



Two killed in gas leak at pharmaceutical plant in Visakhapatnam
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Nagaland's law and order situation has improved: Neiphiu Rio
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India, Sri Lanka hold talks over debt after Rajapaksa's request
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Corps Commanders hold talks in Chushul

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

India and China held another round of Corps Commanders-level talks at Chushul in Ladakh on Tuesday aimed at reducing tensions along the border as earlier efforts made no headway. The talks were under way till the time of going to press.

The talks between Lt.Gen. Harinder Singh, General Officer Commanding of the Leh-based 14 Corps, and Maj.Gen. Liu Lin, Commander of the South Xinjiang Military District, began around 11 a.m. at the Border Meeting Point at Chushul on the Indian side. The earlier round of talks was held on the Chinese side at Moldo, opposite Chushul.

At the second round of talks on June 22, the two sides had come to a "mutual consensus" to disengage along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

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Core industry output contracts for third month

Only fertilizers recorded growth of 7.5% amid overall dip

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

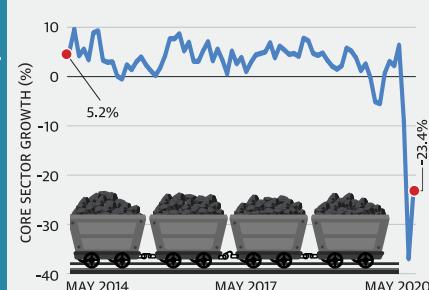
The output of eight core sector industries shrank 23% in May 2020, the third straight month of contraction, according to data released by the Commerce Ministry on Tuesday. Although the contraction narrowed from the 37% decline in April, economists expect the trend to continue at least through June.

Of the eight core sectors, the fertilizer industry was the only one which saw actual growth in output in May, rising 7.5% in comparison to May 2019. The rest continued to contract, with the steel sector performing the worst and recording a 48.4% fall, while cement production dropped 22%.

The energy sectors also showed negative growth,

Sharp falls

Coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizers, steel, cement and electricity make up the core sectors



with coal production falling 14% and crude oil and natural gas production dropping 7% and 16.8% respectively. Petroleum refinery production, which carries the greatest weight in the core sector index, saw a contraction of 21%, while electricity generation dropped 15.6%.

"Optically, it is a better picture in May as compared to April, but the situation is still way below normal or

pre-COVID levels," said Devenra Kumar Pant, chief economist at India Ratings and Research, the Indian arm of the Fitch group.

"It is the kharif sowing season and there has been a good monsoon so far, with a good reservoir position, so we are seeing some growth in the fertilizer sector," Mr. Pant said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Sharp fall in reporting of non-COVID-19 diseases

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The ongoing novel coronavirus pandemic has led to India's disease surveillance system recording unusually fewer instances of diseases other than COVID-19, according to information on weekly outbreaks available on the website of the Integrated Disease Surveillance

Programme (IDSP), a Health Ministry body.

The IDSP issues weekly reports on disease outbreaks across the country based on its surveillance network that spans at least 600 districts.

In the week of March 16-22, the most updated report that is available, there were only six outbreaks/

disease alerts reported. In the same week last year, there were 17 alerts; in 2018, there were 28, and in 2017, there were 45. An alert is when a sizeable number of cases from a region are reported. The reports include specific villages from where the cases emerged.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

With the inspiration of Hon'ble Chief Minister
Mamata Banerjee

Telemedicine: An important initiative in West Bengal to fight against Covid-19



To provide essential medical advice to Covid patients in the state, a 24x7 Telemedicine centre has been launched.



From 12 noon on 1 July, experienced doctors will be present at this centre and Covid patients can call and get necessary medical advice from them on the phone.

Bengal Fights Corona

Phone number of the Telemedicine centre: 033-23576001

Issued in the public interest by the Department of Health & Family Welfare

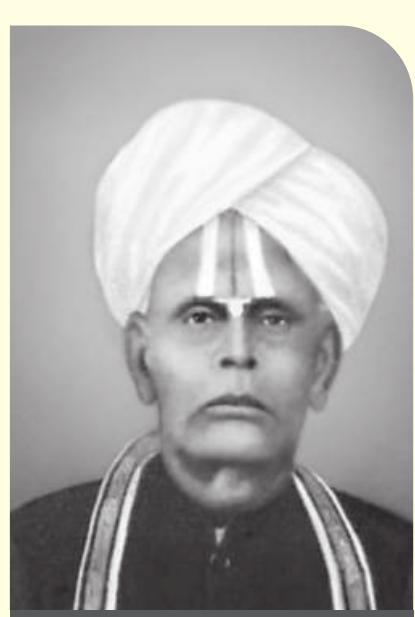
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LATE SRI M A VENKATARAMA CHETTIAR



LATE SRI ATHI KRISHNA CHETTIAR

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OUR VISIONARIES

SAW YESTERDAY,

KVB IS THE

FUTURE TO MANY,

TODAY.

What our visionaries sowed in 1916, is what allows people to reap every day. On 1st of July, we celebrate our Founders' Day to pay tribute to our founding fathers – Shri M.A. Venkatarama Chettiar and Shri Athi Krishna Chettiar.

Their foresight has enabled KVB to become a bank that spearheads the industry. With innovations and many firsts, KVB has a growing business of ₹1,08,000 cr. We salute our founders with continuous change and innovation, thereby keeping their spirit and vision alive. And this is what makes us the bank of the future.

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Banned apps will get chance to send in their clarifications

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the Union government banned 59 Chinese applications, including popular ones such as TikTok, Shareit, Mi Video Call, Club Factory and Cam Scanner, citing threat to national security and sovereignty, an Information Technology Ministry official said the banned platforms would be given a chance to submit their clarifications.

This is in line with provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.

Following the ban, TikTok withdrew its app from Google Play Store and Apple App Store. In a statement on Tuesday, it said it had been invited to meet the authorities concerned and submit clarifications.

The company's India head, Nikhil Gandhi, said it had complied with all Indian laws related to data privacy and had not shared information of any Indian user with foreign governments, including the Chinese. "The government has issued an interim order for the blocking of 59 apps, including TikTok, and we are in the process of complying with it."

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CHINA CONCERNED ▶ PAGE 11

Free foodgrain scheme till Nov.

Additional outlay of ₹90,000 cr. under PMGKAY will benefit 80 cr. people: Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

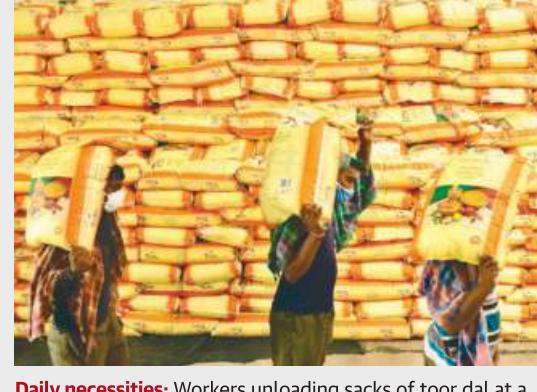
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced that the free grain distribution scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) will be extended by five months till the end of November, with an additional estimated outlay of ₹90,000 crore.

Making the announcement in an address to the nation via television, he said the government's decision to start the PMGKAY within days of the lockdown had ensured that the poorest of the poor were not left hungry, with 80 crore people having benefited from the free distribution of grains.

'No hunger'

"Timely decisions of lockdown and distribution of free grains by both the government and civil society outfits ensured that our poor did not suffer hunger. Population twice that of the European Union, 12 times the population of the U.K., and two-and-a-half times the population of the United States was provided free grains by the government



DAILY NECESSITIES: Workers unloading sacks of toor dal at a warehouse near Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

Timely decisions of lockdown and distribution of free grains by both the government and civil society outfits ensured that our poor did not suffer hunger. Population twice that of the European Union, 12 times the population of the U.K., and two-and-a-half times the population of the United States was provided free grains by the government

NARENDRA MODI,
PRIME MINISTER

would also be spending more. "Therefore, the government has decided to extend the programme to the end of November," he said.

Mr. Modi thanked the farmers and the "honest" taxpayers for making it possible to put this ambitious scheme in place.

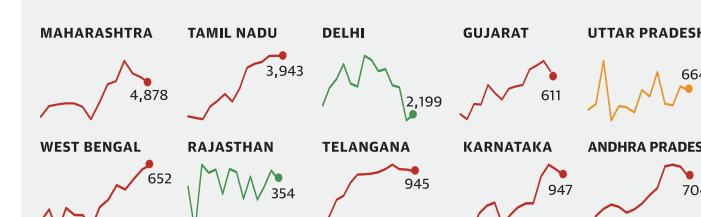
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Viral tracker

With 17,672 new COVID-19 cases recorded on Tuesday, India's tally rose to 5,85,202 infections

CASES	17,672	DEATHS	505
7 DAY-CHANGE	+4.8%	7 DAY-CHANGE	+19.1%

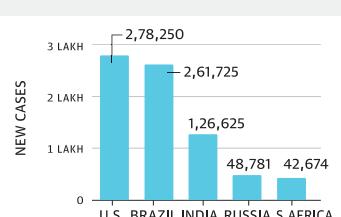
The line graphs depict the new cases in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases in the latest seven days are much higher than the previous seven days, then the cases are rising in that State; if they are lower, then cases are dropping; if they are similar, then the cases are flattening.



ANXIOUS WAIT: People waiting to get tested for COVID-19 at the Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

WEEKLY CASES

India recorded 1,26,625 cases in the week ending on Monday, the third highest after Brazil and the U.S.



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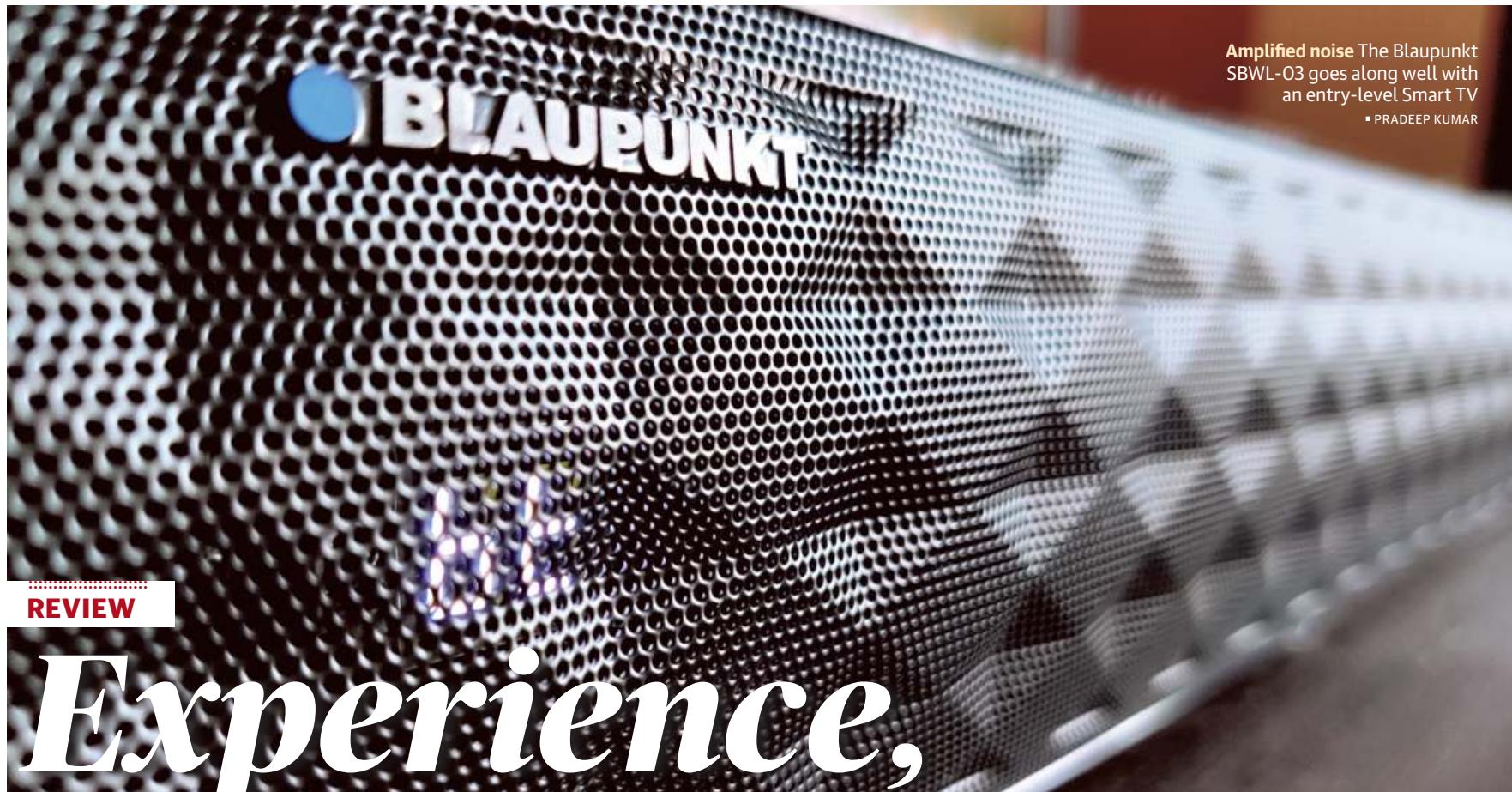
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REVIEW

Experience, interrupted

■ PRADEEP KUMAR

Sound was an unexpected collateral in the TV evolution as big Cathode-ray tube sets made way for smarter and sleeker panels. As most smart TVs generate noise of not more than 20W output, this also created the need for innovation in surround sound technology. Massive home theatre equipment was going out of style, and in came soundbar technology with a search for an immersive audio-visual experience slowly growing desperate.

Maximalism was out, and minimalism – with high performance – was in. That said, we are spoilt for choice as soundbars that tick desired boxes oc-

German firm Blaupunkt's latest soundbar offering falls short of quality performance standards but, for its price point, offers great value for money

cupy the market.

Inside the box

The latest product out of German gadget company Blaupunkt's stables, model SBWL-03 with subwoofer delivering 2.1ch audio output with Dolby Digital amplification adds to the category.

At nearly 38 inches, the SBWL-03 is pretty long for a soundbar at any price range. That presents an issue. Irrespective of where your television is

set – mounted on a wall or on a table – you will need to rethink the space in your home to accommodate the soundbar and its cousin.

The build quality is average. The product feels entirely plastic, except out at front where the grille panel adds a touch of class. Unlike previous models, the SBWL-03 is not a perfect rectangle. The curved finish on the front lends it a cupcake-look from the side. However, we are not a fan of the Blaupunkt

badge, it looks and feels cheap. An LED output screen on the front that displays two letters lights up once the device is turned on. There is a power button, USB input and volume control keys provided to one side of the soundbar. However, should the remote lose its functionality, you will be left with no option to change the input modes, adjust the bass, treble and sound equaliser levels – a drawback.

Here is the deal: whether you are able to leverage maximum performance out of the device relies solely on the TV you use. The TV we connected the SBWL-03 to was a Sony 4K UHD, which despite its 20W output offers deeper surround, clean audio and quality sound even at higher volumes.

The verdict

So the test was to mainly observe if the Blaupunkt SBWL-03 could add an extra layer of depth to the sound field, amplify the richness of high pitch noises and generate enough bass to earn a nod. The device claims to deliver

Amplified noise The Blaupunkt SBWL-03 goes along well with an entry-level Smart TV

■ PRADEEP KUMAR

an audio output of 100W + 150W. When turned on, it starts at 50% volume (16 units). SBWL-03's best performance was observed between 18 and 24 units. Any lower, and the sound amplification is negligible; any higher and the noise is over-amplified and turns uncomfortable to continue listening, making for a limited operative space.

So, you will have to manually adjust your TV volume at regular intervals to keep the sound quality

and levels at an optimum. The subwoofer offers decent bass, but for 150W output, it is nearly not enough.

Connecting the device to a Bluetooth input was seamless but the connection is sketchy; any minor interruption – sometimes as simple as someone standing between the device



and its Bluetooth source – results in disrupted play.

Circling back to the point of importance of the quality of TV, the market is flooded with entry-level Smart TVs selling for around the same price point as SBWL-03, sometimes even cheaper in the good old days before COVID-19 when offering a 'lightning deal' was routine for an e-tailer.

Expecting decent sound output from these entry range TVs is a bit of a stretch. For such TVs, the Blaupunkt SBWL-03 offers great value for money. You get a product that looks refined from

a distance and delivers average performance consistently; believe us, consistency is key. The Aux-in output does the job though if you would like to try the HDMI input, be reminded that Blaupunkt devices are not known to deliver enhanced sound via HDMI. Still, the sound output is reliable when delivered from a wired source. Users may also be tempted to try out Blaupunkt's earlier models that are priced much cheaper and deliver nearly identical performance.

However, if you own a quality television set, spending a few extra thousands on a soundbar that offers 5.1ch audio output, more manoeuvrability and a deeper surround sound seems like the better bet.

The Blaupunkt SBWL-03 is available on Amazon India for ₹12,990 and on Flipkart for ₹12,591

SPECIFICATIONS	
HARDWARE:	2.1ch soundbar and sub-woofer
DIMENSIONS:	L/H/D – 96x8x8cm
INPUT:	USB/Bluetooth/AUX LineIn/Optical/HDMI(ARC)
DISPLAY:	LED
POWER OUTPUT:	50W*2 + 150W = 250W
VOLTAGE:	AC120-240V
SPEAKER DRIVER:	2.27*2 + 8S



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(An autonomous body set up by Reserve Bank of India, Central Financial Institutions and Public Sector Banks)

INSTITUTE OF BANKING PERSONNEL SELECTION

(An assessment, India trusts us

Website: www.ibps.in | In case of queries / complaints please log in to <http://cgrs.ibps.in>

COMMON RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR RECRUITMENT OF OFFICERS (SCALE-I, II & III) AND OFFICE ASSISTANT (MULTIPURPOSE) IN REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBs) - CRP RRBs IX

The online examinations for the next Common Recruitment Process for RRBs (CRP RRBs IX) for recruitment of Group "A"-Officers (Scale-I, II & III) and Group "B"-Office Assistant (Multipurpose) will be conducted by the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS) tentatively in September and October/November 2020. The interviews for recruitment of Group "A"- Officers (Scale-I, II & III) under the same process will be coordinated by the Nodal Regional Rural Banks with the help of NABARD and IBPS in consultation with appropriate authority tentatively in the month of November 2020. Candidates, intending to apply for CRP RRBs - IX should ensure that they fulfil the minimum eligibility criteria on the stipulated date as specified in the detailed notification issued and hosted on authorised website by IBPS.

Activity	Tentative Dates
On-line registration including Edit/Modification of Application & Payment of Application Fees/Intimation Charges	01.07.2020 to 21.07.2020
Conduct of Pre-Exam Training (PET)*	24.08.2020 to 29.08.2020
Online Examination – Preliminary	September / October, 2020
Result of Online exam – Preliminary	October, 2020
Online Examination – Main / Single	October/November, 2020

* In case it is possible and safe to hold PET

Candidates are advised to regularly keep in touch with the authorised IBPS website www.ibps.in for details and updates. Before registering online candidates are advised to read the detailed notification and follow the instructions mentioned therein.

Mumbai

Date: 01.07.2020

Hear me now

The in-ear Mi True Wireless Earphones 2 look familiar and offer pleasant sound but little else



■ DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

As we continue to ride out isolation periods – with more lockdowns imminent – we turn to earphones and earbuds to steal some more alone time. When the Mi True Wireless Earphones 2 arrived, I had high hopes; the sound tech of Xiaomi's televisions has been impressive, after all. For these earphones, do not expect fancy packaging; these are projected to have a user-friendly experience with no extra fuss.

The earphones with the charging case are quite light at just 50 grams. The build quality is decent with a somewhat frosted finish – with a somewhat obvious AirPods-like design. I was surprised that these earphones do not have an IP (Ingress Protection) rating; there are less expensive earphones out there which have decent ratings. Though they are not marketed as sports-friendly accessories, even the most 'lazy' gadgets have some kind of spill protection.

Performance power?

The charging case has a capacity of 250mAh, while each fully-charged earphone has 30mAh; and charging is done via a USB-C cable which is provided in the package. This is surprising, given there are earphones with 75mAh per earphone with a 500mAh charging case for a lower cost. I found there was not enough juice to watch a full-length Hindi movie while connected to these, but I could have a lazy session of idle listening for about 40 minutes, but with only a 10-metre wireless range.

The first time I tried these earphones was during an hour's session of dynamic yoga, but they could not hold steady. I liked the sound quality for its crispness and clarity, but I would have liked some more bass.

I am usually sceptical of in-ear earphones without silicone wing-tips due to the lack of noise isolation; when the volume is pushed up past 60%, people in your proximity are privy to what you are streaming.

For those who are wary of Chinese brands at the moment, keep in mind the company's India head Manu Kumar Jain announced that, for a while now, 99% of their smartphones have been made in India in support of the government's Vocal For Local programme.

It is worth noting that Xiaomi offers better performing earphones – the wired ones, in particular – so do check those out, if you are brand-particular.

The Mi True Wireless Earphones 2 are available for ₹4,499 (original MRP ₹5,499).

POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



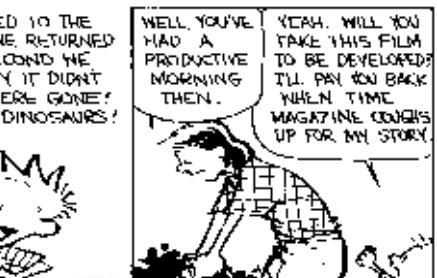
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS



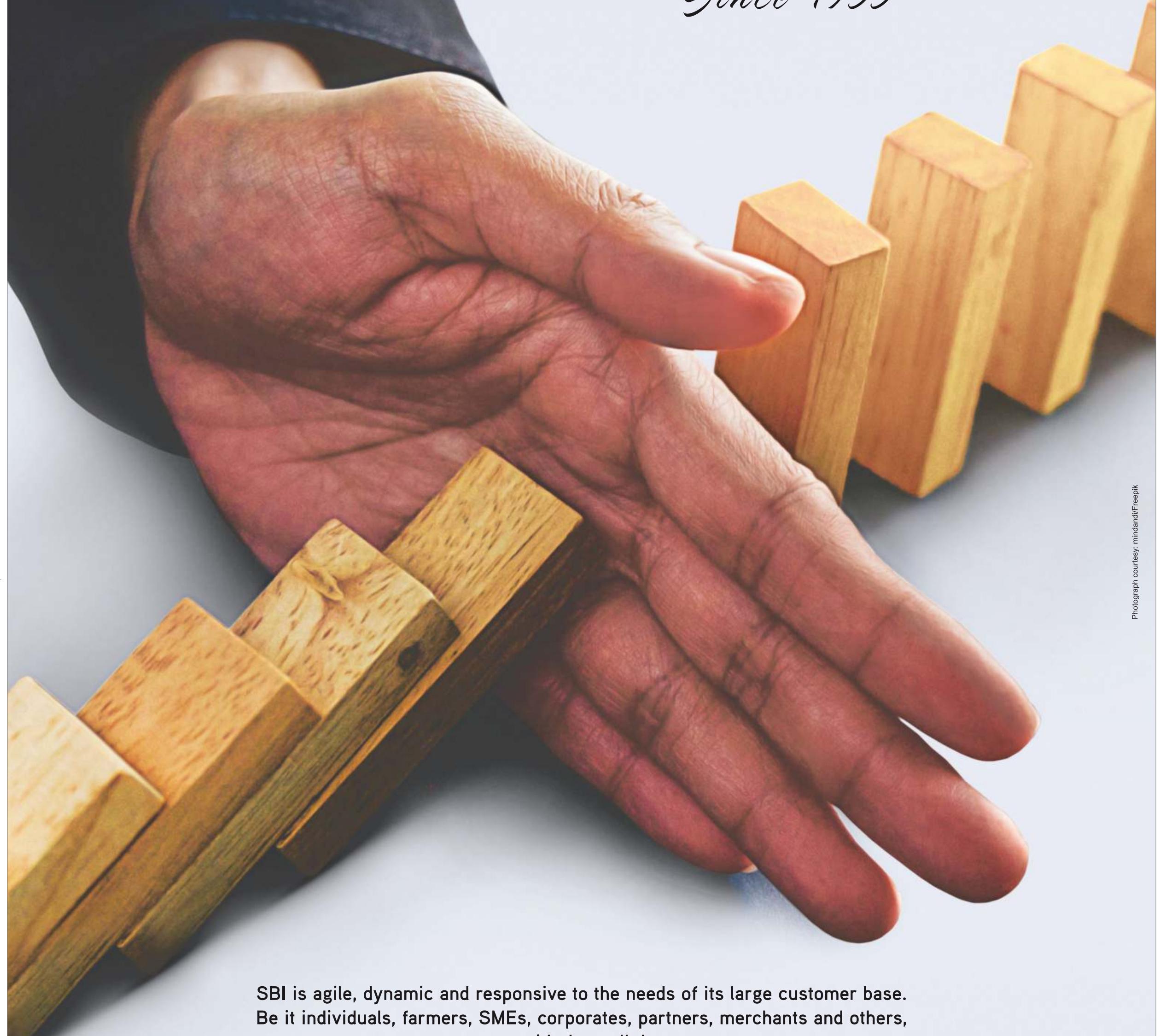
CALVIN AND HOBBES





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— Since 1955 —



Photograph courtesy: mindandif/Freepik

SBI is agile, dynamic and responsive to the needs of its large customer base. Be it individuals, farmers, SMEs, corporates, partners, merchants and others, we are with them all the way.

Our digital journey has led to simplified, customised solutions for all our customers. YONO SBI App, our integrated, digital banking platform, enables users to access a variety of financial and lifestyle services.

More importantly, we feel responsible and thankful to the people who have reposed their trust in us since inception.

Today, we celebrate our 65th Foundation Day with all humility.

Building a strong 'Bharat': Taking banking to the masses in the hinterland through FI&MM



Customers at Dhubri District, Assam



Doorstep Banking Services Being provided to Senior Citizen, Sonamura Branch, Agartala, Tripura

State Bank of India with nearly 22000 retail banking branches out of which nearly 14000 are located in semi urban areas has always been at the forefront of development of the nation - be it corporates, MSME, consumer finance, housing or rural development.

Rededicating itself to the development of "Bharat" and in line with its vision of "Being the Bank of choice for a transforming India" the Bank has set up a dedicated Financial Inclusion & Micro Markets Vertical (FI&MM). With this, nearly 8000 branches in rural and semi urban areas would focus exclusively on micro finance, agriculture & allied activities and micro/small enterprises. This strategic move is aimed at reaching out to the masses at the bottom of the pyramid. With this initiative, SBI is also creating a value chain for the growth of these communities and their future generations.

A major portion of SBI's CSR spending will be through this FI&MM vertical so as to ensure

community development. The Bank has set up 260 dedicated District Sales Hubs to strengthen the bonds with the rural economy. These Hubs would work in close association with the local economy, government agencies and engage with SHGs, JLGs, FPOs, NGOs, etc. Working closely with the local community helps these Hubs in identifying the future financial requirements of people, hence constructing a blueprint for immense growth.

The sales hubs would deliver customised financial products for the local economy. Each hub would act as an outbound sales force and promote investment credit in 25-30 branches attached to it. Their efforts would be supplemented by recruiting officers who specialise in agriculture, horticulture and social banking. Such interventions would result in multi-fold benefits to various sectors of the local economy.

In addition to the branch Network, the Bank also extends banking services through its 63,000 Customer Service Points, which are located in close proximity, at no additional cost to its customers.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

Financial inclusion and community development go hand in hand at SBI. Education, women empowerment, healthcare and sanitation, arts, culture and heritage, sustainability and environment – are areas in which SBI Foundation's CSR activities has been consistently working. Various CSR programmes deliver societal benefits to all geographical regions of the country without any regional, linguistic, caste, creed, religious or other barriers. This has made true difference to the lives of over a million beneficiaries from underserved communities.

These schemes are available at very low costs. The CSPs would also act as collection agents for collecting Banks loan instalments as and when they fall due. The CSPs provide self-employment to the Kiosk operator having certain basic computer proficiency.

Further in terms of an MOU signed by the bank with National Skill Development Corporation, 8500 local youth would be engaged as apprentices under the initiative of Ministry of Skill Development to increase their employability. These apprentices would be attached at the Bank's rural and semi-urban branches.

The FI&MM initiative of the Bank would be a game changer in making available effective & banking & financial services in rural areas. It would help in meeting the credit needs of rural areas and create a framework of continuous growth.

IMPARTING FINANCIAL LITERACY:

A key factor intertwined with financial inclusion is financial literacy. With the objective of imparting financial literacy the Bank has set up 341 Financial Literacy Centres (FLCs) across the country. In FY 2019-20, a total of 29,995 financial literacy camps were conducted by these FLCs across the country where 16.82 lakh people participated.

As a part of the pilot project implemented by RBI, the Bank has also set up 15 Centres for Financial Literacy (CFL) at Block level, five each in the state of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana in association with NGOs identified by RBI

An all-inclusive approach in creating more awareness about financial products and organizing aggressive education cum promotion campaigns in unbanked parts of any region has led to the success of SBI financial inclusion initiative. Going forward, it would help in uplifting the economic status of the unbanked population, by encouraging them to be 'Atmanirbhar'.

ROBUST BC CHANNEL & CSPS

Over the years, the Bank has built a robust network of low-cost Business Correspondent (BC) Channel. BC model is supported by 19 national BCs and 47 Circle BCs, who deliver Banking services through Customer Service Points (CSPs). BC Channel provides banking products and services to the populace in unbanked areas. It also facilitates reduction of footfalls in Bank branches. SBI has leveraged on the advanced inhouse "Kiosk Banking" technology to take banking to every corner of the country.

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CSPs, Our lockdown heroes

The Customer Service Points (CSPs) became instrumental in delivering banking services to remote areas during the national lockdown phase. They are SBI's covid-heroes.



Take the case of Salami Shashankar, a 27 year old girl who since March 25 has been providing banking services to 20 tribal hamlets in Koraput district, Odisha. She is an outsourced staff, aka business correspondent (BC)/Customer Service Point for SBI Laxmipur branch.

Each day she carries 70 withdrawal and deposit slips, stamp pad, a laptop and cash of around ₹30,000 to ₹40,000.

Known as the 'bank madam', she plays the primary role of making various State and Centre Government subsidies available to these communities.

Salami's relentless efforts during lockdown has benefitted more than 1000 customers in times of dire need.

The story of Manoshi Borah is equally inspiring. Early morning, Manoshi Borah, a CSP of SBI Dergaon Branch reaches her work place by crossing the Brahmaputra river by a boat. This has been her routine even during the lockdown phase.

Following the lockdown guidelines, she has been providing banking services in Bhekeli and Bakchi villages in a river island district - Kajuli. Duly trained by her respective SBI Branch, she has been supporting SBI's financial inclusion initiatives.

SBI MUTUAL FUND

A PARTNER FOR LIFE

As the largest Asset Manager in the country, we at SBI Mutual Fund understand the responsibility we have to make people financially literate, particularly in smaller town and cities where we are the leaders.

We have made significant efforts to help our existing and potential investors understand the basic principles of investing for their goals. We acknowledge the responsibility we owe to our investors when we manage their money and our focus on SLR or Safety, Liquidity and Returns, in that order has helped us build trust and confidence in investors.

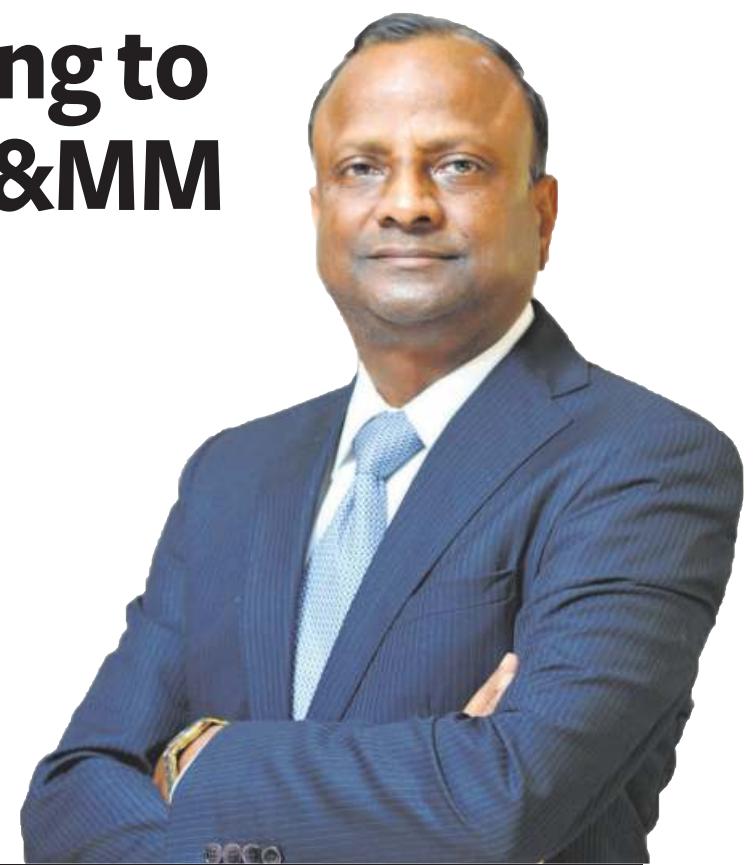
Over the years, there has been greater financialization of assets and mutual funds have become the most convenient and low cost investment option available to plan for long term wealth creation. With an extensive network of independent financial advisors and SBI branches our mutual fund solutions are accessible to millions of savers across the country. We would like to welcome all of them to start their investing journey today. As our parent SBI prides itself as a Banker to every Indian, we want to be the Fund Manager to every Indian.

PERFORMANCE UNDER FINANCIAL INCLUSION

As on 31.03.2020

- Opened **12.97 cr** FI accounts under BC Channel
- With deposit level of **₹30,098 cr**
- FY 2019-20 - BC Channel recorded **49.63 cr** transactions
- Amounting to **₹2,29,067 cr**
- Translates to around **18 lacs** transactions per day.

Shri Rajnish Kumar,
CHAIRMAN, STATE BANK OF INDIA



DBT: Reaching beneficiaries in record time

A time bound process, ₹30,796.39 crore and 20.56 crore women beneficiaries with Jan Dhan Accounts. These numbers can only briefly indicate how State Bank of India made Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMKY) for the poor a success in record time. During the COVID-19 pandemic in India, Hon'ble Prime Minister announced a relief package under PMKY for the poor - ₹500 each to be credited to women Jan Dhan Account holders for the months of April, May and June, to tide over the hardship caused by severe lockdowns. Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Rural Development, directed SBI to act as a nodal bank for sending funds to 32 Public and Private sector banks, for onward credit of ₹500/-, which was achieved in record time.

HOW SBI CHAMPIONED IT?
The number of beneficiaries for this Yojna was huge. Hence efforts were made to stagger the crediting and its disbursement in a phased manner. This was done to avoid over-crowding of branches. The process continued for three months.

On receiving the request from the Ministry to have a dash board that has MIS of the beneficiaries of all the banks, SBI's in-house IT Team rose to the occasion to make it available in a short time despite skeletal staff due to Covid situation. A joint effort of the team made this Yojna successful in short span of time.

RISING TO THE OCCASION
State Bank of India is playing a major role in supplementing these efforts of the Government. DBT Desk at Government Business Unit in New Delhi, coordinates with IT Teams of the Bank, Central/State

Bonding with communities through DBT

• DBT initiatives for FY 2019-20

DISBURSEMENTS routed through SBI IT Centre	57.27 cr
Amount remitted	₹2,95,045 Cr.
SBI's Share in DBT transactions	51%
• LPG PAHAL (Pratyaksh HastanitritLabh) scheme (transactions)	139.01 cr
Direct benefit of subsidy to LPG consumers of all the three PSU oil companies.	
Amount processed	₹25,122 crore
• MGNREGA, a flagship scheme of GoI	
SBI processed (transactions)	26.18 cr
Amounting to	₹35,750 cr (as sponsor bank)

Ministries, NPCI, NIC, PFMS and various Implementing Agencies across the country, through its wide network of branches. All the major schemes of Central Government are being implemented through SBI on a pan India level. SBI is the accredited Bank for 26 ministries. State Governments are also benefited by using SBI's robust IT platform for implementing their area/region wise schemes for identified target groups. The Bank has appointed Nodal Officer for each state to look after their needs.

FUTURE DBT PLANS

SBI is the accredited bank for Ministry of

Chemical and Fertilizer. Department of Fertilizer is working on the project to streamline the "Indian Fertilizer Subsidy Programme" by exploring the feasibility of direct cash transfer to small and marginal farmers for providing subsidy to procure fertilizer. SBI is actively working with Department of Fertilizer for convenient payment solutions for procurement of fertilizer by farmers as well as cashless solution to their distribution network.

DBT is the high priority and focus area of Government of India. To make the process seamless, the GoI is continuously working on reforming the delivery system, of fulfilling their social responsibility, by strengthening the existing processes in various welfare schemes, ensuring simpler and faster flow of funds to the identified beneficiaries by proper identification of target groups, avoiding multiple payments and frauds by deduplication, unifying these key schemes with last mile beneficiaries in SBI.

Today we built technological and channel capability to service seamlessly the largest clientele base in India and we used it effectively to make available the financial assistance to crores of women PMJDY beneficiaries.

SHRI CHALLA SREENIVASULU SETTY,
MD (Retail & Digital Banking)



Commemorating a decade of providing insurance solutions to every corner of the country, SBI General Insurance re-vamps its brand identity to resonate with the evolving customer needs of today.

SBI General
INSURANCE

is now →

SBI general
SURAKSHA AUR BHAROSA DONO

INSURANCE SOLUTIONS



Representing agility, adaptability and innovation, the new brand identity represents the ethos of SBI General - being responsive to customers' needs. Though one of the most important products in general insurance, a plethora of complex products, fine prints combined with other reasons have led to low adoption of **Health Insurance** in India. However, the criticality of health insurance has become evident in recent months.

Arogya Sanjeevani - a simple and standard health insurance policy that makes affordable health care accessible to everyone, which also covers COVID-19 hospitalization expenses.

SMEs form the backbone of our economy, yet the sector battles with operational risks every single day. At SBI General, we actively engage with SMEs to provide insurance solutions and guide them on covers, exposures, and risk mitigation.

Home insurance has a very low awareness and penetration. We provide simple yet comprehensive covers that protect the home, its contents, and related risks. With customers at the heart of our business, we continue our focus on tech/solution-driven innovation. SBI General insurance solutions are also available on YONO App & Portal. Some of our upcoming products are COVID insurance, Kutumb Swasthya Bima & Gramin Samridhi Bima.

Stepping on the pedal to create a more vibrant and dynamic 'India'

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE RELIEF MEASURES TO MSMEs

SBI's SME portfolio is about ₹2 lakh plus crore with 1.4 million customers, and MSMEs constitute a significant portion of the portfolio. When the Covid pandemic left its impact on various sectors, State Bank of India came to the rescue of the MSMEs immediately. MSMEs formed a crucial part of the announcements made under the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' by GOI.

Apart from extending deferral of interest dues and moratorium on Term loan repayments, SBI has been at the forefront in providing relief measures to SME borrowers affected by the lockdown, by extending 10% of fund based working capital limits as CCECL (Common COVID 19 Emergency Credit Line) and easing of working capital

SBI has always been at the forefront of assisting the MSME sector since 1956. We understand that the MSME sector is the key to revival of Indian economy and the bulwark of Atmanirbhar Bharat. We are closely working with all MSME units in our fold and beyond to offer them all the required support and creating a simplified digital solution in on-boarding and service. Our resolve and commitment is to support this vital sector that provides large employment and is a major pillar of our supply chain.

**SHRI ARJIT BASU,
MD
Commercial Clients
Group & IT**

FOCUSSED PRODUCTS FOR SMES

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY): Disbursed ₹34,978 cr in FY 2019-20 and ₹2,534 cr in the current year



SBI e-Mudra Loan

- Prime Minister Employment Generation Scheme: Has sanctioned 10,057 loans
- Stand Up India: Has sanctioned 4,162 loans by FY 19-20 & 284 loans in the FY 20-21
- e-Mudra, end to end digital delivery model: ₹194 cr has been disbursed



SBI'S MAJOR PRODUCT SUITE

- Supply Chain Financing
- Pre-Approved Merchant Loan
- Export Credit



An MSME unit

finance.

During the lockdown, to empower the MSMEs, SBI carried out several initiatives –

• SBI organized more than 1000 E-Town Hall Meetings from May to

date.

• Bank reached out to all the MSME customers to explain various relief and financial support measures extended by SBI

• Conducted 119 webinars for

employees to educate them on the products for support to MSMEs.

• 50 State Bank Institute of Learning & Development & 2 Apex Training Institutes at Gurugram and Hyderabad conducted 841 webinars

during May 2020

SUPPORTING MSMEs AND BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Responding quickly after issue of ECLGS guidelines by NCGTC, SBI rolled out the Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line Product to support business enterprises.

The pre-approved product is made available within 5 days on sending notification to customer and acceptance. Under Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL), the bank has so far sanctioned GECL aggregating ₹19,000 crore to 4 lakh MSME customers and disbursed loans worth ₹13,000 crore.

Revamp of SME structure: SBI has created a new position of AGM SME across 80 Administrative offices to improve the connect with SME customers and function as a single point of contact.

A leading Bank in the country that enjoys customer's trust, SBI ensures availability of credible financial sector products with the help of its Subsidiaries and Joint Ventures. Their contribution has helped in distributing financial products from the branch network and digital distribution channels across the length and breadth of the country.

SHRI DINESH KUMAR KHARA, MD Global Banking and Subsidiaries



SPECIFIC INITIATIVES:

Contactless lending platform psbloansin59minutes.com is an online marketplace to cater to various financial aspirations of individuals and businesses in a simple, quick and hassle-free way. The Platform has set a new benchmark in loan processing by reducing turnaround time for in-principle approval from days to less than 59 minutes. Under the platform Bank has approved around 8,877 sanctions amounting to ₹3,193 cr (from 01.11.2018 to 12.06.2020)

COVID-19 INITIATIVES & ENABLERS FOR MSMS:

The Bank provided immediate support to MSMEs by extending moratorium for Term Loans. Other enablers include - deferment of Interest on Working Capital, sanction of pre-approved CCECL (for WC limits upto ₹5.00 cr in Sole Banking), smooth roll out of GECL SMS

was sent to all eligible customers immediately advising availability of the product. About 4 lakh GECL loans have been sanctioned and ₹13000 cr have been disbursed so far.

COVID Emergency Credit Line (CECL):

Till now 1,35,992 loans have been sanctioned aggregating ₹8975 cr. Further, 21,345 loans disbursed aggregating ₹3218 cr. The purpose of the CECL is to meet the temporary liquidity mismatch confronting the SMEs arising out of Covid-19.

Restructuring of MSME accounts:

SBI has been proactively restructuring of stressed loans under the RBIs Scheme for restructuring MSME accounts.

One app for banking and lifestyle services - YONO

SBI's mobile banking and lifestyle app YONO (you only need one) is a one-stop-shop app that offers not just financial services but also a gamut of investment, insurance and shopping services.

Accessible on Android and iOS as well as on web, YONO allows a seamless omnichannel experience through a single customer ID and password. The app is designed to minimize clicks and maximize convenience. Therefore, "you only need one" app.

By reducing all banking paperwork, YONO also simplifies the lives of SBI executives, enabling them to focus their efforts and energy on serving our customers better.

