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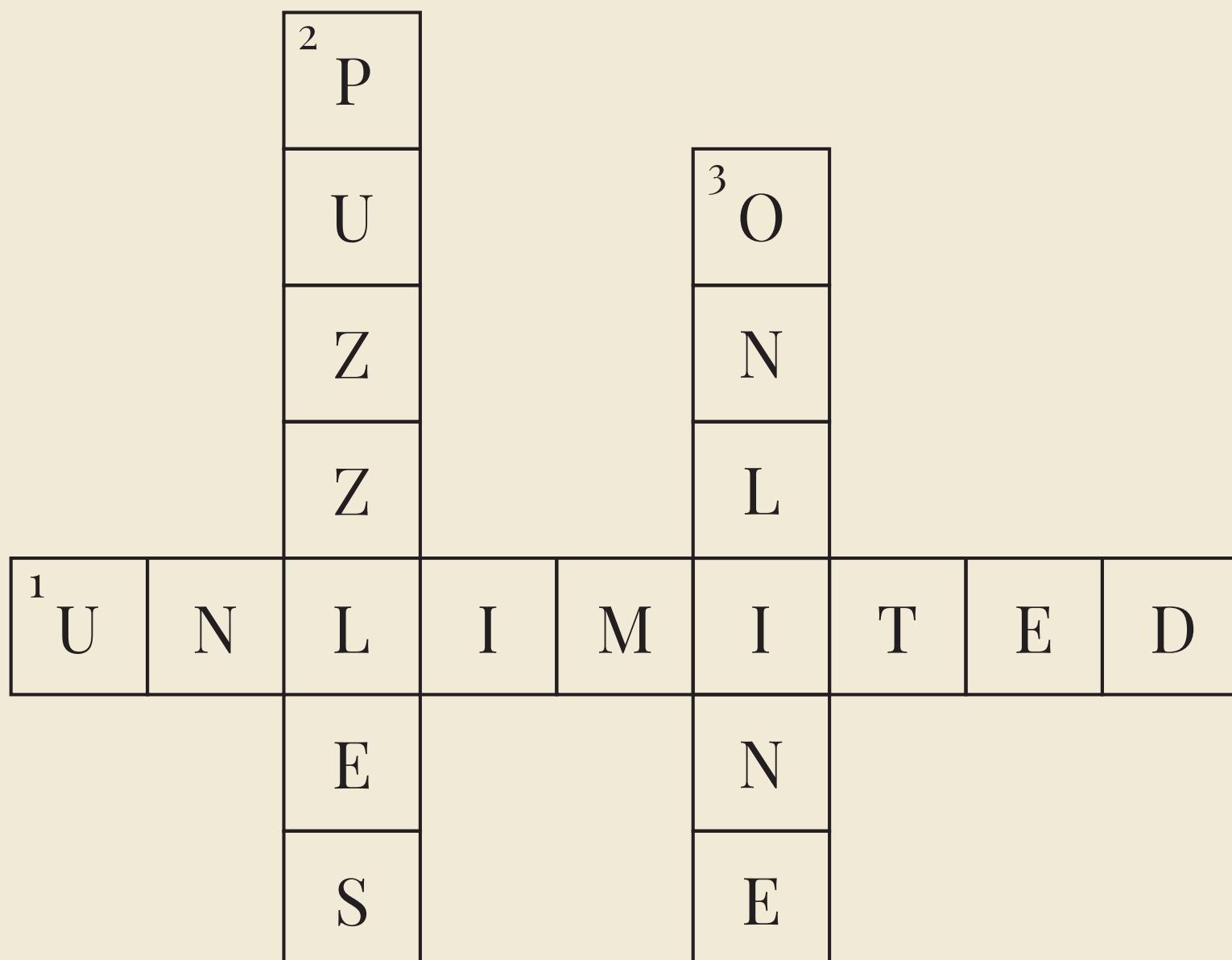
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THE HINDU



JULY 26, 2020

on Sunday



Two militants killed in encounter near Srinagar, say police
page 7



Jairam Ramesh writes to Javadekar on draft EIA notification
page 8



U.S. now says no new foreign students for all-online classes
page 9



Broad's allround show helps England gain control in third Test
page 14

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NEARBY



9,251 new cases, 257 more deaths in State

MUMBAI Maharashtra on Saturday reported 9,251 new COVID-19 cases, taking its cumulative case tally to 3,66,368. The State also recorded 257 fatalities, including 116 in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), pushing its death toll to 13,389. With the addition of 1,080 cases, Mumbai's case load shot up to 1,08,060, while its death toll to 6,036, with 52 more fatalities. The MMR saw a spike of 3,523 cases, taking its total case tally to 2,20,840. The death toll in the region now stands at 8,895. Pune city saw a staggering rise of 1,913 cases and 45 deaths, while Pimpri-Chinchwad registered 866 new cases. Aurangabad, Nagpur and Ahmednagar recorded spikes of 238, 126 and 115 cases, respectively. Nashik city reported 306 fresh cases. There are 1,4575 active cases in the State, while its tally of recoveries has risen to 2,07,194, with 7,227 patients being discharged on Saturday. A total of 18,36,920 people have been tested so far. Maharashtra's recovery rate now stands at 56.55%, while its case fatality rate is 3.65%, according to health officials.

Not in favour of entirely lifting lockdown: Uddhav

MUMBAI Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said he was not in favour of completely lifting lockdown measures in Maharashtra just to address the State's economic concerns. He said there is a need to strike a balance between issues of health and economy, considering the challenge posed by COVID-19. "I have started reopening a few things gradually. Once reopened, it shouldn't be shut again. Hence, I prefer taking steps in phases," he said, in an interview published in *Saamana* on Saturday. The lockdown in the State will continue till July 31.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 5

MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

Ladakh left out in the cold 11 months after becoming a Union Territory

Understaffed departments, confusion over recruitment and opacity over governance have continued after the reorganisation of J&K

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Eleven months after it was carved out as a separate, administrative Union Territory (UT), the high-altitude desert region of Ladakh is at a crossroads, with minimal staff functioning from makeshift accommodation, no recruitment agency to fill gazetted posts, no formal bank and a dispute over its capital.

The challenge to ensure efficient administration in this high plateau located at an altitude of 9,800 feet can be gauged from the recent process to recruit doctors

Recruitment stalled
With demand growing for a separate recruitment agency on the lines of the Public

under the National Health Mission (NHM). Out of the 110 doctors recruited from across the country, including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, in April-May this year with a package up to ₹2,50,000 per month, only 15 have opted to join so far.
"We have re-advertised these posts," director, NHM Ladakh, Dr. Phuntog Angchuk said.

Service Commission (PSC) in the UT of J&K, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has balked at filling any gazetted post so far.

Ladakh saw the creation of over 400 posts after being declared a separate division within J&K prior to August 5, 2019. The number of vacant

posts multiplied after it was declared a UT to around 5,000.

"Ladakh needs a PSC so that only locals are preferred for these jobs," said Feroz Khan, chairman and chief executive councillor (CEC) of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)-Kargil.

Staff from JK

Over the past week, the J&K government administration has transferred over 118 officials on deputation to Ladakh to bring some semblance of normalcy in the understaffed departments

including Education, Irrigation, Flood Control, Jal Shakti and Higher Education.

The transfers followed a letter from Umang Narula, adviser to the Lt. Governor.

SPECIAL

"The UT of Ladakh is facing serious constraints of manpower at various levels.

Some directorates and heads of departments are headless, which is adversely affecting the delivery of public services (in Ladakh)," the letter reads.

As per the official records, many directors hold charge

of as many as five departments. Many departments like Disaster Management exist only on paper.

But there is opposition to the deployment of staff from J&K.

"We face unemployment of trained and qualified youth in Ladakh. Instead of conducting a special drive to fill up the vacant positions, the officials here are requesting UT of J&K to depute staff," said Sajad Kargili, who contested the 2019 parliamentary polls as an Independent candidate.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6



Rising unease: A deserted road in Kargil during a shutdown called by a students body on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gehlot to make fresh push for Assembly session amid face-off

Cabinet decides to make another proposal to Governor, respond to his queries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR / NEW DELHI

Amid a serious face-off with the Governor, the Congress government in Rajasthan on Saturday deliberated on a fresh proposal to convene a session of the Assembly next week to enable Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to prove his majority on the floor of the House.

Governor Kalraj Mishra had on Friday refused to give immediate approval to a similar proposal.

New submission

A Cabinet meeting, presided over by Mr. Gehlot, decided that the government would make a fresh submission to the Governor for calling the Assembly session, while responding to his questions raised over the original proposal.

In a fresh communication to the Raj Bhavan, the Cabinet conveyed that the Governor has no discretion in the matter and has to follow the advice of the Cabinet, *The Hindu* has learnt.

Citing previous Supreme Court rulings on the matter, the Cabinet is believed to



Strategy game: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot leaving a hotel in Jaipur on Saturday. ■ PTI

have said that the Governor can neither question the period of convening an Assembly session, fix the procedures for the conduct of the session nor set the agenda.

"The Cabinet met at 4 p.m. again and conveyed these points to the Raj Bhavan. We will wait for his response as we don't want to escalate things," a senior Congress leader said.

The Governor had earlier stated that the note containing the request forwarded by the government neither explained the urgency nor did it mention the agenda for the

session. The Governor sought a clarification on six issues and asked why the session should be convened for a floor test when the government itself was claiming that it had full majority in the House.

"No justification has been given for calling the session at such a short notice," he said.

While accusing the Governor of stalling a decision on summoning the House session under "pressure from above", Mr. Gehlot had said that the people from the entire State could lay siege to Raj Bhavan.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

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'Army is working to restore LAC position'

Lt. Gen. Joshi non-committal on timeline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

"We shall continue all efforts to restore the *status quo ante* along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China," said Lt. Gen. Y.K. Joshi, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, on Saturday.

However, he remained non-committal on the timeline for the resolution of the stand-off in eastern Ladakh, which has been ongoing for 12 weeks.

During the talks for disengagement, India has consistently called for the restoration of the *status quo ante* at the LAC or the pullback of Chinese troops to pre-May positions.

"There are certain commitments required from the two sides which is essential for the process to move ahead and deliver the outcomes that are desirable. There are certain factors though, such as territorial integrity of the country, that are not negotiable at all. While we are investing sincerely in this ongoing endeavour to bring about peace along the border, we also remain prepared at all times for any eventuality," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

M.P. CM tests positive for COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday said he has tested positive for COVID-19. He was admitted to Chirayu Hospital, a private COVID-19 facility.

Sharing the news on Twitter, the 61-year-old Mr. Chouhan wrote, "My beloved residents of the State, I was having COVID-19 symptoms, and after a test my report has come out to be positive."

He appealed to those who had come in contact with him to get themselves tested, and his close contacts to go into quarantine.

"All required tests have been carried out and the results have been found to be normal. His condition is normal," said Ajay Goenka of Chirayu Medical College and Hospital.

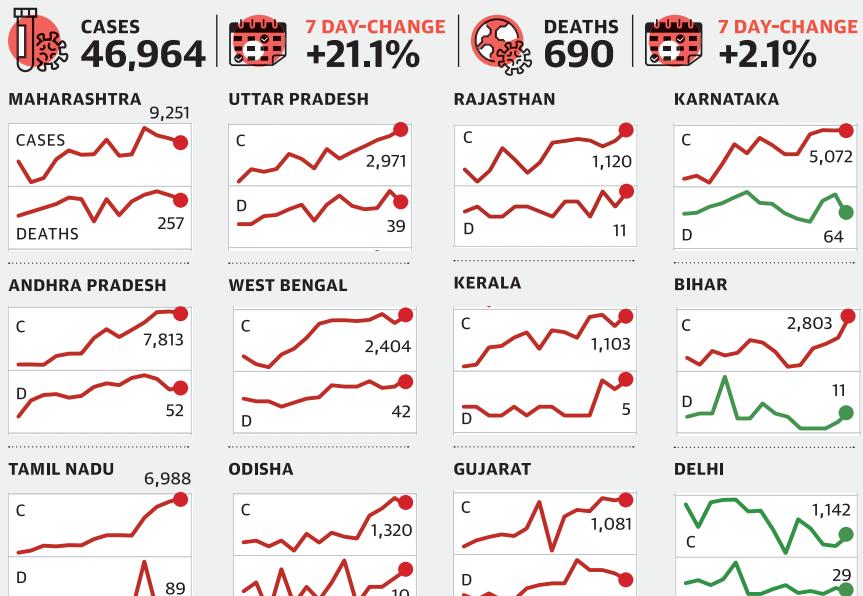
Mr. Chouhan is the seventh legislator from the State to have contracted the illness so far.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6



With 46,964 new COVID-19 cases recorded on Saturday, the cumulative tally rose to 13,83,837. A record 4,20,898 samples were tested on the previous day. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising (red), or dropping (green).

NEW CASES AND DEATHS IN INDIA



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

UN report flags IS threat in Karnataka, Kerala

'Significant number of terrorists present'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
UNITED NATIONS

A UN report on terrorism has warned that there are "significant numbers" of Islamic State (IS) terrorists in Kerala and Karnataka, noting that the Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) terror group is planning attacks in the region.

The 26th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning the IS, the Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities said that the AQIS operates under the Taliban umbrella from the Nimruz, Helmand and Kandahar provinces of Afghanistan.

IS attacks
In May last year, the terror group (also known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh) claimed to have established a new "province" in India, the first of this kind of announcement that came after clashes between militants and security forces in Kashmir.

The dreaded outfit, through its Amaq News Agency, had said that the Arabic name of the new branch is "Wilayah of Hind" (India Province).

A senior Jammu and Kashmir police officer had rejected the claim.

The AQIS is reportedly planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader, Asim Umar.

The AQIS is reportedly planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader, Asim Umar.

According to the report, one member state reported that the IS Indian affiliate (Hind Wilayah), which was announced on May 10, 2019, has between 180 and 200 members.

The report added that there are significant numbers of IS operatives in Kerala and Karnataka.

AQIS operations
The group reportedly has between 150 and 200 members from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan. The current leader of the AQIS is Osama Mahmood, who succeeded the late Asim Umar.

The AQIS is reportedly planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader, Asim Umar.

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FILM REVIEW

A surreal experience that bridges reality and fiction

Although *Dil Bechara* is quite shallow in its telling, it is hard to look at Manny the character, and not Sushant the actor, and be part of this utterly strange experience

KENNETH ROSARIO

Watching *Dil Bechara* is an inadvertently surreal experience. How often does fiction become so hyperreal? Actor Sushant Singh Rajput, who died by suicide last month, plays a terminally-ill character in the film, Immanuel Rajkumar Junior or Manny, and we know how this tragedy is going to pan out, in both real life and on-screen, because of the film's source material, *The Fault in Our Stars*.

The film – Singh's only posthumous release – showcases him as an ebullient young boy, who is aware that the end is near but perseveres to live in the moment. He teaches Kizie Basu (Sanjana Sanghi), his girlfriend, who has thyroid cancer, to do the same. In the end, as the narrative pays a teary-eyed tribute to Manny, it is hard to detach the sequence from Singh's reality, and the co-relation is affecting and absurd, to say the least.

Truthful adaptation

As a film, however, *Dil Bechara* lacks depth and the feeling of fragility that is at the centre of a story like this. A very truthful Indian adaptation of *The Fault in Our Stars*, starring Shailene Woodley and Ansel Elgort, *Dil Bechara* even borrows some dialogues (although translated) from the original, in addition to scenes and character traits.

But Mukesh Chhabra's rendition is hurried and doesn't allow some very fundamental relationships to build, like that of Kizie and her parents, which makes her character very one-dimensional. Saswata Chatterjee and Swastika Mukherjee, who play their parts with conviction, aren't given much to do as parents of a



Teary-eyed tribute: The film showcases Sushant Singh Rajput as an ebullient young boy, who is aware that the end is near but perseveres to live in the moment. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dil Bechara

DIRECTOR: Mukesh Chhabra
CAST: Sushant Singh Rajput, Sanjana Sanghi, Saif Ali Khan, Saswata Chatterjee, Swastika Mukherjee
RUNTIME: 101 minutes
STORYLINE: Manny, a cancer patient, helps Kizie, who has thyroid cancer, fulfil her dream of going to Paris

The Fault in Our Stars is irrationally holding onto a novel's ending for purpose, Kizie is given an album, but the film doesn't do much with it. Even their trip to Paris is rushed and fairly inconsequential, making the coming-of-age aspect of *Dil Bechara* its weakest link.

While Manny is supposed to be the one who teaches Kizie to find hope and fulfillment, even if her days are numbered, he comes across as a caricature and isn't gi-

ven enough backing to be the way he is. But the film is more than Manny. It's about Singh and the life he lived.

Melancholic relevance

Even though the film was supposed to release earlier and was delayed due to several reasons including an allegation of sexual harassment against Chhabra, which was later reportedly cleared upon enquiry, there is a melancholic relevance to it. Had it been under different circumstances, the way one would look at this film would have perhaps been much different. But its hard to look at Manny, the character, and not, Sushant, the actor, and be part of this utterly strange experience, where reality is much more moving than fiction.

Dil Bechara is currently streaming for free on Disney+ Hotstar

Mightier than the pen

Sheela Birnstiel, the executor of Osho's masterplans (featured in a Netflix documentary), writes about her life after in an upcoming autobiography

SUNALINI MATHEW

Earlier this year, Penguin Random House announced plans for the August release of Sheela Birnstiel's autobiography *By My Own Rules*, a toned down title, compared to her previous *Don't Kill Him! The Story of My Life with Bhagwan Rajneesh: A Memoir* (2012). From the sound of the title, we can only hope it won't be a senior version (which Sheela is, at 70) of the woman who once replied to a question from an Australian reporter with the now famous line, "Tough tities", when asked about concerns on setting up an Osho ashram in the country.

It is difficult to tell whether Sheela really has mellowed in the post-Osho years. Then, she was second-in-command at his ('Bhagwan' Rajneesh) Oregon outfit in the U.S. in the 1980s. Now she runs two homes - Matrusaden and Bapusaden - for the elderly near Basel, in Switzerland, where she lives with her two sisters, 80 and 77.

When we meet, I'm told she cannot sit for long, because of a back problem. "I had a small accident with one of my dementia patients," she says, speaking of how she tried to support him as he fell on top of her in May last year. She broke a couple of vertebra and has been through an



operation and physio since. "It happens in life. If this is the only complaint I have in life, it's not so bad," she says.

It was about the time she lost her dog, Cora too. The grey hound-Afghan hound mix, whose photo is her WhatsApp display picture "was very pretty. Her understanding and her ability to communicate was so profound," she says, almost like somebody's grandmother.

India calling

Back in India after more than 30 years, Sheela (born Ambala Patel Sheela, then Silverman and now Birnstiel – she has been married thrice) "arrived" last September. After the success of *Wild Wild Country*, she did a Ka-

ran Johar interview hosted by Sipping Thoughts, a digital media brand, and Humans for Humanity, a not-for-profit; met journalists; attended a few parties, and dinner with a group of Osho followers in Delhi. She says the whole trip and the two subsequent ones have been a bit of a blur, though she "fully enjoyed meeting" Johar, actor Neha Dhupia, entrepreneur Bina Ramani and BW Businessworld editor Anurag Batra.

The camera that's filming a documentary on her, to be released later in the year, hovers above. And there's a film too. As per a June report in *Variety*, Priyanka Chopra will produce and star (as Ma Sheela) in the Amazon Prime Video drama, *Sheela*. It has been following her since she woke up. Is that the real reason she came then?

"Coming to India and being Indian, I know you have to be flexible, otherwise you break your head against the wall," she says vaguely, in a sweet, old-lady way or perhaps a good business woman way.

"Right now I am thinking in multiple languages: English, German, Hindi and Gujarati," she cackles, adding that she'd like to come back to Baroda, a city she grew up in, and begin a waste management project.

