

**OPINION 6**  
BEING HUMANE

**WORLD 8**  
NEGLECTANCE OR MISSILE MAY HAVE CAUSED BLAST: LEBANON PRESIDENT

**SPORT 12**  
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2020 A  
WAKE-UP  
CALL: BHUMI  
10 VIVACITY

# 16 die as AI plane breaks into 2

Plane overshoots Kozhikode runway, plunges into valley, both pilots killed

PNS/PTI ■ KOCHI

Sixteen people — pilot, co-pilot and 14 passengers — were killed and several others injured when a Dubai-Calicut Air India Express flight with 191 passengers and crew on board overshoot the runway at Kozhikode airport and fell into a valley, breaking into two portions, on Friday around 7.41pm, police sources said. There were 184 passengers, including 10 infants, and five-member cabin crew when the flight approached the airport.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the flight IX 1344 operated by B737 aircraft from Dubai overshoot runway at Kozhikode at 7.41 PM on Friday. "No fire reported at the time of landing," it noted.

"As per the initial reports rescue operations are on and passengers are being taken to hospital for medical care. We will soon share the update in this regard," it stated.

While the aircraft broke into two, nearly 50 ambulances were seen coming out of the airport with the injured persons. Kozhikode airport is designated as a table top aircraft (airport atop a hill). Capt Sathe was a wing commander in the Indian Air Force before he switched over to Air India.

"AI Exp flight overshoot Kozhikode runway in rainy conditions, went down 35 ft into slope, split into 2. Formal enquiry will be conducted by Aircraft Accident Investigation



Rescue work in progress as an Air India Express flight with passengers on board en route from Dubai skidded off the runway while landing in Kozhikode on Friday. PTI

Bureau," said Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The injured include one of the cabin crew members. Sources in Kozhikode airport said at least 40 passengers have been admitted to various hospitals in and around

Kozhikode. The front portion of the aircraft had to be cut open to take the body of the pilot from the cockpit.

According to information coming out of the airport, the aircraft crash landed on the runway from where it skidded

off. The first visuals shown by local TV channels were that of a totally damaged aircraft, the front side of which has been damaged totally. It was raining heavily when the aircraft touched the ground. Most of the passengers were heard crying in pain.

The co-pilot has been injured seriously while some of the passengers in the aircraft suffered injuries. The flight was part of the Vande Bharat Repatriation Mission operated by the Government of India.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bollywood actor Rhea Chakraborty was on Friday questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Mumbai in connection with a money laundering case relating to film star Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide. Her request to put it off the interrogation was rejected by the agency.

Chakraborty arrived at the agency's office minutes after the 11.30 am deadline. Rhea Chakraborty left the ED office after 8 hours of interrogation.

Her father Indrajit Chakraborty and brother Showik, both accused in the abetment to suicide case lodged by Patna Police, were also seen with her.

Chakraborty's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh had in his complaint before Patna Police alleged financial irregularities in the late actor's bank accounts.

In the complaint, Singh alleged ₹15 crore was siphoned off from Rajput's bank account in one year to accounts of persons not known or connected to the late film star.

Two companies linked to Rajput and some financial deals involving Chakraborty, her father and Showik who are stated to be directors in these companies, are under the scanner of the ED, officials said.



Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty arrives at Enforcement Directorate office for questioning in connection with a money laundering case in Mumbai on Friday. PTI

**Bihar seeks in SC dismissal of plea to transfer case**

**NEW DELHI:** The Bihar Government on Friday sought in the Supreme Court dismissal of Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty's plea for transfer of the Patna FIR against her to Mumbai in actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case, terming it 'premature, misconceived and non-maintainable'.

The 28-page affidavit of Patna SSP Upendra Sharma, filed through Bihar's advocate Keshav Mohan, said the state police has the jurisdiction in the case as the consequences of the offence are in Patna as well where the old father of the deceased actor resides. PTI

**Rhea's call details spark up debate**

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

Coming ahead of and during her questioning by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) team in the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case in Mumbai, Rhea Chakraborty's call record details — with the late actor, Bollywood personalities, a senior Mumbai police official and her own family members — on Friday sparked a new debate in the media in connection with the probe into Rajput's death.

The late actor's domestic help Samuel Miranda during a year time.

## SC: Full damages for victims before Italian marines' case closure

**'Won't pass order without hearing victim families'**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court made clear to the Centre on Friday that it would not pass any order on the plea seeking closure of cases against two Italian marines, accused of killing two Indian fishermen, without hearing the victims' families who should be given adequate compensation.

A bench headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde allowed the Centre to file within a week an application making the victims' family members as parties to its plea seeking closure of Italian Marines case. Solicitor General Toshar Mehta informed the bench, also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, that Italy has assured the Indian Government that it would prosecute the Marines there as per law.

When the bench insisted that adequate compensation

should be paid to the kin of victims, Mehta said Centre will ensure that maximum compensation is given to them.

The bench said it appreciates the steps taken by Italy to prosecute these marines but the court is on the issue of adequate compensation. "We want that adequate compensation be paid to the victims' family".

The SC referred to the case against the marines pending before the special court and said that without applying for withdrawal of prosecution of case how the Centre can come and seek its closure.

Mehta replied that the top court had earlier said that proceedings on the special court be kept in abeyance.

The bench said, "You can apply for withdrawal of prosecution. The victims' families will have the right to oppose it. The victims' families are not even a party here."

We will not pass any order without the victims' family being heard," and allowed the Solicitor General to implicate family members of the victims as party in its closure application.

## 16 die in Idukki landslide as heavy rain batters Kerala

PNS ■ KOCHI

Torrential downpour and landslides across the hilly regions of Kerala early Friday claimed 16 lives while 52 persons were washed away by the fury of the nature. The mishap occurred at Munnar in Idukki district on the slopes of the Kerala side of the Western Ghats.

All 16 who died in the landslide were workers of tea plantation in Munnar of Idukki district and were sleeping in their company quarters (known in local parlance as laayam) when the mishap happened. Though the landslide and the disaster occurred early morning, the outside world came to know about the mishap after five hours.

The NDRF from Tamil Nadu reached the site by 4.30 pm and was engaged in rescue operations when reports last came.

Cooking utensils buried in mud, asbestos and tin sheets strewn around were all there to be seen at the area, which was the habitation of around 80 odd workers near a tea plantation, about 30 km from the tourist town of Munnar.



Rescuers work at the site of a mudslide triggered by heavy monsoon rain in Idukki, Kerala on Friday. AP

## Priest among 5 missing in Karnataka landslide

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Five people, including the priest at Talacauvery, have gone missing due to massive landslide at Bramhagiri hills triggered by heavy rain in Kodagu district.

According to Kodagu district administration officials, heavy rain at Talacauvery in Bhagamandala late Thursday night led to landslides at Bramhagiri hills, in which two houses of the temple priests were buried.

## Over 1,000 cases for second consecutive day in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Reporting more than 1,000 fresh cases for the second consecutive, Punjab on Friday reported 1,063 fresh coronavirus positive cases — the highest single-day spike — along with 23 deaths, pushing the state's Covid-19 tally to 21,930 and death toll to 539. The state had reported 1,049 cases and 26 deaths on Thursday.

Punjab has reported a total of 5,811 cases in the first week of August, amounting to 27 percent of the state's total cases. Among districts, Ludhiana has been witnessing a constant surge reporting infections in triple digits since July 25.

Continuing to register a high number of cases along with deaths, Ludhiana once again reported nine of 23 coronavirus deaths and 296 fresh cases — the highest number of deaths and fresh infections any district has reported in the State.

Other than Ludhiana, three districts were reported from Amritsar and Jalandhar, two each in Fatehgarh Sahib, and

SBS Nagar (Nawanshahr), and one each in Fazilka, Kapurthala, Patiala, and Sangrur.

Patiala reported the second highest number of infections in the state at 122, followed by Mohali (SAS Nagar) and Jalandhar both reporting over 70 cases, Amritsar (67), Gurdaspur (53), Bathinda (49), Pathankot (41), Barnala (37), Sangrur and Ropar (32), Tarn Taran (29), Fatehgarh Sahib and Kapurthala (26), Faridkot (19), Fazilka (16), Mansa (15), Moga (14), Muktsar (13), Hoshiarpur and SBS Nagar (11), and Ferozepur (7).

Punjab's all 22 districts reported fresh coronavirus cases. While two districts — Ludhiana and Patiala — reported cases in three-digit figure, except Ferozepur, all remaining districts reported infections in double digits.

Among the fresh cases are 11 policemen, three troopers of the Border Security Force (BSF), six health-care workers, seven inmates, and five front-line workers, among others.

Continued on Page 2

## Poster drive in Capital as job offers exceed job demands

CHANDAN PRAKASH ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will launch a poster drive from next week to apprise people about job portal as the number of job seekers is lesser than the number of jobs available on the portal.

Employment Minister Gopal Rai said more than nine lakh jobs are available at the job portal and the number of applicants is just 8.64 lakh. "More than nine lakh jobs are available at the job portal and the number of applicants is 8.64 lakh. Till date, 22 lakh job posts were made by different employers at the job portal," he said.

Rai said 3.5 lakh such job posts were cancelled due to duplication and some posts were fake. He also said till Friday, 10 lakh vacancies were created by the employers as they have received the required number of people and till date, there are 8.64 lakh job applicants who are still looking for jobs. "Delhi is going through the Covid-19 pandemic and this has hit the employment sector and this is opportunity for job seekers," he said.

## Trump cites India's action, bans TikTok

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump, citing India's recent ban on Chinese social media apps, has signed executive orders that would ban TikTok and WeChat from operating in the US as they threatened America's national security and economy.

The ban comes into effect in 45 days, Trump said in two separate executive orders signed on Thursday. India was the first country to ban TikTok and WeChat, citing national security concerns. India has banned 106 Chinese apps, a move welcomed by both the Trump administration and US lawmakers.

## ASHA workers on strike over paltry payment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government's Covid-19 fight has hit a major hurdle with around six lakh ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) workers going on a two-day strike on Friday, protesting late and paltry payment besides lack of protection equipment from infection.

There are around ten lakh ASHA workers across the country who have been playing a key role in contact-tracing, conducting surveys, and organising of awareness schemes for the pandemic.

They have also been involved in screening infected passengers, migrant workers, and others in the community for symptoms of the virus in their respective States.

## SII plans ₹225/dose Covid-19 vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major development, Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's largest vaccine manufacturer by volume, has entered a partnership with Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, to accelerate the manufacture and delivery of up to 100 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine for India and low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) by as early as 2021.

Created in 2000, Gavi is an international organisation, a global Vaccine Alliance, bringing together public and private sectors with the shared goal to improve access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

As per pact, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will provide \$150 million in at-risk funds towards helping the Serum Institute to develop the candidate vaccines, including those from AstraZeneca and Novavax, to be priced at USD 3 per dose (around ₹225).

It will be made available in 92 countries in GAVIS COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the company said in a statement.

The collaboration, which involves GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance, will provide SII with "upfront capital" through the Foundation's Strategic Investment Funds.

## Govt OK's OCIs from Germany, US, UK, France to visit India

**NEW DELHI:** Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card holders from the US, UK, German and France, with whom India has signed "air bubble" arrangements, will be allowed to visit the country, the Home Ministry announced on Friday.

Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical and employment purposes. "Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted to enter India OCI card holders who belong to countries with which 'air bubble' arrangements have been finalised by Ministry of Civil Aviation," a Home Ministry spokesperson said.

## Whopping over 61K cases in a day

**Covid-19 IN INDIA**

**TOTAL**

**CASES: 20,86,483**

**DEATHS: 42,564**

**RECOVERED: 14,25,717**

**ACTIVE: 6,17,744**

**Hockey captain Manpreet, 3 other players test +ve**

**NEW DELHI:** The Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and three other players have tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the national camp's

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,90,262	17,092	3,27,281
Tamil Nadu	2,85,024	4,690	2,27,575
Andhra Pradesh	2,06,960	1,842	1,20,464
Karnataka	1,64,924	2,998	84,232
Delhi	1,42,723	4,082	1,28,232
Uttar Pradesh	1,13,378	1,981	66,834
West Bengal	89,666	1,954	63,060
Telangana	75,257	601	53,239
Bihar	71,794	400	46,265
Gujarat	68,885	2,604	51,792
Assam	55,497	132	37,225
Rajasthan	50,159	767	36,195
Odisha	42,550	292	28,698
Haryana	40,054	467	33,444
Madhya Pradesh	37,298	962	27,621
Kerala	31,790	103	19,147

resumption in Bengaluru, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Friday.

Besides Manpreet, seven-

er Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh and drag-flicker Varun Kumar have also tested positive for the deadly virus. PTI





# Night curfew in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala

The curfew imposed from today to check Covid spread

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Concerned over the rising number of Covid-19 cases in Punjab, the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Friday ordered night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am in the worst-affected cities of Ludhiana, Jalandhar, and Patiala from Saturday.

At the same time, the Chief Minister directed all big cities or towns to prepare an integrated management plan for treatment of the disease at both Government and private facilities. As cases in the State went up to 20,891, with 1,050 instances reported on one day on Thursday, the Chief Minister announced a week-long trial of enforcement of mandatory mask wearing rule by making offenders stand at a spot for an hour with a mask on.

"I am of the view that making the offenders stand at that spot might help check the violations on this count, which had crossed 3.82 lakhs," said the Chief Minister while answering questions in his weekly 'Ask Captain Live session on Facebook.

Capt Amarinder also appealed to the people to get themselves tested early and start treatment in a proper hospital, urging them not to rush to private tertiary care facility directly since good treatment is available in the state government hospitals.

CM directed an inquiry by the Vice-Chancellor into case of death of a non-COVID patient, Dr Parvinder, at GGS Medical College, Faridkot, as doctors refused to treat him till the file work was completed and COVID-19 test report came, even though he was suffering from low Oxygen levels. "This is not acceptable and patient has to be attended first at all costs. Strict action will be taken against those found responsible," he added.

Directing Muktar Sahib Deputy Commissioner to inquire into a complaint regarding pressure being put by DAV School principal on students for payment of fee by refusing to give their note-books, the CM promised prosecution against any school indulging in such acts. To a question on pressure from a college for fee payment, he said that Higher Education Department will probe the matter.

In response to a request from a Fatehgarh Sahib resident to allow the livestock market to resume operations, which were suspended in March causing massive losses to the people, Capt Amarinder said he will direct the Department to let the Mandi operate, but with total adherence to safety protocols.

"There are adequate testing facilities available in the State," he said, adding that four new testing labs would become operational on Monday.

"Delay in going for testing and treatment is the main cause for increasing number of COVID deaths," he said, pointing out that with 26 persons succumbing on Thursday, the death toll in the state had gone up to 517 (2.47 percent).

Expressing concern over the steady increase in COVID-19 infections and positivity in the

State, which reported 8.50 percent cases in samples tested in past one week, the Chief Minister said: "With the peak projected to come in Punjab by end of August or early September, one could not be certain how high the peak of daily cases may go."

"Given the recent increase in cases in districts like Bathinda, Barnala, Ferozepur, we cannot afford to be complacent," he said, urging the people to hold their nerve in these tough circumstances and fight the disease with strength and determination.

# Punjab CM meets victims of Hooch tragedy

SAD DUBS CM'S TARN TARAN VISIT AS PHOTO-OP CUM JOYRIDE

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/ TARN TARAN

Declaring that guilty of hooch tragedy would not be spared and properties of those responsible for this tragedy to be confiscated, besides deputed special prosecution officers for pursuing these cases; Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Friday announced to enhance the compensation being given to the victim families from existing Rs two lakh to Rs five lakh.

The Chief Minister, who visited Tarn Taran to share his sympathies with the bereaved families hailing from the district, said that perpetrators of this heinous crime would not be spared at any cost. "Given the recent increase in cases in districts like Bathinda, Barnala, Ferozepur, we cannot afford to be complacent," he said, urging the people to hold their nerve in these tough circumstances and fight the disease with strength and determination.

"To ensure that culprits get their just punishment, special prosecution teams would be deputed to vigorously pursue these cases," he said adding that the properties of those responsible for this unpardonable act be confiscated.

The Chief Minister said that the State Government was duty-bound to ensure strictest punishment to the culprits so that it acts as a deterrent for others in the future.

Underlining the need to refrain from politicking over the sensitive issue at this juncture, Capt Amarinder Singh reiterated his government's commitment to stand by victim families in this hour of grief by extending a helping hand in providing jobs, education, and other social security benefits to them.

Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar, without mincing any words, said that this tragedy was an outcome of criminal negligence and meritorious exemplary punishment to the perpetrators of this crime.

SAD TERMS CM'S TARN TARAN VISIT AS 'PHOTO-OP-CUM-JOYRIDE' Besides confining tractor-trolleys, tipper or other vehicles carrying mining material illegally, Chief Engineer Mining SK Gupta said that a legal action has also been initiated against the land owner, whose land was being used for the illegal practice. Miners and the landowners are equally responsible for the illegal practice.

Giving breakdowns about the action taken by the department, he said that a total of 201 cases of illegal mining were registered against 189 persons in the past three months, between May and July this year. "In the last three months, the highest number of illegal mining cases has been registered from Hoshiarpur, 37 in SBS Nagar and 25 in Ropar," he said.

During interaction with the families, Capt Amarinder announced that those victims who have lost their eyesight in the tragedy would also get a financial assistance worth Rs five lakh.

Handing over a cheque of Rs 2.92 crore for 92 victim families of Tarn Taran to the Deputy Commissioner, Capt Amarinder Singh unequivocally said that anyone, however affluent he might be, responsible for this atrocious crime would not be spared at any cost.

