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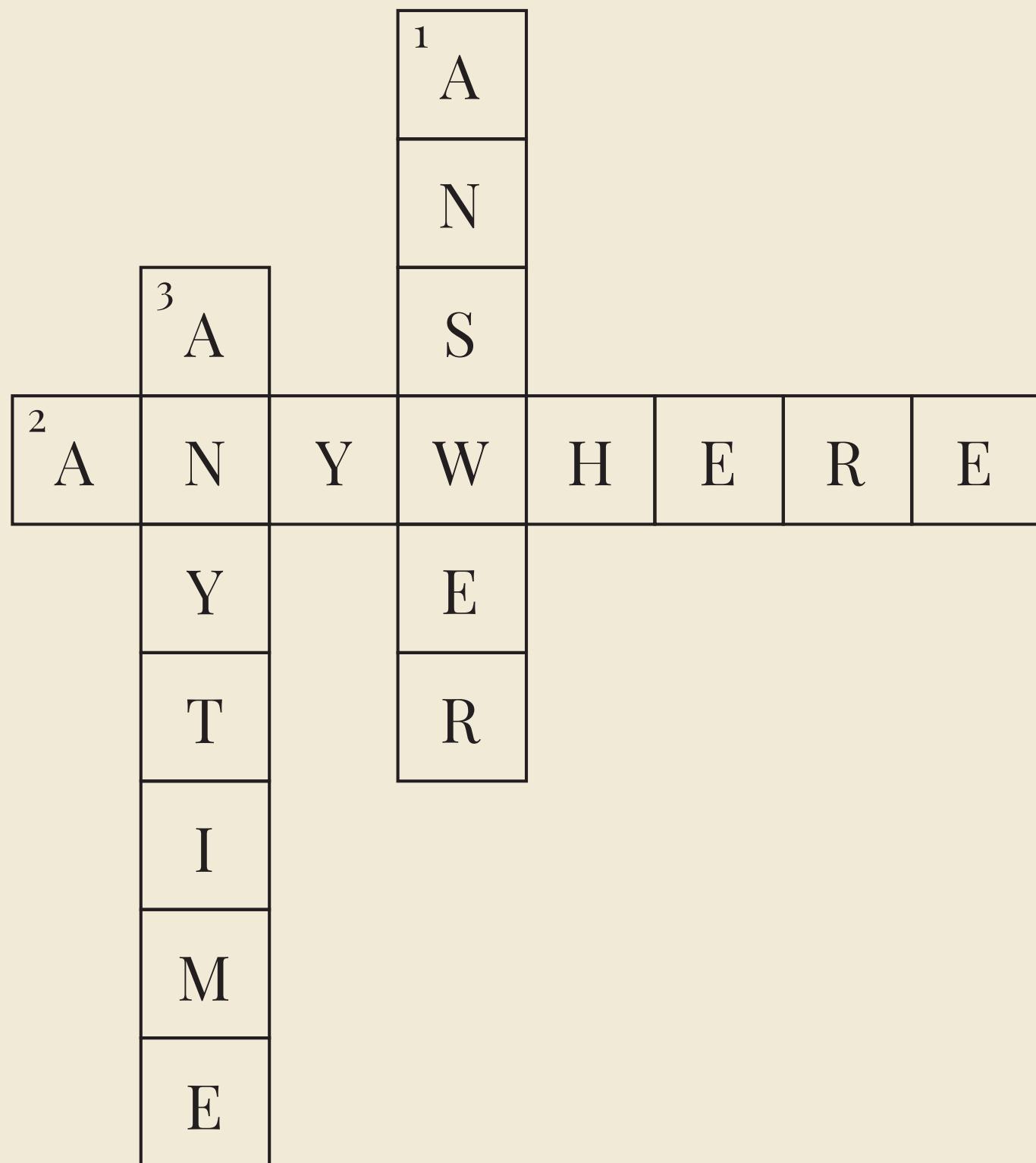
THE HINDU GROUP

ACROSS

2. In or at any place (8)

Down

1. The correct solution (6)
 3. Whenever (7)





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THE HINDU



We need full reset in India-China ties, says Shivshankar Menon

page 7



Biocon's psoriasis drug gets DCGI nod for use in COVID-19 patients

page 8



Six NSCN (IM) members killed in Arunachal Pradesh

page 8



Amitabh Bachchan tests positive for COVID-19, hospitalised

page 14

NEARBY



'Height of Ganpati idols cannot exceed 4 feet'

MUMBAI
The Maharashtra government on Saturday directed Ganesh mandals to restrict the height of idols to four feet during Ganesh Chaturthi this year. Even idols installed at home cannot be taller than two feet. The government has also asked the mandals to consider immersing the idols during Maghi Ganesh Chaturthi in February or next year's Ganesh Chaturthi.

WEST ▶ PAGE 5

Amid spike in cases, Pune civic chief transferred

MUMBAI
The Maharashtra government on Saturday transferred Pune Municipal Commissioner Shekhar Gaikwad. He has been replaced with Vikram Kumar, CEO, Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority. Pune city is among the worst hit in the State and, as on Friday evening, had 25,893 cases, with the rise particularly sharp and worrying over the past few days. Mr. Gaikwad's transfer comes at a time when Pune city is set to undergo a 10-day lockdown with minimum restrictions from July 13. PTI

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 5
MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

BJP offering MLAs ₹25 crore to topple Rajasthan govt.: Gehlot

Central leaders involved, claims Chief Minister; police register FIR against two

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

A major dispute has arisen between the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP in Rajasthan, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot once again accusing the latter of trying to topple his government in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Gehlot said on Saturday that though huge sums of money were being offered to the Congress MLAs, his government was stable and would complete its term.

A day after the Special Operations Group (SOG) of the Rajasthan police registered a case on the alleged attempts to destabilise the State government, Mr. Gehlot said at a press conference in Jaipur that BJP leaders in the State, who had crossed the "limits of shamelessness", were playing the game at the behest of Central leaders of their party.

Organised effort
Mr. Gehlot said this was the second attempt to topple his government, after the BJP's attempt to poach the legislators ahead of last month's Rajya Sabha elections failed. "This time, the efforts are more organised. MLAs have



A video grab of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot addressing a virtual press conference on Saturday.

MLAs have been offered an advance of ₹10 crore and a deferred payment of ₹15 crore... BJP leaders are doing politics like in a *bakra mandi* (goat market)

ASHOK GEHLOT, Rajasthan CM

BJP has nothing to do with these allegations. During the Rajya Sabha polls also, they had levelled such allegations which are baseless

SATISH POONIA, BJP State president

Party	Seat
Congress	107
BTP	2
CPI(M)	2
RLD	1
Independents	13
BJP	72
RLP	3
Total	200

BTP: Bharatiya Tribal Party
RLP: Rashtriya Loktantrik Party
RLD: Rashtriya Lok Dal

been offered an advance of ₹10 crore and a deferred payment of ₹15 crore," he claimed.

"Amid the crisis posed by the pandemic, the BJP has gone beyond humanity. Its leaders are doing politics like in a *bakra mandi* (goat market)," Mr. Gehlot said. He

named Leader of Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria, Deputy Leader of Opposition Rajaendra Rathore and BJP State president Satish Poonia as those involved in "dirty games".

The SOG has detained two persons, whose telephone calls were intercepted, after

registering an FIR in connection with the horse-trading charges during the Rajya Sabha polls.

The FIR stated that the conversation revolved around the alleged differences between the Chief Minister and his deputy Sachin Pilot and the scope for breaking the ruling party and luring Independent MLAs to topple the government.

Notice to CM, Dy. CM
While the SOG has issued notices to the Chief Minister, the Deputy Chief Minister and the government's chief whip Mahesh Joshi for recording their statements, the Anti-Corruption Bureau is also likely to take action under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

Mr. Gehlot said the SOG's investigation, which he would be glad to join by giving his statement, would reveal all aspects of the BJP's conspiracy.

The BJP rejected Mr. Gehlot's allegations and accused him of misusing the agencies like SOG and ACB for "threatening MLAs and [other] political parties".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Vikas Dubey's aides held in Maharashtra

ATS team arrests Arvind, Sushilkumar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Saturday nabbed two associates of Vikas Dubey, who was shot dead by the Uttar Pradesh Police on Friday.

An ATS team of the Juhu unit, led by former Mumbai police "encounter specialist" inspector Daya Nayak, laid a trap at Kolshet Road, Thane, following a tip-off and arrested Arvind, alias Guddan Ramvilas Trivedi, 46, and Sushilkumar, alias Sonu Suresh Tiwari, 30.

They have been booked under Sections 302 (punishment for murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 394 (voluntarily causing hurt in committing robbery) and 120B (punishment of criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

Murder of Minister
"Initial inquiry by the agency revealed that Guddan was involved in many cases with Dubey, including the 2001 murder of State Minister Santosh Shukla," said Vikram Deshmukh, Superintendent of Police, ATS. The Uttar Pradesh government had announced a cash reward for his arrest.

He said Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Task Force



Arvind, alias Guddan Ramvilas Trivedi

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SIT to probe police role

The Uttar Pradesh government has formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the killing of eight policemen in Bikru village, the financial and criminal background of the accused and the role of the Kanpur police. ▶ PAGE 7

had been informed about the arrests.

Dubey and his henchmen had ambushed a police team that had gone to arrest him in an attempt to murder case on the intervening night of July 2 and 3. Eight policemen died and several more were injured in the shootout that followed.

NIA detains 2 gold smuggling case suspects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said on Saturday it had detained two suspects in the Kerala gold smuggling case from Bengaluru.

"Accused Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair have been detained. They are being examined and will be arrested in due course. They were detained from BTM Layout in Bengaluru," an NIA spokesperson said on Saturday.

The agency had registered a case a day ago.

The NIA had earlier said in a statement that initial inquiries suggested that the "proceeds of the smuggled gold could be used for financing of terrorism in India."

The 30 kg gold concealed in imported plumbing material was seized by the Customs officials on July 5 upon inspection of an air cargo consignment addressed to the Consular General of the United Arab Emirates.

The NIA slapped various Sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act on four accused – Sarith P.S., Swapna Suresh, Fazil Fareed and Sandeep Nair.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

+ UGC to take action if States cancel exams: Govt.

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

As Delhi became the latest State to cancel final year university examinations in defiance of University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, both the Centre and the regulatory agency reiterated

that guidelines were legally binding on the States and must be followed.

As per the UGC Act, State governments cannot take this decision. Unlike school education, which is on the State list, higher education is on the concurrent list. UGC does have the power to take

action. First we will try to take States on board."

On Monday, the UGC had directed that final year examinations must be conducted by September-end in online or offline mode.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

Sombre Saturday: highest cases reported in a day; death toll crosses 10,000

8,139 new cases, State tally nears 2.5 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Maharashtra reported a fresh high of 8,139 COVID-19 cases on Saturday, even as the State's death toll from the pandemic crossed the 10,000 mark with 223 more patients succumbing to the virus in the last 24 hours. The State's previous record high for new COVID-19 cases was 7,862 reported earlier this week.

The State has now reported a whopping 2,46,600 cases so far, but nearly 1.37 lakh patients have recovered, so effectively, there are over 99,000 active cases currently.

Mumbai, which had accounted for a bulk of fresh infections through the early weeks of the pandemic, reported just 1,284 new cases on Saturday. Just 39 of the 223 deaths on Saturday, which took the State's total toll to 10,116, were reported from the State capital. Mumbai's current COVID-19 tally is at 91,745 cases with 5,244 deaths.

However, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) on the whole still accounted over half the State's new cases, with municipal corporations near Mumbai reporting 3,126 cases. The MMR accounts for over 1.68 lakh cases of the State's tally and the gap between Mumbai city cases and the cases in other MMR regions combined is fast shrinking.

BMC official succumbs

On Saturday evening, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation informed that Ashok Khairnar, Assistant Commissioner of the H-East ward had lost his life battling the novel coronavirus.

Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray offered "heartfelt condolences" to Khairnar's family and said, "We have lost a Covid hero today. He managed his ward with brilliance, the doubling day rate being at 134 and infection rate being lowest at 0.5%."

The silver lining

As many as 4,360 patients were discharged on Saturday, after full recovery, taking the total number of recovered cases to 1,36,985. This gives the State's recovery rate of 55.55% with a case fatality rate of 4.1%.

Dharavi proves we can curb COVID-19: CM

Lockdown extended in Navi Mumbai

RAINA ASSAINAR

MUMBAI

After the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus acknowledged the success of Mumbai's densely populated Dharavi slum in containing the COVID-19 pandemic's spread on Friday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said the battle against the virus in Dharavi demonstrated that it can be contained through self-discipline and community efforts.

At least 82% patients in Dharavi have recovered, and the number of active cases has been arrested to 166, the CM said. "Dharavi is an inspiration for the world on how to curb the spread of a pandemic," he said in a statement, applauding the tireless efforts of BMC, along with local NGOs, residents and medical practitioners.

Environment and Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray asked all Municipal Commissioners in the MMR region to strengthen the 'Chase the Virus' campaign by implementing the Dharavi model. Mr. Thackeray, along with Thane's Guardian Minister Eknath Shinde held a meeting in Kalyan-Dombivli, which has been seeing a sharp rise in new cases, to discuss the Dharavi model with other MMR Commissioners.

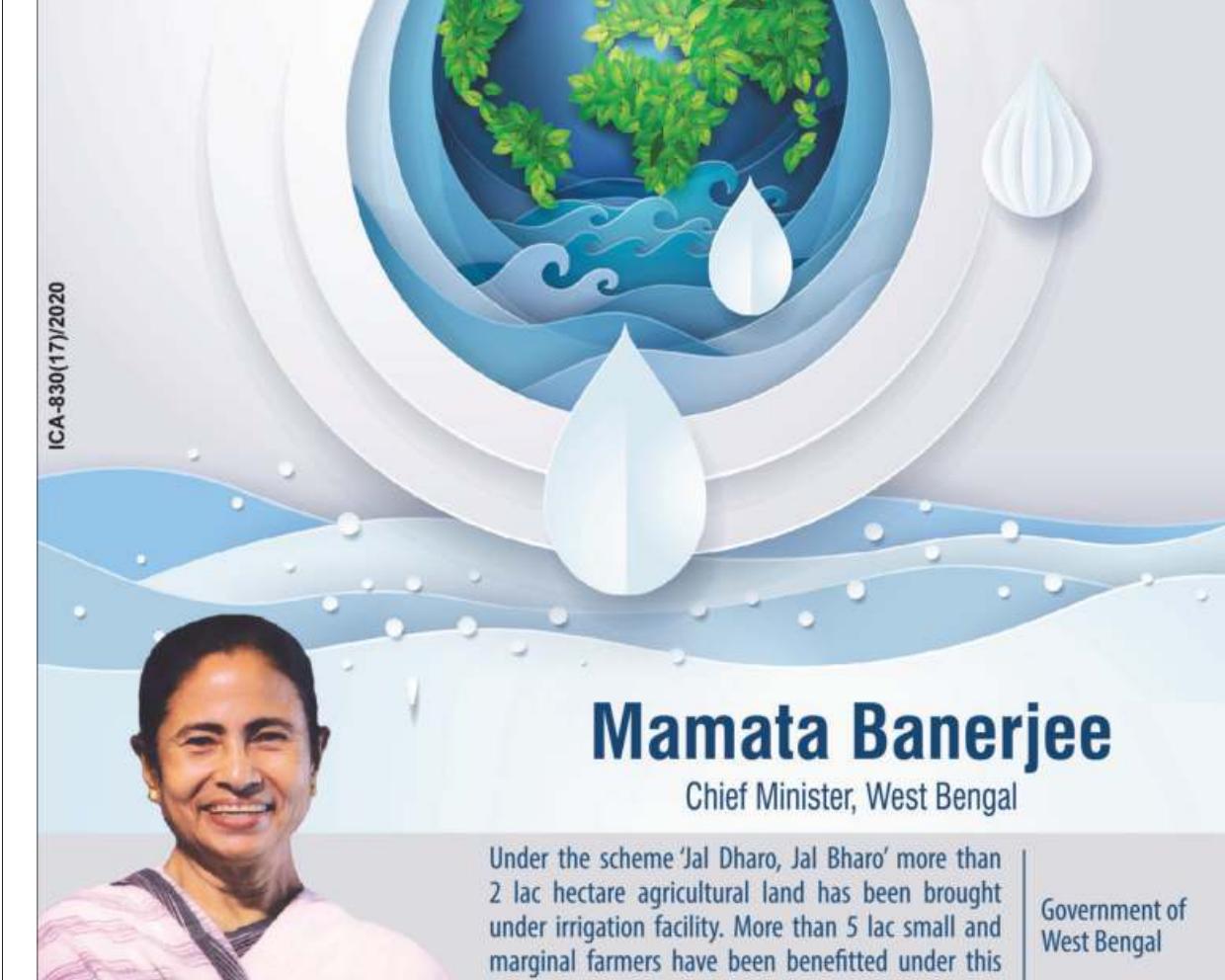
If Dharavi, with such a dense population could contain the virus, any other place could do the same. Even as Jumbo COVID-19

centres are being made in the MMR region, they need to focus more on contact tracing and increase testing," Mr. Thackeray said. "Do not panic if the number of cases increase," he said, stressing that no person should be devoid of treatment and priority should be given to reducing the mortality rate.

Thane collector's order

Meanwhile, Thane Collector Rajesh Narvekar issued an order for extending the lockdown till the midnight of July 19 and municipal corporations have been asked to decide individually as per the situation of the respective areas.

While Kalyan-Dombivli



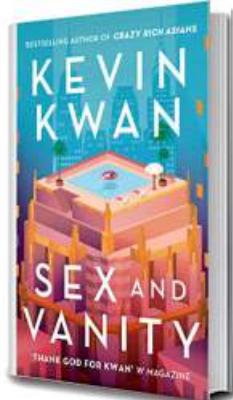
Mamata Banerjee

Chief Minister, West Bengal

Under the scheme 'Jal Dharo, Jal Bharo' more than 2 lac hectare agricultural land has been brought under irrigation facility. More than 5 lac small and marginal farmers have been benefitted under this scheme across the State.

Government of West Bengal

The man behind the bestselling *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy on exploring the snobbery of old money in his upcoming novel, *Sex & Vanity*



Over-the-top: (Clockwise from above) His new novel; Kevin Kwan; a still from *Crazy Rich Asians*; and the poster of the film. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

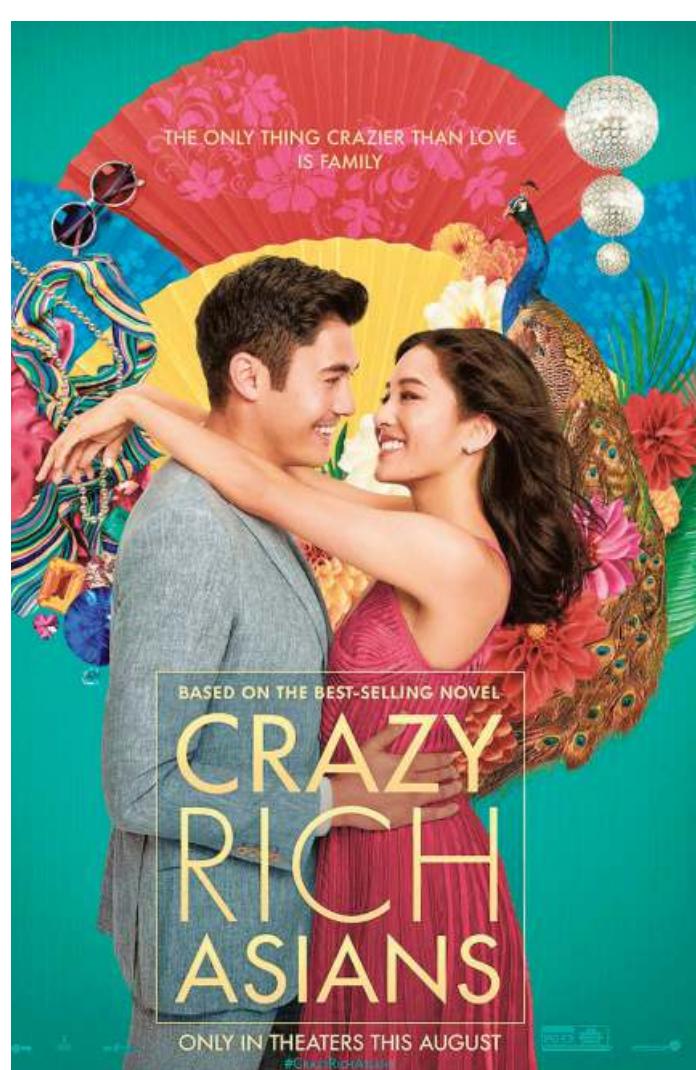


• KENNETH ROSARIO

In 2018, Kevin Kwan's bestseller, *Crazy Rich Asians*, transformed into a watershed moment for Asians in Hollywood. A film adaptation with an all-Asian cast, Asian director and writers, luring white audiences to the cinemas, where franchise movies reigned supreme in the summer, was previously unheard of. Kwan, the brain behind it all, found unprecedented fame, propelling him to an enviable New York City (NYC) clique of celebrity writers. But he doesn't consider himself as one. "Celebrity is such a strange word," he says, over a long-distance phone call from the Big Apple. "I have friends who are actual celebrities and to me that is a very special condition, which I wouldn't wish on anyone."

The one-percenters

Kwan says he is very much a "writer in a room who lives a normal life", and is eager for his latest book, *Sex & Vanity*, to release. It is his first novel after the big Hollywood success and the *Crazy Rich Asians* trilogy ended. But the essence of his writing and universe carries on in his latest – one occupied by the filthy rich. A modern-day rendition of EM Forster's *A Room with a View*, the novel's writing is over-the-top and impudent, the characters (mostly Asian or Asian-American) are among the top 1% (as Bernie Sanders would disdainfully call it) and romance drives the plot through exotic private islands and uppity venues in NYC.



But the book has something previously unexplored: the rift between old and new money. To most, the wealthy are a homogeneous and cloistered group but

Kwan, whose lineage can be traced to the upper-class establishment of Singapore, knows the finer differences. After spending over two decades in NYC, the 47-year-

KEEPING UP WITH KWAN



old author not only understands the lives of the wealthy Asians but also the East Coast elites.

"In New York, I could be a fly on the wall and observe how the elites treated people they perceived as new money," he recalls, adding, "No matter how privileged you are, there's always going to be someone who will think you are not good enough. The snobbery never ends."