SEAMLESS BANKING WITH YONO

Launched in November 2017 by the honourable Finance Minister of India, YONO has become popular among customers. In the 2.5 years since its launch, it has added many feathers to its cap. In July 2018, it won the Mobile Banking Initiative of the Year in India Award at the Asian Banking and Finance Retail Banking Awards (Singapore). In December 2018, it bagged the Best BFSI in Terms of Implementation of Digital Transformation Award at the CSI IT Innovation & Excellence Awards (Mumbai).

GROWTH NUMBERS

- 24 million registered users
- 51 million downloads with 5 million logins per day
- Over 10 million card-less ATM transactions
- 6.5 lakh mutual fund transactions
- Over 70 lakh bank account openings
- Has issued more than 1.8 lakh credit cards
- Disbursed pre-approved personal loans amounting to ₹18,000 crore
- More than 8 lakh agri-gold loans to farmers
- Sold around 4 lakh life insurance policies

tion Award at the CSI IT Innovation & Excellence Awards (Mumbai).

NEW AGE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

YONO plans to onboard 250 million customers by financial year 2025. It also plans to add many new products to its portfolio in the coming years, including end-to-end home loans and pre-approved car loans.

Zero paperwork, Open a SB Account instantly* through YONO App

Download & Register now to avail the benefits

Banking | Investments | Shopping | Tickets | Food | More

YONO relies on a range of new-age digital solutions. It uses data analytics for future credit assessment. The YONO team is now building a video KYC feature to further streamline and expedite opening of digital accounts, developing a farmer database with the help of blockchain technology, and creating a tool to authenticate inward cheques us-

ing machine learning.

WHAT YONO OFFERS?

YONO offers end-to-end digital-banking services, enabling customers to open a savings account in less than five minutes using their Aadhaar Card and without any paperwork, transfer funds in just four clicks, receive an overdraft facility against fixed deposits, and view their entire financial portfolio with SBI in one place.

YONO Cash - With YONO Cash, customers can withdraw cash from 2,70,000 touchpoints including ATMs, CSPs or merchant shops without needing to use their debit cards.

YONO DURING LOCKDOWN - During lockdown, YONO started a new pre-approved personal loan facility to help customers to borrow up to ₹5 lakh within 45 minutes and commence their repayment journey only after six months.

SIMPLIFYING SHOPPING AND PAYING BILLS WITH YONO PAYMENTS WITH YONO

Through YONO's online marketplace, customers can directly shop from more than 80 e-commerce sites. YONO offers a host of exclusive and personalised deals to help customers save more as they shop.

To further simplify shopping, the platform is now developing features such as debit on delivery that enables customers to pay directly through their bank account at the time of product delivery, without using their debit or credit cards.

YONO also allows customers to pay their bills, individually or through "auto-pay", across more than 20 categories including mobile recharge, credit card and utilities.



RWARD POINTS WITH YONO

Customers receive reward points for transactions made through YONO that can be redeemed for shopping, buying gift vouchers, recharging mobile/DTH and even for donating to social or environmental causes.

INVESTING AND INSURING WITH YONO

In addition to being a banking app, YONO is also a financial superstore. It includes products and services from SBI Life, SBICAP, SBI Cards, SBI Mutual Fund and SBI General Insurance. Paperless instant policies without medical check-up or branch visit, more than 9 general insurance policies (from health to car insurance), 16+ credit card variants, and thousands of ELSS, equity and DAF mutual funds—YONO makes all these and more available to its customers on a single platform. What's more, it also offers wealth and financial advisory. With YONO, customers do not need to switch between apps for their different financial needs.

YONO FOR FARMERS

Inspired by the overwhelming response to its flagship app, SBI launched YONO Krishi, a platform designed especially for farmers, in April 2019. Available in eight vernacular languages, YONO Krishi provides simplified banking services, an online marketplace to buy/rent agricultural inputs and equipment, farming advisory, investment and insurance products and services, including agri gold loans. Already, it has made life simpler and uncomplicated for scores of farmers, enabling them to spend more time on their harvest and sales.



SBI Life
INSURANCE

With Us, You're Sure

Registered in March 2001, SBI Life has come to be known as one of the most trusted life insurance companies in India. In the last two decades the company has been a source of financial immunity to over 27.5 Million individuals and their families through its range of insurance solutions. With over INR 1.6 trillion of Assets Under Management, authorized capital of INR 20 billion and a paid up capital of INR 10 billion, the company's strong financial fundamentals and a consumer first approach have been its pillars of growth. Being digitally ready has helped the company serve its consumers meaningfully. In current times, right from Covid 19 fatalities to defence martyrs, SBI Life has been able to settle claims quicker through the company's hassle free claim settlement processes. The company continuously strives to maintain world class operating efficiency to better serve the consumers and communities across the length and breadth of India.

SBI'S DIGITAL INNOVATIONS

In sync with the government's vision to create a less-cash and a knowledge-driven economy, SBI has spearheaded digital innovation across its banking landscape through user-friendly and cost-effective payment solutions, multi-channel platforms and technology-enabled back-end operations.

- Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS) for withdrawal
- BHIM Aadhaar Pay for merchant payment
- BHIM SBI Pay (UPI) for instant real-time payment from person to person & person to merchant
- Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS) for payment of utility bills
- Doorstep Banking (DSB) services

SBI'S DIGITAL OFFERINGS

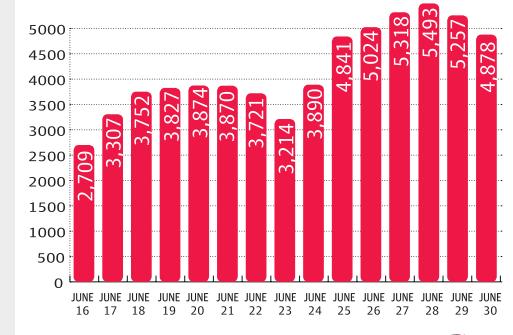
- YONO Business – An integrated digital platform for all business needs offering Corporate Internet Banking, Cash Management, Supply Chain Finance Unit, E-Forex and E-trade with user-friendly digital interface, real-time fund settlement and paperless transactions
- Loan Life-Cycle Management – Online Loan application & tracking facility for MSME borrowers
- Contactless Lending Platform offers easy access to loans for SMEs
- e-Mudra – Web application for Mudra loans
- Project Vivek - objective appraisal system
- Pre-Approved Merchant Loan - end-to-end digital pre-approved loan offer for current account customers
- Online Customer Acquisition Solutions (OCAS) - online platform to capture leads from tractor and agri-implement dealers and state government departments
- E-Shakti - aims to digitise self-help group (SHG) account holders

Maharashtra COVID-19 tracker

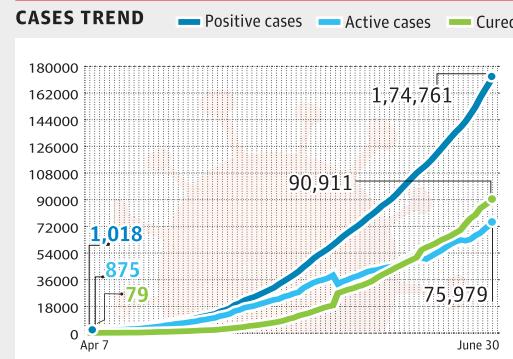
TOTAL CASES	NEW CASES	ACTIVE CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
1,74,761	4,878	75,979	90,911	7,855

DISTRICTS AFFECTED: 35

DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS	DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Mumbai	77,658	4,556	Hingoli	270	1
Thane	37,630	956	Sangli	376	11
Pune	22,327	752	Nanded	344	13
Aurangabad	5,328	256	Yavatmal	285	10
Nashik	4,226	222	Latur	331	18
Palghar	5,858	108	Osmanabad	215	10
Raigad	3,980	95	Sindhudurg	219	4
Solapur	2,651	265	Buldhana	245	12
Jalgaon	3,415	234	Parbhani	99	4
Akola	1,536	76	Gondia	123	1
Nagpur	1,468	15	Gadchiroli	66	1
Satara	1,076	43	Chandrapur	94	0
Kolhapur	846	11	Nandurbar	175	7
Ratnagiri	595	27	Bhandara	80	0
Dhule	1,094	54	Wardha	19	1
Amravati	566	28	Washim	102	3
Jalna	552	14			
Ahmednagar	431	14			

POSITIVE CASES OVER LAST 15 DAYS

893 (18%) of Tuesday's cases are from Mumbai

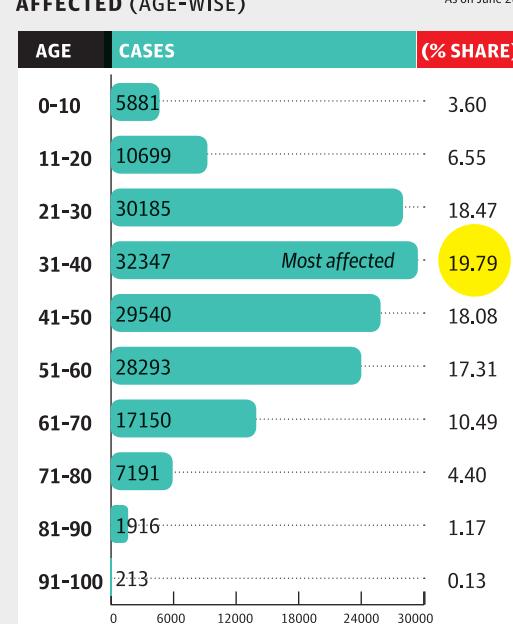


52.02% is the State recovery rate

**MORTALITY RATE**

Maharashtra 4.49%

India 2.96%

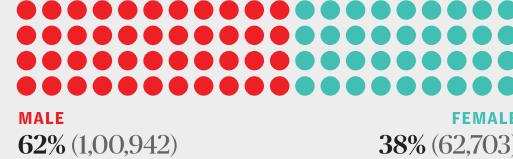
**QUARANTINE NUMBERS**

5,78,033 | 38,866



Home quarantine

Institutional quarantine

CASES (GENDER-WISE)**DEATH (GENDER-WISE)**

70% of deaths due to co-morbidities

HELPLINE NUMBERS

Toll free number: 104/1075

Maharashtra: 020-26127394

National: 1075/1800-112-545/011-23978046

State helpline email id: ssuumarashtra@gmail.com

CITY-WISE HELPLINE NUMBERS

Mumbai city: 022 22664232 | Palghar: 0252 297474

Mumbai suburbs: 022

26556799 / 26556806 | Raigad: 02141 222118

Thane: 022 25301740 | Ratnagiri: 02352 226248

Sindhudurg: 02362 228847

Source: Public Health Department, Maharashtra, BMC

MERC directs power discoms to make billing transparent

Consumers can opt to pay bills in three instalments, says Power Minister

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Following reports of domestic power consumers receiving inflated bills this month, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday said the Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission (MERC) has directed power companies to display transparency in its billing and resolve complaints.

Shock and dismay

Many consumers in Maharashtra including Bollywood actors had taken to Twitter to express shock over unexpectedly high electricity bills. "Taking stock of the rising number of consumer complaints related to exorbitant electricity bills, MERC has directed power companies to show transparency in its billing procedures and redress the consumer complaints immediately," Mr. Thackeray said.

State Power Minister Nitin Raut said consumers can opt to pay their bills in three instalments and those paying the entire bill amount will be given a 2% discount. Mr. Raut also directed Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (Mahadiscom) to start a public awareness campaign.

He said, "Mahadiscom could not take meter readings on the spot due to the lockdown. As a result, bills for April and May were given based on the average bill in the previous months."

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Nitin Raut
Photo: S. P. DIXIT

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States hold the key

In Unlock 2, finely-tuned strategies for disease control and expansion of activity are needed

The Home Ministry's orders relaxing the lockdown in the Unlock 2 phase until July 31 provides for a wider resumption of activity in areas other than containment zones, while retaining, appropriately, the prohibition on mass gatherings. After the first phase of the national lockdown, the handling of the pandemic, crucially testing, tracing, quarantining and treating sick patients to reduce infection spread and mortality, has come to depend on the capacity of individual States. India's current case total, including 3,47,326 people who recovered and 17,403 who died, is in excess of half-a-million. With no prediction for when COVID-19 could peak, the latest announcement casts a heavy responsibility on the States. They are, of course, empowered to impose additional restrictions outside containment zones without impeding inter- and intra-State movement of people and goods. Some of them have learnt that community-level monitoring of influenza-like fever and respiratory illness and testing in a focused manner shows higher positivity rates; good serological testing in containment zones would add insight on the overall state of infections. Such fine-tuning of strategies, together with access to testing where indicated, will be crucial in the unlock phases. States must also realise that more activity could bring more patients to hospitals, which are already stretched in terms of fatigued health staff and available beds. Targeted lockdowns for smaller areas, and measures to encourage healthy behaviour hold the key to lower the incidence of cases. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal with a large caseload have extended their lockdown until July 31, a period that should be used to distribute masks to all residents, and ensure that the message of face-covering and distancing leads to full compliance.

Getting infection spread under control early should make it possible for the Centre to put in place a good system to handle domestic emergency travel, and facilitate more inward and outbound movement of stranded individuals. Several senior citizens have been caught abroad with inadequate access to health care and drugs due to the pandemic, especially in the U.S. Workers too are trapped in many countries. Within India, regulations that do not aid working from home need to be modified: they treat electronic equipment as non-essential and unavailable from e-commerce channels because of delivery restrictions in some cities. Self-certification for bank accounts has become due in the new financial year and should be postponed or handled online. Though the Centre has extended the provision of free foodgrain to 80 crore people for five more months, the quantum of rations at five kilos of grain and one kilo of pulses falls short of what families need in a month. In coming weeks, these social imperatives need to be addressed, while undertaking the formidable task of halting the upward trajectory of infections and deaths.

Control, not delete

Despite privacy issues with many apps, linking them to national security concerns is puerile

Citing concerns to both data security and national sovereignty, the Indian government on June 29 announced it would block 59 widely used apps, most linked to Chinese companies. These include the popular video-sharing social networking app TikTok, a mobile browser called UC Browser, and a file-sharing app called SHAREit. What is common to all three is their wide user base in India, with each claiming more than 100 million monthly active users, and their origins in China. Explaining the ban, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology cited "the emergent nature of threats" posed by the apps and "information available" that they are engaged in activities "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order". The apps, according to the Ministry, had been reported for "stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorized manner to servers which have locations outside India", which "impinges upon the sovereignty and integrity of India". From the perspective of data security and privacy, there is indeed a strong case to be made to more strictly regulate apps that handle vast amounts of user data. Such a move was surely long overdue.

But the government might have done the right thing for the wrong reasons. The timing of the move, coupled with the fact that it has chosen to block the apps outright, rather than ensure they were complying with the law, suggests the ban is less motivated by privacy concerns than about sending a message to China amid the tensions along the border. After all, privacy and data security concerns are not limited only to Chinese apps. Concerns about many of these apps are hardly new, and the move to block them comes after these apps had already amassed hundreds of millions of users in India. If sending a message about China is the motivation, the ban is more signalling than substance. It may help the government show the public it is taking China on, even if it will have no impact on deterring Chinese behaviour on the border, which will require a tough diplomatic and military response. The tensions on the border, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, have ignited a much-needed debate on India's economic dependencies on China. India remains reliant on Chinese products in several critical and strategically sensitive sectors, from semiconductors and active pharmaceutical ingredients to the telecom sector, where Chinese vendors are involved not only in India's 4G network but in on-going 5G trials as well. India faces tough choices going forward in dealing with its deep economic embrace of China. Hitting the delete button on social media and gaming apps barely scratches the surface of the problem.

In ending stand-off, magnanimity must prevail

India's border dispute with China calls for peaceful resolution, and has no place for moral outrage or military might



R. SUDARSHAN

India's oft-quoted mantra when it comes to international relations has been *vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (the earth is our only family). It is not in India's DNA, so to speak, to demonise any country in its neighbourhood, including China, South Asia and South East Asia, all the way to Indonesia; that is because of long-standing civilisational ties. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke in Shanghai just five years ago, in 2015, he recounted to the Indian community living there how China's President Xi Jinping took him to his native village in Xian province and showed him the book written by the seventh century Buddhist monk, Xuanzang, whose travels connected the birthplaces of both leaders. This was symbolic, he said of the bond between India and China in terms of *aatmiata* (soulful intimacy), *nikatata* (closeness) and *bhaichara* (solidarity). There could not be more genuine and sincere affirmation of the spirit of friendship.

Keep a cool head

Presently, India is on the brink of regarding China as Enemy Number One. This has happened because of a bloody, hand-to-hand combat, without firearms, between Indian and Chinese soldiers in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh, which left 20 Indian soldiers dead and many more wounded. It may never be known how many Chinese soldiers died or were injured. These deaths on the frontier are a tragic break in an admirable re-

cord of avoiding casualties on both sides, despite face-offs on numerous occasions, along a long frontier between India and China. Both sides have accepted that the border between the two countries must be settled by agreement for the sake of peace.

China has refused to recognise the McMahon line and the demarcation of boundaries done by the British colonial power. Pending a final settlement of the boundary, India and China signed the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, in 1993. Another similar agreement (Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas), signed in 1996 contains a specific clause related to the use of firearms by both sides: "Neither side shall open fire, cause bio-degradation, use hazardous chemicals, conduct blast operations or hunt with guns or explosives within two kilometres from the Line of Actual Control. This prohibition shall not apply to routine firing activities in small arms firing ranges."

Apparently, this provision was respected by both sides during the clash on June 15. Tragically, they fought much more barbarically, with nail-studded sticks, knives and stones, causing inhuman suffering. This incident threatens unofficial partition of territories that has stood the good test of time: Ak-sai Chin is claimed by India, but China, de facto, rules; China claims Arunachal Pradesh, but India, constitutionally, rules.

Will it ever be possible to resolve the boundary dispute, which is at the root of the conflict? And if so, how? The dispute cannot be resolved by going to war. No war has permanent winners. No losers can



willingly accept defeat. The only way to resolve disputes, in post-nuclear times, is through negotiations, as equal powers, with mutual respect.

China's record

During his visit to India in April 1960, China's Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai made a proposal to settle the boundary dispute. It was rejected by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In hindsight, history must record that as a lost opportunity which has had tragic consequences.

Today, China regards itself as a superpower in the making, which implies that negotiation will be condescending, tantamount to "my way or the highway". The more China feels beleaguered, the more intransigent it is likely to be in negotiations to resolve the border dispute with India. China has flexed its muscle. It refused to recognise the authority of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The PCA rejected China's legal claims. It ruled that China had breached its obligations under the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea and Article 94 of UNCLOS concerning maritime safety, and that China violated international obligations.

China has not paid any heed to international opinion that supports

unimpeded commerce, freedom of navigation, overflights, and peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea. The same hubris has made China more intolerant of infrastructure built by India, while it continues to build its own along that frontier.

Weighing in on the options

Should India counter China, tit for tat, by adopting a posture of aggression? Or should India redouble its diplomatic efforts to counter China's intransigence with the support from Japan, Australia, the United States, Russia, and other countries, including those disputing China's claims in the South China Sea?

What must matter to India is whatever is good for its people. Focusing on strengthening military might, when the economy is suffering and COVID-19 is taking its toll, will not be wise. Nor is it wise to call for a boycott of Chinese imports. Sanctions and boycotts are justifiable only when there is strong moral justification. Boycott of South Africa during the Apartheid period was justified and it served its purpose in hastening South Africa's turn to equality and democratic governance. Arguably, there is moral justification for sanctions against Israel if it expands its illegal settlements in the West Bank and Palestine territories. Moral outrage has been triggered by actions of regimes in South Africa and Israel. But India's border dispute with China calls for peaceful resolution, not moral outrage.

It is understandable, in the immediate aftermath of the sacrifice made by India's soldiers, that nationalist ferment will come to fore. As has happened with other incidents when sovereignty seemed to have been transgressed, this one also will run its course. If India

boycotts goods from China, it will hurt itself more and barely make a dent in China's economic prospects. India is lauded as the pharmacy of the world because its quality and price are compelling. It has been reported that Steve Jobs wanted to change the iPhone screen barely three days before its formal launch. China's factory that assembled the phone for Apple mobilised its workforce to get the screens replaced in quick time. India should emulate China in its manufacturing practices and agility to adapt to international demand. There is little parity between India and China in trade terms; there is much more parity in military might, at present, compared to the 1960s.

The home watch

It is unfortunate that in many cities in India, people from the North-east, who have features resembling Chinese, have been ostracised. India must be on guard, in the aftermath of current tensions with China, not to unleash any kind of hostility against anyone, especially resident Chinese nationals. India must learn the hard lesson, which it did not in 1962, that warm and gushing expressions of friendship towards China will not stop hostilities; only pragmatic and shrewd diplomacy can do that. Oscillating to the opposite end and attacking China as the enemy is not wise.

R. Sudarshan is Dean of the School of Government and Public Policy, O.P.Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana. Previously, he was a policy adviser for Governance and Justice in the United Nations Development Programme

PCR testing is a double-edged sword

In order to avoid blind reliance on the result for COVID-19, clinical diagnosis by specific criteria should be popularised



M.S. SESADRI & T. JACOB JOHN

The government has allowed SARS-CoV-2 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing in many government and private laboratories. In January there was one laboratory (National Institute of Virology, Pune) but today there are 1,000. Test validity depends on laboratory quality. Mechanisms to ensure internal quality control and external quality assessment are urgently required.

The boon and bane of PCR testing are in its capacity to amplify even one viral gene segment in the sample to generate a detectable signal – a positive test; it is a boon because it accurately detects the presence of virus but a bane because it is prone to false negative and false positive results.

