3-lakh mark

Recovery rate now stands at 55.05%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The COVID-19 tally in Maharashtra crossed the 3-lakh mark on Saturday with the addition of 8,348 cases while the death toll increased by 144, including 86 fatalities in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, to 11,596, the Health department said.

The number of cases now stands at 3,00,937 while the tally of active cases has reached 1,26,926.

The discharge of 5,306 patients in the day took the count to 1,65,663, an official statement said. The number of people tested so far stood at 15,22,564.

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A health worker checking the temperature of a woman in Mumbai. ■ PTI

Meanwhile, Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee urged the youth in the State to come forward and help the poor who are struggling during the pandemic. The Trinamool MP has started a campaign to bring together 'Yuva Yodha' (youth warriors) to help people in the State.

COVID-19 guidelines for gated homes

Measures to be taken at complexes include hand sanitiser at entry points, screening of visitors: govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has issued a COVID-19 advisory for gated residential complexes, asking them to make provisions for hand hygiene (sanitiser dispenser) at entry points and in work areas.

The advisory says thermal screening of visitors/staff should be carried out at entry points and only asymptomatic individuals allowed to enter the premises. Vendors, household help, car cleaners, delivery personnel, etc. will also undergo such screening daily. Physical distancing of at least six feet should be followed as far as feasible at all locations at all times in all common areas, including parks, corridors, lift lobbies, gyms, clubs, etc.

All those above 65 years of age, those with co-morbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 should be told to stay only at home, it notes.

Outside the municipal corporation limits, Kolhapur district has 227 cases, Solapur district 151, Pune district 307 and Jalgaon district 182.

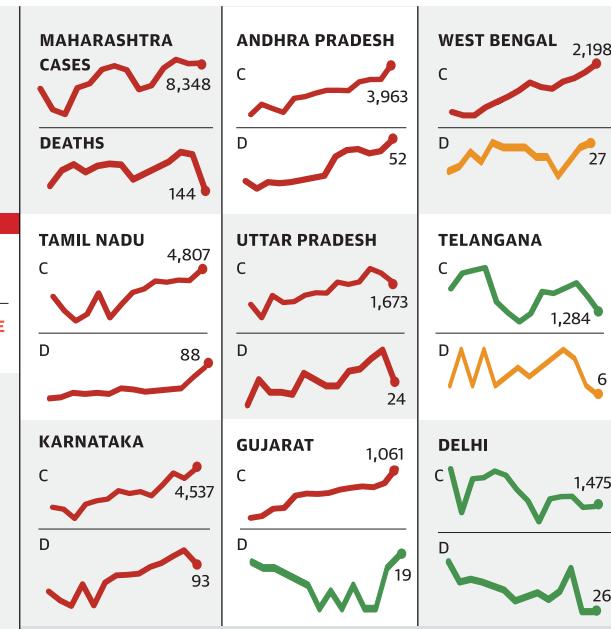
Other COVID-19 management measures include mandatory use of face covers/masks and frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly

Viral tracker

India recorded 35,738 new COVID-19 cases and 550 deaths on Saturday, taking the total to 10,76,265 cases and 26,845 deaths

NEW CASES AND DEATHS
CASES 35,738 DEATHS 550
7 DAY-CHANGE +23% 7 DAY-CHANGE +10.2%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases/deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases/deaths are rising ■; if they are lower, then dropping ■■; if they are similar, then cases/deaths are flattening ■■■ in that State



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

dirty, use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser (for at least 20 seconds) wherever feasible, strict observance of respiratory etiquettes such as covering the mouth and the nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow, and proper disposal of used tissues.

"Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any ill-

ness at the earliest to state and district helpline. Spitting shall be strictly prohibited," the advisory says.

It emphasises adopting simple preventive measures, early reporting of symptoms and informing the community about the myths and stigma that patients, healthcare and other front line workers often encounter.

If a gated complex is de-

clared as a containment zone, the resident welfare association (RWA) will cooperate with the local health authorities in carrying out various activities as stipulated in the containment plan.

The Ministry says small COVID-19 care facilities can be set up in gated residential complexes with the resources of RWAs/residential societies/NGOs for the manage-

ment of suspect/asymptomatic/pre-symptomatic/very mild cases.

This facility is not meant for elderly patients, children (<10 years), pregnant/lactating women, patients with comorbidities (diabetes, hypertension, heart, kidney and chronic respiratory diseases, cancer and other immune-compromised states), who shall be admitted to the appropriate COVID Care Health Facility.

Required standards

These facilities shall be made operational only if the required guidelines and standards are met and shall be continued as per the direction issued by the local health authorities. Measures to be taken on occurrence of case(s) include that the RWA shall encourage residents to self-report symptoms and facilitate their testing, isolation and quarantine of contacts.

Counselling, guidance and support to COVID-19-affected individuals and families will be provided. Special attention is required in such households, which have no family member to take care of the dependents.

Govt. opens up NDRF for individual donations

COVID-19 notified a 'disaster' in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has applied an unused provision in the Disaster Management Act, 2005 to allow any person or institution to contribute to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for the purpose of disaster management.

On Saturday, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said it has "laid out the modalities for receipt of contributions/grants from any person or institution for the purpose of disaster management" in the NDRF as per Section 46(1)(b) of the DM Act, 2005. The section pertaining to NDRF says "any grants that may be made by any person or institution for the purpose of disaster management".

The Ministry said that contributions can be made online or through physical instruments drawn in favour of "PAO (Secretariat), MHA" at New Delhi.

The Ministry had invoked the Disaster Management Act, 2005 for the first time in March this year in the wake of COVID-19. The pandemic was notified as a "disaster," paving the way for the States to utilise the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for treatment of patients and other logistics such as quarantine centres, which are not available in the SDRF.

The States have to submit utilisation certificates, pending which no future allocation is made.



People waiting for transport after being discharged from a hospital in Navi Mumbai.

setting up laboratories among other things. The other notified disasters are cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves.

The NDRF, maintained under the accounting head of the Union Finance Ministry, has been allocated ₹22,070 crore in the financial year 2020-21, up from ₹17,210 crore in the 2019-20 fiscal.

Supplements SDRF
As per Section 46 of the DM Act, the "NDRF supplements the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in the SDRF".

The States have to submit utilisation certificates, pending which no future allocation is made.

Used PPEs wash up in Assam floods

Medical waste raises concerns over spread of COVID-19; death toll touches 105

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Adding to the worries of authorities, floodwaters in Assam have spread discarded medical waste from hospitals and COVID Care Centres, raising fears of infection among people in inundated areas.

Three more people drowned on Saturday, taking the rain-related toll to 105. While 79 persons have drowned or were washed away, 26 died in landslides.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) have voiced concern over reports of discarded personal protection equipment kits, masks, blood pouches, syringes and other hospital wastes amid floodwaters in some parts of the State.

Locals in Chandrapur near Guwahati had complained to the authorities about such discarded wastes flowing into their compounds. Officials said a private firm had been assigned to collect and destroy such wastes but had dumped it in the open instead.

"We have asked the Deputy Commissioner concerned to take action immediately," said M.S. Manivannan, Chief Executive Officer of Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

The flood situation, meanwhile, improved with 12.16



Staying afloat: Villagers crossing a flooded area in Morigaon district of Assam on Saturday. ■ PTI

lakh people returning to their homes overnight. The number of affected people has now come down to 27.64 lakh.

Likewise, the number of people in 290 relief camps came down by 1,848 to 47,465.

"Two people drowned in Barpeta district and another in South Salmara district. Three more deaths were reported from other districts, but they were not related to the floods," an ASDMA spokesperson said.

Western Assam's Dhubri district continued to be the worst-affected district with 4.69 lakh people in makeshift

camps of their own arrangement. Goalpara had 4.49 lakh affected people at the last count followed by Barpeta (3.55 lakh), Morigaon (3.52 lakh) and South Salmara (2.25 lakh).

The water level in the 1,055 sq km Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve has also subsided.

Officials said 85% of the park was still under water, with 59 of the 223 anti-poaching camps inundated.

The flood has so far claimed 96 animals; seven one-horned rhinos and two Asiatic water buffaloes were among 39 animals that drowned. Most of the ani-

mals killed were hog deer, 15 of which were hit by vehicles while trying to cross a highway on the southern edge of the park to escape to the hills beyond.

The State has faced two waves of floods since May 22 affecting more than 53.5 lakh people across 30 of 33 districts.

Meanwhile, as of 11.55 p.m. on July 17, Assam had 21,864 COVID-19 positive cases, of which 51 resulted in deaths and three people migrated to other States. There were 7,705 active cases at the last count, with almost 65% infected people having recovered and discharged.

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35 mn Iranians face infection: Rouhani

President asks people to break the chain of transmissions as total number of cases jump to 2,71,606

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TEHRAN

President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that 35 million Iranians may contract COVID-19, as the country still did not have herd immunity although a quarter of the population may have already been infected.

It appears to be the first time a senior Iranian official has indicated the country is seeking to defeat COVID-19 via herd immunity.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus has killed more than 5,88,000 people and infected nearly 14 million around the world since first being detected in China late last year.

Iran has been battling a resurgence of COVID-19, with figures showing a rise in both new infections and deaths since a two-month low in May.

On Saturday, the Health Ministry reported another 188 deaths and 2,166 cases of infection in the past 24 hours.

That took the overall toll



Warning signs: Painted street bins in Tehran warn residents to guard against the pandemic. ■ AFP

to 13,979 dead out of 2,71,606 cases since Iran reported its first cases in mid-February. The rising toll has prompted authorities to reimpose restrictions in worst-hit provinces after being lifted country-wide in April, with Tehran extending them for an extra week on Friday.

"Our estimate is that up to now, 25 million Iranians

have been infected with this virus," Mr. Rouhani said during a televised meeting of the country's virus-fighting task force.

Herd immunity

"We have to consider the possibility that 30 to 35 million more may face infection," he added, citing the results of a study by the Health Ministry. "We have not yet

achieved herd immunity and we have no choice but to be united and break the chain of transmission of the coronavirus." Mr. Rouhani's deputy head of communications, Alireza Moezi, said on Twitter hours later that the 25 million in fact refers to "those who have encountered the virus and achieved complete immunity".

Mr. Rouhani also said that

Iran may have to prepare itself for double the amount of hospitalisations it has had in the past five months, according to the study.

The study shows that "out of every 1,000 infected, 500 show no symptoms" Mr. Rouhani added, warning that they present the main challenge by "spreading more virus and over a longer period" than those identified.

The Health Ministry does not report the overall amount of hospitalisations over COVID-19.

The Islamic republic has been struggling to contain West Asia's worst COVID-19 outbreak since announcing its first cases in mid-February.

Iran has refrained from imposing full lockdowns but closed schools, cancelled public gatherings and banned travel between provinces in March, before lifting the restrictions the next month to reopen its sanctions-hit economy.

Hackers manipulated employees to access accounts: Twitter

'They accessed tools only available to our internal support teams to target 130 accounts'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Twitter says hackers "manipulated" some of its employees to access accounts in a high-profile attack on the social media company, including those of Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden and tech entrepreneur Elon Musk.

Posts trying to dupe people into sending the hackers Bitcoin were tweeted by the official accounts of Apple, Uber, Bill Gates and many others on Wednesday, forcing Twitter to lock large

numbers of accounts in damage control.

Virtual currency

More than \$1,00,000 worth of the virtual currency was sent to email addresses mentioned in the tweets, according to Blockchain.com, which monitors crypto transactions. "We know that they accessed tools only available to our internal support teams to target 130 Twitter accounts," said a statement posted on Saturday on Twitter's blog.

For 45 of those accounts,



the hackers were able to reset passwords, login and send tweets, it added, while the personal data of up to eight unverified users was downloaded. Twitter locked down affected accounts and

removed the fraudulent tweets. It also shut off accounts not affected by the hack as a precaution. Most of those have now been restored, Twitter said on Saturday.

The attack was carried out by a group of young friends with no links to state or organised crime, *The New York Times* reported on Friday.

The paper said it interviewed four people who participated in the hacking, who shared logs and screenshots backing up their accounts of what happened.

The young hackers said a mysterious user who went by the name "Kirk" initiated the scheme with a message and was the one with access to Twitter accounts. They added they were only involved in taking control of lesser-known but desirable Twitter accounts, such as an "@" sign and single letters or numbers that could easily be sold, according to the report.

The hackers maintained they stopped serving as middlemen for "Kirk" when high-profile users became targets.