If there is a stereotypical im-

TuneCore launches a distribution platform tailored for Indian independent artistes



DIY your music career

SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

When playback singer Nikhita Gandhi wanted to release her music back in high school, she did not have a record label deal. "As an independent artiste, it is important to understand the business and be self-empowered," she says. Using TuneCore – which allows musicians to distribute their work on platforms like Spotify, Apple Music and 150 other audio download and streaming sites – she was able to get her work noticed. The independent digital music distribution, publishing and licensing service (founded in 2005) launched operations in India earlier this month.

"When an artiste decides to put their music out, it is important for them to think like an entrepreneur. It needs to be marketed and delivered to listeners. Because of the way the industry has evolved, they have support to independently optimise visibility and distribution, and TuneCore is part of that process," says country manager Heena Kriplani. This is the eighth international expansion for the Brooklyn-based company, which also has op-

erations in the U.K., Australia, Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Canada. "TuneCore has been serving local talent since 2006. When the need for more localised tool was apparent, we began an in-depth study into the Indian music landscape," says Kriplani.

This included accounting for regional language music and bringing in an industry veteran like Kriplani herself, who has worked with Gibson Industries for over a decade. There are also guides written by music publisher Achille Forler and podcaster Mae Thomas, sharing practical steps and tailored advice. One success story is rapper 100

RBH, from Amravati in Maharashtra. By distributing his music, he was able to get a record deal plus playback singing opportunities.

A dashboard allows users to track their digital music sales and sign up for Facebook, Instagram and YouTube monetisation services. For the first year, they offer 50% off the regular distribution costs, with singles available for ₹499 and albums for ₹1,499. The artiste retains 100% of sales revenue and rights to their work. "We're constantly evolving. The plan is to produce trends and make them available to artistes as they happen," concludes Kriplani.

Details: tunecore.in

Digital distributors

■ **CD Baby**, created by American writer-musician Derek Sivers, was one of the first platforms to enable musicians to distribute their own music on CDs, and now streaming services.

■ **SongTradr** is offering unlimited distribution and 100% distribution royalties through December 31 for users signing up for a free starter account.

■ **DistroKid** has an annual payment model (approximately ₹2,000) for unlimited song and album uploads. 'Roxanne' singer Arizona Zervas used it to reach #1 on the Spotify US top-50 chart.

In the spotlight: (clockwise from left) Stills from *Wild Wild Country* and Sheela Birnstiel with her dog.

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



We don't mix anything in our values. For example, we don't mix love with sex; we work with pure ingredients here

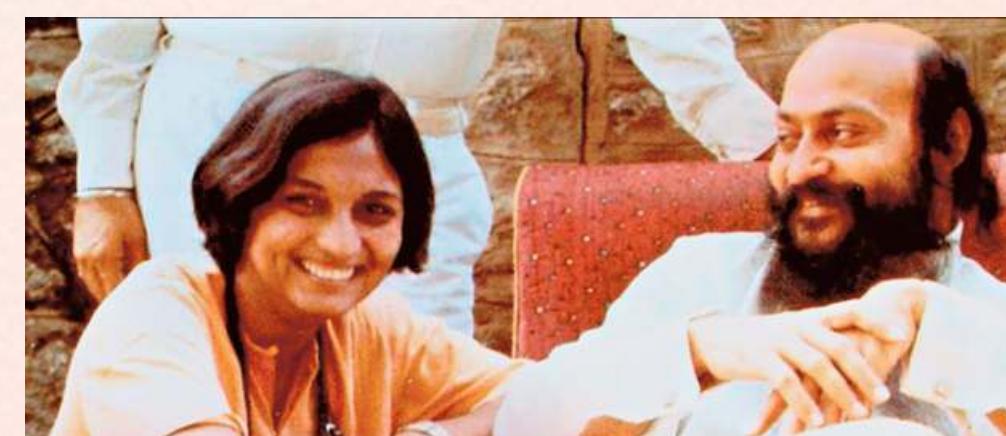


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TENDER NOTICE

For & on behalf of President of India, Chief Workshop Manager, (Engineering Workshop), Central Railway, Manmad-423104 invites e-bids for e-Procurement website, www.irrep.gov.in for the following work. **SR No. 1** Tender Notice No. & Date : CEW/MMR/01/2020-2021 dt.d.21.07.2020. Name of work : Removing weeds roots from the ground all types of wild vegetation including thorny trees, bushes, shrubs, jungle shrubs, babool, green grass etc. & maintaining for the period of one year with contractor's labour, materials, tools, plants, equipments, lead, lift transportation etc complete in all respects in C.E. Workshop Manmad. Approx cost of work : 2,53,552/- Earnest Money Rs : 5,100/- Cost of Tender document : 1000/- Completion period : 12 Months. Date & Time of closing : 31.08.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. Date & Time of opening : 31.08.2020 at 15.30 Hrs. **SR No. 2** Tender Notice No. & Date : CEW/MMR/02/2020-2021 dt.d. 21.07.2020. Name of work : Painting of Jigs of various spans of girders using Contractor's material, labour, consumables etc. including handling /shifting of material etc. complete in C.E. Workshop Manmad. Approx cost of work : 2,01,898.09/- Earnest Money Rs : 4,000/- Cost of Tender document : 1000/- Completion period : 4 Months. Date & Time of closing : 31.08.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. Date & Time of opening : 31.08.2020 at 15.30 Hrs. **SR No. 3** Tender Notice No. & Date : CEW/MMR/03/2020 dt.d. 21.07.2020. Name of work : Dismantling and depositing of scrap of old PSC girder, scrap turn Table, scrap generated from cutting section, EUR scrap, rail cut pieces near points and crossing shop, and minor scrap spreading across various locations in the workshop area and depositing the same in DSK Yard in C.E. Workshop, Manmad. Approx cost of work : 4,69,804.05/- Earnest Money Rs : 9,400/- Cost of Tender document : 1000/- Completion period : 4 Months. Date & Time of closing : 31.08.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. Date & Time of opening : 31.08.2020 at 15.30 Hrs. Complete information of above e-tender notice is available on website "www.irrep.gov.in". Bids other than in the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tender. Bhru 4 Railway Helpline 139



dian was nervous of, when she offered him biscuits? "I am not afraid to say my mind," she says echoing the fierceness of both Gloria Gaynor and the *Old Testament*. "You can't change me. This is how I was born, this is how I will die."

Sheela talks of values taught, "of having your own integrity, of not compromising your individuality". And of love and loyalty given. I ask of when the two get mixed up with something more sinister. Flickers of something deep within stir, her eyes widening. "We don't mix anything in our values. For example, we don't mix love with sex; we work with pure ingredients," says the woman, who bluntly told Johar she never had a sexual relationship with 'Bhagwan'.

Who is Ma Sheela then? Is she the person women can look up to? Or is she the one Sam Wollaston, a journalist in *The Guar-*

Timings

MUMBAI

SUNDAY, JUL. 26
RISE 06:14 SET 19:17
RISE 11:34 SET 23:48
MONDAY, JUL. 27
RISE 06:14 SET 19:16
RISE 12:32 SET 00:00
TUESDAY, JUL. 28
RISE 06:14 SET 19:16
RISE 13:32 SET 00:30

Mumbai Weather
max min
Mumbai Airport 33 25
Pune 32 21
Mumbai City 33 25

Mumbai Today
31°C The morning will be warm. Moderate rain may occur over the city. The sky would remain cloudy.

Mumbai Tomorrow
31°C Moderate rain would occur over the city. The morning will be comfortable. A mostly cloudy sky is expected.

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THE HINDU

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Exempt 'corona warriors' from traffic fines: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Saturday requested the Police Commissioner to exempt 'corona warriors' from traffic fines issued during lockdown and to start 'Traffic Lok Adalats'.

During the lockdown, Mr. Gupta said there were many routes in Delhi which were barricaded and others were open for one-way movement only, leading people to violate traffic rules "unintentionally".

A Delhi government spokesperson did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

Commenting on Ms. Sanghotra's case, Dr. Hooda, in-charge of the billing depart-

Private hospitals flouting price caps for COVID-19 treatment

Civil society groups blame govt. for not enforcing order or supporting patients

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

When 52-year-old Narender Kaur tested positive for COVID-19 on June 24, her daughter immediately called up government helplines numbers but allegedly got no response responded.

Left with little choice, she rushed her mother to Shanti Mukand Hospital, a private clinic close to her house.

"They asked me to deposit ₹4 lakh. Since I could not withdraw more than ₹50,000 from my card in a day, I paid ₹2.5 lakh in installments. But on July 5, I got a call from the hospital's billing department that my bill had exceeded ₹7.5 lakh. I was shocked. How can it be ₹7.5 lakh?" asked Mayanka Sanghotra, Ms. Kaur's daughter.

The Delhi government had capped charges for COVID-19 treatment at private hospitals on June 20, but many clinics are charging much more than the limit. "Later, I came to know about the Delhi government rates and after help from activists and putting a lot of pressure on the hospital for more than 10 days, they agreed to change my rates to Delhi government prices on July 17. I still paid ₹4.2 lakh," Ms. Sanghotra told *The Hindu*.

During a press conference on Saturday, various rights groups said the issue was a direct consequence of the "failure" of the Delhi government to provide transparent information to the public, and lack of effort by authorities to enforce the order on capping rates.

A Delhi government spokesperson did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

Commenting on Ms. Sanghotra's case, Dr. Hooda, in-charge of the billing depart-



A healthcare worker collecting swab sample of a man for COVID-19 test in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

ment of Shanti Mukand Hospital, said: "In 60% of the beds, we charge Delhi government rates, and in 40% we charge hospital rates, as per the government order. We charged her hospital rates after getting an undertaking from her. We later changed it to Delhi government rates."

COVID-19

When it was pointed out that according to the official order, the private hospital has to charge government rates on all its beds, Dr. Hooda said: "Now we charge Delhi government rates on all our beds."

Ms. Sanghotra settled her bill around 7 p.m. on July 17. Around 9.30 p.m., her mother passed away.

"I had gone to Lok Nayak Hospital and Rajiv Gandhi Hospital when I came to know that the bill is very high, but there were no ventilator beds and we were forced to stay in a private hospital. The government did not help to even settle the bill. The government is not

doing anything," she said.

The group of civil societies also sent a letter to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Saturday.

"We, the undersigned civil society organisations and networks, are writing to you regarding flagrant noncompliance of private hospitals with the Delhi government's order capping treatment rates for COVID-19, and to express our concerns regarding the lack of efforts by the Delhi government to enforce the order," read the letter jointly written by the All India Action Network (AIDAN), Anveshi Research Centre for Women's studies, and 18 other groups.

More cases

Apart from Ms. Sanghotra, three other people said they were "overcharged" by private hospitals. Though a total of four cases were pointed out during the press conference, the groups said there were more such cases.

"The behaviour of private hospitals is no accident, but rather a direct consequence

of the refusal of the Delhi government to enforce its own order, which has enabled hospitals to violate the rules with impunity. There is complicity of the government in refusing to act or provide support to patients. It is very hard for families to negotiate with hospitals and get the correct rates, especially when the patient is admitted due to power differential," said Malini Aisola, co-convenor of AIDAN.

A resident of Mohali, Dr. Bawa said he had come to pursue his post-graduation at the hospital – which comes under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation – as its medical college had a good reputation and would set him up for a government job.

On June 20, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), headed by the L-G, accepted recommendations of a committee under V. K. Paul, member of NITI Aayog, for fixing rates for COVID-19 treatment in private hospitals. A hospital that reserves over 60% of its total beds for COVID-19 treatment can charge government rates for 60% of the beds and hospital rates for the other 40%.

A hospital that reserves less than 60% of its total beds for COVID-19 treatment has to charge government rates for all its beds.

Shanti Mukand Hospital had reserved 100 beds out of a total 200 beds for COVID-19 treatment.



Sagardeep Bawa joined the hospital in 2017.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

As doctors we cannot even really go on strike and stop our work... there is a moral responsibility...

All we are asking for is our salary... why does it have to go to the court every time?

added.

The resident doctors' association of the hospital, in which Dr. Bawa is an office-bearer, had written to authorities last month decrying delay in payment of salaries. Last week, they wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal calling for his intervention.

"As doctors we cannot even really go on strike and stop our work. Apart from legal roadblocks such as the Epidemic Diseases Act there is also a moral responsibility. All we are asking for is our salary, which is a basic right, especially in a pandemic... why does it have to go to the court every time?" he said.

Hospital not to blame

"We understand that the hospital administration is not to blame, the responsibility lies with the civic bodies and the government to ensure there are funds," he added.

Dr. Bawa is currently part of the hospital's rapid response team and has been managing a COVID-19 testing centre in Alipur. "We test around 70 people every day out of which 4-5 test positive" he said.

In his final year of residency, Dr. Bawa is on the lookout for alternative opportunities.

Resident doctor forced to borrow money from parents

Hindu Rao Hospital has not paid salary for several months'

SIDHARTH RAVI

NEW DELHI

Senior resident at Hindu Rao Hospital Sagardip Bawa was forced to borrow money from his parents as he has not been paid his salary for several months. "At my age, it is embarrassing to ask for money from my parents but I do not really have a choice," said the 31-year-old, adding that he had been very close to defaulting on his life insurance premium.

"It has become very common for residents and juniors in the hospital to borrow money from each other because everyone knows what the situation is like," said Dr. Bawa.

A resident of Mohali, Dr. Bawa said he had come to pursue his post-graduation at the hospital – which comes under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation – as its medical college had a good reputation and would set him up for a government job.

He joined the hospital in 2017 and was prepared for his salary to be delayed once in a while but had never thought that the situation would become so dire.

Before the COVID-19 outbreak, salaries would sometimes get delayed by two months, but now there are delays of 3-4 months.

The committee was appointed by the Centre, who also appoints the L-G.

Later in the day, based on the DDMA's approval, the Delhi government issued an order fixing package rates for COVID-19 treatment in private hospitals. A hospital that reserves over 60% of its total beds for COVID-19 treatment can charge government rates for 60% of the beds and hospital rates for the other 40%.

A hospital that reserves less than 60% of its total beds for COVID-19 treatment has to charge government rates for all its beds.

A senior police officer said that the deceased has been identified as Head Constable Satyanarayana who was posted

Many doctors have been forced to petition authorities and protest regularly, he said.

When he started at the hospital, there were around 25 senior residents with him. Due to regular salary issues, only five remain. In June alone, 4-5 doctors did not renew their contract with the hospital, which has been declared a COVID-19 facility, he

Officer succumbs to virus

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

ed in Madhu Vihar police station. "He tested positive on July 13 and was sent to Akhshardham Covid Care Centre but his condition worsened and he was shifted to Lok Nayak Hospital," the officer said. He was also given plasma treatment. However, he tested positive again and breathed his last at Lok Nayak Hospital around 6 a.m. on Friday.

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PUBLIC NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 230(3) OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2013, RULE 6 AND 7 OF THE COMPANIES (COMPROMISES, ARRANGEMENTS AND AMALGAMATION) RULES, 2016 AND RULE 20 OF THE COMPANIES (MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION) RULES, 2014

FORM NO. CAA.2

[Pursuant to Section 230(3) of the Companies Act, 2013 and Rule 6 and 7 of the Companies

(Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamation) Rules, 2016]

COMPANY SCHEME APPLICATION REFERENCE NO.24/3/2019-CL-III

In the matter of scheme of Arrangement of

HLL Lifecare Limited, [HLL] (Demerged Company)

And

HLL Biotech Limited, [HBL] (Resulting Company)

And

Their Respective Shareholders

ADVERTISEMENT OF NOTICE OF THE MEETINGS OF UNSECURED CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that by orders dated 04th June, 2020 and 20th July, 2020 and in compliance of Rule 20 of Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and circulars issued thereunder, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India has directed meeting of the Unsecured creditors of the Company for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving the proposed Scheme of Arrangement of HLL Lifecare Limited, (First Applicant Company and for the Demerged Company) and HLL Biotech Limited, (Second Applicant Company and / or Resulting Company) and their Respective Shareholders ("Scheme")

In pursuance of the said orders and as directed therein notice is hereby given that a meeting of "Unsecured creditors" of the said company will be held through Video Conference (VC) on Wednesday, 26th August 2020 at 10 A.M and all unsecured creditors whose debt is above Rs. 10 Lakh as on 31st March, 2020 are requested to attend and vote. The facility for joining the meeting shall be open 30 minutes before the time scheduled for meeting. Details of joining the meeting through Video Conference (VC) and will be shared separately through registered email/phone. Detailed procedure for remote e-voting/e-voting during the meeting has been provided in the notice of meeting.

Copy of said scheme of arrangement under Section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013 can be obtained free of charge at the registered office of the Company situated at HLL Bhavan, Mahilamandiram Road, Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala - 695012 on all working days (except on Saturdays, Sundays and Public holidays) between 2.00 P.M. to 05.00 P.M upto 2 (two) days prior to the date of meeting.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India has appointed Dr. Mandeep Kumar Bhandari IAS, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India being the administrative in-charge of the applicant Companies as the chairperson for the said meeting.

The above mentioned Scheme of Arrangement, if approved by the meeting, will be subject to the subsequent approval of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

MATTERS PRESCRIBED UNDER RULE 20(V) OF THE COMPANIES (MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION) RULES, 2014

In pursuance of the above orders and as directed therein, meeting of "Unsecured creditors" of the said company will be held through Video Conference (VC) on Wednesday, 26th August 2020 at 02.00 P.M and all unsecured creditors whose debt is above Rs. 10 Lakh as on 31st March, 2020 are requested to attend and vote. Before the date of this publication, notice and explanatory statement to persons entitled to attend the meeting were completely dispatched. Persons entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may vote through remote e-voting mechanism. The user id and password for e-voting will be communicated to the unsecured creditors to their registered email/phone. The remote e-voting period will commence at 10.00 AM on 23 August 2020 and ends at 05.00 PM on 25 August 2020. During this period unsecured creditors may cast their vote by remote e-voting module shall be disabled by 05.00 PM on 25 August 2020. The vote on resolution cast by unsecured

Drug racket kingpin held from Agra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab police on Saturday said they have arrested the mastermind of the drug cartel which spread across 11 States.

DGP Dinkar Gupta said Jatinder Arora alias Vicky alias Saamp, mastermind of the 'Agra Prescription Drug Gang', was arrested from Agra.

"Vicky was diverting prescription drugs across 11 States leading to addiction, overdose and deaths," said Mr. Gupta.

The Punjab police had on Thursday said that they had busted the cartel and arrested 20 persons with a huge cache of drugs, proceeds-money and five vehicles, in an operation over eight weeks. According to the police, the cartel was pushing pharmaceutical opioids (drugs) into the markets all across India by diverting drugs in huge quantities from the manufacturers, suppliers, wholesalers and retail chemists.

Adityanath govt. transfers district police chiefs of Ayodhya, Kanpur

Kanpur SSP shifted in the wake of Vikas Dubey episode, lab technician's case

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Kanpur district police chief Dinesh Kumar P. was among the 15 IPS officers transferred by the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday evening.

Mr. Dinesh Kumar, who joined as Kanpur SSP as recently as June 15, has been transferred to Jhansi as SSP in the wake of the Vikas Dubey episode and the kidnap and murder case of Sanjeet Yadav in which 11 police personnel, including an IPS officer Aparna Gupta, were suspended on Friday on charges of negligence.

Eight policemen were shot dead in Bikru village of Kanpur on the intervening night of July 2 and 3 by history-sheeter Vikas Dubey and his associates. Dubey and his five associates were later shot dead in separate incidents.

The government also



U.P. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visiting the Ram Temple construction workshop in Ayodhya on Saturday. • PTI

transferred the district police chief of Ayodhya days before the scheduled bhoomi-pujan there for the Ram Mandir on August 5.

SSP Ashish Tiwari was transferred to Jhansi as SP.

This came on a day when Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Ayodhya, where he would be staying

the night, to take stock of the preparation for the foundation ceremony of the Ram Mandir, an event that will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

DIG Aligarh Range Prentender Singh takes over as SSP Kanpur while Deepak Kumar, DIG Chitrakoot, is the new SSP of Ayodhya.

CBI probe demanded

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KANPUR

The family of 27-year-old lab technician, Sanjeet Yadav, on Saturday demanded a CBI probe into his kidnap and killing.