Fight to fit in

In *Sex & Vanity*, the tussle between heritage and newly-acquired richness manifests itself in Lucie Churchill's relationship with her fiancé, Cecil Pike. In a bid to fit in, he is flashy, opulent and eager to please, while she is a goody-two-shoes who only wants to chase personal gratification. In

a way, they embody Kwan's observation of the differences between the elites in the East and the West. While the former project their affluence with big houses, cars and jewellery, the latter have made a shift towards satiating private experiences like lavish holidays, golf, collecting art or even philanthropy, he says.

It is not just Kwan's interactions with the crème de la crème, but also his personal struggle for self-identity in the US that finds its way into the novel. Lucie, a *hapa* – half Chinese, half American – spends her life reconciling with her dual racial heritage, a struggle that not only impacts her self-esteem but finds pertinence in a racially-divided America of late. "This is something I have had much experience with," says

Kwan, who spent his adolescent years in Texas, before moving to New York. "No matter what, you are always going to be an outsider, whether it is the world of privilege in Houston or in NYC; you are always an interloper."

Asians on the map

Representation in mainstream cinema and literature, therefore, is imperative to trigger change. "*Crazy Rich Asians* started a revolution," he declares. "It took me by surprise how much it affected white Americans, and not just Asians." In the last two years, Kwan has witnessed a gradual, if not a tectonic, shift in narratives and casting. He counts films like *The Farewell* (2019) and actors like Awkwafina as examples of breakout successes, and Mindy Kaling's *Never Have I Ever* among his current favourites.

"I do see that *Crazy Rich Asians* has opened the eyes of Hollywood that our stories are financially viable," he says. But the progress may be slower in the

casting department. "The instinct for big players in Hollywood is to be as risk-averse as possible and that entails casting well-known stars and, unfortunately, there are a lot more well-known stars who are not Asians."

Currently working as a creator and co-writer on a television series for STX Entertainment, Kwan informs that *Sex & Vanity* is the first in a trilogy. While the first novel is an homage to Manhattan, the second and third will be an ode to London and Paris. He is open to optioning the book for an adaptation, but says he didn't write it with a movie in mind. "If you think about a possible film while writing, you are setting yourself up for disaster," he says. The novel, though, reads quite like a romcom, rife with mushy dialogues and sweeping descriptions of panoramas waiting to be filmed. "I try to stay in the literary world and evoke a story visually. At the same time, I am very influenced by movies," concludes Kwan.



In New York, I could be a fly on the wall and observe how the elites treated people they perceived as new money

Finding calm in chaos

Raja Kumari on her latest single 'Peace' and discovering how simple self-care can be

• SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS



"I feel like my songwriting is prophetic," says Raja Kumari, about her latest single 'Peace', that was released last week. A laid back R&B number, it is a departure from the rapper-songwriter's usual hip-hop style. Recalling that she had co-written the song (with friend and collaborator Elvis Brown) in early January, she says, "I'd been going through a lot, missed my family as I'd been in India for quite some time, it was lonely... So I wanted to say something positive." However, it is also relevant to the current state of the world, offering an escape with her smooth vocals and calming visuals.

Chatting on Instagram Live earlier this week, she is impeccably turned out as always, although it is late night in California, where she has been quarantining with her family for the past few months. There is plenty of love in the comments for her work, especially the new single. Even her mum is a fan, says Raja Kumari. "It is her favourite because it is so peaceful and she can send it to all her friends. In the other songs, when I drop an F bomb, she can't share it. So we have issues," she laughs.

The lockdown has taught her many things, including the true meaning of self-care, she says. Apart from going vegan and making other health-related changes, she explains, "I was going 20 million miles per hour and did not realise that self-love is sleeping on time, staying hydrated, choosing happiness and joy in every moment. Becoming my own



support system has become the most important thing."

It is something she learnt through her career as well, getting into an industry where "no one looked like [me]". To make Indian culture as mainstream in America as Latin culture is, she feels will take more than one artiste. "I believe we have a lot of talent. So if we keep elevating our quality, we can have a renaissance," she says. This desire is why she partnered with Bumble's 'Leveling the Charts' initiative to mentor upcoming young artistes in India. Her advice? "Perseverance, belief in self, consistency, manifestation, setting intentions, removing limiting ideas and beliefs, and having the audacity to believe in your dreams. These are the things that create superstars," she says.

With half a million followers on Instagram, Raja Kumari has never shied away from activism on her social media page. Having grown up in the US, she says the current political situation and the Black Lives Matter movement has shaken many people "out of their slumber". Counting herself one among them, she says, "I was affected by this idea of being a model minority, understanding my privilege and re-educating myself, and unlearning things. If I can bring in alternate information that my followers can research on their own to make a decision, I think it is my duty and responsibility to share it." And to the haters, she simply says, "I wish them the best."



• ROSELLA STEPHEN

Marie-Cécile Cisamolo is no stranger to exquisite craftsmanship. "I love my job, even on a Saturday," goes an Instagram post, as she tries out a Bulgari ruby ring, a Cartier panther bangle-watch and other glittering pieces from the current Christie's Hong Kong Magnificent Jewels sale. But the auction house's jewellery specialist is visibly excited when she presses a tiny moonstone button on an Art Deco table clock and it chimes. Cisamolo is on a webinar about an ongoing collection of Cartier clocks, where each of the 101 pieces on sale features the French house's mastery in enamelling, engraving and gem setting. And as she pulls out an agate and purple enamel number with a little agate door to reveal a meticulously designed clock face, or enlarges over the feminine colours or quirks of some of the clocks, Francesca Cartier Brickell, her co-host, provides the inside story.

From the family album

Sharing details from a decade of research spent on her recent book, *The Cartiers*, Brickell talks about the journey from Belle Epoque to Art Deco, mystery to prism clocks. About how Louis Cartier was surrounded by great inventors, including Edmund

Turn back the clock

The largest private collection of Cartier clocks to go under the hammer at Christie's is also a reminder of the drama and opulence before WWI

Jaeger. How he loved to visit Chinese antique shops in Paris to buy lacquer panels. And the trend for all things Chinese in the 1920s, as seen in vanity cases, jewellery and art. Sitting in her grandfather Jean-Jacques Cartier's library (he ran Cartier London till the business was sold to Swiss



(Clockwise from left) Art Deco mother-of-pearl, enamel, turquoise, moonstone and diamond clock; Belle Epoque enamel and diamond clock; and Art Deco 'Mignonette' clock.

luxury conglomerate, Richemont), Brickell points to a design aesthetic that was also inspired by the splendour of Russia's royal House of Romanov. She reminds us of clockmaker Maurice Couet's contribution to Cartier and presents original drawings and letters from that time.

When Brickell refers to how Louis Cartier's jewellery designs, in the Garland Style, inspired his clocks, Cisamolo picks up a 1904 creation in dark-blue opaline glass and white enamel from a shelf behind her. In the catalogue of clocks, all from a private European collector who had amassed them over three decades, the starting bid for this urn clock is CHF 40,000. The collection is estimated to sell above \$5 million. Christie's says the clocks, even if over a 100 years old, are in working condition.

The mystery continues

While the sale does not include a mystery clock – Cartier's tour de force of illusion, where the hour and minute hands float free inside what appears to be a crystal ball, with no clockwork showing – they do have a few semi-mystery clocks. Cisamolo's favourite, a day and night clock made in 1913, comes with the Latin inscription: "I do not count the hours if they are not brilliant." Previously owned by aristocrats, heiresses and politicians, these horological creations are a reminder of beauty and opulence from another era. As Cisamolo puts it, now let's hope they find the right homes.

The sale at christies.com closes on July 21, 2020.

Timings

MUMBAI

SUNDAY, JUL. 12
RISE 06:09 SET 19:20
RISE 00:00 SET 12:11
MONDAY, JUL. 13
RISE 06:09 SET 19:20
RISE 00:28 SET 12:58
TUESDAY, JUL. 14
RISE 06:09 SET 19:20
RISE 01:02 SET 13:47

Mumbai Weather	max min
Mumbai Airport	33 28
Pune	31 22
Mumbai City	33 28

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

Mumbai Tomorrow
33°C A warm morning. Moderate rain are possible over the city. A mostly cloudy sky is expected over the city.

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Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	68	Gurugram	69
Ghaziabad	86	Faridabad	90
Noida	80	Greater Noida	67
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200	Poor 201-300 Very Poor 301-400 Severe >400
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) Source: CPCB			

IN BRIEF

BJP leader seeks to meet CM over power bills

NEW DELHI
BJP state president Adesh Gupta wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal here on Saturday seeking to discuss complaints over electricity bills. Mr. Gupta claimed that power bills were being sent without subsidy to entrepreneurs, businesspersons, common man and even schools. "The people of Delhi are being asked by this to give a fixed charge for the electricity they did not even use," Mr. Gupta stated in the letter.

Two arrested for killing homeless man

NEW DELHI
Two persons have been arrested for allegedly killing a man because he bullied them and also sold one of their crutches to buy liquor, the police said on Saturday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bhardwaj said that the accused have been identified as Karan and Satish who allegedly killed one Anil, a homeless man.

2 realtors arrested for duping man of ₹2 crore

NEW DELHI
Two realtors have been arrested for allegedly duping a man of ₹2 crore on pretext of investment, the police said on Saturday. Joint Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing) O.P. Mishra said, "One Rajesh Kumar Garg was induced to invest in a project called Airwill Intellicity, developed by accused persons, in Greater Noida on the pretext of fixed return in the form of add on profits of 3% per month on an investment of ₹2 crore," Mr. Mishra said.

Youth succumbs to stab injuries

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 21-year-old youth succumbed to his injuries in a city hospital on Thursday, eight days after he was stabbed during a robbery bid near Pratap Nagar metro station, the police said.

A senior police officer said that a sub-inspector has been suspended and Station House Officer of Gulabi Bagh police station has been sent to district lines in a disciplinary action for not registering an FIR into the incident after being informed that the victim, Lakan, a call centre employee who was also pursuing graduation from University of Delhi, that he had been robbed of ₹1,200 and had been stabbed multiple times.

The police said that Lakan, a resident of Shastri Nagar, was returning from work on July 1 when he was robbed and stabbed.

Active cases fall below 20K; govt. plans to test all health workers

Some Central hospitals have already started testing their employees for antibodies

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Delhi has dropped below 20,000, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Saturday.

As many as 1,781 new cases were reported in 24 hours, taking the tally to 11,0921. Of the total cases, 87,692 people have recovered and there are 19,895 active cases. Also, 34 more deaths have been reported in a single day, taking the toll to 3,334, read the bulletin.

Though the total cases in Delhi have been increasing, the active cases have been decreasing since July 1.

The number of active cases was 27,007 on July 1 and has decreased by 26.3% to reach 19,895 on Saturday.

The positivity rate, which is the percentage of people who test positive, was 8.2% on Saturday – the lowest since July 1. The number of containment zones was 639.

The Delhi government is also planning to test all

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
11,0921	3,334
New cases in the past 24 hours	New deaths in the past 24 hours
1,781	34

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

healthcare workers for COVID-19 using antibody testing kits. Similar tests have already begun in multiple Central-run hospitals, according to officials.

Antibody testing

"The Delhi government will test all healthcare workers, numbering at least 40,000-50,000, for COVID-19 using antibody tests. The government is in talks with the Centre and ICMR on whether to procure the kits or if the ICMR will provide the kits," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*.

A positive result in an antibody test means that the person has developed antibody



People waiting to be tested at a government school in north-west Delhi on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

dies against the virus, which implies that the person was infected at some point.

The official said that the idea is to understand how prevalent the virus is in healthcare workers.

"We are planning to start testing before July 20," the official said, adding that the plan is to first test workers in COVID-19 treatment facilities and then the rest.

Minakshi Bhardwaj, Medical Superintendent of Central government's RML Hospital, said that the process has already begun.

"We have been testing our over 4,000 employees using antibody testing kits. We had procured the kits and the process will take at least one more week," she said.

The Centre's Lady Hardinge Hospital is also in the process of starting the tests, according to officials.

A communication has been sent to the Union Health Secretary with request for initiating Rapid Antigen Test for high-risk group of individuals in health facilities of Central government," the bulletin added.

Hospitals with low ratio would mean better management. Good practices in these hospitals will be studied and improvements will

be made in hospitals where more deaths are taking place, the government said.

According to the government, a total of 691 deaths were reported in the city between June 24 and July 8 – an average of 46 deaths per day. According to findings of a Delhi government study.

COVID-19

All these deaths were studied and analysed by the Health Department.

The report stated that the number of daily deaths had been reducing over the last few days – from a high of 101 in mid-June to around 46 now. The overall death rate has also come down to 3.02% from 3.64% in Jun

The report stated that as per the Centre's Paul Committee, 45% of deaths in India occur during the first 48 hours. In Delhi, this had come down to 15%.

Delay in admission

Of the 691 deaths, the report stated 505 patients were in serious condition when admitted to hospitals, 291 were already in hospital when they tested positive and "everyone else got timely admission into the hospital". The study found delay in hospital admission in 28 cases.

The Delhi government stated that testing has been increased; an emphasis on home isolation of asymptomatic and mild symptom patients had released a large number of hospital beds; there was better ambulance response time; the admission process for patients at hospitals was quicker; and that the capacity of ICU beds had been increased.

The country's first plasma bank in the city may further bring down mortality rate in Delhi, it added said.

Doctor arrested for issuing fake certificates to prisoners

HC had on June 29 ordered Crime Branch to probe the matter

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have arrested a doctor and his accomplice for allegedly issuing fake medical certificates to family members of prisoners to get favourable bail order, they said on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) Rakshesh Pawar said that the accused have been identified as Gajendra Kumar Nayyar (61), a resident of Uttam Nagar, and his accomplice Mukesh Sangwan (38), a resident of Pankha Road. While the doctor ran two nursing homes and issued fake medical documents, Sangwan brought him clients, the police said.

MBBS degree

During interrogation, it was found that Dr. Nayyar completed his MBBS from Maulana Azad Medical College in 1979 after which he went abroad and worked there. He also holds an FRCR (fel-

lowship of the Royal College of Radiologists) degree from the U.K. In 2006, he returned to India and worked in various hospitals, the police said.

According to the police, accused doctor met Sangwan's wife Sunita in 2015 and prepared fake medical documents for her for Sangwan's bail in a rape case.

"He prepared fake medical certificates/documents and charged ₹15,000 to ₹25,000. Presently, he was running two hospitals K.S. Nursing Home in Greater Noida and N.S. Hospital at Dwarka Mod, Uttam Nagar, and using them for the purpose of issuing fake certificates," the officer said.

Man killed by daughter, wife and her partner

They decided to kill the victim when he got to know about the wife's affair

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 25-year-old man was allegedly killed by his daughter, wife, her partner and her daughter and her classmate.

Body in drain

The police said that they received a call on July 2 stating that a man's body was lying in a drain near Bhati Village. A tattoo with "ST" written was found on the body.

The police also found a car abandoned about a kilometre away from the drain.

When ownership of the car was checked, it was found to be in the name of Mahender alias Sanjay, a resident of Dera Village. The tattoo also helped identify the victim.

The police then questioned Sanjay's brother. The brother also allegedly told the police that the couple often quarrelled over a person named Dalchand alias Dalu alias Manoj who often came to their house.

During the probe, Manoj allegedly confessed to the crime which he claimed he had committed with the victim's wife. The wife was held and the two minor girls were also apprehended.

Manoj allegedly revealed that he was in a relationship with the victim's wife for the last nine months and when the victim got to know about the two, he started beating the wife and daughter.

E-conversion of plots on DDA portal soon

No visits required to office

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is set to launch a portal for the e-conversion of plots in the city in a bid to facilitate stakeholders to complete the entire process online.

Senior officials said that the portal, which was in the pipeline for long, will also help customers to complete formalities online without stepping out amid the prevailing COVID-19 outbreak.

The portal, to be launched soon, will also have facilities to get Extension of Time (EOT) online as well.

Senior officials also added that the portal will help customers avoid middlemen and complete the process of converting plots from leasehold to freehold electronically.

The numbers went up slightly on Saturday and officials expect the footfall to increase on Sunday. Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel had announced on July 2 that all Centrally protected monuments under the ASI would open from July 6, subject to rules of local administrations and guidelines of the Union Health and Home Ministries.

The number of visitors

was capped between 2,000 and 5,000 daily for different monuments and ticket sales moved to online-only mode.

Low footfall
According to the ASI's online ticket portal, Qutub Minar had the highest number of visitors from Monday to Friday, with 100 to 125 tickets

Tablighi Jamaat case: 75 foreigners granted bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

outbreak.
Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Gurmohina Kaur granted the relief to the foreigners on furnishing a personal bond of ₹10,000 each. Till date, 445 charged foreign nationals from 33 different countries have been granted bail. The police had in June filed 59 chargesheets against 956 foreigners belonging to 36 different countries in the wake of the COVID-19

outbreak.
Second, forms received on the last few days before the lockdown which have been digitised, but not processed further.

Third, riot victims who had taken refuge at a relative's place and missed filing the application for compensation within the prescribed time. Had filed applications on March 20, but not able to submit it at respective SDM offices, which have been brought to the notice of SDM concerned.

Lastly, under assessment or under compensated applications.

Many died and several were injured in the north-east Delhi riots that broke out in February this year.



Two visitors at Qutub Minar after it reopened on July 6.
■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

being sold daily on an average. An official said the monument used to see around 10,000 visitors daily.

On Saturday evening, just 174 tickets out of the 1,500 available for the slot of 12 p.m. till 6 p.m. had been sold as of 5 p.m.

Similarly, Humayun's Tomb, which used to receive

6,000-7,000 daily visitors, got 50 to 75 this week, with 132 tickets out of 1,000 being sold for the afternoon slot on Saturday at 5 p.m., according to the official.</

Shops, offices shut in Uttar Pradesh

Lockdown-like restrictions imposed for 55 hours from Friday night in the State

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

Shops and business establishments, other than those dealing with essential services, remained closed in Uttar Pradesh on Saturday after the government reimposed on Friday lockdown-like restrictions across the State.

The government on Thursday had announced that restrictions will be reimposed from 10 p.m. on Friday to 5 a.m. on Monday following the surge in coronavirus cases. However, the functioning of essential services and opening of religious places were allowed during this period.

Roads wore a deserted look on Saturday as tempoz, taxis and government buses did not operate. Only vehi-



Passengers waiting at Charbagh railway station in Lucknow on Saturday. ■ PTI

cles carrying essential goods were plying.

Police personnel were posted at all prominent crossings in Lucknow and maintaining a close watch on the people moving on two-wheelers.

Since it is the second Saturday of the month, the go-

shut. However, the shops selling essential items were open.

In Kanpur, Naveen Market, Somdutt Plaza, Civil Lines, Meston Road, Panki, Chamanganj, Kidwainagar and other areas remained closed.

In Prayagraj, the main markets in Civil Lines, Mutthiganj, Lukerganj, Badshahi Mandi, Ashoknagar and Nawab Yusuf Ali Road also remained closed. Before the restrictions were imposed, people were seen crowding shops to buy essential items.

Additional Chief Secretary Awanshi Awasthi on Friday had said that directives have been issued to the police to strictly enforce restrictions and deal strongly with violators.

In government and private offices remained closed across the State.

Markets in prominent areas of Lucknow such as Hazratganj, Aminabad, Chowk, Gomtingar, Indiranagar, Latouche Road, Alambagh, Hewett Road, Aliaganj and Gudumba remained

Amarinder seeks PM's nod to cancel final exams

Advise UGC to follow earlier order: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking permission to let the State government adhere to its decision on cancellation of university-college examinations in view of the rising COVID-19 cases.

In his letter, the Chief Minister has urged the Prime Minister to advise the Ministry of Human Resource Development and the University Grants Commission to reconsider its decision on mandatory conduct of final term exams by September.

"UGC may be asked to reiterate its earlier issued guidelines of April 29, 2020, wherein it had been clearly

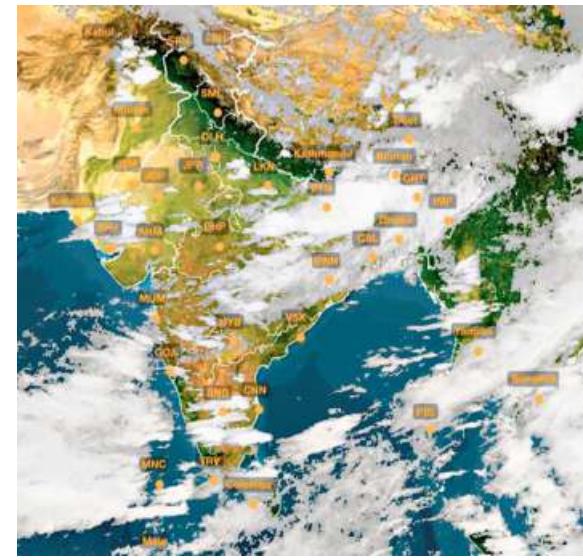
mentioned that the guidelines were advisory in nature and each State-university would chart out its own plan of action taking into consideration the issues pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic," he wrote.

Capt. Amarinder wrote that the State government had on July 3, 2020, decided to cancel all pending UG and PG final term examinations and to promote the students on the basis of performance in previous years-semesters.