Pointing out further, the Chief Minister said that investigations are already underway in this case and Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta has been directed to further expedite the same.

Regarding the deaths as murder, Capt Amarinder categorically said that the perpetrators of this heinous crime deserve no leniency since it is a man-made tragedy.

"To ensure that culprits get their just punishment, special prosecution teams would be

deputed to vigorously pursue these cases," he said adding that the properties of those responsible for this unpardonable act be confiscated.

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SAD TERMS CM'S TARN TARAN VISIT AS 'PHOTO-OP-CUM-JOYRIDE'

Terming Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's visit to Tarn Taran police lines as a mere photo op-cum-joy ride, the Chief Minister said that the failure to visit the hooch tragedy victim families besides sharing the stage with Congress MLAs who were accused of being responsible for the tragedy.

Demanding immediate dismissal of Congress Government during a protest while proceeding towards Raj Bhawan before being arrested, senior SAD leaders Balwinder Singh Bhundur and Birkram Singh Mehta said that the Chief Minister made a show of visiting victim families when the truth was that he paid a 20-minute visit to the police lines in Tarn Taran which were turned into an army Campment as the Congress Government feared a backlash from the people.

"People were summoned to be present like they are in a Durbar due to which a large number of them refused to come to the police lines from SPs and DSPs deputed

specifically for this purpose. The Chief Minister also refused to visit Amritsar and Batala—the two other sites of the hooch tragedy—making it clear that he was just going through the motions and that poor and dalit lives don't matter to him," they said.

The two leaders, who were flanked by relatives of victims from Muchal village in Amritsar, said that it was reprehensible that the Chief Minister made MLAs, against whom murder charges should be pressed for being responsible for distributing spurious liquor, sit on the stage.

"How can a free and fair inquiry be held into horrific tragedy if the Chief Minister is himself shielding the accused in this manner?" the leaders asked.

They said instead of humiliating victim families by behaving like a feudal lord, the Chief Minister should have visited them and announced a compensation of ₹25 lakh and a government job for each family.

# 201 cases registered for illegal mining in Punjab

299 vehicles seized in 3 months

Chandigarh: Tightening noose around illegal miners in the state, Punjab Mining and Geology Department has registered as many as 201 cases against 189 persons involved in illegal mining activities in the last three months — May to July 2020. A total 299 vehicles and machines, being used for illegal mining, have also been seized across the State in the past three months.

"Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh has already ordered stringent action against those indulging in illegal mining in the State," said the state Mining and Geology Minister Sukhbir Singh Sarkaria.

Sarkaria said that vehicles used for mining material must have a slip of Mining Department. "All those vehicles that did not have the Mining Department slip to carry min-

ing material were being seized and legal action is being taken against them," he added. Besides confiscating tractor-trolleys, tipper or other vehicles carrying mining material illegally, Chief Engineer Mining SK Gupta said that a legal action has also been initiated against the land owner, whose land was being used for the illegal practice. Miners and the landowners are equally responsible for the illegal practice.

Giving breakdowns about the action taken by the department, he said that a total of 201 cases of illegal mining were registered against 189 persons in the past three months, between May and July this year. "In the last three months, the highest number of illegal mining cases has been registered from Hoshiarpur, 37 in SBS Nagar and 25 in Ropar," he said.

The Minister also warned that strict action would also be taken against those owners on whose land the illegal practice was being done.

He directed that the vehicles used for illegal mining must also be confiscated. Notably, the Minister said that no political interference would be tolerated at all. "Punjab Government is fully committed to provide sand-gravels to the people of State at reasonable prices and for this

purpose, the mining sites have been allocated through e-auction," he added.

Notably, the Minister said that the mining sites have been allocated through e-auction, he added.

Giving breakdowns about the action taken by the department, he said that a total of 201 cases of illegal mining were registered against 189 persons in the past three months, between May and July this year. "In the last three months, the highest number of illegal mining cases has been registered from Hoshiarpur, 37 in SBS Nagar and 25 in Ropar," he said.

# Punjab Health Dept to fill 323 posts of medical officers to tackle Covid-19

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To overcome the shortage of specialists during COVID-19 pandemic, Punjab Health and Family Welfare Department will conduct a walk-in-interview to fill 323 posts of Medical Officers (Specialists) on a regular basis. In addition to strengthening the health infrastructure, the State Government has been laying thrust to fulfill all the vacant posts of Specialists in Government Hospitals so as to impart quality health services in the various areas of State, said the state Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu.

He said that there is dire need of specialists

in the Health Department to effectively deal with the coronavirus situation.

Giving details about the recruitment, the Minister said that 37 posts of Anaesthesia, 4 ENT, 44 General Surgery, 25 Gynaecology, 56 Medicine, 6 Ophthalmology, 4 Orthopaedics, 4 Pathology, 83 Paediatrics, 1 Psychiatry, 45 Radiology, 7 Skin and VD, TB and Chest would be recruited through walk-in-interview.

"As many as 470 applicants have applied for these posts as online applications are called from all over the country," he said. "The shortlisted candidates will be paid pay and emoluments as per seventh Central Pay Commission pattern," he added.

# Three deaths, 47 fresh cases reported in Chandigarh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Three more city residents succumbed to COVID-19 while 47 fresh positive cases were reported in Chandigarh on Friday. The COVID-19 toll reached 23 in the city and the total case tally stood at 1374. There were 530 active cases at the evening.

"The residents including an 82-year-old male from Sector 7, 77-year-old male from Sector 45 and 62-year-old male from Sector 39 died due to COVID-19," stated the Health Department's evening bulletin.

Among 47 fresh cases, 36 were detected through RT-PCR while 11 were reported through rapid antigen testing. The fresh cases were reported from Sector 15, 16, 17, 20, 24, 32, 35, 37, 40, 41, 52, 56, Dhanas, Bapu Dham colony, Maloya, Manimajra and Burali, according to the bulletin.

A senior assistant in Accounts Branch of Chandigarh Administration

was also tested positive for COVID-19 following which the office of CP Division no 2 (roads) was closed in the second half on Friday.

43 patients also recovered from COVID-19 taking the total number of recoveries to 820 in the city, the bulletin added. Meanwhile, 16,596 samples of city residents have so far been tested for COVID-19.

ODD-EVEN SYSTEM INTRODUCED IN SEVERAL MARKETS

Keeping in view rapid increase in COVID-19 positive cases in the city, the Chandigarh Administration on Friday re-introduced odd-even system in several markets and ordered closure of few shops in Sector 22 till August 14. The decision was taken during the meeting held under Punjab Governor and UT Administrator VP Singh Badnore to ensure that the socio-economic needs being followed in the markets.

"The odd-even system will be followed in 11 markets starting from August 8 till August 14. On August 8, only the shops having even numbers will remain open while on August 9, the shops having odd numbers will remain open," stated an order issued by Manoj Parida, Adviser to UT Administrator.

The markets where the odd-even system is introduced include Krishna Market in Sector 41, Shastri Market in Sector 22, Patel Market in Sector 15, Sector 8 Internal Market in Sector 22, 20, Palace Market in Sector 20, Booth Market in Sector 21, Palika Bazar in Sector 19, Sadar Market in Sector 19, Janta Market in Sector 27 and market area near old PNB Bank/Bihari Garment, Sector 22, Chowk, the order said.

Apert from this, the Scooter Repair Market in Sector 43 will remain closed on all Sundays. The SCO 1010-11-Radha Market, SCO 1030-31-Attar Market, SCO 1004-Sweetie Market.

NISHU MAHAJAN ■ CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh's Covid-19 positive cases are now spread across 50 different sectors and 17 villages in the periphery of the city.

After the city's first case of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) was reported from Sector 21 on March 19, the tally has now crossed 1300-mark, with infections scattered across Chandigarh.

The mapping of Covid-19 cases done by Chandigarh Health Department reveals that a maximum of 277 positive cases have been reported from the densely populated Bapu Dham colony in Sector 26 where till August 7 in the city.

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cases, Sector 46 with 23 cases, Sector 21 and Sector 21, cases each, Sector 52 with 19 cases, Sectors 15 and 19 with 20 cases each, Sector 20 with 17 positive cases, Sectors 23 and 24 with 15 cases among others.

According to the data, 22 heaviest workers in PGIMER and 13 in GMCH-32 have so far been found infected with the virus.

With easing of lockdown restrictions from June onwards, the virus has spread its tentacles to many new localities in the city while till mid-June Bapu Dham colony was seen as the hotspot for positive cases. The BDC was also demarcated as a containment zone in the month of April, however, the perimeter control was removed on May 4, 200-mark on July 19, 300-mark on June 2, 400-mark on June 20, 500-mark on July 8, 600-mark on July 14, 700-mark on July 19, 800-mark on July 23, 900-mark on July 27 and 1000-mark on July 30.

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in GMCH-32 and PGIMER. Due to the rapid surge in the number of persons found infected with the virus in the past one month, the recovery rate of COVID-19 patients in Chandigarh has declined to 59 percent against the national average of 67.98 percent. The fatality rate stood at 1.67 percent in the city.

Shockingly, in July alone, 608 positive COVID-19 cases have been reported in Chandigarh while a total of 440 COVID-19 cases were reported in around three months time period (March 19-June 30). The union territory has so far reported 323 cases in the month of August with the highest single-day spike of 64 cases recorded on August 5.

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# Covid-19 cases spread to 50 sectors & 17 villages in Chandigarh

city to ensure social distancing, was lifted on May 3 amid protests by the Administration and a series of relaxations were announced under unlock phases starting June 1.

Currently, night curfew is imposed from 10 pm to 5 am in the city, odd-even system is introduced in several markets and the city's prime tourist spot-Sukhna Lake which draws large crowds is closed on week-ends to stem the spread of

COVID-19. Among other measures taken, the Administration has started rapid antigen testing, door-to-door survey to identify symptomatic patients and intensive channelling drive for isolation of safety protocols.

At present, cinema halls, swimming pools, theatres, banquets, auditoriums, assembly halls and similar places are not permitted to open in the city.

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# Haryana CM inaugurates Plasma Bank in Faridabad

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment (Independent Charge), Santosh Kumar Gangwar on Friday inaugurated Plasma Bank at ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad.

Plasma banks have also been set up at Rohtak, Gurugram and Panchkula districts too. The COVID-19 vaccine trials are also underway at Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma

University of Health Sciences, Rohtak.

Khattar and Gangwar inaugurated the Plasma Bank at ESIC Medical College and Hospital, Faridabad through video conferencing from Haryana Bhavan in New Delhi.

Appealing to the people who have recovered from COVID-19 infection, both the Chief Minister and Union Minister of State said that on humanitarian grounds all such people should come forward and donate plasma to COVID-19 infected patients.

# Haryana Govt creates 20 new posts of District Municipal Commissioners

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

On the direction of the Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, the Government has decentralised the powers ensuring more development at grass root level, the Haryana Government on Friday created 20 new posts of District Municipal Commissioners.

Director General, Urban Local Bodies Department, Amit Kumar Agrawal said that a notification has been issued in this regard. In all the districts (except Charkhidadri and Faridabad) a District Municipal Commissioner each would be

NOTIFICATION HAS BEEN ISSUED IN THIS REGARD

posted whereas, Charkhidadri district would be clubbed with Bhiwani district.

Referring to the powers and responsibilities of the District Municipal Commissioners, Agrawal said that they would exercise all powers of the Deputy Commissioners as exercised earlier under municipal act. Apart from this, superintendence, control and monitoring of the Municipal bodies fall under their juris-

diction. He said that District Municipal Commissioners would coordinate with the District Administration as well as the other Line Departments/Offices for implementation of the government policies and schemes.

He said that they would also supervise the implementation of centrally sponsored schemes as well as state government schemes or programmes, projects and other activities entrusted to the Municipal Bodies and take cognizance directly on matters or complaints against officers or officials of the respective Municipalities as ex-officio Chief Vigilance Officer.

# Congress, BJP slug it out over 'you love China'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress and the BJP on Friday continued to spar publicly levelling 'you love China' allegations against each other.

The Congress on Friday maintained its pressure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the 'Chinese incursion' by directly attacking him besides the BJP for just crafting an image and spending millions of rupees to win elections. The party also questioned the influence China wields on Indian establishments and why the BJP took Beijing's help in the Lok Sabha elections by shoring up votes of Indian citizens with it.

The Congress said Modi's love for China is now visible to the world and this dates back to his tenure as the Gujarat Chief Minister in Gujarat. The party also quipped that foreign policy does not mean that the Prime Minister is constantly on aeroplane mode.

'Why did you compromise the data security and privacy of crores of Indians by involving Chinese companies linked to the PLA,' Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said at the AICC press conference.

The party shared documents about BJP having partnered with those Chinese com-

panies who have now been banned by the Government for their links with the Chinese establishment.

'UC Web Mobile got banned in July this year. In 2019, according to the expenditure report submitted by the BJP to the Election Commission, they hired this very company to run their campaign. It is the same Alibaba-owned company - UC Web Browser - which was also red-flagged by the Modi gov't in 2017 for sending crucial data of Indians to China. What was the compulsion of involving the same company for elections which you had red-flagged two years ago,' Khera questioned.

There is another company called Gamma Gaana Limited (incorporated in China). Yu Yung, one of the directors of this company is also the director in 10c India Pvt Ltd. Gamma Gaana Ltd is funded by Tencent. Last month, the government banned it saying it was a threat to national security. The PLA, this company too was used by the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress alleged.

According to the Congress, the third company called ShareIT Technology has been banned by the Government last month

## Cong had MoU with China in 2008, BJP hits back, asks Sonia to explain



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Congress attacking the Prime Minister, BJP president J P Nadda on Friday took to the field again to direct his volleys at his Congress counterpart Sonia Gandhi and her predecessor Rahul Gandhi. Nadda sought an explanation from her about their party's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with China in 2008 saying even the Supreme Court has expressed surprise at the deal.

The BJP's attacks on the Congress have heightened with Rahul's continued questioning of Chinese 'incursions' on

the Line of Actual Control in East Ladakh.

Nadda in a tweet cited the observations of the Supreme Court on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and sought an explanation from Sonia and Rahul.

'Even the SC is surprised at the MoU signed by the Congress party with the Chinese Gov., Mrs Gandhi & her son, who led the signing, must explain. Does this explain donations to RGF and opening Indian market for the Chinese in Ramnagar, which affected Indian businesses?' he tweeted.

Nadda's remark came after the Supreme Court refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Congress and the Communist Party of China.

The apex court asked the petitioner to file his plea before

the High Court, but expressed surprise how a political party could enter into an agreement with China.

BJP's national spokesman Sambit Patra who referred to his party president's tweet also asked Congress leaders to explain the nature of the MoU and the alleged dealings with China.

He alleged that even during the Doklam border standoff with China, Congress leaders' conduct was suspect. In line with Nadda's assertions, Patra said the Congress was not ready to clarify their dealings with Beijing.

He also wondered whether a national party could sign an MoU with a political party of a foreign nation.

The BJP spokesman said according to the MoU, both the parties were to exchange information on all regional and international issues.

Congress charged.

Our Prime Minister crafted an image for himself - an image of a leader who before

2014, roared on issues of border security. Several companies were lined up, spending crores of rupees to create this image

## SC refuses to hear PIL for probe against Congress over China pact

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a PIL seeking NIA probe into the alleged 2008 agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of China.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde, asked senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani appearing for PIL petitioners Shashank Shekhar Jha and journalist Savio Rodrigues, to withdraw the plea and approach the high court.

'Every relief which you are seeking can be granted by the high court. Secondly, high court is a proper court. Thirdly, we will have the advantage of high court order also,' said the bench, which also comprised Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

The top court, in the hearing conducted through video conferencing, allowed the petitioners to 'withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the high court.'



At the outset, Jethmalani alleged that it was an 'agreement between a political party of this country with the only political party in that country (China)' and the issue pertained to national security.

'We find that there is something which appears to be, what might be called, unheard of and absurd in law. You are saying that China has entered into an agreement with a political party and not

the Government. How can a political party enter into an agreement with China,' the bench observed.

On being stressed by the lawyer that this was the case, the bench said, 'We will allow you to withdraw this and file a fresh petition. We will examine what you say in the petition and if we find any false statement, we may prosecute you.'

PTI

## Modi: NEP has potential to transform entire nation



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Outlining that there has not been any allegation of bias against the New Education Policy (NEP) unveiled by his Government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said that it has the potential to not only change the education system but to also transform the entire nation. He said the NEP will be the foundation of the 'New India, one that focuses on "how to think" rather than "what to think" that was being stressed upon till now.

Addressing a conclave on 'Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy', Modi also spoke on the contentious issue of mother tongue as the mode of teaching in the initial years. Justifying it, the PM said, 'We need to make our students global citizens and yet be rooted in their culture. The learning power of students will

improve if the language they speak in and the language in which lessons are taught in school is the same. That is why we have recommended teaching in the mother tongue as far as possible - at least class 5. This will strengthen their foundations.'

Lauding the NEP, he said the fact that there was no allegation from any region or segment that it had any kind of bias or inclination is an indicator that the 'changes people wanted to see for years in the education system, they have got to see'.

Asking all stakeholders to discuss the ways to implement the new policy, the PM said: 'In recent years, there have not been major changes in education and thus the values of curiosity and imagination were not given the thrust. Instead, we moved towards a herd community. The mapping of interest, ability, and demand were allowed. We tried to do such on critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities in our youths. It will be possible if we have purpose, philosophy, and passion of education.'

The PM said students should get a chance to follow their passion. 'We are also try-

ing to ensure that the talent of India stays in India and works for the development of generations to come, said PM.