Sanjeet's sister Ruchi Yadav met ADG-Police Headquarters B.P. Jodgand and demanded a CBI probe into the case, suspecting that there could be more people behind the killing. She told the ADG that the police had failed to recover her brother's belongings, including a couple of bags, mobile phone, wallet and an ATM card.

Ms. Ruchi and her mother urged the ADG to retrieve the victim's body, a police officer on condition of anonymity said.

Stringent NSA to be invoked in Meerut double murder case

Bodies of woman, daughter exhumed from house of accused

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

The Meerut district administration has started proceedings to invoke the National Security Act against Shamshad, from whose house in Bhood Baral village under Partapur police station the bodies of his live-in partner and her daughter were exhumed on July 22. The accused was arrested on July 23 after a brief encounter with Meerut police.



Priya, her daughter and Shamshad. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

and she started a beauty parlour. It was during that period that she found Shamshad on Facebook where he introduced himself as Amit Gurjar."

Ms. Chanchal said when Priya realised that she was duped and that he would not marry her, she filed a rape case. "But he promised to marry her. I think Priya made a wrong decision by taking back her complaint."

She added that the IO used to build pressure on Priya to take back her complaint. Based on the audio clips purportedly carrying conversations between policeman and Ms. Chanchal, SSP Sahni has suspended one S.I. and sent the IO to police lines. Ms. Chanchal said she first approached the Partapur police station in early April but the local police did not believe her until she approached the SSP with local Bajrang Dal leaders on July 14.

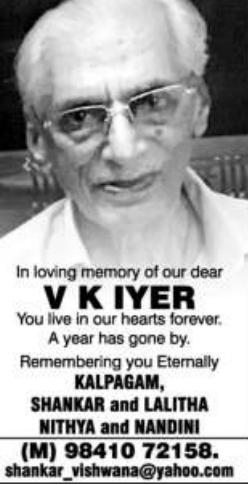
has also been booked for criminal conspiracy," the SSP said. After Shamshad's arrest, his wife had alleged that police had taken money from him to keep the case under wraps. A police team has been sent to Bihar to nab them.

It was Priya's friend Chanchal from Modinagar whose relentless pursuit unravelled the disappearance of the mother and daughter on March 28. Ms. Chanchal said Priya lived in her father's house in Modinagar after her divorce. "We became friends

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY



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DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

3-day lockdown in Tripura from Monday

Mortality rate insignificant, recoveries encouraging, says CM

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

The Tripura government has imposed a three-day complete lockdown from Monday in view of the surge in the coronavirus infections. The Health department will conduct a house-to-house survey and antigen tests of suspected patients during the lockdown.

Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb in a video message on Saturday evening urged the people to cooperate with the administration and the police who will enforce the

lockdown from 5 a.m. on Monday. "Please help us to contain the spread."

Mr. Deb said Tripura is one of the few States where the mortality rate of the infected patients was insignificant and the rate of recoveries was very encouraging.

'Remain at home'
He requested the people to remain at home during the lockdown days also to respond to the health staff who will be visiting every household.

The Chief Minister an-

nounced an incentive of ₹1,000 for all category health staff who will be taking part in the survey. He added that sufficient number of beds, ventilators, PPEs and emergency equipment to cope with the situation were available.

The Chief Secretary said the night curfew will continue as usual.

Tripura has recorded 3,787 cases as per the last official tally announced on Friday night.

Eleven people have died of the disease.

Policeman's body left on road for hours

Last respects paid according to protocol: Ganjam police

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The body of a police officer was lying on a road for hours after relatives and attendants fled the spot when he died of COVID-19 in Odisha's Ganjam district.

Instead of keeping the body in a mortuary, the hospital staff brought the body wrapped in clothes and left it unattended on a road for hours on Saturday. The Ganjam district police administration swung into action after the news of the body spread. "It is untrue that the body was abandoned. The body was kept for inquest. But some [people] spread

false news. We have paid our last respects as per protocol," said Brijesh Rai, Ganjam SP. He said the police also ensured that the family did not face any opposition from villagers while performing the last rites. Meanwhile, the State government has come up with a guideline on disposing the bodies of COVID-19 victims. "If families do not wish to take part in the last rites, the body may be disposed of in their absence," said Special Relief Commissioner P.K. Jena in a letter to all District Collectors.

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

A roughly 40-metre-high mountain of untreated municipal waste on the 30-acre landfill site at Bandhwari off the Gurugram-Faridabad highway has been a threat to the ecologically fragile Aravalis, the wildlife and underground water – as well as a challenge for the authorities – for almost a decade now.

EcoGreen Energy Private Limited was hired in August 2017 for collection and treatment of solid municipal waste from Gurugram and Faridabad. Around 2,000 tonnes of mixed garbage reaches the site daily from the two cities, out of which the Millennium City contributes as much as 1,200 tonnes.

Till a year ago, the firm could handle just 500 tonnes of garbage daily with two trommel machines (a mechanical screen used to separate materials). Recently, five new machines were installed at the garbage management plant by the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) and one more by EcoGreen to segregate and treat around 1,800 tonnes per day.

Segregating waste

Plant head Ravi Kumar said the trommels run 12-18 hours a day to treat the waste to their maximum capacity, but the monsoon is a challenge. "It becomes difficult to segregate the waste as it gets wet due to the rain. Once it rains heavily, we need to wait for 2-3 days for the waste to dry before it can be segregated," said Mr. Kumar.

When segregated, the fresh waste produces around 30% refuse-derived Fuel (RDF) and 25% organic waste; the rest is "reject". The RDF is used in cement industries and the organic waste is converted into compost. The reject is used to level low-lying areas. The site has untreated legacy waste of around 30 lakh tonnes, as per conservative estimates.

Though Solid Municipal Waste rules make segregation of waste at source mandatory, implementation on the ground is almost nil.



Clockwise from extreme left:
Leachate collected in large ponds for processing; leachate before (black) and after (clear) treatment through Disc Tube Reverse Osmosis; the landfill site at Bandhwari.

• ASHOK KUMAR

A steep mountain to scale

Recent efforts to manage the 40-metre heap of garbage at Bandhwari – off the Gurugram-Faridabad highway – have yielded some results, but the problem is far from over

The company's deputy chief executive officer, Sanjay Singh, said only 10-20% of the total municipal waste collected from the two cities comes to them segregated. "A lot of effort, energy and resources are required to segregate it. If we get segregated waste from source, it not only saves energy and resources, but we can also produce good quality compost. Our vehicles have separate cabins to keep segregated waste, but we mostly get mixed waste," said Mr. Singh.

Besides a Leachate Treatment Plant (LTP), two Disc Tube Reverse Osmosis (DTRO) systems were put into operation in January.

"The leachate from the site is collected into ponds, with layers of rubber sheets laid on the floor and side walls, and treated," said Mr. Kumar, adding that the DTRO and the LTP together have a capacity to treat 550 kilo litres of leachate per day. Around 350 kilo

litres is generated daily.

The DTRO-treated leachate is as good as drinking water. It is one of the best technologies in the world," said Mr. Kumar. The system, however, struggles during the monsoon as the rainwater mixes with the leachate, increasing the volume manifold.

Power generation

Last year, the MCG procured environmental clearance to set up a 15 MW Waste-to-Energy Plant (WTEP) at the site. It has now applied for expansion of its capacity to 25 MW. An online meeting is scheduled with the Expert Appraisal Committee for Thermal Power Projects on July 28 in this regard. The work on the project is set to start by the end of this year.

"It would be a flagship project in India. If all goes as planned, the WTEP will be operational by the end of 2022. As part of preparations for setting up the plant, 10-acre plots have been identified in Faridabad's Sihi and Nuh's Karoli to dump and treat the waste during this period. Gurugram's waste will be dumped in Karoli," said Mr. Singh.

The general manager (Engineering) at EcoGreen, Sumit Kumar, told *The Hindu* that increase in capacity for the WTEP was sought in view of the large amount of waste generated and future expansion.

He added that all fears of the plant leading to air pollution were unfounded as gases would be released according to the Central Pollution Control Board rules and Solid Waste Management guidelines. The pollution board can also monitor emissions on a real-

In one day

On July 20, the landfill at Bandhwari received:

- 1,236,205 tonnes of waste from Gurugram
- 81,660 tonnes of waste from Faridabad

The Disc Tube Reverse Osmosis (DTRO) systems processed:

- 152 kilo litres of leachate (intake); 102 kilo (outlet): DTRO-II
- 75 kilo leachate (intake); 50 kilo (outlet): DTRO-II

SOURCE: ECOGREEN ENERGY PRIVATE LIMITED

time basis.

However, concerns remain.

On July 19 this year, citizens from Gurugram, Faridabad, Delhi and other cities tweeted about the ongoing destruction of the Aravallis in a nationwide 'tweetstorm' with hashtags such as #AravalliUnderThreat and #AravalliBachao.

Some of the tweets pointed out that leachate from the landfill was threatening wildlife too.

"Citizens have been writing to the NGT, Haryana Pollution Control Board and the administration for the last one year but no action has been taken to stop illegal discharge of leachate or treatment of legacy waste at Bandhwari according to the Indore model, as directed by the NGT. Citizens have also demanded cancellation of the waste management contract with EcoGreen," said Gurugram-based environmental campaigner Neelam Ahluwalia, who is also a documentary filmmaker.

The decision of the administration to construct a WTEP in an eco-sensitive zone has also come under question with many activists claiming that the technology has been a failure in every other city in India.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Anwar, S/o Sagir Ahmad, R/o H.No. 548, Chatta Lal Miyan, Chandni Mahal, Delhi, Age: 36 years, Height: 5'6, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, wearing Black colour T-Shirt, Black colour Pajama and Plastic Sandal in feet, has been missing from the area of P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi since 15.07.2020. In this regard a DD No. 40-A, dated 20.07.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368638, 24368641
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/222/CD/2020

SHO
P.S. Chandni Mahal,
Delhi
Ph: 011-23271751, 23279338



'DGIPR hired agency for posting online poll ads'

CEO replies to allegations on BJP leader being hired during 2019 Assembly polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Amid allegations that an agency owned by a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was hired for putting up election-related online ads during the 2019 Maharashtra Assembly polls, the State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) said the firm was selected by the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR).

The State CEO said it is "misleading and incorrect" to suggest that it had engaged any agency on political considerations.

Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan on Friday alleged that an advertising and social media company owned by a BJP office-bearer was hired by the CEO, Maharashtra, to issue election-related online ads during the polls. On Thursday, social activist Saket Gokhale made the same allegation in a tweet.

The State CEO said, "As per the standard practice, an electoral awareness campaign is launched through an agency engaged by the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations



Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan • FILE PHOTO

of the State government."

The State CEO said the DGIPR then follow the rules in force and a "laid-down procedure for selecting an appropriate agency for public awareness and it is not (done) by the CEO Office".

The State CEO added, "As for the specific imputation made in the tweet of Saket Gokhale, an interim reply of facts has been sent to the Election Commission of India. Meanwhile, some other representations on the matter have been received from some public representatives, which are also being addressed and a detailed response shall be sent to the commission soon."

"This pandemic is a global war. It has affected the entire world. Those countries which had lifted the lockdown in haste thinking that it was over, were again forced to impose it to curb the spread. In Australia, they had to rope in Army," Mr. Thackeray said.

"Many people are opposing lockdown. They say that lockdown is affecting the economy. To such people, I would say that I am ready to lift the lockdown, but if people die due to it, would you take the responsibility?...E-

ven we are concerned about the economy," he said.

On the restarting of the suburban railway network in Mumbai, he said, "What if families fall ill and their houses are sealed? Therefore, everything would be done step-by-step."

Speaking about his government which has completed six months in office, Mr. Thackeray said he was leading a three-party alliance government supported by some independents.

"This is not just Thackeray, but everybody's sarkar, especially that of the citizens of the State, who have accepted this experiment," the CM said.

Mr. Thackeray said the six-month period has been full of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Nisarga, which hit the coastal parts of the State on June 3. "I am not bothered about the political challenges. People have faith in me," he asserted.

Tracking health: A healthcare worker conducts an antigen test in IC Colony at Dahisar in Mumbai. • AADESH CHAUDHARI

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The farmers of Raigad, who had lost trees spread out over acres of land during Cyclone Nisarga, can finally heave a sigh of relief as the State government has agreed to pay them relief as per the damaged crop instead of per hectare.

for coconut and supari trees," Raigad Guardian Minister Aditi Tatkare said.

The initial approved amount was ₹11 per supari tree and ₹127 for a coconut tree, which was raised to ₹50 and ₹250 respectively. Apart from the per tree damage, coconut and supari farmers will also receive some amount from the per hectare relief, which will amount to ₹7.88 crore.

Around 15.11 lakh supari trees and 1.74 lakh coconut trees have been damaged in the cyclone, for which farmers will be compensated ₹7.55 crore and ₹4.37 crore respectively, bringing the total to ₹11.93 crore.

Alibaug, which saw the most damage to 6.53 lakh supari and 38,504 coconut trees over 744 hectares, will receive relief of ₹4.22 crore. Shrivardhan, where 5.92 lakh supari and 81,730 coconut trees over were destroyed will receive ₹5 crore.

Murud, with 2.23 lakh supari and 20,399 coconut trees, will receive ₹1.62 crore. Mangaon, where 594 supari and 17,219 coconut trees were damaged, will receive ₹43 lakh.

Uddhav not in favour of lifting lockdown in State completely

Need to strike balance between economy and health, says Maharashtra CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday said he was not in favour of complete lifting of the lockdown in Maharashtra only to address the economic concerns. There was a need to strike a balance between issues related to health and economy considering the challenge posed by COVID-19, he added.



Tracking health: A healthcare worker conducts an antigen test in IC Colony at Dahisar in Mumbai. • AADESH CHAUDHARI

"I will never say that the lockdown will be lifted completely. But I have started re-opening a few things gradually. Once reopened, it shouldn't be shut again. Hence, I prefer taking steps in phases. You can't just think about economy or health. There needs to be a balance between the two," he said, in an interview published in Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamana on Saturday.

The lockdown in the State will continue till July 31. From June onwards, the government had started lifting the restrictions in phase-wise manner under its Mission Begin Again initiative. Meanwhile, some other representations on the matter have been received from some public representatives, which are also being addressed and a detailed response shall be sent to the commission soon."

"This pandemic is a global

war. It has affected the entire world. Those countries which had lifted the lockdown in haste thinking that it was over, were again forced to impose it to curb the spread. In Australia, they had to rope in Army," Mr. Thackeray said.

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On the restarting of the suburban railway network in Mumbai, he said, "What if families fall ill and their houses are sealed? Therefore, everything would be done step-by-step."

Speaking about his government which has completed six months in office, Mr. Thackeray said he was leading a three-party alliance government supported by some independents.

"This is not just Thackeray, but everybody's sarkar, especially that of the citizens of the State, who have accepted this experiment," the CM said.

Mr. Thackeray said the six-month period has been full of challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Nisarga, which hit the coastal parts of the State on June 3. "I am not bothered about the political challenges. People have faith in me," he asserted.

Tracking health: A healthcare worker conducts an antigen test in IC Colony at Dahisar in Mumbai. • AADESH CHAUDHARI

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The farmers of Raigad, who had lost trees spread out over acres of land during Cyclone Nisarga, can finally heave a sigh of relief as the State government has agreed to pay them relief as per the damaged crop instead of per hectare.

for coconut and supari trees," Raigad Guardian Minister Aditi Tatkare said.

The initial approved amount was ₹11 per supari tree and ₹127 for a coconut tree, which was raised to ₹50 and ₹250 respectively. Apart from the per tree damage, coconut and supari farmers will also receive some amount from the per hectare relief, which will amount to ₹7.88 crore.

Around 15.11 lakh supari trees and 1.74 lakh coconut trees have been damaged in the cyclone, for which farmers will be compensated ₹7.55 crore and ₹4.37 crore respectively, bringing the total to ₹11.93 crore.

Alibaug, which saw the most damage to 6.53 lakh supari and 38,504 coconut trees over 744 hectares, will receive relief of ₹4.22 crore. Shrivardhan, where 5.92 lakh supari and 81,730 coconut trees over were destroyed will receive ₹5 crore.

Murud, with 2.23 lakh supari and 20,399 coconut trees, will receive ₹1.62 crore. Mangaon, where 594 supari and 17,219 coconut trees were damaged, will receive ₹43 lakh.

Raigad farmers to get relief on per tree basis

16.85 lakh coconut, supari trees damaged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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FROM PAGE ONE

Ladakh left out in the cold after becoming UT

Since the implementation of the J&K Reorganisation Act in October last year, a cumbersome process of division of assets from banks to fans and sofas between the UTs has hit a dead end.

While the J&K Bank remains the official bank of J&K, the new J&K domicile law bars outsiders, including people from Ladakh, from applying for recently announced posts in the bank. "The J&K Bank's assets remain a common entity. Our youth should be allowed to sit for the test," LAHDC-K chairman Mr. Khan said.

The J&K Bank has around two dozen branches in Ladakh and remains its largest bank with presence in the tough and remotest pockets of Leh and Kargil.

The clamour for domicile laws for Ladakh are growing now. Phuntsog Stobgyal, a BJP youth leader from Leh who met Member of Parliament Jamyang Tsering Nam-

gyal and other senior officials over the issue recently, said, "Domicile laws for Ladakh are coming soon and will address these issues."

Hill councils

The fate of both the councils, LAHDC-Kargil and LAHDC-Leh, that manage governance issues at the micro level with budgetary independence and also give representation to people, is also hanging fire.

"There is confusion in the minds of people because there is no formal order on demarcating the functioning of the hill councils by the Ministry of Home Affairs so far," said Phunchok Stanzin, executive councillor of the LAHDC-Leh. Mr. Khan said the absence of business rules has failed to delineate powers.

"The council should be granted legislative powers on the lines of Bodoland Council to frame laws. Otherwise, the councils will be ineffective," he said.

Gehlot to make fresh push for Assembly session

Earlier in the day, Mr. Gehlot told the MLAs at a Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting here that he would go to Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, if needed, to make sure that the "BJP's conspiracy" to topple his government did not succeed. "If we have to picket Rashtrapati Bhavan or even the Prime Minister's residence, we will do that," he said.

As the legislators raised their hands in support, Mr. Gehlot asked them to maintain solidarity and stay strong, while indicating that they may have to stay in the hotel on the outskirts of Jaipur for 21 more days to complete the time of advance notice for convening a new session of the Assembly.

Army is working to restore LAC position

On the ongoing disengagement process, the first phase of which has only been partially completed so far, Lt. Gen. Joshi said the same is happening on the ground and also being verified by the commanders on the ground to ensure its validity and correctness.

"It is a complex and integrated process which needs diligent execution," he told News18, adding once complete disengagement is achieved, de-escalation would take place which would be guided by the principle of mutual and equal security.

During the first phase of disengagement, Chinese troops pulled back from standoff areas at Galwan and patrolling Point 15 but only partially from PP 17A.

At Pangong Tso, where

Chinese troops moved in about 8km from Finger 8 to Finger 4 claimed by India, they only moved back from the base of Finger 4 to Finger 5 but continue to remain on the ridgelines of Finger 4 overlooking Indian positions. The fourth round of Corps Commander talks on July 14 discussed this and the second phase of disengagement but there has been no progress on the ground since then.

On Friday, the third round of talks under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) since the beginning of the standoff were held, where both sides agreed to hold another round of senior military talks to take forward the disengagement process.

M.P. Chief Minister tests positive for COVID-19

On Wednesday, Minister Arvind Singh Bhardwaj had tested positive, hours after he attended a Cabinet meeting. A day before, he accompanied Mr. Chouhan to Lucknow to pay their last respects to Governor Lalji Tandon. Earlier, Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia had also contracted the illness.

Mr. Chouhan said he was following all guidelines. "Based on the doctor's advice, I will quarantine myself. My appeal to the State's people is to be cautious. Even a little negligence is like inviting corona. I made all possible efforts to keep corona at bay, but people met me on several subjects."