"It was very moving, very moving to see hundreds of thousands of people from all

10,000 march in anti-Kremlin protest

They call for release of regional Governor, who was detained last week

REUTERS

MOSCOW

At least 10,000 people marched in the Russian far eastern city of Khabarovsk on Saturday, demanding the release of a popular regional Governor detained last week on suspicion of murder, in a second week of protests.

Sergei Furgal, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party, was the Governor of the Khabarovsk region where he swept to power in 2018 after defeating a rival from the ruling United Russia party that backs President Donald Trump. It is unclear when Mr. Biden began receiving the intelligence briefings, which are normal for major party presidential nominees.

Pre-trial detention

Mr. Furgal was taken to Moscow last week, where he is now in pre-trial detention after being charged with involvement in the murder of multiple businessmen 15 years ago.



Protest against detention: People holding posters reading "Freedom for Khabarovsk region's Governor Sergei Furgal" during Saturday's protest. ■ AP

He could face up to life in prison if found guilty of the charges, which also include involvement in attempted murder. He denies the charges.

Demonstrators packed a city thoroughfare on a sweltering Saturday afternoon, carrying posters in support of Mr. Furgal, some demanding his release, others calling for an open and transparent trial, with the column of

marchers stretching into the horizon.

Referendum win

The protests come barely three weeks after a landslide referendum victory for the Kremlin on amendments to the Constitution, allowing Mr. Putin to remain in power for another 16 years.

Dozens were arrested in Moscow last week after a few hundred protested against the amendments. Last Saturday, between 10,000 and 12,000 people took part in a march in Khabarovsk, the local branch of the Interior Ministry said. This Saturday, fewer than 10,000 marched, the city Mayor's office said, adding that the protest was peaceful and there were no detentions.

Ukraine plane's black boxes sent to France

Reading will begin on Monday: Iran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TEHRAN

Iran has sent to France the black boxes of a Ukrainian passenger plane its forces mistakenly shot down in January, a Foreign Ministry official said in a media report on Saturday.

The black boxes were transferred to Paris yesterday by aviation organisation officials and a judge, and their reading will start on Monday," Mohsen Baharvand, Deputy Foreign Minister for international and legal affairs, was quoted as saying by the *Etemad* newspaper.

Flight 752, an Ukraine International Airlines jetliner, was struck by two missiles

and crashed shortly after taking off from Tehran's main airport on January 8.

'Human error'

The Islamic republic admitted days later that its forces accidentally shot down the Kiev-bound jetliner, killing all 176 people on board. Iran has said that the misalignment of an air defence unit's radar system was the key "human error" that led to the plane's downing.

Canada, whose nationals made up most of the victims on board the jetliner, had demanded for months along with Ukraine that Iran send the black boxes abroad so their contents can be analysed.

ELSEWHERE



Australia suspends Parliament for 2 weeks

SYDNEY
Australia's Parliament will be suspended for two weeks over fears that politicians could bring COVID-19 from outbreak hotspots to the country's capital, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced on Saturday. The announcement means that Parliament will not reconvene until at least August 24, having resumed on June 8. ■ AP

China floods kill 14, force opening of dam's gates

BEIJING
At least 14 people have died in the latest round of seasonal rains and flooding in southern China. Three floodgates of the Three Gorges Dam that spans the Yangtze were opened as the water level behind the massive dam rose more than 50 feet above flood level, Xinhua reported. ■ AP

Fire damages 15th-century French cathedral

Prosecutors suspect arson, open inquiry into blaze at the Gothic structure



Taking control: Fire-fighters battling a blaze at the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in Nantes on Saturday. ■ REUTERS

"After Notre-Dame, the St. Peter and St. Paul Cathedral is in flames. Support to the firemen who are taking all the risks to save the Gothic jewel," President Emmanuel Macron tweeted from Brussels, where he was attending an EU summit.

Smoke was still coming out of the Gothic structure later on Saturday morning.

The blaze comes just over a year after a massive fire at the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, which destroyed its roof and main spire.

completely destroyed, he said. Stained glass windows at the front of the cathedral were blown out.

However, the damage was not as bad as initially feared. "We are not in a Notre-Dame de Paris scenario. The roof has not been touched," Mr. Ferlay said.

Local fire chief Laurent Ferlay told reporters 104 firemen were still at the site to ensure the blaze was completely under control.

The fire broke out behind the grand organ, which was

very early," Mr. Castex told reporters.

It was not the first time fire has damaged the cathedral in Nantes, which is about 340 km southwest of Paris.

Incidents in 1944, 1972
It was partly destroyed during the Second World War in 1944 after Allied bombings. In 1972 a fire completely ravaged its roof.

It was finally rebuilt 13 years later with a concrete structure replacing the ancient wooden roof.

"The fire of 1972 is in our minds, but at this stage the simulation is not comparable," Nantes Mayor Johanna Rolland told reporters.

In 2015, a fire that appeared to have been caused by renovation work destroyed most of the roof of another church in Nantes, the Saint Donatien Basilica.

French prosecutors said they had opened an arson inquiry, noting the blaze had erupted in "three separate places".

After new cases emerge, China rolls out mass testing in Xinjiang

It is to eventually cover all of Urumqi, the province's capital

REUTERS

SHANGHAI

Urumqi, the capital of China's far western region of Xinjiang, has gone into "wartime mode" and launched an emergency response plan after the city reported 16 new COVID-19 cases on Friday.

State broadcaster CCTV cited unnamed officials as telling a press conference on Saturday that the city had suspended gatherings and ordered communities to restrict visits to other households.

It urged people not to make unnecessary trips outside the city and ordered infection tests for anyone who wished to leave Urumqi, aiming to prevent the spread of the virus.

'Wartime' response
It has also carried out city-wide free infection tests, officials told the press conference as part of what the offi-

cials termed a "wartime" response.

On its official Weibo account on Saturday, the regional government said all recent new infections and asymptomatic cases reported in the autonomous region were in Urumqi.

Rui Baolong, director of the disease control and prevention centre in Urumqi, told the news conference that recent cases in the city were associated with a cluster of activities, with all confirmed cases and asymptomatic infections reported in the city.



A woman at a subway station in Beijing. ■ AP

matic infections reported in Tianshan District, CCTV said. She didn't say what activities were involved.

Xinjiang has so far mostly avoided the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic which erupted in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year. As of July 17, the region reported a total of 17 cases, plus 11 asymptomatic cases. Another 269 people were under medical observation, according to the regional health commission. It reported another 12 asymptomatic cases as of noon on Saturday.

The city launched an emergency response plan on Friday to analyse confirmed cases and asymptomatic infections, state broadcaster CCTV reported, adding the government would carry out epidemiological investigations to trace the source of the infection in order to make sure none was missed.

John Lewis, towering figure of Civil Rights era, dies at 80

He was among the early activists who fought segregation

KATHARINE Q. SEELYE



John Lewis in a 2007 photo. ■ AP

nities of second-class citizenship. At nearly every turn, he was beaten, spat upon or burned with cigarettes. He was tormented by white mobs and absorbed body blows from law enforcement.

On March 7, 1965, he led one of the most famous marches in American history. In the vanguard of 600 people demanding the voting rights they had been denied, Mr. Lewis marched partway across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, into a waiting phalanx of state troopers in riot gear. Ordered to disperse, the protesters silently stood their ground. The troopers responded with tear gas and rubber tubing wrapped in barbed wire. In the melee, known as Bloody Sunday, a trooper cracked Mr. Lewis's skull with a billy club, knocking him to the ground, then hit him again when he tried to get up.

Once registered, millions of African Americans began transforming politics across the South. They gave Jimmy Carter, a son of Georgia, his margin of victory in the 1976 presidential election. And their voting power opened the door for Black people, including Mr. Lewis, to run for public office. Elected in 1986, he became the second African American in Congress from Georgia since Reconstruction.

While Mr. Lewis represented Atlanta, his natural constituency was disadvantaged people everywhere. Known less for sponsoring major legislation than for his relentless pursuit of justice, his colleagues called him "the conscience of the Congress". ■ NY TIMES

and crashed shortly after taking off from Tehran's main airport on January 8.

'Human error'

The Islamic republic admitted days later that its forces accidentally shot down the Kiev-bound jetliner, killing all 176 people on board. Iran has said that the misalignment of an air defence unit's radar system was the key "human error" that led to the plane's downing.

Canada, whose nationals made up most of the victims on board the jetliner, had demanded for months along with Ukraine that Iran send the black boxes abroad so their contents can be analysed.

Flight 752, an Ukraine International Airlines jetliner, was struck by two missiles

New 26AS to show major transactions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department on Saturday said the new Form 26AS would have additional details of taxpayers' high-value financial transactions undertaken during a financial year and facilitate voluntary compliance and ease of e-filing of IT returns.

Form 26AS is an annual consolidated tax statement that can be accessed from the income-tax website by taxpayers using Permanent Account Number (PAN).

The earlier Form 26AS used to give information regarding tax deducted and collected at source relating to a PAN, besides other information.

But now, the new form will have Statement of Financial Transactions in various categories to help taxpayers recall all their major financial transactions so that they have a ready reckoner while filing the ITR, the Central Board of Direct Taxes said.

Growers wary of Rubber Act's repeal; board says no proposal

Without Act, 1.3 mn farmers to suffer: sector representatives

K.A. MARTIN
KOCHI

The rubber sector, which has about 1.3 million rubber farmers contributing to a ₹1-lakh crore industry, is in turmoil amid concerns that the Centre plans to repeal the Rubber Act of 1947.

The very existence of the Rubber Board, the system of licensing, extension, replanting, research, subsidies, control over export-import and a host of other support systems depend on the Act. Withdrawal of the Act would empower the Centre to disband the board and end the present system of rubber farming, growers' representatives fear.

Jose K. Mani, MP, asserted that any 'move to repeal the Rubber Act' is a 'declaration of war against the people'.

But sources in the sector suspect that reports of the likely repeal of the Act, which first surfaced in 2016,

HDFC Bank Q1 net profit rises 19.6%, provisions climb 49%

Continued slowdown may lead to rise in number of defaults, warns lender

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI



Banking on cash: The lender's continued focus on deposits helped maintain a healthy liquidity coverage ratio. ■ PTI

HDFC Bank on Saturday reported first-quarter net profit rose 19.6% to ₹6,658.6 crore, from ₹5,568.16 crore a year earlier, helped by double-digit growth in net interest income and reduced operating costs.

The private sector lender, however, registered a 48.9% increase in provisioning for possible defaults. Provisions and contingencies rose to ₹3,891.5 crore in the three months ended June, from ₹2,613.7 crore in the corresponding period in 2019. Total provisions for the quarter included contingent provisions of about ₹1,000 crore and the bank cautioned that there was a risk that defaults could rise as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The continued slowdown may lead to a rise in the number of customer de-

faults and consequently an increase in provisions the reagent against," the bank said in a regulatory filing to the stock exchanges.

"The continued slowdown in economic activity has led to a decrease in loan originations, the sale of third party products, the use of credit and debit cards by customers, the efficiency in collection efforts and waiver

of certain fees," the lender stated, adding that fees/other income were lower by about ₹2,000 crore as a result.

Net revenue (net interest income plus other income) grew to ₹19,740.7 crore in the April-June quarter, from ₹18,264.5 crore.

Net interest income (interest earned less interest expended) grew by 17.8% to

₹15,665.4 crore, driven by growth in advances of 20.9%, and a growth in deposits of 24.6%. The net interest margin was 4.3%.

Management transition'

"Such resilient performance is highly comforting," said Rajiv Mehta, lead analyst at Yes Securities. "However, we would be closely monitoring moratorium data, management's recent assessment of the COVID impact and management transition," Mr. Mehta added.

The total balance sheet size was ₹15,45,103 crore, an increase of 22.1%. Deposits rose to ₹11,89,387 crore.

"The bank's continued focus on deposits helped in the maintenance of a healthy liquidity coverage ratio at 140%, well above the regulatory requirement. Total advances as of June 30, 2020, were ₹10,03,299 crore, up 20.9%," the lender said.

Levy on digital services is ambiguous, say tax experts

Impost blurs line between digital and physical, they assert

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI

The Finance Ministry's move to impose an equalisation levy of 2% on e-commerce supplies and services from April 1 has led to a lot of ambiguity and needs clarity, according to tax experts.

The first instalment of payment became due on July 7. Earlier, the government had imposed a 6% equalisation levy on online advertisement services by non-resident entities. Later, the scope was expanded to online sale of goods and provision of services from April 1.

"The language is quite ambiguous. The concerns are genuine," said K. Vaitheswaran, a Chennai-based advocate and tax consultant.