'With changing time, a new global system has risen. Thus, it was essential for India to change its education system accordingly. Creating a 5+3+3+4 curriculum, and replacing the 10+2 structure was a step in this direction.'

'Often students find that what they have learned is not in line with their job. Thus, to give flexibility to students we have given multiple entries and exit points.'

We have also freed education from the stream system. Students will have the flexibility to change their course if they do not like it. It is right that we are moving from thinking when a person is not glued to one profession for the entire lifetime and hence s/he needs to skill, re-skill and up-skill. These issues are part of NEP. The PM said about the main features of the NEP. He added that NEP shifts focus from what to think to how to think.

'Till now, we have focussed on what to think but NEP 2020 focuses on how to think,' he pointed out.

## LoR launched to benefit street vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move to give access to street vendors who do not have Identity Card (ID) and Certificate of Vending (CoV), the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on Friday launched a Letter of Recommendation (LoR) module to provide benefit to street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme. Those who are not included in any survey list also get benefitted from the LoR module.

The module provides for an end-to-end digitally-enabled process wherein an eligible vendor can request for a Letter of Recommendation from the Urban Local Body and on receipt of the same he/she can apply for a loan under PM SVANidhi. Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, launched the module.

According to the ministry, for applying for the LoR from ULB through the online module on PM SVANidhi portal, a vendor needs to possess any one of the documents: Proof of availing one-time assistance, provided by certain States/UTs, during the period of lockdown; or the membership details with the vendors' asso-

ciations; and any other documents to prove that he is a vendor. Further, a vendor can also request ULB through a simple application on white paper to conduct local enquiry to ascertain the genuineness of the claim as vendor. ULBs will have to dispose of the request for issue of LoR within a period of 15 days.

The vendors possessing LoR will be issued Certificate of Vending / ID Card within a period of 30 days. This provision will help in extending problems with concentration and memory - and a general decline in quality of life.

Since commencement of online submission of loan applications on PM SVANidhi portal, more than 4.45 lakh requests for loan under PM SVANidhi, Durga Shanker Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, launched the module.

This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors who had been vend- ing before 24 March, 2020, in urban areas including those from surrounding peri-urban/ rural areas. Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.

## Do not let your guard down: Researchers warn Covid patients who have recovered

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Do not let your guard down, is what researchers have warned patients who have recovered from the coronavirus infection. For, they said, the road to recovery for infection-recovered patients may take months and need vital specialist rehabilitation to ensure quality life.

The researchers found that infection-free patients faced one or many health issues like fatigue, breathlessness, psychological distress - including problems with concentration and memory - and a general decline in quality of life.

The research team - involving multidisciplinary specialists from the University of Leeds, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust and Leeds Beckett University - had followed 100 Covid-recovered patients four-to-eight weeks after being discharged from hospital.

The findings, 'Post-discharge symptoms and rehabilitation needs in survivors of COVID-19 infection: a cross-sectional evaluation, have been published in the Journal of Medical Virology.

It holds importance also for India where the



Government has been maintaining that the recovery rate is on the high side after focussing on life after Covid-19 that is not the same for infection-free patients.

The researchers identified a pattern of longer-term symptoms likely to be experienced by people who were hospitalised with the Covid-19 infection.

Some patients, particularly those who had been in intensive care, had symptoms associated with cases of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). PTSD symptoms are a well-recognised component of post-intensive care unit syndrome caused by a variety of factors including fear of dying, invasive treatment, pain, delirium, inability to communicate, weakness,

immobility, and sensory problems and sleep deprivation.

Dr Manoj Sinan, Associate Clinical Professor at the University of Leeds and a Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine at Leeds General Infirmary, who supervised the research project, said: 'The emerging evidence is that for some, the road to recovery may take months and it is vital that specialist rehabilitation is on hand to support them. This research gives an important insight into patient needs, and what we can help shape services in the community.'

More than two-thirds (68.8 percent) of patients in the intensive care group and just under half (45.6 percent) of the other group said their overall quality of life had deteriorated.

## India opens to and fro travel with 4 countries

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Friday opened international travel to and from the USA, the UK, Germany and France.

The Union Home Ministry said that Indians can also go to these countries and foreigners including OCI holders with valid visa can now travel to these nations and come to India. India's Civil Aviation Ministry has entered into an 'air bubble agreement' with the USA, the UK, Germany and France. The Ministry said that soon more countries will be in this bilateral agreement of air travel known as 'air bubble agreement' in the wake of Covid-19 situation.

In the order, Union Home Ministry said that allowing travel will be subject to health checks and only applicable to those who are not having Covid-19 and other norms stipulated by the Civil Aviation Ministry. The MHA also said that the travellers must have valid visa. 'Ministry of Home Affairs has permitted OCI cardholders to enter India who belong to countries with which "air bubble" arrangements have



been finalised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical & employment purposes. Indian citizens have also been allowed. We need to do such on any type of visa," said MHA in a statement.

The Civil Aviation Ministry, for its part, said that Delhi Airport has developed new features in their portal for international travellers for 'contact-less declarations'. The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) announced that it has developed a first-of-its-kind portal where India-bound international arriving flyers can fill the mandatory self-declaration form and also apply online for exemption from mandatory institution quarantine process.

## EC settles matter over Baldev Singh appointment as SEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Disposing of a complaint of Maharashtra Congress leader Sachin Sawant questioning procedures for appointment of State Chief Electoral Officer Baldev Singh in 2019, the Election Commission on Friday said no action is needed in the matter as the appointment was done after consultation with the State Government. 'Singh had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal records during the five years of his service prior to his appointment,' the EC said.

'The Commission having duly considered the matter, does not find any reason for taking any action in the matter. The CEO's appointment is done in consultation with the concerned state government/union territory wherein a panel of officers is furnished to the poll body' the EC said in a letter addressed to Sawant.

The EC further said that Baldev Singh, a 1989 batch IAS officer of Maharashtra cadre was appointed by the



Commission following due procedure wherein the State Government had clarified that he was clear from the vigilance angle and as per records, he had been rated outstanding in his performance appraisal reports during the five years of his service prior to his appointment as CEO, Maharashtra.

Sawant had alleged that Singh was facing an inquiry initiated by CVC and the ministry of industry and commerce in an alleged irregularity in SEEPZ SEZ. Sawant questioned why the credentials of the CEO were not cross-checked while appointing him to the post and whether the Election Commission of India was working under pressure of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

## J&K Bank loan fraud case: ED raids 17 locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at 17 locations in Delhi, Ludhiana, Jammu and Srinagar in connection with the J&K Bank loan fraud case involving Hilal Ahmed Rather in a money laundering case worth Rs 177.68 crore. Hilal is son of former Minister Abdul Rahim Rather, who served as Finance, Agriculture, Rural Development, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister under the National Conference-led government in the erstwhile State.

The investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act was initiated on the basis of an FIR registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Jammu.

Investigation conducted by ED revealed that a loan of Rs 177.68 crores was sanctioned by the J&K Bank, without verifying documents and in violation of guidelines of RBI, to Paradise Avenue for construction of a residential housing project in Jammu. The agency said in a statement.

A substantial part of the loan was siphoned off by Hilal Rather by transferring the



funds from the loan account of Paradise Avenue to various entities and rerouting the funds back to the firms controlled by Rather from where it was further withdrawn and transferred for purchase of movable/immovable assets in India, Dubai and USA, the ED said.

The residences of Abdul Rahim Rather in Srinagar and Hilal Rather in Jammu were among the premises searched by the ED. Several incriminating documents and digital evidence have been seized during the search operations, the agency added.

## Purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for IAF: ED raids multiple locations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches at multiple locations in various cities in connection with a money laundering case relating to alleged corruption in the purchase of 75 Pilatus basic trainer aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2009.

The searches were conducted at 14 premises including a dozen in the national capital and one each in Gurgaon and Surat, officials said.

The ED had initiated a money laundering case to probe the deal and is carrying out the search operation to gather evidence under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

The case involves absconding arms dealer and alleged middleman Sanjay Bhandari, who is already facing separate ED and CBI probes for corruption and alleged possession of undeclared assets in the country and abroad.

Bhandari is suspected to be staying in the UK at present and the ED is in the process of initiating extradition proceedings against him.

The PMLA case was lodged by the ED after taking cognisance of the CBI FIR to probe the money laundering angle in the case and alleged creation and generation of illegal assets by the accused.

The CBI had named Bhandari as an accused in the case along with unidentified officials of the Indian Air Force, the Defence Ministry and Switzerland-based Pilatus Aircraft Limited in the case. The Swiss company was one of the bidders for the contract floated in 2009.

The CBI has alleged that Pilatus had entered into a criminal conspiracy with Bhandari and Bimal Sareen, both directors of Offset India Solutions Pvt Ltd, and dishonestly and fraudulently signed a Service Provider Agreement with Bhandari in June 2010 in violation of the Defence Procurement Procedure, 2008.

The deal was allegedly done to get the contract for supply of 75 basic Trainer Aircraft to the IAF.

The agency had alleged that the company made a payment of CHF 1,000,000 in the account of Offset India Solution Private Limited with the Standard Chartered Bank, New Delhi in two tranches in August and October, 2010.

AHEAD OF WB ASSEMBLY POLLS

# Join BJP parivar: Nadda to people

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the Assembly elections less than a year away the BJP on Friday mounted fresh attacks on the Mamata Banerjee Government holding it responsible for all round deterioration of socio-political and economic situation in Bengal and asked the people to join the saffron outfit in hopes to effect a second Parivartan (change) in the State.

Firing salvos at the ruling Trinamool Congress party led president JP Nadda said "Bengal has gone into an

eclipse ... today there is an all round deterioration in law and order situation, the students do not get jobs, the farmers do not get right prices for their produce."

Calling the people to "join the BJP parivar" he said "today cut and run money and corruptions reigns supreme in Bengal and whoever wants to protest is either silenced by the goons or the police. This situation cannot run for long and the people of the State have to come forward to change the government by allowing the BJP to take the lead in doing so."

Nadda was speaking ahead of the beginning of a membership drive by the saffron outfit. The party on Friday launched a massive membership drive keeling in view the next year's Assembly elections.

Speaking on the occasion Bengal BJP president MP Dilip Ghosh said, "we (BJP) are referred to as a non-Bengali party ... but they forget that our main ideology Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was from Bengal ... As the Vice Chancellor of the Calcutta University he requested

Rabindranath Tagore to give a lecture in Bengali ... and today they say we are a party of non-Bengalis."

Saying how "thousands of people are joining the BJP not just in Bengal but across the country" he accused the TMC of running a goonda raj saying how the TMC government was indulging in vendetta politics. Ghosh said, "Our supporters are not safe. Either BJP workers are homeless or in jails in false cases. They are ruining Bengal's traditions, culture and education system."

Appealing to the TMC

## TMC rejects Modi's claims on NEP debate

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Friday rejected claims made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the State or its Government was consulted before bringing about the new education policy (NEP).

Speaking about the issue, Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee said that "no one from Bengal was consulted on the New Educational Policy" and added whether anyone was privately consulted was beyond his knowledge.

"Insofar as the new education policy is concerned ... to my knowledge, nothing has happened nor one was consulted ... not even a single time ... except to our honourable Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) I can say with my full voice that none from Bengal was included."

Regarding the draft resolution of the NEP he said it being said that "discussions were held with states for 3 to 4 years but no such discussion took place" and added "may be discussion was held with someone but not with us." The Minister also said that the State had formed a 6-member expert committee which will give their views by 15th August.

## Kerala likely to see hike in cases: CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala is in for tough times as the number of Covid-19 cases in the State are likely to see a hike, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Briefing the media on Friday, Vijayan disclosed that Kerala would see a hike in the number of Covid-19 cases in days to come. "It is the considered opinion of medical experts that situation in Kerala would worsen in days to come," said Vijayan.

The Chief Minister had on Monday lambasted the State authorities and frontline health workers charging that the Covid-19 preventive measures had gone out of control because of the indifferent and irresponsible attitude of the Government staff deputed to tame the pandemic.

On Friday, the State saw 1,251 new persons testing positive for Covid-19, said the Chief Minister. Kerala had 1,251 new patients, 1061 contracted the pandemic through local transmission. There were 73 persons who could not tell the source from where they contracted the pandemic," said the Chief Minister. Five persons succumbed to the pandemic on Friday and this took the fatalities to more than 100.

The 1,251 included 77 expatriates and 94 persons who returned to Kerala from other parts of India. "There were five deaths in the last 24 hours during the last 24 hours and this took the total fatalities in the State to more than 100," said Vijayan. On Friday, there were five districts in the State each testing more than 100 cases in the last 24 hours, ending Friday evening saw the testing of 27, 608 persons in the State.

## 119 succumb to virus in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu on Friday saw 119 persons succumbing to Covid-19 and 5,880 persons joining the list of coronavirus patients, according to a press release by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The casualties registered on Friday make it the highest number of deaths on a single day in the State. 115 patients who breathed their last on Friday had comorbidities (pre-existing chronic diseases). Till date Tamil Nadu has lost 4,690 lives to covid-19.

The number of new patients diagnosed with covid-19 on Friday is on the higher side, when compared to that of Thursday (5,684).

But the total number of active cases on Friday, (52,759) is less than that of Thursday (53,486) which is encouraging to the authorities.

As 6,488 patients were cured and returned home from hospitals, the number of patients recovered from the pandemic rose to 2,27 lakh.

A single day saw Tamil Nadu health authorities testing 65,189 persons and the number of testing centres functioning in the State rose to 126. While the number of new persons diagnosed with Covid-19 came down to 984 in Thursday (which was 1,000+ every day till yesterday), the same cannot be said about the constituents which make the large cluster of four districts.

While Chengalpatt tested 319 positive cases, Kancheepuram saw 166 new patients and Thiruvallur (388).

## My mission to end militancy: J&K L-G Vijayan lashes out at media over gold smuggling case

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Reaching out to the common people of Jammu & Kashmir the newly appointed Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha on Friday clearly spelt out his mission in the UT will be to bring peace, end militancy and to ensure development by all means.

Sinha also emphasised his priority would be zero tolerance for corruption besides establishing dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Interacting with the media persons soon after he was administered the oath of office by the Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal, Sinha said, "J&K is India's heaven and crown. I have been given a chance to play a role here. August 5 is a historic day and will be remembered in history."

Referring to his brief interaction with the section of senior officers, Sinha said, "I met some officers and they told me that in the past one year, there has been a lot of development in all sectors. I will take forward the same



process of development with a speed and vigor."

Interestingly, the oath ceremony was attended by only BJP and Jammu and Kashmir Apni party leaders. None of the representatives of the National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party and Congress attended the oath ceremony.

Listing out his priority areas, Sinha said, "I have no specific agenda but there will be no disparity. There will be equal treatment to all. And we will work for the welfare of people of J&K. I will try

on that front and I have spoken to some officers in that regard already." "I will be in touch with the media too besides common people of J&K."

The Lt Governor further said that he would like to see Jammu & Kashmir free from militancy and isolation. "We will work within the framework of the Constitution of India to take J&K towards inclusive development and peace. We will also initiate dialogue with the masses to have a better understanding of their problems and issues, and will try to address the same," he said in a reply to one of the questions.

"I assure the people of J&K that I will try to come up to their expectations and take J&K forward on the vision and mission of making this UT a model to emulate," he added. Later, Lt Gov Manoj Sinha visited the civil secretariat complex where he has presented a formal guard of honour. He also attended a meet with the administrative secretaries of all the departments.

## Vijayan lashes out at media over gold smuggling case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the first time since the gold smuggling scam hit the headlines, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan lashed out at a Press briefing on Friday and issued a stern warning to journalists "who were out to discredit him in public life."

"There is a media syndicate working in the State with an intention to tarnish my image. The people in the State know about me. However hard you try, you will not succeed in your attempts," said a visibly upset Vijayan when he was asked about reports attributing to the National Investigation Agency that appeared in a section of the media.

Some media houses had reported quoting a statement made by the NIA to the Special Court that Swarna Suresh, the kingpin in the smuggling racket, was known to Vijayan and she had wielded influence in the Chief Minister's Office. The Chief Minister who was taken aback by the question gave the reporter a piece of his mind in harshest terms. He warned the journalist not to attempt to get an answer from him to suit the former's convenience.

The press briefing, convened to inform the media about the Covid-19 update ended in a not so pleasant note as a section of the media persons expressed their displeasure in private over the ire of the Chief Minister when faced with inconvenient questions.

## Paswan accuses 11 States of passing on Central PDS subsidies as their own

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday accused several states of passing subsidised PDS foodgrains and passing them on to end users as their own without giving any credit to the Centre.

He said this trend is apparent in 11 states, mostly non-BJP ruled, that are trying to undermine the efforts of the Centre in ensuring that no poor goes hungry.

According to Paswan, there are 11 States which take subsidised foodgrains from the central government but are passing on to ration card holders free of cost or at further subsidised rates.

"These states spend about ₹10,000 crore from their pocket and pass it to end users as their own. This is wrong on their part. They should give due credit to the central government."

"Out of 11 States, four States (West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka) are distributing grains at free of cost, while Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Telangana are distributing rice at a further subsidised rate of ₹1/kg and Tripura at ₹2/kg rice via PDS, he said.

Under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the central government is distributing foodgrains to States for distribution through Public Distribution System (PDS), also known as ration shops, at a subsidised rate of ₹2/kg rice and ₹3/kg wheat, costing over ₹1 lakh crore annually to the exchequer. "We are spending over ₹1 lakh crore annually on subsidised PDS foodgrains distribution, but in several states there is no mention or credit given to the Union government,"

Paswan said at a virtual press conference.