Despite being in the Cab-

net meeting where Mr. Bhardwaj was present, Mr. Chouhan held one-on-one meetings with at least 17 Ministers, including Health Minister Prabhu Ram Choudhary, on Thursday. A day before, he met six Ministers, the Chief Minister's office said. On Thursday evening, he attended a function at the party office here where former Congress MLA Narayan Patel switched over to the BJP.

Former Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in a tweet, wished Mr. Chouhan a speedy recovery. Had Mr. Chouhan been cautious and "followed the protocols, didn't take it as a joke, then probably you would have been saved from it", he said.

Active cases rise in A.P. as 7,813 test positive

Kerala too adds 1,103 cases amid strong local transmission; Karnataka, with 55,388 active cases, ranks second nationally

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's course of COVID-19 management was marked by the addition of 1,103 new cases on Saturday, taking cumulative cases to 18,098.

While the steady rise reported daily brought little cheer to the Health administration, active cases were stabilised by 1,049 recoveries on the same day.

Local transmission con-

COVID-19

nued to drive the State's case load, with 875 out of the 1,103 cases being locally acquired infections, including 72 for which no epidemiological link was found. These included 21 health-care workers.

The number of active cases or patients currently under treatment in hospitals in the State was 9,420.

Recoveries recorded so far



Awaiting their turn: People waiting at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru before leaving to their native places on a Shramik Special train on Saturday. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

in the State stood at 8,613.

Four deaths

The death toll touched 59, with two more fatalities in Kozhikode and one each

from Ernakulam, Kasaragod and Palakkad. Thiruvananthapuram reported the maximum number of cases again, with locally acquired infection accounting for 229

out of 240 cases. The district had the maximum active cases with 2,666 persons being treated in hospitals.

Kozhikode had 110 cases, Kasaragod (105), Alappuzha

(102), Kollam (80), Ernakulam (79), Kottayam (77), Malappuram (68), Kannur (62), Pathanamthitta (52), Idukki (40), Thrissur (36), Palakkad (935) and Wayanad (17).

Over 1.54 lakh people were under quarantine, of whom, 8,981 with mild COVID-like symptoms were in hospitals. The number of samples tested in 24 hours was 22,013.

Andhra Pradesh reported

52 new deaths and 7,813

fresh COVID-19 cases on Saturday.

The tally was up, at 88,671 and the death toll was 985. Active cases shot up in the past few days and as of Saturday 44,431 patients

were under treatment. With 3,320 patients discharged in the past day, recoveries

stood at 43,255. The recovery rate was down to 48.78%.

Guntur district reported nine new deaths and its overall toll was closer to 100. West Godavari reported

eight deaths and East Godavari, Kurnool and Krishna six deaths each. Chittoor district reported five deaths, Vizianagaram four and Visakhapatnam and Srikanthapuram three deaths each. Similarly, Nellore and Prakasam reported one death each.

East Godavari once again topped the single-day tally with 1,324 cases, West Godavari had 1,012 new cases and Visakhapatnam 936 cases.

Karnataka stood second in active cases in the country at 55,388, pushing Tamil Nadu to third place. Maharashtra led with 1.45 lakh active cases.

With 5,072 new infections, total positive cases touched 90,942. After 110 deaths on Friday, fatalities dropped to 72. The toll was 1,796. Bengaluru Urban reported 2,036 new cases, and 30 of the 72 deaths.

(With inputs from Vijaya-

wada and Bengaluru bureaus)

IN BRIEF**Bishop moves SC seeking discharge without trial**

NEW DELHI Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun, has approached the Supreme Court claiming innocence and seeking to discharge him without a trial. In his petition, the former head of the Catholic diocese in Jalandhar claimed that he was 'falsely implicated' by the complainant after he questioned her financial dealings.

The accused has moved the top court after the Kerala High Court dismissed his petition. ANI

New concerns await Kerala's fisheries sector

KOCHI As the annual ban on trawling ends in Kerala on July 31, it will bring a fresh set of problems for the fisheries sector.

There are around 3,600 trawling boats that operate off the coast of the State. Most of the workers, numbering around 50,000, are from Tamil Nadu. But due to the strict restrictions to curb COVID-19, deploying workers from the neighbouring State will be a problem, said P.V. Jayan, representing traditional fishermen in Kerala.

Executive officer of A.P. temple suspended

VIJAYAWADA The executive officer of Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, Tirumalaigiri, at Jaggaiahpet in Andhra Pradesh, has been suspended on charges of misuse of official powers.

Photos and videos had been posted in various social media groups alleging that the official was using the temple staff for his personal work.

The Endowments Department initiated the action against Mr. Saibaba on Saturday. A departmental enquiry has been ordered into the allegations.

Hotels and resorts reopen in Mysuru

Kickstart for flagging economy of the region known for its forest sanctuaries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSRU

The Chamarajanagar district administration has ordered the reopening of tourist places and rescinded its earlier directives forbidding hotels, resorts and homestays from accepting reservations and bookings.

Chamarajanagar is known for its forests and has the Bandipur National Park, BRT Tiger Reserve and M.M. Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, apart from drawing pilgrims to the Male Mahadev temple.

Safaris will be offered on only half the carrying capacity of vehicles, according to officials.

The order, which came into immediate effect, was issued late on Friday evening. Deputy Commissioner M.R. Ravi said the Sunday lockdown



Relaxing restrictions: A file photo of tourists in the Bandipur safari vehicles.

would, however, continue with its associated restrictions. He said the reopening was necessitated to give a kick-start to the district's flagging economy.

Soon after the unlocking began in June, there was a surge in tourists

visiting Bandipur and other places of interest, following which restrictions were clamped again in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 cases. However, Mr. Ravi said it was imperative to protect the economy.

Temple tourism at M.M. Hills was not affected by the

earlier orders as the authorities had put in place measures to ensure social distancing. Also, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the district was 170 as on Saturday, and hence there was no need for a prolonged lockdown of tourist places, officials said.

In worsening pandemic, no respite in sight for Mollywood

More containment zones prevent return to shooting

G. KRISHNAKUMAR
KOCHI

Some respite: The shooting of Malayalam film 'Tsunami' resumed in Kochi. ■ H. VIBHU

The worsening COVID-19 pandemic has cast a shadow over the resumption of shooting of new Malayalam movies though the Kerala Film Producers' Association (KFPA) has given its nod to register new films from August 1.

Even though the government had permitted indoor shooting with a maximum crew of 50 persons from June, the increase in the number of containment zones and stringent regulations have doused the hopes of a gradual return to normalcy.

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The Supreme Court has taken a serious view of a plea highlighting that Indians, mostly blue-collar job workers from Tamil Nadu and other parts of the country, are still stranded in quarantine camps and "open spaces" in Kuwait amid the COVID-19 pandemic, awaiting repatriation to their homeland. A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde said Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to consult with the government and obtain instructions. The court listed a hearing in 10 days.

The petition was filed by Velinadu Vazh Tamil Nala Sangham, represented by senior advocate S. Nagamuthu, advocates Prabu Ramasubramanian, K. Paari Vendhan and Ragunatha

stick to the original schedule," he added.

Sujith Vaassudev, cinematographer-director, said that ensuring the safety of the people remains key in these tough times.

"We have to cooperate with the efforts being made by authorities to contain the outbreak," he said.

Sethupathy. The petition said the pandemic may continue for an indefinite period of time and citizens cannot be left stranded in inhuman conditions in a foreign country.

It sought a direction from the government to make a list of stranded Indians, draw up a schedule for their repatriation and, in the meanwhile, get in touch with the Embassy in Kuwait to provide them with basic essentials and medicines.

The petition said that in dire situations orchestrated by a global crisis, each country takes care of its own. A foreign country will prioritise its own people over the Indians there. Added to this fact, the majority of countries are finding it difficult to match their efforts to the alarming spike in cases, it pointed out.

The petition was filed by Velinadu Vazh Tamil Nala Sangham, represented by senior advocate S. Nagamuthu, advocates Prabu Ramasubramanian, K. Paari

Cabinet decision binding on Governor

A 2016 SC order is significant in the Rajasthan face-off as it limits the Governor's power to specific areas

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court has held that a Governor is bound to convene a meeting of the Assembly for a floor test on the recommendation of the Cabinet.

The five-judge Constitution Bench judgment of the Supreme Court in *Nabam Rebia versus Deputy Speaker* on July 13, 2016, held that a Governor cannot employ his "discretion", and should strictly abide by the "aid and advice" of the Cabinet to summon the House.

Rajasthan deadlock

The judgment is significant in the present deadlock between Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot over the summoning of an Assembly session for a floor test.



Head-to-head: Congress workers staging a demonstration against the BJP in Jaipur on Saturday. ■ ROHIT JAIN PARAS

had held.

The Nabam Rebia judgment was a consequence of then Arunachal Pradesh Governor J.P. Rajkhowa's decision to advance the Assembly session, a move which led to unrest in the State and culminated in President's Rule.

The Governor can summon, prorogue and dissolve the House only on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister as the head. And not at his own," the unanimous judgment by the Bench led by then Chief Justice J.S. Khe-

The Constitution Bench held Mr. Rajkhowa's decision to be a violation of the Constitution. The judgment led to the restoration of the Congress-led Nabam Tuki government.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The judgment said even the Constituent Assembly was wary of extending the Governor's discretion. Though the draft Constitution had vested the Governor with the discretion to summon and dissolve, it was later omitted by the framers of the Constitution.

"It is an accepted principle that in a parliamentary democracy with a responsible form of government, the powers of the Governor as Constitutional or formal head of the State should not be enlarged at the cost of the

real executive, viz. the Council of Ministers," it said.

The Supreme Court highlighted how Article 163 of the Constitution does not give the Governor a "general discretionary power to act against or without the advice of his Council of Ministers".

The court said the Governor's discretionary powers are limited to specified areas like giving assent or withholding/referring a Bill to the President or appointment of a Chief Minister or dismissal of a government which has lost of confidence but refuses to quit, etc.

"The area for the exercise of his discretion is limited. Even in this limited area, his [Governor's] choice of action should not be arbitrary or fanciful. It must be a choice dictated by reason, actuated by good faith and tempered by caution," the court said.

Congress raises concern over anti-defection law

Rajasthan crisis has sparked calls for amendments

SANDEEP PHUKAN

NEW DELHI

The Rajasthan High Court's order asking for *status quo* on the Assembly Speaker's disqualification notice to dissentient Congress lawmakers seems to have triggered a debate within the Congress on the broader issue of the anti-defection law, or the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution, and political parties regularly approaching the courts over the way it is applied.

Former Union Law Minister Kapil Sibal, who is arguing for Speaker C.P. Joshi in the Supreme Court, on Saturday said the BJP was using the Tenth Schedule to "destabilise" the elected Congress government in the State, and called for amending some provisions.

In a series of tweets, former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who is a senior advocate in the Supreme Court, referred to court orders on the Tenth Schedule. "In 1992, the Supreme Court ruled: "Having regard to the constitutional scheme in the Tenth Schedule, judicial review should not cover any stage prior to the making of a decision by the Speakers/Chairmen; and no *quia timet* actions are permissible. Those words are simple and clear enough. That statement of the law by 5 judges was binding on all courts, HC or SC. Now, dear average citizen, you be the judge," he said on Twitter.

In a separate case, the police said he helped in the return of a terrorist, a week after joining the Al-Badr outfit, in the Awantipora belt of Pulwama.

told *The Hindu*.

According to the family, the police accused Mr. Malik, a postgraduate, of "anti-India activities on the campus of the KU".

People said both the militants were locals. Preliminary reports suggest they belonged to the Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Student held
A Kashmir University (KU) student, Aaqib Malik, was arrested on Friday in connection with an FIR registered in 2018 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

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Governor Mukhi broke norms: Gogoi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi on Saturday accused Governor Jagdish Mukhi of violating the COVID-19 protocol by stepping out of the Raj Bhavan, marked a quarantine zone, to visit flood-hit areas.

Mr. Gogoi also criticised the BJP-led State government for the "sudden" withdrawal of restrictions from the Raj Bhavan to facilitate the trip on Friday. "The Governor's House was declared a containment zone after 73 officials and staff tested positive. But the restrictions were suddenly lifted," he said. "Besides, the 77-year-old Governor visited the affected areas in violation of protocol, instead of being an example to the fellow citizens," he said.

Raj Bhavan officials said all safety measures were adhered to during his visit. Barring the 972 cases on July 22, more than 1,000 positive cases have been recorded in Assam every day since July 20. Till Friday evening, Assam recorded 29,921 cases, of which 9,143 were active while 76 persons had died. Tripura recorded 11 deaths followed by Meghalaya with five, Arunachal Pradesh with three and Nagaland one.

Sold infant rescued
The police in Kokrajhar district on Friday reunited a woman with her month-old daughter. Her husband, a jobless migrant labourer, sold the baby for ₹45,000 on July 2.

"We arrested the man from Dantola Mandaria village and two women on charges of human trafficking," the police said. He said he had been facing extreme poverty after returning from Gujarat, where he worked as a labourer.

SC panel, lawyers mull on physical court hearings

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

A seven-judge committee of the Supreme Court led by Justice N.V. Ramana has brainstormed with lawyers on the subject of resuming physical court hearings, which were stopped in late March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a meeting held on July 24 with Bar leaders, the committee finally decided to wait for another two weeks and see how the situation panned out. A source in the Supreme Court said that during the discussion physical court hearings with glass shields to protect the judges was considered. Ho-

India testing over 4 lakh samples a day

Collective efforts of Centre, States have kept a check on COVID-19 mortality, says Health Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India has now hiked its COVID-19 sample testing capacity to over 4 lakh tests a day with 4,20,898 samples tested in 24 hours, said a release issued by the Union Health Ministry on Saturday.

"With this, the tests per million (TPM) has further increased to 11,485 and cumulative testing to 1,58,49,068. This elevated number comes on the heels of 3,50,000 tests having been done every day consistently over the last one week," the Ministry said.

The Central government has now advised the States and Union Territories to keep up the strategy of "test, track and treat".

"Aggressive testing may lead to a higher number of daily positive cases initially but would eventually achieve a decline as has been demonstrated after the Central government's targeted



The fight is on: The new 450-bed COVID-19 hospital at Burari that was inaugurated by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

efforts in Delhi," the Ministry said.

India has one of the lowest case fatality rates (CFR) in the world, according to the Health Ministry, with 32,223 COVID-19 patients having re-

coved in the 24 hours.

"The cumulative number of recovered cases has reached 8,49,431 currently. The recovery rate stands at 63.54%.

The gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has further increased to 3,93,360," the Ministry said.

Stating that this has been achieved with the effective and standardised clinical management protocols

based on the "holistic standard of care approach", the Ministry said the CFR continued its downward trend, which meant that the collective efforts of the Centre, the State governments and Union Territory administrations had resulted in keeping a check on the mortality due to COVID-19.

"The CFR has significantly dipped to 2.35% currently," the Ministry said.

It added that a strong factor contributing to this achievement was the increase in the number of laboratories from one in January 2020 to 1,301 currently. This includes 902 government labs and 399 in the private sector.

"Revised facilitative guidelines of testing by ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) and all-round efforts by the governments have also aided in widespread testing," it said.

in healthy Indian adults. The firm said around 1,600 participants aged above 18 would be enrolled in the study," a source said.

Initial results of the first two-phase trials of the vaccine conducted in five trial sites in the U.K. showed it has an acceptable safety profile and homologous boosting increased antibody responses, the source said.

SII plans to start the phase 2 and 3 human trials in India in August.

SII CEO Adar Poonawalla has said, "Serum Institute of India has entered a manufacturing partnership with AstraZeneca to produce and supply 1 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine being developed by Oxford University."

"According to the application, it would conduct an observer-blind, randomised controlled study to determine the safety and immunogenicity of 'Covidshield'."

Row over man's death outside hospital

He was allegedly left unattended as his wife didn't have money for patient slip

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL



Grief untold: Aarti Rajak leaving for home with her husband's body on Saturday from Guna. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Guna district hospital around 6 p.m. on Wednesday. When she approached the counter, she was told she needed to pay for registration. Since she did not have any money, she waited with her seriously ill husband on

the hospital premises. "The next morning, when she tried again to get a registration slip to admit her husband, she was told another counter outside would open soon for the slip. As she waited, her husband died at 8 a.m."

Speaking to reporters, Ms. Rajak said, "No one came to our help from the hospital.

Stating that the hospital always had a security guard, and a police post, apart from two ward boys deployed at the main gate at night, doctors on emergency duty and two officials at the slip counter too, the Commission said: "All of them ignored the critical condition of the woman and her husband."

Speaking to reporters, Ms. Rajak said, "No one came to our help from the hospital. When the slip wasn't made, how could a doctor see him? Even after his death, no one came for an hour at least."

Following media coverage of the official apathy, Guna Collector Kumar Purushottam on Friday initiated a magisterial inquiry.

Priyanka targets U.P. govt. over handling of COVID-19

Testing and hospital facilities inadequate, says Cong. leader

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday targeted the Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh over its handling of the COVID-19 situation and accused it of adopting a mantra of "no test is equal to no corona" even as cases rise.

In a letter to the U.P. Chief Minister, Ms. Vadra said the battle against the pandemic could not be fought by just "managing publicity and news". She noted that 2,500 COVID-19 cases were reported in U.P. on Friday. "Quarantine centres in U.P. are in a pathetic state. Because of



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

this, people are not stepping out of their homes for getting tested," she said.

Focussing on the shortage of beds in hospitals, she said, "The Prime Minister is a Member of Parliament

from Varanasi, the Defence Minister from Lucknow, many other Union Ministers are from U.P. Why can't temporary hospitals be opened in Varanasi, Lucknow, Agra?"

In a separate tweet, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi too attacked the Union government over news reports that Railways earned ₹429 crores by running special Shramik trains during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"There are clouds of disease and people are in trouble, but one seeks to benefit – this anti-people government is converting a disaster into profits and is earning," Mr. Gandhi tweeted.

Jairam slams draft project clearance rules

He objects to post facto approvals and curtailed notice period for public hearings in EIA notification

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

health and welfare of the people.

Feedback sought

The notification is right now open to public comments before the government gives its final seal of approval.

"These changes are not based on the three As – audits, assessments and analyses. The changes are not based on any research. They reflect a mindset that sees environmental regulation as an unnecessary regulatory burden and not as an essential obligation to be met for the health and welfare of our people and for ensuring development that is sustaina-



Jairam Ramesh
ble," Mr. Ramesh said in the letter which he posted on his Twitter handle.

Mr. Ramesh opposed it on five grounds and marked a copy to Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

"It allows for post facto approvals which go against the very principle of assessment and public participation prior to environment clearance and has provisions that will routinely legitimise illegality. It reduces public participation in all steps of the environment clearance process by lessening the notice period for public hearings and doing away with them for a large category of projects."

'Encourages land grab'
Apart from doing away with environmental impact assessment, the Congress leader noted that the proses

Assam flood death toll rises to 97

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The death toll in Assam floods since May 22 increased to 97 with a person drowning in Morigaon district on Saturday.

Another 26 people died in landslips during the period.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said the number of flood-affected people reduced by a few thousand overnight to 26.38 lakh.

About 2,300 people returned home from the relief camps where 47,772 people remain, an official said.

IIT-Kharagpur develops rapid test kit

The low-cost portable device can give results within one hour, say researchers

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) have developed a new technology for low-cost COVID-19 tests using a portable device. The test results (from saliva samples) can be made available in a customised smartphone application for dissemination within one hour without requiring manual interpretation, researchers said.

"This first-of-its-kind device will bring the testing for COVID-19 out from the walls of expensive laboratories and RT-PCR machines and enable testing at affordable costs for the under-served community across the world," a press statement from IIT-KGP said.

Prof. Suman Chakraborty from the Mechanical Engineering Department said the technology was "very different from traditional detection systems used across the world". "This method has



Going local: The device will enable testing at affordable rates among under-served communities, says IIT-Kharagpur.

eliminated the need for a PCR machine. It includes a portable, automated pre-programmable temperature control unit, a special detection unit on genomic analysis and customised smartphone app for test results without any manual interaction," Prof. Chakraborty said.