"While the intention appears to be taxing e-commerce, it cannot end up taxing transactions where the medium is only the Internet," he said.

"There should be a dis-

tinction between digital goods/digital services on one hand and goods and services supplied using the digital medium as a mode of delivery or for transacting," he said.

Mr. Vaitheswaran, who had authored the book 'Taxation of Digital Economy,' pointed out that, for instance, booking a film ticket online will not make movie screens e-commerce suppliers but downloading a film would become an e-commerce supply.

"Digital offerings of non-residents such as online books/online games/online gaming services (under specified circumstances) seem to come under the purview of the expanded equalisation levy. This is also in line with digital tax enactments by some other economies," said Vishal Malhotra, tax leader for technology, media and entertainment and telecom, EY India.

However, he pointed out the way the provisions were worded, one could also interpret the same to bring sale of physical goods as also services enjoyed offline within the purview of the equalisation levy.

Mr. Malhotra said many businesses negotiated supply and service agreements online and use electronic means for confirming contracts but the delivery of goods and/or services was largely offline.

An example of this could be orders placed online for commodities such as oil on a portal.

The intent cannot aim to bring billions of dollars of cross-border commodity purchase transactions within the ambit of the equalisation levy. This is also in line with digital tax enactments by some other economies," said Vishal Malhotra, tax leader for technology, media and entertainment and telecom, EY India.

He urged the government to provide clarity to help avoid litigation.

Vodafone Idea pays ₹1,000 cr. in AGR dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea on Saturday said it had paid an additional ₹1,000 crore to the government towards the statutory dues, taking its total payment to ₹7,854 crore. The company had earlier deposited ₹6,854 crore in three tranches, Vodafone Idea said in a regulatory filing.

"In line with the above, the company has yesterday (July 17, 2020) paid a further sum of ₹1,000 crore to the DoT (Department of Telecom) towards the AGR dues. The company had earlier deposited ₹6,854 crore in three tranches," according to the filing.

Vodafone Idea was facing a staggering ₹58,000 crore demand in overall statutory dues, after the Supreme Court last year ordered non-telecom revenues to be included in calculating statutory liabilities.

Rajaratnam, IRS, could 'smell the brief'

He was synonymous with I-T law

R.V. EASWAR

In the last few decades, if there was one man whose name was synonymous with the law of income-tax, it was that of Mr. S. Rajaratnam, IRS, who breathed his last on Saturday at the age of 93.

My lawyer-friend told me while breaking the news this morning that in the last twenty years

OBITUARY

era, particularly for the junior members of the Bar. He could "smell the brief" as they say! You had only to stand up, and he would anticipate all your arguments and sum it up for you. He would have looked up all the facts and all the law himself. He never stood on the formalities of a judicial proceeding; his only aim was to do justice.

Patience he had in abundance; not a frown creased his face, nor a harsh word was uttered.

The profession will undoubtedly miss Mr. Rajaratnam's sobering counsel. The values he stood for are eternal. His motto in life appeared to me to be only to share his stupendous knowledge with others so that it may benefit them.

(The writer is a retired judge of the Delhi High Court and previously, the President of ITAT)

INTERVIEW | BARNIK CHITRAN MAITRA

Agriculture sector needs reforms for sustainability'

Farm potential unrealised: Arthur D. Little managing partner

MINI TEJASWI

India should urgently look at comprehensive reforms to make agriculture a sustainable and scalable industry, says Barnik Chitrani Maitra, managing partner, India, South Asia, at global consulting firm Arthur D. Little. In an interview, Mr. Maitra discussed many issues around sustainability, falling farmer incomes, better price realisation, value addition, cold chain infrastructure and management. Edited excerpts:

Where does India's agriculture sector stand now?

■ The country has made big strides in agriculture. Post-liberalisation, the yield has increased, and is the third-largest producer by value.

However, the sector realises only 50 to 60% of its potential. Price realisation is affected by the APMC Act and middlemen. Except for a few crops (rice, wheat) and a few States (Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh), the selling price for the farmer is 15-50% below the minimum support price (MSP).

The country's food processing value addition is less than 10% of the produce while for most developed economies this is 100

to 300%.

How can farming be made a sustainable occupation?

■ The agriculture sector employs over 52% of the workforce, contributing to only 14% of the Gross Domestic Product

be enforced beyond three States and it triggered food inflation and macroeconomic instability.

There are other ways: increased price realisation for the farmers, so [that] they get most of the consumer surplus, and use of technology and supply aggregation platforms for storage, logistics and better price discovery. There is potential to create a segment of processed and branded food, to increase farmers' income.

Any suggestions to reform the farm sector?

■ The country should follow a five-point agenda for reform: focus on sustainable yield improvements through scientific farming practices; improve agriculture marketing to increase farmers' price realisation through policy changes; set up an Integrated Agriculture Export Mission to scale up food processing and exports to increase value addition from 10% to 50%; promote direct marketing through farmer producer organisations; and, seriously work on reforms in the agriculture sector.



Domestic aviation gets single-window clearance cell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Civil Aviation Ministry has set up a single-window clearance mechanism to expedite various investment proposals in the domestic aviation industry.

"MoCA (the Ministry of Civil Aviation) has an Investment Clearance Cell (ICC) for prompt assistance and clearance," the Ministry said in a tweet on Saturday.

The setting up of the ICC was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the 2020-2021 Union Budget in February this year, as per MoCA.

According to a Ministry order of July 16, the cell was also set up following an order from the Department of Promotion of Industry and Trade (DPIIT) on July 1 in this regard.

The 10-member ICC will be headed by Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary in the Aviation Ministry, according to the MoCA order.

The ICC has been mandated to serve as a single-window system for attracting investment and its terms of reference include accelerating investments, bringing projects to the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS) and which require special incentive, policy interventions, expeditious clearances and systematic references, among others, the MoCA order said.

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A B-ME

SNAPSHOTS



Warm close-up

The Solar Orbiter, a Sun-observing mission jointly organised by the NASA and ESA, launched on February 10, has sent down the first images of the Sun from a distance of about half the Earth-Sun distance. This is the closest observation of the Sun so far, and it shows 'campfire' like structures that could be miniature solar flares. These formations could perhaps explain the Sun's coronal heating.



Smell secrets

Neurobiologists at the Harvard Medical School have studied mice to see how the brain transforms information about odour chemistry into the perception of smell and how individuals have a highly personalised sensation of smell. Using machine learning, the researcher computed how "alike" smells were and exposed mice to study these odours. The study was published in the journal *Nature*.

Study finds evidence of vertical transmission of coronavirus across the placenta

Placenta, amniotic fluid and baby's blood, nasopharyngeal and rectal samples tested positive

R. PRASAD

Transmission through droplets and contact with contaminated surfaces seem to be the major routes of novel coronavirus spread. The World Health Organization recently acknowledged that "short-range aerosol transmission" of the virus "cannot be ruled out" in specific indoor locations which are crowded, inadequately ventilated and where exposure to the infected person is over a prolonged period of time. Now, a study has found evidence that confirms vertical transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus from the mother to the foetus. The route of infection is through the womb (*in utero*) well before the onset of labour and delivery of the baby.

About half-a-dozen studies published in medical journals have already suggested vertical transmission as a possible route but have not been able to provide strong evidence about the route of spread – transplacental or transcervical – of the virus from the mother to the child. These studies could not confirm the transmission route because samples of placenta, amniotic fluid and blood of the mother and the newborn were not collected and tested in every mother-infant pair.

For instance, in a study published recently in the journal *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*, only the placenta and nasopharyngeal swab samples of the mother were tested for the virus. Though nasopharyngeal swab samples of the



Route of spread: From the mother's blood, the virus causes placental infection and inflammation, gets into the neonate's blood. ■ GETTY IMAGES

newborn collected on the day of birth and on two other days, plasma and stool samples tested positive for the virus, the researchers did not collect and test the cord blood. Hence the researchers classified it a "probable" case of congenital route of vertical transmission.

Strong evidence

In contrast, the results published recently in *Nature Communications* involving one mother-newborn pair provide strong evidence of "confirmed" vertical transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus through the "transplacental" route.

Studying how the virus reaches the foetus, the researchers of the *Nature Communications* paper led

by Danièle De Luca from Paris Saclay University, France, found that the virus first occurs in the mother's blood and later causes placental infection and inflammation. The virus then gets into the blood of the neonate following placental infection. The neonate also showed clinical manifestation of COVID-19 in terms of neurological signs and symptoms.

The mother aged 23 years, at 35 weeks of gestation, was admitted to the hospital in March with symptoms of coronavirus infection. Real-time PCR detected the presence of two genes (E and S) of the virus in the blood and in nasopharyngeal and vaginal swab samples.

To check for vertical transmission, the researchers first collected

clear amniotic fluid prior to rupture of membranes. The amniotic fluid tested positive for two genes of the virus. The baby was delivered through caesarean section to avoid infection during normal childbirth; caesarean delivery is routinely done in the case of HIV positive mothers to cut the risk of vertical transmission.

Confirming infection

To confirm infection in the newborn, the researchers collected blood and bronchoalveolar lavage samples soon after birth and tested them for the virus. Both samples tested positive. They also collected nasopharyngeal and rectal swab samples at three time points – one hour after birth, and three and 18 days of postnatal age. These too tested positive for the virus, confirming infection with SARS-CoV-2.

The amount of virus in different tissues both in the mother and newborn varied. "Viral load was much higher in placental tissue, than in amniotic fluid and maternal or neonatal blood," they write. In the case of the newborn, the nasopharyngeal sample collected on day three after birth had higher viral load, while the blood contained the least amount of the virus.

"Our findings confirm that transplacental transmission is indeed possible in the last weeks of pregnancy, although we cannot exclude a possible transmission and foetal consequences earlier during the pregnancy," they write.



Vitalising light: Vitamin D is produced when sunlight falls on the skin and triggers a chemical reaction. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Arming India's poor against the pandemic

Vitamins and nutritious food subsidy are indispensable in this fight



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

There have been considerable discussions in scientific circles on the importance of vitamin D in these days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Maryam Edabi and Aldo Montana-Loza have published a paper titled, "Perspective: Improving vitamin D status in the management of COVID-19," in *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2020) 74:856-859; <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41430-0200661>, which points out how vitamin D deficiency can affect COVID-19 high-risk patients, particularly those who are diabetic, have heart conditions, pneumonia, obesity and those who smoke. It is also associated with infections in the respiratory tract and lung injury.

Besides, vitamin D is known to help in having the right amount of calcium in the bones, catalyse the process of protecting cell membranes from damage, preventing the inflammation of tissues and helping stop tissues from forming fibres and weakening bones from becoming brittle, leading to osteoporosis. Thus, the levels of vitamin D (and calcium) in human (and animal) bodies need to be monitored and when necessary, and administered in appropriate doses and frequency, externally by a trained clinician.

Vitamin D and its prevalence

The easy to read site ods.od.nih.gov describes vitamin D in detail. It is produced when sunlight (or artificial light, particularly in the ultraviolet region of 190-400 nm wavelength) falls on the skin and triggers a chemical reaction to a cholesterol-based molecule, and converts it into calcidiol (adding one hydroxyl group, also called 25(OH)D technically) in the liver and into calcitriol (or 1, 25(OH)2D) in the kidney. It is these two molecules that are physiologically active. It is suggested that the level of 25-OHD in the range 30-100 ng/ml is thought to be sufficient for a healthy body; levels between 21-29 ng/ml are considered insufficient, and levels below 20 ng/ml mean the individual is deficient in the vitamin.

Since sunlight is important for the generation of vitamin D, tropical countries have an advantage over the northern countries. India, being a tropical country, one would expect naturally derived vitamin D levels to be good. Yet, it is not so!

Indeed a paper by Sandhya Selvarajan and colleagues, titled, "Systematic review on vitamin D level in apparently healthy Indian population and analysis of its associated factors" was published in September 2017, in *Indian Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 2017; 21(5):765-775, free access directly or through <http://www.ijem.in/text.asp?2017/21/5/765/21/5/765/214773>. The group did a thorough and exhaustive analysis of over 2,998 published papers and reports, and also data from studies done in various states of India (North Zone, comprising Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana; East Zone: Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal; West Zone: Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa and Maharashtra; South Zone: Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu and the Northeast Zone: Assam, Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh). Overall, these 40 studies provided a sample of 19,761 persons. The level of vitamin D from all these 40 studies ranged between 3.15 ng/ml to 52.9 ng/ml. Vitamin D level among south Indians is (15.74-19.16) ng/ml, yet below 20. Also, females showed consistently lower levels than males.