"Since 01 July 2020, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKY) has been started, which will continue till November 2020. Under this scheme, a total of 201 LMT food grains will be distributed among 81 crore beneficiaries, as well as a total of 12 LMT white chana will be distributed among 19.4 crore families," he said.

"We bear over 90 per cent procurement cost of the foodgrains, the Government of India does not give even in advertisements. They claim as if they are bearing the entire cost. The state governments should take note of this," he said. The beneficiaries should be told that the subsidised grain is coming from the central government not only under the NFSA but also through newly launched Pradhan Mantri Garib Anna Yojana (PMGKY), he added.

## Fake Colonel of Punjab caught cheating in name of enlisting in Army

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

Fake colonel, a resident of Punjab, who was cheating people in lieu of recruiting in the Army in Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh, caught by the Igla police on Thursday.

In Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh, fake colonel resident of Punjab, who cheated people in lieu of recruiting in the army, caught up by the Igla police on Thursday. He walked around wearing the Lieutenant Colonel uniform. Several number plates of 10s were seen in the car which he used to police on the police.

SP Dehat Atul Sharma told that a person from Punjab who cheated some people in Mathura in the name of a job in the army. On Thursday, it was found that the accused is coming to Bhilpur, a village in Igla to take the money. Inspector Igla, Praveen Kumar Mann and SO Madan Singh stopped his car in front of Bato Devi School near village Bhilpur-Balpur. The car rider was in the uniform of Army Lieutenant Colonel. When they

stopped the car, he started calling himself Lieutenant Colonel. After inspecting vigorously, the inspector found the Aadhar card, which had the name Sarvan, son of Gurmeh, resident of Ludhiana, Punjab. On strict questioning, the accused stated his real name as Pradeep alias Pitu, son of Gurmeh. He used to call himself a lieutenant colonel and cheated the youth in the name of getting a job in the army. Seven and a half lakhs taken from three people in Mathura.

Ramkumar, a resident of village Kudwara in Mathura (UP) who had registered a case of cheating against the accused on Tuesday. He said that the accused had convinced himself to get a job by calling him a Colonel in the Army. The fake colonel took two and a half lakh rupees from Manoj and Tejwer of the same village and his companions. He also took education related papers. On 10 July, Rajkumar gave 7.5 lakh rupees to Pradeep Sharma, resident of Bhilpur. On finding about the fraud and asking for money and papers, Sarvan (fake colonel) threatened to kill the victims.

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## Big win for Mahinda

With the pro-China Rajapaksa clan in full control, India has to work on strategic engagement and economic alliances



The Sri Lankans have chosen stability over liberalism, performance over democracy in returning the Rajapaksa clan to power with a massive mandate in the nation's parliamentary elections. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ruling party, the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), won 145 of the 150 seats, that would now allow him to amend the Constitution, expand his executive powers and ensure that his elder brother, Mahinda, continues as Prime Minister. In short, the dynastic hold on Sri Lanka's politics is now absolute. And the brothers could overturn any reformatory attempts that have been made by previous Governments to consolidate their

position. Sri Lankans, much like other nations around the world, including India, have voted for nationalist pride and muscular leadership in tough times. The Government's smart COVID-19 management has scored big with the voter, the island nation reporting just 11 deaths and managing the elections without any cluster outbreaks during the polling process. The Rajapaksa brothers are seen as strongmen and deliverers and seem to have consolidated their hold among the Sinhalese Buddhist majority in the aftermath of the Easter bombings, which showed how scattered IS modules were choosing virgin targets. And no matter how militarist Gotabaya may seem, the Sinhalese trust him to tackle terrorism as he cleaned up the Tamil movement ruthlessly, an operation that had earned him the moniker of the "terminator." For India, though, the return of Mahinda Rajapaksa is worrying as he has a harder approach to Tamils and has welcomed Chinese strategic interests and investment at our expense. In the past, he accused New Delhi of intervening in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, propping up his own protégé Maithripala Sirisena against him and ensuring he lost the elections. Sirisena's SLFP and ally UNP, whose leader Ranil Wickremesinghe became Prime Minister, formed a coalition Government which was pro-India. The Indian establishment was also too overt rather than being covert about its interventions. So a hurt Mahinda never settled down, his party scoring on local elections till he forced a coup, subduing Sirisena, getting him to sack Wickremesinghe and becoming Prime Minister for 51 days. Gotabaya took charge of Defence and Security, kept the Tamil-majority areas under strict military vigil and put Indian diplomats under surveillance. It is this distrust that needs to be healed now for geo-strategic reasons if we don't want China to run ahead.

Little wonder then that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was one of the first dignitaries to wish Mahinda, with whom he has been in touch over regional COVID-19 management. India's diplomacy in the neighbourhood has to factor in the pragmatism by lesser neighbours, who have successfully played on its anxieties with China and are negotiating the best of both worlds given the competitive muscle-flexing by two Asian majors. Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are all happily walking the trajectory of "trade ties" with China and "historical linkage" with India to buttonhole both nations into giving concessions. Mahinda, too, seized the moment by calling India a "friend" with whom he had a "long-standing cooperation." The Modi Government is pushing proactive participation over historical assumptions in its Lanka policy. Yet, the Chinese are way ahead in Lanka. They have a 99-year lease on the Hambantota port after Sri Lanka's failure to repay loans and are using it to enhance their military arc in the Indian Ocean region for the way to east Africa. The Chinese have even created an island off Colombo, a new financial hotspot and a key conduit to East Africa, besides controlling the island nation's infrastructure sector, hospitality and supply chains. And while we may have halted Huawei's 5G technology, Sri Lanka has no security fears about the new-generation mobile telephony technology. India has, therefore, to do a very tightrope act with Sri Lanka if it wants to protect its strategic interests amid a Chinese swamp. That, too, without compromising too much on Tamil interests. We need to work on investment and project partnerships, encourage soft diplomacy via people-to-people contacts and strengthen an institution like BIMSTEC to ensure continuous communication. And we must take care to not appear exploitative or patronising.

## COVID spiral

As the virus spreads, India must ramp up its testing capacity, focus on the hinterland and come up with a standard protocol



The dreaded community spread has India well and truly in its grip because, from the time the pandemic began in the country, we had recorded 1.5 million cases till July 28 but have added a whopping 5,00,000 infections in just nine days. This is an average of 50,000 fresh cases recorded each day. India has breached the 20-lakh barrier and fatalities have touched the 41,000 mark. The country that has been fighting to rapidly ramp up its poor healthcare infrastructure is now snapping at the heels of Brazil, which has more than 2.8 million cases, and the US, which is leading the list of worst-hit countries with five million cases. And if the

experts are to be believed, the community spread has only just begun and the next million cases may take just a little over two weeks if infections continue to spread at the same rate at which they are now. Expert opinion has it that the country needs to shift its focus on the war against the pandemic to rural India, which has multiple challenges of a high population density, patchy administration and a tottering healthcare infrastructure.

Another area where the country needs to improve its performance is testing that has been dismally slow. Till August 5, the country had just tested 16,617 people per million, which is a paltry 1.66 per cent of the population. Compare this to other nations like the US, which has tested 18.8 per cent of its population, Russia 20 per cent, South Africa five per cent and the UK 25 per cent. The Government's excuses of overpopulation and being a poor country hold no water as even a country like Brazil, which has a much lesser GDP than ours, has tested 6.3 per cent of its population. Moreover, a small country like Iran has tested three per cent. If we are to beat the pandemic, we have to ramp up our testing and take it up to five per cent at least, which is around 32 million more people. Testing also helps us map the trajectory of the disease and prepare containment strategies or it would look like we are just flying blind as some Western experts are suggesting. Right now, while the urban centres are bending the curve, unexpected hotspots are emerging, which need to be contained lest they set off a ripple effect that can lead to a "viral" blast. Also, what is needed is a national protocol for a standardised response, better guidance and a balanced allocation of resources. The silver lining in the dark cloud is that the recovery rate in the country is continuously rising and the fatality rate has remained much below the global average. If the figures being bandied about by the Health Ministry are anything to go by, the recovery rate has risen from 51.08 per cent on June 15 to a record high of 67.98 per cent on August 7, while the fatality rate has gone down to 2.05 per cent. These two in tandem have enabled a higher and rising difference of more than 7.7 lakh between the number of recovered patients and active cases in the country, claims the Ministry. Of course, there is still a problem of unaccounted deaths and cases that may completely change the picture. Plus, we have come a long way from the time we faced a shortage of simple things like hand sanitiser to the more complex PPEs and ventilators. Now, after four months, we are actually exporting these to other nations. The two indigenous vaccines are showing promise and developers are preparing to begin simultaneous phase 2 trials that study immune response and additional safety in a large population. In some more good news, pharma major Lupin has launched its Favipiravir drug at a very reasonable price. So, while we may not yet be winning the COVID war, all is still not lost. India can live to fight another day. But we must stick to a mapping and tracking plan and not get complacent. More importantly, not let up. Given our population, we will have recurring waves.

## Being humane

Following the pandemic, there has been a resurgence of hatred against stray dogs who are left to fend for themselves. Not many understand how their lives have turned upside down



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected human behaviour throughout the world, causing new, either by choice or compulsion, created by lockdowns. Moods marked by irritation and anger intensify old animosities and create new ones. An example is the resurgence of hatred towards stray dogs, who have been an integral part of India's urban landscape since the time of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, if not earlier.

Directly or indirectly, animals and creatures that live in water or the sky feature prominently in the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the narratives of the *Vedas*, *Brahma Sutra*, the *Puranas* and the epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Examples are many, but two well-known ones merit a mention. In *Mahabharata's* *Mahaprashastika Parva* (The Chapter of the Great Departure), a small brown dog began to follow the five Pandavas and Draupadi as they began their final journey out of this world. One by one, Draupadi and four Pandavas fell dead as they climbed Mount Meru. Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava, and the dog marched on. The king of the gods, appeared in his flying chariot and said that he had come to take Yudhishthira to heaven in his mortal body. Assured that Draupadi and his four brothers were already there and well, he asked whether the dog could come with him. On being told that heaven had no place for a dog, he refused to go without the latter. It was then that the dog appeared in his true self as Dharma, the God of Virtue, and said this was Yudhishthira's final test. He would not have been able to enter heaven alive if he had agreed to abandon the dog.

This anecdote is widely known and cited. Another incident is found in the Bengali translation of the *Saptakanda Ramayana* (The *Ramayana* in Seven Parts) by Krittibhava Ojha. It happened when Ram, after defeating Ravana and sending Sita to save Valmiki's hermitage, was holding court in Ayodhya with Lakshman guarding the entrance. A white dog with red eyes, lame in one leg and limping, with thick patches of congealed



blood on his head, indicating that it has hit with a stick, came and touched Lakshman's feet. Asked why he had come, he said he would relate the cause of his sorrow to Ram if the latter granted him an audience.

Told of the dog's request by Lakshman, Ram asked for the dog to be brought before him forthwith. Arriving in Ram's presence, he began to sing the former's praise with folded hands and head bowed. Asked about the reason for his coming, he said, "A *sanyasi* (a mendicant who has renounced the world) has hit me for no fault of mine. Distressed and hurt after being hit, I have come to your court after starving for three days. The court should please ask the *sanyasi* what was my fault that he should have hit me with a stick?" Ram said that the *sanyasi* should be brought immediately before him so that the court could judge. How could a *sanyasi* be cruel to an animal? (All quotations are from *Saptakanda Ramayana* translated from Bengali to English by this author).

The dog, who accompanied Ram's messenger, identified the *sanyasi* as he was brought before Ram, who asked, "Why have you abandoned your *dharma* and are cruel to animals? One who perpetrates *adharma* has to live in hell. What kind of renunciation is yours when your body is so full of anger? Castigation of others and malevolence towards others are grave sins. A terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanyasi*. A sage who has

given up greed, illusion and desire, is respected in this world. And, though a *sanyasi*, you suddenly burst into anger! What was the fault of the dog that you hit him with a stick?"

The ascetic replied, "I went to the town for alms after reciting prayers on the banks of the Ganga during the whole day. Begging for alms, the whole body burning with hunger, I found the dog lying in front occupying the whole road. I loudly asked him to give way but he pretended not to hear. He was asleep with one eye closed and looked at me with the other. I became angry and hit him on the head with a stick. Now that I have said all this before the court, you decide what punishment to give me."

On being asked by Ram about the punishment, the courtiers said that the *sanyasi* should be buried from bathing in the Ganges. At this, the dog said that he should not be punished but made the ruler of the kingdom of Kalinjar. The courtiers laughed as Ram made the *sanyasi* the king of Kalinjar. Climbing onto the back of an elephant, his splendour enhanced by the royal sceptre, the *sanyasi* began travelling happily towards Kalinjar as people laughed at his attire — a loin-cloth — with the royal umbrella over his head.

Asked by the courtiers as to why was the kingdom given to the *sanyasi* when the idea was to punish him, Ram directed them to the dog, who said, "Under a curse by Lord Shiva, death does not alter the king's destiny to be

reborn as a dog...I was the king in the previous birth and now I have been reborn as a dog and suffered much. But having seen you, I will now escape from my torment." While everybody said that the *sanyasi's* worldly possessions have now increased, the dog said, "Have no doubt, whoever becomes the king of Kalinjar becomes a dog in his next birth." He then did *namaskar* to Ram and walked slowly to Varanasi where he fasted to death and attained heaven because he had seen Ram.

Ram's statement that a "terrible hell is the punishment for a cruel and malevolent *sanyasi*" has an echo in a passage in Skanda V, chapter 26 of *Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God*. It reads, "God has given different forms of livelihood to creatures. Some of these may go against the interests of man. But man should not retaliate against these creatures for two reasons. They are not endowed with the capacity to know that they are doing injury to man; and next, man knows that they will be injured if he retaliates. A person who injures lower creatures for selfish purposes goes to a purgatory called *Andhakupa* and there he will have to live in a low type of body, attacked by the creatures he had injured. In darkness, without sleep, and restless, he will have to drag on a wretched existence." (Translated by Swami Tapasyananda).

The passage quoted from *The Srimad Bhagavata: The Holy Book of God* applies especially to those who inveigh ceaselessly

about the "menace" posed by stray dogs. They can neither see the role the latter play as sentinels, whose barking alerts people against the arrival of thieves, robbers and terrorists/insurgents. Precisely for this reason, terrorists in some areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Maoists in parts of central India have asked villagers to kill all dogs in their areas.

In the present situation, how many of India's stray dog haters have tried to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has turned the lives of these canines completely upside down? It has been said often enough to become common place knowledge that the closure of hotels, *dhabas* and restaurants have deprived vast numbers of them of their food. It is not just the left-overs thrown into garbage bins that they miss. Many of them, who had been fed regularly by the staff and owners of these eating places, have now to fend for themselves — something to which they have grown unused.

Finally, how many haters of stray dogs have any idea of the love and loyalty that most dogs unconditionally lavish on people? Not surprisingly, Konrad Lorenz writes in *Man Meets Dog*, "The whole charm of the dog lies in the depth of friendship and the strength of spiritual ties with which he has tied himself to man." Author of the landmark book *On Aggression* and perhaps the best-known authority on animal behaviour, he should know.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, *The Pioneer*, and author)

## SOUNDBITE

I would have wanted more opportunities to play Test cricket. In those days, it was difficult to get a spot among star players like Sachin and Rahul who started opening.

**Former cricketer**  
—Yuvraj Singh

From what I can tell you is that the equation of the industry has not changed. It's an equal playing field. You've to have a huge amount of luck and then things will fall in place.

**Actor**  
—Chunky Panday

What China did is a terrible thing. Whether it was incompetence or on purpose, it was a terrible thing that they did... not only to the US, but to the world.

**US President**  
—Donald Trump

PM Modi congratulated 130 crore Indians during the *bhoos m puja* but India's population is over 138 crore. The omission of 8 crore people is wrong after CAA/NRC.

**Congress leader**  
—Shashi Tharoor

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

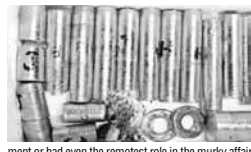
### Stand firm

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Now Pak in map war" (August 6). Close on the heels of Nepal's issuance of a map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura under its territory, Pakistan has released a territorial map of its own, which includes the former princely State of Junagadh (Gujarat) and Kashmir. This prompted a quick response from India's Ministry of External Affairs, which termed it an "exercise in political absurdity."

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that the map represented the aspirations of the whole nation and all its political parties. It is likely that Pakistan has China's blessings in producing the map given similar border claims by Nepal recently. Pakistan has expressed its frustration through a series of steps that coincided with the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370. It had announced that August 5 would be observed as "day of exploitation" even as the Khan Government again failed to persuade the UN Security Council to come up

### Gold smuggling gets murkier

It is common knowledge that gold is smuggled into the country by land, sea and air. The Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized 4,000 kilograms of gold worth ₹1,300 crore that was illegally brought into Gujarat. In February, DRI officials found about 15 kg of gold valued at over ₹6 crore on the sea bed at Mandapam off the Tamil Nadu coast. There are unspoken such instances. More recently, an influential gang smuggled nearly 230 kg of gold into Kerala, tucked stealthily in the diplomatic parcel bags couriered from Dubai to the Consulate General of the UAE in Thiruvananthapuram. On July 5, Customs officials intercepted the passage of a diplomatic bag, stated to be the 21st in line, which led to the seizure of 30 kg gold. The probe was assigned to the NIA as suspicion of illegal money being used for nefarious activities gained strength. However, the Opposition chose to focus on the association of M Sivasankar (IAS), the Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Kerala, with the accused, Swapna Suresh, and underplayed the issue through the diplomatic channel. In fact, it chose to hamper the Chief Minister. Even after days of interrogation by both the Customs officials and the NIA, it remains unclear if the officer was a victim of misjudgment or had even the remotest role in the murky affair.



ment or had even the remotest role in the murky affair.