"Conducting online examination for such a large number of students, majority of whom reside in rural areas without assured access to computers-laptops and internet, is also not possible," he added.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Uttarakhand, west Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, north Odisha, Konkan & Goa, Rayalseema, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.2	32.5	27.0	Kozhikode	8.5	31.4	24.4
Ahmedabad	2	35.6	26.9	Kurnool	—	33.1	24.7
Aizawl	18	23.7	18.4	Lucknow	13.8	35.2	26.4
Alahabad	6.2	32.9	26.5	Madurai	1.4	36.2	24.2
Bengaluru	0.4	29.4	21.0	Mangaluru	0.7	30.4	23.8
Bhopal	—	31.7	25.4	Mumbai	1.3	32.9	27.6
Bhubaneswar	—	33.4	27.5	Mysuru	—	30.0	21.0
Chandigarh	10	34.1	24.6	New Delhi	8.1	36.4	23.9
Chennai	19.4	34.8	23.2	Patna	—	32.0	25.8
Coimbatore	0.6	32.2	22.4	Port Blair	0.1	30.8	25.7
Dehradun	—	32.2	24.2	Puducherry	—	33.6	26.3
Gangtok	12.6	30.5	18.1	Pune	2.8	31.7	23.6
Goa	76.9	30.1	20.1	Raipur	—	33.8	26.2
Guwahati	7.8	33.3	24.4	Ranchi	8.3	31.2	22.8
Hubbli	—	32.0	27.0	Shillong	148.5	21.7	18.1
Hyderabad	6.2	31.9	23.2	Shimla	1.6	31.0	24.2
Imphal	3.3	26.2	22.3	Srinagar	—	32.3	15.7
Jaipur	—	38.0	28.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.4	24.2
Kochi	—	30.2	24.1	Tiruchi	—	37.4	25.2
Kohima	3.4	25.6	18.0	Vijayawada	—	34.6	24.6
Kolkata	—	34.7	28.6	Visakhapatnam	—	34.8	27.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday					
CITIES	SO. NO.	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	20	31	—	37	42
Bengaluru	9	22	51	13	—
Chennai	3	29	74	53	—
Delhi	5	36	112	74	46
Hyderabad	7	49	25	18	36
Kolkata	8	8	16	40	—
Lucknow	2	20	61	56	—
Mumbai	59	13	6	22	42
Pune	38	14	56	37	39
Visakhapatnam	13	59	37	49	92

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

SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

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

IIT-Bhubaneswar exam results out

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

Floodwaters have started to enter the Kaziranga National Park with 46 of the 223 anti-poaching camps being inundated overnight.

Park officials said so far 41 animals have died during the onslaught of monsoon. Nine of the animals - all hog deer - were run over by vehicles while trying to cross a highway along the southern edge of the park.

Animals escape the flooded park to the relative safety of the hills of Karbi Anglong district beyond this highway.

"It is gratifying that the institute could fully organise the lectures and laboratory sessions without any loss, the students have fully earned their degree as per

the IIT standards by appearing in conventional examinations using online mode," said R.V. Rajakumar, Director of IIT-Bhubaneswar.

Of the 448 students who participated in online examinations, 385 cleared their end-semester examinations. Encouraged by 100% participation in online examinations, the IIT-Bhubaneswar has scheduled comprehensive online examinations for junior students from July 22.

Tripura may take stricter measures

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

Tripura Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb on Saturday hinted at taking harsh measures like the imposition of a lockdown in the wake of a surge in coronavirus cases in the State. He also expressed displeasure over violations of health protocols and curfew restrictions. "I am receiving proposals from the districts. We may even enforce lockdown," he said.

Later, the Chief Secretary ordered a change in the night curfew timings from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. instead of 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



Khushi

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of male **Age:** Approx 50 years, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Height:** About 5'4", **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Thin, was found dead at Footpath, near Shop No. 11382, Singha Chowk, Idgah Road, Nabi Karim, Delhi on 01.07.2020. In this regard

a DD No. 35A U/S 174 Cr.P.C., dated 01.07.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi. His dead body has been preserved in LHM Hospital Mortuary. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

SHO
P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi
Ph.: 011-23521081, 8750870428

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
QUALITY CONTROL & PROCUREMENT DIVISION

P.H.E. Jal Shakti Department, HMT Srinagar,
Phone: - 0194-2496307, E-mail: - xenandnp@gmail.com

CORRIGENDUM-02

Subject: - Extension of dates for Supply of 2000 Metric Tons of ISI Marked Stable Bleaching Powder Grade-I as per IS-1065/89. (with upto date amendments). Ref:

1. This office No.: PHE/M&P/04 of 2020-21/ e-Tender Dated: 10-06-2020.
2. Representation Made by firm M/s International Trading Corporation Srinagar vide No: XN/PHE/S-STB/7272-20 dated: 08-07-2020 (Received vide mail).
3. Representation Made by firm M/s A.R. Chemicals Srinagar vide No: EEGB/Kmr dated: 07-07-2020 (Received vide mail).

In light of the representation made by the firms vide their letters referred under reference 02 and 03, the above referred e-tender is hereby re-scheduled as follows:-

1	Tender Notice No.	N. I. T. NO: PHE/M&P/04 of 2020-21/ e-Tender Dated: 10-06-2020.
2	Date of Inviting Tender	10-06-2020.....11.00AM
3	Document Downloading End Date	18-07-2020.....02.00PM
4	On Line Document Submission End Date	18-07-2020.....04.00PM
5	Date of opening of Cover 1st.	20-07-2020.....2.00PM

No: PHE/M&P/1224-27
Dated: 08 -07-2020

DIP/K- 2810
Executive Engineer,
QC & PD (PHE) Jal Shakti
Dept. HMT Srinagar

TENDER REF. No. F.44 /CPC/Audit /DHS/2020-21

Dated, Agartala 01/07 / 2020

Tender (EOI) for engagement of CAG empanelled Chartered Accountant Firms (C.A. Firm) for Quarterly Internal Audit of Peripheral Units and NGOs under Tripura State AIDS Control Society for the financial year 2020-21

Disburse crop loans under waiver scheme immediately: HC to bank

'Don't insist on payment of interest on the loan amount'

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

In a welcome relief to farmers, the Aurangabad Bench of the Bombay High Court directed the Aurangabad District Central Cooperative Bank to disburse crop loans to eligible agriculturists under the loan waiver scheme immediately, without insisting on the payment of interest on the loan amount till the actual benefit is given to the agriculturists.

A Division Bench of S.V. Gangapurwala and R.G. Avachat was hearing a public interest litigation filed by RTI activist Kishore Ashokrao Tangade. Advocate Satish Talekar, appearing for Mr. Tangade, contended that despite the government order of January 17, 2020, directing the bank to not charge interest from October 1, 2019, till the actual benefit is given to those who are entitled to it under the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Shetkari Debt Waiver Scheme, 2019, the bank has not disbursed the loan amount to the eligible agriculturists.



Because of non-disbursement of the loan by the bank, many agriculturists are not in a position to sow seeds

SATISH TALEKAR
Advocate at Bombay High Court

culturists on the ground that interest from October 1, 2019, has not been paid.

Mr. Talekar said, "Fortunately, this year, the agriculturists benefited by the timely rains. Sowing season has commenced from the month of June. However, because of non-disbursement of the loan by the bank, many agriculturists are not in a position to sow the seeds."

He said loans have been

disbursed only to 49.62% of the agriculturists and that too to those who have paid the interest amount calculated from October 1, 2019. Such agriculturists have paid the interest amount by selling their gold ornaments and other articles. The government scheme, under order dated January 17, 2020, is not implemented by the bank in its true letter and spirit, Mr. Talekar said.

The lawyer representing the bank said considering the financial position of the bank, a conscious decision has been taken by the board, to not grant waiver of interest from October 1, 2019. He said the bank would lose the interest amount, if the loan is disbursed without recovering the amount of interest from October 1, 2019, and it will affect the financial condition of the bank.

However, the court said the bank was bound by the directions of the State and directed the bank to disburse the amount to eligible farmers without insisting on the payment of interest.

Height of Ganapati idols cannot exceed 4 feet: Maharashtra govt.

State asks mandals to consider postponing immersion of idols

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Saturday directed Ganesh mandals to restrict the height of idols to four feet during Ganesh Chaturthi this year. A notification issued by the Home Department said even idols installed at home cannot be taller than two feet.

The notification comes amid a spike in COVID-19 cases in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune. The 10-day Ganesh Chaturthi will begin from August 22. The notification asked people to install metal or marble idols at home. "If clay idols are installed, they should be preferably im-

mersed at home or in nearby artificial ponds," it said.

The government has also asked the mandals to consider immersing the idols during Maghi Ganesh Chaturthi in February or next year's Ganesh Chaturthi. There won't be any processions to mark the arrival and immersion of idols this year.

Prevent crowding

The notification mentioned that there should be no *aarti* at immersion venues, no crowds during daily *aarti* and noise pollution norms must be followed. "The need of the hour is to prevent crowding and ensure the health and safety of people," it said. Ganesh Mandals have

been asked to accept only voluntary donations and ensure that advertisements focus on spreading awareness and social messages. "Instead of cultural programmes, health camps, and blood donation drives should be organised. Awareness should be created about infections such as the novel coronavirus, malaria and dengue," it said.

Darshan facility should be provided online through Facebook or other media or through cable networks, the notification said. Pandals should have sanitisation and thermal screening facilities and organisers should ensure that devotees follow the hygiene protocol.

Goa tests inmates after jailor contracts COVID-19

161 samples return negative

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

The Goa government has started testing all inmates of the central jail at Colvalé for COVID-19, after a jailor tested positive for the virus, a health official has said.

State Health Secretary Nila Mohanan said testing of all inmates began on Friday. She said the exercise was launched as a precautionary measure.

"A couple of days back, we received information that one of the jailors has tested positive. After that we took samples of 42 others, including jailors, staff members and two-three jail inmates, who had come in contact with him. But all of them tested negative," Ms. Mohanan said on Friday.

"Health authorities then began large-scale testing at the jail," she said, adding, "a total of 161 samples have been tested so far and all of them were found negative."

Till Friday evening, a total of 221 samples were collected and the exercise would continue for the next couple of days.

No further lockdown
Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has ruled out the possibility of impos-

ing further lockdown in the State, which is grappling with rising COVID-19 cases.

Speaking to a TV channel on Friday, Mr. Sawant said the process of unlocking has started and priority should be given to resume economic activities.

"The lockdown was initially imposed to create awareness and educate people about COVID-19. That phase has passed now," Mr. Sawant said.

Plasma donation drive

On Saturday, the State government said it would launch a campaign to encourage recovered patients to donate their plasma for treatment of others.

State Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said the awareness campaign would start from Sunday. He said,

"We will be encouraging the recovered COVID-19 patients to come forward and donate their plasma. It will save lives of other people."

An apheresis machine, which is required for the plasma therapy, would be installed at the State-run Goa Medical College and Hospital by Monday. "We will do whatever is required to save lives of the people," Mr. Rane said.

CLASSIFIEDS

thehinduads.com

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindhi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

Advocate

Business

Defence

Doctor

Engineer

Finance/ Banking

Government/ Quasi-Govt.

IAS/ Allied Services

Information Technology

MBA / CA / ICWA

NRI

Cosmopolitan

Divorcee

Physically Challenged

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

TAMIL

TAMIL

TAMIL

COSMOPOLITAN

COSMOPOLITAN

COSMOPOLITAN

DOCTOR

TELUGU

HINDU BRIDE

TELUGU

MUDALIYAR (SUPREME Elite)

TELUGU

CHETTIAR AVITTAM

TELUGU

HINDU SC

TELUGU

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FROM PAGE ONE

BJP offering MLAs ₹25 cr. to topple govt.: Gehlot

BJP State president Mr. Poonia said the Chief Minister was trying to shift attention from an "intense infighting" in Congress by blaming the BJP for the political situation created by the ruling party.

"The Congress protected democracy for 70 years after Independence, but all of this changed after 2014 when the BJP came to power at the Centre," Mr Gehlot said.

The Congress, elected to power in December 2018, has 107 MLAs in the 200-member State Assembly. The ruling party has the support of 13 independent legislators and one Rashtriya Lok Dal, two CPI(M) and two Bharatiya Tribal party MLAs.

NIA detains smuggling case suspects



Police taking Sarith, an accused in gold smuggling case, to a special court in Kochi on July 9. ■ PTI

By some accounts, the NIA zeroed in on the accused when Ms. Suresh's daughter, a college student, switched on her mobile phone to call her friend in the capital. Investigators had earlier tapped this person for information on the whereabouts of Ms. Suresh.

Ms. Suresh, a former employee of the UAE consulate, had worked on a "request basis" for the mission. She came under suspicion after she allegedly pressured a Customs official to release a shipment addressed to the consulate expeditiously.

UGC to take action if States cancel exams

As *The Hindu* had then reported, the Commission said it would tell States which had already cancelled examinations to comply with the fresh directions.

However, in what is fast becoming a political battle, with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi calling for the cancellation of exams, several non-BJP ruled States which had already cancelled exams – Punjab, Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal – have written to the Centre saying they did not wish to conduct exams. On Monday, Delhi joined them as the first State to cancel exams after the UGC guidelines were issued, citing the fear of COVID-19 cases spreading.

Strengthening the idea that political sides are being taken on this issue, BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, which had cancelled its exams, took a U-turn after the UGC guidelines were issued, saying it would now conduct exams. Congress-ruled Rajasthan and BJP-ruled Haryana, which had both cancelled exams earlier, are yet to announce their course of action after the guidelines were issued.

"As per our guidelines, they are binding in nature. The original guidelines [on exams, issued in April] had flexibility, but guidelines are usually binding in nature," said UGC general secretary Rajnish Jain.

Mandatory guidelines He told *The Hindu* that so far, UGC has only received a representation from Punjab, and has replied asking them to reconsider as the guidelines must be mandatory adopted by States.

"For us, all universities are similar in terms of implementation of guidelines, wherever they are," added Prof. Jain. "We have given them different options on when and how to conduct the exams, based on their COVID situation. They are free to choose within those limits."

CM YK

Karnataka tally up by a record 2,798 cases

In another high, State records 70 fatalities; 1,813 test positive, 17 die in A.P.; Kerala witnesses steady local transmission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Local transmission accounted for more cases than imported ones again in Kerala, as it recorded 488 fresh COVID-19 cases on Saturday.

Imported cases stood at 243, while cases of local transmission were 245. With the death of a 79-year-old reported from Ernakulam, the State's toll came to 29. There were 143 recoveries, and active cases were 3,442.

Alappuzha with 87 cases, Thiruvananthapuram (69), Pathanamthitta (54) and Malappuram (51) were at the top of fresh cases reported.

Three health care workers, four Defence Security Corps in Kannur, two ITBP personnel and two BSF jawans were among those who contracted the disease through local transmission.

A junior sub-inspector deputed for surveillance in the COVID-19 hit coastal region of Poothura contracted the infection. With this, COVID-19 cases among police in

Daily challenge

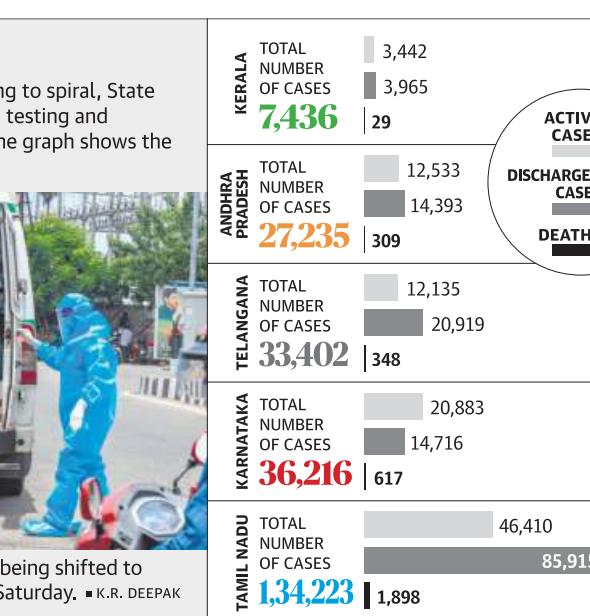
With COVID-19 cases continuing to spiral, State governments have stepped up testing and strengthened care facilities. The graph shows the spread in the southern States



To safety: A COVID-19 patient being shifted to hospital in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

Thiruvananthapuram rose to five. Earlier, three personnel of the Armed Reserve camp and a civil police officer of Pettah police station were diagnosed with the disease.

The Poothura policeman was among the many policemen tested randomly.



Deputy Commissioner of Police (Law and Order, Traffic) Divya V. Gopinath said he was hospitalised as soon as his test sample returned positive. Some 12 officers who came in close proximity with the infected person were quarantined.

Karnataka on Saturday reported the biggest single-day spurt of 2,798 cases and a record 70 fatalities, taking the total number of infections in the state to 36,216, the health department said. Out of 1,533 fresh cases, a whopping 1,533 were from Bengaluru

urban. As of July 11, cumulatively 36,216 COVID-19 cases had been confirmed.

There were 613 deaths and 14,716 discharges, the health department said, adding that out of 20,883 active cases, 20,379 patients were in isolation at designated hospitals and stable, and 504 in ICUs.

Out of 70 deaths, 23 were from Bengaluru urban, eight from Mysuru, five from Dakshina Kannada, among others.

Out of 2,798 new cases, contacts of the majority were still in the process of being traced. Among the districts, on new cases, Bengaluru urban accounted for 1,533, followed by Dakshina Kannada 186, Udupi 90, Mysuru 83, Tumakuru 78, Dharwad 77 and Yadgir 74. A total of 7.99 lakh samples were tested so far, 20,587 just on Saturday.

Telangana recorded total cases of 33,402, of which active cases were 12,135 and the total deaths 38. Andhra Pradesh had another single-day high of

COVID-19 cases and deaths. The State witnessed 17 more deaths and detected 1,813 fresh cases on Saturday.

The tally rose to 27,235 and the death toll to 309. Of the total, 24,422 were local cases and 2,813 including 2,385 of other-State individuals and 428 of foreign returnees were imported, the Health department said.

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Andhra Pradesh had another single-day high of

IN BRIEF



Relocate LG Polymers plant, says committee

VISAKHAPATNAM

The High Power Committee that probed the styrene monomer vapour leak from the LG Polymers' plant in Visakhapatnam, that killed 12 and hospitalised over 580 persons on May 7, in its report has recommended the shifting of the factory "away from human habitations". The report comes as a shot in the arm for many groups who have been demanding the same, on the ground that the chemical factory is listed under category-A of hazardous industries.

Total lockdown for 7 days in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

In the wake of a spike in COVID-19 cases over the last two weeks, the government decided to reimpose total lockdown in Bengaluru Urban and Bengaluru Rural districts for seven days from 8 p.m. on July 14 till 5 a.m. on July 22. All the guidelines announced during the previous lockdowns will be in force during this period. Shops and establishments delivering essential items such as medicines, vegetables, fruits and milk would remain open during the period.

Red sanders worth ₹1 cr. seized in Seshachalam

CHITTOR

A combing party of the Andhra Pradesh Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force on Saturday seized 1.50 tonnes of red sanders logs in Seshachalam hills, 25 km from Tirupati. The logs were left behind by around 25 smuggling operatives from Tamil Nadu who fled after pelting stones at the team.

The Hyderabad Commissioner of Police stated that the Commissioners' Task Force had commenced action and that two cases had already been booked.

Cong., BJP step up protest against Kerala govt.

Probe gold smugglers' connections in CMO: Chennithala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Anti-government agitators owing allegiance to the Congress and the BJP ignored physical distancing rules at separate demonstrations across Kerala to highlight the "proximity" of the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) with persons wanted by the law on the charges of gold smuggling and anti-national activity.

The police used water cannon and canes to disperse BJYM protesters at Adoor in Pathanamthitta district. The police also fired water cannons to disperse a protest organised by the Kerala Student Union (KSU) in Kollam demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. A march taken out by the KSU district com-



Police use water cannon to disperse protesters seeking action in the gold smuggling case in Kozhikode on Friday. ■ PTI

mittee resulted in a minor clash in front of the Collectorate.

In Kochi, the Youth Congress organised a protest while complying with the physical distancing norms.

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala asked the police to take cognisance

of the attempt to smuggle gold, saying the attempt had acquired a political dimension after investigations revealed that Swapna Suresh, a "respondent" in the case, was a close confidante of M. Sivasankar, who was later removed as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister.

Andhra turns to Facebook, IIT-T

'Mapping, analysis of immense help'

APPAJI REDDEM
VIJAYAWADA

Against the backdrop of a spike in COVID-19 positive cases and casualties, the Andhra Pradesh government has roped in social media giant Facebook and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Tirupati for better management of the pandemic – the mapping and analysis of people moving in public places has been a big help for the government machinery in its containment efforts.

The State has a total of 27,235 positive cases, including 1,813 reported on Saturday. While 14,393 people have been discharged, 12,533 are active.

While Facebook has provided anonymised and aggregated data on population density, movement and so-

cial engagement, IIT-Tirupati has analysed the data to arrive at figures on how people are moving around hotspots, or red zones, during days and nights. Using the ward-level coordinates from the government, the information is further analysed and feedback given to the government.

"Technical reports from Facebook are very helpful as they give real-time view of important correlates of disease transmission and mobility. IIT-Tirupati is supporting us with the analysis from Facebook datasets," Pratap Bhimireddy, Special Representative, Investment Promotion & Infrastructure Development, told *The Hindu*.

It was decided at the meeting to advise all the hospitals treating COVID-19 patients to go in for cryogenic liquid oxygen tanks/vessels to avoid bottlenecks due to usage of cylinders, the release said.

Traders holding stock of oxygen cylinders shall possess a licence from competent authorities, failing which they will also be prosecuted under the Explosives Act, it said.

The Hyderabad Commissioner of Police stated that the Commissioners' Task Force had commenced action and that two cases had already been booked.

Telangana reviews its oxygen supply

Kin of COVID-19 patient carry body in autorickshaw

Teams will inspect hospitals and dealers, check black marketing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has decided to form joint teams of officials to carry out inspections, among other measures, to check black marketing of oxygen cylinders.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar held a meeting with officials, including the police, on Friday, to review the supply of oxygen to hospitals.

It was decided in the meeting to form joint teams and take other

measures, following complaints of black marketing of oxygen cylinders leading to a possible shortage in supply to hospitals, an official press release said.

The joint teams would comprise officials from the Drug Control Administration, Task Force of Hyderabad City Police, Director of Public Health, and Deputy Chief Controller of Explosives.

The teams will inspect hospitals and dealers to assess whether sale and utilisation

of oxygen cylinders were in conformity with the guidelines, and initiate prosecution in case of any violations.

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The Hyderabad Commissioner of Police stated that the Commissioners' Task Force had commenced action and that two cases had already been booked.

Padmanabhaswamy temple case ruling tomorrow

SC to decide who will run the temple, manage assets

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to pronounce its judgment on Monday in the famed Padmanabha Swamy temple case, primarily who should play a dominant role in running the temple and managing its considerable assets – the State government or the erstwhile royal Travancore family. The judgment by a Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Indu Malhotra will answer major questions in the case: whether the temple is a "public"

entity; should a devaswom board be formed like in Tirupathi, Guruvayur and Sabarimala; what is the ideal scheme to be formulated by the court in its parents patriae jurisdiction to protect the assets of the deity, which in law is a perpetual minor; what should be the role of the erstwhile royals in future administration of the temple, the deity being a perpetual minor; and should the erstwhile royals be allowed to continue to manage or administer the other assets and properties belonging to the temple through their private trusts.