Prof. Chakraborty said. He also added that RT-PCR based tests suffer from a compelling constraint of requiring an elaborate laboratory infrastructure and support system, including the operational and maintenance cost, to perform the test.

be used for a large number of tests, on mere replacement of the paper cartridge after each test and the cost of test is ₹400 per test, taking all components of expenses and business model into account, the institute said.

Arindam Mondal, assistant professor from the School of Bio Science department, said the portable device was "capable of detecting any other kind of RNA virus by following the same generic procedure".

IIT-KGP director V.K. Tewari expressed the hope that the innovation "can make significant breakthrough in global viral pandemic management" and added that the unique innovation was aligned with the institution's vision to "develop high-end healthcare technologies that can be afforded by the common people".

IIT-KGP in a press statement said it was ready for commercial production of the product.

Kashmir saffron now has GI certificate

Farmers will get the best price: L-G

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The J&K administration on Saturday issued the certificate of geographical indication (GI) registration for saffron grown in the Kashmir Valley, even as the crop sees a decline in its production and shrinking of land under cultivation.

Describing it as "a momentous decision of the Centre", J&K Lieutenant-Governor G.C. Murmu said this was the first major step to put saffron produced in the Kashmir Valley on the world map with authentication.

"With the GI tag, Kashmir saffron will acquire more prominence in the export market and would help farmers get the best remunerative price," he said.

Mr. Murmu, while complimenting the Director-Agriculture, Kashmir, said restoring the pristine glory of Kashmir saffron is top priority for both the govern-



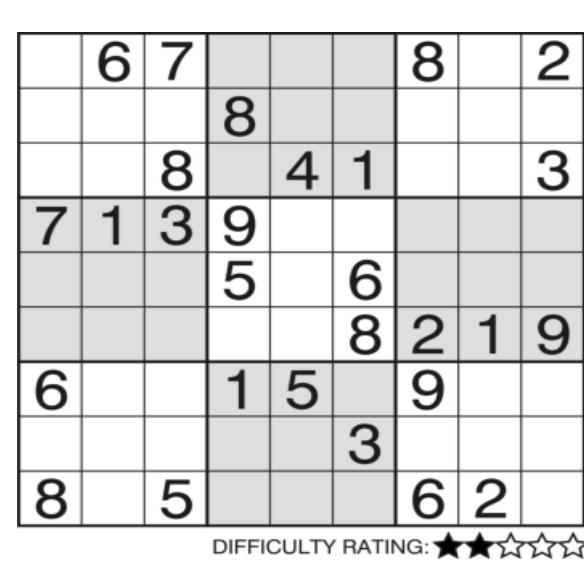
Farmers processing saffron flowers at Pampore in Kashmir. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

mment of the Union Territory as well as the Centre.

The GI tag would also stop adulteration prevalent in its trade, he said.

Kashmir saffron, grown at an altitude of 1,600 metres, saw a steep decline in production by around 65%, from 16 tonnes to 5.6 tonnes in 2018. According to an official data, land under saffron cultivation has also come down to 3,715 hectares in 2009-10 from 5,707 hectares in 1996.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



CM
YK

M-BM-BME

Australia rejects China's sea claims

There is no legal basis for Beijing to assert rights over South China Sea islands, says declaration to UN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SYDNEY
Australia has rejected Beijing's territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea in a formal declaration to the UN, aligning itself more closely with Washington in the escalating row.

In a statement filed on Thursday, Australia said there was "no legal basis" to several disputed Chinese claims in the sea, including those related to the construction of artificial islands on small shoals and reefs.

"Australia rejects China's claim to 'historic rights' or 'maritime rights and interests' as established in the 'long course of historical practice' in the South China Sea," the declaration read.

"There is no legal basis for China to draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of maritime fea-



Contested dots: A Vietnamese-claimed island in South China Sea's Spratly island group, as seen from a Philippine Air Force C-130 transport plane, in April 2017. •AP

tures or 'island groups' in the South China Sea, including around the 'Four Sha' or 'continental' or 'outlying' archipelagos."

Pompeo's declaration
The declaration comes after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and re-

sources in the South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's.

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea based on a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation from maps dating back to the 1940s.

The latest escalation comes ahead of annual talks between Australia and the U.S., with Ministers travelling to Washington for the first time since Australian borders were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings come at a "critical time" and it is essential they are held face-to-face, Foreign

Minister Marise Payne and Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said in a statement on Saturday.

U.S. relations with China have markedly deteriorated in recent months, especially over trade disputes, the COVID-19 pandemic and Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

Criticism on Hong Kong
Ms. Payne and Ms. Reynolds also penned an article in *The Australian* newspaper on Saturday, labelling national security legislation imposed on Hong Kong last month as "sweeping and vague".

"We face a public health crisis, economic upheaval and resurgent authoritarian regimes using coercion in a bid to gain power and influence at the expense of our freedoms and sovereignty," they wrote.

U.S. consulate in Chengdu readies for closure

Insignia removed from the front as tit-for-tat evacuation begins

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

CHENGDU
Workers removed the U.S. insignia from the consulate in the Chinese city of Chengdu on Saturday, a day after Beijing ordered its closure as relations deteriorated in a Cold War-style stand-off.

The Chengdu mission was told to shut in retaliation for the forced closure of Beijing's consulate in Houston, Texas, with both sides alleging the other had endangered national security. The deadline for the Americans to exit Chengdu remains unclear, but AFP reporters saw a worker on a small crane remove a circular U.S. insignia from the front of the consulate, leaving just an



Exit sign: A worker removing the sign at the entrance to the U.S. consulate in Chengdu on Saturday. •AP

American flag flying. Three moving company trucks entered the U.S. consulate building Saturday afternoon.

Cleaners were seen carting big black bags of rubbish from the consulate in the early hours of the morning. One of them had split and

appeared to contain shredded paper. At least ten bags were removed.

Other staff were seen moving trolleys around inside, one carrying a large empty metal bin, while some wheeled suitcases.

Beijing says closing the

Chengdu consulate was a "legitimate and necessary response to the unreasonable measures by the United States", and has alleged that staff at the mission endangered China's security.

Washington officials, meanwhile, said there had been unacceptable efforts by the Chinese consulate in Houston to steal U.S. corporate secrets and proprietary medical and scientific research. The last Chinese diplomats left the Houston consulate on Friday as a 72-hour deadline to close the mission passed. Officials there were seen loading large sacks of documents and other items onto trucks, and throwing some in bins.

No new foreign students for online-only study, says U.S.

Trump is eager for schools to reopen with in-person classes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

The United States announced on Friday that it will not take in any new foreign students seeking online-only study, after rescinding a hotly contested order to expel those already here and preparing for that because of the pandemic.

The policy change was announced in a statement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

President Donald Trump has made a tough line on immigration a cornerstone of his message and has suspended several kinds of visas for foreigners during the COVID-19 crisis.

Reversing course
The original policy change of revoking the visas of fo-



A sign promoting physical distancing at MIT. •AP

educational institutions that are adopting a cautious approach to reopening amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Trump is eager for schools at all levels to reopen with in-person classes as a sign of a return to normality.

There were more than one million international students in the U.S. for the 2018-19 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education. Many schools depend heavily on the tuition paid by those students. Most U.S. colleges and universities have not yet announced their plans for the fall semester but Harvard has said all its classes for the 2020-21 academic year will be conducted online, "with rare exceptions."

'Maldives should drop charges against migrants'

HRW seeks release of 80 workers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MALE
Human Rights Watch (HRW) on Saturday urged the Maldives to drop charges against 80 migrant workers arrested for demanding their unpaid wages in a country otherwise known for its upmarket tourism.

The New York-based group said authorities detained the foreign workers during separate demonstrations against inhumane living conditions and work without pay. "The authorities should drop charges and release all those held for engaging in peaceful protest, and address allegations of human trafficking and other abuses..." HRW said in a statement.

Workers in the construction sector had not been paid even before the country went into COVID-19 lockdown in March, according to officials. Sporadic clashes erupted since May. Police confirmed they arrested 41 migrant workers at Hulhumale, just outside the capital on July 13. There had been other arrests elsewhere bringing the total number detained to just over 80.

HRW said Male was invoking national security to deflect from its failure to curb abuses against migrant workers. Responding to concerns earlier this month, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said it acknowledged the "unjust treatment" of foreign workers.

Anti-Kremlin rallies grip Russia's Far East

Khabarovsk residents protest for third Saturday in a row against official's arrest

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KHABAROVSK

Huge anti-government demonstrations erupted in Russia's Far East on Saturday over the arrest of a popular Governor who was replaced this week by a Kremlin appointee who never lived in the fraught region.

Residents of Khabarovsk near the border with China took to the streets *en masse* for the third Saturday in a row after Governor Sergei Furgal was arrested by federal law enforcement and flown to Moscow on murder charges this month.

The running demonstrations have been some of the largest anti-government protests in Russia in years, which the Kremlin said this week were being fuelled by Opposition activists outside



Taking to the streets: People hold posters reading 'Give us back Sergei Furgal, people's Governor', during a protest in Khabarovsk on Saturday. •AP

Khabarovsk. Tens of thousands of residents marched through Khabarovsk waving the region's flag, carrying banners and chanting slogans against President Vladimir Putin as passing cars honked their horns in support. "We want our Governor to be released because

we believe he was very likely detained illegally," said protester Alina Slepova. Mr. Furgal was removed by federal officials "for their own purposes, not for the good of our region," she said.

Demonstrators converged in front of the regional administrative building on Lenin

square shouting "Freedom" and "Putin resign".

"The centre is sucking resources from the Far East," said demonstrator Alexander Gogolev who voiced anger that the region receives "nothing in return".

Estimates of turnout

Estimates of the turnout varied greatly, with Khabarovsk officials saying that 6,500 people attended. Pro-Opposition social media channels placed the number much higher at around 90,000.

Authorities say at least 10,000 people took part in previous demonstrations on July 11 and July 18, though some local media and Opposition figures put the figure at 35,000 to 50,000 people or more.

Russia, China, Iran trying to influence election: U.S.

Democrats call the statement 'generic'

DAVID E. SANGER
JULIAN E. BARNES

United States intelligence officials issued a public warning on Friday that China was "expanding its influence efforts" in the U.S. before the presidential election, along with Russia and Iran, but Democrats briefed on the matter said the threat was far more urgent than what the administration described.

The intelligence warning on Friday did not accuse the Chinese of trying to hack the vote; instead it said they were using their influence "to shape the policy environment in the United States."

Russia, the warning said, was continuing to "spread disinformation in the U.S."

that is designed to undermine confidence in our democratic process," and it described Iran as an emerging actor in election interference, seeking to spread disinformation.

In a statement issued later, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was joined by the Senate Democratic leader, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, and two key Democrats, in saying that the descriptions of malign activity were "so generic as to be almost meaningless." The statement "does not go nearly far enough in arming the American people with the knowledge they need about how foreign powers are seeking to influence our political process."

NY TIMES

ELSEWHERE



Singapore PM could delay retirement

SINGAPORE
Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong named a largely unchanged Cabinet on Saturday following an election win this month, and flagged a delay, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, of his plan to step down. Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat, his expected successor, was retained as Finance Minister's post. REUTERS

Gunmen kill 20 farmers in Sudan's Darfur

KHARTOUM
Gunmen killed at least 20 people, including children, who were visiting their farms in Sudan's war-torn Darfur region for the first time in years, a tribal chief said on Saturday. The killings took place in Aboudous, some 90 km south of Nyala, the capital of South Darfur province, the tribal chief said. AFP

Over 5,60,000 infections reported in two days

U.S. sees over 70,000 cases on Friday

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

PARIS

The world has set a new record for the highest daily increase in COVID-19 infections, as a survey released on Saturday showed that governments are fast losing support for their handling of the pandemic.

There were more than 2,80,000 new cases recorded globally on both Thursday and Friday, the highest daily rises since the virus emerged in China late last year. Friday's tally of 2,82,042 was marginally down on Thursday's single-day record 2,84,661, according to an AFP count based on official sources, but still marks an alarming uptick in the spread of the virus.

Nearly a third of the world's 15.8 million infections have been registered since July 1, while the total death toll nears 6,40,000. The U.S. remains the hardest-hit nation, on Friday

Revisiting Jackson's legacy under President Trump

A panel on the former President has sparked debates on racial reckoning within the historical profession

JENNIFER SCHUESSLER

Andrew Jackson has been no stranger to rough-and-tumble conflict. In his own time, he upended the established political order and helped spearhead the violent expansion of America's borders. In ours, he has become a toxic figure for many, as even the Democratic Party he helped found has distanced itself from his legacy of slaveholding, Indian removal and populist demagoguery.

Last week, Jackson cut a posthumously destructive path through another institution once centred on his legacy, when the Society for Historians of the early American Republic was thrown into turmoil after a contentious scholarly panel about the man. The panel, which was held via Zoom on July 17, featured discussion of a paper by Daniel Feller, the editor of the "Andrew Jackson Papers". Titled "Andrew Jackson in the Age of Trump," it set off a firestorm that led, within 72 hours, to the ouster of

the group's president, as well as the publication of open letters denouncing the talk and counterletters protesting the ouster.

Discussion on Jackson

With Jackson and President Donald Trump, Mr. Feller was taking on two characters with few admirers in the often left-leaning historical profession.

He began by recalling the day in 2017 when Mr. Trump visited the Hermitage, Jackson's home in Nashville, Tennessee, before picking apart what he called the Presi-

dent's distorted and self-serving efforts to wrap himself in the former President's mantle.

He also assailed journalists for what he said were misrepresentations of Jackson. But his most stinging words were reserved for his fellow historians, whom he accused of misreading the historical record, exaggerating his destructive policies toward Native Americans and generally painting a politically driven picture of Jackson as a "homicidal maniac" that was "untethered from reality."

Mr. Feller's talk drew sharp challenges from some of the other panelists. But reaction exploded in the Zoom comments section and on social media, as viewers blasted his criticisms of women scholars, what some saw as corner-cutting in his reading of the historical record, and the all-white composition of the panel.

But things reached a boiling point in the last three minutes, when Mr. Feller, apparently repeating a misheard phrase uttered earlier by another panelist, referred to Jackson's reputation for slaughter of "redcoats and redskins." And tensions kept boiling as word of the talk spread.

Resignation of chief
Twenty-four hours later, the society's president, Douglas Egerton, issued a statement apologising for the panel's lack of diversity and calling the use of racial slurs unacceptable. But he also wrote that he didn't want to "si-

lence people he disagreed with."

But his statement itself, and that phrase in particular, drew strong condemnation from some members of the group, known as SHEAR. The next day, the 17 voting members of the group's advisory council posted a letter calling for Mr. Egerton's resignation, which he offered.

It was a tempest in a teapot, as multiple society members put it in interviews. But it also echoed a broader upheaval happening at institutions across the U.S. in the wake of the protests inspired by the death of George Floyd.

To some historians, the fracas represented an embarrassing abandonment of scholarly prudence amid a social media stampede. But to others, it represented part of a long-overdue racial reckoning within the white-dominated historical profession, with broader implications for how history gets written, and by whom. NY TIMES

ICICI Bank net jumps 36% to ₹2,599 cr.

Lender makes additional ₹5,550 crore provision to cushion balance sheet from impact of COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
ICICI Bank Ltd. on Saturday reported first-quarter standalone profit after tax rose 36% to ₹2,599 crore, from ₹1,908 crore a year earlier.

Core operating profit increased by 15% to ₹7,014 crore, while net interest income (NII) grew by 20% to ₹9,280 crore.

The net interest margin inched up to 3.69%, from 3.61% a year earlier, reflecting the higher liquidity with the bank due to strong deposit inflows and limited credit demand due to the lockdown, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

Fee income slid to ₹2,104 crore, from ₹3,039 crore, reflecting lower business volumes and customer activity in view of the lockdown.

The bank reported treasur-



Treasure trove: The ₹3,063 crore realised from the stake sale in the insurance arms added to treasury income. ■ REUTERS

ry income of ₹3,763 crore, including ₹3,036 crore realised from the sale of stakes in ICICI Lombard and ICICI Prudential.

The bank also made an additional COVID-19 related provision of ₹5,550 crore. "The additional provisions have been made to com-

sured that the bank had set aside more than was required as per the RBI's guideline of April 17.

Stake sale boost

"The bank prudently utilised large gains on partial stake sale in insurance subsidiaries for significantly augmenting COVID-19 related provisioning pool [now at 1.3% of loan book]," said Rajiv Mehta, lead analyst, Institutional Equities at Yes Securities.

"The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the bank is highly uncertain and will depend on the ongoing spread of COVID-19," Sanjeev Batra, president, said in a conference call.

Mr. Batra said the bank held COVID-19 related provisions amounting to ₹8,275 crore as of June 30, and that the additional provision en-

result in higher additions to non-performing loans, increase in provisions, lower loan growth and fee income," the bank said.

Total advances of the bank increased by 7% to ₹6,31,215 crore. Total deposits increased by 21% to ₹8,01,622 crore. Average savings account deposits increased by 14% year-on-year.

Gross additions to NPAs were ₹1,160 crore. Recoveries and upgrades, excluding write-offs, from non-performing loans were ₹757 crore. The net NPA ratio declined to 1.23% as of June 30, from 1.41% as on March 31.

Total capital adequacy, including first-quarter profit, was 16.3% and Tier-I capital adequacy was 14.9%.

Consolidated net profit rose to ₹3,118 crore, from ₹2,514 crore a year earlier.

Ambuja Cements net declines 28.8%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Ambuja Cements' consolidated net profit declined by 28.8% to ₹592.51 crore for the quarter ended on June 30 on account of COVID-19 related disruptions.

The company, which follows the January-December financial year, had clocked a net profit of ₹831.75 crore a year earlier, Ambuja Cements said in a BSE filing. Revenue from operations was down 34.3% at ₹4,644.17 crore during April-June quarter, from ₹7,074.08 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Total expenses declined 34.9% to ₹3,845.41 crore, from ₹5,909.22 crore a year earlier.

Copious monsoon rains spur summer crop sowing in India

Rice up by 22 mn hectares from 18.7 mn hectares last year

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Farmers have planted 79.9 million hectares with summer crops so far, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, up 18.3% from last year, as robust monsoon rains spurred sowing in the world's leading producer of farm goods.

Farmers generally start planting rice, corn, cotton, soybeans, sugarcane and peanuts, among other crops, from June 1, when monsoon rains typically arrive in India. Sowing usually lasts until July or early August.

Monsoon rains play a crucial role in agriculture,



which employs 50% of India's 1.3 billion people, as nearly half of the country's farmland lacks irrigation.

As of Friday, planting of rice, the key summer crop, was at 22 million hectares, against 18.7 million hectares at the same time last year. Corn planting was at 7.1 million hectares, up from 6.6

million during the same period last year.

The area planted with cotton totalled 11.8 million hectares against 9.6 million hectares a year earlier.

Sowing of soybeans, the main summer oilseed crop, stood at 11.4 million hectares, compared with 9.7 million hectares at the same time in 2019. Soybean output is set to jump by at least 15%. Planting of the protein-rich pulse was at 9.9 million hectares, higher than 7.9 million hectares last year. Sugar cane sowing was unchanged at 5.1 million hectares. India has received 6% above average rainfall since June 1.

Don't privatise PSBs, cut govt. stake: Marathe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Public sector banks should not be privatised given the country's developmental needs but the government can look at reducing its shareholding to 26% by selling a larger portion of its stake to common Indians, RBI's board member Satish Marathe said on Saturday.

Mr. Marathe, who started out working in a state-run bank before getting associated with the cooperative banks sector, however, said that public sector banks need an overhaul of their systems, processes and staff attitudes to be relevant and effective in the future.

NCLAT upholds Adani's takeover plan for Dighi Port

Cites SC's Essar ruling to dismiss promoter's challenge

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR

CHENNAI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), New Delhi, has rejected a plea by Vishal Vijay Kalantri, a former director and shareholder of Dighi Port Ltd., challenging the approval granted to the resolution plan submitted by Adani Ports Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) after rejecting the promoter's settlement offer.