And the role of the consulate in the gold smuggling, particularly the attaché, is still shrouded in mystery. An argument doing the rounds is that the attaché is not bound to reveal his travel itinerary to the Government, he being a diplomat. The question here is: Can a diplomat aid terrorism and still leave the country quietly under the cover of diplomatic immunity from prosecution? Politically, the Opposition efforts to besmirch Vijayan's reputation have not registered much success. Meanwhile, the sleuths are preparing to travel abroad for investigations.

**Haridasan Rajan**  
Kozhikode

### Tough questions

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "After Ayodhya" (August 6). The pomp and show displayed at a simple event such as the *bhoos*

*m puja* at Ayodhya was avoidable. The event has raised several questions. Was it correct for the PM to lay the foundation of the temple, one which remained embroiled in a long history of disputes? In a secular democracy, the PM is not expected to represent any particular religion or organisation. For a head of the state, religious affiliations should remain confined within the four walls of his home.

**Sritama**  
Via email

### Crisis within crisis

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Monumental apathy" (August 7). The massive explosion in Beirut, Lebanon could not have come at a worse time for Lebanon when the country has been battling one crisis after another. Nations across the world as well as international institutions must offer help to Lebanon so that it can overcome the catastrophe.

**Prathna**  
Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## FIRST COLUMN

## Transparency is long overdue

The Centre has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the online audit of Panchayati Raj Institutions



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

**T**ransparency and accountability in the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been hanging fire for long. After much reflection, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has launched an AuditOnline application for scrutinising the accounts of over 2.50 lakh gram panchayats (GPs). To begin with, the accounts of at least 20 per cent or 50,000 GPs would be audited online for 2019-20. This was long overdue as the GPs have been endowed with substantial powers, authority and responsibilities with the enactment of the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act. Following the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission (FC), ₹2,00,292 crore was transferred to the PRIs during 2015-16 to 2019-20. The 14th FC, and many others before it, had underlined the need for auditing panchayat accounts as the wisdom, faithfulness and propriety of expenditure were a matter of nagging concern. Guidelines were issued by the Finance Ministry in 2015 to the effect that the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) would examine the release and transfer of the grants-in-aid and expenditure in Panchayats and municipalities.

The 15th FC, while recommending allocation of ₹60,750 crore for 2020-21 to the three tiers of the PRIs, comprising the district panchayats, block panchayats and GPs, laid emphasis on ensuring timely availability of audited accounts online so as to strengthen their financial management. Hence, AuditOnline facilitates online and offline checking of accounts of the PRIs with a view to improving transparency and accountability in the utilisation of public money. The accounts of 20 per cent GPs would be audited on a pilot basis and scaled up to 100 per cent in the financial year 2021-22. Owing to the online digital payment mechanism, now integrated with eGramSwara, the GPs were able to make online payments out of the 14th FC grants. In fact, 1.52 lakh GPs were on the platform and 1.04 lakh GPs made online payments during 2019-20.

Notably, AuditOnline will ease up access to records which can be monitored at the district, State and Union level. It can enable uploading of photos of the work done and geo-tagging of projects to facilitate physical inspection and remote verification of the assets. This will help reduce costs, ensure quicker reviews and sound documentation and enhance environmental sustainability. The timely availability of records was a major issue in the offline system but in the online audit system, the auditors will be able to see all documents related to work approval and payments.

AuditOnline also facilitates online and offline scrutiny of accounts and maintains the past records of the auditee. Plus, the information would be available in public domain. Fully configurable, it is capable of depicting any type of workflow and mapping seamlessly the auditor/auditee engagement and interaction and audit observation tags. Further, its Dynamic Form Designer allows drawing of the forms for case record and fact sheet easily and generation and download of various graphical reports for analysis and monitoring, based on customisable report templates. Another and yet more significant advantage is the fact that the monitoring authorities would get notified instantaneously via e-mail/SMS/System-based alerts at various trigger points, enabling concurrent analysis, mid-course correction and better monitoring. A greater responsibility has been given to the State Accountant General (AG) under AuditOnline rules. The AG, representative of the CAG, shall identify the District Local Fund Auditor (DLFO) for each area. The entire audit process — starting with the identification of the DLFO, audit planning, recording of entry and exit meetings by the auditor, concurrence and approval of the meetings, communication of the draft audit to the auditee, generation of audit report, review of the response and action taken there on, by the auditee with clear timelines — are all unambiguously outlined. The audit report shall be provided to the GP by December 31 every year for consideration and corrective action.

Despite numerous accruable benefits, there are apparent hurdles and technical glitches. How will the online audit take off if the books of accounts are not complete, leaving aside the issue of high-speed internet and uninterrupted connectivity? It's only when the money is spent, brought on account and the accounts closed, a prerequisite for any audit, that the online audit can be undertaken. However, the Union Government has rolled out a robust and much-desired architecture for the audit of PRIs. In fact, 11 States (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Telangana, Tripura, and Uttarakhand) have already provided their configuration details and others will follow suit. Extensive online training and hands-on sessions are being carried out with the States. With the successful operation of AuditOnline, hopefully, the image of PRIs will improve with the expanded reach of accountability, encompassing all the three tiers of India's multi-layered and now expanding digital democracy.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary Lok Sabha and an author)

MOBILE APPLICATIONS DEVELOPED AND OWNED BY COMPANIES IN CHINA CONTINUE TO THREATEN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND ECONOMY.

—US PRESIDENT  
DONALD TRUMP

## POINT COUNTERPOINT



CHINA URGES THE US TO CORRECT ITS WRONGDOINGS, STOP POLITICISING ECONOMIC ISSUES AND CRACKING DOWN ON RELATED FIRMS.

—CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON  
WANG WENBIN

# Embrace the circular economy

As nations move towards a post-pandemic fiscal recovery, they must adopt strategies for long-term sustainable development and create resilient economies

SHILPI KAPUR  
BAKSHIPRAHLAD  
TEWARI

**T**he pandemic and the response to it by various governments around the world have posed unprecedented challenges, the effect of which would be felt for decades to come. People and economies are suffering not only due to the huge loss of lives but also from the slowdown of economic activities during the lockdown. According to the Union Minister of Road Transport Nitin Gadkari, the contagion is expected to cause a loss of over ₹10 lakh crore to India's economy. The World Bank, too, estimates that 12 million people in India could be pushed into poverty. While initially, the most visible impact of the crisis was on the healthcare sector due to shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, critical medical supplies and healthcare professionals trained in the handling of a contagion, its impact is now being felt on the free movement of people, goods and services, too.

A circular economy is based on the principles of reducing our waste and pollution throughout the lifecycle stages, keeping products and materials in use for long and regenerating natural systems. Circular economy-based concepts, such as cascaded reuse of resources to design reusable masks to substitute single-use masks, supported by Government-formulated guidelines and awareness about the same, are steps in the right direction.

The global market for refurbished medical devices is also predicted to witness significant growth. Recently, fuel cell manufacturer Bloom Energy started to refurbish ventilators to meet the supply gap in hospitals in the US. Due to COVID-19, organisations preferred work from home (WFH) and educational institutes preferred to learn from home using virtual platforms for meetings and online classes, which led to an unprecedented surge in demand for refurbished laptops. This cascaded reuse of resources would also be critical in filling the void that has emerged in supporting online education to rural and urban poor students. Measures like these will create new market opportunities, increase the use of existing assets and reduce the pressure on the environment created by the demand for virgin raw materials.

Integrating circularity in various governments' recovery agenda and strategies thus assumes importance. In April, the City of Amsterdam launched its Circular 2020-2025 strategy, which outlines the actions it would take to cut down the use of new raw materials to half by 2030. The local government also considers this strategy to be the basis for scaling recovery from the effects of COVID-19. Similarly, the European Union (EU) and South Korea have both adopted 'Green Deals' as central pillars to their economic recoveries, both leveraging regenerative models and circular economy principles. The deployment of idle railway coaches by Indian Railways as isolation wards during the surge of Coronavirus infections is adapting the approach to use existing infrastructure to an extent possible. This provides an opportunity for other governments to integrate resilience, low carbon and sustainable growth thinking into their recoveries by avoiding short-term emission-intensive projects.

Rebuilding the monthly and global supply chain systems by adopting a circular economy as a mode of production can help economies withstand supply disruptions like those experienced in the current pandemic. This was particularly visible in the case of stressed food production and distribution, which was experienced during the hastily-implemented lockdowns. By creating new and shorter supply chain connections between producers and con-

“THE TIME IS RIFE FOR US TO RETHINK OUR CONSUMPTION PATTERNS, TO BUILD IN RESILIENCE, CIRCULARITY AND AN EFFICIENT RURAL-URBAN CONNECTION TO REDUCE THE VULNERABILITY OF OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEMS AND MOVE TOWARDS AN ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT



sumers, we can ensure a continuous supply of essential goods in vital sectors and help improve resilience through stock availability and competitiveness without giving up the commitment to achieving the UN-set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In order to support the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* Abhiyan, newer ecosystems need to be envisaged that are based on local, shorter and more distributed supply chains via localised material sourcing. At the start of the pandemic in India, the availability of PPEs was critically low, owing to non-availability of local manufacturers, long gestation period to import their machines and the high cost. In line with the spirit of 'Vocal for Local' and with various Government initiatives, India is today the second-largest manufacturer of PPE body overalls within a short span of four months. There is also a need to engage in collaborative consumption to share resources by replacing traditional ownership of products with lending, borrowing and the availability of repair services to facilitate reuse. This would help reduce panic buying. For instance, the assurance of the Delhi Government to provide 'Pulse Oximeters' for monitoring oxygen levels of patients undergoing home isolation is a positive step in this direction. Acceptance of such 'pay for services' rather than 'owning facility options' would gain momentum if hygiene is ensured. Local waste sites can be turned into resource centres that undertake recovery and recycling of plastics.

Circular innovations can address manufacturing and supply chain shortages with the healthcare sector as a case in point. Circular knitted fabric (washable and reusable) can be used to produce non-medical protective face masks. The need for investment in technology for designing responsible packaging solutions that maintain food safety and quality standards and prevent contamination can enhance the sustainability of the home delivery ser-

vices that people are increasingly relying upon. Such solutions could also help continue efforts to reduce the usage of plastics and styrofoam. Several initiatives by various Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies and collaborations involving various stakeholders have been done across the globe to minimise single-use plastics.

In addition, enhancing material productivity also plays a significant role in addressing the diminishing stock competitiveness of industries (such as the Indian automobile sector in comparison to China, Singapore, Indonesia, and Bangladesh) due to high material cost. The circular economy emphasises reuse, and through this has the potential to generate not only environmental benefits but cost benefits, too, and create new revenue opportunities. For example, the focus on manufacturing durable goods would help them to generate income from rentals, repairs and refurbishment while reducing the environmental footprint.

In the COVID-19 crisis, digital solutions have promoted virtual workplaces, a mobile Government and a multitude of platforms to monitor and trace infections. Digitalisation has not only been limited to medical solutions or WFH set-ups but has been an instrument in supporting online education modes, too. Digital technology can play a role in creating city and village systems that are regenerative and restorative by offering dematerialisation opportunities, increasing our knowledge and understanding of data on the lifecycle of materials, people and external conditions, allowing for more informed decisions based on accurate data. This would help close the loop of material cycles and contribute to keeping products/materials in use for a longer period of time.

For example, digital technology can help aggregate local marketplaces dealing in secondary and alternative materials and formalise the informal sector waste-pick-

ers. Real-time tracking technologies provide information on where a product ends up and how it will be reused or recycled.

However, despite the many opportunities that circular thinking presents, ongoing efforts in this direction have been hit due to the pandemic. For example, in the waste management sector where significant work was done to manage plastic waste, many efforts have been halted during the lockdown, particularly in the private recycling space.

Recycling plants are mostly shut or are operating at limited capacity with a lot of the informal sector workers, who played the role of aggregators (such as the junk collectors) leaving urban centres for their native places. Procurement of recyclable waste has also become a challenge. Among plastics, virgin plastics may have been even cheaper than secondary raw material plastic due to falling prices of hydrocarbon fuels resulting from the current low demand. This will also affect the economic viability of many plastic recyclers. Efforts would be required to stimulate the demand for recycled materials and close the price gap between virgin and recycled plastics.

As countries step towards economic recovery after COVID-19, they should undertake circular economy strategies for long-term sustainable development and for creating resilient economies. The BRICS nations recently acknowledged the heightening of social vulnerabilities and job losses due to the pandemic and have emphasised on the need for improving the environment and promoting the circular economy in national plans as steps towards recovery. The time is ripe for us to rethink our consumption patterns, to build in resilience, circularity and an efficient rural-urban connection to reduce the vulnerability of our economic and social systems and move towards an *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.

(Bakshi is Senior Fellow and Tewari is Fellow and Area Convener, TERI)

# Maintain a healthy digital diet

During this period of social distancing, we should use technology to increase our independence and harness our inner potential



PRAKRITI PODDAR

**T**he Coronavirus pandemic has made social distancing the new normal and the majority of us are becoming increasingly dependent on digital technology. Pushed into an uncertain future, we are spending more time to digitally connect with people, work, shop, keep ourselves informed and even entertained.

While a digitally-mediated daily life can keep us safe from the risk of infection, too much exposure to it can harm our mental health. There has been a lot of awareness raised about the impact of exposing oneself to negative influences on social media and the news. The more information we receive

the more insufferable the pandemic becomes. We have seen people feel hopeless and helpless as a result of all the information they absorb and unfortunately, sink into deeper mental health issues.

Fake news and conspiracy theories can induce fear and lead us to either fight, freeze or fold up. If you are one of the fighters, the information on digital feeds will help you take action in serving others, hence, limiting your online time.

You may also minimise the understanding of the situation and label all those people, who err at the side of precaution, as hysterical and not abide by the safety rules. Thus, putting yourself and others in danger. If you freeze, then you will lock yourself down and if you fold, you will need support to uplift your mental health.

At all costs, people must keep their digital activity healthy during the outbreak. Let us take a look at three evidence-based tips for a healthy digital diet during the outbreak.

**Take control:** It is natural to feel

powerless and scared in the face of a pandemic but people can use digital technology to regain control and give themselves a degree of autonomy over their life.

This is critical as having control promotes emotional well-being. So, people must think about ways in which they can use digital technology to help them do it. It can be something as simple as using the technology at their disposal to make plans, manage their schedule, organise activities with others and even do online shopping at websites where they get to exert greater choice.

The key is to use digital technology actively instead of letting themselves get passively guided by algorithms. People must think of digital technology as a tool that allows them to extend their autonomy and makes it possible for them to develop strategies to cope better. For instance, people can consider limiting passive screen time and passive browsing viewing with more interactive screen time — playing educational games, making

YouTube videos, coding a website — where they are in control.

**Nurture relationships:** While social distancing is good for our physical health, isolation is not good for our mental health. So, we must use this opportunity to digitally connect with old friends, family members or acquaintances that we somehow lost touch with. We must also nurture our existing relationships by scheduling regular chats online and using digital devices to spread positive news, express gratitude to the people serving us and helping others.

For instance, people can order food and grocery online for friends, family members and neighbours who are not digitally-enabled. Helping others can give life more purpose and allay anxieties. Organise group chats and regular virtual meet-ups — seeing a familiar face, even on a phone screen, can be reassuring. People must use this time as an opportunity to rebuild affiliations with those who matter.

**Be smarter:** Our well-being is also influenced by our competence, ability

to rise above challenges, take smart decisions and experience a sense of accomplishment and success.

Hence, people must use this opportunity to take online courses, learn new skills and do things that engage them. People must consider using digital technology to look after their body and mind during this period of confinement. They may not be able to hit the gym but they can use digital reminders and prompts to move and exercise more — even if they are confined inside a restricted environment. People can consider downloading a nutrition app, exercise, mindfulness or meditation app. They must think about how they can use digital technology to improve exercise, sleep and diet regimes.

People can use digital technology to be smarter about their information diet, too. Use fact-checking services to counter conspiracy theories, unfounded rumours, urban legends and misinformation. Reduce information intake to one or two trustworthy sources. Most importantly, get infor-

mation from reputable sources instead of regurgitating what they read on social media.

**The way towards digital well-being:** Our increased digital dependency can be of benefit to our well-being instead of a hazard. We need to use our screens positively and promote greater autonomy, relatedness and competence. To be balanced, people must schedule their downtime, off-screen time, exercise time and fun time. This will form the core of their emotional well-being and hold them in good stead.

People must remember not to reach for their phone as soon as they wake up. They must give themselves the time to get ready, eat and then get to their device. We should use technology to increase our independence, further our well-being and harness our inner potential. Doing so will not only help us get through the pandemic but will also ensure that we emerge stronger from it.

(The writer is Director of a Wellness company and heads a foundation)



## FOREIGN EYE



## YETI A BOON TO TOURISM

Taunting anthropologists and researchers, the elusive Yeti continues to confound science. Ecologist Daniel Taylor found a trail of footprints during a 1983 search of the Barun but eventually concluded that it was more likely to be a bear. Yetis still court controversy as we saw recently with the aborted Visit Nepal Year 2020 sculptures, but they also boost tourism. (Nepali Times editorial)



## LANKA PARLIAMENTARY POLLS

# Rajapaksa registers landslide victory

Gets two-thirds majority

**Colombo:** Mahinda Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's Prime Minister for the fourth time on Sunday after his party registered a landslide victory in the general election, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to amend the Constitution to further consolidate the powerful Rajapaksa family's grip on power.

The Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP), led by prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, won in 145 constituencies, bagging a total of 150 seats with its allies, a two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament, according to the results announced by the election commission on Friday.

It won all but four of the 22 electoral districts on offer, polling 6.8 million votes (59.9 per cent).

The 74-year-old Prime Minister Mahinda thanked the Sri Lankan people for putting their faith in the SLPP and said that the country will not stand disappointed during its tenure.

"Heartfelt gratitude to all



Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa greets Buddhist monks following his election victory in the general election at his residence in Tangalle Sri Lanka on Friday

Sri Lankans for placing their trust in President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, myself and the Podajana Party and voting for the 'Saubhagya Dakkama' election manifesto in overwhelming numbers. We will ensure Sri Lanka will not stand disappointed during our tenure," he said.

Mahinda will be sworn in as the new prime minister for the fourth time on Sunday at a ceremony at the historic Buddhist temple of Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb, according to an official statement.

He created a record in polling over 500,000 individual

preference votes, the highest ever recorded by a candidate in the history of elections.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first world leaders to congratulate Mahinda on the outcome of the elections and said the two sides will work together to further advance all areas of bilateral

cooperation and to take their special ties to ever newer heights.

"Thank you PM @narendramodi for your congratulatory phone call. With the strong support of the people of #SriLanka, I look forward to working with you closely to further enhance the long-standing cooperation between our two countries. Sri Lanka & India are friends & relations," Mahinda tweeted.

The Rajapaksa family has dominated Sri Lankan politics for two decades. Mahinda was previously president, from 2005 to 2015. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa had won the November presidential election on the SLPP ticket.

In the parliamentary election, he was seeking 150 seats mandatory to execute constitutional changes, including to repeal the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which had curbed the presidential powers while strengthening the role of Parliament.

Activists, already alarmed by the diminishing space for dissent and criticism in the island nation, fear such a move could lead to authoritarianism. **PTI**

## POWER TUSSELE WITH OLI INTENSIFIES

# Nepal: Prachanda tells party workers to prepare for worst

**Kathmandu:** Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has asked the party workers to prepare for the 'worst' as the ongoing power tussle between him and Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has intensified with no solution in sight.

Oli and Prachanda have held at least ten meetings in recent weeks to sort out the differences between them. But, as the Prime Minister did not accept the condition of a one-man-one-post, the talks failed. Oli has refused to give up his post as prime minister as well as chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

A bitter internal feud has been brewing in the ruling NCP since the last few weeks after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Oli's resignation, saying his anti-India remarks were 'neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate.'

The vote sparked a police crackdown and led to one of Spain's biggest political crises in decades as mass protests roiled the relatively wealthy northeast region of 7.5 million people. Polls and recent elections show thousands of heavily armed men on both sides of the conflict. Besides Taliban fighters, warlords in Kabul

"Our main concern is not about gaining power, what we want is to follow the proper procedure while running the NCP. We are not focusing on gaining any position, but our fight is against the wrong trend developing in the party," Prachanda told a select group of journalists during a special briefing on Wednesday.

He held the press conference along with three senior party leaders Madhav Nepal, Jhalanath Khanal and party spokesperson Narayan Kaji Shrestha, according to Nagarkir daily.

The dissident group accused Oli of trying to damage the image of other senior leaders of the party, the daily reported.

Prachanda and Nepal have claimed that the majority of the powerful Central Working Committee members have supported them while raising voice against Oli.

Prachanda also alleged that while the Standing Committee meeting was in progress, at the initiative of Prime Minister

Oli a new party was registered under the name of a lesser-known person at the Election Commission with the intention to split the ruling party. If confirmed, the PM (Oli) does not follow the proper procedure of the party then how can the unity of the party remain intact," he wondered.

Prachanda claimed that he and other senior leaders of the party were trying to save the party by creating a favourable situation.

"We are trying for the best outcome but the communists of this country should also be prepared for the worst thing that happens," Prachanda told media persons, indicating a possible split in the ruling party.

"I had agreed to make Oli Prime Minister for a full 5 years term and enjoy the executive chairman's position in the party beyond that, but he did not want within the party," said Prachanda.

Oli has dragged the party towards anarchism by calling separate gatherings," Prachanda said. **PTI**

## TikTok threatens legal action in US over Trump order



**Washington:** Video-sharing app TikTok on Friday threatened to take legal action in US courts against Donald Trump's executive order banning anyone under US jurisdiction from doing business with the company's parent ByteDance.

"We will pursue all remedies available to us in order to ensure that the rule of law is not discarded and that our company and our users are treated fairly — if not by the Administration, then by the US courts," TikTok said in a statement. **AFP**

## Negligence or missile may have caused blast: Lebanon President

**Beirut:** Lebanese President Michel Aoun says there are two possibilities behind Tuesday's blast — either negligence or 'external intervention' by a missile or a bomb.

Aoun said on Friday that he asked France for satellite images to see if there were warplanes or missiles in the air at the time of the blast.

The blast is believed to have been caused when a fire touched off 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored at the port since it was taken from an impounded ship in 2013. The cause of the initial fire is not known.

Aoun told journalists that he received information on July 20 about the stored material and "immediately ordered"

military and security officials to do what was necessary. He did not elaborate. He said several governments in charge since 2013 received warnings about the material.

He said the investigation is concentrating on 20 persons. He rejected an international investigation into the blast, saying that it will make us "lose the truth."

**AP**

## Leader denies Hezbollah role in Beirut blast

**Beirut:** Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah says the explosion at the Beirut port reveals nepotism and corruption that can't be ignored in Lebanon and that those responsible should be brought to justice.

Nasrallah denied in a speech on Friday that his group was responsible for Tuesday's blast or exercised any power at the port.

He was responding to claims that his group may have stored explosives at the port. Still, Nasrallah didn't rule out a missile attack or an act of sabotage. He said that storing explosive materials like ammonium nitrate at the port for so long means "it is partially an issue of negligence, corruption, nepotism" that should not be ignored. **AP**

## China sentences 4th Canadian to death on drug charges

**Beijing:** China has sentenced a fourth Canadian citizen to death on drug charges in less than two years following a sharp downturn in ties over the arrest of an executive of Chinese tech giant Huawei.

Ye Jianhui was sentenced on Friday by the Foshan Municipal Intermediate Court in the southern province of Guangdong.

Ye had been found guilty of

manufacturing and transporting drugs, the court said in a brief statement. Another suspect in the case was also given the death penalty and four others sentenced to between seven years and life in prison. Death sentences are automatically referred to China's highest court for review. Ties between Canada and China have nosedived over Canada's

late 2019 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, a company executive and the daughter of Huawei's founder, at Vancouver's airport in at the request of the US, which wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran. Her arrest enraged Beijing, which calls it a political move aimed at constraining China's power as a global technology power. **AP**

## Malaysia's Mahathir forms new party in fightback attempt

**Putrajaya (Malaysia):** Two-time former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced on Friday that he is forming a new ethnic Malay party, Muhyiddin Yassin, which he was sacked from his previous party during a political struggle with his successor.

Mahathir, 95, quit as prime minister in protest in late February after fellow party member Muhyiddin Yassin withdrew their Bersatu party from the ruling coalition, triggering its collapse less than two years after a historic victory in 2018 national polls.

Muhyiddin was sworn in as

new prime minister in March with a new government supported by ex-Prime Minister Najib Razak's corruption-tainted party that was ousted in 2018.

Mahathir, who was sacked from Bersatu after his son and three other senior members, said Muhyiddin had hijacked the party and helped revive what he called a kleptocratic government.

He accused Muhyiddin of using money to buy support in Bersatu, causing it to stray from its goal of fighting graft. Mahathir said he believes many grassroots members are unhappy and still support him. **AP**

## 'Malaysia wants to send Zakir Naik to other place, but not many countries willing to accept him'

**Kuala Lumpur:** Malaysia was looking for a country except India to send Zakir Naik, but not many countries are willing to accept the controversial preacher, former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has said.

Naik, a 54-year-old radical Islamic preacher, wanted by the Indian authorities for alleged money laundering and inciting extremism through hate speeches, left India in 2016 and subsequently moved to the largely Muslim Malaysia, where he was granted permanent residency when Mahathir

was the prime minister.

Claiming that the fugitive Islamic preacher "would not be safe from the Indian public," the 95-year-old politician, who is eyeing a comeback, said he would like to send Naik to some country "where we feel he will be safe."

"For the time being he (Naik) can stay here but we would like to send him to some other country where he would be safe. Unfortunately, not many countries are willing to accept him," Mahathir was quoted as saying by the WION news channel.

When asked whether he would extradite Naik if he became the Prime Minister of Malaysia again, Mahathir said, "Well, we would like to send him to some country where we feel he will be safe."

He once again refused to send Naik to India, saying "at this moment we feel that he would not be safe from the Indian public."

Naik has been banned from any public activities in the multi-ethnic country after his controversial remarks against Malaysian Hindus and Chinese last year. **PTI**

## Portland protesters cause mayhem again, cop hurt

**Portland:** Portland's nightly protests turned violent again even after the city's mayor pleaded for demonstrators to stay off the streets and a police officer hit by a rock early Friday suffered what was described as a serious injury. The protesters who came out Thursday night clashed with officers near a police precinct station and also used metal bars to disable police vehicles, police said in a statement. The nightly clashes this week have ratcheted up tensions in the city after an agreement was reached last week between state and federal officials for federal agents to pull back from their defence. **AP**

## US RECORDS OVER 2,000 VIRUS DEATHS IN A DAY AFTER THREE MONTHS

**Washington:** The United States has recorded more than 2,000 coronavirus deaths in 24 hours, the highest number of daily fatalities in three months, Johns Hopkins University's real-time tally showed on Thursday.

The country, which has seen a major resurgence in coronavirus since the end of June, added 2,060 deaths in one day as well as more than 58,000 new cases, the Baltimore-based university showed at 8:30 pm (0030 GMT Friday). **AFP**

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**TYPE-1 2BHK 512.50 Sq.ft**

9428	10347	9889	10430	9014	10373	9994	9991	9342	10302	9120	10425
10215	9264	10428	10427	4356	9987	9934	10402	9758	10223	9976	10422
9577	9905	9307	10095	9431	9021	9288	9887	9850	9539	9925	9430
10348	10401	10094	9249	10420	10391	9726	10394	9996	10386	10429	10310
9507	11022	9229	9643	9019	9651	9568	9747	9261	10000	10052	9788

**TYPE-3 2BHK 488.30 Sq.ft**

9039	9845	9600	4921	9955	10080	9633	9537	9147	10212	10125	9757	10305
9341	10194	10074	9631	9824	9725	9995	3592	9834	10309	10426	9900	2439
9870	9839	10168	9310	10167	10077	9660	9665	10311	10403	10308	9838	9598
10342	10083	9871	9682	9986	10351	9997	10145	4219	10164	9321	9350	10146
9594	9860	10330	9835	9028	9806	3077	10328	10288	10289	10149	10419	9751
9011	9810	4355	10389	9683	3585	9408	9005	9728	9442	9856	4439	9409
9444	10237	10005	9841	9043	9484	9263	9849	9494	4250	10331	9632	10382
10174	9804	4925	9595	10173	9489	10072	10366	9635	9732	10400	4607	10160
10436	2438	9859	10340	9684	9567	9731	10192	10051	9803	9209	10073	9485
9579	4924	4684	9842	4682	9589	10205	3076	10417	9088	9036	9357	10218
9554	10327	9550	9086	9813	9301	9571	10216	9861	9490	10160	9789	10062
9978	10181	9105	9756	4116	9584	10124	9441	9616	10370	9676	9214	9366
10079	9471	9447	9736	9213	9455	9596	11001	10138	9886	10203	9332	3696
2017	10082	9483	9423	10304	10211	10236	10172	9781	9909	9569	9089	4389
10317	9802	9800	10219	10122	9197	2552	10396	3937	10202	9491	10115	9669
10334	4115	9440	10071	9133	10275	10199	9100	9959	9487	10176	9345	8988
9582	10117	10229	9136	9320	10185	10078	9465	9586	9211	10375	10228	9426
10382	10116	10193	9072	9482	9780	10096	10091	3990	9799	9030	9891	9615
10423	10390	9637	10361	9787	10132	10189	4282	9892	10121	10050	10054	9844
10055	10333	10131	10158	10263	9330	9798	9134	9042	9082	9585	9622	9769
10301	10066	9958	10179	9829	9389	10344	10315	10084				

**TYPE-3 2BHK 488.30 Sq.ft**

9498	9973	10182	4653	9919	3470	9435	3547	10320	9660
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**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Name: Hemchand, So: Sh. Lal Chand, R/o: H.No. T-452A, Street No. 21, Bajpet Nagar, Delhi** has been missing since **08.11.2019** at 11:00 am, from the area of P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi. In this regard a case **DD NO. 50A** dated **29.07.2020** has been registered at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing person are as under:  
**Age:** 37 years, **Height:** 5'6", **Complexion:** Shallow Face: Round, **Built:** Strong, **Wearing:** Blue colour shirt and black colour pant. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person kindly inform to the following:  
**Website:** <http://cbi.nic.in>  
**E-mail id:** [cbi@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cbi@cbi.gov.in)  
**Ph:** 011-24368638, 24368641  
**Fax No:** 011-24368639  
**DP/251/CD/2020**

**SHO**  
**P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi**  
**Tel.No. 011-25872637, 8750870434**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one girl **Name: Suneha D/o Late Nandu R/Jhugi No. 320, J.J. Camp, Ayurvidic Hospital, Haiderpur, Delhi** has been missing since **20.07.2020** at 11:00 am, from the area of P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. In this regard, a case **DD FIR NO. 0478/2020 U/s 363 IPC Dated 28.07.2020** has been registered at P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped girl is as under:  
**Age:** 14 Years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5', **Face:** Round, **Built:** Normal, **Wearing:** Pink colour suit & salwar and black colour chappal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing girl then please inform P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi at following Tel No. / J. e-mail: [cbi@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cbi@cbi.gov.in) and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
**Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641**  
**Fax No: 011-24368639**  
**DP/284/NW/2020**

**Sd/- SHO**  
**P.S. Shalimar Bagh, Delhi**  
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**NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation-47 read with Regulation 29 & Regulation 33 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that a Meeting of the Board of Directors of Superior Finlease Limited ("the Company") will be held on Thursday, August 13, 2020 at the Registered Office of the Company at 1:00 PM, in order to, consider and approve (i) the financial results of the Company for the quarter ended June 30, 2020, and also on the website of BSE Limited at <http://www.bseindia.com> and Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.mseil.co/> where the shares of the Company are listed.  
For Superior Finlease Limited  
Sd/-  
Disha Rani  
(Company Secretary)

Date: August 06, 2020  
Place: New Delhi.



# Sensex, Nifty end flat on negative global cues

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty ended flat on Friday as negative cues from global markets and spiking COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors on the edge.

After touching a low of 37,787.58 during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex clawed back loss to end up at 15.12 points or 0.04 per cent higher at 38,040.57.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty rose 13.90 points or 0.12 per cent to finish at 11,214.05.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 433.68 points or 1.15 per cent, while the Nifty rose 140.60 points or 1.26 per cent.

Asian Paints was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, upping 14 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Maruti.

On the other hand, Titan, HCL Tech, Infosys, M&M and Sun Pharma were among the laggards, skidding up to 2.65 per cent.

Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported a 94 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 54.64 crore for the June quarter, adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global markets tumbled

after US President Donald Trump signed an order prohibiting American residents from transacting with Chinese apps WeChat and TikTok, ratcheting up US-China tensions.

China has vowed to retaliate against the executive order, which comes into force in 45 days.

According to traders, negative overseas cues and mounting COVID-19 cases in the country kept investors jittery.

Registering over 60,000 cases in 24 hours for the first time, India's COVID-19 tally galloped past 20 lakh on Friday while the number of recoveries surged to 13.78 lakh, according to Union Health Ministry data.

The number of cases around the world linked to the disease has crossed 19 crore.

"The unrelenting pace of virus infections and other uncertainties led to the benchmark indices ending flat today with volatile trades. Global cues were also mostly negative, with a sharp drop in US stocks following US actions on popular Chinese apps, and anticipating retaliatory action from China."

"However on a weekly basis, Indian benchmark indices ended up by around 1 per cent, following gains in the

## Wall Street stalls; S&P 500 dips after 5-day winning streak

AP ■ NEW YORK

Wall Street is stalling on Friday, as a whirlwind of worries about rising US-China tensions and whether Congress can deliver more aid for the economy threaten to halt its big run.

The S&P 500 was edging 0.1% lower in early trading after a five-day winning streak had brought it back within 1.1% of its record for the first time since February. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 73 points, or 0.3%, at 27,317.45, as of 9:30 a.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite pulled 0.1% back from its record.

Markets around the world

got a small boost before trading began on US. Stock markets when a report showed that the US job market strengthened more last month than economists expected. But the bump for U.S. Treasury yields and European stocks proved short-lived.

It's a busy day for markets, with investors also focused on Capitol Hill, where Congress and White House officials have been negotiating on a hoped-for deal on more aid for the economy. A marathon meeting Thursday left both sides still far apart on key issues, and they both said the future of talks is uncertain.

Investors say it's crucial that Washington pump more

money into the economy, which has shown signs of improvements since the spring but is still hobbling amid worries about a resurgence in coronavirus cases.

Even though Friday's jobs report was healthier than the market expected, it also showed that hiring is already slowing following months of acceleration and remains far below where it was before the pandemic.