The authors conclude that India, a nation of abundant sunshine, is surprisingly found to have a massive burden of vitamin D deficiency among the public irrespective of their location (urban or rural), age or gender, or whether they are poor or even rich. Hence, it is clear that vitamin D supplementation is necessary for most Indians to treat its deficiency.

Nutritive food

The Central and State governments, as well as public-spirited foundations, companies and even sympathetic public have been very helpful in offering free food for crores of poor, particularly, migrant workers. In addition, almost all of them are extremely poor and have had to depend on such food. Their vitamin D levels must certainly be less (far less) than 10 ng/ml. Typically, these food supplies have included wheat or rice, and grains (chana, urad and the like), and some highly subsidised items of food (sugar, milk and such). Vegetables are not given – raw or cooked – though cooked meals are offered in cities and towns by the State governments and private foundations, at affordable prices. Also, the main government schemes of giving free mid-day meal scheme for students studying in government schools, and the feeding programmes for preschool children and pregnant women under the Integrated Child Development Services through anganwadis have been vital.

Given the deficit in vitamin D (indeed in many other vitamins, and calcium), it is highly desirable for the governments to (a) consult nutrition experts and institutions to advise and suggest the type of nutritive items that can be added to the current 'ration' food given to the poor, and the meals given to school children, (b) in any case, supply free of charge, vitamin D, other vitamins and calcium, in consultation with medical and public health experts regarding the dosage, frequency and other details. There are excellent Indian companies that manufacture these. With these steps, India will have armed its poor against not just the current, but future pandemics as well.

(*I thank Drs. Mahtab Bamji and Ghanshyam Swarup, and Shakti Balasubramanian for their inputs and advice.*)

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Question Corner

Self-amputation in lizards

How does a lizard lose its tail?

Certain animals voluntarily shed a body part in response to attempted predation. Lizards losing their tails when they are pulled by a predator is well known. This self-amputation is called autotomy.

The severed tail continues to wiggle for about 30 minutes. Studies have shown that the severed tail follows an elaborate repetitive and diverse motion, which includes flips up to 3 cm in height. The wiggly motion very often distracts the attention of the predator, thus enabling the lizard to escape.

Now, researchers at Aarhus University have found the answer to what allows lizards to shed their tails easily. They found that tail

autotomy occurs at preformed horizontal fracture planes. In the case of tail autotomy within the vertebra, the tail gets fractured or split at a distinct preformed area of weakness. Studies have shown that lizards aid the process of autotomy by "contracting muscles around the fracture planes".

The muscle contractions are supposed to "facilitate splitting of the skin and muscles to complete the release of the tail".

According to their findings published in December 2012 in the journal *PLOS ONE*, the mechanism of tail autotomy in Tokay gecko is determined by pre-formed 'dotted lines' in the fracture planes, which are maintained by adhesion and microstructures seen at the terminal end of the muscle fibres also likely play a role in releasing the tail.

The pre-formed fracture surfaces are found at specified intervals all along the lizard's tail.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

Previously unknown faults at the foot of the Himalaya discovered

These could cause earthquakes in the densely populated Nepal region

ASWATHI PACHA

Data from an oil and gas exploration company has helped geologists discover a series of faults at the foot of the Himalaya. The international team notes that this fault system in the southeastern region of Nepal has the potential to cause earthquakes in the country.

The team looked at seismic reflection data, routinely collected by exploration companies looking for oil and gas. In this method, seismic waves are produced by small explosions at multiple sources, and many recorders called geophones record the sound echoing off layers beneath the surface.

Composite image
The signals are combined to make an image that looks like a slice showing layers through the top few kilometres of the Earth's crust. The researchers were able to identify the faults because the pattern of layers showed bends.

"Our research highlights



Deeper look: The work highlights the need to look below the surface to fully understand earthquakes and structures within the Himalaya. ■ JOHN WALDRON

the need to look below the surface, and further afield, to fully understand earthquakes and structures within the Himalaya," said Michael J. Duvall a graduate student from the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta, Canada, in a release. "This network of faults show that the Himalayan deformation reaches further [about 40 kilometres further south] than we previously thought." He is the first author of the paper recently published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

Seismic waves

When asked if this fault could affect India, corresponding author John W.F. Waldron explained in an email to *The Hindu*: "The faults we detected don't appear to extend into India, but seismic waves from an earthquake occurring on them might affect regions of India near the border...

other similar faults might be present elsewhere along the southern edge of the Himalaya and might extend beneath northern India. We don't currently have access to data that would help us explore this."

He adds that the work with seismologists might add to the present study by clarifying how these faults move.

"The problem is that good scientific records of earthquakes go back less than a hundred years. During this time there don't seem to have been any earthquakes on the faults that we discovered. However, the time between earthquakes on typical faults is often hundreds or thousands of years, and is very haphazard," explains Prof. Waldron.

As to whether 2015 Nepal earthquakes could have had a connection to this fault, he answered that they "occurred much further within the mountain belt. As far as we know, the faults we newly discovered did not move in that event."

Prof. Waldron adds: "General earthquake preparedness is most important in my opinion, rather than trying to guess where the next earthquake will be. Making sure buildings are safe in an earthquake is important."

Pandemic may call for sustained support for health-care workers

Managers of health-care workers must anticipate effects of stresses peculiar to the present crisis

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed health-care systems across the world to the very brink. This is not just about lack of infrastructure but also about stretching health-care workers to their limits. From having to make very difficult decisions, for example, regarding allotment of resources, to breaking bad news often to families of patients, health-care workers are under tremendous pressure. In this context, an *Analysis* published in *The British Medical Journal* compares the trauma faced by health-care workers during the pandemic to that of a war situation and advocates giving them adequate support and counsel before, during and after the crisis.

The type of decisions health-care workers may have to take could range over allocating scant resources, balancing their own needs

against those of patients, allotting time for family over the demands of duty and so on. All of these could result in "moral injury" – a term borrowed from military usage by the authors, referring to the psychological distress that results from actions that violate someone's ethical or moral code.

The authors advocate that this can be prevented by preparing the personnel for what they are going to encounter, and providing enough support and encouragement during and after the crisis, in such a way that they do not take the route to mental illness and instead move towards post-traumatic growth.

Post-traumatic growth
Post-traumatic growth refers to positive changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviour following traumatic life events. "It may present as being more able to cope with

adversity in the future or feeling less anxious when thinking about future challenging events," says Neil Greenberg, Professor of Defence Mental Health with King's College London and trauma lead at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, in an email to *The Hindu*. He is an author of the paper. He further adds, "This may come across as increased optimism, more positive mood and better coping when adversity strikes."

Prof. Greenberg further explains, "Many people find it hard to talk about what did not 'go right' because they fear being judged or reprimanded... or they may feel a seething anger at their bosses for not supporting them which they do not speak about as they fear they may lose control and this might lead to problems at work." He suggests that reflective practice sessions, by leaders who speak about what did

not go right for them, may help people develop a meaningful narrative. "Best to do this either periodically as the crisis is ongoing or shortly afterwards as people are trying to make sense of what they have experienced," he says.

Indian context

In India, for several reasons,

systems have not been stretched as much as the European systems.

However, here too, there is a chance that mental health issues may crop up. Chennai-based psychiatrist, Dr M. Suresh Kumar, currently Director of Psymed Hospital, who has worked internationally in public mental health, has this to say: "Young people are at the forefront of this fight, and many of them may not be adequately prepared to work under such circumstances... there is a chance of moral injury occurring." He also points out that professionals such as doctors or nurses do not readily ask for help or reveal stress. They should be encouraged to speak out and be provided ongoing help rather than a one-time help. According to Dr Suresh Kumar, peer support is easier to accept. He adds, "Most important is to express appreciation of the service."

Tough work: From making difficult decisions to breaking bad news often, health-care workers face undue stress now. ■ AFP

have experienced," he says.

Indian context

In India, for several reasons,

including the early lapse into lockdowns, and perhaps the demography, the medical

systems have not been stretched as much as the European systems.

However, here too, there is a chance that mental health issues may crop up. Chennai-based psychiatrist, Dr M. Suresh Kumar, currently Director of Psymed Hospital, who has worked internationally in public mental health, has this to say: "Young people are at the forefront of this fight, and many of them may not be adequately prepared



BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Psoriasis drug in COVID-19 therapy

Why are monoclonal antibodies being used to treat patients with SARS-CoV-2?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: On July 11, pharma major Biocon announced that it had received the approval of the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to market Itolizumab for treatment of cytokine release syndrome (CRS) in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome patients due to COVID-19. Itolizumab is a monoclonal antibody which is used to treat acute psoriasis.

What are monoclonal antibodies? Monoclonal antibodies are proteins cloned in the lab to mimic antibodies produced by the immune system to counter an infection. They have their genesis in serum, the colourless constituent of blood that contains antibodies. These proteins bind to an antigen, the fragment of an infectious virus in the case of SARS-CoV-2, and either destroy it or block its action. In the case of COVID-19, there are yet no proven drugs to treat moderate or severe manifestations of the disease. Among the therapies being tested is convalescent plasma, which is a constituent of blood and recovered from those who have successfully fought the disease. This blood contains antibodies produced within a week or two of being infected. While plasma therapy involves injecting this entire antibody-soup into another sick patient, a

monoclonal antibody can be made by isolating specific antibodies and multiplying them via various techniques. Isolating plasma and serum is laborious and time-consuming when it must be administered to every patient. However, since 1975, several techniques have been perfected that allow antibodies once isolated to be easily replicated. These are stored in vials and can be injected into patients.

How useful are they in treating COVID-19 patients?

While eight in 10 of those infected by the disease recover with little more than a few days of cough and fever, about one in 10 can manifest severe systems of the disease irrespective of their age and medical history. Experts are not sure why, but have observed that many who died were victims of a cytokine storm – when the immune system goes into overdrive to flush out the virus. Pro-inflammatory cytokines recruit a host of specialised immune system cells to neutralise antigens. However, these cytokines can aggravate inflammation and injury in lung cells as well as in several other organs. A challenge in treatment is how to prevent this over-reaction. One method is to use antibodies that can block a particular protein, called CD6. They are found on the surface of T-cells, a class of cells that are a central prong in the body's defence system.

Experts say if this CD-6 is suppressed, it will prevent the T-cells from releasing a cytokine cascade and thus better regulate the immune system. There is also a lot of research going on in using such antibodies to prevent the replication of the virus. Since last month there have been reports from laboratories from nearly everywhere, reporting the presence of one or more antibodies that could be used to block the 'spike' protein, the key the coronavirus uses to infiltrate lung cells and proliferate. Before monoclonal antibodies were roped into discussions surrounding COVID-19, research has focused on deriving the right kind of antibodies that specifically bind onto regions of interest. These underpin the design of cancer therapies or fixes for autoimmune diseases, rheumatoid arthritis or acute psoriasis.

Is there a downside?

Sometimes antibodies are known to help viral entry and replication in target cells which can worsen the disease. This is why they need careful evaluation.

Does Itolizumab hold promise in the fight against COVID-19?

Itolizumab is an approved drug for acute psoriasis since 2013 and has passed safety and efficacy trials for that disease in over 500 patients. However, independent experts have pointed out that the efficacy of the drug in treating COVID-caused Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome has not been conclusively demonstrated because it has, as part of a clinical trial, only been tested on 30 patients. However, the drug has been approved by the DCGI for emergency use in the treatment of moderate to severely ill patients as per the discretion of physicians. The DCGI also directed Biocon to conduct a phase-4 study – it must monitor it for adverse reactions or side-effects after it has been administered in large groups of patients and report back to the authorities. Experts pointed out that the normal process for approving a drug includes a phase-3 trial, where the drug's safety and efficacy are first evaluated in the wider population. Officials at Biocon claim they plan to test the drug in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Several doctors, at a press conference organised by Biocon, said their patients had benefitted from the drug but mostly when they were yet to reach a stage before requiring ventilators or external oxygen support. The drug cost a little under ₹8,000 for every vial. Generally, four vials are necessary for treatment, company officials said.

Why is India out of the Chabahar rail project?

Can it rejoin later? What is Iran's stand on the issue? And what about the China link?

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The story so far: The inauguration of a track-laying project from Iran's Chabahar port to Zahedan on the border with Afghanistan on July 7, has ensured that Chabahar – which literally means "four seasons", named for its salubrious weather – is once again in the middle of a storm over the fate of India's investment there. The port project along Iran's southern coast in the Sistan-Baluchestan province has been a part of discussions between New Delhi and Tehran since their first agreement to develop it, in 2003. State-owned IRCON International Limited (IRCON) was associated with the rail project even as India acted quickly to develop Chabahar port facilities. Over the years, the Chabahar project has grown, and now envisages a port, a free trade zone, the 628-km railway line to Zahedan, and then the little over 1,000-km track to Sarakhs on the border with Turkmenistan.