Follow protocol

When a laboratory handles several samples, cross-contamination must be avoided. During sample preparation for testing, if even one gene segment falls into the tube from the laboratory environment, it will be amplified and the test will be positive – but, false positive. It points to the lack of meticulous attention to protocol while processing samples, some with and others

without the viral genes. A laboratory technician's proficiency is integral to quality assurance. In reliable laboratories, a positive result means that the person whose sample was tested was indeed infected. For reliability, only laboratories under quality assurance should do testing.

Ensure quality

Here is an example. A conscientious professional in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, scrupulously practising personal protective procedures, had to get the mandatory PCR test to get an e-pass for an important meeting in a neighbouring city. The authorised laboratory for voluntary testing, a private laboratory in another town, sent a technician to his house to collect a nasopharyngeal swab. Two days later he gets a "positive for COVID-19" test report.

The laboratory informed the health authorities who wanted him admitted in a COVID-19 quarantine centre, despite pleas for home isolation. With great difficulty he bought time for two days to get admitted in a reputed hospital for two tests on consecutive days, in the hospital's nationally accredited lab. You can imagine his personal anxiety and his family's anguish, apart from the expenses incurred. Both tests were negative; he returned home, missed his meeting, and lost faith in the epidemic management system. Had he been admitted in a COVID-19 quarantine centre, he might have



been exposed to infected persons, the story turning tragic for no fault of his.

The first test result was false positive, which should not occur in any quality-assured laboratory. The selection of private laboratories has not been careful. There have been newspaper reports recently of a private laboratory in Amritsar turning out four false positive PCR results in as many days. After selection, quality checks of laboratories have been found to be woefully inadequate.

We wonder how many laboratories produce similar false positive results. How many of reported positive tests in asymptomatic subjects nationwide are false positives? And how many lead to a misfortune similar to that experienced by the gentleman in Vellore? There is urgent need to ensure quality assurance from all laboratories testing for the coronavirus infection. Erring laboratories must be disqualified at least until quality assurance is certified.

A false negative PCR means that a person with infection was missed by the test, but that is in the very nature of PCR. The viral load is lower in the throat than in the nasopharynx. Hence throat swabs are falsely negative in 60% of tests and nasopharyngeal swabs in 30%, according to published studies. An incorrectly taken nasal swab may miss the virus altogether and lead to a false negative test.

The relatively high frequency of false negative results leads to gross underestimation of the epidemic's magnitude. Moreover, traced contacts with false negative tests will not be quarantined but allowed to spread the virus, augmenting the epidemic.

Doctors should not be misled by false negative tests when COVID-19 is clinically diagnosed with specific criteria. The patient must be treated as COVID-19, and the PCR repeated. Globally, many patients with COVID-19 pneumonia who are PCR negative on the first swab have typical appearances of COVID-19 in a chest x-ray or CT scan. They turn PCR positive on repeat testing. Missing a diagnosis of COVID pneumonia just because of a negative PCR test is medical negligence.

In order to avoid blind reliance on the PCR test result, clinical diagnosis by specific criteria, which is the only way to diagnose COVID, (D for disease), should be popularised among doctors. Whether or not a confirmatory PCR test is done depends on circumstances. During the rural wave of the epidemic, doctors should be confident to diagnose COVID-19 even without a PCR. If we fail to implement these correctly, we are rendering disservice to unsuspecting society and its members.

M.S. Seshadri is retired Professor of Medical Endocrinology, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore and now Medical Director, Thirumalai Mission Hospital, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu. T. Jacob John is retired Professor of Clinical Virology, CMC, Vellore and past President of the Indian Academy of Pediatrics



To read more letters online, scan the QR code
friends of the people. Their 'Ungal Nanban' programmes were well-received. It is rare to find such officers today.
THARICUS S. FERNANDO, Chennai

Season to resume
The proposed restart to the 2020 Formula One season is hard to fathom ('Sport' page, "Hamilton eyes Schumacher's record", June 30). With most of Europe and parts of the U.S. scrambling to reimpose restrictions following a resurgence of the novel coronavirus, this move defies logic. It seems rather desperate to run the races without fans, behind closed doors in a 'paddock bereft of human contact'. Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN, Vellore, Tamil Nadu

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Digital strike

It appears that the Government of India has suddenly woken up to the fact that 59 Chinese apps pose a threat to India's security and sovereignty (Page 1, "TikTok among 59 Apps banned by the Centre", June 30). The government has also not explained how these apps were considered to be "engaging in activities prejudicial to the security of the state and public order". It seems the government has acted in haste by pandering to "popular sentiments".

B. SHIV KUMAR,
Hyderabad

App bans are notoriously hard to execute. Usually, app firms upload their official version of their apps on to the App Store and Play Store.

However, even when applications are taken down from these platforms, users will still be able to download their unofficial versions from the web. So, it would require Internet service providers to blacklist every host name and domain name associated with these apps. This poses further security threats and may be exploited by cyber criminals. A simple ban will not work. Since many of these apps are a part of routine life, relevant and similarly efficient alternatives are a must.

RAVI TEJA KATHURIPALLI,
Hyderabad

The CBSE policy to choose in the case of students who have appeared in more than three subjects, the average of the marks obtained in best three performing subjects to

be awarded in the subjects whose examinations have not been conducted, and for students who have appeared in only three subjects, the average of the marks obtained in the best two performing subjects to be awarded in the subjects whose examinations have not been conducted, may not be fair for many students. In our case, the lockdown happened after the English, physics and chemistry exams (for the science stream). The marks obtained in these subjects have practically no relation to maths and computers, the most scoring subjects for which the exams have been cancelled. Some students may be very good in physics/chemistry/English while others may not be so. Hence, totally ignoring the performance of a student in

a specific subject and awarding marks on the basis of some other subject does not seem to be justified. Therefore, the subject performance in maths, computers (or other subject exams that were supposed to have been held and were cancelled) should also take into account the average marks obtained in the internal exams. A better way may be to calculate the average of the best two of the last three internal exams conducted by school (for the same subject for which marks are being awarded); make a comparison with the marks as in the present scheme (average of best two or three subjects); award the greater of the two. A re-exam is not a good option because there are around 250 schools abroad apart from the number of States in India. It

may not be conducive to hold exams on a wide scale. Second, students cannot be made to study the same course repeatedly for an indefinite period of time because they have to join universities and move on.

SAMEER SIKKA,
State of Kuwait

boycotts goods from China, it will hurt itself more and barely make a dent in China's economic prospects. India is lauded as the pharmacy of the world because its quality and price are compelling. It has been reported that Steve Jobs wanted to change the iPhone screen barely three days before its formal launch. China's factory that assembled the phone for Apple mobilised its workforce to get the screens replaced in quick time. India should emulate China in its manufacturing practices and agility to adapt to international demand. There is little parity between India and China in trade terms; there is much more parity in military might, at present, compared to the 1960s.

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Utilise MGNREGA to the fullest capacity

The scheme should not be diluted in the name of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan



BRINDA KARAT

The role of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as a lifeline for the working poor in rural India has been proved once again with the experience of the lockdown. In April and part of May, it was the absence of MGNREGA which accentuated rural distress. The Central government revised lockdown guidelines to allow MGNREGA work only from April 20, nearly a month after the nationwide lockdown was imposed, and released funds for it belatedly.

But once the money reached the States, the results are evident. Whereas the number of households who got work in April 2020 was the lowest in several years at 95 lakh, in May the number went up to 3.05 crore. Till the third week of June, 2.84 crore households had got work, much higher when compared to the same months last year. With an average 23 days of work and a daily wage of ₹200, households who got work earned an average of ₹1,500 a month. Even though this is meagre, it shows the potential of MGNREGA to bring work and relief, provided it is further expanded.

The Central government released ₹38,000 crore for MGNREGA work, of which 70% has already been utilised. With the return of migrant workers to their home States and with substantial numbers having completed the quarantine period, the demand for work is bound to increase. The remaining ₹8,000 crore fund available to the States is clearly insufficient. It is therefore essential for the Central government to release the second tranche without delay.

Work provided to few

Even in these months where there has been a welcome increase in workers who got work, it is extremely disturbing that as many as 1.82 crore workers who demanded work were turned back. According to figures available on the Ministry's website, in this fiscal year, 8.07 crore



"The government must ensure the release of funds on an emergency basis."
MGNREGA workers in Viluppuram district of Tamil Nadu. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

workers demanded work, but work was provided only to 6.25 crore workers.

Recently we heard the Prime Minister and the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister hardsell the record of employment provision in the State claiming that one crore jobs had been provided in a single day. This is certainly a novel interpretation of statistics. What is the nature of the work? Are they permanent jobs? Are they one-day jobs such as work on MGNREGA sites can be? In U.P., over one crore workers had applied for work under MGNREGA, but more than one third of them were turned back.

Similarly in Bihar, which also has a large number of returning migrant workers, 12 lakh workers of the 41 lakh workers who applied were turned back. In spite of a legal provision of unemployment allowance not a single rupee in compensation has been paid. Now that the monsoons have set in, this issue becomes all the more relevant. During the rainy season even though demand is high, work provision is low. It is therefore essential for the Central government to ensure that States are provided with the funds to pay unemployment allowance to all workers demanding

work. In this context of the need to strengthen MGNREGA, the announcement of the Central government's "new" scheme, the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan, to provide work to migrant workers in 116 selected districts, raises several questions. First, what is the criteria for selection? Why, for example, should the States of West Bengal and Chhattisgarh be omitted when reverse migration is particularly high in these States? Of the 44,794 crore spent between June 20 and June 28, Bihar received more than 50% of the fund. As noted earlier, Bihar has had a poor record of implementation of MGNREGA. The Bihar elections are scheduled for later this year. It will be a terrible travesty of justice if this scheme is designed to serve a narrow political purpose.

Second, according to the list of 25 kinds of work available under this "scheme" it is clear that almost every single one of them is already covered under the convergence programmes of MGNREGA. What is the new "skill mapping" required for this since this work is already covered under MGNREGA? The nature of the work is manual work, mainly construction

and earth work, including work to lay cables, ostensibly to take Internet connections to rural areas. It is unstated but clear that this will benefit private telecom companies.

Most importantly, how will this new scheme impact the MGNREGA work in these selected districts? There is no clarity on this critical issue in the set of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Rural Development, the nodal Ministry for this scheme. Last year, under MGNREGA, in these 116 districts taken together, an average of just 43.7 workdays were created, which was lower than the national average of 50 days. This poor record of provision of work may have been one of the reasons for the higher rates of migration from these districts. Instead of new schemes why should MGNREGA not be expanded to give work to all workers? This is a legal right, whereas the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan has no such legal binding on the administration.

The scheme is primarily meant for migrant workers in those districts where their numbers are 25,000 or more. That means in these selected districts women who comprise a smaller percentage of migrant workers will be largely excluded. However, women in these districts had a high demand for work reflected in the fact that the average of women working in MGNREGA in these districts last year was 53.5%, which was higher than the average for the rest of India. So unless this work in 116 districts is in addition to MGNREGA, women will suffer.

Potential for MGNREGA

MGNREGA should not be diluted in the name of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan. The potential for MGNREGA to provide relief to the suffering of rural India should be utilised to its fullest capacity. This will also require a removal of the restriction of only one person per household to make every individual eligible. The cap of 100 days should be removed to expand it to at least 200 days. Unemployment allowance should be guaranteed for all those turned away from work. And importantly, the government must ensure the release of funds on an emergency basis.

Brinda Karat is a member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) Polit Bureau and a former Rajya Sabha MP

Making trade more digitised

While different interventions have positively developed the port ecosystem, there are still gaps that need to be bridged



AFAQ HUSSAIN & NIKITA SINGLA

India's exports in April 2020 contracted by 60% year-on-year. There was a 37% fall in the twenty-foot equivalent units handled by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in April 2020 as compared to April 2019. The steep decline in world trade lays bare the significance of a more digitised trading environment, with minimal manual touch points.

With the pandemic, the slump in international trade is unpredictable. As countries slowly emerge out of this, new demand and supply chains will form, that will be located in countries that re-orient their existing trade structures.

Upgradation, digitisation, automation

Globally, digitisation of procedures and lower human intervention are the two major pillars that drive trade across borders. Post India's ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization in April 2016, reforms focused on infrastructural upgradation, digitisation and automation. Schemes such as Direct Port Entry and Direct Port Delivery, and the Radio Frequency Identification system and Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade, were all aimed at reducing the time and cost of clearance of goods. The Port Community System was aimed at seamlessly integrating all maritime trade-related stakeholders on a single platform. And e-SANCHIT (e-Storage and computerised handling of indirect tax documents) was aimed at reducing human intervention.

These and other interventions speak of the government's focus on effective logistics and smooth export-import (EXIM) procedures at Indian borders. This resulted in continuous improvement in India's Ease of Doing Business ranking, particularly in the 'trading across borders' parameter on which it ranked 68 in 2020. With the current crisis, ports across India demand a greater leap in trade facilitation measures to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods.

While different interventions of the government have positively developed the port ecosystem, there are still some gaps that need to be bridged. These are particularly with respect to the standardisation and coordination of processes across ports, and awareness and acceptability of new initiatives among the users which depends on the

adaptability and ease of linkage between multiple systems.

Gaps to be filled

Some of the delay in moving to a paperless trade ecosystem can be attributed to gaps in the effective implementation of digital platforms. First, shortcomings in the functionality of the system and technical glitches result in limited use of the system or parallel use of hard copy. For example, the absence of a shipping line delivery order in customs and terminal systems results in usage of hard copy for cargo movement. Second, lack of connectivity/message exchanges between different stakeholders' systems results in delayed cargo clearance. Third, there are many issues with respect to training and capacity building amongst the users, restricting the optimal utilisation of digital platforms.

Like in the rest of the world, in India too the operations of multiple stakeholders in the logistics and trade ecosystem including customs brokers, shipping lines, freight forwarders, transport operators, port custodians, container freight stations and border management authorities have been restricted. This indicates the need to further augment the digital infrastructure in the trade ecosystem. With trade volumes contracting and economic indicators shrinking, the present crisis presents an opportunity to develop new systems and enhance existing platforms while at the same time changing the attitude of stakeholders on the ground.

In the last two months, different guidelines have been issued by the government, focusing on measures to facilitate and expedite the clearance process so that it is more automated, online and paperless. While some immediate steps are needed to survive the crisis, it is imperative to work on a permanent road map which addresses some of the gaps highlighted. Enhanced integration of systems and coordination between them should ideally result in exchange of messages and sharing of input data between them on a real-time basis. Promoting use of a multi-stakeholder single platform like the Port Community System can streamline EXIM procedures, moving towards a digitally engaged and enhanced trading environment.

These efforts will be instrumental towards improving India's trading ecosystem and achieving the desired target of Ease of Doing Business (ranking under 50) set by the Prime Minister's Office. The more digitised our trade facilitation infrastructure, the more immune we will be to future disruptions.

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Reviving SAARC to deal with China

Deeper regional economic integration will help India

PRAHASH RANJAN

As India-China border tensions continue to fester, a hegemonic China, as part of its global expansionism, is chipping away at India's interests in South Asia. This should be a major cause for concern for New Delhi. China's proximity to Pakistan is well known. Nepal is moving closer to China for ideological and material reasons. China is wooing Bangladesh by offering tariff exemption for 97% of Bangladeshi products, and has intensified its ties with Sri Lanka through massive investments. According to a Brookings India study, most South Asian nations are now largely dependent on China for imports despite geographical proximity to India.

Domestic challenges

There are two major domestic challenges that India faces in revitalising SAARC. First, to reap political dividends at home, and for ideological reasons, there has been an unrelenting top-dressing of anti-Pakistan rhetoric and Islamophobia on the Indian soil. There's also a recurrent use of the 'Bangladeshi migrant' rhetoric. Such majoritarian politics influences foreign policy in undesirable ways. It dents India's soft power of being a liberal and secular democracy, which gives moral legitimacy to India's leadership in the region. This divisive domestic politics fuels an anti-India sentiment in India's neighbourhood.

Second, the economic vision of the Modi government remains convoluted. It's unclear what the slogans of *atma nirbharta* (self-reliance) and 'vocal for local' mean. The government's economic advisers contend that this does not mean autarky. On the other hand, the Prime Minister and his Ministers are stating that India needs to cut down its dependence on imports, thus signalling a return to the obsolete economic philosophy of import substitution. If this marks sliding back to protectionism, one is unsure if India will be interested in deepening South Asian economic integration.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi did well by reaching out to SAARC leaders earlier this year, but such flash-in-the-pan moments won't help without sustained engagement.

India should take the lead and work with its neighbours to slash the tariff and non-tariff barriers. There's a need to resuscitate the negotiations on a SAARC investment treaty, pending since 2007. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development, intra-ASEAN investments constitute around 19% of the total investments in the region. The SAARC region can likewise benefit from higher intra-SAARC investment flows. Deeper regional economic integration will create greater interdependence with India acquiring the central role, which, in turn, would serve India's strategic interests too.

Reinvigorating SAARC
Several foreign policy experts argue that India's strategic dealing with China has to begin with South Asia. In this regard, it is important to reinvigorate SAARC, which has been in the doldrums since 2014. In the last few years, due to increasing animosity with Pakistan, India's political interest in SAARC dipped significantly. India has been trying hard to isolate Pakistan internationally for its role in promoting terrorism in India. However, as Professor S.D. Muni argues, Pakistan is not facing any isolation internationally. India started investing in other regional instruments, such as BIMSTEC, as an alternative to SAARC. However, BIMSTEC cannot replace SAARC for reasons such as lack of a common identity and history among all BIMSTEC members. Moreover, BIMSTEC's focus is on the Bay of Bengal region, thus making it an inappropriate forum to engage all South Asian nations.

One way to infuse life in SAARC is to revive the process of South Asian economic integration. South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world with intra-regional trade teetering at barely 5% of total South Asian trade, compared to 25% of intra-regional trade in the ASEAN region. While South Asian countries have signed trade treaties, the lack of political will and trust deficit has prevented any meaningful movement. According to the World Bank, trade in South Asia stands at \$23 billion, an estimated value of \$67 billion. In-

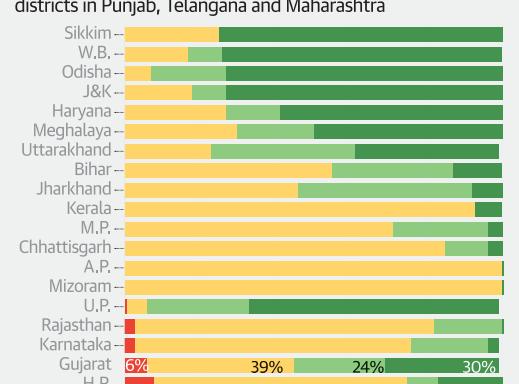


DATA POINT

The rural salve

The high levels of reverse migration recorded during the COVID-19-related lockdown led to a sudden surge in demand for work through MGNREGS in States where the bulk of the migrants returned. Sowing of kharif crops doubled this year following a massive increase in rural labour and an above average monsoon. These two factors led to levels of rural employment seen before the lockdown was imposed. By The Hindu Data Team

DEMAND FOR WORK | The graph depicts the % of districts where the no. of households which demanded MGNREGS work tripled (green), doubled (yellow), increased significantly (orange) or reduced (red) in FY21 compared to FY20. While the demand tripled in many districts in W.B., Odisha and U.P., it reduced in many districts in Punjab, Telangana and Maharashtra



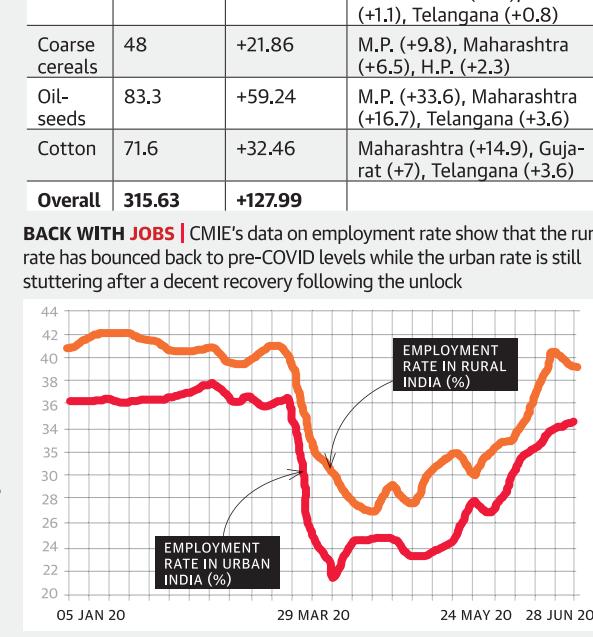
LAST WORD | The sudden rise in sowing, especially in cotton, has to be met with an equal increase in govt. procurement. If not, the glut in the market will cause prices to crash and profits to dwindle. Also, according to CMIE, though rural jobs have increased, due to excess supply of labour the wage rates will drop significantly. Thus, workers may earn less than they used to

SOWING SURGE | Farmers sowed 315.63 lakh hectares (LH) of kharif crops as of June 26, 127 LH more than the area usually covered by this time. In places such as Punjab, Maharashtra and Telangana, the demand for MGNREGS work was possibly muted due to a large increase in sowing

Crop	Area sown in FY21	Change over usual area	States with most increase in sown area
Rice	37.71 LH	+5.66 LH	Punjab (+4 L.H.), U.P. (+2.6)
Pulses	19.4	+7.94	Maharashtra (+5.1), M.P. (+1.1), Telangana (+0.8)
Coarse cereals	48	+21.86	M.P. (+9.8), Maharashtra (+6.5), H.P. (+2.3)
Oil-seeds	83.3	+59.24	M.P. (+33.6), Maharashtra (+16.7), Telangana (+3.6)
Cotton	71.6	+32.46	Maharashtra (+14.9), Gujarat (+7), Telangana (+3.6)
Overall	315.63	+127.99	

BACK WITH JOBS | CMIE's data on employment rate show that the rural rate has bounced back to pre-COVID levels while the urban rate is still

stuttering after a decent recovery following the unlock



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 1, 1970

100 mini-supermarkets in Fourth Plan

Mr. Ujjal Singh, Governor of Tamil Nadu, said here to-day [Coimbatore, June 30] that there was a plan to start 100 mini-supermarkets at smaller centres in the State during the Fourth Plan period and that sanction had already been accorded for starting 17 such mini-supermarkets at taluk centres and towns. The Governor who was inaugurating the third anniversary of "Chinthamani", the co-operative supermarket in Coimbatore, said that if the co-operative movement was to prosper along right lines and benefit the people at large, inefficiency and corruption should be stamped out. Special training must be imparted to employees of cooperative institutions in managerial skill, salesmanship and business techniques so that they could have a viable co-operative sector as an integral organisational part of the strategy for planned and rapid economic development of the country. Mr. Ujjal Singh said that the co-operative movement was based on the principle of a classless society where there would be no room for exploitation by those who were occupying positions of advantage.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 1, 1920

Mr. Gandhi: Letter to Viceroy

Mr. Gandhi has sent the following letter [June 24, Bombay] to H.E. the Viceroy: Your Excellency - As one who has enjoyed a certain measure of Your Excellency's confidence and one who claims to be a devoted well-wisher of the British Empire, I owe it to Your Excellency and, through Your Excellency, to His Majesty's Ministers to explain my connection with, and my conduct to, the Khilafat question. At the very earliest stage of the war, even whilst I was in London, organising the Indian volunteer ambulance corps, I began to intercede myself in the Khilafat question. I perceived how deeply moved the little Musselman world in London was when Turkey decided to throw in her lot with Germany. On my arrival in India in January of 1915 I found the same anxiousness and earnestness among the

FROM PAGE ONE

Corps Commanders hold talks in Chushul

Defence sources had said the modalities for disengagement from all friction areas in Eastern Ladakh had been discussed and would be taken forward by both sides.