Trump is considering executive orders to address some of the issues if Congress does not reach a deal on aid, such as evictions and unemployment insurance, but they appear unlikely to have much impact.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in early days.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.86 per cent lower at USD 44.70 per barrel. On the currency front, the rupee ended almost flat at 74.93 against the US dollar.

## Increase in gold loan LTV will heighten credit risks for banks: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The increase in loan-to-value (LTV) ratio for gold loans, or the quantum of borrowing against a given quantity of the precious metal, will heighten credit risks for banks, a ratings agency said on Friday.

The RBI had on Thursday increased the LTV ratio for gold loans by banks to 90 per cent from the earlier 75 per cent, in a bid to make loans available to people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

"An increase in the LTV ratio to 90 per cent increases the credit risk for banks as the collateral available in the form of gold ornaments or jewellery may not be sufficient to fully cover both principal and interest components on these loans," Brickworks Ratings said.

Its Director for Ratings, Vydyanathan Ramaswamy, said, in a "negative carry" for banks as the total exposure will exceed the value of the pledged gold.

"It could adversely impact the recoverability and asset quality of banks in the case of a weakening in the borrower

credit risk profile and/or sharp decline in gold prices, which have seen a strong rally over the last few months," he added.

However, given that the higher LTV is only till March 31 next year, the risk on the portfolio is for a limited period, the agency said in a note.

Also, gold loans are mostly short-term loans of anywhere between 3 to 24 months, it said.

The agency said given that the RBI's announcement on higher LTV gold loans is limited to the banking sector, banks are bound to garner a larger market share vis-a-vis their non-bank peers in loans against the pledge of gold in fiscal 2021.

At present, non-bank financiers and unorganised lenders like local pawn brokers with a wider network enjoy a large market share in loans against gold ornaments and jewellery.

They also charge high rates on these loans, which can range anywhere between 20 per cent to 50 per cent, whereas banks charge much lower interest rates, it said.

## Gold, silver prices continue to climb; touch record levels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices surged for the 16th straight session on Friday and touched an all-time high of ₹576.00 per 10 grams in the national capital, according to HDFC Securities.

Silver too continued its upward movement, with the price touching a record-high of ₹77,840 per kilogram. Silver for the 16th consecutive day jumped by ₹576 compared to the closing level of ₹77,264 per kg on Thursday.

In the previous trade, gold had closed at ₹57,002 per 10 grams. On Friday, the price increased by ₹6 to ₹57,008 per 10 grams. Due to both the metals recorded all-time high prices, HDFC Securities said.

"Spot Gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi continued to scale new highs by gaining ₹6. Gold prices are trading higher for the 16th consecutive day in India," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading marginally lower at USD 2,061 per ounce and USD 28.36 per ounce, respectively.

## Sebi revises eligibility, shareholding limit for clearing corp at IFSC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday amended international financial services centre (IFSC) guidelines pertaining to eligibility criteria and shareholding limit for clearing corporations that wish to operate in such centres.

The decision, aimed at streamlining the operations of IFSC, has been taken after consultation with stakeholders, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

Under the norms, any Indian recognised stock exchange or clearing corporation, or any recognised stock exchange or clearing corporation of a foreign jurisdiction, will form a subsidiary to pro-

vide the services of clearing corporation in IFSC wherein at least 51 per cent stake is held by such exchange or clearing corporation, Sebi said. The guidelines stipulate that the company must be acquired or held by any other person, whether Indian or of foreign jurisdiction.

Besides, such person will not at any time, directly or indirectly, either individually or jointly, hold more than 5 per cent stake in a clearing corporation in IFSC, subject to applicable laws.

Sebi further said any other stock exchange, depository, bank, insurance company or Indian or foreign jurisdiction have been allowed to acquire 15 per cent stake in such clearing corporation operating in an IFSC.

Among others, public financial institutions of Indian jurisdiction, foreign commodity derivatives exchange and bilateral multilateral financial institutions approved by central government "may acquire or hold, either directly or indirectly, either individually or together with persons acting in concert, up to 15 per cent of the paid up equity capital of the clearing corporation with prior approval of the board."

To give effect to this, Sebi has amended IFSC guidelines. Last month, the regulator had revised eligibility criteria for clearing corporations to stock exchanges desirous of operating in IFSC. The country's only IFSC is in GIFT City near Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

## India's power transmission segment may attract ₹1.8 lakh cr investment by FY25: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic power transmission segment is expected to attract investments worth ₹1.8 lakh crore in the next five years, according to a report by rating agency ICRA.

It said evacuation infrastructure for renewable energy (RE) projects will drive investments in the power transmission segment.

"ICRA expects an investment of Rs 1.8 trillion (₹1.8 lakh crore) over the five-year period from FY21 (financial year 2020-21) to FY25 in the power transmission segment at state and utility level, driven by evacuation infrastructure for RE projects," the rating agency said on Friday in the line with

a shift in policy focus from conventional sources (coal and gas) to renewable power sources (wind and solar), the focus of the transmission segment is towards augmenting infrastructure for evacuation of power generated by RE projects.

Sabyasachi Majumdar, group head and senior vice-president (corporate ratings) of ICRA, said the agency has lined up 14 transmission projects under the tariff-based competitive bidding (RBCB) route for evacuating power from 25-gigawatt RE projects.

The Government has also lined up 14 transmission projects in the intra-state segment, providing healthy pipeline for private sector players, he added.

There is likely to be

a slowdown in electricity demand and investments in the sector in 2020-21 amid the Covid-19-induced disruption but recovery is expected from 2022 onwards, he said.

ICRA said the private sector's share is expected to witness a healthy growth over the next four-five years, while Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (PGCIL) and other state transmission utilities are likely to remain major players in the power transmission segment.

On the issues in the segment, the agency said, "The key challenge for the winning bidder under the TBCB route has been delays in execution by because of delays in securing right of way, forest clearances and re-routing requirements in some cases."

## ₹ settles nearly flat at 74.93 against US \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee ended almost flat at 74.93 against the US dollar on Friday due to a caution prevailing in the foreign market in view of mounting coronavirus cases and US-China trade tensions.

Starting off at a tepid note, the rupee fell to a low of 75.04, but recovered slightly thereafter and moved in a narrow band throughout the session.

It finally settled at 74.93, gaining 1 paise over its previous close. On Thursday too, the rupee had closed steady after the Reserve Bank maintained its status quo in its policy rates.

Meanwhile, the US dol-

lar index, which gauges the value of the greenback against a basket of key global currencies, rose 0.32 per cent to 103.08. Analysts said forex market sentiment was mainly guided by growing US-China trade tensions and mounting coronavirus cases in the country.

Rahul Gupta, Head of Research- Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services, said the rupee's recovery was mainly due to US-China trade war and coronavirus concerns have kept USDINR spot above the crucial support of 74.75.

Also, it is respecting the immediate resistance of 75.20, which could lead to further selling of equity segment will push the USDINR spot higher."

## Govt aims to develop 10 Craft and Handloom Villages in India: Irani

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Smriti Irani on Friday said the government is aiming to develop ten Craft and Handloom Villages in the country to attract tourists from across the globe can visit them and learn the rich legacy of Indian weavers and lend support to the Make in India initiative.

Irani shared the Textiles Ministry's vision while addressing a function through video conferencing to mark the National Handloom Day. Almost 95 per cent of the handwoven fabrics used globally are produced in India. The Minister said that the National Handloom Awards, which are presented on the occasion of the Handloom Day, are being deferred upon the request of weavers who wish to celebrate the honour instead of receiving it digitally due to the prevailing circumstances posed by COVID-19. "It is our goal to develop ten Craft and Handloom Villages across the country so that our Handloom products are not limited to clothes or home furnishing alone."

We want that tourists from India and across the world visit these special Craft and Handloom Villages to not only learn about the weavers but also contribute to our pledge of Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant nation)," said the Minister for Textiles and Women and Child Development.

Irani shared that students from the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) are contributing to the upgradation of 9 out of 28 Weavers' Service Centres across the country in terms of design, marketing and research.

These centres are located in Delhi, Srinagar, Jaipur, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Guwahati, Kanchipuram and

Bhubaneswar.

She said it is the government's endeavour to ensure upgradation of all weavers' service centres through NIFT students to strengthen the rich legacy of handloom in India.

Irani said the 'My Handloom' portal launched on the occasion will help in connecting state government undertakings, agencies and cooperative societies with the Centre's schemes for weavers to know about their status and benefits.

Highlighting the importance of the country's handloom, Textiles Secretary Ravi Capoor said 95 per cent of the handwoven fabrics used globally are produced in India. Observing that weavers do not get remunerative prices for their products, he said plans are afoot to ensure they get high returns by eliminating middlemen and linking them directly to the market.

After deducting the marketing fee from the amount received towards the sale of a product, the remaining amount can be transferred to the weaver's bank account through direct benefit transfer, Capoor suggested.

Irani also launched a mobile app and backend website for Handloom Mark Scheme. The minister said the Handloom Mark is being promoted to provide collective identity to the authentic handloom products. Textiles Committee Mumbai has developed the mobile app with a backend web portal to completely digitise the process of registration. The app is in English and 10 Indian languages and will enable the weavers of the country to apply for Handloom Mark registration from the comfort of their homes.

"It helps ascertain the genuineness and originality of the product through unique and dynamic QR code labels affixed on each handloom product."

## RAJ CM TAKES IMPORTANT DECISIONS

### Tax exemption for vehicles deprived of permits during lockdown

**Jaipur:** The State Government has decided to exempt the motor vehicle tax (motor vehicle tax payable for the Omni Bus category of spared transport vehicles sold during the period of nationwide lockdown in the event of COVID-19 epidemic. The CM has taken this sensitive decision after approving the proposal received from Finance Dept and Transport Dept. According to the proposal, in the motor vehicle tax payable for the period of April 1 to June 30, 2020 for Omni Bus category vehicles of 8 and above seating capacity not listed in any permit category due to non-issuance of permits during lockdown in the state. Full exemption will be given. Also, 75 per cent exemption will be given to these vehicles on the tax payable for July 2020. It is known that in the context, such tax exemption was given on 24 June 2020 in the past for permit-free buses.

### CM approves 400 more in new veterinary sub-centres

**588 new posts will be created in subdivision offices**

**Jaipur:** Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved the creation of a total of 400 new posts of 200 livestock assistants and 200 jaladhari in 200 new veterinary sub-centers to be opened in 2020-21. Each veterinary sub-center will get the post of a livestock assistant and a water holder.

Gehlot has also approved an additional budget provision of ₹20.72 crore by creating a total of 588 new posts for strengthening 294 subdivision offices in Agriculture, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry division office will get an information assistant and a junior assistant.

Approval to fill 83 vacant posts. The Chief Minister has approved to fill 83 vacant posts in Agriculture, Veterinary, Jodhpur and its constituent colleges.

These include 65 academic, 15 non-academic and 3 deputation posts.

## Vodafone Idea bounces back; shares close 7 pc higher after initial loss

**New Delhi:** Shares of Vodafone Idea bounced back from early losses to close 7 per cent higher on Friday. On the BSE, the stock closed at ₹166.70, up from ₹155.60, after an initial loss of ₹11.10. The stock had plunged 7.39 per cent to ₹164.31 in early trade. Later, it erased the losses as the trade progressed. It finally closed at ₹166.70, a gain of 7.03 per cent.

On the NSE, it settled the day 6.66 per cent higher at ₹166.70. During the morning trade, it had gained 7.87 per cent to ₹166.70. Value-buying at lower levels may have led to

recovery in the stock. In terms of volume, 1,121.88 lakh shares were traded on BSE and over 68 crore on NSE. The NSE's Vodafone Idea, after market hours on Thursday, reported widening of net loss to ₹2,540 crore in the June quarter after it made additional provisioning to pay statutory duties and said its ability to continue as going concern hinges on the Supreme Court allowing more time to pay dues.

**PREMIUM MERCHANTS LIMITED**

Registered office: Omare Square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre, Jasola, New Delhi-110025  
CIN: L51909DL1985PLC021077 Tel: +91 11 61119658  
Email: premiummerchants123@gmail.com website: www.pmtltd.in

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

NOTICE is hereby given that the 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company will be held on Monday, 31st August, 2020 at the registered office of the Company at Omare Square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre, Jasola, New Delhi-110025 at 3:00 PM to transact the business mentioned in the Notice of Annual General Meeting. The notice of AGM along with Annual Report, Proxy Form and Attendance Slip have been sent in electronic form to those shareholders whose email address are registered with the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent/Depository Participants, unless the Members have requested for hard copy of the same. Physical copy have been dispatched through permitted mode to all other members. The Company has completed all dispatches through e-mail and other permitted modes on Friday 7th August, 2020. Members may note that the Annual Report, AGM Notice letter also indicating the process and manner of e-voting process, Proxy Form and Attendance Slip are available on Company's website [www.pmtltd.in](http://www.pmtltd.in) (due to some technical reasons, the website of the Company is being repaired and the same will get functional shortly) and can also be obtained from registered office of the Company in compliance with provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the Companies (Management and Administration) Amendments Rules, 2015 and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015. The Company is pleased to provide its member the facility to exercise their right to vote by electronic means and business may be transacted through remote e-voting facility provided by National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). The remote e-voting period commences from Thursday 27th August, 2020 at 9:00 A.M. and ends on Sunday, 30th August, 2020 at 5:00 P.M. The remote e-voting shall be disabled thereafter and no e-voting will be allowed thereafter. The Board has appointed Mr. Surinder Kishore Kapahi, Proprietor Kapahi and Associates, Company Secretaries as Scrutinizer for conducting the e-voting process in accordance with the law and in a fair and transparent manner. The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to their share in the paid up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date of 24th August, 2020. Members holding shares either in physical or dematerialized form, on the said cut-off date, are eligible to avail the facility of remote e-voting. Any person, who acquires shares of the Company after dispatch of AGM Notice and holds such shares as of the cut-off date i.e. 24th August, 2020, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at [evoting@nsdl.co.in](mailto:evoting@nsdl.co.in). At the AGM, facility for voting through ballot paper shall be made available to the Members as on the cut-off date i.e. 24th August, 2020, who have not cast their votes by remote e-voting, shall be entitled to exercise their rights to vote at the AGM through ballot paper. The members who have cast their votes through electronic means prior to the AGM may still attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again. The notice of AGM containing, inter-alia, the procedure of e-voting is available on the Company's website [www.pmtltd.in](http://www.pmtltd.in) and on NSDL's website <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> in case of any queries, Members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and e-voting user manual available at the Downloads section of <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com> or contact NSDL at the toll free no: 1800-222-990 or write a mail to [info@nsdl.com](mailto:info@nsdl.com). Notice is also hereby given that that pursuant to section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 10 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015, the Register of Members and Share Transfer books of the Company will remain closed from Tuesday, August 11, 2020 to Friday, August 14, 2020 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of taking record of the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting.

Thanking You  
For Premium Merchants Limited  
Balbir Singh  
Director  
DIN: 00227438

Date: 06.08.2020  
Place: New Delhi

**UJVN LIMITED**  
(An Unlisted Govt. Enterprise)  
"Uttam Janakalyan Vastu Nigam Limited"  
UJVN-2019-2020  
Tel: 011-23953776 Fax: 011-23953776 website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

Tender No.488 Date: 07.08.2020

**TENDER NOTICE**

Office of the Executive Engineer (Maint.), Chhbro Power Station, Dakpatthar (Dehradun), invites sealed tenders for following works:  
Tender No. CH(Maint.): 11/2020-21 Cleaning of pits, clean water tank, and miscellaneous work.  
Tender No. CH(Maint.): 12/2020-21 Annual up-keeping and maint. of Chhbro field hospital

Estimated cost: (1) ₹2,43,590/- GST extra (2) ₹7,96,048/- GST extra  
Date of availability of bid on website: 08.08.2020, 11:00 hrs.  
Last date for submission of tender: 31.08.2020 up to 13:00 hrs.  
For further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvn.com".  
(Executive Engineer, Maint., Chhbro)

**APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION**

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified deadbody of male Age : 40-45 years, Height: 5'2", Build: Thin, Complexion : Sallow, Face : Oval, was found on 03.08.2020 at Ahinsa Dairy, Infront of back diwar, Fatehpur, Delhi-06. In this regard a DD No. 23-A dated 03.08.2020 u/s 174 Cr.P.C. has been lodged at P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification for 72 hours in the mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this found person may kindly inform to the following:-

**SHO : P.S. Lahori Gate, Delhi**  
Tel. No. 011-23953776

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely Kamlesh, W/o: Shree Chotu Ram, R/o: H. No. A-9 in front of Dispensary missing since 01.08.2020 from H. No. A-9 in front of Dispensary. In this regard DD No. 52A, dated 01.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi. The description of missing lady is as under:

Name: Kamlesh, Age: 55 Years, Height: 5'3", Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Medium, Wearing: Blue suit, red salwar and slipper in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi.

Web: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [clc@cbi.gov.in](mailto:clc@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph: 011-24368638/24368641, Fax: 011-24368639  
Police Station, Mahendra Park, Delhi  
Ph: 011-27632501, 27632501, 8750870227

DP/286/NW/2020

SHORT CIRCUITS



**BHUMI PEDNEKAR**

What Mumbai saw in the last two days was devastating amount of rain. There were some places that were badly affected. The videos and articles are so scary and heart-breaking. This year has been a wake-up call. Development is important but there has to be a balance. Small changes make a huge difference.



**MAHESH BABU**

A kind request to my dear fans. I feel blessed and thankful to have all of you. I truly appreciate all the good deeds you do to make my special day worth remembering. Since we are battling a global pandemic this year, safety is indispensable. I request all my fans to avoid any social gatherings on my birthday. Please stay safe.