What ties India to Chabahar?

The Chabahar project is ambitious and will require deep pockets, but New Delhi has always weighed its strategic benefits above the costs. India-Iran relations are historic and New Delhi has sought to maintain these ties in the face of opposition from Iran's adversaries, namely the United States, Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Chabahar project ties India and Iran together as New Delhi deals with its difficult neighbour to the west, Pakistan. A major trade and connectivity hub on Iran's coast not only gives India an alternative route to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan, but also has the potential to provide an Indian strategic counter to Pakistan's Gwadar port being developed by China right next door to Chabahar. The Chabahar trade zone could be an important weigh station for India's energy imports and food and material exports coming from Kandla and Mundra ports. And the rail project will allow India an independent corridor not only to Afghanistan, which Pakistan has denied it, but also to Central Asia and Russia someday.

What happened to the rail project?

While the Chabahar port development has moved forward in the last five years, the railway line languished.



BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

After several threats and appeals to India, Iran said it was moving ahead to build the Chabahar-Zahedan line on its own this month, with approximately \$400 million from the National Development Fund of Islamic Republic of Iran.

What was the hitch?

Despite the attractions, India's investment in Chabahar has always been held hostage to international policy shifts on Iran. U.S. policy in particular has swung wildly in the last two decades. It placed heavy sanctions on Iran until nuclear talks between the P-5+1 (the U.S., the U.K.,

France, China, Russia and Germany) that began in 2006, ended successfully with the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. As a result, while India continued to negotiate for Chabahar, it was not until after the sanctions were lifted that talks could make headway. In 2016, the Chabahar agreement, which included the Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport

and Transit Corridor between Afghanistan, Iran and India was signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. It also included the port project and the railway line to be built and funded by IRCON for \$1.6 billion. In 2018, however, U.S. President Donald Trump overturned the JCPOA, and re-imposed stringent sanctions on Iran. This meant India's energy imports from Iran, which was its third largest supplier, had to be

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dropped to zero. Bilateral trade, which depended on a rupee-rial exchange mechanism also stopped. The U.S. gave Chabahar port and rail line a special waiver or "carve-out", but the sanctions made it very difficult for companies dealing with the U.S. to participate in the project.

Are other projects hit too?

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has disclosed that India's ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has been cut out of the development of an Iranian gas field project, Farzad B; both sides had been in talks since 2009. The project, which will now go to an Iranian company, had also floundered due to a combination of U.S. sanctions, Iran's changing conditions and fluctuating prices, as well as India's delayed responses. On the Chabahar-Zahedan rail project, the MEA said IRCON had completed its feasibility studies by December 2019, three years after the memorandum of understanding was signed, but that it had not heard back from Iran. In the meanwhile, Iranian Railway authorities have begun laying tracks. An Iranian official told *The Hindu*, "In the absence of an active Indian engagement and partnership, it is currently under construction by Iranian funding and engineering capacities." Both New Delhi and Tehran have left the door open for IRCON to return to the project at a later date, but for the moment, India is not a part of the railway construction.

What is the China angle?

The announcements on the two projects come even as news filters in of a China-Iran 25-year partnership for \$400 billion to build infrastructure and energy resources in Iran, giving the impression that Iran may be relying more and more on Beijing.

Has India lost an opportunity?

India's stakes in Chabahar remain strong, and no matter who builds the railway line, Indian trade could still find its way to Afghanistan and Central Asia. India's monetary losses are minimal, as it had not invested money or material on the rail line yet. However, there is the worry of reputational damage from the idea that India gave in to U.S. sanctions, a departure from the past. China's growing inroads in Iran could make Indian projects there more unviable. The largest worry is that Chabahar, the enduring symbol of India-Iran friendship, could become collateral damage in a larger proxy war between the U.S. and China.

What is plea bargaining and how does it work?

Will this practice help to avoid long trials? Why is it uncommon in India?

K. VENKATARAMAN

The story so far: Many members of the Tablighi Jamaat belonging to different countries have obtained release from court cases in recent days by means of plea bargaining. Accused of violating visa conditions by attending a religious congregation in Delhi, these foreign nationals have walked free after pleading guilty to minor offences and paying the fines imposed by the court. These cases have brought the focus on plea bargaining as a practice by which time consuming trials can be avoided. Even though plea bargaining is available to those accused of criminal offences in India for over a decade, it is not yet common.

When was it introduced in India?

Plea bargaining refers to a person charged with a criminal offence negotiating with the prosecution for a lesser punishment than what is provided in law by pleading guilty to a less serious offence. It is common in the United States, and has been a successful method of avoiding protracted and complicated trials. As a result, conviction rates are significantly high there. It primarily involves pre-trial negotiations between the accused and the prosecutor. It may involve bargaining on the charge or in the quantum of sentence.

In India, the concept was not part of law until 2006. There has always been a provision in the Code of Criminal Procedure for an accused to plead 'guilty' instead of claiming the right to a full trial, but it is not the same as plea bargaining.

The Law Commission of India, in its 142nd Report, mooted the idea of "concessional treatment" of those who plead guilty on their own volition, but was careful to underscore that it would not involve any plea bargaining or "haggling" with the prosecution.

Plea bargaining was introduced in 2006 as part of a set of amendments to the CrPC as Chapter XXI-A, containing Sections 265A to 265L.



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

In what circumstances is it allowed? How does it work?

Unlike in the U.S. and other countries, where the prosecutor plays a key role in bargaining with the suspected offender, the Indian code makes plea bargaining a process that can be initiated only by the accused; further, the accused will have to apply to the court for invoking the benefit of bargaining.

Cases for which the practice is allowed are limited. Only someone who has been charged with a criminal offence that does not attract the death sentence, life sentence or a prison term above seven years can make use of the scheme under Chapter XXI-A. It is also applicable to private complaints of which a criminal court has taken cognisance. Other categories of cases that cannot be disposed of through plea bargaining are those that involve offences affecting the "socio-economic conditions" of the country, or committed against a woman or a child below the age of 14.

The applicant should approach the court with a petition and affidavit stating that it is a voluntary preference that he has understood the nature and extent of punishment provided in law for the offence. The court would then issue notice to the prosecutor and the complainant or victim, if any, for a hearing. The voluntary nature of the application must be ascertained by the judge in an in-camera hearing at which the other side should not be present. Thereafter, the court may permit the prosecutor, the in-

vestigating officer and the victim to hold a meeting for a "satisfactory disposition of the case". The outcome may involve payment of compensation and other expenses to the victim by the accused.

Once mutual satisfaction is reached, the court shall formalise the arrangement by way of a report signed by all the parties and the presiding officer. The accused may be sentenced to a prison term that is half the minimum period fixed for the offence. If there is no minimum term prescribed, the sentence should run up to one-fourth of the maximum sentence stipulated in law.

What is the rationale for the scheme? What are its benefits?

The Justice Malimath Committee on reforms of the criminal justice system endorsed the various recommendations of the Law Commission with regard to plea bargaining. Some of the advantages it culled out from earlier reports are that the practice would ensure speedy trial, end uncertainty over the outcome of criminal cases, save litigation costs and relieve the parties of anxiety. It would also have a dramatic impact on conviction rates. Prolonged incarceration of offenders without any progress in the case for years and overcrowding of prisons were also other factors that may be cited in support of reducing pendency of cases and decongesting prisons through plea bargaining. Moreover, it may help offenders make a fresh start in life.

Do courts have reservations?

Case law after the introduction of plea bargaining has not developed much as the provision is possibly not used adequately. However, earlier judgments of various courts in cases in which the accused enter a 'guilty' plea with a view to getting lesser sentences indicate that the judiciary may have reservations. Some verdicts disapprove of bargaining with offenders, and point out that lenient sentences could be considered as part of the circumstances of the case after a regular trial. Courts are also very particular about the voluntary nature of the exercise, as poverty, ignorance and prosecution pressure should not lead to someone pleading guilty of offences that may not have been committed.

Who draws up the Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus?

What is the reason for a 30% syllabus reduction this year? How will it impact learning?

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

The story so far: With the COVID-19 pandemic keeping students out of classrooms, forcing schools into various modes of distance education and reducing teaching time, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has decided to cut down its 2020-21 syllabus by 30%, for students from Classes 9-12.

Why does it matter?

Although the CBSE said core concepts will be retained, there has been concern regarding the topics removed from the syllabus. For the sciences and mathematics, some teachers are worried that the topics removed are foundational in order to understand concepts that will be covered in the following academic year. The wider public concern has revolved around social sciences, history, political science and other humanities subjects. Opposition politicians and academics are protesting against the omission of topics such as federalism, citizenship, nationalism, secularism, democracy, and diversity, as well as analysis of recent economic policies such as demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax.

What was the rationale?

"When we interacted with our schools and principals, there was a demand that with this much content in the provided time they can't complete the syllabus," said Joseph Emmanuel, Director of Academics at CBSE. He pointed out that the CBSE has already been in the process



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

of promoting competency-based education and experiential learning, instead of content-based learning dependent on memorising facts. "... in the COVID scenario, we thought why not experiment by integrating different topics for the examination, so that the load on the children is minimised. So the strategy is through pedagogy. You will be integrating new topics and teachers will be giving more focus on concepts, rather than the content."

How is the curriculum compiled?

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is responsible for developing the National Curriculum Framework that all school systems across the country follow. It also prints textbooks based on its syllabus each year, which are used in all CBSE schools.

The CBSE course committees, each with about six to seven members, comprises school teachers as well as university professors. They meet every year to deliberate on changes and updates, and recommend a revised syllabus by February, before the new academic session begins. This year, they were asked to meet again in June to select topics for the 30% reduction. "Mainly we use the NCERT curriculum and syllabus, but there is about 10-

20% variation done by every examination board," said Dr. Emmanuel. "The course committees are an independent group. There was no outside input for the rationalisation process. Being an autonomous body, there is complete independence on academics," he explained. The course committee suggestions were approved by the CBSE's Curriculum Committee and then its Governing Body, which includes representatives from the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development and the Delhi State government, apart from school principals and vice-chancellors.

"Topics suggested for rationalisation have already been covered. For example, concepts such as democracy or federalism have been interwoven from middle level onwards. The children are already familiar with these concepts and they can be taught through various alternative ways," added Dr. Emmanuel. Subjects such as GST and demonetisation may have been left out of Business Studies because they were covered in the Economics syllabus instead, he added.

How does this inform the teaching process?

Teachers say that given the time crunch exacerbated by COVID-19, it is highly unlikely that topics which will not be tested in the examination will be taught in the classroom. "Even in a regular year, many political science teachers omit subjects such as federalism, democracy and citizenship from the political theory chapters in Class 11, in order to begin the Class 12 syllabus instead. They don't see the point in teaching such 'vague' subjects and the COVID-19 rationalisation only validates that kind of thinking. Each school has complete discretion for Class 11 since there is only an internal examination," said a political science teacher from a reputed Delhi school, who did not wish to be named.



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE

The fusion of the divine and the dynastic



The ex-royals of Thiruvananthapuram have retained their ceremonial rights over the temple, but it will be administered by a committee

MANU S. PILLAI

In 1817 the British agent in Travancore reported to his bosses an anxiety the royal house entertained about some of its subjects. The incumbent Rani wished to visit some northern districts but was informed that people in these parts held "feelings of resentment and hostility against the reigning family".

As Colonel Munro explained, this hatred for the dynasty ruling from Thiruvananthapuram apparently stemmed from the fact that these lands were conquered only a few decades before, after which they were long held "by the most cruel and rigorous exercise of despotic power".

As it happened, then, he escorted the Rani on her tour to the area, finding in the process, however, that her fears were overstated: people flocked to see the royals, revealing, he wrote, an "attachment, zeal, and devotion, bordering upon idolatry".

While Munro tried to spin this as a consequence of the state's alliance with the British, in reality the Rani owed her near-divine status to a shrewd ancestor. Martanda Varma, heir to a political backwater in what is now Tamil Nadu's Kanniyanukumari district, had in the 18th century birthed Travancore in fire and blood: dozens of noble houses were destroyed, princely lines were toppled, and conquest upon conquest made.

Aiding him were mercenaries, bribery, a Dutch commander, and English arms. But while he was a sharp strategist, Varma was denied legitimacy in subjugated territories. Many were surprised when he conquered even a state under Brahmin rule – given Hindu soldiers' refusal to fight here, Varma carted in Muslims and Christians. Elsewhere, as his men seized temple property, local priests beat them with brooms.