However, there has been no progress on the ground since and officials described it as a wait-and-watch situation, even as further military build-up continued on both sides.

Free foodgrain scheme extended till November

Mr. Modi added that with the amount already spent since April, the total outlay for the scheme would go up to ₹1.5 lakh crore.

According to government sources, the next few months may see a slow recovery in the economy as the COVID-19 cases, as also mentioned by Mr. Modi, showed an uptick but with lower mortality rates compared to other countries.

Core industry output contracts for third month

"But the decline in oil and gas and petroleum products shows that economic activity was not taking place in May, even though essential industries were allowed to function by then," he added. He expected the decline to continue for several months to come, noting that daily mobility and petroleum consumption data for June had failed to come back to normal, although the lockdown was lifted.

"Many people are still working from home, many industries are still functioning below normal demand due to the pandemic. We are likely to remain in the negative zone for a few more months," he said.

D.K. Srivastava, chief policy advisor at Ernst and

A similar consensus between the Corps Commanders on June 6 was breached following the violent clash in the Galwan Valley, which resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers, including a Colonel.

India's consistent demand has been restoration of status quo of the pre-May 5 positions and de-induction of Chinese forces along the LAC.

19 cases in Kerala linked to community spread

20 dead in Karnataka; Telangana, A.P. report seven fatalities each; senior citizen succumbs in Thiruvananthapuram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Karnataka on Tuesday reported 20 deaths and 947 new COVID-19 cases. Seven patients each succumbed to the disease in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

In what was seen as more evidence of local transmission of COVID-19 in Kerala, 19 more people got the disease from the community as of Tuesday. Nine were CISF personnel in Kannur.

COVID-19

Kerala reported 131 new cases, including one death. All except 19 were imported cases. With 75 new recoveries, active cases were 2,112.

With the test results of a 76-year-old man, who had travelled from Mumbai and passed away at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College hospital on Saturday return-

ing COVID-19 positive, the number of COVID deaths rose to 24. Northern Kerala, especially the Malappuram-Palakkad belt and the Kannur-Kasargod belt could pose a challenge as case cluster formation had begun to happen here, even through in a small way, data showed.

Just in the past five days, the number of people who developed COVID-19 through local transmission in Kerala, as per official figures, was 76. Over the past five days, 42 people who travelled to Tamil Nadu by flights and trains tested positive there.

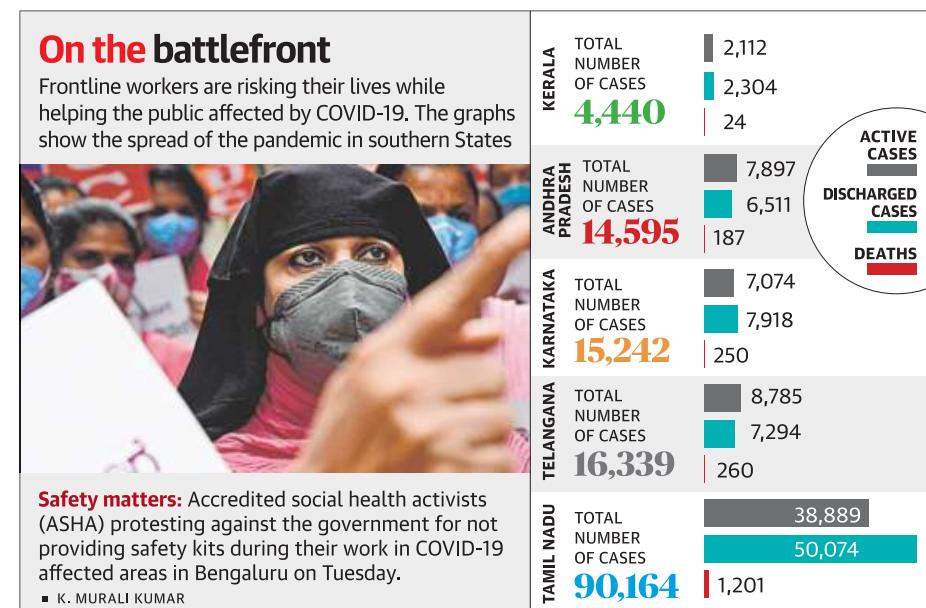
All these people apparently contracted COVID-19 from the community and many were asymptomatic.

Andhra Pradesh crossed the 14,000-mark in the COVID-19 case tally with the detection of 704 more cases from 18,114 samples.

Seven persons succumbed to COVID-19, taking the toll to

On the battlefield

Frontline workers are risking their lives while helping the public affected by COVID-19. The graphs show the spread of the pandemic in southern States



Safety matters: Accredited social health activists (ASHA) protesting against the government for not providing safety kits during their work in COVID-19 affected areas in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

■ K. MURALI KUMAR

187 and the tally rose to 14,595. Of the total, there were 7,897 active cases and 6,511 recoveries. Three deaths were reported in Kurnool and two in Krishna. One

death each occurred in Guntur and Anantapur districts, the Health Department said.

The total deaths in Kurnool and Krishna were 65 and 63 respectively. Of 704

new cases, 648 were among locals. Chittoor reported 107 new local cases, the highest, followed by Anantapur at 104. Krishna reported 84 new cases, Kurnool 82, Kada-

pa 75, Guntur 58, East Godavari 55, Prakasam 31, Visakhapatnam 26, Vizianagaram 13, West Godavari seven, Nellore five and Srikakulam one.

Karnataka reported 20 deaths and 947 cases. Tuesday's deaths were the highest for a single day.

The death toll touched 246. Total cases came to 15,242, of which 12,021 were reported.

While Ballari reported six deaths and Bengaluru Urban four, two each were from Haveri, Vijayapura and Dharwad, one each from Kolar, Davangere, Belagavi and Mysuru.

Telangana experienced a spike on Tuesday again, with 945 more testing positive. Cases totalled 16,339 and total fatalities stood at 260. Greater Hyderabad area contributed 869 positives.

(With inputs from Vijayawada and Bengaluru bureaus)

Down the drain



Canal breach: The canal linking Mallannasagar and Kondapochammasagar reservoir breached in Siddipet district of Telangana, inundating Shivaru Venkatapur village in the early hours of Tuesday. The canal was constructed over a year ago. ■ MOHD ARIF

Telangana puts off all entrance tests

A-G conveys govt. decision to HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

All Common Entrance Tests (CETs) in Telangana for admissions to different courses, including the POLYCET 2020, were postponed by the government.

The High Court, hearing a petition for deferment of the tests, was informed by Advocate-General B.S. Prasad that the next dates would be announced in due course.

NSUI State president B. Venkat Narsing Rao had filed the petition. After hearing counsel for the petitioner, a Bench of Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan

and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy sought to know from Mr. Prasad whether the government would reimpose a lockdown in Hyderabad. The AG sought time till noon to ascertain the government stand. When the Bench re-assembled, he said the Cabinet was likely to take a call in a couple of days. To the Chief Justice's question on the petitioner's contention on deferment, he sought time till 2.30 p.m., saying the Chief Secretary was consulting the Departments concerned. When the Bench re-assembled, he announced the decision to postpone all tests.

IN BRIEF



Congress extends olive branch to Jose K. Mani

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM At least two top leaders of the Congress, including the Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala, have held out an olive branch to embattled Kerala Congress (M) factional leader Jose K. Mani, who faced the prospect of ouster, from the United Democratic Front (UDF). Former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy said the UDF had not closed the door on Mr. Mani. "It is not a closed chapter," he said.

Goats, sheep quarantined in Karnataka village

BENGALURU About 50 goats and sheep have been kept in isolation at a village in Tumakuru district after a shepherd tested positive for COVID-19, officials said on Tuesday. The villagers panicked when they noticed that some goats and sheep at Godekere village in Gollarahatti taluk were having respiratory problems, an officer in the animal husbandry department of the district said. PTI

Bangalore varsity students told to vacate hostels

BENGALURU Hundreds of students of Bangalore University have been told to vacate their hostel rooms immediately as the Brutal Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) wants to take over two hostels in the varsity's Jnanabharathi campus so that they can be converted into Covid Care Centres. Vice Chancellor K.R. Venugopal said that the State government had requested them to vacate two of the hostels, where 750 beds could be set up.

98.82% pass in Class X board exam in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM The results of the class X board exam held in Kerala amid the coronavirus scare were announced on Tuesday. Over four lakh students took the exam by wearing masks and following social distancing norms amid the virus spread. The pass percentage was 98.82. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan congratulated all those who had passed and urged students to take the results in the right spirit. PTI

Slight rise in India's fish production

KOCHI India's marine fish production registered a marginal increase of 2.1% in 2019 compared to the previous year. The country recorded 3.56 million tonnes in total landings during the year, according to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute. The figures released here on Tuesday showed that Tamil Nadu took the first position in landings with 7.75 lakh tonnes. It was followed by Gujarat (7.49 lakh tonnes) and Kerala (5.44 lakh tonnes).

Gas leak in Vizag pharma plant kills two

4 more fall sick at Sainor Life Sciences plant; 1 among them is battling for life

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE
VISAKHAPATNAM

Two persons died and four others were taken ill after inhaling hydrogen sulphide vapours that leaked from the reactor of a pharmaceutical company's plant at Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City at Parawada, about 40 km from here, late on Monday.

Commissioner of Police R.K. Meena told *The Hindu* that the leak at Sainor Life Sciences Private Limited had been brought under control.

The deceased have been identified as shift in-charge Ragi Narendra and chemist Gowri Shankar. The others –

L.V. Chandra Sekhar, P. Anand Babu, D. Janakiram and M. Surya Narayana – were rushed to a private hospital where the condition of Chandra Sekhar was said to be critical.

The incident comes close on the heels of the styrene monomer vapour leak at LG Polymers on May 7, in which 12 persons died and hundreds were hospitalised.

Mr. Meena, Vizag District Collector V. Vinay Chand and officials from the Fire Service and the Factories Departments rushed to the plant on Tuesday morning to assess the situation.

Based on a complaint



Tragedy strikes: Family members of one of the deceased mourning in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

lodged by the VRO, police booked cases under IPC Sections 304 (2), 278, 284, 285 and 337. Police were deployed in strength and access to the plant was restricted.

Deputy Chief Inspector of

Factories K.B.S. Prasad said from preliminary investigation it appeared that the leak originated in a hose that connects the reactor to the centrifuge. The vapour leaked in a small quantity and accumulated near the reactor area

over a period of time. The shift in-charge and the chemist were the first to be affected and the four co-workers, who went to their rescue, also inhaled some, Mr. Prasad said.

This is the second incident in the Sainor Life Sciences plant since it began operations at JNPC.

In September 2015, two workers were charred to death and five others injured in a reactor blast. Cases were booked against the company and it was allowed to resume operations only after the management paid a hefty fine.

There have been about 40 industrial accidents in Visakhapatnam district, over 20 in pharma and chemical units alone, since 1997. About 130 lives have been lost and hundreds injured.

A.P. official held for assaulting colleague

CCTV footage of episode goes viral

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE

A tiff over following safety etiquette during the COVID-19 pandemic led to the arrest of an executive with the State Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) here on Tuesday.

The incident took place at Harita Tourism Hotel, a designated COVID-19 quarantine centre, on Saturday.

APTDC deputy manager C. Bhaskar allegedly thrashed Usha Rani, a differently-abled woman colleague who, on seeing him without a mask, suggested that he follow the mandatory personal protective measure following a spurt in novel coronavirus cases in the city.

On April 24, the IDSP said nearly 9.45 lakh people from 734 districts were under surveillance for possible COVID-19.

the woman before pulling her by her hair and beating her with a chair's handle. Fellow colleagues, who were taken aback, quickly came to her rescue and took him away from the spot.

The CCTV footage of the woman being thrashed went viral on social media platforms.

State Women's Commission Chairperson Vasireddy Padma visited the victim and directed the police to file a chargesheet within one week and ensure stringent punishment to the accused under the relevant sections of the IPC and Dispo Act.

On the directive of Tourism Minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, APTDC Managing Director Pravin Kumar placed the accused under suspension.

Ballari DC orders inquiry into 'dumping' of bodies

Video shows bodies being thrown into large trenches

STAFF REPORTER
BALLARI

Ballari Deputy Commissioner S.S. Nakul on Tuesday ordered an inquiry after a video showing bodies, allegedly those of COVID-19 victims, being hurled into large burial trenches in an isolated area.

The video caused public outrage in Ballari, which has seen a spurt in the number of cases that has now touched 834. Mr. Nakul told *The Hindu* that an enquiry would be conducted by the Additional Deputy Commissioner and he had been directed to submit his report at the earliest. "Whether the mortuary staff violated guidelines issued for burying COVID-19 victims will be confirmed only after the inquiry."

He said there was no conclusive evidence to prove that the incident took place in Ballari district. "However, throwing bodies into a trench is disgraceful. The victims should be buried separately in an isolated area."

Mr. Nakul said serious action would be taken against those responsible, if it is confirmed that the incident took place in Ballari district. The district reported nine COVID-19 related deaths on Monday and five more on Tuesday, he said. Six deaths were reported on Wednesday.



A video grab purportedly showing a body being taken to a burial trench. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Sharp fall in reporting of non-COVID diseases

"We have been invited to meet with concerned government stakeholders for an opportunity to respond and submit clarifications," he said.

We need to wait and watch to understand the impact of banning these apps on the Indian economy as we are not sure about the anticipated counter from China. The economic impact on Chinese firms would, however, be significant," Anand S., vice-president, TechVision, Frost & Sullivan, told *The Hindu*.

He noted that some of the apps banned were very popular in India.

For instance, the time spent on TikTok in India in December last was more than the next 11 countries combined. "The fear that the implications could be followed in other countries is a bigger threat to the Chinese economy", he said.

Experts have said the move to ban the apps, which together are estimated to have over 500 million monthly active users in the

country, may have a significant impact on the Chinese firms.

A.C. Dhariwal, former Director of IDSP said behavioural changes such as the use of masks and restricted movement had led to a possible decline in several viral borne diseases, including H1N1, mumps and measles. "Distancing and lack of contact may have seen a decline in contagious diseases as well as say water borne infectious diseases," he noted.

'Seriously concerned' by ban on apps: China

State-run media warn of fall in exports and investments

ANANTH KRISHNAN

CHENNAI
China on Tuesday said it was "seriously concerned" by India's move to block 59 Chinese apps, which it described as "a deliberate interference in practical cooperation" between the two countries.

China's state media warned the move would bring economic repercussions, including affecting outbound Chinese investment into India.

In separate statements issued by China's Foreign Ministry in Beijing and its Embassy in New Delhi, the Chinese government called on India to review the decision.

"I want to stress that the Chinese government consistently asks Chinese enterprises to abide by international rules and local laws and regulations when conducting external cooperation," China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said, expressing "strong concern".

The Indian government has the responsibility to protect the legitimate rights and interests of international in-



Zhao Lijian

abuses national security exceptions, and suspects of violating the WTO rules. It also goes against the general trend of international trade and e-commerce, and is not conducive to consumer interests and the market competition in India," the statement said.

The Embassy said the ban will affect not only the employment of local Indian workers who support these apps, but also the interests of Indian users..."

Chinese media and social media widely discussed the ban on Tuesday. China restricts a number of foreign apps and websites in the mainland, and among those blocked are WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

In an editorial, the Communist Party-run *Global Times* slammed what it said was "a lacklustre explanation for the nonsensical move".

The newspaper quoted experts who "predicted Chinese overseas direct investment (ODI) into India will drop sharply in 2020, with two experts forecasting a more than 50% [reduction]."

The Chinese are at Sirijap, which is 8 km east of Finger 8. They built a road up to Finger 4 in 1999 when Indian

INTERVIEW | S. DINNY

'Status quo at Pangong Tso has been changed'

PLA's actions of blatantly erecting structures show they do not respect agreements, says retired Colonel

ANANTH KRISHNAN

While attention has been focused on the Galwan Valley following the June 15 violence, another unprecedented face-off has been unfolding at Pangong Tso. By erecting tents and other structures on Indian territory between Finger 4 and Finger 8, China's PLA has changed rules of agreements, says Colonel S. Dinny (retired), who commanded an infantry battalion at Pangong Tso until 2017.

They have been sensitive to our presence in this area because they felt they built the road, and they dominated up to Finger 4. They do not want us to come to Finger 8 frequently, so sometimes they stop us. As per agreements, when stopped, you cannot bypass them. We reciprocate, and stop them before they come to Finger 4. For many years, it was a one-man show and they were dominating. Only in the past seven or eight years, we have started pushing our infrastructure so our presence has increased. What [encounters] used to happen once or twice a month, is now on an almost daily basis.

Having served at Pangong Lake, how different is the current situation?

■ The problem peculiar to this place is China's perception of the LAC is at Finger 4 and our perception is at Finger 8. The Fingers [mountain spurs] are numbered 1 to 8, from west to east. So, there is a distance of 8 km where the entire conflict has been happening. Our post is between Finger 2 and 3, which is well connected by a road. There is a track to 1 km short of Finger 4, but it ends there. After that, it's only a foot track.

The Chinese are at Sirijap, which is 8 km east of Finger 8. They built a road up to Finger 4 in 1999 when Indian

troop presence was limited because of Kargil. No vehicle can cross Finger 4. When we patrol up to Finger 8, we have to go on foot. The Chinese have the advantage as they can come up to Finger 4 on vehicles.

They have been sensitive to our presence in this area because they felt they built the road, and they dominated up to Finger 4. They do not want us to come to Finger 8 frequently, so sometimes they stop us. As per agreements, when stopped, you cannot bypass them. We reciprocate, and stop them before they come to Finger 4. For many years, it was a one-man show and they were dominating. Only in the past seven or eight years, we have started pushing our infrastructure so our presence has increased. What [encounters] used to happen once or twice a month, is now on an almost daily basis.

What explains the timing?

■ Two things happen every summer. All the infrastructure work starts, and you have more troops in the area because annual exercises happen then. The winter at 17,000 feet is cruel. Summer



Colonel S. Dinny (retired)
Both armies can definitely follow a no-patrolling zone in the around 23 areas along the LAC

is when you can both construct infrastructure and protest it, so you see escalation of conflicts.

What is different this time?

■ Firstly, the scale at which the status quo has been changed is blatant. In Pangong Tso, both sides know there is a dispute, but they have unilaterally changed the status quo and in a blatant way, by erecting structures [between Finger 4 and 8] for everyone to see, in a way that shows they do not respect past agreements.

No country can allow such a thing to happen even if this territory is disputed. Also different is the scale of violence.

What are India's options?

■ The approach of the Indian Army and government is the right one. We have ensured a balance of forces so if anyone wants to escalate, there will be no surprise. Having said that, my view is kinetic action is the last resort. People are jumping to that and saying we should evict them physically. We have not reached that stage.

The talks itself are a positive sign that both want to de-escalate. Both will be looking for an honourable exit. If the situation is prolonged, it is ideal for the exit strategy because if it is abrupt, there is a sudden notion of victory or loss of face. Hopefully, we will have a gradual de-escalation by winter and be back to the status quo ante of April. Else, it will be a long haul, and other means will come into play.

The violence on June 15 in Galwan Valley was

unprecedented, and so are the multiple stand-offs at different points. What explains this?

■ My reading is although the trigger was at Pangong Tso, slowly but steadily the scale has expanded. The June 15 incident definitely came as a

shock to me. I always had this fear that someday things could get out of hand. By God's grace, none of the troops opened fire. People have asked why they didn't use weapons. I think that was a good decision from both sides to adhere to agreements and protocols despite the violence. If they did use weapons, the casualties would have been in hundreds. There is a sincere and serious requirement for revisiting these agreements now because our contacts are increasing.

Asking for a border resolution is far fetched, but what both armies can definitely do is follow a no-patrolling zone in the 23 or so areas along the LAC where there are differing perceptions. Now we have unmanned aerial vehicles and other assets to observe this, and we do not need physical contact of troops. I don't want to say it, but the day is not far away when people may actually start using weapons.

If there is a no-patrolling zone, you will find there is a drastic reduction in this kind of conflict, which would be a great thing for peace on the border.