Over the years, different Benches of the Supreme Court had played a part in taking an inventory of the

treasures stored in the temple vaults, appointed *amicus curiae* to report on the happenings of the temple and even had former Comptroller and Auditor General Vinod Rai audit the valuables. One of the major debates

was the opening of Kallara (vault) B.

Two independent reports from former *amicus curiae* and senior advocate Gopal Subramanium, who bowed out of the case later, and Mr. Rai had pointed to a large

number of financial discrepancies, major system deficiencies as regards maintenance of temple accounts, and discrepancies in the use of precious metals, among other things.

The judgment is on petitions challenging a 2011 decision of the Kerala High Court. The High Court had essentially held that, upon the death of the last ruler of the erstwhile State of Travancore on July 20, 1991, the petitioner, His Highness Sri Marthanda Varma, did not step into the shoes of the ruler and cannot claim management rights over the temple under the provisions of the Travancore Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act, 1950.

M BM-BME

entity; should a devaswom board be formed like in Tirupathi, Guruvayur and Sabarimala; what is the ideal scheme to be formulated by the court in its parents patriae jurisdiction to protect the assets of the deity, which in law is a perpetual minor; what should be the role of the erstwhile royals in future administration of the temple, the deity being a perpetual minor; and should the erstwhile royals be allowed to continue to manage or administer the other

INTERVIEW | SHIVSHANKAR MENON

'We are still in a crisis and need a full reset of India-China relations'

The disengagement terms are dangerous, as they suggest that we are withdrawing from territory which we have controlled consistently, says former NSA

SUHASINI HAIDAR

India and China must fully reset ties, says former National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon, cautioning that any move to allow buffer zones, mutual pull-outs and suspending patrols at the LAC sends out the wrong message that both sides are equally responsible for the aggression.

What do you think will be the lasting impact of the stand-off at the LAC?

Well, I think there is no question that after this, India-China relations will be reset, as there is no going back on the situation before [the Ladakh stand-off]. What China did this time – pressing forward on multiple points along the LAC, then changing the definition of LAC claims, the deaths for the first time since 1975 [in the June 15 Galwan clash] – represents a significant change in Chinese behaviour. This

actually calls into question the whole structure of agreements and confidence building measures that were put in place since 1988, and with the 1993 agreement, which had kept the peace on the border for some time. But this is still a crisis. I don't see this as having been solved yet or being behind us. And I am sure that India-China relations will have to be reset after this.

What do you make of some of the terms of disengagement on both sides, the creation of buffer

zones, suspending patrols on the LAC, etc.?

These [terms] are dangerous, as they suggest that we are withdrawing from territory which we have controlled consistently, and that we were part of the problem to start with. China stopped us from doing our normal patrols in these areas, which we have done for years. If we are withdrawing from territory that we have controlled, it seems to me that we are setting a dangerous pattern.



China learned that if Indian government gets a propaganda victory, they could actually make gains

diplomatic failure not to call them out for changing the status quo, something that China committed to maintain both with Bhutan and with us. So, frankly, [China] learned the lesson that as long as the Indian [government] could walk away with a propaganda victory, they could actually make gains

plomatic failure not to call them out for changing the status quo, something that China committed to maintain both with Bhutan and with us. So, frankly, [China] learned the lesson that as long as the Indian [government] could walk away with a propaganda victory, they could actually make gains

and change the outcomes on the ground in their favour. What we are seeing is more of the same strategy that China has followed in the South China Sea where she changes facts on the ground, presents you with a *fait accompli*, takes two steps forward and then negotiates one step back. And if we are agreeing to a similar kind of arrangement, no matter how temporary you say it is... all these temporary arrangements tend to become relatively permanent.

So are you saying that status quo ante is something that has to be enforced soon?

■ What we need to do is to insist that China implement what she has committed to implement under the agreements, what she says she is

committed to do, which is to respect the LAC and maintain the status quo.

There is a suggestion now that India could militarise the Quad or make the Indo-Pacific a strategic concept. Do you think that is the way for India to counter China?

■ Well, that is not the entire solution because India-U.S. congruence actually applies to the maritime domain. Our problem with China right now is on land... it is a continental problem and that problem is not going to be solved by the U.S. That is something we have to solve by our own self-strengthening.

You spoke of the congruence with Washington, and yet, the one message that India sent

out during this time, was the visit by the Defence Minister to Moscow...

■ It has never been binary for us, either the U.S. or Russia or even U.S. or China. We have worked with both, and we will continue to work with both. Russia is still the source of our major military platforms. I do think that one consequence of what we have seen happening in Ladakh and the whole reset of India-China relations, will be stronger India-Russia relations as well.

What do you see as the diplomatic roadmap ahead?

■ You know, right now we are in the middle of the crisis. So everything is possible. We could go the 1986-88 way after Sumedhong Chu when

the Chinese came in and sat on territory on our side in eastern sector. And we ended up with the Rajiv Gandhi visit, and the new understanding, the *modus vivendi* of 1988, which kept the peace for several years, and enabled us both to develop and grow. Or we could go the 1959-62 way, which is a steady downward spiral in the relationship where public opinion and actions drive the two sides into conflict, which is the worst option. Thirdly, we could go into a sort of "no-war, no-peace", an indeterminate space where relations are much more adversarial. My expectation is of a sort of muddling through for the time being, but that always contains the risk of things getting worse.

(Read the full interview at <https://bit.ly/NSAMenon>)

Series of pleas in SC seek probe into Dubey's death

Police version raises questions: NGO

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A series of petitions were filed in the Supreme Court (SC) on Saturday seeking an independent probe into the police encounter of Vikas Dubey and his associates on Friday.

One of the petitions, filed by Anoop Prakash Awasthi, begins by asking "shall we close our honourable courts, prosecution agencies and dismantle the system of administration of criminal justice as the trigger-happy cops in Uttar Pradesh do not need them and believe only upon their fire power when taking any adversary or outlaw in their custody?" Mr. Awasthi asked the court to appoint a central agency like the NIA or



the CBI to probe the "police-criminal-politician nexus" involved in the deaths of the eight police officers and the encounter killings of Dubey and his henchmen.

A separate plea was also filed by NGO, People's Union for Civil Liberties, saying the police version of the encounter "raises many serious questions". It had previously moved the court for a probe into U.P. police encounters between January 2017 and March 2018.

2 armed infiltrators killed along LoC in Kupwara

Pakistan is pushing militants to instigate people, says GOC

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

The Army on Saturday killed two armed infiltrators along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara and warned that Pakistan was "trying hard to push more and more militants into the Valley in an attempt to instigate people".

"Two heavily armed militants were killed in Nowgam sector [in Kupwara], owing to the swift and appropriate response by our alert troops on the ground. These militants had used the route through Pakistan Army posts, which clearly indicates that Pakistan is pushing militants into India," Major General Virender Vats, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's Baramulla-based 19 Infantry Division, told presspersons during an interaction.

The infiltrators, he said, were trying to cut the anti-infiltration fence and were dressed in combat fatigues.

"Two AK-47 rifles, 350



Heavy threat: Arms and ammunition recovered from the site after the two militants were killed on Saturday. ■PTI

rounds and some electronic switches were spotted at the site. In addition to the food and medicines, around ₹1.5 lakh in Indian and Pakistani currency were also recovered. A search operation is still underway to sanitise the area," Major General Vats said.

The Army did not rule out the possibility of the militants being on a suicide attack mission in the Valley. The counter-infiltration grid in Jammu and Kashmir was "spotting similar infiltration attempts in the Rajouri and Kupwara sectors in the re-

cent past," the Army officer added.

"Pakistan is trying hard to push more and more militants into the Valley, in an attempt to instigate the people, which they have failed to do for long now. Launchpads across the LoC are fully occupied by militants and around 250 to 300 militants are ready to infiltrate," the GOC said.

Unlike south Kashmir, the GOC said, militancy and their narratives were largely "discarded by the people and have not got any sort of traction in north Kashmir".

Akhil Gogoi tests positive for COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Jailed peasant leader and anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) activist Akhil Gogoi tested COVID-19 positive as the total lockdown in Guwahati was extended by a week on Saturday.

Mr. Gogoi has been in captivity since his arrest on December 12, 2019, for allegedly instigating violence during the anti-CAA protests that led to the death of at least six people. Dhaijya Konwar and Bitu Sonowal, two members of his group Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, also in jail for more than 200 days, had tested positive on July 8.

"His antigen tests a few days ago came out negative. A third test today [Saturday] said he is positive," Inspector-General, Prisons, Dasarath Das said.

Supporters of Mr. Gogoi have been campaigning for his release from the Guwahati Central Jail since July 9. Mr. Das said 55 of some 1,200 prisoners in the jail had tested positive so far.

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ADMISSION TO MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMME - 2020

- This is in continuation of the Advertisement dated 15th February, 2020, for admission to the Master's Degree Programmes, 2020.
- The last date for applying through email for admissions has been extended upto Saturday, 25th July, 2020.
- Please refer to the website of the School for further details.
- The candidates, who had already applied, need not apply again. However, they may refer to the website for further details regarding additional documents to be uploaded, Selection Criteria, etc.

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All the tenders* issued by Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of BCCL www.bclcweb.in, Coal India Limited (CIL) e-procurement portal <https://coaldilatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://reproc.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>.

*This is applicable to all Open (Domestic / Global) Tenders issued through e-procurement portal of CIL.

उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार
सूचना एवं जनसंबोधित विभाग
(संस्कृतीय विभाग)- 03-2020
राजनामः दिनांक: 10 जुलाई, 2020
शुद्धि- पत्र

कृपया इस कार्यालय के पत्र संख्या: 15/मु-एवज से. (सोनमी)-03/2020, दिनांक 03 जुलाई 2020 द्वारा उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार के प्रवार-प्रसार तथा बांटिंग किए जाने से संबंधित पौर असाधुओं के चयन हेतु आवाजित ई-निविदा को अपराह्नीय कारणों से दिनांक 20 जुलाई 2020 अपराह्न 12.00 बजे तक विस्तारित किया जाता है, जो उसी दिन साथ 04.00 बजे निविदा समिति के समक्ष निविदाता की उपस्थिति/उपस्थिति में खोली जाएगी। ई-निविदा से संबंधित समस्त नियम एवं शर्त पूर्वक रहेंगी।

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PROJECT PHED JODHPUR
Telephone: 0291-2651700 email: rj_cejod@nic.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO.3/2020-2021

Online tenders are hereby invited on behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from Contractors enlisted in 'AA' Class of Rajasthan and Contractors enlisted with CPWD/ Posts, Telecom, Railway, MES, other state Govt. / Central Government undertaking/ organizations equivalent to 'AA' class of Rajasthan provided they meet out prescribed eligibility criteria, after giving prescribed earnest money. Detail of this tender notification and pre-qualification criteria can also be seen in NIT exhibited on website <http://eproc.rj.nic.in> and www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. Tenders are to be submitted online in the format of website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> and will be opened online in the office of the Chief Engineer Project, PHED, Jodhpur.

S. N.	Name of Work	Tender Value (in Rs.)	1. Earnest Money Deposit.	Period of Contract	Last Date and Time of submission	Date of Opening of Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Upgradation of 5 MLD tannery Common Effluent Treatment plant	Lump sum	1. Rs. 24,67 lacs 2. Rs. 5900/- 3. Rs. 11200/- including GST	9 months	29.07.2020 4:00 PM	30.07.2020 2:00 PM	

For detailed terms and conditions please visit website www.eproc.punjab.gov.in

ED seeks info on cases against Dubey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sought from the Uttar Pradesh police details of the cases against Vikas Dubey, who was gunned down on Friday, to initiate a money laundering probe.

The agency has also asked for details of the gangster's properties, who was allegedly involved in the killing of eight police personnel in the intervening night of July 2 and July 3. It is learnt that over 60 criminal cases, including eight involving 15 murders, were filed against Dubey in the past three decades. Among them, seven pertained to attempted murders, and two were under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Raipur
Tatibandh, G.E. Road, Raipur, C.G. - 492099
Admin/Rec./Contract/ Faculty /2020/AIIMS.RPR/2006 Dated: 12.07.2020

RECRUITMENT NOTICE

AIIMS, Raipur invites Applications from Indian nationals for the post of Assistant Professor in the department of Burns & Plastic Surgery, Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, ENT, Trauma & Emergency (Emergency Medicine), Trauma & Emergency (General Surgery), Radio Diagnosis, Microbiology and Neurology on contractual basis for a period of 11 (eleven) months in AIIMS, Raipur.

For eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and prescribed application format please visit the website www.aiimsraipur.edu.in. Last date of receipt of application is 03.08.2020.

All the notifications, amendments, corrigendum etc. related to this advertisement, if any, will be published only in the website of AIIMS, Raipur. For updates please visit the website regularly.

Director
AIIMS, Raipur

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TENDER INVITING NOTICE

The E-Tender is invited "For SUPPLY OF TABLETS for JVVN" against TN-90. UBN- VVN2021GLOB00136. All the details regarding tender are available on website <http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/content/raj/energy/tender/jaipur-vidyut-vitrani-nigam-ltd-en/home.htm#>, www.sppr.rajasthan.gov.in and <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. In future, corrigendum/ extension, if any, shall be published only on above websites.

JPR No 2567(2020)
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NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
eproc.punjab.gov.in

Tender Ref: PETS/CETP/Upgradation/2020-21/02

The Administrative officer, Punjab Effluent Treatment Society for Tanneries, 58-Leather Complex, Kapurthala Road, Jalandhar on behalf of Deputy Commissioner, Jalandhar-cum-Chairman, Interim Committee, Punjab Effluent Treatment Society for Tanneries invites tenders in Electronic Tendering System for the upgradation of 5 MLD capacity tannery Common Effluent Treatment Plant on the basis of the costs estimated approved by Govt. of India Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (Leather Section), Udyog Bhawan, New Delhi as per eligibility criteria mentioned in DINIT. The bid document is available online, bids are to be submitted online through e-procurement portal <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. Bids submitted manually will not be accepted.

S. N.	Name of Work	Tender Value (in Rs.)	1. Earnest Money Deposit. 2. Processing Fees 3. Tender Form (In Rupees)	Period of Contract	Last Date and Time of submission	Date of Opening of Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Upgradation of 5 MLD tannery Common Effluent Treatment plant	Lump sum	1. Rs. 24,67 lacs 2. Rs. 5900/- 3. Rs. 11200/- including GST	9 months	29.07.2020 4:00 PM		

Six NSCN (IM) members killed in Arunachal

Assam Rifles trooper injured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A joint team of the Assam Rifles and the police on Saturday gunned down six members of the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (IM), in an encounter in Arunachal Pradesh.

Officials said an Assam Rifles trooper was injured in the gunfire in Longding district bordering Nagaland.

Most factions of the NSCN are active in Longding, Changlang and Tirap districts of Arunachal Pradesh, where ceasefire agreements do not apply.

This is said to be the biggest operation against the extremists in recent times.

Arunachal Pradesh Director General of Police R.P. Upadhyaya said the joint team followed specific inputs that an "armed gang" of NSCN members was trying to carry out kidnappings for extortion and could attack the security forces.

"The place where the incident happened is a 40-minute trek from nearest village Nginu, which is about a two-hour journey from district headquarters Longding," he said.

He added that the extremists fired about 250 rounds.



Arms recovered after the encounter in Arunachal Pradesh's Khonsa area.

"We have recovered six firearms, including four AK-47 rifles, two grenades, an improvised explosive device and 500 rounds of unused ammunition. Senior police and Assam Rifles officers are at the spot where the operation is still on," Mr. Upadhyaya said.

The NSCN (IM), the largest extremist group in the northeast, has been engaged in peace negotiations with the Centre since 1997. The territorial limit of the ceasefire is within Nagaland, and the outfit and other factions are active in adjoining States in the region.

Some top NSCN (IM) leaders, reportedly frustrated with the "never-ending" peace process, are learnt to have gone underground once again and are negotiating with Chinese agencies for a possible return to insurgency.

No room for complacency in COVID-19 fight: PM

'Priority given to monitoring and containment'

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reiterated the need to observe personal hygiene and physical distancing in public places. He was speaking after attending a COVID-19 review meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and senior government officials.

The Prime Minister also appreciated the manner in which the pandemic had been "contained" in Delhi.

Mr. Modi said that priority was being given to "close monitoring and guiding the containment work in regions where the infection rate is high".

Stating that there was no room for complacency in this regard, he said that awareness of COVID-19 should be disseminated widely and that there should be a continuous emphasis on preventing the spread of the infection.

He also appreciated the efforts of the Centre and State and local authorities in containing the pandemic in Delhi, and directed that a similar approach be adopted by the governments of the neighbouring States for con-

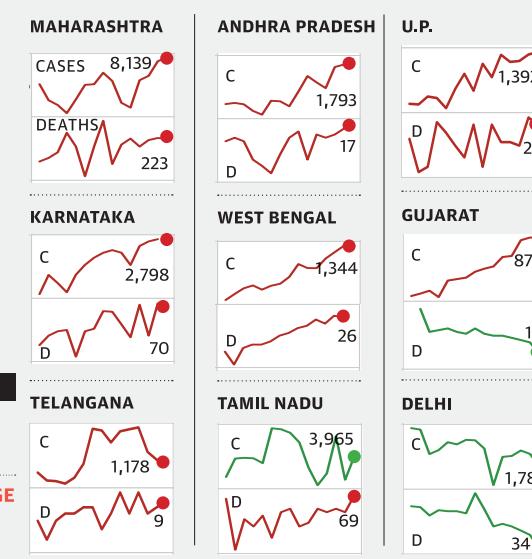
Viral tracker

With 27,175 new COVID-19 cases and 540 deaths recorded on Saturday, the cumulative total rose to 8,49,788 cases and 22,683 deaths. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. States are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising (red), dropping (green), or flatlining (yellow).

CASES
27,175
7 DAY-CHANGE
+13.4%

DEATHS
540
7 DAY-CHANGE
+27.1%

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



tainment in the entire National Capital Region. India on Saturday recorded the recovery and discharge of a total of 5,15,385 COVID-19 patients so far.

"There are 2,83,407 active cases and all are under medical supervision either at the Central and State government hospitals for severe cases, and in home isolation for pre-symptomatic patients and those showing moderate symptoms," said the Ministry. It noted that the recent policy changes, including allowing all registered medical practitioners to recommend testing for COVID-19 and the introduction of Rapid Antigen Point

2,82,511 samples were tested on Friday and currently, India's tests per million

of Care testing along with RT-PCR (Real Time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction,) have substantially bolstered monitoring.

"So far, 1,13,07,002 samples have been tested through the collective public and private labs under Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) diagnostic network of 1,180 labs in the country. While those in the public sector have increased to 841 labs, the number of private labs has also been strengthened to a total of 339," said ICMR.

2,82,511 samples were tested on Friday and currently, India's tests per million

(TPM) figure stands at 8,193.

"The States as well as the medical college hospitals designated as centres of excellence were reminded by ICMR and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) that indiscriminate use of 'investigational therapies' may cause more harm than good," noted the Health Ministry. It added that the ICMR had strongly recommended that the focus of COVID-19 clinical management

should remain on oxygen therapy (including high flow nasal oxygen), steroids, appropriate and timely administration of anti-coagulants and supportive care.

Psoriasis drug gets DCGI nod for emergency use

Trials done in Mumbai and New Delhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), has cleared Itolizumab, a drug used to treat severe chronic plaque psoriasis, for restricted emergency use in COVID-19 care.

The DCGI's approval for Itolizumab is for emergency use only in the treatment of cytokine release syndrome (CRS) in moderate to severe ARDS (acute respiratory distress syndrome) patients due to COVID-19, biopharmaceuticals firm Biocion said.

The company said Itolizumab will be manufactured and formulated as an intravenous injection at the bio-manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.

Itolizumab is the first novel biologic therapy to be approved anywhere in the world for treating patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 complications. The DCGI nod for the repurposed drug is based on results from the successful conclusion of a randomised, controlled clinical trial at multiple hospitals in Mumbai and New Delhi.

The decision comes as



Pharma companies are repurposing existing drugs for treatment of COVID-19.

the Health Ministry said that available evidence for remdesivir suggests that it may decrease the time for clinical improvement when used in moderate to severe cases and has no benefits in terms of reduced mortality.

Remdesivir is to be used with extreme caution due to its potential for serious adverse effects including liver and kidney injury," the Ministry said.

It added that studies on another drug, Tocilizumab, have not shown any benefits in mortality reduction. "Rampant use is to be discouraged since the effect of the drug is directed at the 'cytokine storm,'" the Ministry added.

Varavara Rao needs medical help: family

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Varavara Rao, 81-year-old poet incarcerated at the Taloja jail, called his family members after eight days on Saturday, but they said his speech was incoherent and he needed urgent medical help.

His daughter Pavana told *The Hindu*, "He had fallen on July 2 and was talking normally then. But today he was incoherent."

He was hallucinating and his voice dropped. He then gave the phone to Vernon Gonsalves, 61, another accused in the Bhima Koregaon violence lodged with him]. Vernon has been taking care of him at the hospital ward in the jail," she said.

"He is stable physically but he needs help neurologically. He is not receiving any treatment inside jail. He has been sick since he was discharged from J.J. Hospital on June 1," she said.

On June 6, he had written a five-page letter to his family telling them that he was fine and eating well.

Mr. Rao's appeal against rejecting his bail is slated to be heard by the Bombay High Court on July 17.

Cong. MPs back Rahul as party chief

Modi government has 'failed', says ex-party president

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI



Why is the PM so scared of disclosing the names of those who donated money to him for PM-CARES?

RAHUL GANDHI
Congress leader

Lok Sabha members of the Congress, at a virtual meeting with party president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday, pitched for Rahul Gandhi to take over as "full time" Congress president once again.

The leadership issue assumes significance as Ms. Gandhi will be completing a year as the party's interim president on August 10, and the Congress Working Committee (CWC) may have to give her an extension.

Mr. Gandhi is also learnt to have told his colleagues that the party should more forcefully raise people-centric issues as the common people have been most affected by the lockdown.

He cited India-China border clashes and India's rise to the third spot in terms of COVID-19 cases as "examples of failures".

While the former Congress chief accused the Modi government of "misleading" and being "untruthful" with regard to the situation at the Ladakh border, his Lok Sabha

MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) funds, and the possibility of holding the monsoon session of Parliament.

Deliberate delay' Starting the proceedings, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said his impression was "that the government would delay the monsoon session as much as possible and may even utilise the provision of having a six-month interval between two sessions to avoid unsavoury questions".