So, having forged Travancore and become ruler of south Kerala, the Rajah de-

cided to secure legitimacy. And for this, the Padmanabhaswamy temple was critical.

As a site of worship, it is over 1,000 years old, with origin myths featuring a Dalit woman, a sage, and a divine child. While the area's rulers were always wedded to the temple, its present splendour is chiefly Martanda Varma's legacy: the Tamil-style *gopuram*, the magnificent stone corridor, and even the image of the deity, made of 12,008 *salagramas*, replacing the old wooden idol, were installed by this Rajah, employing thousands of sculptors and masons. Famously, 20 years into his reign, Martanda Varma also performed the *trippadidanam*, by which, placing his sword before the shrine, he pledged all his conquests and his person to the deity within.

While this "surrendering" of his possessions may have been a spiritual moment, as the official tale goes, it was also wedded to political goals. By making god his state's owner, the parvenu prince –

seen as an invader, a usurper, a breaker of norms, and a man of ruthless ambition – became "Padmanabha Dasa", god's humble servant. Everything was shielded by the deity's aura now. Festivals were inaugurated, patronage of Brahmins reached unprecedented levels, and his family obtained a caste upgrade, slowly coming to occupy a place next to divinity. As a court historian wrote, Varma "strengthened the position of his heirs" in a "religious" sense; a "sacred regard" was constructed, making the ruler akin to "the Pope in Rome". Why, even to "speak ill" of the ruler became, as the Travancore State Manual put it, equivalent to "blaspheming the deity".

Standard pattern

This fusing of the religious with the political, the divine with the dynastic, was in many ways a standard pattern for Hindu kingship – its romanticising in Travancore, however, expunges the historical circumstances that caused the royal family to ceremoniously broadcast its bond with Padmanabhaswamy.

In the 19th century, as sovereign power slipped into the hands of the British (unsurprising, given that Varma, on his deathbed, while advising his heirs to preserve the temple also asked them to stay close to the East India Company), ritual sovereignty compensated for that loss. Swathi Tirunal, the composer king, made massive donations to the temple, for example, boxed in as he was by

the British who leeched real authority. Subsequent rulers also, several of whom led controversial lives (like many Popes), nevertheless, remained devoted to the temple, which was also a source of prestige.

While in Varma's day, his family came to possess unilateral power over the shrine by cutting to size its council and disbanding the ring of nobles in control, the merger of Travancore with the Indian Union meant new arrangements were made. The government of India re-

featuring outsiders.

In some ways then, while Martanda Varma rendered toothless the council that governed the temple till the 18th century, the court's acceptance of the committee formula by the man's 21st century descendants, is history coming a full circle. The ex-royals will be supreme in ceremonial matters while Padmanabhaswamy's everyday interests will be guided by a group of five: the head priest, a nominee from Delhi, a Kerala government representative, a person nominated by the titular Rajah, and the district judge. For extraordinary expenses, physical alterations, and changes in "fundamental" practices, the Rajah is supreme, but routine power resides with the committee.

For extraordinary expenses, physical alterations, and changes in "fundamental" practices, the Rajah is supreme, but routine power resides with the committee

cognised the ruler's right in the temple, and till his death in 1991, the last king, Bala Varma, was at the helm. His brother held the reins till his own demise in 2013, during which time, however, legal challenges emerged. Indeed, while the recent Supreme Court judgement has been spun as a "victory" for the ex-royals, it actually shows the triumph of compromise: the original claim that the temple was a "private" one was modified to acknowledge it as a public institution; the right to unilateral control made way for administration by a committee.

Elephant in the room
There is, however, an elephant in the room: succession. The court has upheld the matrilineal or *marumakkathayam* system of succession to temple trusteeship. While this is described generally as succession from maternal uncle to nephew, it is more complex. As is the practice with the Zamorin Rajah's family, the ex-royals of Cochin, and even ordinary matrilineal families, the eldest male born in the female line, taking all branches of a house together, becomes the head. In Travancore, this

means lineal heirs of the last Senior Maharani, Sethu Lakshmi Bayi, and Junior Maharani, Sethu Parvathi Bayi. The latter had two sons, the older of whom was the last ruler, the other the man who died in 2013. Her grandson, born in 1949, is the current head. But next in seniority are males born in the 1950s, from the branch of the Senior Maharani (which holds 30 of the 37 total members of the family).

This was a woman whose life proved such a nightmare in Thiruvananthapuram that she exiled herself to Bangalore after Independence and died in obscurity there; despite having herself once ruled the state, the recognition she received was such that in 1949, VP Menon's team, during the integration of the state, found the last ruler behaving as though the Senior Maharani did not even exist. Even the home she built and raised her children in was deemed the property of the Junior Maharani's son. While *marumakkathayam* grants Sethu Lakshmi Bayi's descendants a claim to future trusteeship, whether this will open up fresh complications, given this troubled history, will need to be seen. One branch, by possession of seniority in age of its males, has controlled the temple for nearly a century now; the approaching turn of the other may spark off new dynamics in Padmanabhaswamy's house.

(Manu S. Pillai is the author of *The Ivory Throne: Chronicles of the House of Travancore*)

In Focus

■ It is over 1,000 years old, with origin myths featuring a Dalit woman, a sage, and a divine child

■ Its present splendour is chiefly Martanda Varma's legacy

■ Twenty years into his reign, the Rajah placed his sword before the shrine, pledging all his conquests to the deity

HUAWEI

The race to dominate future tech

The technology giant has occupied centre stage in the U.S.-China trade war

ANANTH KRISHNAN

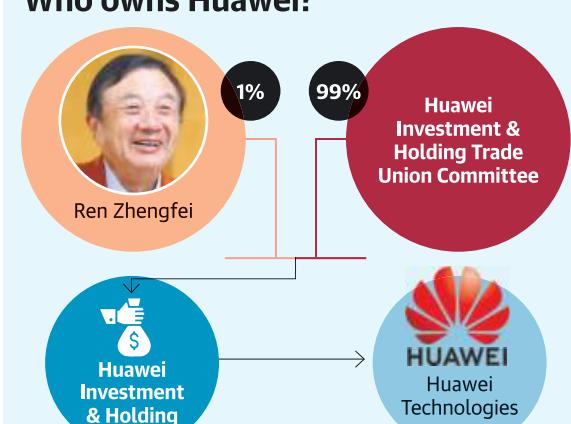
On July 15, the U.S. said it would impose visa restrictions on the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei, its latest move against a company that has occupied centre stage in the ongoing U.S.-China trade war.

The Donald Trump administration has been pushing countries around the world to ban Huawei's products, particularly in 5G networks. Under U.S. pressure, the U.K., which in January first indicated it would allow a limited role for Huawei in constructing "non-core" elements of its 5G network, on July 14, reversed its stand, announcing a ban.

If the moves aimed at Huawei are certainly part of a broader U.S.-China competition to dominate technologies of the future – a battle in which many Chinese companies have made huge strides to close the gap with their American competitors – concerns have also been driven by questions surrounding Huawei's ties to the Chinese government.

The rise of the company has paralleled China's economic resurgence. Huawei was founded in 1987 with a start-up capital of 21,000 RMB (then around ₹73,000) in Shenzhen. Fast forward three decades, and China is the world's largest trading nation and second-largest

Who owns Huawei?



SOURCE: DONALD C. CLARKE AND CHRISTOPHER BALDING

economy, while Huawei is the world's biggest supplier of telecom equipment and, according to the company, the second-biggest manufacturer of smartphones.

Ownership question
Huawei's founder, Ren Zhengfei joined the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Engineering Corps in 1974. While much has been made of Mr. Ren's PLA background, the Engineering Corps, at the time, was not an uncommon choice for aspiring engineers. He was promoted to a rank that is the equivalent of a Deputy Regimental Chief, but without a military rank. He left the Army in 1983 when China disbanded much of the PLA Engineering Corps, and started Huawei four years later. Huawei describes itself

as "an independent, privately-held company" and says it is "not owned or controlled by, nor affiliated with the government". The company says it is owned by its employees, who are given shares.

That claim has been questioned. While Mr. Ren owns 1% of Huawei Investment and Holding, the company that owns Huawei Technologies, the remaining 99% is owned by Huawei Investment & Holding Trade Union. In a 2019 paper, Donald C. Clarke of George Washington University Law School and Christopher Balding of Fulbright University Vietnam argued that what Huawei called "employee shares" were "at most contractual interests in a profit-sharing scheme".

The ownership of the

Trade Union, they said, remained unclear. "If Huawei Holding is 99%-owned by a genuine Chinese-style trade union operating the way trade unions in China are supposed to operate, it is in a non-trivial sense state-owned," they wrote. "Regardless of who, in a practical sense, owns and controls Huawei, it is clear that the employees do not". Beyond the question of ownership, even "private" companies in China have close ties with the state – all the more so when they are involved in sensitive sectors of the economy.

Moreover, the Chinese government has, on occasion, acted on the behalf of Huawei, treating it as it would a prized asset.

India is weighing a decision to exclude Huawei from its 5G network. Following recent moves to ban 59 Chinese apps and curtail imports of Chinese power equipment for security reasons, analysts have suggested Delhi is considering a ban.

That could cost Huawei billions of dollars in revenue, with India a major overseas market for Huawei's telecom equipment, which currently powers India's 3G and 4G networks. In 2018-19, the company reported revenues of ₹12,884 crore from India, up from ₹8,282 crore in the previous financial year.

SACHIN PILOT

The rebel in turbulence

Rajasthan's former Deputy CM finds himself in a corner with difficult choices

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

A member of the Lok Sabha at 27, a Union Minister at 32, Congress State chief at 37 and a Deputy Chief Minister of a big State like Rajasthan at 41 – Sachin Pilot's rise in Indian politics has few parallels. Once feted as the future of the Congress party, Mr. Pilot finds himself in a corner – partly painted in by himself, partly pushed into it by his ruthless rival and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the magician-turned party patriarch, who is never short of a few tricks up his sleeve. At 43, Mr. Pilot is at a crossroads, with precarious options – surrender to Mr. Gehlot or lend his clout to the BJP's machinations. A more honourable path of making a regional outfit is arduous even for the battle-hardened. Mr. Pilot was born into comfort.

Mr. Pilot inherited a



ILLUSTRATION: J.A. PREMKUMAR

set his eyes high. He joined the Indian Air Force. A war veteran and a Squadron Leader by 1979, he met Indira Gandhi and sought an entry in politics. Shearing his old surname and adding 'Pilot', he entered politics as a Lok Sabha MP from Bharatpur in Rajasthan in 1980. He would soon endear himself to Rajiv Gandhi, and his political career soared.

Children of privilege
For the outside world, Sachin Pilot and Rahul Gandhi are children of privilege, but the bonding they would soon develop was equally of tragedy – of losing their fathers at a young age. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991 when Rahul was 21; Rajesh Pilot died in a road accident in 2000, when Sachin was 23. In 2004, both en-

tered the Lok Sabha as first time MPs. They often sat together, and spoke – perhaps, about taking the party from the clutches of the old guard. In 2009, Mr. Pilot got a berth in the Union Ministry. The camaraderie between him and the Gandhi siblings was soon talked about in Delhi. He had also married by then. Sarah Abdullah, daughter of Farooq Abdullah and Mr. Pilot had met as children.

Appointed Rajasthan Congress chief in 2014, Mr. Pilot led from the front and the Congress won the assembly poll in 2018, along with Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. In the other two States, the party chiefs, Kamal Nath and Bupesh Singh Baghel, became Chief Ministers, but Rajasthan took a different turn. Most MLAs supported Mr. Gehlot. Mr. Gandhi had grand plans for a transition in the party, from the old guard to the younger generation, but the second consecutive Lok Sabha defeat in 2019 derailed him. He threw in the towel and all his comrades were left to fend for themselves. It was at this point that Mr. Pilot was required to rework his plans and ambitions. The failure to do that may be proving costly for Mr. Pilot.