Citing the Supreme Court verdict on Essar Steel, the appellate body noted that it was manifestly clear that judicial review of the resolution plan approved by lenders based on commercial wisdom could not be assailed, unless it was demon-



strated as being contrary to the provisions of the law.

Greenfield port

The Mumbai Bench of the NCLT had approved APSEZ's bid for Dighi Port, which is developing a greenfield port in Maharashtra and owed lenders over ₹3,000 crore.

While Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) was initial-

ly chosen over APSEZ by the committee of creditors (CoC), JNPT subsequently withdrew from the fray.

Revised bid wins

In a revised bid, the Adani group company offered ₹650 crore upfront, payment of insolvency process costs and dues payable to the 'Maharashtra Maritime Board' on a priority basis.

The promoter offered ₹680 crore to lenders, besides ₹50 crore against process costs, which the CoC rejected. The "case is yet another instance of the promoters not letting the goose escape from their dragnet, though it no more lays golden eggs," the appellate tribunal observed in its ruling.

Indian Bank's gold loan at 7% for farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

deep Singh Puri and his U.K. counterpart Ranil Jayawardena.

Mr. Goyal and Ms. Truss "affirmed their shared commitment to an FTA and towards that, Early Harvest deals in a staged manner," the ministry said in a statement.

The issue was discussed in the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting between the two countries on Friday. It was co-chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and U.K. Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss.

The issue was discussed in the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting between the two countries on Friday. It was co-chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and U.K. Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth Truss.

Both sides resolved to cooperate in the health sector especially in view of the present pandemic of COVID-19," the statement said.

The reduction has been done considering the pandemic situation and also to provide easy credit to needy farmers at a cheaper cost, it said.

With effect from July 22, agricultural jewel loans are sanctioned at 7% fixed, which means it is only ₹583 per lakh per month. The bank lends up to 85% of the ornamental value, repayable in six months.

INTERVIEW | PRAGUN JINDAL KHAITAN

Rise in ventilator manufacturing led to new segment demand: JAL

'As economy opens, we see demand for our products rising'

LALATENDU MISHRA

Overall, when the first quarter was a washout for most companies, Jindal Aluminium Ltd. (JAL), a leading aluminium extrusion company, witnessed rising demand from ventilator manufacturers as the spread of COVID-19 necessitated the use of this vital equipment at hospitals to save the lives of critical patients. However, the overall demand scenario remained muted, said Pragun Jindal Khaitan, vice chairman and managing director of the ₹3,000 crore manufacturer of aluminium extrusions and aluminium flat-rolled products. Edited excerpts:



Aluminium extruded products support functions of a ventilator... we have supplied over 100 MT of these

What is the impact of COVID-19 on the company and what is the outlook?

■ COVID-19 has impacted almost all sectors. Due to the falling market demand, and restrictions, our production was limited and there was a reduction in the overall output in April and May 2020.

Whereas, June has turned out to be positive in terms of revival as we witnessed a 65-70% rise in demand, on an average. During this period, our exports have neither increased nor decreased significantly... it has been between 15-20% of the total output.

The upsurge in the manufacturing of ventilators triggered by COVID-19 cases led to a new segment demand of aluminium extrusions. These aluminium extruded products support functions of a ventilator in one way or the other. Approximately, we [have] supplied more than 100 MT of these products till now. From here, as the economy opens, we only see an increase in demand.

How is poor demand from the auto and real estate sectors reflecting on the

auto and real estate sectors reflecting on the

Tata education trust gets relief in ₹220-cr. case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) has ruled in favour of Tata Education and Development Trust in a case wherein the tax department had raised a demand of more than ₹220 crore, an official statement said on Saturday.

The case pertains to assessment years 2011-12 and 2012-13 on money spent by the Trust for creating an endowment fund at Cornell University, U.S., to provide scholarships to Indian students and granting financial assistance to the Harvard Business School for constructing an executive building to be named Tata Hall. It donated ₹197.79 crore in 2011-12 and ₹25.37 crore in 2012-13.

The controversy erupted after the Public Account Committee (PAC) of the Lok Sabha in 2018 sought an inquiry in the matter as it believed that exemption granted by the direct tax body was in violation of the I-T Act. The ITAT said in its order on July 24 that all other grounds of appeals will be "rendered, academic and infructuous".

Building and construction and automobile sectors have been the largest consumers of aluminium. Any thrust to these sectors will have a direct bearing on aluminium consumption and support employment.

Likewise, is the slump in the construction industry squeezing the downstream segment?

■ Building and construction constitute a significant part of the overall demand in the downstream segment. The main use of the metal in this sector is to offer materials for roofing and cladding, production of windows and door frames, as well as small applications like shutters, door handles, and ceiling partitions to name a few.

It is needless to say that due to the current lockdown situation, the construction sphere was unable to operate to its fullest capacity.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

The following e-Auctions scheduled for disposal of Ferrous Scrap, Non-Ferrous Scrap, other Misc Scrap, condemned Wagon, Coaches & Locomos, Scrap Rails and other Permanent Way Scrap material are stands cancelled.

CORRIDGEM TO AUCTION PROGRAM FOR AUGUST-2020 NOTICE NO.2020

Date	e-auction conducted by	Materials for auction	Bid Issue Date
05.08.2020 & 19.08.2020	Sr.DMM/TVC	Stands cancelled due to administrative reasons	03.08.2020
06.08.2020 & 20.08.2020	Sr.DMM/TVC (for PGT divn)	Stands cancelled due to administrative reasons	28.07.2020
All other Auctions scheduled for August'20 remains unaltered.			
For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our web-site http://www.ireps.gov.in —>E-Auction—>Sale—>Live Auctions			
D.Y.CMM/SALES/PERAMURB FOR PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER			
Follow us on : https://twitter.com/GMSRailway			

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NOTICE INVITING BIDS

For Procurement of Packages for Mill Expansion Plan at TNPL Unit-II

S.No.	Description	Bid Issue Date
1.	Erection of Plant & Machinery in Chemical Recovery Area	03.08.2020
2.	Supply of Steam Pipes & Fittings (IBR)	28.07.2020
3.	DNCC & CNCNC Collection System in Recovery Island	06.08.2020
4.	Fabrication and Erection of Steel Chimney	06.08.2020
5.	Application of Thermal Insulation	27.07.

SNAPSHOTS



Inherited sensations

Researchers have found that some people from Central and South America and Europe have inherited a Neanderthal variant of a gene. This gene encodes an ion channel that initiates the sensation of pain. This may explain how some people have a low threshold of pain. Nerve cells have a special ion channel which is important in initiating the electrical impulse that signals pain, which is sent to the brain. The research was published in *Current Biology*.



Lockdown science

Because of lockdowns and a fall in human activity, there was a 50% drop in human-linked vibrations around the earth. This was recorded by the Royal Observatory of Belgium and five other institutions including the Imperial College, London. This longest quiet period in observing seismic noise allowed the researchers to listen to previously unobserved earthquake signals more clearly than ever. This was published in *Science*.



Question Corner

Quicksilver tongue

How far and fast do chameleon tongues move?

Previous studies have found that chameleons can ballistically project their tongues up to two body lengths. This is based on work done with large-sized chameleons. But using smaller chameleons, Christopher V. Anderson from the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Brown University, U.S., found that smaller chameleons are able to project their tongues far longer. He reported his findings in 2016 in a paper published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. Using a chameleon species *Rhampholeon spinosus*, which is just 47 mm SVL (snout to vent length), he found tongue projection distances are as high as 2.5 body lengths. Tongue projections more than twice the body length was seen in three other

How wearing masks cut coronavirus transmission to 139 clients in a salon

Both stylists and most clients were wearing masks during the entire duration of each appointment

R. PRASAD

The case for wearing masks to cut the risk of coronavirus transmission just got stronger. Vigilant mask-wearing by two hair stylists working at a salon in Springfield, Missouri, in the U.S. in mid-May from the day they developed symptoms helped prevent 139 clients they served from getting infected.

Neither the clients nor their contacts, who were traced and followed up for two weeks, developed any symptoms of COVID-19. One month after contact tracing, 104 of 139 clients were interviewed over telephone. Among the 104 who were interviewed, 102 (98.1%) reported wearing a mask throughout the time of appointment while two reported wearing a mask part of the time. But both stylists were wearing masks during the entire duration of each appointment. The stylists were wearing a double-layered cotton mask or a surgical mask.

The clients were offered testing five days after exposure, or as soon as possible for those exposed more than five days before contact tracing began. In all, 67 (48.2%) clients volunteered to be tested, and none was found infected by the virus by RT-PCR. The results of the study were published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Close contact

The stylists came in close contact with their clients seeking haircuts, facial hair trimmings and perms for a period ranging from 15 to 45 minutes, yet did not transmit the virus to them. While



Good measure: The stylists came in close contact with their clients, yet did not transmit the virus to them. ■ GETTY IMAGES

the duration of close contact may be sufficient for virus spread, the mode of interaction during the contact did not involve talking, sneezing or coughing. Also, most of the clients who got a haircut were facing away from the stylists, which might have also reduced the risk of transmission.

There is a body of evidence to show that virus transmission is "highest during the two-three days before symptom onset". Though rate of transmission of the virus before symptoms show up is not clear, asymptomatic people are "likely to contribute to virus spread". Yet, the study did not trace and test those clients who had interacted with the two stylists days before the stylists started exhibiting

symptoms.

Importance underscored

The role of masks in preventing transmission of the virus is underscored by the fact that the first stylist possibly infected the other stylist during those periods between clients when neither wore a mask. Also, one of the stylists infected four others who were living with her.

The first stylist who was infected worked for eight days even when symptoms showed up. She stopped working only when results of RT-PCR test returned positive. The second stylist developed respiratory symptoms three days after the first stylist exhibited symptoms. The second stylist

worked for five days even while exhibiting symptoms before self-isolating and getting tested.

"These results support the use of face coverings in places open to the public, especially when social distancing is not possible, to reduce spread of SARS-CoV-2," the authors write.

Not a substitute

As per World Health Organization guidelines for both healthy and infected people, "the use of masks is part of a comprehensive package of the prevention and control measures that can limit the spread of... COVID-19. However, the use of a mask alone is insufficient to provide an adequate level of protection or source control, and other personal and community level measures should also be adopted to suppress transmission of respiratory viruses."

"[Masks are] not a substitute for other public health measures - hand hygiene, physical distancing, testing, contact tracing, etc. - all of this must be done together," Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, Infectious Disease Epidemiologist at WHO tweeted.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) echoes the same message: "The use of face masks in the community should be considered only as a complementary measure and not as a replacement for established preventive measures, for example physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, meticulous hand hygiene and avoiding touching the face, nose, eyes and mouth."



Handy window: Animal models are used to study and understand human diseases.

■ GETTY IMAGES

Of mice and SARS-CoV-2

Human-relevant systems are needed to understand COVID-19

SURAT PARVATAM

Science and research have always relied on using animals to understand various human diseases. The primary reasons have been the genetic similarity between animals and humans (mice share 98% of DNA with us), and that we have developed tools to edit genes in various animals. We can edit a gene out in mice to try to understand its role in progression of human cancer. These "animal models" are supposed represent a window to further study and understand human diseases.

An animal model for a particular disease should fulfil two criteria. It should be able to "catch" that infection (in case of infectious diseases) and show the clinical outcomes and altered physiology that accompanies the disease. Many animals do not fulfil the second criteria. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) is a fatal disease that leads to loss of neurons that control our motor functions, leading to wasting of muscles, paralysis and death. While mice models of this disease also show wasting of muscles, the cause of death is blockage in the gut. Thus, drug targets that would prevent these mice from dying would be irrelevant in humans.

Road blocks

These systemic issues are coming to the fore with scientists trying to find the elusive vaccine/drug by attempting to cure experimentally infected lab mice, rats, hamsters and rhesus monkeys. However, they are faced two roadblocks. Mice, the most widely used "models" to understand human diseases, cannot be infected with SARS-CoV-2. If you imagine the virus to be a lock, it needs a "key" (usually a protein) on the surface of a cell to enter. The "key" is present in humans, rhesus monkeys, to a lesser extent in hamsters, ferrets and cats, but not in mice. Scientists are now creating genetically altered mice that express this "key", as larger animals pose additional difficulties of housing, handling and are expensive.

This leads us to our second roadblock that an animal model should also reflect the clinical features. Apart from fever, sore throat, cough, pneumonia, COVID-19 infection in humans is also known to affect the heart, kidneys, intestine, and brain. While ferrets, hamsters, cats, rhesus monkeys and genetically modified mice could get infected with SARS-CoV-2, all of these develop only mild lung infection, most do not show fever, and they recover within seven-nine days. Many of them do not show the virus in organs other than the lungs, and exhibit contradictory results. A study in cats showed that the infection was more severe in kittens versus older cats. This is opposite to humans where older infected population has a higher risk for death.

Those critical roadblocks bring some questions on how much these models will be able to help the scientists to find a cure, if they are able to self-limit the disease. Thus, there is need for systems and approaches that can "model" human diseases to a greater extent.

Mini organs

Scientists are now creating miniature 3D organ-like structures, called "organoids" that aim to replicate a human organ. These mini organs, created using stem cells, are 200 microns (width of two human strands of hair) to a few millimetres in size. They have similar three-dimensional structure and cellular composition as human organs, and thus, are better reflective of human biology compared to animal models. Infection of mini-lungs with SARS-CoV-2 showed that virus triggers a massive immune response, similar to what has been observed clinically in humans. Four compounds were able to reduce viral levels in mini-lungs, and one of them is registered in three clinical trials. Scientists were also unclear on how the virus travels to various organs inside the body, till a study found that SARS-CoV-2 could infect blood vessel organoids. This indicates that the virus could travel via the blood stream to various organs, such as kidney, heart, etc (which also express "key" for the virus to enter).

Despite their potential, many of these mini-organs currently do not have blood supply, resident microbes or immune cells. Also, it is difficult to understand the holistic response based on individual organs. Scientists are currently battling these limitations by creating multiple interconnected mini-organs, and growing different types of cell (blood cells, immune cells) together.

It is unlikely that we would get all the answers on how the virus affects humans using one system or model. Thus, we also need to invest in computational or AI-based approaches to integrate information from different organ systems or models to create a systems body of information.

A study by Tufts Centre estimated that seven out of eight drugs that enter the clinical pipeline fail indicating the low translatability of the current paradigm. With many drugs, like Remdesivir failing to show statistically significant clinical benefits in COVID-19 trials, use of new methodologies that are more relevant to human biology coupled with further innovation to address their limitations could hold the key to find potent therapeutic targets for this healthcare crisis.

(Surat Parvatam is senior research associate, Centre for Predictive Human Model Systems, Atal Incubation Centre-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (AIC-CCMB), Hyderabad)

Meet the 'tiny bug slayer', ancient relative of dinosaurs and pterosaurs

The fossil's tiny body size may help explain the origin of flight in pterosaurs

ASWATHI PACHA

If Jurassic Park taught you that dinosaurs and gigantism are synonymous, it is time to update your knowledge. A newly described species from Madagascar suggests that dinosaurs and pterosaurs (extinct flying reptiles) had extremely small ancestors – just 10 centimetres tall. It was named *Kongonaphon kely* which roughly translates from the Malagasy language as 'tiny bug slayer' – a reference to its insect diet.

The fossils were discovered in 1998 as part of an expedition by an American-Malagasy crew.

Small bones

"The site that produced *Kongonaphon* had already yielded a number of other fossils, so they were exploring it carefully, and in doing so were able to find even very small bones. It may seem like a long time between discovery and publication (22 years), but this is fairly typical for paleontology," explains Christian F. Kammerer, Research Curator of Paleontology at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences in



Unusual size: Life restoration of *Kongonaphon kely* shown to scale with human hands. ■ AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

an email to *The Hindu*. He is the corresponding author of the paper recently published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

"In the case of this animal, I had to make detailed comparisons with all of its relatives, so that I could be certain we were dealing with a new species and not just another specimen of a previously-known type," he says.

Dr. Kammerer adds that during the time *Kongonaphon* was alive (around 237 million years ago), Madagascar was directly attached to

India as part of the supercontinent Gondwana. "Triassic vertebrate fossils of similar age have been found in a band of rocks extending across Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, but thus far nothing like *Kongonaphon* has been found there. I am confident that future work by Indian paleontologists will recover relatives of *Kongonaphon*."

The paper notes that such tiny ancestral body size may help explain the origins of flight in pterosaurs. Dr. Kammerer details: "All flying animals seem to have evolved

from very small ancestors. A smaller, lighter body is more conducive to aerial locomotion such as gliding, which seems to be an important intermediary step in the origin of flight. Extensive studies on the origins of birds have shown there was also a miniaturisation event there, with the gigantic theropod dinosaurs becoming progressively smaller in size and the first birds (such as *Archaeopteryx*) being only around the size of a pigeon or a myna."

Body size

Analysis of body size throughout the history of dinosaurs and relatives shows that ancestrally medium-sized animals evolved into very small animals, such as *Kongonaphon*, which would have been around 10 cm tall and about 30 cm long. This then evolved into dinosaurs and pterosaurs which could reach enormous sizes.

Dr. Kammerer adds that they are currently analysing many other fossils previously collected at the same site as *Kongonaphon* was. The team is also studying prehistoric ecosystems and the evolution of Triassic animals.

How young Asian elephants learn to bend their trunks left or right

The first-of-its-kind study of wild elephant calves found that laterality develops even at three months of age

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

Most people are either left-handed or right-handed. They are consistent in this laterality. Similarly, adult Asian elephants consistently use their trunks either preferring the left side or the right side. Fascinated by the question of when and how this laterality develops in young elephants, a group of researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) studied free-ranging, individually identified Asian elephants from the Nagarhole and Bandipur National Parks and Tiger Reserves. The researchers found that calves develop a laterality in the way they use their trunks from three months onwards. They are more or less fixed in this laterality by the time they are a year old. This study, tracking out how this behaviour de-

velops as the calf grows, is a first-of-its-kind study of free-ranging Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*). The results have been published in *The International Journal of Developmental Biology*.

Equally likely

Unlike humans, where right-handedness dominates, elephants do not show a bias in this behaviour at the population level: Asian elephants are equally likely to show left-handedness as they are to show right-handedness.

In a prior study by Keerthi priya and coworkers led by TNC Vidya in JNCASR, such a lateralisation was seen in a calf of less than two months in captivity. However, due to the small number of young ones studied then, the gradual development of the behaviour could not be observed. As Dr. Vidya says, "During that



Handedness: Elephant calves do not seem to start by trying out different sides and then settling on one side randomly, and the side preference seems innate. ■ T. REVATHI

dy, we had sampled a single young calf and saw that even that had some lateralisation. So, in this study, we systematically checked if calves, in general, showed trunk lateralisation."

Elephant calves show handedness very early. She fur-

ther explains that this suggests that the elephant calves don't seem to start out trying out different sides and then settling on one side randomly, later becoming left-handed or right-handed through practice. "Instead, the side preference seems innate."

In this study, T. Revathi, a PhD student, and S. Anvitha, MS-PhD student, at JNCASR, observed 30 calves (less than a year old) and juveniles (between one and five years old). Among these there were 16 females and 14 males from nine different clans.

The study throws open several questions. From their previous observations of adult and young elephants, the group deduced that the laterality was not inherited from the mother. Further studies may explore if it is inherited from the father.

Developmental inertia

The researchers found that trunk motor control develops postnatally over months although limb motor control and trunk side preference is achieved within a few hours of birth. "One possible reason for this could be phylogenetic

inertia," says Dr. Vidya. The term phylogenetic inertia refers to limitations on future evolutionary pathways imposed by previous adaptations. Or, in other words, how elongated noses (trunks) developed over evolutionary time and whether there are any constraints as a result of previous adaptations that affect the development of trunk.

In order to study this, one would have to examine sets of related species with elongated noses. "Unfortunately, there are only three living species of elephants," remarks Dr. Vidya. "However, one could look at elephant shrews, or tarsiers, which have elongated noses, and their relatives. One could examine whether these development of strength in these elongated noses occurs gradually after birth," she explains.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Sero-survey in Delhi

What are the implications of the findings? How reliable are they?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: To estimate the extent of infection in the community, scientists at the National Centre for Disease Control (formerly National Institute for Communicable Diseases), a Health Ministry body tasked with monitoring epidemics, conducted a district-wise serological survey across Delhi from June 27 to July 10. Preliminary findings showed that 23.48% of Delhi's population had been exposed to the virus and that a large number of those infected were asymptomatic.