**SHALMALI KHOLGADE**

I keep away from controversy because I am rather focussed on making music, writing songs, finding various avenues to channelise my creativity. What else should I do? Pointing fingers on people will not do any good to music. I am not just here for making music in Bollywood. I look beyond that.



**RAJA KUMARI**

We shot *Peace's* video in the middle of quarantine. Although I'm used to having a big crew on set to handle everything from location scouting to glam and make-up, all I had in LA was me and Shawn Thomas (long-time director and collaborator) and the help of my manager and assistant. It definitely was a challenge.

**VAAANI KAPOOR**

Ayushmann is one of the most talented actors of our generation and I am only thrilled about our first film together to be this beautiful love story. I have always wanted to work with Abhishek Kapoor, being so inspired by his films. This feels like an amazing opportunity to be part of his vision.



CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES



# BEYOND THE DARK WHIMS

Pakistani filmmaker ASIM ABBASI talks to SAKSHI SHARMA about how his leading women have given a positive spin to the term 'churail' in his eponymous web series and the need to share stories about the under-represented

The term 'Churail' has been used to refer to witches or to a woman who practises dark magic. You might have heard women being called as *churail*, *dayan*, *bhootni*, spellcaster and other such names for their "wrong" actions. But how often have you heard them being used to question the patriarchal status quo and represent strong-willed women?

Pakistani filmmaker Asim Abbasi, who is now foraging into the web series space with his series *Churails*, believes that the term rightly represents his lead protagonists as it has nothing to do with dark magic. Says he, "The term has historically been used to label women negatively for their courage, aggression, ambition — all the qualities that I associate with a strong woman, were deemed negative. She is the uncanny outsider who comes to shake up the patriarchy. And it is the fear that she elicits in the guardians of the status quo

(often men), that drives men to label them in a derogatory way. So our characters are taking this term, ripe with symbolic value, to give it a positive spin. Every woman, according to me, should aspire to be a *churail*."

Set in Karachi, it is a story of four women from different walks of life who come together to open a covert detective agency to expose cheating husbands amongst the city's elite. These self-proclaimed women run their operations under the guise of a fashion store named 'Halal Designs' that specialise in conservative women's attire. As their operations expand, they come to be the saviours of abused, mistreated and harassed women, and their search for a missing girl brings them face to face with the exploitative world of talent agencies, escort services, and cosmetic companies. It features Pakistani actors Sarwat Gilani, Nimra



Bucha, Yasra Rizvi and Mehar Bano. Excerpts:

□ The series stars four women reeling from personal miseries who further

open a detective agency under the pretext of a burqa shop. How did you conceptualise it?

The themes of gender politics, particularly power dynamics, between a man and



a woman, and the resultant misogyny are topics that I wanted to address in my writing for a while. But I did not want the starting point of the series to be heavy-handed. I wanted the darkness to slowly creep in. So my natural, perhaps humorous inclination, was to first make my characters colourful spies, who gradually turn vigilantes. I was interested in talking about the lack of autonomy that a woman has over her body. Often in patriarchal societies, women are dressed and undressed at the whims of the society, and are being told what is appropriate and what is not. Hence, the store specialises in modest-wear for women to showcase this irony.

□ The poster of the project has a caption: 'Hojayen tayaar, khwateen aur hazrat. Especially hazrat, Jald urahi hain kuch rangeen churailien, apki deep-rooted misogyny ki band bajanay'. Another scene showed a sign at a store: 'Pets and men not allowed.' How do such strong statements establish the idea of the series?

The store titled 'Halal Designs' is a safe space that women have created for other women. The clients need to feel protected, hence, the idea of it not being open to men. The sign for the store is a replay of boards saying 'women and dogs not allowed' that actually existed in prestigious members clubs in the subcontinent before the Partition, under the British Raj.

□ Your narratives have usually centred around strong female characters. Are there any personal instances that have shaped your choices?

I have grown up in a household of a lot of women and have been surrounded by them all my life. So I tend to gravitate towards their experiences. As a filmmaker, it is my duty to tell stories about those who are under-represented or the ones I believe are not represented fairly in the mainstream media. Female-centric stories Pakistani television rarely regurgitate the same trope about a damsel in distress who needs rescuing by a prince. Those stories are not a representative of the women I know. And those are not the stories I believe our daughters should grow up with.

□ In one of your interviews you mentioned, "It's not message per se, I prefer to raise questions." What do you aim to achieve through your work?

Well, apart from entertaining audience by providing a thrilling, edge-of-your-seat experience, I hope that the show stays with them long after the 10 hours of viewing experience is over. They should be able to reflect on the questions the series raises. I wish them, particularly men, to become

more open to working towards a more equitable society, where women are respected and treated fairly.

□ There has been a surge of grey roles in online content now. Filmmakers and actors don't like putting characters in a box. Do you think the same can be said about your four leads?

Absolutely. I deliberately set out to tell a tale of four very flawed individuals. They are not always going to do the right thing. They are going to make mistakes and may not even apologise for them but these traits are all very human to have. All good content, which seeks to create empathetic characters that the audience can root for, should be moving away from the binaries of black and white.

□ You had earlier said, "It's very difficult to put *Churails* into a genre. It's discussing serious issues, but the show itself doesn't take itself too seriously." What did you mean?

In terms of genres, I would say the series has elements of drama and thriller but I tend to find the whimsy in the darkest of moments, and I feel my work reflects that. The themes that the series addresses are posed as questions rather than preachy messages. My characters find something to smile about even when everything around them is falling apart.

□ On the artistic front, are we ready to nurture cross-boundary collaborations, irrespective of the political environment?

Yes, because art has nothing to do with institutional politics. Its sole purpose is to provide a cathartic experience for the public by emphasising our shared humanity and it aims to do that by bridging the differences.

□ Do you think the audience for the series might get affected from the Pak-India rivalries?

I don't think so. People on both sides of the border are well aware that they have similar life realities and are eager to have a dialogue and cultural exchange.

□ Can we call this an opportunity for the country to attract other global platforms and entertain the idea of producing Pakistani content?

Absolutely. We have not had web content come out of Pakistan that could compete in the global market before. This is a small but important step in getting our stories out to the world. I am hopeful that it will attract more investment into Pakistani talent and filmmakers.

(The series will stream from August 11 on Zee5.)

STUDIO CHAT 15 MINUTES

## Celebs go vocal for local

On the occasion of National Handloom Day, Bollywood actresses including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Kangana Ranaut, Vidya Balan, Dia Mirza, Taapsee Pannu and Janhvi Kapoor urge people to support Indian weavers and Indian organic fabric industries. The handloom sector is one of the major symbols of the cultural heritage of India.

"Most of us have more than we can consume. Fashion industry has become one of the most damaging industries for our environment. New challenges call for new resolves. Let's promote our own Indian organic fabric industries and preserve the planet. When we choose hand-

loom, we choose to elevate our poor weavers out of poverty, we choose vocal for local, we choose our mother earth, we choose love for every single being on this planet," said Kangana via a tweet. Priyanka posted a few pictures in mustard silk saree on Instagram and wrote, "Let us all resolve to support our weavers across the country in these difficult times by buying and wearing their beautiful creations in our everyday life and also help #IndiasHandloomLegacy alive. Appreciate the labour of love."

Priyanka posted a picture in a green saree and wrote on Instagram stories, "Indian handlooms are known to be

unique and a work of art. Let's support our support to the weavers and artisans of the textile industry."

Janhvi shared an image of her most favourite handloom saree. "The weavers and artisans in our country are truly unmatched in skill and creativity. The best in the world," she wrote.

Dia Mirza said she is proud of Indian heritage. "Our weavers need all our support and love. This National Handloom Day, let's celebrate the rich legacy of our Indian weaves and textiles. There is nothing like a handloom saree," she wrote along with an image.

—With inputs from agencies



## Open to new ideas: Anushka

Actor Anushka Sharma became the youngest female producer in Bollywood at the age of 25 with the clutter-breaking revenge thriller *NH10* and she has since then only shown her passion to tell remarkably new stories. From experimenting with genres to backing fellow outsiders to shine bright in Bollywood, Anushka, through Clean Slate Filmz, has been an entrepreneur who at her core is a diverse storyteller.

Anushka feels her Army background has shaped her content choices majorly. "Being Army kids, we are always open to new ideas and all that travelling really helped us understand local stories. Such experiences has not only helped us in storytelling, but it also makes you look at things in different ways rather than a set societal perspective," says Anushka, who runs the business with her brother Karanesh.

She adds, "Watching films doesn't always help you understand movies better. Our life experiences have helped us in this business. We have approached everything with a fresh mind. If we have taken the less travelled path, it is because we have followed our instincts."

Anushka is riding on back to back suc-



cesses as a producer with both *Paatal Lok* and *Bulbul* doing incredibly well. She reveals that there is no formula for success when it comes to content production. "The business of production is very tricky and even the most experienced can't say that they have figured it out. You just learn from your mistakes. Even when things don't work the way you wanted, they give us learnings," says she.









India on Friday retained the right to host the 2021 T20 World Cup while Australia will conduct this year's postponed edition in 2022, the ICC announced on Friday after its board meeting, straightening out a schedule that went topsy-turvy due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year's edition had to be postponed because of the raging pandemic, which has severely impacted all sports calendars globally.

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) today (on Friday)

confirmed that the T20 World Cup 2020 that was postponed due to Covid-19 will be held in Australia in 2022. India will host the T20 World Cup 2021 as planned," the ICC stated in a press release.

The global body also confirmed that next year's women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand has been postponed until February-March 2022 because of the impact the pandemic has had on cricket globally.

ICC Chief Executive Manu Sawhney said: "We now have absolute clarity on the future of ICC events enabling all of our Members to focus on the resched-

"We will now proceed as planned with the Men's T20 World Cup 2021 in India and host the 2022 edition in Australia."

The format of the 2021 T20 World Cup will remain as it was for 2020 and all teams that qualified for that event will now participate in India in 2021.

A new qualification process will be started for the 2022 edition in Australia.

"BCCI were never keen to host the 2022 event which would have meant that they had to host back to back ICC events including the

50-over World Cup in 2023. That wasn't a viable option," an ICC Board member told *PTI*.

However, it was a big setback for the women's game with the much-awaited World Cup being pushed by a year.

Sawhney said the decision would "give players from every competing nation, the best opportunity to be ready for the world's biggest stage and there is still a global qualifier to complete to decide the final three teams.

An ICC Board member said that due to various countries facing different situations with regards to the Covid case load, it would

There have been difficult to hold the qualifiers in time.

The postponement also raised doubts about the future of Indian legends such as Mithali Raj and Jhulan Goswami, who probably won't play in their last ICC tournament in 2021.

The decisions were taken by the IBC (the commercial subsidiary of the ICC) following an extensive contingency planning exercise which took into account the health, credit and commercial impact of Covid-19 around the world.

The format of the postponed World Cup will remain as it was for 2021. Five teams have already qualified for the event and that will stand for 2023.

The original global qualification event to determine the final three teams to contest the event was scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in July this year, but was postponed due to Covid-19.

The qualification event will now be held in the UAE.

"There has been no women's international cricket played since the conclusion of the Women's T20 World Cup earlier this year and due to varying the impact of Covid-19 globally that is likely to result in a significant number of the teams," Sawhney says.

India's white-ball series against England, scheduled at home in September-October, was on Friday postponed to early 2021 with both the boards citing the Covid-19 pandemic, which wrecked the international calendar and created space for the IPL during this window.

Both teams were scheduled to play three ODIs and as many T20s and the matches could now be held after the Test series between the two in India early next year.

The series was to be a preparatory one ahead of the T20 World Cup which was originally scheduled from October 18 to November 5 in Australia, but has now been postponed.

"BCCI and ECB are in consultation with a view to confirming the 2021 schedules for an all-formats England mens tour to India to run from late January to late March and the Test tour to late March and early June in 2021," the BCCI said in a statement.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah added: "The BCCI and ECB are working closely to finalise the day-wise schedule as we move towards the resumption of cricket.

The five-Test series to be hosted by India could be trimmed to four to accommodate the white-ball games next year.

"Moving the event by 12 months gives all competing teams the chance to play a sufficient level of cricket...So the integrity of the tournament is maintained."

Wolverhampton Wanderers' Conor Coady embraces Olympiakos' Omar Elabdellattou after the Europa League match

Wolves battled into the quarter-finals of the Europa League on Thursday while Sevilla, Bayer Leverkusen and Basel enjoyed far more comfortable victories in the matches that brought the Europa League round of 16 to a belated close.

Raul Jimenez scored the only goal from the penalty spot in the ninth minute and Wolves survived a series of scares to edge Olympiakos 1-0 at Molinex for a 2-1 aggregate win in a tie that began in Athens on March 13.

Allan, club captain Frank Allain, the visitors' French Scottish goalkeeper, failed to catch a back pass in the seventh minute.

Daniel Podence, who scored for Olympiakos at Tottenham in September but moved to Wolves in January, darted in and stole the ball.

Allan chastised his back less than four minutes over and Jimenez converted the penalty.

The Greek champions created a string of chances but were thwarted by good saves by Rui Patrício, a tight offside decision and their own inaccurate finishing.

Wolves began their Europa League campaign on July 25 last year against Crusaders in the second qualifying round, will next face Sevilla at Duisburg on August 11.

Sevilla were also in Duisburg on Thursday where they took the lead against Roma after 22 minutes as a back pass let Jesus Navas switched play with a cross-field pass to left-back Sergio Reguilón that caught Roma flat-footed.

Reguilón surged past two defenders and into the box before sliding a low shot past Spanish goalkeeper Pau Lopez's foot.

Sevilla needed a second on the counter-attack in the 43rd minute.

England was bowled out for 219, a 107-run first innings deficit, after losing six wickets to Pakistan's leg-spinners on the third day of the first Test at Old Trafford on Friday.

At tea Pakistan stretched its lead by another 20 runs to take control despite Shan Masood's duck.

Ollie Pope's 62 was as good as it got for the England batsmen, with the majority of those runs scored on day two, with Yasir Shah claiming 4-66 and Shadab Khan taking the last two wickets.

England resumed the day on 92-4 with Pope and Jos Buttler hoping to continue the rescue mission they had started the previous evening.

But Pope was out of the game when he walked out but almost fell short of his half-century, deflecting Shaheen Afridi over the top of the stumps in an early scare. He got there soon after, off 81 balls, but the first ball he hit was a short one that sent him sprawling.

Just nine runs came off the bat in that time, outscored by the 10 extras Pakistan contributed, with the three Pakistan batsmen—Shan Masood, Mohammad Abbas and Naseem Shah working up a head of steam.

Buttler edged the third ball of Naseem's spell just short of second slip but after that it was a case of the more the merrier. The duo reached the drinks break without any crucial nicks and when both hit their first boundaries of the day there was a small hope that they had weathered the storm.

But the rain with wide-



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England batsman Chris Woakes, right, is bowled out by Pakistan's Yasir Shah during the third day of 1st Test at Old Trafford on Friday.

stand crept up to 65, every run hard-earned, before the batsmen produced a memorable delivery to claim his deserved reward.

Pope was hardly to blame, feeling back and fending to tellingly after the teenager got one that kicked viciously off the surface.

By carrying an early blow to the batsmen, the England batsman Woakes, the remainder of the session was better for England as they eased the score out to 59-5.

Buttler had scrapped his way through to 38 but fell to his second Ball after lunch, leaving the batsmen with a rod that followed Yasir enough room to start the stumps.

The experienced spinner was buoyed by the success and made short work of Dom Bess, producing the turn and bounce that left Asad Shafiq with a diving effort and a rod that

third wicket of the spell and fourth overall when Woakes took his chance and showed his bowling for 19 swinging hard left leg.

England were in turmoil at 170-8 but had Stuart Broad to thank for two tail-end stanzas that added 49 to the total.

He finished unbeaten on 29, having been hit by a slow-swoop of Shaheen and a slower screw six off Yasir under his belt, but all-rounders Shadab did enough at the other end to send off Jofra Archer and James Anderson.

England had chipped the batsmen with the ball, getting Masood caught down the leg side and lucky to go with his career-best 156 from the first innings.

Anderson should have made two down by tea but Ben Stokes dived in front of Root and spilled the chance to

Barcelona coach Quique Setién says that he is ready to count on youngsters Ansu Fati and Riqui Puig to eliminate

Napoli and advance to the Champions League final eight in Portugal.

Barcelona will be without midfielders Sergio Busquets, Arturo Vidal and Arthur for

Saturday's second leg of their round-of-16 tie. The match will be played five months after the Spanish side earned a 1-1 draw at Napoli before the pandemic brought most sports to a halt.

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W/o. Sh. Harpal Singh & Sh. Radehy Shyam Singh	Share out of total land measuring 3 Km. land comprised of charges and expenses there on	12.02.2020		
Sh. Radehy Shyam Singh & Sh. Radehy Shyam Singh	Kheewat / Khatori No. 80/119 to 122, Khasra No. 4/10/3-0	6/11.02.2020		
Sh. Rishi H. 08, Ward No. 1, Village Harsid, Near Railway Station, Post Office Kheer District Ambala	as per Jamabandi for the Year 2007-08 located at Village Haddi, H. No. 194, Sub Tehsil Sahiwal, Talah Bahra, District Ambala in the name of Smt. Baldev Devi of Harpal Singh vide Sale deed No. 1, Village Harsid, Near Railway Station, Post Office Kheer District Ambala	17.05.2012 dated 12.01.2014, Bounded as under:-		
	Other Owner Gujaraj Lal, West Road, North: Other Owner House of Sh. Naab Singh, South: Other Owner House of Sh. Naab Singh			
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