TV PICKS

Hungarian Grand Prix: Main race, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.20 p.m. & 8.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 11 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11.10 a.m. (Monday)
FA Cup: Sony Ten 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.
England vs West Indies: Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
MotoGP: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m. onwards
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 12.50 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Woods just makes cut; two share lead

DUBLIN (US) Five months without competition and Tiger Woods was grinding over key shots at the Memorial. He missed a pair of three-foot putts early but a birdie-birdie-par finish for a four-over 76 was just enough for Woods to make the cut at three-over 147 on Friday. Ryan Palmer (68) and Tony Finau (69) were tied for the lead, leaving Woods 12 shots behind. AP



Ex-Aussie Test captain Jarman passes away

ADELAIDE Former Australian Test wicketkeeper and ex-ICC match referee Barry Jarman has passed away aged 84, the South Australian Cricket Association said on Saturday. Jarman captained Australia in one Test on the 1968 Ashes tour of England when Bill Lawry was injured. Jarman played 19 Tests and made two half-centuries among his 400 runs at an average of 14.81. AP

Botham to be elevated to a peer: report

LONDON England cricket great Ian Botham is to be made a Lord by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson as reward for his support of Brexit, according to a report in *The Times*. The newspaper said Botham would be among 30 new life peers announced by Johnson to mark his first year at 10 Downing Street. If elevated to the peerage, Botham would also be the ninth Test cricketer to sit in the House of Lords. AFP



Quartararo clinches pole at season-opening GP JEREZ DE LA FRONTERA (SPAIN) Frenchman Fabio Quartararo powered to pole position for the season-opening Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday, setting a Jerez lap record time to edge out Yamaha's Maverick Vinales. The 21-year-old posted a time of one minute and 36.705 seconds to claim his seventh MotoGP pole in only his second top-class campaign. 41-year-old Valentino Rossi struggled and could only qualify in 11th place, 1.036sec slower than Quartararo. AFP

West Ham almost safe; Leeds United back in PL

LONDON West Ham effectively sealed its Premier League survival with a 3-1 win over Watford on Friday. It climbed to 15th place and is six points clear of the relegation zone. In other news, Leeds United, crowned The Championship winner, returns to the Premier League after 16 years.

The result: West Ham 3 (Antonio 6, Soucek 10, Rice 36) bt Watford 1 (Deeney 49). AFP

Hamilton takes pole

Equals Schumacher's feat of seven at Hungaroring

HUNGARIAN GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BUDAPEST

Lewis Hamilton broke the circuit lap record and drew level with Michael Schumacher for another feat on Saturday as he claimed a record-increasing 90th pole position of his career for the Hungarian Grand Prix.

The six-time champion clocked a stunning time of one minute and 13.447 seconds on his second run in final qualifying to finish just ahead of teammate Valtteri Bottas as Mercedes reeled off its 65th front-row lockout.

Another mark beckons

It was Hamilton's second successive pole of the season and his Schumacher-equalling seventh pole at the Hungaroring, where on Sunday he seeks his eighth victory, potentially drawing level with another Schumacher achievement for wins on the same track (Magny-Cours, France).

"I have to pinch myself," said Hamilton. "It doesn't register. It's quite humbling because I work with an incredible bunch of people who do an amazing job here



Classy drive: Hamilton was at his best during qualifying. *AFP

and back home. "And Valtteri doesn't make it easy for me. It takes perfection to do laps like that so this is one of the things I enjoy most."

Bottas said he expected it to be close. "We seem to be on another level, pretty far ahead of the others. My laps were ok, but I couldn't go faster really."

Racing Point impresses

Behind the two 'black arrows', the controversial 'pink Mercedes' of Racing Point were third and fourth with Lance Stroll and Sergio Perez ahead of a much-improved showing by four-time champion Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc for Ferrari. Max Verstappen was a

disappointing seventh for Red Bull, Lando Norris eighth ahead of his McLaren teammate Carlos Sainz and Pierre Gasly, in his 50th Grand Prix, 10th for Alpha Tauri.

The starting grid:

Row 1: Hamilton (Mercedes) and Bottas (Mercedes); **2:** Stroll (Racing Point) and Perez (Racing Point); **3:** Vettel (Ferrari); **4:** Verstappen (Red Bull) and Norris (McLaren); **5:** Sainz (McLaren) and Gasly (Alpha Tauri).

6: Ricciardo (Renault) and Russell (Williams); **7:** Albon (Red Bull) and Ocon (Renault); **8:** Latifi (Williams) and Magnussen (Haas); **9:** Kvyat (Alpha Tauri) and Grosjean (Haas); **10:** Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo) and Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo).

He will undergo two COVID-19 tests, which have to produce negative results, before his self-isolation period is lifted. The ECB said Archer was due to rejoin the squad on Tuesday.

Third day's play washed out

Jofra Archer fined but available for third Test

WI IN ENGLAND

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

Jofra Archer will be available for England's third and final Test against the West Indies next week after being ruled out of the second match for a breach of coronavirus protocols, it was announced on Saturday.

The England and Wales Cricket Board's statement came as the host's quest to level the three-match series at 1-1 was frustrated by rain washing out the whole of the third day's play at Old Trafford.

Written warning

The 25-year-old Archer could yet feature in the finale after a disciplinary hearing chaired by England managing director Ashley Giles on Friday decided an "undisclosed" fine, believed to be in the region of £30,000, and a written warning amounted to sufficient punishment.

He will undergo two COVID-19 tests, which have to produce negative results, before his self-isolation period is lifted. The ECB said Archer was due to rejoin the squad on Tuesday.



Gloomy: The Old Trafford pitch under covers on Saturday. *GETTY IMAGES

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings: Rory Burns lbw b Chase 15, Dom Sibley c Roach b Chase 120, Zak Crawley c Holder b Chase 0, Joe Root c Holder b Joseph 23, Ben Stokes c Dowrich b Roach 176, Ollie Pope lbw b Chase 7, Jos Buttler c Joseph b Holder 40, Chris Woakes c Hope b Roach 0, Sam Curran c Brathwaite b Chase 17, Dom Bess (not out) 31, Stuart Broad (not out) 11; Extras (4b, 1b, 7b, nb-8, w-10): 29; Total (for nine wkts. decl. in 162 overs): 469.

West Indies bowling: Roach 33-9-58-2, Gabriel 26-2-79-0, Joseph 23.1-5-70-1, Holder 32-10-70-1, Chase 44-3-172-5, Brathwaite 3.5-0-9-0.

West Indies — 1st innings: Kraigg Brathwaite (batting) 6, John Campbell lbw b Curran 12, Alzarri Joseph (batting) 14; Total (for one wkts. in 14 overs): 32.

Fall of wicket: 1-16.

England bowling: Broad 5-1-14-0, Woakes 4-3-2-0, Curran 3-1-8-1, Bess 2-0-8-0.

de Villiers and Markram do it for Eagles

REUTERS
PRETORIA

Aiden Markram and A.B. de Villiers bludgeoned lightning half-centuries to lead Eagles to victory in the inaugural, experimental three-team Solidarity Cup at the Centurion Park on Saturday.

Markram (70 from 33 balls) and de Villiers (61 from 24) took Eagles to 160 for four in its 12 overs, convincingly beating Kites (138 for three) and Kingfishers (113 for five).

The three sides, made up of eight players each, batted in two six-over innings in which they faced each of the other opponents in the field.



Eagles skipper A.B. de Villiers holds the trophy. *AFP

Kapil's advice really helped, reveals Dravid

'He asked me to explore different options before deciding what I wanted to do'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Batting great Rahul Dravid says legendary allrounder Kapil Dev's advice helped him to explore options after his retirement before eventually taking up the coaching job of India-A and U-19 sides.

"After I finished [playing], there were quite a few options and I was not sure what to do. It was Kapil Dev who gave me this advice actually when I was coming to the end of my career," Dravid told India women's team coach W.V. Raman on his YouTube channel 'Inside Out'.

"I bumped into him somewhere and he said 'Rahul, don't commit to doing

anything straightforward, go out and spend a few years just exploring and doing different things and see what you really like'; I thought it was good advice."

The former captain said

initially he liked doing commentary, but later found "a little disconnect" from the game. "...the thing that gave me the most satisfaction was really being involved in the game and being connected

with the boys. I really liked the coaching side of things and I got sort of involved in that when the opportunity came up to do some coaching with India-A and Under-19," Dravid said.

"I thought it was a good place to start and took it up and I've really enjoyed it since. A lot more satisfying to be involved in the coaching side of things," he said.

He backed the BCCI's decision to restrict U-19 players to one World Cup only.

"Instead of just 15-20 players, we were able to give 45 to 50 players exposure to the facilities at NCA, so it broadens the pool," said Dravid, Head of Cricket at the NCA in Bengaluru.

Women's wrestling is much more competitive now

Alka says a conducive ecosystem has lifted standards



Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

Alka Tomar, the first female wrestler from the country to win a World Championships medal, says a more conducive ecosystem has lifted women's wrestling standards in India.

Alka, who bagged a bronze medal in 59kg in the 2006 World championships, said a host of factors have made women's wrestling more competitive in the country in recent times.

"The overall scenario is very different and much better now. Top wrestlers like Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik, Sarita Mor and Pooja Dhanda have taken India closer to the world level. Pro Wrestling League (PWL) also helped. Good scientific support, sponsorship and publicity have attracted a lot of girls to the sport."

"We used to know about our opponents after landing in the country where we had to compete. Now, you know everything beforehand, see

trials. There was hardly any scientific support to make you fit in quick time," Alka told *The Hindu*.

Boon of technology
Alka — a Commonwealth Games champion, an Asian Games bronze medallist and the winner of several medals — said technology was a boon for today's wrestlers.

"We used to know about

Sushil Kumar keeping it simple

Wrestler says his target is to win the Olympic gold

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI

Double Olympic medallist and former World Champion wrestler Sushil Kumar, whose accomplishments are top class, keeps his life simple and has clear goals.

"I have got bronze and silver, gold is still left to win", said Sushil, in the Manav Rachna Happy Times web interaction, in conversation with Ritika Singh and Satarupa Ghosh.

The 37-year-old Sushil said staying motivated had never been a problem as he always looked ahead after every achievement and prepares for the next target.

Even though he was prepared, Sushil did not get a chance to compete in the Rio Olympics. He recalled a similar instance in 2002.

"As a junior, I was selected for the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester. But a few days before the competition, my name was removed.

"I had beaten Shokinder Singh and he was selected, as I was still a junior. My gu-

ru Satpal tried his best, but nothing happened.

"At that time, Sports Minister Uma Bharti had announced ₹20 lakh for gold. Coming from a middle-class family, I had felt that the money would have been useful," recalled Sushil.

Guidance
Heartbroken, he had decided to compete in mud-wrestling where there was a lot of money, when Sushil found the light of guidance. "Coach Uday Chand told me, who knows god has bigger things for you."

"God has given me so

much more," said Sushil, happy about the foundation that strengthened his resolve to settle for nothing less than the Olympic medals.

Sushil said there was never any pressure on him, as he prepared hard and did not allow anything to distract his focus.

"If you prepare well, there is no fear and you happily compete", he said.

Sushil revealed that he had enjoyed four months of family time during lockdown.

Peak performance
"Reaching peak performance is in your hands. The whole world has been facing the same situation. To cry or laugh, it is your choice", said Sushil.

Sushil gave credit to the close circle around him for everything he had achieved so far.

"I am very lucky. I have a good guru, good family, good wife, children. My focus is to stay fit and be ready," said Sushil.

Daruvala gets first points



Jehan Daruvala. *FILE PHOTO

Sports Bureau
BUDAPEST

Jehan Daruvala got his first points of the FIA Formula 2 Championship with a sixth-place finish in the feature race won by Robert Schwartzman on Saturday.

The Indian, starting 15th, had a poor start that saw him drop down to 21st before running long on his first stint on the medium tyres. After changing to the faster soft tyres for the final third of the 37-lap race, the Carlin Racing driver's rapid pace helped him climb to sixth.

On Sunday, Daruvala will start from third in the reverse grid race, aiming for his first podium of the season.

CM YK

Together with M.S. Narasimhan, he proved a theorem which is now a cornerstone of geometry. An extension of this led to the notion of parabolic bundles. With students Musili and Lakshimbala, Seshadri combined algebraic, combinatorial and geometric insights into the modern

CLASSIFIEDS

thehinduads.com

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

DOCTOR

TAMIL MUSLIM: MBBS, PG Groom wanted for MBBS MD bride, 29yrs, working in TN Govt. from well settled family. Phone: 9486240388; bysmimohd@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Chennai. Well Settled Educated Family Seeks Muslim Dr. Good looking Smart 27/160cm Govt. Dr MBBS. Sonologist persuing PG Call / WhatsApp: 8939214627

HINDU/AJORA/27/16CM/VERY FAIR/MD Dermatology/affluent business family/Seeks groom from Doctors/Civil Services/Estd. Business/Other Equal Cadres/Punjabi, caste preferred Caste Ct: 9009955520/9926147373

MD Paediatrics. 28 years, Telugu Devanga, Chennai. Seeks Alliance from MD. Doctors. Phone: 9884161468.