How was the Delhi sero-prevalence survey done? Unlike the real time RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) tests or antigen tests that scan for the presence of the coronavirus in the body, the sero-prevalence survey was designed to look for the presence of antibodies, produced in response to the coronavirus, in the blood. On an average, antibodies can be detected five days after an infection sets in. The coronavirus, in general, diminishes after 21 days. Antibodies, for a host of other viral infections, are normally expected to linger for many months and confer protection against fresh infections by the same virus. However, it is still too early in the evolution of SARS-CoV-2 to know how long the antibodies will last.

According to health experts, because the actual virus withers away quickly, many of those infected show mild symptoms. Antigen and PCR tests are often cumbersome to be widely deployed in the field and are not always the best way to estimate the spread of the virus. After the Indian Council of Medical Research led a multi-institutional study in May

The Delhi government cautioned that the survey showed 77% of the population is still vulnerable to the infection. It has urged citizens to wear masks and strictly maintain social distancing

What did the survey find?

Nearly 22,000 samples were collected from 11 districts. It emerged that on average, 23.48% of Delhi had been exposed to the virus. A large number of those infected were asymptomatic. Like in all statistical surveys, extrapolating the results from a sliver of a population to an entire city comes with its own caveats. Generally, those who commission such surveys report their findings in a peer-reviewed journal and detail, for instance, how accurate the test was in picking up infections and the error margins in extrapolating the results to a population. No such details were made available, so the announcement that nearly a quarter of Delhi's 20 million population had been exposed to the virus is at best only suggestive.

A lot of the samples were collected from Delhi's densest pockets so the extent of variation of infection in less populated parts of Delhi is not known. The Delhi government has said it will keep repeating these surveys at periodic intervals to gauge the spread of the infection. The survey found that nearly eight of the 11 districts had a sero-prevalence exceeding 20%. To the Delhi government, the fact that after six months of the global pandemic there was a 23% spread was indicative of the effect of lockdown and containment zone management. But the government also cautioned that the survey showed 77% of the population to be vulnerable to the infection; therefore, measures such as masks, hygiene, social distancing ought to be strictly adhered to.

Another way to look at serology surveys is to compare the number of RT-PCR positive cases and the number of those who were infected as per their antibody profiles. Thus assuming that 50 lakh (or 25% as per this survey) were infected and comparing that to only about 100,000 who were confirmed positive, it appears that a PCR test caught only about 1 in 50 who are infected by the virus. This undermines claims by the Delhi government of its ability to contain infection spread. However, missing a sizeable proportion of those infected by the coronavirus is par for the course given that it spreads rapidly and leaves a large proportion of those afflicted with only mild (and frequently unreported) symptoms.

How reliable are serology surveys?

While it is routine in epidemiology to deploy antibody tests to estimate the prevalence of a disease, the sheer speed of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the global nature of the disease have complicated the matter. Generally, they take a while to develop and are tested in the field before being deployed in large numbers. This is done to rule out errors such as the test marking the wrong antibodies, or an inappropriate sample that does not represent a population being chosen. Such problems hindered an early plan by the ICMR to use China-manufactured antibody kits in April and May to gauge infection spread. The ICMR is still to publish details of its May serosurvey that estimated 0.73% of the population in 63 surveyed districts to be infected. For COVID-19, the reliability of such surveys still rests on nascent science.

Why have COVID-19 cases surged in Kerala?

How has the State fared? Have norms been flouted by the people?

S. ANANDAN

The story so far: Plaudits won by Kerala for stamping out the COVID-19 pandemic appeared premature when in early July, a superspreader event in the densely-populated coastal villages of Poonthura, Manikyavilakam and Puthenpally (on the outskirts of Thiruvananthapuram city) led to a spike in infections through local transmission. Very soon, the cluster grew over a fairly large population and similar clusters mushroomed in Chellanam and Alva in Ernakulam. Daily cases of local transmission exceeded imported infections within a week. An alarming 81% of the cases reported on July 24 were through local spread of the virus. The total number of cases leapt from 6,166 on July 8 to 16,995 on July 24, with 9,371 active infections. There were 453 containment zones, triggering discussions about a potential State-wide shutdown, but the suggestion was put on hold almost unanimously at an all-party meeting chaired by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Was Kerala's early success a fluke?

India's first COVID-19 case was detected in Kerala on January 30, when a medical student from Wuhan in China tested positive in Thrissur. The State's health apparatus had stayed alert with customised containment guidelines and protocols and the first wave ended with the recovery of all three imported cases. A middle-aged couple returning from Italy gave the surveillance team at the airport the slip, causing another bout of infections. More instances of quarantine violations came to the fore as the number of cases grew to 499, 33% of which was on account of local spread.

However, the State leveraged its epidemic management skills gleaned from two Nipah outbreaks, the ingenious technology-driven use of 'contact-tracing' using spatiotemporal data, social capital and decentralised governance to tether the daily figures to zero all over again in the first week of May. On May 4, just 16 patients (3.5% of the total cases) were under treatment in hospitals. Deft planning and execution and enthusiastic people's participation ensured the success of the 'break-the-chain' of the coronavirus campaign, the community kitchen initiative to feed the needy, psychosocial counselling to alleviate stress and rationing of essentials. People lapped up the government's socio-economic interventions during this period.

Spirits were still high and the government began to open up sectors on priority in a phased manner from mid-May with the twin aim of reviving economic activity and to ease the burden on the labour class, farmers and the self-employed.

Was the third wave entirely unexpected?

When the Centre was contemplating repatriation missions from abroad, the pandemic had straddled the continents. Kerala, which has a large population of overseas Indians, wanted tests to be conducted at the port of origin so that travellers who were suspected to have contracted the infection could be segregated and ferried separately. When that did not happen, passenger handling policy at Kerala's airports was revised with the aim of multi-layer screening to isolate people with symptoms and shift them to designated COVID-19 hospitals, which were already up and running.

The local bodies were tasked with readying institutional quarantine centres for the returnees, a policy which made way, in the wake of an influx of



H. VIBHU

people starting from May 7, and with hiccups in the arrangement, to 'paid quarantine' for those who could afford it and home quarantine for all others except those with no home isolation facility. The State has so far received 6,03199 people in the post-lockdown repatriation exercise. It became a vexing political question when the government insisted that everyone desirous of entering the State mandatorily register themselves on the 'COVID-19 Jagratha' portal and get passes.

A prescient warning had been sounded by the experts' panel advising the State on corona containment strategy; the planning wing had presented projections and the State braced itself for a surge in cases. In fact, extreme shortage of testing material - swab, medium and kit - in May-end and early June determined the way the State modulated its strategy. "We chose to test only those likely to have been infected and used the kits sparingly. Meanwhile, sentinel surveillance among the high-risk sections like health workers and the police was kick-started to detect social spread," said a top official.

A bouquet of tests – RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction), antigen, antibody, TrueNat, CBNAAAT (cartridge-based nucleic acid amplification test) and the like – was introduced to monitor trends even as a decision was taken to test everyone with influenza-like illness (ILI).

What went wrong?

As more relaxations kicked in and with the 'success stories' inducing a degree of complacency and false sense of safety in people, several chose to throw caution to the winds, violating social distancing and quarantine norms with alacrity. Unannounced entry of people through the porous borders of Thiruvananthapuram, Wayanad and Kannur made tracking difficult. Ceremonies such as marriages, with hundreds in attendance, were held against stipulations leading to spread of the infection.

By the end of June, sentinel surveillance indicated a wide cluster of infections in Ponnani taluk in Malappuram following which a lockdown, of the kind earlier successfully experimented with in Kasaragod, was clamped in the taluk. Meanwhile, infections with no known source of origin emerged, prompting the government to admit community transmission in the coastal pockets of Thiruvananthapuram.

Misleading campaigns and the fear of another imminent lockdown upsetting their livelihoods turned the people restive in critical containment zones such as Poonthura until they were reassured and the government announced relief measures. That a good number of the new patients were asymptomatic required the health officials to convince them that they were indeed sick and

could infect others.

How serious is the situation?

Kerala's vulnerability to the pandemic is compounded by its ageing but active population, a high degree of comorbidities in its people, and population density. Despite spiralling cases of community transmission, it has been able to maintain a cumulative test positivity rate of 2.6%. Says Rijo M. John, health economist, "But the cause for concern is the current positivity rate of 4.6%, which although much better than the national average of 11.7%, calls for doubling the rate of testing. It's also ominous that cases are now doubling in 10 to 11 days whereas nationally it's 18 to 20 days. That apart, case fatality at 0.32% is among the best."

The State has been able to augment its testing by adding over 80 testing centres, with 25 RT-PCR stations. The rate of testing has steadily increased through July to cross 25,000 in a 24-hour cycle on July 24. The Kerala Medical Services Corporation has stockpiled adequate number of testing material for 30 days, and "the tests will be further ramped up in containment zones", according to Dr. Mohammed Asheel, part of the State's COVID-19 taskforce.

A doctor spearheading a major component of the battle against COVID-19 said the public health-care staff in Kerala are on the verge of exhaustion, having been on their toes since January. "There's definitely a shortage of skilled human resources on the medical and non-medical fronts and this issue was flagged a few months ago, with the government making stand-in arrangements." A COVID Brigade comprising trained medical professionals, skilled citizens and volunteers will be pressed into service at the COVID First-line Treatment Centres (CFLTCs) being set up by the local bodies.

"A total of 69,800 beds are getting ready at CFLTCs by the third week of July for treatment of asymptomatic patients," Dr. Asheel said. The Chief Minister said a pool of 30,000 employees to man the CFLTCs have been selected and assigned to respective districts. "An additional 50,000 have been identified."

Have the tables turned in favour of COVID-19?

The Kerala government still believes it has a fighting chance. "The immediate aim is to prevent deaths," says a senior official, "and to ensure that the health system doesn't breach its capacity threshold". While the CFLTCs, which have already begun functioning, will ease the burden on the tertiary COVID hospitals, the State could consider asking asymptomatic patients, about 60% of the total, to stay at home, with some mechanism to monitor them in case the daily infection tally crosses 2,000, which is not unlikely by early-August. Over the past few months, the State has added more ventilators and ICUs in the public sector, but it must be noted that 60% of the State's major health-care facilities are in the private sector. The government has held talks with some 1,129 of them about pricing and some 200 of them would be making their services available at the CFLTCs, says the Chief Minister.

Is SARS-CoV-2 a latent virus which can recur?

Is there a possibility of a 'second' COVID-19 infection? Or are there flaws in the testing system?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: Ever since cases of 'reinfection' – people who had tested negative for COVID-19 testing positive again after a while – emerged in early January, the question of latency of the SARS-CoV-2 virus is being hotly debated. The first such cases emerged in the east (China, South Korea) where scientists were puzzled over why or how individuals who had tested negative twice for the virus, had, after a few weeks or months, tested positive, the second time around albeit with milder symptoms. A latent infection is when the virus in the body is dormant and does not replicate within the host. It however possesses the capacity to be reactivated at some point, causing a flare-up of the disease much later.

What is a latent viral infection?

A latent viral infection is an infection that is inactive or dormant, authors Sergey Sheleg and Alexey Vasilevsky write in an article in the *Global Journal of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Research*. "As opposed to active infections, where a virus is actively replicating and potentially causing symptoms, latent (or persistent; but not chronic) infections are essentially static which last the life of the host and occur when the primary infection is not cleared by the adaptive immune response," they explain. Examples are Herpes simplex viruses type 1 and 2, varicella-zoster virus, HIV, Epstein-Barr virus (human herpesvirus 4), and cytomegalovirus. They are known to cause typical latent infections in humans, Sheleg and Vasilevsky add.

They go on to explain that "latent viral infections can be reactivated into a lytic form (the replication of a viral genome). The ability to move back and forth from latent to lytic infections helps the virus spread from infected individuals to uninfected individuals".

Ryan McNamara, a research associate at the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of North Carolina, in a long tweet thread sought to explain the difference between the types of viral infections. Tweeting from @Ryan_Mac_PhD, he says: Viruses fall into two broad categories: chronic and acute; while a chronic virus will infect its host for extended periods of time, often through the lifetime of the host. An acute infecting virus, such as influenza and rotavirus, is cleared from the body after a few days or weeks.

"A chronic virus can go into latency. This is when a virus is present within a cell, but not actively producing more infectious virus particles. For example, when a herpes virus infects a cell, its genome can remain in that cell as long as that cell is alive," Dr. McNamara says.

The reactivation to the lytic state, when the production of new virus particles occurs, he calls an 'intentional strategy by the virus to promote its survival'. A perfect example of this would be chickenpox, caused by the human herpesvirus 3 – after infection, "the body responds and the virus goes into latency. Decades later, it



can re-activate, resulting in shingles". What causes reactivation is not very clear in this case. According to him, HIV can also go into latency after infection. It integrates itself into the host chromatin (a substance within the chromosome), and can reactivate upon stimulation such as inflammation induced by co-infecting pathogens. This can lead to uncontrolled HIV replication and clinical AIDS.

Does SARS-CoV-2 go into latency? What causes second infections?

Sheleg and Vasilevsky have recorded South Korean officials reporting that nearly 100 people thought to be cured of the novel coronavirus have tested positive for COVID-19 again. According to Jeong Eun-Kyeong, director of the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the COVID-19 virus may have "reactivated" in the patients rather than them becoming re-infected.

In Chennai too, last week, the civic body recorded a couple of cases of patients who had recovered from COVID-19 testing positive again after a span of time.

Prof. T. Jacob John, an eminent Vellore-based virologist, says: "None of the observations conclusively proves a second infection. In each one of these cases,

there is sufficient reason to suspect that it is one infection, with negative results in between. While the RT-PCR [reverse transcription/polymerase chain reaction] tests are considered to be the gold standard for testing, all tests are not 100% accurate. False positives and false negative results are expected to occur. Patients are known to test negative, then positive, and negative again, in subsequent tests performed even within days."

'None of the observations conclusively proves a second infection. In each one of these cases, there is sufficient reason to suspect that it is one infection, with negative results in between.'

Dr. McNamara explains the concept of "limit of detection" of a virus, here. This is the threshold where a virus can be detected. A negative SARS-CoV-2 test does not mean zero infection; it means no detectable infection."

Prof. John clarifies that another issue is that many viruses can survive at the mucosal level in spite of immunity. "A classical example is the polio virus, which, like SARS-CoV-2, is also a positive sense, single strand RNA (ribonucleic acid). While immunity kicks in two weeks after infection, viral shedding can continue for up to 10 weeks, in spite of very high antibody levels. Why this happens has not been explained by anybody, so far. And, in polio, if a stool test came back negative in between and then tested positive, we don't take it as a second infection, it is a continuous infection." He further found with lab tests that the host harbours an "antibody-bound virus that is non-infective".

He goes on to add: "If second infections were sufficiently common we would have picked it up by now. But it is possible that some people have specific problems with immunity against this virus. In that case, it must be investigated further."

Dr. McNamara explains: "It's entirely possible to have detectable, then non-detectable, and then detectable SARS-CoV-2 virus because of the limit of detection of our current testing. Also, a SARS-CoV-2 test doesn't necessarily mean there is infectious virus. Testing for SARS-CoV-2 RNA on surfaces can yield a positive result, but that simply means that there is some SARS-CoV-2 RNA present, it doesn't necessarily mean the RNA is intact, or that the RNA is inside an infectious particle. So, fragmented RNA can actually yield a positive result."

Korea Biomedical Review (koreabiomed.com) reported in April that the country's Central Clinical Committee for Emerging Disease Control had said the reason 263 Koreans tested positive after recovery from the new coronavirus seemed to have been not because they contracted the virus again; rather, remaining virus fragments were detected in them.

Does testing criteria make a difference?

Globally, it is now accepted that clinical signs are sufficient to commence treatment for COVID-19, even before an RT-PCR test is done. Also, cessation of symptoms is said to signal that a person has recovered. Unless someone has been critically ill, it is no longer necessary for the patient to test negative twice for COVID-19 to be declared cured, or sent home.

"We do know that finding cases is now largely determined by testing in India. But the experience of other nations has shown that we could do the same with clinical diagnosis too, they did not suffer the consequences of that," Prof. John adds.

While 100% protection is not possible, he insists that ultimately, the use of masks and physical distance is going to be the only deterrence for transmission.



SUHASINI HAIDAR

Parallel exercises in the Indo-Pacific this week, including a trilateral exercise between the U.S., Australia and Japan in the Philippines Sea, and an Indo-U.S. naval exercise in the Indian Ocean have fuelled speculation that Quadrilateral (Quad) exercises will be launched soon between all four navies.

All eyes are on a decision by New Delhi, to accept Australia's request that has been pending for four years now, to join the annual Malabar exercises with India, the U.S. and Japan. The decision has not been an easy one, given China's fierce opposition to the militarisation of a coalition seen as a counter to its claims in the Pacific and inroads in the Indian Ocean. India has also been wary of joining any exercise that could be construed as an alliance, something External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said this week India will "never be" a part of.

In 2018, at the Shangri-La Dialogue, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that India sees the Indo-Pacific as a

"geographical concept", not a "strategy or a club of limited members". Also, India is the only country in the Quad that shares a land boundary with China, and the militarisation of the Quad will not help India deal with that threat. Fourthly, unlike the U.S., Japan and Australia, which are tied by military alliances, India is a member of other strategic forums, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation with China, Russia and Central Asia, BRICS and RIC, which appear to be at cross purposes with a Quad alliance.

The China factor
Even so, many contend that China's recent moves, including its aggression in the South China Sea and transgressions and deadly clashes across the Line of Actual Control (LAC), may in fact prove to be the tipping point that makes India take the plunge, pushing the countries of the Quadrilateral Security Group, called the Quad for short, into a military embrace that will have far-reaching implications for regional and global security.

Ironically, the Quad,

which today involves such laboured and slow-paced discussions, was originally born in an instant: from the crisis that followed the tsunami in December 2004. Within days of the disaster, India had mobilised an impressive fleet, and demonstrated to the world that it would not just manage its own rescue effort in Tamil Nadu and the Andaman and Nicobar islands but could also provide assistance to its maritime neighbours: Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia.

In all, about 32 Indian ships and 5,500 troops were pressed into India's international efforts. The humanitarian and disaster relief effort was coordinated in the next few weeks with three other naval powers engaged in the rescue effort: the U.S., Australia and Japan. The then Foreign Secretary, Shyam Saran, spoke every day to his counterparts about what was needed next. Eventually, the "Quad" effort was handed over to the UN, but the idea of the Indo-Pacific as a larger maritime strategic community, and the Quad as an effective instrument in it, had been planted in the

minds of all four members. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who had been promoting the idea of an "arc of prosperity and freedom" that brought the Quad countries closer together, was happy to develop the concept, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh discussed it with him during a summit

For India, a decision to invite Australia to join the Malabar exercises will not be an easy one, given China's fierce opposition to the militarisation of the coalition

in December 2006. In 2007, when the annual India-U.S. "Malabar" exercises were held in the Indian and Pacific oceans, first off Okinawa and a few months later, off Visakhapatnam, they included Japan, Australia and Singapore. The exercises and the strategic coordination in what Mr. Abe had called "the confluence of two seas" rat-

ted Beijing and Moscow, who termed it an attempt to build "an Asian NATO".

China's Navy had not at the time undergone its massive modernisation drive towards a blue water navy (it only commissioned its first aircraft carrier, *Liaoning*, in 2012), and the effort by the Quad countries was clearly an impetus to hasten the process. But at the time, China's demarcations to the Quad countries paid off. Contrary to the currently popular lore, it was not India that cancelled the "Quad" exercises in 2008: the U.S., which was trying to gain China's support in the six-party talks on North Korea, dampened enthusiasm for a Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting, and the Kevin Rudd government in Australia then pulled out of the exercises. The Quad was shelved for the next decade.