IN BRIEF



Mamata calls for a befitting reply to China

KOLKATA
Pledging full support to the Union government on the tensions with China, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said banning apps is not enough and the Centre should give a befitting reply to the neighbour. "Only banning some apps will not give you the result. We want to give China a befitting reply. How do we do it, that they have to decide," she said. Ms. Banerjee said unless there is an 'aggressive' response from the Centre, people of the country will wonder, "What is the government's stand?"

ED quizzes Ahmed Patel again in Sterling case

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday recorded a statement of Congress leader Ahmed Patel in the Sterling Biotech Limited case. On June 27, it had questioned him for several hours. The probe is based on one of the two FIRs lodged by the CBI against Sterling Biotech and others in October 2017. While one case alleges routing of undeclared funds belonging to unknown Income Tax Department officials, the second alleges bank loan defaults to the tune of ₹8,100 crore. The ED has attached assets worth over ₹14,500 crore in the bank loan case.

Infiltration bid foiled in Kupwara, says Army

Srinagar
The Army on Tuesday said it foiled an infiltration by at least 6 to 8 armed men from across the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara district on the intervening night of Monday-Tuesday. "The intruders group was challenged at Parkian Gali along the LoC but it fled away taking advantage of darkness", the Army added. Their suspicious movement was spotted on June 29-30 in two groups and "our own troops challenged the infiltrators with fire," it said.

Criminal law reform consultation soon

NEW DELHI
The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted a national level committee for reform in criminal law. The committee, which has several leading legal academicians on board, would be gathering opinions online, consulting with experts and collating material for their report to the government. The consultation exercise would start on July 4 and go on for the next three months.

Modi's address did not match the hype: Congress

Implement a NYAY-like scheme, says Rahul Gandhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Prime Minister seemed preoccupied with the idea of Bihar Assembly elections

SUPRIYA SHRINATE
Congress Spokesperson

hype that was generated before the speech and the Prime Minister seemed "preoccupied with the idea of Bihar Assembly elections."

The party also questioned Mr. Modi's claim that the COVID-19 battle was well under control, as the data portrayed a grim picture and India was now the fourth highest in terms of the number of cases.

No shortage of funds'

Mr. Gandhi said COVID-19 had "destroyed" the economy, and the poor, the workers and the middle and salary class had been hit the

hardest. He said the Centre had turned down the repeated requests to implement a scheme like NYAY citing shortage of funds. "I want to remind the nation that the government has waived crores of rupees in tax of 15 crony capitalists and in the last three months the prices of petrol and diesel have been increased by Narendra Modi government 22 times. There is no shortage of money, the government has ₹3 lakh crore," he said.

"Two things were clear from the Prime Minister's address. One, that this crisis is going to last, at least until November, as he extended the existing schemes. And second, his preoccupation with regard to the Bihar elections, as he was repeatedly referring to Bihar," said party spokesperson Supriya Shrinante at a press conference.

"This was a hard blow against the soldiers, their families and the nation. In these difficult circumstances, I wish to express my steadfast and friendly support, along with that of the French armed forces. I request you to kindly convey my heartfelt condolences to the entire Indian armed forces as well as to the grieving families," the sources quoted Ms. Parly as having said in the letter on Monday. Recalling that India France's strategic partner in the region, Ms. Parly reiterated deep solidarity and expressed her readiness to meet Mr. Singh to follow up on their ongoing discussions.

France condoles soldiers' deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

French Defence Minister Florence Parly wrote to her Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh condoling the death of 20 Indian soldiers in Galwan Valley, French diplomatic sources said on Tuesday.

"This was a hard blow against the soldiers, their families and the nation. In these difficult circumstances, I wish to express my steadfast and friendly support, along with that of the French armed forces. I request you to kindly convey my heartfelt condolences to the entire Indian armed forces as well as to the grieving families," the sources quoted Ms. Parly as having said in the letter on Monday. Recalling that India France's strategic partner in the region, Ms. Parly reiterated deep solidarity and expressed her readiness to meet Mr. Singh to follow up on their ongoing discussions.

In a video message on Twitter, Mr. Gandhi said, "The whole country knows that China has taken away India's 'sacred land' and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to tell the nation when he would push them out.

In a video message on Twitter, Mr. Gandhi said, "The whole country knows that China has taken away the sacred land of India. All of us know that the Chinese are inside Ladakh at four places. Narendra Modi ji, please tell the nation when will you push the Chinese

When will you throw out Chinese troops, Rahul asks PM

BJP talks of 'Make in India' but buys from China, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day after the Union government banned 59 Chinese apps, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that China had taken away India's 'sacred land' and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to tell the nation when he would push them out.

In a video message on Twitter, Mr. Gandhi said, "The whole country knows that China has taken away the sacred land of India. All of us know that the Chinese are inside Ladakh at four places. Narendra Modi ji, please tell the nation when will you push the Chinese



Rahul Gandhi
troops out of India and how?"

At the party's official briefing, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinante termed the ban on Chinese apps a mere 'symbolic' gesture and asserted that the party would back the government in taking a more 'decisive action'.

Paswan welcomes PMGKAY extension

Oppn., activists call for universal PDS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement to extend the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) till November.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Paswan said, "This is a historic step and I would congratulate PM Modi for this. I would urge the State governments, who have not so far distributed the entire allocated amount of food grains, should immediately pick up necessary food grains from the nearest FCI godowns and distribute it to the needy."

So far, 87% of food grains allocated under the scheme for April, May and June has reached the beneficiaries, the Ministry said. Only Chhattisgarh and Lakshadweep have achieved 100% distribution.

Opposition parties and activists working in the field of food rights however, are not impressed. "Bowing to people's protests, the Modi government has extended the provision of 5 kg grains free for 80 crore people for

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Ram Vilas Paswan

the next 5 months. This falls far short of the required 10 kg per month for six months to all needy to prevent hunger deaths," CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury tweeted. CPI general secretary D. Raja questioned what was stopping the government on universalising public distribution at a time of crisis, especially when government godowns have stocks far exceeding the buffer stock range.

Associate Professor of Economics and food rights activist Reetika Khera said while extending the food entitlements is a welcome move, Mr. Modi didn't speak about the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme under which eight crore migrants, who are not covered under the National Food Security Act, were provided food grains for two months.

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Health workers must get vaccine first: PM

High-level meet reviews preparedness to combat COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vulnerable groups, including health workers and those in the general public, should be identified and prioritised for early vaccination, noted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday while chairing a high-level meeting to review the planning and preparations for vaccination against COVID-19, as and when a vaccine is available.

He said vaccination of India's vast and diverse population will need to factor in issues including those related to management of medical supply chains, prioritisation of at-risk populations, coordination between different agencies involved, as well as the role of private sector and civil society.

Universal access

"The Prime Minister said that after the vulnerable population is vaccinated the same should be offered to "anyone, anywhere" without imposition of any domi-



Testing matters: A lab technician checking the results of a COVID-19 test.

cile-related restrictions for getting the vaccine. Also the vaccination must be affordable and universal – no person should be left behind and the entire process from production to vaccination should be monitored and supported in real time with the use of technology," noted a government press release.

The Prime Minister also directed officials to evaluate in a broad manner available technology options that can form the backbone of the national endeavour to vaccinate everybody in the most

efficient and timely manner and directed that detailed planning for such large-scale vaccination should be undertaken immediately.

The current status of vaccine development efforts were also reviewed at the meeting.

Meanwhile in an extensive exercise, Uttar Pradesh's 1.6 lakh ASHAs workers have tracked nearly 30.43 lakh migrant returnees in two phases – 11.24 lakh in the first and 19.19 lakh in the second phase, noted a release issued by the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday.

"They have assisted in contact tracing and community level surveillance. The ASHAs not only identified 7,965 persons with symptoms but also regularly followed up on their health status. They have facilitated sample collection from 2,232 returnees of which 203 were found to be positive and were referred to COVID health care services," the Ministry added.

Centre to focus on online education

Laptops planned for 40% of college students; govt. schools to get ICT facilities

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

With the social inequity in online education coming to the fore due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre has proposed long-term measures to bridge the divide, including plans to distribute laptops or tablets to 40% of all college and university students over the next five years, and to equip all government schools with information and communication technology (ICT).

In a presentation to the Finance Commission on Monday, the School Education Department also estimated it would need to spend up to ₹1 lakh per school for sanitisation and quarantine measures in preparation for the safe reopening of schools that have been shut due to the pandemic.

Basic measures

The measures would include ensuring basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, safe drinking water, availability of alcohol rub/sanitiser, disinfectant, cleaning material and equipment for temperature checking.

Funds for these measures



Virtual access: For college and university students, the promotion of online education will be two-fold. ■ K. ANANTHAN

are being provided under the composite grant for schools, ranging between ₹25,000 for small schools with less than 100 students and ₹1 lakh for schools with over a thousand students, according to the presentation to the Commission.

In order for government schools to be reopened, funds will also be provided for the 3.1 lakh govern-

ment schools above upper primary level who do not have ICT facilities, the Centre proposes a budget of ₹55,840 crore to equip them with such facilities.

Urgent matter

For college and university students, the promotion of online education, which has become more urgent due to the pandemic, will be two-fold. On the one hand, the Human Resource Development Ministry proposes to spend ₹2,306 crore on developing and translating digital course content and resources over the next five years.

On the other, it intends to provide laptops and tablets to 4.06 crore students – that is, 40% of the projected student population – by 2026, at a total cost of ₹60,900 crore. The largest chunk of 1.5 crore students are to receive devices in the next financial year 2021-22. An average cost of ₹15,000 has been assumed per device.

The Centre and States are to share the cost of making devices available, in a 60:40 ratio, according to the presentation to the Finance Commission.

Fresh rules on movement of people issued

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The permit or e-pass system for inter-State movement of vehicles was done away with on May 30, when the first set of guidelines for opening up the economy under Unlock 1.0 were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

However, if the local administration wanted to regulate movement in the wake of a surge in the number of COVID-19 cases, it was asked to give wide publicity in advance regarding the restrictions, the guidelines had said.

As per the guidelines issued on Monday for Unlock 2, local authorities could impose restrictions based on their assessment outside containment zones but there shall be "no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods" and "no separate permission/approval/e-permit will be required for such movements." Lockdown has to be strictly implemented in containment zones where "only essential activities are to be allowed."

Groom dies, 95 guests test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

A groom died two days after his marriage, and 95 others, mostly those who attended the wedding ceremony, were found to be COVID-19 positive in Bihar.

The ceremony took place on June 15 at village Deephali in Paliganj of Patna district.

The 30-year-old groom, a software engineer from Gurugram in Haryana, had come to his village for the wedding.

He was said to be unwell at the time of his wedding and having symptoms of COVID-19 but went ahead with the function under family pressure. Two days later, on June 17, he died even before he could reach Patna's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). He was cremated without being tested for COVID-19.

Later, a few villagers informed the Patna district administration about the man's death and a team of doctors and paramedics rushed to the village to collect samples of those who attended the ceremony. Fifteen of them were found to be positive for COVID-19. On Monday, 80 more people tested positive.

"Many who have tested positive for COVID-19 are those who had attended the ceremony," said a health official.

Bengal wants flights suspended

State opposed to services from high-prevalence areas such as Delhi and Chennai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha on Tuesday wrote to Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation P.S. Kharola urging him to stop domestic flights from high prevalence places to Kolkata.

"West Bengal is witness-



Mamata Banerjee

ing a steep rise in cases...Accordingly, I request you not to schedule any flight to West Bengal from high prevalence places viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chennai, Indore, Ahmedabad and Surat and to stop the movement of flights from

to acquire 6,000 private buses in Kolkata by Wednesday by imposition of National Disaster Management Act.

To commandeer buses

"If the owners do not operate buses by Wednesday, we will be left with no option but to acquire them," also Mr Sinha wrote to Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla seeking permission to invoke the NDMA.

The State government had proposed a Rs 15,000 aid to private bus owners but they were not willing to bring the bus on the streets.

The bus owners were de-

manding a hike in the bus fares and commuters in Kolkata and suburbs have been having a tough time in reaching their destinations.

In another letter addressed to the Prime Minister Ms Banerjee opposed the Centre's decision to bring cooperative banks of the country under the Reserve Bank of India.

"This is the only thing that we have in our control. The Union government should not take away that control. Our government has decided to write to the NITI Aayog chief against the decision," the Chief Minister added.

Venugopal gets a year's extension as A-G

Tushar Mehta to be S-G for three more years; six new Additional S-Gs appointed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government has extended the term of K.K. Venugopal as Attorney-General (A-G) for one year, Tushar Mehta as Solicitor-General (S-G) for three years, beginning July 1, appointed six new Additional Solicitors-General (ASGs) and extended the tenure of five ASGs.

While the A-G was reappointed by President Ram Nath Kovind, the other appointments were notified by the Law Ministry late on Monday after the Appoint-



K.K. Venugopal

ments Committee of Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared them.

Mr. Venugopal was ap-

pointed in July 2017 after his predecessor Mukul Rohatgi resigned. Even though the

usual tenure (including reappointment) of the A-G is three years, he has been given a one-year extension because he agreed for that period owing to his advanced age of 89.

The ASGs who got a three-year extension are Vikramjit Banerjee, Aman Lekhi, Madhavi Goradia Divan, K.M. Natarajan and Rajan Jain, an official release said.

The senior advocates who

have been appointed ASGs are Balbir Singh, Suryaprasad V. Raju, Rupinder Singh Suri, N. Venkataraman,

Jayant K. Sud and Aishwarya Bhati.

Besides reappointing Anil C. Singh as the ASG for the Bombay High Court and Satya Pal Jain for the Punjab and Haryana High Court, five new ASGs have also been appointed. They are Yezdekar, Jehangir Dastoor for the Calcutta High Court, Chetan Sharma for the Delhi High Court, Sankaranarayanan for the Madras High Court, Krishna Nandan Singh for the Patna High Court and Devang Girish Vyas for the Gujurat High Court.

A total of 143 Pakistani nationals, including family members, left through the Wagah-Attari border. India also evacuated 38 officials from the High Commission of India in Islamabad.

Jamaat members can be shifted: HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday permitted the shifting of 65 foreign nationals, who had participated in the religious congregation at Tablighi Jamaat centre in Nizamuddin here, to an alternative accommodation.

The court passed the order after counsel for the Centre, Delhi government and Delhi police said they do not have any objection to shifting of them as they were facing certain issues, including unhygienic condition.

39 Pakistan officials return home

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

At least 39 officials from the Pakistan High Commission returned home on Tuesday, diplomatic sources said. This came a week after India asked Pakistan to reduce the staff strength in the mission by 50%.

A total of 143 Pakistani nationals, including family members, left through the Wagah-Attari border. India also evacuated 38 officials from the High Commission of India in Islamabad.

Law and order is better: Nagaland CM

Rio reacts to Governor Ravi's letter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Almost a fortnight after Governor R.N. Rio wrote to him complaining about "armed gangs" making hay, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio said law and order in the State was vastly better than the pre-ceasefire years.

The Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) had inked the ceasefire pact with the Centre in 1997. Other groups followed, but the rival Khaplang group walked out of the truce in March 2015.

"The situation today is way better than the years preceding the Centre's signing of ceasefire agreements in the 1990s and in the 1960s.. Nagaland was also adjudged the best performing small State in law and order in 2018 and 2019 [by a Delhi-based publication group]," Mr. Rio told presspersons in the capital Kohima on Monday. He said the State Cabinet held a meeting at the Raj Bhavan on June 19, in which the Governor read out the letter he had written three days ago. Deputy Chief Minister Y. Patton, also the Home Minister, briefed the Governor on the law and order situation.

In his letter, Mr. Rio said the unrestrained depredations by more than half-a-



Neiphiu Rio

dozen organised armed gangs, brazenly running their so-called "governments" and challenging the legitimacy of the State government without any resistance from the law and order machinery, created a crisis of confidence in the system.

"Law-abiding citizens are made miserable by rampant extortions and violence by the armed gangs," said the Governor, who is also the interlocutor in the Naga peace talks.

"The State government development departments are under duress to give regular ransom to the armed gangs," he said.

The NSCN(IM) reacted to the letter last week, asserting that it did not extort from people but levied "legitimate taxes" on them.

The working committee of Naga National Political Groups, a conglomerate of other rebel groups, also denied its involvement in extortion.

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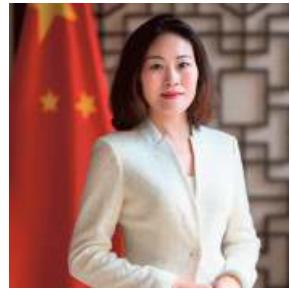
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'Wrong to blame China for India-Nepal dispute'

They should resolve differences through talks, says envoy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Nepal's new political map was a response to a public demand to uphold its sovereignty, according to Chinese Ambassador in Kathmandu Hou Yanqi.



Chinese Ambassador in Kathmandu Hou Yanqi

In an interview to a prominent Nepalese online publication, she said Nepal's territorial dispute with India at Kalapani should not be disturbed by "unilateral" action and those who said Nepal acted on behalf of China in fact intended to undermine China-Nepal ties.

"This is a measure by the Nepali government to firmly safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity and comply with the public opinion. Any so-called 'Nepal at the behest of China' accusation is baseless and comes with ulterior motives. Such accusations are not only an insult to the will of the independent country of Nepal,

The envoy urged Nepal

and India to resolve the territorial dispute at Kalapani. "We hope the two countries will resolve their differences properly through friendly consultations and refrain from taking any unilateral action that may complicate the situation", she said.

New map

Nepal passed the new map in the Lower House of Parliament on June 13 and the Second Constitution Amendment, which gave constitutional guarantee to the map, completed the legislative process on June 18 with the authentication of the Bill by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari.

She argued that reports about China acquiring territory from Nepal in the northern part of the country were created by "irresponsible media and individual groups" as the Nepal-China boundary was already demarcated "without any dispute".

The envoy urged Nepal

but also are endeavours directed at disruption of China-Nepal relations", said Ms. Hou in the interview to *Rising Nepal*.

She argued that reports about China acquiring territory from Nepal in the northern part of the country were created by "irresponsible media and individual groups" as the Nepal-China boundary was already demarcated "without any dispute".

The envoy urged Nepal

LIC employees write to PM against disinvestment

'It is inimical to Atmanirbhar Bharat'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The All-India LIC Employees Federation has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to stop the proposed disinvestment in the Life Insurance Corporation of India, saying the move would be against his stated mission of an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

rightly so of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Disinvestment in LIC will be a stepping stone for privatisation in future which will be against the national interest," the letter stated.

LIC provided a large number of Indians in rural areas and socially and economically weaker sections life insurance at a reasonable cost, it said.

National priorities and obligation of reasonable returns to the policyholders have been the main criteria of LIC's investment. The total funds so invested for the benefits of the community at large are ₹29,84,331 crore as on March 31, 2019. If the government goes ahead with its plan of disinvestment in LIC, there will be implication for policyholders," the letter said.

With disinvestment, LIC

would be forced to review its investments in social sectors like housing, power and irrigation, it said.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
One in three girls missing globally due to sex selection, both pre- and post-natal, is from India – 46 million out of the total 142 million, according to the UNFPA's State of the World Population 2020 report released on Tuesday.

The figure shows that the number of missing women has more than doubled over the past 50 years, who were at 61 million in 1970.

The report examines the issue of missing women by studying sex ratio imbalances at birth as a result of gender-biased sex selection as well as excess female mortality due to deliberate neglect of girls because of a culture of son preference. Excess female mortality is the difference between observed and expected mortality of the girl child or avoidable death of girls during childhood.

The report cites a 2014 study to state that India has the highest rate of excess fe-

INTERVIEW | SHAKTISINH GOHIL

'We have learnt from our mistakes in 2019'

Face of the *Mahagathbandhan* will be decided by consensus, says Congress's Bihar in-charge

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Congress Bihar in-charge Shaktisinh Gohil said the Mahagathbandhan, or the grand alliance of Opposition parties, in Bihar has learnt its lessons from the disarray during the general election, and like-minded parties are working on providing an alternative to the voter.

The Mahagathbandhan failed to make any mark in the Lok Sabha election. What went wrong then? And has the Congress and its allies learnt any lessons from the debacle?

■ We made a few mistakes in the run up to the Lok Sabha election.

Till the very last minute we didn't have clarity on seat-sharing and the tussle over who will contest on which seat didn't go down well.

Although we did get over the differences, at least among the top layers of the

leadership, by then it was too late to bring a similar cohesion among the cadres on the ground.

We have all learnt our lessons from this. All the alliance partners have to ensure that we do not get entangled in the number game and each ally is treated with respect.

There are already cracks visible in the alliance, with Hindustan Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Jitan Ram Manjhi protesting against the RJD for not constituting a coordination committee. Does the Congress share his views on the subject?

■ We had a preliminary meeting which was attended by all our alliance partners. It was held in a cordial atmosphere.

It was decided that the RJD will organise a meeting of the State-level leaders and constitute a coordination committee.

I don't see a problem, I be-



lieve it will soon be taken care of.

We have been hearing about a possibility of a third front, with the Congress walking out of the Mahagathbandhan along with the other parties. Would you comment?

■ The Bihar voter is very unhappy. The BJP and the JD(U)

are not on the same ideolog-

*ical plane and even their style of administration is diametrically opposite to each other's. Because of this Bihar's *janata* (common people) is suffering.*

There is reluctance among the other allies about projecting Tejashwi Yadav as the face of the alliance. Does the Congress accept him as the face of the alliance?

■ This is something for the allies to decide by consensus at an appropriate time. And when you unite on an ideology then the issue of projecting any one face is not relevant.

There has been a growing sentiment within the Congress in Bihar that an alliance with RJD is eroding their own electoral base and is slowly pushing the party towards extinction in the State. Would the Congress consider breaking the ties?

■ The Congress has never worked for "power politics"; we work for our convictions and ideology. We don't use and throw our allies like the BJP. Our party has internal

democracy and everyone accordingly shares their thoughts.