DOCTOR PARENTS invite proposals for their daughter, Hindu Padmasali MBBS MS (OBG) ongoing age 24, height 5'6 ft seeks handsome groom from Doctors / civil services / business and other equal Cadres . Boy should be below 29 yrs height atleast 5'9 to 6ft, preferably Padmasali community strictly from well settled Ultra Rich family... Ct: 9515844920, Vinayabur@gmail.com

DOCTOR

Hindu Doctor MD 32 own house, Car, Clinic Seeks Doctor / M.Tech, CA groom. Caste no bar. Ct: 9095533993

ENGINEER

ENGINEER ITSW Engineer MNC, Bangalore - B.E., M.Tech., (Ph.D.) 24 lakhs p.a. native Coimbatore, Madham, 33/157 Jangam Telugu girl seeks well educated employee/Business groom with clean habits, CNB, Send your profile to 9486476641

ENGLISH

ANGLOINDIAN CATHOLIC Girl 40 yrs 175 cm family abroad seeks suitable groom. Email: margaret75104@gmail.com

MUDALIAR 32/15BCMS FAIR, Visagam (Thulam), B.E., M.S/US working in US wanted good looking Groom. Sub Castle No Bar. Only Groom working in US, Ct: 9443338110.

VANIYA CHETTIAR Bride 26, 169cm, Karthigai Rishabham, has completed a Master degree in Engineering. Comes from an affluent family settled in Pondy. Father is a businessman. Seeking a suitable well-educated groom from the Chettai community. Contact 7708434512

KANNADA

HINDU VOKALIGA 25 BE Civil with Master Dip Arch, Seeks Groom from the same Community. 9791768175

MALAYALAM

SYRIAN JACOBITE Family invites proposals from professionally qualified and well settled Bangalore-based boys for their daughter 26/150 fair and sweet natured. Professionally qualified masters student. Please correspond with photograph and details to: trivandrum1@gmail.com

MALAYALEE HINDU Ezava Girl 29/170 Cm, B.Tech (ITNC) MBA (IMB) Consultant in MNC Seeks Boys From Malayalee Origin. Well Placed And Equally Qualified In Private/Central Govt/Defenses Sector. Call 9447284858 Or erpmnhan@gmail.com

TAMIL

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl, Fair, Good looking, 03-04-1986 born / 152cm / M.Sc. M.Phil , working as Assistant Professor in a Reputed Women's College, Mount Road, Chennai. Both Parents Doctors (Private) , Suitable Alliance, Employed / Settled in Chennai / With Clean Habits from Same Community. Contact: 9841182514

CATHOLIC, SLIM, Fair, Pretty, 25/165BE/MNC/Chennai. Seeks well qualified boy. Contact: 6379375959

CSI, AD 39yr/ 156cm/ B.Sc, B.Ed. Legally Divorced, Property Worth Rs.2Cr. One 9y boy, Seeks suitable Groom. Castle No Bar 9282129901, soundarapandiyang57@gmail.com

SC, NADAR M.A, 36/155cms Working in Integral Coach Factory, Chennai. Ct: 9375411849/ chella.ranis@gmail.com

HINDU NADAR girl age 30, Chittarai, M.A. very Smart Entrepreneur, well settled, seeking with good background educated Groom in Chennai. Castle No bar, Brokers excuse- 9841780740

Hindu DKV Pallan, age 25. Wheatish complexion, 165cms, BE(EEE), Rahu Ketu, looking for well educated and well employed Groom. 9087676257.

SITHARA AGE 29 Uthirattadi Meenam Kumbham doing her Ph.D. Seeking a Handsome, well settled Bridegroom only from Chennai with Clean Habits. Ct: +91 9840420774

Hindu 32/152, B.E., upper middle class. Divorce Seeks Suitable Groom. Castle No Bar. Contact 9486 95984.

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

TAMIL

TAMIL

TAMIL

MALAYALAM

TAMIL

TAMIL

URDU

SM 4 Tamil speaking Balja Naidu girl, 26/156 cm, Studying PG in Europe. Moolam (3 Pada) seeks same/Equiv caste H.Some PG with good family background preferably settled abroad & below 30, reply with BHP to kingkumarrh@gmail.com

HINDU AD PR Widow ME working as Lecturer, No. child 36/155cm seeks groom CNB, Age <40 Ct: 7406401199

Hindu Adidavardar Kongu Parayar 29 BE, M.Tech, Ph.D seeks Educ'd Prof'l Groom. Ct: 7558146647 / 8973345370

CHRISTIAN 37/183 cms, Ph.D. Asst.Prof, well settled family. Divorcee. Castle no bar. 9746305518

RELATIONSHIP MANAGER in a leading Bank, Chennai / B.Tech., MBA/ 27 5.8' Fair/ Tamil / Arcot Mudalal/ Kettai from affluent family looking for educated, fair and homely girl from a decent family. Divorcee. BHP to mohanveedu@hotmail.com, Ph: +91 9841272183.

IVER BHARADHWAJAM Uthiram, 38yrs/ 180cms, BE, MNC Chennai 15 Lakhs per annum. Own House at Chennai seeks any Brahmin Girl. Ct: 09443022214

INTER CASTE Parents (Father-SC, Mother-SC) seeks Alliance for Daughter 26/ 164. Good Looking, Uthiram. M.Sc (CS) /15,000 PM - Expecting Educated Employed, Castle No Bar. 94433 07660 / wedfor1994@gmail.com

ALLIANCE INVITED for A 29 Year Old, 55" M.B.A. Working in an IT, MNC. Smart, Good Natured, Truly Talented, Iyer Girl from a Like Minded, Well Qualified and Well Placed Groom from a Progressive Family. Preferably in India or Singapore. Gotham - Nairupad-Kashyapa, Star - Uthiram. Response with Details and Horoscope to sawedding20@gmail.com. Contact 9444835593.

CSI 29, Tall, Erudite, Seeks Fair, Slim, Compatible. Proposal From any Denomination Ct: 9791683272/ Ph: +91 9841272183.

NADAR 41/179 B.E. Carleton U.SRF 9360991547

IYER VADAMA, Age 48 (D.O.B. 11.02.1972), Moolam, seeks suitable Bride. Divorcee excuse. Ct: 7305914279

DOCTOR MBBS, MD, DM (on going), wheatish, good looking 29 years, 165cm, seeks professional groom preferred Doctors / Engineers from Madurai / Pillai Community. Reply with full details and Photo. Ct: 9842412306, E. Mail: aaryabalaji@gmail.com

TELUGU

BALIJA NAIDU groom, chennai, for convert educated girl, senior software engineer, M.Tech 29, 53' Kettai. Reply whatapp: 9444835593.

SAURA STRA

KAMMA BE, MS in USA, 1980/163, Uthiram seeks BE, MS (USA) groom. Contact: 99762 54300.

DOCTOR MBBS, MD, DM (on going), wheatish, good looking 29 years, 165cm, seeks professional groom preferred Doctors / Engineers from Madurai / Pillai Community. Reply with full details and Photo. Ct: 9842412306, E. Mail: aaryabalaji@gmail.com

DINDIGUL SOURASTRA 31, B.Sc., Private 4 Lakh PA, Divorcee, No issues suitable Bride Ct: 9894839097

TAMIL

SAIVA MUDALIYAR born Aug 04 M.Sc. A, B.L. Legal Co. & Bank Well Settled Seeking Good Looking Educated Family Veg Only Ct: 9841298539

DOCTOR-GROOM WANTED

RC FERNANDO Handsome Very Rich Family 25/165/ B.E. Arch, Chennai Seeks God Fearing Educated Girl, Age 23 or below 23 Ct: 6379397599

CATHOLIC, 29/175/M.TECH/MNC/ CHENNAI. Seeks Educated Grl. Ct: 6379397599

MUDALIAR, UNMARRIED /1972 Anusham / B.M.B. MLM/ Sr.Officer - PSU, Chennai Rs.60,000 PM / seeks Educated suitable Alliance. Issueless widow acceptable, Caste No Bar - 94430766085.

TAMIL 1980 /165, M.A.B.L., H.C. Advocate Rich only son seeks Dr., Engg. employee Bride C.N.B.9.4888 88189.

DOCTOR MBBS, MD, DM (on going), wheatish, good looking 29 years, 165cm, seeks professional groom preferred Doctors / Engineers from Madurai / Pillai Community. Reply with full details and Photo. Ct: 9842412306, E. Mail: aaryabalaji@gmail.com

TELUGU

REDDY, 24/160, Beautiful, B.E (MS) Father Bank Manager, 50Cr.Prop. Elite, CNB, 7299576644, 7299576666

SAIVA MUDALIYAR born Aug 04 M.Sc. A, B.L. Legal Co. & Bank Well Settled Seeking Good Looking Educated Family Veg Only Ct: 9841298539

MUDALIAR 32/15BCMS FAIR, Visagam (Thulam), B.E., M.S/US working in US wanted good looking Groom. Sub Castle No Bar. Only Groom working in US, Ct: 9443338110.

URDU

MUSLIM URDU PH.D 37 154cm Asst Professor Govt Job 2nd Marriage No issue. Suitable Groom Wanted. 9791015786

MUDALIAR, 29 BE MBA 176 cm 16Lacs pa. Well Settled Family Seeks Suitable Bride C.N.B. 7200866346/ 8778514465

SMU PARENTS seek handsome and well educated groom settled abroad or in India from rich/affluent and modern family for their only daughter fair and beautiful 25/165. visapeople@yahoo.com

TAMIL VISWAKARMA, age 31/175, M.Tech, Uthiram Makaram. Preferably Kamatka, settled in Mysore, non veg, studying P.h.d. Seeks suitable bride with any degree. Ct: 9945347079

MUDALIAR, 29 BE MBA 176 cm 16Lacs pa. Well Settled Family Seeks Suitable Bride C.N.B. 7200866346/ 8778514465

TAMIL MUDALIAR 32/15BCMS FAIR, Visagam (Thulam), B.E., M.S/US working in US wanted good looking Groom. Sub Castle No Bar. Only Groom working in US, Ct: 9443338110.

TAMIL YADAV Avittam 27/177 MBBS, MD(Gen) seeks only MBBS/MD bride Contact: 9942005782

TAMIL CHETTIAR 37/168 Divorcee Coimbatore well settled, Seeks any BC Bride without issues. Ct: 9047851990

HINDU PILLAI, Divorcee, 40/172cm M.E. Ph.D. Professor in Engg. College, Madurai seeks suitable Bride. Contact: 9894036653.

MUDALIYAR 32/15BCMS FAIR, Visagam (Thulam), B.E., M.S/US working in US wanted good looking Groom. Sub Castle No Bar. Only Groom working in US, Ct: 9443338110.

WANTED SUITABLE unmarried girl for boy, Age 32, IT, Employee 2nd Marriage no issues (Vellar (Cast No Bar) no broker 9894899087, 9940362103)

CHETTIAR, 25, 173 cms, Entrepreneur, Masters from a premier Institute, Lives in Karaiyadi, Father is a working Professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like-minded and well educated match from the same community. Contact: 6366448343

AGE 39, Saiva Mudaliyar, Divorce, SWE, Ct: 98412-81948

TAMIL NADU 29 BE MBA 176cm 16Lacs pa. Well Settled Family Seeks Suitable Bride C.N.B. 7200866346/ 8778514465

DOCTOR, 55, Widower, Christian, Chennai seeks Life Partner. Email: selvajothi1962@gmail.com

RAJESH 36, Chennai, Yadav, General Manager-South, Pvt. 1.35 Laks PM, Castle No bar 8610014920, No. Brokers.

HINDU(SC PR) 31 M.Tech Phd(NIT) MNC 80000 pm seeks suitable.

TAMIL NADU 32/15BCMS FAIR, Visagam (Thulam), B.E., M.S/US working in US wanted good looking Groom. Sub Castle No Bar. Only Groom working in US, Ct: 9443338110.

SENGUTHAR AGE 37,Com.Divorcee, Po oradam, Rs.50000/- Seeks bride. Brokers Excuse.Call - 97918 31319

WELL TO DO Doctor Widower 52, Seeks Life Partner, Lady Doctor or Rich Widow. Ct: 9600176767.

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M.Tech. / M.Sc. / M.C.A. (Rs 600 / 650)	Test & Interview. GATE Qualified Candidates will be given preference for M.Tech. with monthly stipend	Rolling Admissions based on +2 Marks / UG Scores or Exam Scores	
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