In 2017, the Quad returned, now named Quad 2.0, coinciding with the revision in Washington's assessment of the challenge from China, and similar reassessments in New Delhi, Tokyo and Canberra. In November 2017, just months after the Doklam stand-off between

Beijing and Moscow, who termed it an attempt to build "an Asian NATO".

the Indian Army and the PLA, officials from all four countries met in Manila for the "India-Australia-Japan-U.S." dialogue. The name of the new Quad was innocuous, in an effort to dispel the notion this was a "gang-up", and they did not even issue a common joint statement. In fact, differences within the group went deeper, and while India defined the "Indo-Pacific" region from Africa and the U.S. west coast, the U.S. limited it to the Indian coast (in 2020, the U.S. aligned its definition with India's).

Alternatives to BRI

Subsequent meetings have closed many of the gaps they have, and the Quad grouping has met biannually since then, discussing "connectivity, sustainable development, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation and maritime and cyber security, with a view to promoting peace, stability and prosperity in an increasingly inter-connected Indo-Pacific region". The emphasis on connectivity has seen the Quad challenge China in another sphere: a coordinated effort to provide financing and sustainable alternatives to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has led many nations to take loans and accept infrastructure bids from Beijing.

The counter has not yet made much headway, but each of the Quad countries

is coordinating their responses on infrastructure projects in their spheres of influence, including India and Australian efforts in the Pacific islands, India-U.S. coordination in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, and India-Japan joint efforts to develop projects in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The military aspect of the Quad has also grown: India has strengthened its naval ties with each of the other Quad countries, and there have been more interactions, formal and informal at the official, political and military levels.

In focus

■ The Quad was originally born out of the crisis that followed the Tsunami in December 2004

■ India's rescue mission in the Indian Ocean was coordinated with the three other naval powers engaged in similar efforts – U.S., Australia and Japan

■ The Quad effort was later handed over to the UN, but the idea of the Indo-Pacific as a larger maritime strategic community had been planted in the minds of all four

TOMORROW GROUP

The fall of a red capitalist empire

Xiao Jianhua's conglomerate is being dismantled step by step by regulators

ANANTH KRISHNAN

On July 17, Chinese regulators announced the takeover of nine financial institutions, with combined assets worth \$140 billion. All of them are thought to have links to the Tomorrow Group, a Chinese conglomerate with interests spanning financial services, insurance and real estate.

The takeover is only the latest step in a three-year battle by the Chinese government, aimed at cutting down to size one of China's most powerful conglomerates whose tentacles, often concealed in a dizzying network of shell companies, extended into every corner of China's financial sector.

A banker for the ruling class" was how one newspaper profile in 2014 described Xiao Jianhua, the bespectacled billionaire founder of the Tomorrow Group. After graduating from the elite Peking University, Mr. Xiao began his career selling computers in the technology district that abuts the campus.

His career took off just as China's stock market boomed. Part of his success was due to his smart cultivating of political networks, coupled with an appetite for risk-taking as he helped manage the wealth amassed by China's elite. By 2016, his net worth was estimated at \$6 billion, placing him at the 32nd spot on the Hurun China rich list, which was, that year, topped by Wang Jianlin, the billionaire foun-



der of another conglomerate, the Wanda Group.

Mr. Xiao became a victim of his own success. In early 2017, the empire that he oversaw from his luxury service apartment at the Four Seasons in Hong Kong, reportedly in the company of a retinue of female bodyguards, came crashing down.

Five men, thought to be state security agents, forced their way into his flat on the 28th floor and left with the billionaire, who was reportedly rolled out in a wheelchair and taken across the border into the mainland. He has not been seen in public since, and is reportedly awaiting trial.

In public interest? The break-up of Mr. Xiao's empire, Chinese regulators have said, was "to protect the rights" of customers "and serve the public's interest." Since 2017, regulators have grown alarmed at the debt-fuelled expansion of many of China's biggest

conglomerates. The following year, they seized Mr. Xiao's Baoshang Bank, accusing it of a poor track record in lending.

With the latest move, the jewel in Mr. Xiao's crown, Huaxia Life Insurance, which, according to the *South China Morning Post*, reported \$26 billion of insurance premium last year, has now been seized, along with eight other insurance and securities firms.

Huaxia Life Insurance, Tian'an Property Insurance, Tian'an Life, Yi'an Property Insurance, New Times Trust and New China Trust were placed "under state ward" while New Times Securities, Guosheng Securities and Guosheng Futures would be under government management for a year, presumably until buyers are found. Gordon Tsui, chairman of the Hong Kong Securities Association, told the Post the seizures "signify a very big clean-up operation" and "taking them over with a

restructuring plan is the only way forward to maintain the stability of the market".

Other tycoons have also been facing the heat. In 2018, regulators took over another conglomerate, the Anbang Group, which had embarked on a massive global buying binge, including for the famous Waldorf Astoria hotel in New York. Its chairman, Wu Xiaohui, was sentenced to 18 years in prison in 2018 for fraud and embezzlement.

The HNA Group, saddled by debt burdens, has been forced to divest many of its assets, while Mr. Wang's Wanda Group, this year, is faced with refinancing \$5.7 billion of its bonds, according to Bloomberg.

'Clean-up' move
Chinese authorities have cited financial risks as being behind their moves to "clean up" the Tomorrow Group, which had, with its sprawling assets, become too big to fail. Left unsaid were the political drivers, with the moves coinciding with President Xi Jinping's crackdown on corruption.

The step-by-step dismantling of the Tomorrow Group is, ultimately, not just about the "cleaning up" of one Chinese company. It could well mark the end of a three-decade era of billionaire-led Chinese capitalism, during which a generation of tycoons built their empires operating adeptly in the murky nexus between China's political and business elites.

KHALIFA HAFTAR

The General in his labyrinth

The rebel Libyan commander's bid to capture Tripoli was thwarted by Turkey

STANLY JOHNY

From being one of the members of the officers' group that toppled King Idris in 1969 bringing Muammar Gaddafi to power in Libya to a renegade General commanding a self-styled army that is fighting to topple the government in Tripoli, Khalifa Haftar has always been at war. His life is a long story of everything that shaped the political life of Libya over the past half a century – coup attempts, rebellions, Cold War spycraft, changing loyalty and civil strife.

As the post-Gaddafi Libya plunged into chaos and anarchy, Mr. Haftar mobilised his troops and amassed power and influence in the east. Then he wanted to take over the whole of Libya, with support from powerful friends in Moscow, Abu Dhabi and Cairo. But his attempts to capture Tripoli, which hosts the country's UN-recognised government, were thwarted, after Turkey sent mercenaries and weapons to back up the government.

Born in the northeastern Libyan town Ajdabiya in 1943, Mr. Haftar moved to the port city of Derna in the early 1960s for education. After graduating from the Benghazi Royal Military College, he joined the military. After the 'al-Fateh Revolution' brought an end to Libya's monarchy in 1969, Mr. Haftar rose through the ranks of the new regime quickly. He commanded the Libya forces that took part

in Egypt's attack on Israeli troops in the occupied Sinai Peninsula in 1973. In the late 1970s, Mr. Haftar travelled to the Soviet Union for military training.

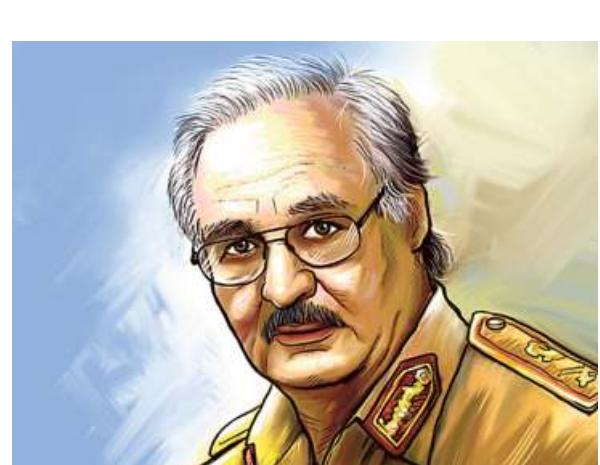
War in Chad
His life would take a U-turn after Gaddafi escalated Libya's intervention in the neighbouring Chad in 1980. Mr. Haftar was the leader of the Libyan forces that were fighting Chad's French-backed regime. In 1986, the Libyan troops were defeated and Mr. Haftar and hundreds of his men were captured as prisoners. Gaddafi disowned them. Probably this was the time the Americans discovered the worth of Mr. Haftar. He would be moved from incarceration in Chad to the battlefields of Zaire (now, Democratic Republic of Congo), where he joined the anti-Gaddafi group, National Front for the Salvation of Libya.

When ties with Zaire turned cold, he moved to

Kenya. By 1990, the CIA took him and his troops to the U.S. under a refugee programme. In the U.S., he took up residence near Langley, Virginia, which houses the CIA headquarters. Ever since, he cooperated with the CIA in its various attempts to incapacitate Gaddafi. He stayed in the U.S. till mass protests broke out in eastern Libya in 2011, inspired by similar ones elsewhere in the Arab world.

Back in Benghazi, Mr. Haftar took the command of the rebel Libyan soldiers who were fighting Gaddafi. When NATO interfered in Libya, Mr. Haftar became the local face of the rebellion. After Gaddafi was toppled and killed, the country fell into chaos with jihadis capturing pockets. In 2014, Mr. Haftar appeared on TV, declaring war on the Islamists in Benghazi. His Libyan National Army launched Operation Dignity, which ousted jihadis from Benghazi and its outskirts.

The war has now entered into a stalemate. But it's not over yet, as Mr. Haftar, still backed by Moscow and others, is ready to fight another day.



Mr. Haftar aligned with the Tobruk-based government, which appointed him "field marshal". But he wasn't done fighting yet.

He accused the Tripoli government, which is backed by different militia groups and political outfits, including the Libyan wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, of harbouring radicals. In April 2019, he launched a military operation against Tripoli. The plan was to topple the government and bring the whole Libya under his command. The UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, which consider the Brotherhood a terrorist group, supported Mr. Haftar's move. Russia, which enjoyed deep ties with Libya during the Cold War, also threw its weight behind him. And he made substantial progress by the year-end having captured territories in the sparsely populated south and west.

But Mr. Haftar's plans were thwarted after Turkey, which sees the Tripoli government as an ally, stepped in. Early this year, Turkey sent weapons and mercenaries to Tripoli, in its most audacious foreign intervention since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, to fight Haftar's men. They stopped Mr. Haftar's advances and then launched a counter-offensive, forcing him to call for a ceasefire last month.

The war has now entered into a stalemate. But it's not over yet, as Mr. Haftar, still backed by Moscow and others, is ready to fight another day.

TV PICKS

Premier League: Star Sports 1, SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 8.45 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 1 & 3 (SD & HD), 11 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 8.40 p.m., 11 p.m. & 1.10 a.m. (Monday)
England vs West Indies: Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
MotoGP: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

Haryana to host 2021 Khelo Games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Haryana will host the fourth edition of the Khelo India Youth Games after the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, the State's Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju announced on Saturday. The Games will be held in Panchkula.

The announcement was made via video conference.

"Usually the Khelo India Youth Games take place in January of every year. However, this time owing to the pandemic, we have to postpone it," Rijiju said.

"However, I am sure by the time we host the Games the pandemic will abate and we will be able to host the Games at the same scale, with participation of all states and over 10,000 participants."

Haryana has done well in all three editions of KI-YG. While it came second in 2019 and 2020 (200 medals in 2020 and 159 in 2019), Haryana won it in 2018 with 102 podium finishes (38 gold, 26 silver, 38 bronze).

Rijiju said, "Haryana already has a very strong sporting culture and has given the country some of its best athletes."

England takes control after Broad blitz

Quick wickets reduce West Indies to 59 for three in its first innings, in reply to the host's 369

WI IN ENGLAND

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

Stuart Broad starred with both bat and ball before Jofra Archer marked his return to international duty with a wicket on the second day of the deciding third Test against the West Indies at Old Trafford on Saturday.

England had slumped to 280-8 after losing four wickets for 18 runs before No. 10 Broad's swashbuckling 62 took the home team to a first innings total of 369.

Strikes in his first over

He then took a wicket with his fourth ball to have West Indies'危险人Kraigg Brathwaite caught at slip by England captain Joe Root and, at tea, the visitors were 59-3.

John Campbell, dropped on 10 by Ben Stokes, was starting to look good while making 32. But fast bowler Archer produced a rib-high delivery that the left-hander Campbell could only fend to Rory Burns in the gully.

And there was time before tea for James Anderson to

strike on his Lancashire home ground when a superb delivery from England's all-time leading Test wicket-taker had Shai Hope caught behind.

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings: Rory Burns c Cornwall b Chase 57, Dom Sibley lbw b Roach 0, Joe Root run out 17, Ben Stokes b Roach 20, Ollie Pope b Gabriel 91, Jos Buttler c Holder b Gabriel 67, Chris Woakes b Roach 1, Dom Bess not out 18, Jofra Archer c Holder b Roach 3, Stuart Broad c Blackwood b Chase 62, James Anderson c Cornwall b Holder 11; Extras (b-12, lb-4, nb-6): 22; Total (in 111.5 overs): 369.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-44, 3-58.

England bowling: Anderson 7-2-13-1, Broad 5-1-13-1, Archer 6-1-16-1, Woakes 7-0-17-0.

25.4-4-72-4, Gabriel 23.2-5-77-2, Holder 24.5-5-83-1, Cornwall 27.5-85-0, Chase 11.3-36-2.

West Indies — 1st innings: Kraigg Brathwaite c Root b Broad 1, John Campbell c Burns b Archer 32, Shai Hope c Buttler b Anderson 17, Shamarr Brooks (batting) 4, Roston Chase (batting) 0; Extras (w-5): 5; Total (for three wkts. in 25 overs, at tea): 59.

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-44, 3-58.

England bowling: Anderson 7-2-13-1, Broad 5-1-13-1, Archer 6-1-16-1, Woakes 7-0-17-0.



In punishing mood: Coming in at No. 10, Stuart Broad scattered the West Indies bowling around, scoring 62. ■ AFP

IN BRIEF

Ganguly tests negative for COVID-19

KOLKATA
BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has tested negative for COVID-19 after he gave his samples as a precautionary measure. The former India captain has been in home quarantine for more than a week after his elder brother Snehasis Ganguly had tested positive for the contagious disease. "He (Ganguly) is living with his ailing mother and family, so as a precautionary



measure he took the test voluntarily and the report came negative on Friday evening," a source close to the BCCI president said. ■ PTI



Hima dedicates medal to COVID-19 warriors

NEW DELHI
Indian sprinter Hima Das on Friday dedicated her mixed relay gold in the 2018 Asian Games to the corona warriors – police and doctors who ensured everyone's safety and good health – who are "working selflessly" amid the pandemic. Also, Anu Raghavan moved from fourth place to finish with a bronze in the women's 400m hurdles. ANI



Atwal makes the cut; Koepka misses out

BLAINE (US)
Arjun Atwal made the cut at the 3M Open with a couple of excellent par saves for a four-under 67 on Friday. Atwal is two-under 140 and Tied-51 after two rounds. Americans Richy Werenski and Michael Thompson led the field, while some high-profile names missed the cut, including Brooks Koepka (70, 71), Tommy Fleetwood (71, 72), Paul Casey (72, 72) and Bubba Watson (67, 74). ■ PTI

Indies. Out of the five, batsman Joe Denly will join the white-ball training group ahead of the upcoming Ireland series. The other four – Dan Lawrence, Craig Overton, Ollie Robinson and Olly Stone – have returned to their counties, the ECB said. ■ PTI

England releases five players from bio-secure bubble

MANCHESTER
England has released five players from the bio-secure bubble here after they were not selected for the ongoing third Test against the West Indies.



Xavi tests positive for coronavirus

DOHA
Former Barcelona star Xavi Hernandez has tested positive for coronavirus, his Qatari club Al-Sadd said on Saturday, adding he would miss their league restart fixture against Al-Khor. "A few days ago, following the Qatar Stars League protocol, I tested

positive in the last COVID-19 test," Xavi said on Al-Sadd's Twitter account. "Fortunately, I'm feeling ok." ■ AFP

Aiming for top-10 in '28 Games, says Rijiju

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Saturday that India will be competing for a top-10 finish by the time 2028 Los Angeles Olympics take place, riding the government's ambitious Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme that means those who are 10-13 years of age will be ready to become world champions by the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

"We will leave no stone unturned," Rijiju said.

He added that the Target

Anand lucky to put it past Leko

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Finally, Viswanathan Anand tasted victory after Peter Leko walked into a checkmating net in the first game of the fifth round of the chess24 Legends of Chess on Saturday.

A day after running out of time in a superior position in the tie-breaking Armageddon game to Anish Giri, Anand was lucky to win after

both players committed a series of mistakes in the closing moments of the game.

In this up-and-down game, on the 55th move, Leko was a couple of moves away from forcing a checkmate. But he blundered, allowed Anand a checkmate-in-three and resigned on the 57th move.

At the same time, Magnus Carlsen's one-move blunder leading to an inevitable checkmate left the chess world stunned after he came

very close to beating Vassily Ivanchuk.

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

Fourth round: Giri bt Anand 3-2; Carlsen bt Gelfand 3-0; Kramnik bt Leko 2.5-1.5; Nepomniachtchi bt Ivanchuk 2.5-1.5; Liren bt Svidler 2.5-1.5.

Atalanta keeps slim title hopes alive



Crucial strike: Duvan Zapata's equaliser allows Atalanta to be within mathematical reach of top spot. ■ REUTERS

SERIE A

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MILAN

Atalanta kept alive its slim Serie A title hopes by drawing at AC Milan 1-1 in a matchup of the two best squads of the restart.

Hakan Calhanoglu gave Milan an early lead with a powerful free kick, and Duvan Zapata equalized from close range after Milan goal-

keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma blocked a penalty kick from Ruslan Malinovskiy.

With only two games still to play, Atalanta moved within five points of Juventus.

Also, Crotone secured promotion from Serie B by beating Livorno 5-1.

The result: AC Milan 1 (Calhanoglu 14) drew with Atalanta 1 (Zapata 34).

Dogfight at both ends of table

Chelsea, United and Leicester vie for two CL berths

PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

The Premier League will finally reach the end of its longest season on Sunday with plenty still on the line at both ends of the table.

Manchester United and Leicester face each other in a shootout for a place in the Champions League next season with Chelsea also hoping to secure its place in the top four.

Wolves and Tottenham are vying for one place in the Europa League.

And at the bottom it could not be closer with one goal separating Aston Villa just outside the relegation zone from Watford in the bottom three, while Bournemouth also has a chance of beating the drop.

Leicester fell out of the top four for the first time since September in midweek after a run of three wins in 13

games either side of the coronavirus shutdown.

However, United's and Chelsea's failures to win on Wednesday means the door is still open for Brendan Rodgers' men to salvage all the good work they did early in the season with victory on home soil on Sunday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men have looked jaded in the past week in losing 3-1 to Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals and being held 1-1 at home by West Ham.

Chelsea just needs a point at home to Wolves to seal Champions League football next season, but should Frank Lampard's men lose, then a draw between Leicester and United would see the latter two finish in the top four.

Whoever misses out on the Champions League between United, Chelsea and Leicester will be guaranteed fifth and a place in the Europa League next season.

José Mourinho's side has won its last three and will be confident ahead of a trip to Crystal Palace, which has lost its last seven games.

Seventh could still be good enough for European football next season, but that depends on Chelsea beating Arsenal in the FA Cup final on August 1.

At the bottom, two of Bournemouth, Watford and Villa will join already relegated Norwich in the Championship next season.

"We have got some fine boxers such as Amit Panghal, Manish Kaushik, Vikas Krishan, Mary Kom and Simranjit Kaur, who have proven themselves at the highest level by beating boxers from strong countries. We have some excellent coaches, led by Santiago Nieva. Our boxers have the capability to win more than one medal, a few of them should be in the finals in Tokyo," Devarajan told *The Hindu*.

"Before that, we can add a few more quota places to our existing nine slots when our boxers compete in the World Cup final in August 1.

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