With 10-11 ordinances passed by the Centre during the pandemic, Mr. Chowdhury asked his colleagues "to keep their powder dry" to corner the government whenever Parliament reconvened. "In her remarks, Sonia ji also expressed the view that it may be September by the time the Parliament meets," said a Congress MP.

The Congress's Lok Sabha leader is also learnt to have narrated his experience at the Public Accounts Committee on Friday, when Bharatiya Janata Party members objected to his proposal to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic "as that would have also led to a discussion on the PM-CARES Fund".

"Why is the PM so scared of disclosing the names of those who donated money to him for PM-CARES?" asked Sanjay Gandhi.

"The whole Congress Party Young Old everyone stands behind you and are ready to make whatever sacrifice you demand. So Rahul ji please LEAD!"

The stage for such a demand seems to have been set by senior party leader Digvijaya Singh who, just before the meeting, tweeted: "This is the crux of the matter and this is the challenge before Sonia ji Rahul ji and Priyanka ji. I am certain they would do it. The whole Congress Party Young Old everyone stands behind you and are ready to make whatever sacrifice you demand. So Rahul ji please LEAD!"

"Since March-end, I am yet to receive a single order as social functions have come to a halt due to lockdown. My earnings are almost nil. After the surgery in 2016, my follow-up treatment such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy have been going on in Cuttack. I have already skipped my treatment scheduled for the first week of July. I don't know if I will survive this,"

COVID-19 compounds misery of Bargarh's cancer patients

They are deprived of medicines, consultations due to curbs

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Battling with cancer is a struggle for its victims and the COVID-19 pandemic has tilted the scale further, making it far tougher to deal with it.

Perhaps nobody understands it better than Pratap Dash, a cancer survivor, in Odisha's Bargarh district. Diagnosed with oral cancer in 2016, he was operated upon at the Tata Memorial Hospital in Mumbai. Since then Mr. Dash has had to spend much of his earnings from renting out marques on his treatment. However, the expense has become almost impossible for him after the pandemic-induced lockdown.

"Since March-end, I am yet to receive a single order as social functions have come to a halt due to lockdown. My earnings are almost nil. After the surgery in 2016, my follow-up treatment such as chemotherapy and radiation therapy have been going on in Cuttack. I have already skipped my treatment scheduled for the first week of July. I don't know if I will survive this,"

Said to be the rice bowl of

Odisha, Bargarh has seen a growing cancer cluster probably due to the overuse of pesticides and fertilizers for the paddy crop, though there has been no focused study as yet.

Left alone

While Mr. Dash is worried about arranging funds for his cancer treatment, Prasanna Mishra, a veteran journalist of Bargarh district, is desperate for consultation about his daily medication for leukaemia.

His desperate calls to Tata Memorial Hospital have gone unanswered and two top government cancer care institutes in Odisha are affected by COVID-19 infection and have shut down outpatient departments (OPDs).

The OPDs of Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer, Cuttack, and AIIMS-Bhubaneswar shut down recently after detection of 150 COVID cases.

"The tablet, which is a lifeline for me, is not available. The cost of the medicine here is thrice the price as in Mumbai. But it is difficult for me to get the drug," Mr. Mishra said.

On a new innings, after de-addiction

Five youth from Arunachal have transformed their lives with the help of police



Fresh start: Some of the participants of Arunachal Pradesh's de-addiction programme. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This would not have been out of the ordinary in the frontier State had the Class 11 dropout not held his employment letter soon after completing a drug de-addiction camp. Four others from the camp got the contractual job too, but he was the only one to enrol for classes in distance learning mode.

"I am living a dream now. I intend to not drift back into the nightmare that took some years out of my life," says the 20-year-old from Meka village near Roing, headquarters of the Lower Dibang Valley district.

Omin began snorting heroin and cannabis while studying in a higher secondary school at Boleng close to his

village. He dropped out in 2018 to peddle drugs for sustaining his addiction and ran into the Roing-based Anti-Drug Squad (ADS) a year later.

Supportive approach Fortunately for him, this wasn't a squad that believed only in using the baton or putting addicts and peddlers behind bars.

The Crime Unit of ADS,

under nodal officer S.S. Jha, arrested 69 drug dealers since its formation in July 2017. But the fight against addiction in a State notorious for growing cannabis and opium began to yield results after the squad added the rehabilitation unit in October 2019 with inspector R.K. Mishra as its nodal officer.

The rehabilitation pro-

gramme entailed opening a counselling centre atop the Roing police station building. Omin was among the first batch of 27 boys at the centre along with Mingkeng

since its formation in July 2017. But the fight against addiction in a State notorious for growing cannabis and opium began to yield results after the squad added the rehabilitation unit in October 2019 with inspector R.K. Mishra as its nodal officer.

The rehabilitation pro-

Be politically neutral, Dhankhar tells officials

Bengal Governor makes Twitter plea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday urged the bureaucracy in the State to maintain political neutrality, accountability and transparency, and commit themselves to upholding the supremacy of the Constitution.

Mr. Dhankhar took to social media saying that IAS and IPS officials must observe All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968.

"IAS and IPS @MamataOfficial must observe All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968 that mandate: political neutrality; accountability and transparency; commit himself to and uphold the supremacy of the Constitution and democratic values; refrain from doing anything which is or may be contrary to any law, rules, regulations and established practices..."

He remarks come at a time when his summonses to officials have not generated the desired response.

Without referring to anyone, he warned that such infraction would attract due accountability.

Mr. Dhankhar said a bureaucrat should maintain "discipline in the discharge of his duties and be liable to implement the lawful orders duly communicated to him

Hong Kong Opposition holds primary vote

The poll was held to choose candidates for legislative elections; this came despite warning from officials

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

HONG KONG

Pro-democracy parties in Hong Kong held primary polls on Saturday to choose candidates for upcoming legislative elections despite warnings from government officials that it may be in breach of a new security law imposed by China.

Thousands queued in the intense summer heat at unofficial polling stations across the city hours after police raided an opinion pollster helping to conduct the vote. "The more Hong Kong people were suppressed, the firmer Hong Kong people stand," democracy campaigner Benny Tai, a legal scholar and co-organiser of the primary, said as voting got under way at 250 polling stations.

1,37,000 cast votes

As of 6 p.m. on Saturday, more than 1,37,000 people had cast their votes, organisers said. "Under the new national security law, no one knows how many pro-democracy candidates would



Yes we can: Opposition members pose while campaigning during a primary election in Hong Kong on Saturday. ■ AFP

be allowed to run in the upcoming LegCo election. They could possibly be disqualified by the government under the new law," said a 34-year-old voter who gave her surname as Poon near a polling station in Tseung Kwan O district. "I treasure every chance we still have to vote for the candidate I like and I hope Hong Kong people can show the government that we won't bend our

knees through the poll," she added.

Chinese legislation

On Thursday, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Minister Erick Tsang warned that those "organising, planning and participating" in the primary might commit offences of succession, subversion and colluding with foreign forces, according to interviews given to a select

few pro-Beijing newspapers.

Beijing imposed the new law on Hong Kong last week targeting acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and foreign collusion with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, in response to democracy protests that erupted last year.

The law is the most radical change in Hong Kong's freedoms and autonomy since Britain handed the city back

to China in 1997.

Au Nok-hin, a former lawmaker and co-organiser of the primary argued that Mr. Tsang's remarks were "ungrounded and without any legitimate reasons". "The suppression (we) faced when organising the primary proves that our government have no tolerance for dissidents, to accept a society with diversity and democratic universal suffrage," Mr. Au told media.

Police late on Friday night raided the office of Public Opinion Research Institute (PORI), a prominent opinion pollster that was helping the pro-democracy camp to conduct the primary.

Police claimed they were responding to a report that PORI computers had been hacked, resulting in an unlawful leak. PORI president Robert Chung said officers copied computer files and he was given a "verbal promise" that they would not use information unrelated to the suspected leak. Voting in the two-day primary will continue on Sunday.

Poll nears, campaigners play up India rhetoric in Sri Lanka

Modi is standing behind us, says TNA leader Sampanthan

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

With the campaign for Sri Lanka's August general election heating up, India and its role in resolving the lingering national question have begun figuring prominently in the election discourse, especially in the Tamil-majority north and east.



A Sri Lankan polling officer taking part in a mock election in June. ■ AP

invited to New Delhi to hold talks with the then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In that meeting, PM Singh advised us and the Rajapaksa administration to hold discussions and we held at least 18 rounds of talks after that," he said.

However, rivals and critics of the TNA have criticised the alliance's contestants for "misleading" the Tamil people that the international community or India would "back them". The sentiment – shared by some on social media – is in line with a growing view among sections that New Delhi has been less vocal about Tamil concerns, and more preoccupied with its own geopolitical interests in the island.

Referring to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Colombo immediately after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's big win in the November 2019 presidential election, and to the President's and Prime Minister's respective visits to New Delhi, Mr. Sampanthan said India had, on all three occasions, underscored the need for the Sri Lankan government to resolve the Tamil question, based on "justice, equality and dignity".

Talks in Delhi
TNA spokesman and former legislator M.A. Sumanthiran has also been referring to India in his pocket meetings – the Election Commission has banned big rallies due to COVID-19 – in the Northern Province, comparing the current poll context with that in 2010. "At that time, the TNA fought the election after the candidate we backed for Presidency [Sarath Fonseka] lost, just like this time. But we won 14 seats and were subsequently

Meanwhile, India also figured in a recent controversy in the south when Colombo port unions and Opposition party JVP objected to Sri Lanka "giving away" the East Container Terminal to India. "Ceding control" of national assets to "foreign countries" has been a recurring concern voiced by nationalist groups in the Sinhala-majority south.

Speaking at campaign meeting, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa said his government had conveyed to New Delhi that the southern Mattala Airport will not be jointly developed with India, as had been proposed by the previous government.

WHO calls for 'aggressive action' and 'global solidarity'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) has urged countries grappling with COVID-19 to step up control measures, saying it is still possible to rein it in, as some nations clamp fresh restrictions on citizens.

With case numbers worldwide more than doubling in the past six weeks, Uzbekistan on Friday returned to lockdown and Hong Kong said schools would close from Monday after the city recorded "exponential growth" in locally transmit-

ted infections. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on countries to adopt an aggressive approach, highlighting Italy, Spain, South Korea and India's biggest slum to show it was possible to stop the spread, no matter how bad the outbreak.

The health agency's comments came as U.S. President Donald Trump was forced to cancel an election rally in New Hampshire, citing an approaching storm.

Mr. Trump has pushed to hold large gatherings against health advice as epidemiolo-

gists warn of the dangers posed by the virus moving through the air in crowded and confined spaces.

Trump hits out at China
On a visit to Florida on Friday, Mr. Trump hit out at Beijing over the pandemic. "(The) relationship with China has been severely damaged. They could have stopped the plague. They didn't stop it," he told reporters.

The virus has killed at least 5,56,140 people worldwide since it emerged in China last December. More than

12.3 million cases have been registered in 196 countries and territories, triggering massive economic damage.

The U.S., the country worst hit by the illness, reported almost 64,000 new cases on Friday and the death toll now stands at just under 1,34,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Brazil, the second-hardest hit, surpassed 70,000 deaths and reported 45,000 new infections, the Health Ministry said.

"Across all walks of life, we are all being tested to the limit," the WHO's Mr. Tedros

told a virtual news conference in Geneva. "From countries where there is exponential growth, to places that are loosening restrictions and now starting to see cases rise. Only aggressive action combined with national unity and global solidarity can turn this pandemic around," he said.

In Australia, meanwhile, authorities said they would slash by half the number of people allowed to return from overseas. From Monday, only 4,000 Australian citizens will be permitted to enter each day.

U.S. President commutes aide's prison sentence

Roger Stone was among the many Trump associates charged in Mueller's probe



A friend, an ally: Roger Stone reacting to the commutation in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Friday. ■ REUTERS

U.S. President Donald Trump commuted the sentence of his long-time friend and adviser Roger Stone on Friday, sparing him from prison after he was convicted of lying under oath to lawmakers investigating Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election.

Mr. Trump's decision to commute Mr. Stone's sentence days before he was due to report to prison marked the President's most assertive intervention to protect an associate in a criminal case and his latest use of executive clemency to benefit an ally. Democrats condemned Mr. Trump's action as an assault on the rule of law. "Roger Stone has already suffered greatly," the White House said in a statement. "He was treated very unfairly, as were many oth-

ers in this case. Roger Stone is now a free man!" The Republican political operative's friendship with Mr. Trump dates back decades. Mr. Stone, 67, was scheduled to report by Tuesday to a federal prison in Georgia to begin serving a sentence of three years and four months.

Not a pardon

Mr. Trump opted to give Mr. Stone a commutation, which does not erase a criminal

conviction, rather than a full pardon. Mr. Stone emerged from his Fort Lauderdale, Florida home wearing a mask with the words "Free Roger Stone."

Mr. Stone was among several Trump associates charged with crimes in former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation that documented Russian interference in 2016.

House of Representatives Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said:

"With this commutation, Trump makes clear that there are two systems of justice in America: one for his criminal friends, and one for everyone else."

The top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, Mark Warner, added: "The United States was founded on the rule of law. It seems our President has nothing but contempt for it."

Bill Russo, a spokesman for Joe Biden, accused the President of abusing his power "as he lays waste to the norms and the values that make our country a shining beacon to the rest of the world."

A Washington jury in November 2019 convicted Mr. Stone on all seven criminal counts of obstruction of a congressional investigation, five counts of making false statements to Congress and tampering with a witness.

Amazon revokes 'ban' on TikTok in five hours

Email was sent in error, says company

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Roughly five hours after an internal email went out Friday to Amazon employees telling them to delete the popular video app TikTok from their phones, the online retailing giant appeared to backtrack, calling the ban a mistake.

widely online, told employees to delete TikTok. The email cited the app's "security risks." Amazon is the second-largest U.S. private employer after Walmart. Moving against TikTok could have escalated pressure on the app in a big way, particularly if other companies did the same. The U.S. military already bans TikTok on employee phones.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said this week that the government was "certainly looking" at banning the app, setting off confused posts as well as jokes by TikTok users.

ELSEWHERE

Trump working on new immigration Bill: officials

It will establish a merit-based system

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump is working on an executive order to establish a merit-based immigration system, the White House said.

The White House statement came soon after Mr. Trump, in an interview with Telemundo News channel, said he is working on an executive order on immigration that will include a "road to citizenship" for recipients of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme.

Responding to a question, Mr. Trump said his action on the powers that they [Supreme Court] gave, I am going to be doing an immigration Bill. One of the aspects of the Bill that you will be very happy with will be the DACA. It will give them a road to citizenship," said Mr. Trump.

to be very happy," he said.

"As the President announced today, he is working on an executive order to establish a merit-based immigration system to further protect U.S. workers," the White House said in a statement.

During the interview, Mr. Trump alleged that the Opposition broke the deal with him on the DACA. Mr. Trump said the recent Supreme Court ruling gave the President tremendous powers when they said that "you could take in, in this case, 7,00,000 or so people."

"Based on the powers that they [Supreme Court] gave, I am going to be doing an immigration Bill. One of the aspects of the Bill that you will be very happy with will be the DACA. It will give them a road to citizenship," said Mr. Trump.

Foreign students in U.S. weigh options following order

Some are considering returning home, while others may move to the neighbouring Canada



Future tense: Natalia Afonso, an international student from Brazil at Brooklyn College, U.S. ■ AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX

International students worried about a new immigration policy that could potentially cost them their visas say they feel stuck between being unnecessarily exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic and being able to finish their studies in America.

Students from countries as diverse as India, China and Brazil told they are scrambling to devise plans after federal immigration authorities notified colleges this week that international students must leave the U.S. or transfer to another college if their schools operate entirely online this fall.

vier Bercerra said Thursday. Some said they may return home, or move to nearby Canada. "I'm generating research, I'm doing work in a great economy," said Batuhan Mekiker, a Ph.D. student from Turkey studying computer science at Montana State University in Bozeman. He's in the third year of a five-year programme. "If I go

to Turkey, I would not have that," he said. "I would like to be somewhere where my talent is appreciated."

Suit by Harvard

A day after Harvard sued, the university notified the court that immigration authorities appear to be already enforcing the policy. A lawyer for Harvard urged the judge to suspend the rule, saying that a first-year student from Belarus was turned away from his flight at a Minsk airport. Jasdeep Mandia, a docto-

ral candidate from India studying economics at Arizona State University, said he has breathing problems that could worsen if he gets sick from COVID-19. Mr. Mandia, 35, originally planned to conduct all his fall studies online. He says the Trump directive puts the shaky standing of international students on display. "It has never been a level-playing field," he said. "But this makes it more apparent."

Natalia Afonso, a Brooklyn College student from Brazil, said she hopes the school will adopt a hybrid model of remote and in-person classes – but she fears riding the subway to campus could increase her chances of catching the virus. "I don't see myself moving back to Brazil at this point," said the 27-year-old, who is studying education and just finished her first semester. "It's very unfair."

UNESCO regrets Turkish move on Hagia Sophia

UNITED NATIONS

The UN's cultural agency, UNESCO, has voiced deep regret over Turkey's move to convert Istanbul's iconic sixth-century Hagia Sophia into a mosque, saying its status as a museum reflects the universal nature of its heritage and makes it a powerful symbol for dialogue. ■ PTI

Das warns of higher NPAs, bank capital erosion

RBI chief says it has become imperative to draw up a recapitalisation plan for public sector and private lenders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI
RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday warned that the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic would likely result in an increase in bad loans across banks, and added that a recapitalisation plan was urgently needed to ensure financial stability.

The economic impact of the pandemic – due to lockdown and anticipated post-lockdown compression in economic growth – may result in higher non-performing assets and capital erosion of banks,” Mr. Das said in his keynote address at the 7th SBI Banking & Economics Conclave. “A recapitalisation plan for PSBs and private banks has, therefore, become necessary.”

Observing that the global financial crisis of 2008-09 and the pandemic had dispelled the notion that tail

risks to the financial system would materialise only rarely, Mr. Das said, “shocks to the financial system dubbed as ‘once in a lifetime events’ seem to be more frequent than even ‘once in a decade’”. The minimum capital requirements for banks, which had been set based on historical loss events, were accordingly likely to be rendered less than sufficient to absorb lenders’ losses in the current economic climate.

“Meeting the minimum capital requirement is necessary, but not a sufficient condition for financial stability. Hence, it is imperative that the approach to risk management in banks should be in tune with the realisation of more frequent, varied and bigger risk events than in the past,” he said.

Stating that the economy had started showing signs of getting back to normalcy, the RBI Governor, however, cau-



The medium-term outlook on the economy is uncertain and depends on the COVID-19 curve, Mr. Das said. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

tioned that “the medium-term outlook is uncertain and depends on the COVID-19 curve”.

“Policy action for the medium-term would require a careful assessment of how the crisis unfolds. Building buffers and raising capital will be crucial not only to en-

sure credit flow but also to build resilience in the financial system,” Mr. Das said, urging all lenders including non-banking financial institutions to conduct periodic “stress tests” to gauge the impact of the pandemic on their balance sheets, asset quality and liquidity. This, he added, would enable them to take timely action to

mitigate the risks.

Pointing to stress points requiring constant regulatory and policy attention, he cited the redemption pressure on NBFCs and mutual funds as a key concern.

“Mutual funds have emerged as major investors in market instruments issued by NBFCs, which is why the development of an adverse feedback loop and the associated systemic risk warrants timely and targeted policy interventions. Increasing share of bank lending to NBFCs and the continuing crunch in market-based financing faced by the NBFCs and Housing Finance Companies also need to be watched carefully,” he added.

Resolution Corporation

Referring to the lack of a mechanism to address bank failures, Mr. Das cited the case of Yes Bank to stress the need for a legislatively mandated

Resolution Corporation.

“In the case of Yes Bank we tried for a market-based resolution... when that did not materialise, we, without adversely impacting the balance sheet of any participating bank, worked out a public private partnership.

“But going forward, we need legislative backing to have some kind of Resolution Corporation which has to deal with resolution and revival of stressed financial firms,” he said. While the traditional approach had been to merge the weak bank with a larger bank, he said, “while that protects the depositors’ interest, definitely it pulls down the balance sheet of the large bank”.

A Resolution Corporation was part of the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill that the Centre withdrew following depositors’ concerns over a controversial ‘bail-in’ clause.

what investments are taking place in the health sector,” said Rohini Pande, who is associated with Yale University. “How much are we spending on testing, basic information campaigns. This is a health induced crisis, you got to respond to that in order to respond to the economy,” she added.

India has historically under-invested in health and the increase is not very much right now as well, she said, stressing that the country needs to recognise that for economic recovery, humanitarian and health crisis are all interlinked.

To change this crisis to an opportunity, let us invest in the health sector,” SBI’s chief economist S. K. Ghosh said, suggesting a plan to build a 500-bed hospital each, in 250 districts, at a cost of ₹60,000 crore over the next two years.

‘Govt. must prioritise healthcare spending’

Use crisis as opportunity: economists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The government can turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity by investing in healthcare, and it should also pursue making all the cities slum-free by 2023, economists observed.

At the seventh economic conclave organised by State Bank of India on Saturday, there was unanimity among the economists on laying greater thrust on decentralisation in policy making in the future, as a one size fits all approach may not work always.

India at present has the third highest number of COVID-19 cases, after the U.S. and Brazil, and has already lost over 22,000 people.

“It’s very concerning that a lot of this discussion of the Aatmanirbhar (Bharat) package or other packages are not talking at all about

Fosun's Gland plans IPO

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Gland Pharma, majority owned by Chinese pharma major Fosun Pharma, has filed a draft red herring prospectus with SEBI for an initial public offering.

The drugmaker has proposed a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to ₹1,250 crore. Under the IPO, 34,863,635 equity shares will be offered for sale, including up to 19,368,686 equity shares of the Chinese promoter (Fosun Singapore) and up to 15,494,949 equity shares of other selling shareholders - Gland Celsus, Empower Trust and Nilay Trust.

Gland markets products under a B2B model.