There is reluctance among the other allies about projecting Tejashwi Yadav as the face of the alliance.

■ This is something for the allies to decide by consensus at an appropriate time. And when you unite on an ideology then the issue of projecting any one face is not relevant.

During the Lok Sabha election, the Congress tried hard to bring the Left parties into the alliance but the RJD resisted. Will that change?

*■ I have said earlier, too, that all the like-minded parties should come together. And Left parties definitely fall under this category. We will be very happy if all of us can work out some space for the Left in the *Mahagathbandhan*.*

World Bank okays funds for Namami Gange

It's a five-year loan of ₹3,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
(\$150 million) for three new 'Hybrid Annuity Projects' in Agra, Meerut and Saharanpur for the tributaries of the Ganga.

A sum of ₹1,209 crore (\$160 million) is provided for the ongoing DBOT (Design, Build, Operate and Transfer) projects in Buxar, Munger, Begusara.

Other heads of distribution would include 'Institutional Development' (\$20 million or ₹51 crore); 'Improving Investments Resilience to COVID-19 Like Emergency Situations' (\$5 million or ₹38 crore); Performance Based Incentive for Urban Local Bodies (\$30 million or ₹226 crore) and Programme Communication and Management (\$16 million or ₹121 crore), said a release from the NMCG.

"The government's Namami Gange Programme has revitalised India's efforts in rejuvenating the Ganga," said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank's Country Director.

46 million girls went missing in India

One in nine females below the age of 5 die due to postnatal sex selection: report

Missing girls

An estimated one in nine deaths of girls below the age of 5 in India, the highest among all countries, may be attributed to postnatal sex selection. The table shows estimates of excess female mortality (EFM) below age 5 and its share of overall mortality rates in 2012

Excess female mortality rates are calculated as the difference between observed and expected mortality rates for girls below age 5

Country	EFM below 5 years	EFM as a % of overall female under-5 mortality
India	13.5	11.7%
Bahrain	1.1	5.9%
Egypt	2.4	5.6%
Iran	1.8	5.2%
Jordan	1.9	5%
Nepal	2.9	3.5%
China	1	3.3%
Afghanistan	5.2	2.7%
Pakistan	4.7	2.7%
Bangladesh	2.1	2.6%

male deaths at 13.5 per 1,000 female births or one in nine deaths of females below the age of 5 in India, the highest among all countries, may be attributed to postnatal sex selection. The same study shows that in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan excess female mortality of girls below 5 years of age was under 3%.

However, the advent of technology and increased access to ultrasound imaging ensured that parents didn't have to wait for the birth of

their girl child to kill her but could terminate a foetus upon knowing its gender. This resulted in the number of girls missing due to female foeticide exceeding those that were missing because of postnatal sex selection.

According to estimates averaged over a five year period (2013-17), annually, there were 1.2 million missing female births, at a global level. India had about 4,60,000 girls 'missing' at

birth each year.

These skewed numbers translate into long-term shifts in the proportions of women and men in the population of some countries, the report points out.

In many countries, this results in a "marriage squeeze" as prospective grooms far outnumber prospective brides, which further results in human trafficking for marriage as well as child marriages.

In the second phase, the loan would fund ₹1,134 crore

M.P. lawyer 'thrashed' by police booked

HC suspends 2 FIRs against Arnab

Sword of Damocles cannot hang over the head of journalist, the court says



Arnab Goswami

we do not find any statement made by Mr. Goswami which can be construed to be against the Muslim community or the Christian community. In such circumstances, it cannot be said that any offence has been committed by Mr. Goswami of provoking rioting or promoting or attempting to promote, on the grounds of religion, dis-

harm or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious groups which is prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony between different religious groups or which disturbs or is likely to disturb public tranquillity, thus prejudicial to national integrity. Neither any statement nor the conduct of the petitioner can be said to have been made de-

liberately and with malicious intention to outrage the religious feelings of any class of citizens or insulting any religion or religious beliefs of that class of citizens."

In the Bandra case, the Bench remarked, "On an overall reading of the FIR, statement of the informant and transcript of the broadcast, it would be wrong to say that Mr. Goswami had made statements in the broadcast with a view to fame or insult the feelings of any religious group or community. The tenor of the programme was Mr. Goswami trying to find out as to who were the people or which were the forces trying to derail or defeat the lockdown and encouraging violation of social distancing norms.

The balance in the bank account of his wife has also been attached.

In 2006, Khawaja was arrested with a bag containing 2.05 kg of RDX and ₹49 lakh in cash by the Special Cell of the Delhi police. He was convicted by the court under the Explosive Substances Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Inaugurating a women's police station at Rajouri, he said Mr. Geelani's letter to the Hurriyat constituents was an "eye-opener". Geelani has admitted that they [the separatists] have miserably failed in their mission and the Kashmir issue was used by the people for their personal gains. He has confessed that his path was wrong, and they were propagating negative-thinking," Mr. Singh said.

The DGP said Mr. Geelani also highlighted "how drugs were being traded from across the Line of Control to this side".

He was in touch with Muktari Ahmed Bhatt alias Ahmed, a Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba operative, to carry out hawala transactions for various separatist and militant activities, the agency said.

"He had generated proceeds of crime to the tune of ₹8.50 lakh during that period," the agency added.

E-commerce websites should be transparent, says petition in Supreme Court

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court for a direction to the government to introduce law necessitating e-commerce sites and websites to display the country of origin of products advertised and sold on their platforms for customers to make an informed decision."

The plea filed by lawyer Divya Jyoti Singh said a large influx of junk was made and

imported from China.

"Indian consumers are still kept in dark by not disclosing the country of origin... e-commerce portals surreptitiously do not disclose the country of origin for the products on their web-portals," it said.

There was a "wave" against Chinese products across the country due to the tensions in the Galwan Valley.

The plea filed by lawyer Divya Jyoti Singh said a large influx of junk was made and

'Country of Origin' on the web-portals, these giant business houses/ e-commerce portals are not only playing with the patriotic feelings of the Indians but also are proving fatal in the efforts of each and every citizen of India in boycotting the Chinese products and also are blocking the way in promoting the local manufacturers/ brands while purchasing from the physical stores," it stated.

With the pandemic on and more shopping done online, it was necessary for platforms to be transparent about the country of origin of the products they hosted. it said.

need of the hour," the petition said.

It said the rules of origin in trade law was crucial. "One can always locate the 'made in country' labels while purchasing from the physical stores," it stated.

With the pandemic on and more shopping done online, it was necessary for platforms to be transparent about the country of origin of the products they hosted. it said.

"He had generated proceeds of crime

Despite opposition, China passes Hong Kong security law

U.S. begins withdrawing special status; activists plan to defy ban on July 1 rally

REUTERS
HONG KONG/BEIJING

China's Parliament passed national security legislation for Hong Kong on Tuesday, setting the stage for the most radical changes to the former British colony's way of life since it returned to Chinese rule 23 years ago.

Details of the law – which comes in response to last year's often-violent pro-democracy protests in the city and aims to tackle subversion, terrorism, separatism and collusion with foreign forces – were yet to be released.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam nevertheless welcomed the law's passage and said it would come into effect later on Tuesday, giving the city's 7.5 million people little time to digest what is expected to be highly complex legislation.

Amid fears the law will crush the global financial hub's freedoms, and reports that the heaviest penalty under it would be life imprisonment, pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong's Demosisto group said it would dissolve.

"It marks the end of Hong Kong that the world knew before," Mr. Wong said on Twitter.

The legislation pushes Beijing further along a collision course with the U.S., Britain and other Western governments, which have said it erodes the high degree of autonomy the city was granted at its July 1, 1997, handover.

U.S. halts tech access
The U.S., already in dispute with China over trade, the South China Sea and the coronavirus, began eliminating



Watershed moment: Pro-China supporters celebrating the approval of a national security law in Hong Kong on Tuesday. ■ AP

Hong Kong's special status under U.S. law on Monday, halting defence exports and restricting technology access.

China said it would retaliate.

Ms. Lam, in a video message to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, urged the international community to "respect our country's right to safeguard national security".

She said the law would not undermine the city's autonomy or its independent judiciary.

Heaviest penalty

Authorities in Beijing and Hong Kong have repeatedly said the legislation is aimed at a few "troublemakers" and will not affect rights and freedoms, nor investor interests.

The editor-in-chief of the *Global Times*, a tabloid published by the *People's Daily*, the official newspaper of China's ruling Communist Party, said on Twitter the hea-

viest penalty under the law was life imprisonment.

As the law was passed in Beijing, the People's Liberation Army garrison in Hong Kong held a drill which included exercises to stop suspicious vessels and arrest fugitives, according to the Weibo social media account of state-run CCTV's military channel.

The legislation may get an early test with activists and pro-democracy politicians saying they would defy a police ban, amid coronavirus restrictions, on a rally on the anniversary of the July 1 handover.

At last year's demonstration, which came amid a series of pro-democracy protests, a crowd stormed and vandalised the city's legislature. "We will never accept the passing of the law, even though it is so overpowering," said Democratic Party chairman Wu Chi-wai.

It is unclear if attending the unauthorised rally would constitute a national

security crime.

A majority in Hong Kong opposes the legislation, a poll conducted for Reuters this month showed, but support for the protests has fallen to only a slim majority.

Police dispersed a handful of activists protesting against the law at a shopping mall.

Dozens of supporters of Beijing popped champagne corks and waved Chinese flags in celebration in front of government headquarters. "I'm very happy," said one elderly man, surnamed Lee.

This month, China's official Xinhua news agency unveiled some of the law's provisions, including that it would supersede existing Hong Kong legislation and that interpretation powers belong to China's Parliament top committee.

Britain, the EU, Japan, Taiwan and others have also criticised the law.

China has hit back at the outcry, denouncing "interference" in its internal affairs.

India, Sri Lanka hold talks over debt

PM Rajapaksa had sought a moratorium on the money owed by Colombo

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

India is holding "close and constructive" discussions with Sri Lanka, on Colombo's pending requests for rescheduling its debt repayment and for currency swap facilities under bilateral and SAARC arrangements, the Indian mission here said on Tuesday.

Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay held discussions "at senior levels" in Colombo on Monday and Tuesday, the statement issued by the High Commission said, on taking forward ongoing discussions.



Mahinda Rajapaksa

by Colombo – totalling \$960 million – during his New Delhi visit in February this year. The request "was under consideration", officials in the Ministry of External Affairs had told *The Hindu*, adding that they were waiting to hear from Colombo on possible dates for the virtual talks New Delhi had suggested.

"The matter [Sri Lanka's requests] had been taken up

at the leadership level and has been followed up by senior functionaries bilaterally," the High Commission's statement said on Tuesday, adding that India "remains committed to partner Sri Lanka closely" for the latter's sustained economic recovery and shared prosperity in the post-COVID world.

Economy under strain

Sri Lanka's mounting external debt was a concern even before the coronavirus pandemic, but its impact has aggravated the strain on the island's nation's economy that is saddled with loans – bilateral, multilateral and in the international money market – amounting to billions of dollars.

This year alone, Sri Lanka is scheduled to repay \$2.9 billion of its debt, which Colombo is reportedly trying to reschedule with bilateral partners. It is unclear how Sri Lanka will repay the ap-

parently non-negotiable \$1 billion international sovereign bond maturing this October.

While economists and experts have been arguing that Sri Lanka must avoid resorting to further debt in this situation, Colombo appears to have few other options in hand.

Sri Lanka is in talks with the IMF, from whom it sought a rapid financing instrument in April. Following the global pandemic, Beijing has pledged a loan of \$500 million to help Colombo deal with its immediate impact. Sri Lanka already owes China about \$5 billion. Further, upon Sri Lanka's request, the China Development Bank (CDB) on Tuesday entered into a \$140 million facility agreement with the Bank of Ceylon, drawn under two tranches of \$70 million each to help the State-owned bank cope amid the pandemic.

ELSEWHERE



Johnson vows to reboot U.K. economy

DUDLEY

Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged on Tuesday to deliver an "infrastructure revolution" to help Britain build its way out of the economic devastation of the COVID-19 outbreak. He promised £1 billion for school repairs and a further £4 billion for "shovel-ready" projects from road maintenance to public transport in what he said was a new "infrastructure revolution" that will also build new homes. AFP

Maduro gives EU envoy 72 hours to leave Venezuela

CARACAS

Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro on Monday gave the head of the EU mission in Caracas, Isabel Brilhante Pedrosa, 72 hours to leave the country after the bloc announced sanctions against 11 Venezuelan officials. "Who are they to try to impose themselves with threats?" he said. "We will sort it out in 72 hours. She will get a plane to leave, but we will arrange our things with the EU." AFP

dent said it was vital for leaders to maintain "consistent, credible and fact-based communication" with citizens, praising South Korea's "open" approach to its pandemic response.

"In contrast, in Belarus, Brazil, Burundi, Nicaragua, Tanzania and the U.S. – among others – I am concerned that statements that deny the reality of viral contagion, and increasing polarisation on key issues, may intensify the severity of the pandemic by undermining efforts to curb its spread," she said.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

The UN rights chief on Tuesday said COVID-19 was being instrumentalised to silence free speech, citing China and Russia, while voicing alarm at statements in the U.S. that "deny the reality" of the virus.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet pointed to Russia, China, Kosovo, Nicaragua among others, where "threats and intimidation" of pandemic response measures in El Salvador.

"Censorship and criminalisation of speech are likely to suppress crucial information needed to address the pandemic," she told the 44th session of the UNHRC.

The former Chilean presi-

dent said it was vital for leaders to maintain "consistent, credible and fact-based communication" with citizens, praising South Korea's "open" approach to its pandemic response.

"In contrast, in Belarus, Brazil, Burundi, Nicaragua, Tanzania and the U.S. – among others – I am concerned that statements that deny the reality of viral contagion, and increasing polarisation on key issues, may intensify the severity of the pandemic by undermining efforts to curb its spread," she said.

The rare action comes as Myanmar faces charges of genocide at the United Nations' top court over a brutal 2017 crackdown against the Rohingya. Some 75,000 Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh.

Activists accused security forces of committing atrocities in various villages, including Gu Dar Pyin, where they say five shallow mass graves had been found.

Myanmar finds soldiers guilty of atrocities

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

Three Myanmar military officers were found guilty by a court martial investigating atrocities against Rohingya Muslims in conflict-ridden Rakhine state, the army announced on Tuesday.

The rare action comes as Myanmar faces charges of genocide at the United Nations' top court over a brutal 2017 crackdown against the Rohingya. Some 75,000 Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh.

Activists accused security forces of committing atrocities in various villages, including Gu Dar Pyin, where they say five shallow mass graves had been found.

PARADIP PORT TRUST
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
Name of the work : "Construction of RCC Drain cum Retaining Wall alongside the IOHP Road (left side)".
EMD cost : Rs.5,07,509/- Last Date and Time of submission of Bid : 16.07.2020 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details please refer our website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app/>
Executive Engineer, Harbour Works Division No. I PPT/PR/99/20-21, DT.30.06.2020



Adnan Abu Al-Haija

part of US President Donald Trump's "peace plan" authorised by his advisor and son-in-law Jared Kushner. Under an agreement amongst partners in Israel's ruling coalition, the enactment can proceed from July 1.

PM Narendra Modi has spoken to Israeli PM Netanyahu three times in the past four months, mainly to discuss cooperation during the pandemic, but officials would not comment on

whether the annexation issue had been raised between them. The officials suggested that India would wait and watch developments before reacting. In January, India had disapproved of the U.S.-Israel peace plan, reiterating India's "consistent support for the Palestinian cause".

Palestinian Ambassador Adnan Abu Al-Haija said India, which has just won a two-year non-permanent seat at the UNSC beginning January 2021, would have an international role to play on the issue. "Israel's termination of the possibility for a negotiated settlement will require States, including India, to rise to their legal and political responsibilities, especially members of the Security Council with due regard for their duty to ensure international peace and security," Mr. Al-Haija said.

The rare action comes as Myanmar faces charges of genocide at the United Nations' top court over a brutal 2017 crackdown against the Rohingya. Some 75,000 Rohingya had fled to Bangladesh.

Activists accused security forces of committing atrocities in various villages, including Gu Dar Pyin, where they say five shallow mass graves had been found.

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
e-Procurement Tender Notice
The Transmission Corporation of A.P. Limited invites bids online for the following works.

Sl. No.	Spec. No.	Name of work	Date & time of availability of tenders on e-procurement
1	APT-e-12/2020	Supply, erection, testing and commissioning of (i) 132 KV DC/SC Line (2-Phase) from 132/33 KVSS Mudigedlu to Proposed RTSS Kolakuntla, (ii) 1 No 132 KV Bay extension at 132/33 KVSS Mudigedlu and (iii) 1 No 132 KV Metering Bay at 132 KV RTSS Kolakuntla in Kurnool District.	From 01.07.2020 at 17.00 Hrs.

NOTE : i) Name and address of the officer inviting bids - CE/Construction-II, APTRANSCO, Vidyut soudha, Vijayawada-44. ii) The contractors/firms are requested to upload the information in pdf format only. iii) Further details can be seen in website(s) : www.approcurement.gov.in

DPR 143PPCL, Dt: 29-06-2020 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER/CONSTRUCTION-II

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM, LTD.
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT ENGINEER (AUTOMATION, N/M & SP)
(Corporate Identity Number (CIN) L40109RJ2000SC016485)
Regd Office: Vidyut Bhawan, Jyoti Nagar, Jaipur-302005
Telephone No. 2740752, Fax No. 2740794, Email: se.sp@rvpn.co.in
Website: <http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvnpn/>

NOTICE INVITING e-BID

Online e-bids are invited from firms/contractors for following project:
1. **BID ENQUIRY NO. RVPN/E/HV/A&SP/TN-59** (Unique Bid No. - PVNP2021WL0B0469): Construction of 3x1500 MVA 785/400KV Substation by upgrading 400KV GSS Nohar to 785KV GSS using GIS Technology along with associated 765 KV Terminal Bays at 785KV GSS Phagti (Jaipur) including supply of all equipments/ materials, erection (including civil works), testing and commissioning EMD/ Bid Security: Rs. 23,86,000/- (DD/Banker Cheque or BG), Opening Date: 30.07.2020.

1. **BID ENQUIRY NO. RVPN/E/HV/A&SP/TN-59** (Unique Bid No. - PVNP2021WL0B0469): Construction of 3x1500 MVA 785/400KV Substation by upgrading 400KV GSS Nohar to 785KV GSS using GIS Technology along with associated 765 KV Terminal Bays at 785KV GSS Phagti (Jaipur) including supply of all equipments/ materials, erection (including civil works), testing and commissioning EMD/ Bid Security: Rs. 23,86,000/- (DD/Banker Cheque or BG), Opening Date: 30.07.2020.

The detailed NIT/Tender Document/Specification and Date Extension are available for viewing/downloading on the website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Other details of NIT, Tender Specification Cost, e-Tender Processing Fee and submission and opening of tenders etc. are also available on the websites <http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvnpn> and <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>.

The interested bidders should be enrolled/registered and submit/upload the on-line tender in electronic format on the website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> for participating in the bidding process.

Further date extensions/amendments, if any, in the above bid shall only be notified/published on above referred websites.

RRVNP/IR-4900/2020
Raj.Samwadi/C20/1673 Superintending Engineer (Automation, N/M & SP)

India should oppose annexation'

Palestine says Israeli move would end the effectiveness of any future dialogue

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Calling on India to oppose Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's plans to go ahead with the annexation of about a third of West Bank territories with a possible vote on July 1, the Palestinian government said the move would end the effectiveness of any future negotiations in the conflict.

"We need India to maintain its support to the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood," Majdi El Khalidi, the Senior Diplomatic Advisor to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, told *The Hindu*. "We urge India to strongly oppose any unilateral actions and violations of international law in the Palestinian Territories, including the Israeli annexation of Palestinian lands by force," he added.

former KGB officer, now 67, stay in office until 2036, though Mr. Putin has said he has yet to take a final decision on what he wants to do.

Critics and staunch supporters are convinced he will run again, while some analysts believe he has not yet made his mind up but wants to keep his options open.

Mr. Putin made his appeal at the scene of a bloody Second World War battle between the Red Army and the Nazis on the eve of the main and last day of a seven-day nationwide vote that will change the Constitution for the first time since 1993.

Under the proposed changes, which State exit polls suggest will be backed by over two thirds of voters, Mr. Putin would be allowed to run for another two six-year back-to-back terms after his current term expires in 2024. That could see the

EU opens borders to 'safe' countries

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

MARKET WATCH

	30-06-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	34,916	-0.13
US Dollar	75.51	-0.09
Gold	49,306	0.12
Brent oil	41.16	-0.75

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	343.90	1.25
Asian Paints	1687.45	-4.50
Axis Bank	406.65	1.85
Bajaj Auto	2826.05	-33.45
Bajaj Finserv	5845.15	-45.05
Bajaj Finance	2831.00	-26.95
Bharti Airtel	559.85	-7.25
BPCL	374.00	-9.35
Britannia Ind	3603.80	84.55
Cipla	640.25	-4.65
Coal India	132.85	-2.00
Dr Reddys Lab	3944.95	-28.90
Eicher Motors	18334.30	220.80
GAIL (India)	102.15	-1.45
Grasim Ind	619.70	0.45
HCL Tech	556.85	3.15
HDFC	1754.65	13.50
HDFC Bank	1065.85	-10.20
Hero MotoCorp	2546.95	42.90
Hindalco	146.20	0.35
Hind Unilever	2180.00	-2.95
ICICI Bank	351.45	8.35
IndusInd Bank	474.80	-5.20
Bharti Infratel	221.50	2.25
Infosys	735.95	4.20
Indian Oil Corp	85.35	-1.75
ITC	194.65	-2.60
JSW Steel	189.35	-1.35
Kotak Bank	1360.45	4.80
L&T	943.65	7.05
M&M	510.70	3.25
Maruti Suzuki	5838.30	159.60
Nestle India Ltd.	17174.45	449.60
NTPC	95.80	0.90
ONGC	81.35	-1.05
PowerGrid Corp	174.85	-3.40
Reliance Ind	1704.10	-19.05
State Bank	178.45	-0.80
Shree Cement	23051.05	709.10
Sun Pharma	472.95	-9.05
Tata Motors	98.25	-1.20
Tata Steel	326.70	5.85
TCS	2082.15	-19.50
Tech Mahindra	543.40	1.85
Titan	949.85	-7.60
UltraTech Cement	3893.55	86.55
UPL	425.20	-6.70
Vedanta	106.40	-1.55
Wipro	219.65	-0.05
Zee Entertainment	171.10	-0.95

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.30	75.62
Euro	84.40	84.79
British Pound	92.36	92.79
Japanese Yen (100)	69.88	70.18
Chinese Yuan	10.64	10.68
Swiss Franc	79.11	79.45
Singapore Dollar	53.89	54.13
Canadian Dollar	54.97	55.23
Malaysian Ringgit	17.58	17.66
Australian Dollar	51.49	51.72

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Swiggy, ICICI Bank in digital wallet pact

BENGALURU
Swiggy, an on-demand delivery platform, has launched its own digital wallet 'Swiggy Money' to enable a single-click checkout experience on its platform. The full-fledged digital wallet, in partnership with ICICI Bank, will enable Swiggy's customers to store money and be used for all food orders on the platform. If the Swiggy customer is an existing ICICI Bank customer, he/she can instantly start using the wallet, according to a release.

Mondelez India forays into cakes category

MUMBAI
Mondelez India with snacking brands such as Cadbury Dairy Milk, Cadbury Bournvita and Oreo has forayed into the cakes category with the introduction of Cadbury Chocobars Choc Layered Cakes in India. The category is estimated to be worth ₹2,000 crore and growing at 18% CAGR. Without disclosing the targeted revenue, company officials said their objective was to grow faster than the market growth.

BoB plans to raise ₹2,000 cr. via bonds

NEW DELHI
State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) said it will mop up ₹2,000 crore by issuing bonds to fund its growth plans. ... Capital Raising Committee of our bank has approved the issuance of Basel III-compliant additional tier I bonds for an aggregate total issue size not exceeding ₹2,000 crore in single or multiple tranches," BoB said. BoB had reported a standalone net profit of ₹506.59 crore for the fourth quarter ended March (₹991.37 crore). PTI

External debt rises \$15.4 billion to \$558.5 billion in March

U.S. dollar-denominated debt remains largest component of the external debt



Burden of borrowing: India's debt service rose marginally to 6.5% of current receipts, according to RBI. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Govt.'s liabilities rise to ₹94.6 lakh cr. in Jan.-Mar.

Public debt accounts for 91%: FinMin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The government's total liabilities increased 0.8% to ₹94.6 lakh crore at March-end 2020 compared with the preceding quarter, a Finance Ministry report said on Tuesday.

Public debt accounted for 90.9% of total outstanding liabilities as on March 31, 2020, the quarterly report on Public Debt Management said.

"Total liabilities [including liabilities under 'Public Account'] of the government, as per provisional data, increased to ₹94,62,265 crore at end-March 2020 from ₹93,89,267 crore at end-December 2019," it said. As per the report, the



weighted average yield of primary issuances moderated further to 6.7% during the March quarter from 6.86% in October-December.

The proportion of debt (dated securities) maturing in less than one year was lower at 3.9% at end-March 2020.

Fiscal deficit at 58.6% of target in two months

REUTERS

India's federal fiscal deficit in the first two months through May this financial year stood at ₹4.66 lakh crore (\$61.67 billion), or 58.6% of the budgeted target for the current fiscal year, government data showed on Tuesday.

Net tax receipts during April-May period were ₹338.5 billion (\$4.48 billion), while total expenditure was ₹512 lakh crore the data showed, indicating the government was front-loading its budgeted spending to combat the impact of pandemic.

India's federal fiscal deficit touched 4.6% of GDP in the 2019-20 fiscal year ended March, from the initial estimates of 3.3%.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Charges for treatment for COVID-19 vary widely, resulting in higher insurance claims and efforts are on to standardise the treatment rates, according to an insurance company official.

According to its credit analyst Geeta Chugh, non-bank financial companies will be worse hit than banks because of lending to weaker sections, reliance on wholesale funding, and liquidity difficulties because of a higher proportion of borrowers opting for default.

The agency said NPAs had been reducing over the past 18 months, after hitting a peak of 11.6% in March 2018, when the RBI had undertaken an exhaustive asset quality review leading to emergence of high amounts of hidden stress coming out.

"Businesses' operational outages and the recession will have a deeper and longer impact on lenders than we previously assumed," it said. From a sectoral perspective, it said airlines, hotels, malls, multiplexes, restaurants, and retail may see a significant loss of revenue and profits due to the outbreak, while highly leveraged sectors like real estate developers, telecom companies and power firms may remain a source of increased bad debt, it said.

Mr. Gopalarathnam said the second quarter would be better than the first, with the company expecting flat growth in the second quarter.

The cryostat's function is to provide cooling to the fusion reactor and keep very high temperatures under control.

Innovative techniques

L&T CEO and MD S.N. Subrahmanyam said the company had used innovative and digital manufacturing tech-

Current account sees a small surplus as trade deficit shrinks

Sharp rise in net invisible receipts also helped, says RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

India recorded a current account surplus of \$0.6 billion, or 0.1% of GDP, for the January-March quarter, against a deficit of \$4.6 billion, or 0.7% of GDP in the year-ago period, the Reserve Bank said on Tuesday.

"U.S. dollar-denominated debt continued to be the largest component of India's external debt, with a share of 53.7% at end-March 2020, followed by the Indian rupee (31.9%), yen (5.6%), SDR (4.5%) and the euro (3.5%)," the RBI said.

The RBI also said debt service (principal repayments plus interest payments) increased marginally to 6.5% of current receipts at the end of March compared to 6.4% in the same period a year ago.

This reflects higher interest payments on commercial borrowings and lower current receipts, it added.

Net services receipts rose to \$22 billion on the back of a rise in net earnings from computer and travel services

net of the country's export and imports of goods and services and also payments made to foreign investors or inflows from them, are considered as an important indicator of a country's external sector.

The Reserve Bank said the surplus in the current account in the March quarter was primarily on account of a lower trade deficit at \$35 billion and a sharp rise in net invisible receipts at \$35.6 billion as compared with the

corresponding period of last year.

The net services receipts increased to \$22 billion in March quarter as against the year earlier's \$21.3 billion on the back of a rise in net earnings from computer and travel services on a year-on-year basis, the RBI said.

Private transfer receipts, mainly representing remittances by Indians employed overseas, increased 14.8% to \$20.6 billion for the reporting quarter, the RBI said.

The net outgo from the primary income account, which primarily reflects the net overseas investment income payments, decreased to \$4.8 billion from \$6.9 billion a year ago, the RBI said.

Uniform stamp duty for deals in securities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Tuesday said States will collect stamp duty at a uniform rate on transactions of shares, debentures and other securities from July 1.

The provisions of the amended Indian Stamp Act, 1899, will come into effect from Wednesday.

With this, the stamp duty will have to be paid by either the buyer or the seller of a financial security, as against the current practice of levying the duty on both.

India banned 59 Chinese mobile phone apps including TikTok and Wechat on Monday, a move seen as retaliation for the death of 20 soldiers in a border clash with China on June 15.

ONGC reports first-ever quarterly loss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) on Tuesday reported its first-ever quarterly loss after it took an impairment on the slump in oil and gas prices.

India's top oil and gas producer reported a ₹3,098-crore loss in the January-March quarter compared with a profit of ₹4,240 crore in the same period a year back.

Chairman and managing director Shashi Shanker said ONGC booked an impairment loss of ₹4,899 crore in the fourth quarter of 2019-20, reflecting valuation of the firm's assets after a fall in crude oil prices. But for the impairment, the company would have booked a profit.

An impairment loss is a recognised reduction in the carrying amount of an asset that is triggered by a decline in its fair value.

The same reason also led to the company seeing FY20 net profit halving to ₹13,445 crore from ₹26,765 crore.

Revenue in the fourth quarter fell to ₹21,456 crore from ₹26,759 crore.

State-wise, business units of Maharashtra have got the highest cumulative sanction of ₹6,179 crore from banks, while disbursement was to the tune of ₹2,774 crore at the end of June 26.

L&T despatches cryostat lid for \$20 billion global fusion project

Vessel's function is to provide cooling to fusion reactor, keep very high temperatures under control

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Engineering and construction giant Larsen & Toubro (L&T) said it had achieved a major milestone under 'Make in India' initiative by building a cryostat for the \$20-billion global fusion project being built in France.

TV PICKS

Premier League: Star Sports 1, 3 & SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD), 10.15 p.m.; Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Serie A: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF



Six more Pakistan players cleared

KARACHI Six players have been cleared to join the Pakistan cricket team in England after recording two successive negative COVID-19 tests, officials said on Tuesday. Mohammad Hafeez, Wahab Riaz, in pic, Mohammad Hasnain, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman can now travel to England. Meanwhile, the 20 players and 11 support staff of Pakistan who are already in England have tested negative, ECB said on Tuesday. The England training group had also tested negative, it added. AFP



Ben Stokes to captain England in opening Test
LONDON England's World Cup hero Ben Stokes was on Tuesday named captain for the opening Test against West Indies, to be played from July 8, in place of Joe Root, who will be with his wife for the birth of their second child. PTI

Mata double revives Getafe's CL bid

MADRID Jaime Mata scored twice as Getafe beat fellow European hopeful Real Sociedad 2-1 on Monday to give its Champions League qualification from LaLiga a boost. The win took Getafe to fifth with 52 points, two behind Sevilla which occupies the final Champions League qualifying spot.

The results: LaLiga: Getafe 2 (Mata 20+pen, 83) bt Real Sociedad 1 (Januzaj 55); **Premier League:** Crystal Palace 0 lost to Burnley 1 (Mee 62). REUTERS

Australia-Zimbabwe ODI series postponed

MELBOURNE The One-Day International series between Australia and Zimbabwe was postponed on Tuesday by mutual agreement between the two Boards due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The three-match series was to be played in August but Australia is currently grappling with a fresh wave of COVID-19 cases. PTI

Inzaghi's Benevento promoted to Serie A

ROME Benevento, coached by former AC Milan and Juventus striker Filippo Inzaghi, secured promotion to Serie A on Monday for just the second time in its history with seven games to spare. Inzaghi's men, who have only lost once in Serie B all season, edged out Juve Stabia 1-0 to move 24 points clear of third place, with the top two guaranteed promotion. AFP

Coaches facing a lot of hardship

Current scenario has forced them to turn to alternative sources of income

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

With the coronavirus holding sway, the sports industry in the country is struggling to breathe.

Raj Hazarika, who runs many sports academies in the National Capital Region, and has submitted a petition to the Union Sports Minister to support such institutes in this moment of crisis, brings to the fore the plight of many sports professionals.

Broken our backs

"The situation has broken our backs," says Hazarika. "We have zero income. Several families depend on us. We have opened our centres with government permission, and follow all hygiene norms. Yet, there is no inflow. Due to the rising number of cases, people are afraid to step out. Therefore income is almost nil."

Hazarika feels schemes like collateral-free loans can



Back to roots: K. Ramandeep, a former junior India player and a full-time coach with FC Barcelona Football School in India, has gone back to farming in Jalandhar. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

help sports professionals tide over the tough phase and stick to their chosen sports careers. "Some of the coaches

who went back home have refused to return to work in the field of sports. E. Satyraj, a reputed tennis coach from

Chennai, is now running a South Indian food cart in Kanpur," says Hazarika.

Aman Dev, a tennis coach from Kolkata, works in a grocery shop while Nazim Ul Islam, a tennis coach from Delhi, has fallen back on his polytechnic qualification to become a refrigerator and air-conditioning mechanic.

The list gets longer.

"K. Ramandeep, a former junior India player and a full-time coach with FC Barcelona Football School in India, has gone back to farming in Jalandhar. Siddharth Dalal, who was head coach of the Junior NBA India team two years ago, is supplying biscuits to grocery shops," says Hazarika.

Another qualified basketball coach from Rajasthan, Vikram Singh, drives a 'tuk-tuk' in his hometown. The pulse of Indian sports is feeble; give it the required life support, pleads Hazarika.

Carlsen's sporting gesture

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Upholding the sportsman-spirit, Magnus Carlsen resigned in the second game in just four moves against Ding Liren after the latter was declared 'lost' in the first due to internet disconnection in the \$150,000 Chessable Masters on Tuesday. In the other semifinal, Anish Giri led Ian Nepomniachtchi 1.5-0.5.

Ding, who battled from an inferior opening phase in the first game to force an equal rook-and-pawn end game, tragically lost his connection. Since he could not reconnect in the time available on his clock, he was declared 'lost on time'. **Semifinals: Set One: Game One:** Carlsen bt Ding , Nepomniachtchi drew with Giri; **Game Two:** Ding bt Carlsen, Giri bt Nepomniachtchi. **Quarterfinals:** Set three: Ding bt Hikaru Nakamura 2.5-0.5.

Krunal resumes outdoor training

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VADODARA

India all-rounder Krunal Pandya resumed outdoor training on Tuesday after more than three months. The Baroda cricketer, elder brother of Hardik Pandya, has represented India in 18 T20Is till date.

"Began my day with a run out on the field... feels good to be back out there again," tweeted Krunal as he also posted a picture of his workout.

Like all cricketers, Krunal had been confined to his house in Vadodara since March 25, when the centre enforced a nationwide lockdown to curb the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

India pacer Shardul Thakur was the first BCCI-accredited player to resume training last month when he bowled in the nets at Boisar in Palghar district.

Recently, Cheteshwar Pujara too started to bat in the nets in his native Rajkot.

Women's Indian Open golf cancelled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Owing to COVID-19 pandemic, the Hero Women's Indian Open golf, scheduled from October 1 to 4, 2020 has

been cancelled.

The event will return for the 14th edition at the DLF Golf and Country Club at Gurugram in October next year.

The July dream team, with Sunil Gavaskar and M.S. Dhoni



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

In one of the closing chapters of his classic *The Art of Cricket*, Don Bradman writes about 'The Ideal Eleven'. For those who believe that the great Australian was merely a run machine, a creature not of this world and somehow lacking in the weaknesses that make us human, here's proof that he was one of us after all. Like fans everywhere, he too understood the "fun trying to pick the best XI", as he says, and suggests XIs made of players with a specific number of letters in their names or those whose names begin with

a particular letter of the alphabet. It is a game most fans, from seven to 70 play. It leads to arguments, exposes biases, and proves the game of cricket is not limited to the field of play. As the former Australian Prime Minister and cricket fanatic Robert Menzies said, in summer we play cricket and in winter we read about it. For 'in winter', read 'during pandemics' and you wouldn't be too far off the mark.

So, as a new month begins here's a question: Of the 12 teams possible, is the July XI – made up of cricketers born in July – the strongest? It might well be. We speak here only of Indian cricket, but the concept can be widened to include other teams, and perhaps even a 'World XI' (W.G. Grace and Allan Border, for instance, were born in July).

Here's July XI, with an additional 12th man. If you think any of the

other teams can come close, please feel free to send in your choices.

Successful opening pair

Opening the batting is one of India's most successful pairs, Sunil Gavaskar and Chetan Chauhan, who, when the latter retired, were statistically the third best behind Simpson-Lawry and Hobbs-Sutcliffe. Till Virender Sehwag changed the grammar of opening batsmanship, this was the textbook pair. Sound, risk-averse, knowing that their job was to keep the bowlers from getting at the rest of the batsmen for as long as possible.

Till Shane Warne overtook the mark, Chauhan had scored the most runs in Tests without a century. Gavaskar's record is too well known to bear repetition here, but suffice to say he is an automatic choice at the top in any all-time In-

dia XI, and a contender for an all-time Earth XI too.

At three would be Sanjay Manjrekar, to be followed by Sourav Ganguly and Chandu Borde. That's a lot of runs, a lot of experience and a lot of range. Both Ganguly and Borde have led India, and Borde, before his shoulder gave out was a top leg-spinner too. V. Subramanya comes in at No. 6. The former Karnataka captain, hard-hitting batsman and brilliant fielder turns 84 this month. Borde and Subramanya toured both England and Australia under Tiger Pataudi, Borde leading the team in Adelaide when Tiger was injured.

The all-rounders' slots are taken by G.S. Ramchand and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, two more men who led India, Ramchand to the first-ever win against Australia at Kanpur in 1959. He was a handsome striker of the ball and opened the bowling, besides, once claiming

six for 49 in a Test in Pakistan. Dhoni is, well, Dhoni.

Among the spinners in the fray is off-spinner Ghulam Ahmed, who, with Vinoo Mankad and Subhash Gupte, became the harbinger of many great Indian spin trios. With Harbhajan Singh, India's most successful off-spinner (400-plus Test wickets), also born in July, one slot is his by right.

Venkatapathy Raju, left-arm spinner, comes into the reckoning as does Chandu Sarwate, the finger-print expert, who mixed off breaks and leg breaks. But Sarwate is best known for a century at number 10 which, in partnership with Shute Banerjee's century at 11, led to a last-wicket stand of 249 runs in a match against Surrey.

Soon he was opening the batting for India against Lindwall and Miller in Australia. Raju gets in on the strength of his 93 wickets from 28 Tests.

Medium-pacers in the long list include Roger Binny, Munaf Patel, Debadish Mohanty and Vasant Ranjane (who began his First Class career with nine for 35 and a hat-trick). Munaf was the quickest of the lot, but Binny was the steadiest, and his batting credentials were far superior. Funny enough, though he was seen as a batsman who could bowl in domestic cricket, he was a bowler who could bat in international cricket. He even opened the batting with Gavaskar.

So there you have the July team: Gavaskar, Chauhan, Sanjay Manjrekar, Ganguly, Borde, Subramanya, Dhoni, Ramchand, Binny, Harbhajan, Raju, Munaf.

Five of the team captained India, but I would hand the honour to Subramanya, possibly the finest captain never to have led the country. Selectors are allowed the occasional surprise!

Vaishali making rapid strides

To play in the second leg of Speed Chess today



The Hindu over the phone. "A player gets six chances; while I made it on my fifth attempt, Gunina qualified from her last."

Vaishali, a former World under-14 and under-12 champion, finds the concept of Speed Chess thrilling. Matches are played in three segments, with games of five, three and one minute durations.

Exciting
She said playing online chess was exciting. "But it can also be challenging," she said.

"Sometimes your internet connection may go off or you could end up making a blunder because your mouse lets you down; I lost my queen in one of my games thus."

Vaishali said she was getting bored during the lockdown in Chennai.

"So I have been studying for my B. Com course," said the first-year student of MOP Vaishnav College, who will resume her Speed Chess campaign on Wednesday when the second leg kicks off.

to reach the semifinals. The India No. 3 fought spiritedly in the last four before narrowly losing to Ukraine's Anna Ushenina, the eventual champion.

Vaishali had, in fact, beaten runner-up Valentina Stefanova of Bulgaria in the first round and made short work of Munkhzul Turmunkh of Mongolia.

"The qualifying section was pretty tough," she told

NADA launches mobile application

Provides athletes easy access to wide range of information

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) on Tuesday launched a mobile application to provide athletes easy access to information on various aspects of sport, prohibited substances and dope-testing.

The app was launched by Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju through video-conferencing so that athletes know which

medication or substances are not to be used. With this, athletes can check for themselves the list of prohibited substances and don't have to depend on anyone else for assistance," Rijiju said.

One-stop guide

NADA sees the app as a one-stop guide for all anti-doping and medication-related information. Besides provid-

ing detailed information on commonly-prescribed medicines, it allows athletes in the Registered Testing Pool to update their whereabouts and record availability for testing and learn about disciplinary and appeal panel decisions.

The app has been available online since the beginning of this year but was formally launched only now.

Finch in awe of Kohli's consistency

PIT STOP SHOW.

"The pressure of playing for India is one but also leading India is another and the way he (Kohli) has done it, so consistently for a long time. And taking over from (MS) Dhoni, the leadership, that is huge. The expectations were high and he kept delivering," he added.

Finch was impressed with Kohli's consistency as a batsman too.

"What has been so impressive for so long is just his consistency across three formats," said Finch.



Nonpareil: Aaron Finch is impressed with Virat Kohli's ability to live up to expectations time and time again. ■ AP

Plant thought to be extinct for more than 135 years found in Sikkim Himalayas

Botanists from Maharashtra and Kerala 're-discover' *Globba andersonii*, commonly known as 'dancing ladies' or 'swan flowers', near the Teesta river valley

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

A team of researchers from Pune and Kerala have "rediscovered" a rare and critically endangered plant species called *Globba andersonii* from the Sikkim Himalayas near the Teesta river valley region after a gap of nearly 136 years.

The plant, known commonly as 'dancing ladies' or 'swan flowers' was thought to have been extinct until its 're-collection', for the first time since 1875, by noted citizen-based botanist Sachin Punekar, founder of the city-



Rare find: *Globba andersonii* flowers and, right, the plant.

based environmental NGO Biospheres, during a field trip to Sevoke in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

Along with Dr. Punekar,

my division of the Malabar Botanical Garden; and Mamiyil Sabu of the Institute for Plant Sciences in Kozhikode, was published earlier this month in the prestigious international journal, *Botany Letters*.

The paper titled 'Rediscovery of *Globba andersonii* and three new synonomies in Indian Zingiberaceae' (belonging to the ginger or turmeric family) details the retrieval from the wilds of this endangered taxon, which was thought to be extinct after 1875.

"The earliest records of

the collection of this plant were dated between the period 1862-70 when it was collected by Scottish botanist Thomas Anderson from Sikkim and