NCLT tells debenture holders to settle dispute with developer citing pandemic

Tribunal says it can't ignore COVID-19's devastating effect on the economy now

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI

The Bengaluru Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has directed debenture holders to consider a fresh settlement proposal for the dues owed to them by a real estate developer, by taking into account the severe economic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Private equity fund India Asset Growth Fund and its debenture trustees (financial creditors) had filed an insolvency petition against CMRS Projects Private Limited for alleged non-payment of

Recent changes to the IBC suspends insolvency proceedings for defaults on or after March 25, 2020

dues. The financial creditors had subscribed to the non-convertible debentures of the company in various tranches totalling ₹13 crore in 2017. As on March 15, 2019, they claimed a default amount of about ₹18.5 crore, including principal and interest. The NCLT noted that the financial creditors had not explored the options available to deal with default

in the Trust deed. “The developer has engaged several contract workers for the purpose of construction and is incurring an expenditure of about ₹3 lakh towards monthly salaries of its employees. It has 110 home buyers and various other vendors, who will be severely affected and prejudiced, if insolvency proceedings are initiated,” the NCLT added.

The adjudicating authority cannot ignore the devastating effect caused to the Indian economy due to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to the recent amendments to the In-

solvency and Bankruptcy Code, which suspended insolvency proceedings for defaults on or after March 25, 2020, the NCLT noted.

Even though the present case is not covered by the amendment, the developer is willing to settle it in the light of an earlier one-time settlement, which was discussed by the financial creditors.

The NCLT told the developer to extend full cooperation to the settlement efforts and gave liberty to the financial creditors to pursue insolvency proceedings if the settlement talks failed.

Insurers unveil Corona Kavach policy

IRDAI clears COVID-19 specific product of 30 insurance firms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI has cleared the Corona Kavach policy or the standard COVID-19 specific product of 30 general and health insurers.

Friday was the deadline for the insurers to unveil the policy conceived by IRDAI.

While prescribing common policy wordings and features, the industry regulator had left the pricing of the policy to the individual insurers.

Following the approval, several insurers including Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, ICICI Lombard General Insurance, Max Bupa Health Insurance, HDFC Ergo General Insurance, Orient

tal Insurance Company and United India Insurance Company introduced the policy.

days of pre-hospitalisation and 30 days of post hospitalisation expenses.

Max Bupa Health Insurance’s MD & CEO Krishnan Ramachandran said health insurance awareness was at an all-time high.

The Corona Kavach product has its own importance but it does not decrease the need of a comprehensive health insurance plan,” Mr. Ramachandran said.

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said the premium of its Corona Kavach policy base cover ranges between ₹447 and ₹5,630 excluding GST, depending on the age of the person, the sum insured and the policy period opted for by a policyholder.

INTERVIEW | MARTIN SCHWENK

Consumer spending will return during festive season

Mercedes-Benz India CEO says setbacks are temporary

N. ANAND

Mercedes-Benz India will be launching 10 new products this year, including its first electric vehicle EQC. The new products will certainly help to create customer demand and the company expects customer sentiment to revive in the festive season, said managing director and CEO, Martin Schwenk. Edited excerpts:

What is your outlook for the current year, assuming that the COVID-19 impact will last till December?

■ Our overall outlook for the mid- to long-term remains positive and we hope for an uptick in the market sentiment during the festive season. However, the current market scenario will continue to be challenging. Our new financial programmes under WishBox 2.0, combined with our new attractive product portfolio will help create customer demand. We are swiftly ramping up production and sales ever since we resumed operations in May.

Do you think people will opt for non-essential purchases at this point in time?

■ We expect that the existing sentiment will shift gradually towards positive as the lockdown is lifted across the country and business starts getting back to normal.

The more the pandemic situation stabilises and ‘freedom of movement’ is restored, business will pick up and the desire for consumption will grow.

We have been witnessing a mindset towards online shopping platforms and this is an encouraging development, especially for high value items like automobiles. The upswing in ov-

erall sentiment during the festival season will see consumer spending return.

You were planning to unveil at least 10 models. Is there any change in the plan?

■ We have seen new products exciting customers and bringing momentum in the market. Hence, we are sticking to our plan of introducing new products in 2020. Due to the current situation, however, some delays cannot be ruled out. We will have 10 product launches this year including our first electric vehicle EQC.

What is the capex for the current year?

■ With most of our investments directly related to our new products, we don’t expect a significant change in capital expenditure. We are confident that 2021 will be a better year and we do not intend to change any of our mid- to long-term plans for the market. We continue to remain bullish on India and believe in India’s long-term potential.

When do you think the market for luxury cars will pick up?

The current market challenges are going to continue for some time and customer sentiment will improve gradually, but we cannot put an exact timeline to

this revival. We estimate 2020 to remain a challenging year for the auto industry and at this moment, it is impossible to predict the outcome.

What has been the impact of COVID-19 on the auto sector?

■ The impact of the pandemic has been witnessed across geographies in the automotive sector, including luxury cars. In a market, which was already facing strong macro-economic headwinds, the sudden shutdown added up to the challenges significantly and this included the luxury auto segment.

These impediments are a temporary setback due to the ongoing situation.

As a fundamentally strong brand, we are resilient, can withstand challenges and we will bounce back.

Every crisis leaves with an opportunity to explore. This time it was the strengthening of our online sales platform, which has emerged as the next happening trend in the luxury automotive segment.

With social distancing around, do you think that there is place for coupe or small cars?

■ We don’t believe that shape or size of the car would matter as long as the social distancing norms are followed responsibly by the driver and passenger. With increased social distancing norms now prevalent, we do see growth in personal mobility, but it will primarily be in the entry segment of the industry, not much at the luxury segment.

In a regulatory filing, Reliance said it had closed sale of 6.13% stake in Jio Platforms with L Catterton, The Public Investment Fund, Silver Lake and General Atlantic.

Reliance had sold a total of 25.09% stake in the subsidiary which houses India’s largest telecom firm, Jio, to 11 investors for ₹1,17,588.45 crore.

Goyal urges film industry to self regulate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The film industry should come together and work as one to show that by self regulation they can “maintain high cultural and traditional ethos” of the country, particularly on OTT platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ Hotstar, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said during a FICCI Frames event on Saturday.

He said while industry representatives spoke about proliferation of screens, filmmakers did not pay heed to requests from cinema halls, which are shut due to COVID-19, to not release films on OTT platforms.

“This is another example of the industry which is not really in unison. Now how do you expect the investments to flow into cinema halls, into multiplexes, if the new way is giving out films directly on OTTs?” Mr. Goyal asked.

RIL closes deal for ₹30,062 cr. in investments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

After Facebook Inc., Reliance Industries has closed deals to sell a minority stake in its digital arm to four other investors, receiving a total of over ₹30,062 crore.

In a regulatory filing, Reliance said it had closed sale of 6.13% stake in Jio Platforms with L Catterton, The Public Investment Fund, Silver Lake and General Atlantic.

Reliance had sold a total of 25.09% stake in the subsidiary which houses India’s largest telecom firm, Jio, to 11 investors for ₹1,17,588.45 crore.



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Exhaled breath of COVID-19 patients can contain novel coronavirus, study finds

According to the pre-print, breath emission rate was highest during the earlier stages of COVID-19

R. PRASAD

Not just talking, singing or shouting, as the World Health Organization indicated on July 9, but even breathing may spread novel coronavirus into the air. A study published in *Nature* had earlier found airborne coronavirus in a patient's breath. A couple of more studies found airborne transmission of the virus during breathing and speaking. A new study posted on July 2 in preprint server *MedRxiv* has again found virus spread while breathing. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed and published in a scientific journal.

The study adds to the existing body of evidence that suggests airborne transmission of the virus can play a role in virus spread. The study found that breath contained the virus, "especially during the early stages of the disease".

On July 9, WHO acknowledged that coronavirus can be airborne in closed settings that lack good ventilation, and it can spread from one person to another in such settings on prolonged exposure.

Airborne transmission

The study found that COVID-19 patients exhaled coronavirus into the

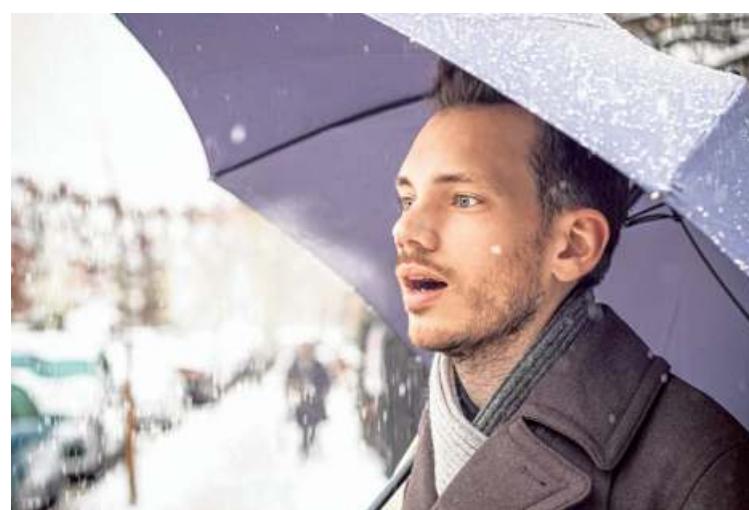
air at an estimated rate of 1,000-1,00,000 RNA copies/minute. The authors write that the virus levels in exhaled breath could reach 1,00,000 to 1,00,00,000 copies per metre cube at an average breathing rate of 12 litres per minute. This would mean that a COVID-19 patient can exhale millions of virus particles per hour. "Our data reveal direct evidence of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 via breathing," Maosheng Yao from Peking University, who led the team, writes.

Key influences

The emission rate of the virus was found to be influenced by a few factors such as disease stage, patient activity and, possibly, age. "We found that the SARS-CoV-2 breath emission rate into the air was the highest, up to 1,00,000 viruses per minute, during the earlier stages of COVID-19," they write.

However, the virus emission was not found to be continuous or at the same rate, but was rather a "sporadic event". For instance, two breath samples collected from the same patient on different dates returned different test results.

The researchers collected exhaled breath condensate samples from 27



Spreading fast: This adds to a body of evidence that suggests airborne transmission of the virus may play a role in virus spread. ■ GETTY IMAGES

COVID-19 patients. The time intervals from symptom onset to the sample collection were all less than 14 days. Of the 27 patients studied, they could detect the virus in the exhaled breath of five patients aged under 50. In these five patients, the emission rate in exhaled breath was 1,000-100,000 RNA copies/minute.

While the hands of all the five patients did not have any virus, two of 22 phone samples tested positive,

and the toilet pit surface tested positive for virus in the case of one patient. Virus in the exhaled breath could be "partially responsible" for the contamination on the surfaces, they say.

The researchers also collected samples from various surfaces and tested them for the presence of the virus. In all, 242 surface swab samples were collected and 13 tested positive for the virus.

The virus was found on five categories of surfaces – toilet pits (16.7%, n = 12), hospital floor (12.5%, n = 16), other surfaces (7.4%, n = 27), patient-touching surfaces (4.0%, n = 149), and medical-touching surfaces (2.6%, n = 38). No virus was found on handles.

"The overall SARS-CoV-2 positive rate for the surface swabs was 5.4% (n = 42). These observations do not support the widely-held belief that direct transmission by contact with surfaces plays a major role in COVID-19 spread," they write. Meanwhile, WHO classifies contact with contaminated surfaces as the second most common route of virus transmission.

Low probability

Large respiratory droplets and direct contact with contaminated surfaces are currently considered dominant routes of virus spread. But the present study has found that frequently touched surfaces like mobile phones have very low probability of virus presence.

"Measures such as enhanced ventilation and the use of face masks are essential to minimise the risk of infection by airborne SARS-CoV-2," they write.



Citiescape: Urban areas in India are particularly prone to most infectious diseases that propagate in close-contact settings. ■ PTI

Bracing for COVID-19 surge in south India

Battle to tackle the pandemic is still in its initial stages

GIRIDHARA R. BABU

It's like a relay race in India, with each State and city taking its turn for a COVID-19 surge. The States which seemed to have novel coronavirus under control when Mumbai and Delhi were surging are running in the next leg. For now, it is Karnataka's turn to lead the pack with a high average growth rate of 8%. Bengaluru, once lauded as a model, accounts for 45% of the confirmed cases. The hard reality is that no city is immune to COVID-19 infection, and the virus reminds us that the battle in tackling the pandemic is still in the initial stages.

Karnataka, in general, and Bengaluru, in particular, was an exceptional performer among all its peers by implementing one of the most stringent lockdowns. Hence, implementation of lockdown was completely successful in limiting the speed of the transmission. As a testimony, most of the cases in Bengaluru were traced to other States after the lockdown was lifted. Each country and State will have an initial circulation due to import of cases from elsewhere. Citing that as a reason for the surge in cases is only reactionary. The other aspect of the lockdown was to prepare to be ready for handling the surge in cases. That is where the success of every model is tested.

Bearing the brunt

Urban areas in India are particularly prone to bearing the brunt of most infectious diseases that propagate in close-contact settings. Besides, urban areas have the disrepute for neglecting public health actions. The pandemic in the metros is a proxy for the devastating effects of most infectious diseases and inappropriate health system responses in urban areas. Bengaluru is no exception to this – centralisation of pandemic responses and use of technology could only mask this in the initial phase of the epidemic. This turned out to be inadequate as the cases started surging with no prior plans to engage and strengthen the urban primary healthcare system consistently.

With restrictions lifted, the public too assumed the worst phase was over. The newfound freedom was exercised with little attention to physical distancing or wearing masks, which resulted in the city corporation collecting more than half-million rupees in fines. It does not mean that calamity is waiting for Bengaluru city; it is among the foremost cities to detect cases, especially due to strong initiatives of improved surveillance for SARI and ILI during the lockdown.

Need of the hour

What is needed now is to reduce the gap in the time lag between the onset of symptoms and isolation of cases. Isolation of cases as early as possible, close to the day of symptom onset, through better communication to the people and use of antigen testing should be the mainstay of decelerating the spread. This will be successful only if primary health care is supported by additional workforce and logistics. The success of quarantine, too, relies on a strong primary healthcare system. Reorienting the primary healthcare staff with immediate hiring or retraining the health volunteers will be pivotal in the success of this phase of the relay. Use of technology can, at best, be complementary in nature and definitely cannot replace the presence of a strong public health workforce.

Barring Telangana, the story in other southern States is similar to that of Karnataka, with some variance. Andhra Pradesh witnessed the surge due to import from other districts and foreign returnees, but local circulations seem to be sustained, including spikes in the temple cities. The State had the highest tests per million and the highest recovery rate compared with other States. In Tamil Nadu, Chennai accounts for 58% of the total cases, while cases in other urban areas are fast-increasing. Tamil Nadu's surge is attributed to inter-State and inter-district travel, enhanced by super-spreaders, crowd and close-contact settings. The case fatality seems to be similar in all these States except Kerala. Kerala has an intricate task of sustaining its track record of 0.43% of reported cases ending up in deaths. Widely lauded for its management globally, Kerala's infallible image is at stake due to spike in cases. With the return of a large number of non-resident people, Kerala has started taking precautionary steps for preventing super-spreading events in the State.

Unexposed people may have COVID-19-specific memory T cells

Further study is needed to ascertain the effect on the disease

R. PRASAD

At least five studies (one of which has been published in *Cell* and the remaining are pre-prints yet to be peer-reviewed) have shown that people unexposed to and not infected with novel coronavirus may still exhibit T cell responses specific to this virus. An overwhelming percentage of adults are exposed to four different coronaviruses that cause common cold. It is thought that SARS-CoV-2-specific T cell responses seen in healthy people might arise from memory T cells derived from exposure to 'common cold' coronaviruses.



Origin: The immunity might arise from exposure to 'common cold' coronaviruses. ■ GETTY IMAGES

to the virus and thereby limit disease severity," notes a Comment published in *Nature Reviews Immunology*. Alessandro Sette and Shane Crotty from La Jolla Institute for Immunology, La Jolla, say that T cells could "potentially facilitate an increased and more rapid neutralizing antibody response" against the virus.

Revealing correlations

One of the ways of ascertaining the role of pre-existing immunity in protecting against SARS-CoV-2 virus is by measuring such immunity and correlating with infection and severity of disease in such people when they are exposed to the virus.

The relationship between infections by common cold coronavirus and age is not well established and so, too, the immunity caused by infections by the four coronaviruses that cause the common cold. This becomes particularly important as children do not show severe symptoms, while older people often do. "The reasons for both are unclear," they write.

"These considerations underline how multiple variables may be involved in potential pre-existing partial immunity to COVID-19", they say. They al-

so caution that it is important to "avoid over-generalizations or conclusions in the absence of data".

Vaccination outcomes

There is a possibility that pre-existing T cell memory might influence vaccination outcomes. Pre-existing immunity could help elicit better immune responses against novel coronavirus, and these responses can manifest faster. Meanwhile, pre-existing immunity could be mistaken as enhanced efficacy of the vaccine in eliciting immune responses.

This could be particularly confusing in Phase-1 trials where the vaccine is tested on a small group of healthy participants. "This could be avoided by considering pre-existing immunity as a variable in trial design. Thus, we recommend measuring pre-existing immunity in all COVID-19 vaccine phase I clinical trials," they write.

This could also have drawbacks. For instance, the pre-existing immunity can reduce the immune responses that the vaccine causes through a mechanism called the "original antigenic sin". It can also lead to antibody-mediated disease enhancement, where antibodies present at sub-neutralising concentrations can actually augment virus infection and cause more severe disease. This is seen in chikungunya and dengue. In the Philippines, post-vaccination with a dengue vaccine, people with no prior infection with the virus came down with severe illness when they were later exposed to the virus.

The normalized burn ratio is an effective burn index commonly used to identify burnt regions in large fire zones. In normal conditions, healthy vegetation exhibits a very high reflectance in the near-infrared spectral region and considerably low reflectance in the shortwave infrared spectral region. These conditions get dismantled and reversed if a fire occurs," explains Srikanth Sannigrahi, the first author of the paper in an email to *The Hindu*. He is a postdoc-

Understanding forest fires and their effect on carbon emissions

Burn indices help demarcate forest fire burn scars

ASWATHI PACHA

"Growing up in Uttarakhand, forest fires were a common sight every year. I've woken up with smoke hovering around," says Sandeep Bhatt from IIT, Roorkee, who spent years tracking these fires and has now reported, along with an international team, their effect on carbon emission and the ecosystem.

During 2003-2017, a total of 5,20,861 active forest fire events were detected in India, and according to the report of the Forest Survey of India, over 54% of the forest cover in India is exposed to occasional fire.

The study published in *Science of the Total Environment* used remote sensing-based models to measure primary productivity over an area and also looked at burn indices, which help to demarcate the forest fire burn scars using satellite imagery.

Common index

"The normalized burn ratio is an effective burn index commonly used to identify burnt regions in large fire zones. In normal conditions, healthy vegetation exhibits a very high reflectance in the near-infrared spectral region and considerably low reflectance in the shortwave infrared spectral region. These conditions get dismantled and reversed if a fire occurs," explains Srikanth Sannigrahi, the first author of the paper in an email to *The Hindu*. He is a postdoc-

toral researcher at University College Dublin, Ireland.

Promising tool

He adds that the spectral differences between healthy vegetation and burnt forest areas can easily be identified and highlighted by remote sensing burn indices. It can be a promising tool for land resource managers and fire officials.

The team notes that the States of northeast India, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are the most fire-prone in India.

Previous studies using forecasting models and *in-situ* observations in western Himalaya have shown a sharp increase of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and ozone during high fire activity periods. The current paper noted very high to high carbon emissions in the eastern Himalayan states, western desert region and lower Himalayan region.

They note that the occurrence of high fire intensity at the low altitude Himalayan hilly regions may be due to the plant species (pine trees) in the area and proximity to villages. Villages make them more susceptible to anthropogenic activities like forest cover clearance, grazing and so on.

Studies have shown that the sharp increase in average and maximum air temperature, decline in precipitation, change in land-use patterns have caused the increased episodes of forest fires in most of the Asian countries.

The team plans to further work on the prediction of forest fires with the support of advanced machine learning models and AI-based techniques.

"Identifying the forest fire hotspots and forecasting the fire location and time accurately is the need of [the hour]. We, therefore, seek many scholarly scientific contributions to mitigate this concurrent issue in a smarter way," adds Prof. Sandeep Bhatt.

Barring Telangana, the story in other southern States is similar to that of Karnataka, with some variance. Andhra Pradesh witnessed the surge due to import from other districts and foreign returnees, but local circulations seem to be sustained, including spikes in the temple cities. The State had the highest tests per million and the highest recovery rate compared with other States. In Tamil Nadu, Chennai accounts for 58% of the total cases, while cases in other urban areas are fast-increasing. Tamil Nadu's surge is attributed to inter-State and inter-district travel, enhanced by super-spreaders, crowd and close-contact settings. The case fatality seems to be similar in all these States except Kerala. Kerala has an intricate task of sustaining its track record of 0.43% of reported cases ending up in deaths. Widely lauded for its management globally, Kerala's infallible image is at stake due to spike in cases. With the return of a large number of non-resident people, Kerala has started taking precautionary steps for preventing super-spreading events in the State.

Assam keelback spotted for the first time in 129 years

The team also recorded 400 plants, 270 butterflies, 25 amphibians and 44 reptiles, 239 birds and at least 20 mammals

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

The Assam keelback snake has been sighted by a team from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, for the first time since 1869. This snake was spotted in 2018 by zoologist Abhijit Das when he, along with a team, was retracing the Abor expedition – an iconic expedition that took place from 1911-1912 that had yielded a rich list of flora and fauna of the Assam region. After due identification, the find has been described in a paper published recently in the journal *Vertebrate Zoology*.

Rewarding expedition

The Abor expedition had covered a 130 km stretch along the Siang river from the base



Elusive vertebrate: The female snake was spotted in a muddy stream in the Poba reserve forest ■ ABHIJIT DAS

spotted the snake as I was following a small muddy stream deep inside evergreen forest," says Dr. Das. "Generally, in a forest you have a forest floor

with leaf-litter, but here was a special habitat, consisting of stream and swamp within the forest, which attracted me."

Unlike other snakes, this one

took shelter under water, below the fallen leaf-litter, a very special way to avoid attention.

Preserved specimens

First known as *Hebius peali* this snake was named after Edward Peal, a British tea planter who first collected two specimens of this snake from upper Assam, 129 years ago. Of the two collected specimens, one was preserved in the Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, and the other was kept in the Natural History Museum in London. Since the former specimen had disintegrated, the team had to compare the present specimen they found with the one kept in the Natural History Museum, London. Had that specimen gone bad, making

the identification would have been that much more difficult.

The Assam keelback is so far known only to inhabit Sivasagar in Upper Assam and Poba in Assam-Arunachal border. So, as far as present knowledge goes, it is an endemic snake of Upper Assam. Through a molecular study, the team has shown that this snake belongs to the genus *Herpetoas*, which has only three other known members, and not *Hebius*. This is also the first description of a live snake and its colouration. This is the first female Assam keelback to have been found. "So, we now know how male and female may differ in morphological characters," says Dr. Das.

The Assam keelback is so far known only to inhabit Sivasagar in Upper Assam and Poba in Assam-Arunachal border. The natural progression will manifest as spikes in every neighbourhood. The pandemic necessitates phenomenal leadership; adamant or complacent systems will crumble faster and steeper. The public health system in urban areas needs rehabilitation, nurturing and strengthening to tackle the rest of the pandemic and future challenges. Having a primary health centre in every ward, recruiting two medical officers for each centre and strengthening them with required field staff and logistics is the first step. Developing the skills and competencies of workers is the next step to be battle-ready for managing any epidemic. Inability to act now will soon lead to running out of excuses during the next wave or the next pandemic.

Giridhara R. Babu is Professor, Head at Life course Epidemiology, Indian Institute of Public Health, PHFI, Bengaluru, and a member of the Karnataka COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee.

M-BM-BME



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IAF on a buying spree

How is India building up the squadron strength of its air force?

DINAKAR PERI

The story so far: On July 2, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh approved defence deals worth ₹38,900 crore which includes procurement of 21 MiG-29 fighter jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF) along with upgradation of 59 existing MiG-29 jets in the IAF inventory and procurement of 12 Su-30MKI aircraft from Russia.

What are the major deals approved?

The Defence Ministry said the MiG-29 procurements and upgradation from Russia are estimated to cost ₹7,418 crore while the 12 Su-30 MKIs, which will be licence-produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), are estimated to cost ₹10,730 crore. Other deals approved by the DAC include Pinaka rocket ammunition, long-range land attack missile system of over 1,000 km range and close to 250 Astra Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missiles for the IAF. The Astra Mk-I has been integrated on the Su-30MKI jets and is being inducted into the force. An ungraded variant, the Astra Mk-II is under development by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

What are the new fighter jets for?

The Defence Ministry said in a release after the DAC meeting that these decisions will address the long-felt need of the IAF to increase its fighter squadrons. The IAF currently has 30 fighter squadrons against a sanctioned strength of 42 squadrons and is set to phase out its MiG-21 fighters in the next few years further reducing the strength. As seen during the Balakot air strikes (Pakistan) in February 2019, air power will be key to swiftly respond to any short escalations and especially relevant amid the ongoing stand-off with China on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The 21 MiG-29s to be procured from Russia have already been manufactured for an unfulfilled order and will now be upgraded and delivered to India. These will add to the three MiG-29 squadrons in service with the IAF which are already undergoing an upgrade. The 12 Su-30 MKIs are meant to make up for the gaps in the Su-30MKI squadrons.

The Indian Air Force is also upgrading all aircraft in its current inventory to make up for the shortfall

What other steps is the Indian Air Force taking to address the shortage?

In July-end, the IAF will start adding the first batch of the 36 Rafale multi-role jets contracted from France. Another deal for 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk-1A estimated to cost ₹38,000 crore is expected to be signed in the next two months which the IAF Chief Air Chief, Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria, termed as "top priority". The deal has assumed even greater importance with the emphasis on indigenisation in defence advocated by the Finance Minister recently.

The IAF currently has one squadron of LCA in initial operational configuration (IOC) and in May, it constituted the second LCA squadron with one aircraft in the final operational clearance (FOC) configuration. It is scheduled to get 20 IOC aircraft and 20 FOC aircraft in all and will eventually operate 123 LCA including the 83 Mk-1A aircraft.

The more capable and larger LCA Mk-2 is under development which the IAF is keen to add in large numbers. An indigenous fifth generation advanced medium combat aircraft (AMCA) is also under development and is expected to make first flight by 2032. There is also a tender for 114 fighter jets that has been floated to global aircraft manufacturers to be manufactured in India under technology transfer.

The IAF is also upgrading all aircraft in its current inventory to make up for the shortfall. The Jaguar, Mirage-2000, MiG-29 fighters are all being upgraded and negotiations are on with Russia for a major upgrade of the Su-30MKI fleet.

What about budgetary allocations?

The defence budget has been going down as a percentage of the GDP, and the novel coronavirus pandemic has put further budgetary constraints on military modernisation. For instance, the defence allocation for 2020-21 is pegged at ₹3.37-lakh crore excluding defence pensions which accounts for 1.5% of the GDP. There is a steep rise in defence pensions, 13.5%, from ₹1.18-lakh crore in revised estimates of last year to ₹1.34-lakh crore this year. The ₹3.37-lakh crore allocated is 5.67% higher compared to the budget estimate of last year and just 1.8% higher compared to the revised estimates of 2019-20 which stood at ₹3.31 lakh crore.

Of the total capital allocation of ₹1.34-lakh crore, the IAF got 38% which comes to ₹43,281 crore, but in real terms the capital allocation for IAF has gone down from the revised estimates of 2019-20 which was ₹44,869 crore. In comparison, last year, the IAF had committed liabilities, payments for deals already signed for, of over ₹47,000 crore which was more than its entire capital allocation. The IAF has signed several major deals which include 36 Rafale jets from France, S-400 air defence systems from Russia, Apache attack helicopters and Chinook heavy lift helicopters from the U.S. among others.

Is the airborne spread of COVID-19 a risk?

In a letter, what have scientists told the World Health Organization? How does the disease pass from one person to another?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: On Monday, July 6, 239 scientists from 32 countries put their signatures on an open letter that said COVID-19 is also transmitted via aerosols. Titled "It is Time to Address Airborne Transmission of COVID-19" (<https://bit.ly/38JOOAG> & <https://bit.ly/2BT9sCu>), and addressed to the World Health Organization (WHO), they said there was enough evidence to show that viruses are released during exhalation, talking, and coughing as micro droplets small enough to remain aloft and pose a risk of exposure at distances beyond 1.2 metres from someone who is infected (over the 3 feet-6 feet recommended for physical distancing between people to avoid transmission).

What do the scientists believe?

The scientists, led by Lidia Morawska of the International Laboratory for Air Quality and Health, WHO Collaborating Centre, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia, appealed to "the medical community and the relevant national and international bodies to recognise the potential for airborne spread of COVID-19. There is significant potential for inhalation exposure to viruses in microscopic respiratory droplets (microdroplets) at short to medium distances (up to several metres, or room scale), and we are advocating for the use of preventive measures to mitigate this route of airborne transmission."

The letter came at a time when most public health organisations, including WHO, do not "recognise airborne transmission except for aerosol-generating procedures performed in healthcare settings."

Responding to the letter, in *Oxford Academic – Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Dr. Benedetta Allegranzi, WHO's technical lead for infection prevention and control, was cited in media reports on Tuesday as saying, "there was evidence emerging of airborne transmission of the coronavirus, but that it was not definitive."

She went on to say that the "... possibility of airborne transmission in public settings – especially in very specific conditions, crowded, closed, poorly ventilated settings that have been described, cannot be ruled out." She added, "However, the evidence needs to be gathered and interpreted, and we continue to support this."

What are aerosols? How different are they from respiratory droplets?

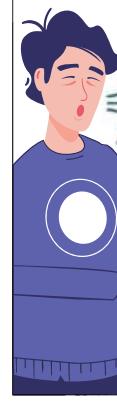
In common understanding, aerosols are minute particles that are expelled under pressure, as in the case of fine mist from a jar of perfume, or a can of roach repellent. However, aerosol is a term used to broadly refer to particles suspended in the air; they could include fine dust, mist, or smoke. In the context of transmission of viruses, as in this case, aerosols are read as micro droplets, much smaller (5 microns or lesser) than respiratory droplets, and take a longer time to drop to the floor. They will be expelled by people breathing, laughing or singing, as against respiratory droplets that are expelled with forceful acts such as sneezing or coughing. As per the open letter, "at typical indoor air velocities [5], a 5 micron droplet will travel tens of metres, much greater than the scale of a typical room, while settling from a height of 1.5 m to the floor."

As they remain suspended in the air for longer, an

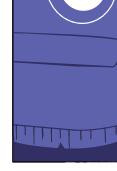
Key difference in transmission

DROPLET

Coughs and sneezes can spread droplets of saliva and mucus



Less than 5 microns



DROPLETS

Human hair: 60 - 120 microns wide

SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

individual who is COVID-19 positive is likely to infect people standing even at a distance of 1.2 m in a small, poorly ventilated room. "This poses the risk that people sharing such environments can potentially inhale these viruses, resulting in infection and disease," the signatories endorsed.

That respiratory droplets transmit COVID-19 infection has dominated the discourse from nearly the beginning of the epidemic, and has guided the path that interventions have taken thus far, including wearing masks, keeping distance, and hand washing routines.

Is there evidence to prove that aerosols transmit SARS-CoV-2?

In its response, WHO did say that there was need to watch the area for possible exposure to aerosols causing the infection, but insisted that the evidence was not yet entirely compelling, except in health-care settings where aerosol emission is common.

The bar of proof has been set high for aerosols transmission; even the scientific reluctance to accept this theory has been couched in belief that it would trigger widespread panic in the community.

A Reuters report cited Jose-Luis Jimenez, a chemist at the University of Colorado Boulder who signed the paper, trying to explain the historical reluctance to accept the notion of aerosol transmission. "If people hear airborne, healthcare workers will refuse to go to the hospital," he said. Or people will buy up all the highly protective N95 respirator masks, "and there will be none left for developing countries".

Does the open letter to the World Health Organization present enough proof?

It says: "Airborne transmission appears to be the only plausible explanation for several superspreading events investigated which occurred under such conditions... and others where recommended precautions related to direct droplet transmissions were followed."

Further, the letter says, "It is understood that there is not yet universal acceptance of airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2; but in our collective assessment there is more than enough supporting evidence so that the precautionary principle should apply. In order to control the pandemic, pending the availability of a vaccine, all routes of transmission must be interrupted."

The signatories agreed that "the evidence is admittedly incomplete for all the steps in COVID-19 micro droplet

transmission," but pointed out that it is "similarly incomplete for the large droplet and fomite modes of transmission." Further they advanced the point of view that "airborne transmission mechanism operates in parallel with the large droplet and fomite routes, that are now the basis of guidance".

They relied heavily on several retrospective studies conducted after the SARS-CoV-1 epidemic, demonstrating that airborne transmission was the most likely mechanism explaining the spatial pattern of infections. "Retrospective analysis has shown the same for SARS-CoV-2," the letter said. "In particular, a study in their review of records from a Chinese restaurant, observed no evidence of direct or indirect contact between the three parties. In their review of video records from the restaurant, they observed no evidence of direct or indirect contact between the three parties."

Earlier, a letter in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, titled "Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1" (<https://bit.ly/22koo5a>), suggested that SARS-CoV-2 remained viable in aerosols for up to three hours, but the generation was done via a high-powered machine that is unlikely to be replicated in real-life situations.

The signatories of the letter said many studies conducted on the spread of other viruses, including respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus, and influenza, show that *viable* airborne viruses can be exhaled and/or detected in the indoor environment of infected patients. "This poses the risk that people sharing such environments can potentially inhale these viruses, resulting in infection and disease. There is every reason to expect that SARS-CoV-2 behaves similarly, and that transmission via airborne micro droplets is an important pathway."

Says Prof. T. Jacob John, retired Professor of Clinical Virology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, "The airborne aerosol transmission theory is rather hyped up, in my opinion." And yet, he says, in closed spaces without ventilation where people tend to crowd around, one must take precautions. Wearing the mask at all times, even indoors, if others are present in the circumstances as described in the open letter, would be recommended, he adds.

What is the future?

As WHO waits for more robust evidence on the principle of aerosol transmission, the authors are pushing only to address every possible pathway to slow down the transmission of COVID-19. Providing sufficient and effective ventilation as far as possible in public buildings, schools and hospitals, avoiding overcrowding in public buildings and transportation systems are recommended, besides, supplementing general ventilation with airborne infection controls such as local exhaust, high efficiency air filtration, and germicidal ultraviolet lights.

The authors, recommending a zero-tolerance approach to COVID-19 transmission, add: "The measures we propose offer more benefits than potential downsides, even if they can only be partially implemented."

Should Kuwait's draft expat bill worry India?

What is the proposal? Will it be difficult to reduce the foreign workforce in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries?

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

The story so far: The Kuwait National Assembly (NA) is discussing several proposals to reduce the share of foreigners in the country's population, which is now pegged at 70%. There are many proposals under consideration, and one is to put country caps on the number of emigrants in the country. In this, the plan is that Indians should not exceed 15% of Kuwaiti citizens, while Egyptians, Bangladeshis and Filipinos among others must not each exceed 10% of Kuwaitis. The head of the Parliamentary Human Resources Development Committee, MP Khalil Al-Saleh, is pushing for a drastic reduction in the number of expatriates. Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim and the government believe that such drastic measures are impossible, though everyone appears to agree in principle that the proportion of foreigners in the population must be reduced. The Speaker has said this week that he and other MPs would submit a new draft law aimed at binding the government to gradually reduce the number of expatriates, according to *Kuwait Times*. Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister Of Interior and State For Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh had also promised last week to send a draft law to the NA within two weeks.

Where is the proposal headed?

Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah had said, "the ideal population structure is to have 70 per cent Kuwaitis and 30 per cent non-Kuwaitis".

Said Reaven D'Souza Managing Editor, *The Times, Kuwait*, currently, it is the other way around. Such a turnaround will require a drastic and impossible reduction in the country's total population and the concerns about the proposal are overhyped. "It is difficult to foresee any law on this being made during the current term of the NA. If and when it is made, there could be measures to gradually reduce the proportion of foreigners. The concern that there could be mass deportation has no basis." The full draft of the proposal has not been published.

Why has this proposal come up in the middle of a pandemic?

Kuwaitis are a minority in Kuwait. Of the total population of 4.3 million, Kuwaitis are 1.3 million, which is less than one third. There are more Indians than Kuwaitis in Kuwait – 1.45 million, according to one account. However, statistics available on the website of the Indian Embassy in Kuwait puts the number at above a million. If Indians cannot exceed 15% of Kuwaitis, the cap would be around two lakh. Migration studies experts warn that calculations regarding the potential numbers that could be affected by the law are based on estimates which are various. "Gulf countries are not very open about population data because citizens are a minority," an Indian working with a Gulf Cooperation Council government said. This has been a lingering concern in all GCC countries – Bahrain,



Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – but the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic renewed the debate. Said Gini Zacharia Oommen, who conducted a post-doctoral field study among Indians in Kuwait, "In the past, high unemployment among the natives, economic crisis and demographic imbalance had triggered movement for nationalisation of the workforce. Arab Spring added a new concern of political stability among the regimes. COVID-19 exposed the huge concentration of certain populations among the expatriates, and the resulting imbalances."

"The current debate in the context of COVID-19 must be distinguished from the nationalisation debate. This one is about diversification of the expatriate community," the official cited above said.

What is the profile of the Indian community in Kuwait?

According to the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, besides the million-plus who are in the country as legal workforce, there are about 10,000 Indian nationals who have overstayed their visas. The Indian community in Kuwait has been growing at 5-6% per annum until the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic put an abrupt stop to immigration to the country. Indians are the largest

expatriate community and Egyptians are the second largest. Three fourths, or about 7.5 lakh Indians are males as against only 2.5 lakh females. It is estimated that 5.2 lakh Indians are deployed in the private sector, as construction workers, technicians, engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, IT experts, etc. About 1.16 lakh are dependents and there are about 60,000 Indian students studying in 23 Indian schools in the country; about 3.27 lakh

are domestic workers (i.e. drivers, gardeners, cleaners, nannies, cooks and housemaids) who are not allowed to bring their spouses/children into the country. About 28,000 Indians work for the Kuwaiti government in various jobs such as nurses, engineers in national oil companies, and a few as scientists. In 2018, India received nearly \$4.8 billion from Kuwait as remittances.

What has India's response been?

India's Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Anurag Srivastava said the Foreign Ministers of India and Kuwait discussed the issue over the phone. "We share excellent bilateral ties which are deeply rooted in people-to-people linkages. The Indian community in Kuwait is well-regarded in Kuwait and elsewhere in the Gulf region and their contributions are well recognised. We have shared our expectations that Kuwait's decision will take into account," Mr. Srivastava said.

What happens now?

Around eight million Indians work in the GCC countries. Around 2.1 million of them are from one State – Kerala. Other major contributors to the Indian expatriate communities in GCC countries are Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab and Rajasthan. A renewed push for nationalisation of jobs and diversification of expatriates is possible. However, the structure of the GCC economies makes any dramatic change unlikely. Nationalisation of government jobs can be achieved to a significant extent, but the private sector will continue to draw the majority of its workforce from abroad.

"The costs associated with hiring a citizen are too prohibitive for the private sector, which will leave the country if it is forced to," an official admitted. There is a social stratification in GCC countries that has natives at the top, followed by white professionals from the U.S. and Europe, immigrants from other Arab countries and then others including workers from India. "There is a division of labour among these classes and that cannot be changed in a hurry. Replacement of Indian or Asian workers on a large scale is not possible, and native Arabs will not do certain categories of work," said the official.

AJIT DOVAL

The spy who came in from the cold

The former IB chief is now a powerful adviser to the PM with a vast mandate ranging from internal security to border talks with China

VIJAITA SINGH

Earlier this year, National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval walked through the narrow lanes of northeast Delhi that just witnessed one of the worst communal riots in more than three decades. With television cameras milling around, the 75-year-old Mr. Doval, a former Intelligence Bureau (IB) Director, marched and stopped to speak to residents, assuring them of peace and justice.

On February 26, as TV channels beamed the visuals and social media was agog with praises for the septuagenarian, reporters were duly informed that it was Home Minister Amit Shah's idea to send Mr. Doval to the riot-hit areas. On March 11, Mr. Shah himself informed the Lok Sabha that it was on his request that the NSA visited northeast Delhi so that the latter "could motivate Delhi Police". The police were criticised for being mute spectators as rioters burnt houses and went on a killing spree.

Ever since Mr. Doval was reappointed NSA in the second Modi government and Mr. Shah moved to North Block, there has been discussion on the power equation at play. The question often asked: whose words on internal security weigh more to the Prime Minister? Both have responsibilities and roles that often overlap. Mr. Doval had an amiable working equation with Rajnath Singh, Mr. Shah's predecessor. After Article 370 was diluted last August and Jammu and Kashmir was placed under an unprecedented lockdown and a communication blockade, photos and videos

of Mr. Doval eating chicken curry and rice with local people in southern Kashmir's Shopian emerged. With the local cable channels snapped and the phone and Internet lines down, the video was played on loop on Delhi-based satellite news channels, the only connect Kashmiris had with the outside world. Cooped in their homes, with concertinas ringed at every lane, Kashmiris watched as Mr. Doval spoke of the benefits (of reading down Article 370 and turning the State into a Union Territory) and the bright future that awaited them. Officials say Mr. Doval

hijacked Indian Airlines flight IC-814 in Kandahar. In July 2004, he was appointed Director of the IB. After retirement in 2005, Mr. Doval retreated to his private life, often contributing to the national security discussions through commentaries and talks. When Mr. Modi came to power in 2014, the former spymaster returned to the government, as the country's fifth NSA.

On June 3 last year, when Mr. Doval was reappointed, the NSA's post was upgraded from the rank of Minister of State to Cabinet Minister in the table of precedence, a first since the post was created in 1998. The decision was reportedly taken as Mr. Doval was also leading strategic dialogues with many countries. A case in point being the talks between 'Special Representatives of India and China on the Boundary Question.'

While China was represented by the State Councilor with a Cabinet rank, India was represented by the NSA with a Minister of State rank. The mismatch in hierarchy had raised protocol issues with the Chinese. The leg-up was also accelerated by the appointment of S. Jaishankar, a retired Foreign Secretary who was much junior in service to Mr. Doval, as the External Affairs Minister. In the first stint of the Modi government, the two differed on various foreign policy matters. Mr. Jaishankar, then Foreign Secretary, had shot off a terse letter to the Home Ministry and the NSA in 2016 after Chinese Uighur activist Dolkun Isa was granted a visa to attend a conference at Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh. In the letter, Mr. Jaish-

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is heavily invested in the security affairs of Kashmir.

Rise of a cop

Born in 1945 at Pauri Garhwal in the erstwhile United Provinces, now in Uttarakhand, Mr. Doval grew up in Ajmer, Rajasthan. His father was an officer in the Indian Army. After graduating from Agra University, he joined the IPS in 1968 in the Kerala cadre. He cut his teeth in anti-insurgency operations in Mizoram and Punjab, including undercover missions. In 1999, Mr. Doval was one of those who negotiated the release of passengers from the

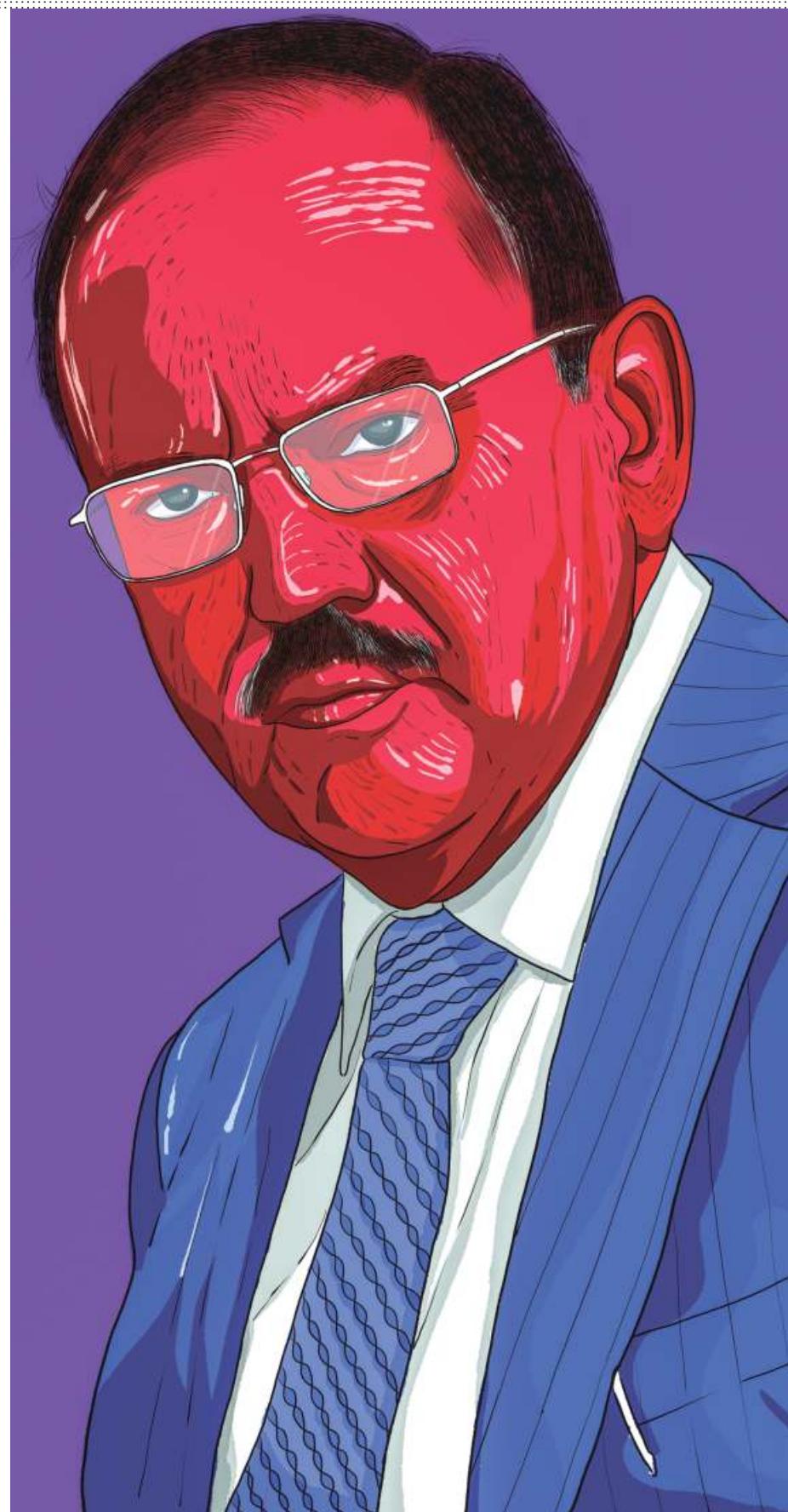


ILLUSTRATION: KANNAN SUNDAR

ankar asked both to consult the Ministry of External Affairs to "better manage the political and media fallout from such decisions".

To address the ongoing Chinese troops build-up at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Mr. Doval quietly revived the China Stu-

dy Group (CSG). An informal group constituted in 1997, the CSG comprises the Cabinet Secretary, Secretaries of Defence and Home, Army chief and Director of Intelligence Bureau, among others. The group has met at least on three occasions since May. The government had initially

denied any serious crisis on the LAC. The extent of the Chinese build-up was later established through satellite images. On July 5, Mr. Doval held talks with China's Special Representative Wang Yi on the disengagement plan at all the confrontation points, including the Galwan

Valley where 20 Indian soldiers were killed in violent clashes with the Chinese on June 15.

Before he sat for the talks on the phone, the ground commanders were sent again to check if the Chinese had indeed moved back 2 km as agreed during the June 30 Corps Commander level talks. As per the agreement, Indian troops also pulled back 1.5 km from India's perception of the LAC with a 30-day moratorium on foot patrolling. Two days before the Doval-Wang meeting, Prime Minister Modi made a surprise visit to Ladakh. Mr. Doval did not accompany the Prime Minister as he was in self-isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advisory group

Though he has an office in South Block, in 2018, Mr. Doval ensured that the Sardar Patel Bhawan at Parliament Street in New Delhi was taken over exclusively for the functioning of the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS). The NSCS, headed by Mr. Doval, works as an advisory group, comprising various experts on security related matters. Several Ministries and departments were moved out of the five-storeyed building to make space for the NSCS.

Last August, the Cabinet Secretariat amended the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961 to include the NSCS, granting it a constitutional authority. Through the order, the NSCS has been empowered to generate Cabinet notes, a role till now reserved for the concerned Ministries. The order said the Secretariat would "assist the National Security Adviser, the Principal Adviser on National Security matters to the Prime Minister; and the National Security Council". *The Hindu* has learnt that the NSCS has so far not generated a single proposal for consideration of the Union Cabinet.

The oft-repeated tales of his undercover operations in Pakistan have helped craft his image as a "super spy" among the common people. When the NSA enters a government building, security personnel and civilians stand in reverence, a gesture duly acknowledged by Mr. Doval.

CAATSA

The spectre of U.S. sanctions

Washington could punish India under a new law for buying Russian arms

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The 'Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act' (CAATSA) was passed by a Republican-controlled U.S. Congress in July 2017, in part to tighten the screws on President Donald Trump's ability to lift sanctions on Russia or alter the U.S.-Russia dynamic significantly without Congressional review. Mr. Trump's 2016 presidential campaign was at the time being scrutinised for any Russian links.

CAATSA's stated purpose was to provide "congressional review and to counter aggression by the Governments of Iran, the Russian Federation, and North Korea, and for other purposes". Mr. Trump reluctantly signed CAATSA into law in August 2017, calling it "seriously flawed" because it "encroaches on the executive branch's authority to negotiate".

The sanctions against Russia, as per Congress, were for its interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, its military aggression against Ukraine, including the annexation of Crimea, as well as for human rights violations.

Section 231 of the law provides for secondary sanctions on persons that engage in "significant transactions" with Russian defence and intelligence sectors. In September 2018, the U.S. invoked secondary CAATSA sanctions on a Chinese military department and its head for the pur-



chase of 10 SU-35 Russian combat aircraft in 2017 and S-400 equipment in 2018.

CAATSA and India

India and the U.S. have had a growing defence relationship – from "near zero" in U.S. arms sales to India in 2008 to \$15 billion in 2019, as per the State Department.

India was designated a "Major Defence Partner" of the U.S. in 2016 and it was granted Strategic Trade Authorization tier I status in 2018. These designations allowed India easier access to sensitive U.S. defence technology.

With this context in mind, then Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, joined by lawmakers from both parties who favoured a close U.S.-India relationship, made a strong case on Capitol Hill for a CAATSA waiver for countries like India (and also Vietnam and Indonesia), which had historically bought Russian arms but were now buying more U.S.

arms. At a Congressional hearing in May 2018, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo asked lawmakers to ensure "sanctions don't hit folks that were not intended to be harmed by these sanctions".

Consequently, in the summer of 2018, the U.S. Congress passed a CAATSA waiver as part of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2019. For it to apply, Congress required the President to certify that the waiver was, among other things, in the U.S.'s national security interest, the entity in question was reducing its reliance on Russian weapons and that it was cooperating with the U.S. on security matters critical to America's security interests.

In the months since then, the U.S. administration, across departments, has reiterated that CAATSA waiver language is not country-specific and that India should not rely on getting a

waiver. These comments were made repeatedly in the context of India's October 2018 decision to purchase a \$5.4 billion long-range surface-to-air missile defence shield from Russia, the S-400. Last week, the U.S. put out the same message after the Defence Acquisition Council approved the procurement of 21 MiG-29 fighter jets for the Indian Air Force (IAF), an upgrade for 59 of these and the acquisition of 12 Su-30 MKI jets – with an estimated bill of ₹18,148 crore.

Example of Turkey

CAATSA can be understood more by examining the case of Turkey. "You can look at the very serious conversation that's taking place with our NATO partner Turkey. And the same concerns will apply should India proceed with an S-400 purchase," a State Department official told media in May 2019.

The U.S. had expelled Turkey from its F-35 fighter jet programme following Turkey's receipt of the first shipments of the S-400 in July 2019, over American concerns that system might compromise its F-35 jets. Turkish pilots are no longer allowed to train on the F-35 and the NDAA for fiscal year 2020 prohibited the sale of these jets to Turkey. In December 2019, Chris Van Hollen, a Senate Democrat, and Senator Republican and Trump ally Lindsay Graham urged Mr. Pompeo to invoke CAATSA against Turkey. That has not happened yet.

An Eastern Orthodox patriarchal cathedral for about 900 years, an imperial mosque for 482 years and then a museum and a famed tourist spot starting 1935. This is the short history of Hagia Sophia, the sixth century Byzantine structure that has survived natural calamities, imperial invasions, crusades and a World War. The architectural marvel in Istanbul, which is revered by both eastern Orthodox Christians and Muslims, is now being turned into a mosque by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Hagia Sophia (literally 'Holy Wisdom') was built by the Byzantine Emperor, Justinian I, in the first half of the sixth century. This was the third cathedral being built at the site. The first one, with a wooden roof, is believed to have been commissioned by Emperor Constantine I in AD 325 on the remains of a pagan temple. This was burned down by rioters in 404. The second church, ordered by Constantine I, was also destroyed in a fire during the Nika riots of 532 that saw widespread destruction. Several earthquakes damaged it partially, leading to restorations. In early 13th century, crusaders looted the building and turned it into a Roman Catholic cathedral. But after the Byzantines recaptured the city from the Venetian crusaders, they restored the cathedral and it continued to remain the seat of the Patriarch until the Ottomans came.

On May 28, 1453, when Constantinople was under siege and the Ottomans were making steady advances into the Byzantine defence lines, Emperor Constantine XI entered the basilica to pray. After prayers, he returned to the city walls to coordinate the war efforts. But the Byzantine defence lasted only one day. On May 29, the Ottomans, under the command of Mehmed II the 'Conqueror', entered the city. Mehmed is said to have been mesmerised by the architectural beauty of the basilica. The Sultan decided to turn the basilica into a mosque. The Ottomans later commissioned the renowned medieval architect Sinan to renovate the structure. They built massive buttresses to support the walls. A mihrab (a semi-circular niche on the wall that indicates the qibla, the direction of Mecca) and a minbar (pulpit) were installed. New mi-



nars came up. The Ottomans covered many of the Byzantine mosaics with Islamic calligraphy. The images of Jesus, Mother Mary, saints and angels were either destroyed or plastered over. Some mosaics were restored when the mosque was converted into a museum. The mosque, called Ayasofya in Turkish, remained the centre of power throughout the Ottoman rule.

A secular museum After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following the First World War, secularists, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal (who was later called Ataturk, the father of Turks), came to power. Ataturk, who abolished the Caliphate, closed down Hagia Sophia in 1930. Five years later, the building was reopened as a museum. Since then, Hagia Sophia, a Unesco World Heritage site, has been one of the most visited monuments in Turkey, and more importantly, an emblem of Christian-Muslim co-existence.

Turning the monument back into a mosque has been a growing demand from the Islamist sections of Turkish society. On Friday, a Turkish administrative court cancelled the museum status of the monument. Mr. Erdogan moved fast, issuing a decree, transferring the management of Hagia Sophia from the Ministry of Culture to the Directorate of Religious Affairs. With this, Turkey's Islamist politics has taken a new turn.

HAGIA SOPHIA

The museum of conflicts

The 6th century Byzantine monument is being turned into a mosque again

STANLY JOHNY

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The Ottoman era Barraging a few years after the

Chase double checks England's progress

Sibley comes good in the second outing as the home team wipes out the first-innings deficit



Good hand: Dom Sibley's patient half-century ensured that England put up a better show against some accurate West Indies bowling. ■ GETTY IMAGES

WI IN ENGLAND

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SOUTHAMPTON

Roston Chase proved a thorn in England's side once again as West Indies strengthened its grip on the first Test here on Saturday.

England was 168-3 in its second innings at tea on the fourth day, 54 runs ahead after West Indies made 318 in its first essay.

Chase had two for 45 off 19 overs after both Rory Burns and Joe Denly 'gifted' their wickets to the off-spinner.

In between their exits, Dom Sibley – bowled off a no-ball immediately after completing his half-century – fell for exactly fifty when he was caught down the leg-side off Shannon Gabriel.

Zak Crawley was unbeaten on 38, with England captain Ben Stokes yet to get off the mark. The latter, leading the side in the absence of Joe Root, had top-scored with 43 in England's first innings total of 204. He led from the front with the ball too, finishing with four for 49.

England 265 for six

England was 265 for six in 95 overs in its second innings. Crawley (76), Stokes (46) and Buttler (9) were dismissed after tea.

England resumed at 15 for no loss in sunny conditions on a placid pitch. West Indies was without a frontline spinner after omitting Rahkeem Cornwall.

SCOREBOARD

England – 1st innings: 204.

West Indies – 1st innings: Kraig Brathwaite lbw b Stokes 65, John Campbell lbw b Anderson 28, Shai Hope c Stokes b Bess 16, Shamarr Brooks c Buttler b Anderson 39, Roston Chase lbw b Anderson 47, Jerome Blackwood c Anderson b Bess 12, Shane Dowrich c Buttler b Stokes 61, Jason Holder c Archer b Stokes 5, Alzarri Joseph b Stokes 18, Kemar Roach (not out) 1; Shannon Gabriel b Wood 4; Extras (lb-21, nb-1); Total (in 102 overs): 318.

Fall of wickets: 1-43, 2-102, 3-140, 4-173, 5-186, 6-267, 7-281, 8-306, 9-313.

But it could call upon Chase, who although a batting all-rounder took a Test-best eight for 60 when West Indies beat England at his Barbados home ground last year en route to a 2-1 series win.

And having already made 47 in this match, Chase removed the well-set opener Burns for 42 when the left-hander cut the ball straight to backward point, ending a first-wicket stand of 72.

England bowling: Anderson 25-11-62-3, Archer 22-3-61-0, Wood 22-2-74-1, Stokes 14-5-49-4, Bess 19-5-51-2.

England – 2nd innings: Rory Burns c Campbell b Chase 42, Dom Sibley c Dowrich b Gabriel 50, Joe Denly c Holder b Chase 29, Zak Crawley (batting) 38, Ben Stokes (batting) 0; Extras (lb-8, nb-1); 9; Total (for three wkts. in 70 overs, at tea): 168.

Fall of wickets: 1-72, 2-113, 3-151.

West Indies bowling: Roach 16-7-32-0, Gabriel 12-2-34-1, Holder 12-6-23-0, Chase 19-6-45-2, Joseph 10-0-23-0, Brathwaite 1-0-3-0.

Impressive Hamilton takes pole

Beats Red Bull's Verstappen on a rain-drenched track

FORMULA ONE

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SPIELBERG

World champion Lewis Hamilton showed he's still the best driver in wet conditions, keeping his composure on a rain-drenched track to take pole position for the Styrian Grand Prix.

It was the Mercedes driver's record-extending 89th career pole and particularly impressive as he first beat Red Bull driver Max Verstappen's mark and then his own leading mark on his final lap.

Valtteri Bottas could only qualify in fourth place.

Driving rain washed out the third and final practice session at midday and threatened qualifying altogether. But the cars managed to finally get out onto the Red Bull Ring even though rain was still lashing down.

Starting grid: 1st row: Hamilton, Verstappen; 2: Sainz, Bottas; 3: Ocon, Norris; 4: Albon, Gasly; 5: Ricciardo, Vettel; 6: Leclerc, Russell; 7: Stroll, Kvyat; 8: Magnussen, Raikkonen; 9: Perez, Latifi; 10: Giovinazzi, Grosjean.



Rain King: Lewis Hamilton delivered one of his top performances despite the treacherous conditions during qualifying on Saturday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

F1 teams risk prison term

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SPIELBERG

countries, has been sent to the teams,, according to Autosport.

The report said that those who break the lockdown rules would face imprisonment, or a fine of £15,000.

The warning comes as FIA is investigating Charles Leclerc and Valtteri Bottas for leaving the Formula One 'bubble' at Spielberg.

SRFI looks for a foreign coach

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI), through the Sports Authority of India, has invited applications from foreign coaches for the Indian teams from October this year, for the 2022 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

Eligibility

The candidates are required to be below 50 years of age and be able to travel with the team for major events. The applicant should also have good knowledge about doubles."

The coach will be recruited for a period of two years. The last date for submission of entries is July 22.

"We spoke to SAI about a foreign coach and they said that an advertisement needs to be put up. Only those who apply will be considered," Cyrus Poncha, secretary of SRFI told The Hindu on Saturday.

Dutee puts her BMW up for sale

Wants to raise funds for her training expenses

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Sprinter Dutee Chand put on sale her BMW car to raise funds to take care of training expenses.

"It is a very costly car which I bought at ₹30 lakhs and its maintenance has become an issue for me. Moreover, I don't have the parking slot too to keep it as I have two more cars.

"So, I have decided to sell it off so that the money raised can be handy to continue training," the 24-year-old Dutee, who has been training in Bhubaneswar, told The Hindu on Saturday.

"I have to spend about ₹1 lakh alone on diet and then have to pay salaries to my support staff including trainer and physio

What about salary? "I get only ₹60,000 per month being on the rolls of Odisha Mining Corporation which is obviously not sufficient in these times," she said.

"Definitely, I can understand these are challenging times for anyone to extend



Dutee Chand
■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

I have to spend about ₹1 lakh alone on diet and then have to pay salaries to my support staff including trainer and physio

financial assistance.

But being an athlete aiming to win an Olympic medal, I just cannot afford to sit back and watch in disappointment with the way things are unfolding around me," says the athlete, the only Indian to win a 2019 Universiade gold in sprints.

Biggest jolt

"For me, postponement of the Olympics is the biggest jolt as I was preparing with all seriousness and intensity.

"The lockdown because of COVID-19 virus has put all my planning in jeopardy and I am desperately hoping for a turn-around in the fortunes to be back on track at the earliest," she said.

He was awarded the Republic's most distinguished award, honorary Irish citizenship, in 1996.

Jack Charlton passes away



Jack Charlton. ■ FILE PHOTO

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Jack Charlton, a member of the England 1966 World Cup winning side and elder brother of the legendary Sir Bobby, has died aged 85, his family announced on Saturday.

Charlton was an integral part of the great Don Revie-managed Leeds United side that won the 1969 League title and the 1972 FA Cup. Charlton also enjoyed a fairytale spell as manager of the Republic of Ireland guiding it to several major finals as well as the 1990 World Cup quarterfinals and last 16 in 1994.

Charlton spoke to The Hindu on Charlton's lasting legacy.

Terry Phelan remembers Charlton's abiding legacy

If he wanted, Jack could have been the PM of Ireland for a million terms'

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU

It was a dream come true for Terry Phelan when he received his maiden Republic of Ireland international call-up from childhood hero, Jack Charlton, in 1991.

Charlton, who was part of the victorious 1966 World Cup England team, passed away on Saturday. South United FC Technical Director

Phelan spoke to The Hindu on Charlton's lasting legacy.

Leeds United legend

I started my career with Leeds. Jack – by then a legend at Leeds (with over 600 appearances for the club) – would come to watch the young lads like myself train and play reserve team matches.

Ireland call up

He would come into our dressing room and tell us stories from his playing days. As a youngster, that

was extraordinary. I'll never forget receiving my debut international call-up from Jack. He wanted the Ireland team to feel like a family.

There were wonderful players like Roy Keane, Dennis Irwin, Andy Townsend and Jason McAteer in the national team, but Jack left no place for egos in the dressing room.

Jack, a World Cup winner, didn't have an ego himself. By just lifting one finger, Jack could get his message across. Jack would always say – 'do your jobs, and you will be folk heroes in Ireland'.

Legacy

He was right. Today, I can walk anywhere in Ireland and people will show me love. And that's thanks to the great Jack Charlton.

If he wanted, Jack could have been the Prime Minister of Ireland for a million terms.

Burnley ends Liverpool's perfect run at Anfield

Norwich swept away by Antonio's four-goal blitz for West Ham

Euro Leagues

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LIVERPOOL

Liverpool failed to win a Premier League game at Anfield for the first time since January 2019 as Burnley ended a run of 24 straight victories for Jurgen Klopp's men on home soil, thanks to Jay Rodriguez's strike in a 1-1 draw on Saturday.

Andy Robertson's first-half header had the champion on course to maintain their perfect home record and close in on a record points tally for the English top flight. But Liverpool was made to pay for a host of missed chances when Rodriguez's fine finish earned a point to further Burnley's late push for a place in Europe next season.

Earlier, Norwich was con-

Jitu puts serving the country and Army above sports

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Asian Games gold medallist and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna awardee Jitu Rai is on national duty.

Promoted to the rank of Subedar Major in the Army, Jitu has flown to the North-East to be with his regiment.

"There is no sport happening. I thought, why waste

time. It is the best time to serve the Army and the country.

"That is my priority ahead of sports," says Jitu, who moved from his family base in Indore.

On reaching his destination and his unit, Jitu had to be in quarantine for 21 days, before reporting for duty and getting the promotion.

Boxers' alleged quarantine violation: SAI forms panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Saturday formed an inquiry committee to investigate three boxers' alleged violation of COVID-19 quarantine norms at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala.

The four-member probe panel is headed by SAI secretary Rohit Bharadwaj and includes Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) CEO Commander Rajesh Rajagopal, former hockey coach A.K. Bansal and SAI Deputy Director (Personnel) Dandapani.

SAI was forced to form the committee after Commonwealth and Asian Games gold-winner Vikas Krishan, Neeraj Goyat and Asian Games bronze-winner Satish Kumar allegedly violated quarantine rules.

"I never ignore shooting. I am carrying my gun and get to practice dry-firing for about one or two hours every day," says Jitu, who had made the Olympic final in Rio.

He has won World Championship silver, apart from a bunch of medals at World Cups and Commonwealth Games.

"Whether it is sports or the Army, I will do my job with the same devotion and concentration," says the 32-year-old Jitu.

India's tiger census of 2018 sets a Guinness world record

Camera traps were placed in 26,838 locations at 141 sites



Night stroll: A tiger photographed using camera traps at Nagarhole National Park in Karnataka. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

3,48,58,623 photographs of wildlife (76,651 of which were that of tigers and 51,777 of leopards; the remainder were other native fauna). From these photographs, 2,461 individual tigers (excluding cubs) were identified using stripe-pattern-recognition software.

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted, "The All India Tiger Estimation is now in the Guinness World Records for being the largest camera trap wildlife survey, a great moment indeed and a shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat."

Bachchan tests positive for COVID-19, hospitalised

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan on Saturday said he had tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to the isolation ward of the Nanawati hospital. The 77-year-old actor announced on Twitter that his family and staff members had been tested for COVID-19 and the results were awaited. "All [those who] have been in close proximity [with] me in the last 10 days are requested to please get themselves tested," he said.

The actor's latest outing was in Shoojit Sircar's *Gulabo Sitabo*, which released on Amazon Prime Video last month, marking Mr. Bachchan's entry in the OTT space. The film was released directly on the streaming platform due to the COVID-19 outbreak.



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