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REPLACE US, WON'T BE BULLIED

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REAL MADRID
WIN LA LIGA TITLE

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Raj crisis gets murkier

Congress produces audio tapes of horse-trading; BJP says CM office manufacturing evidence; Raj, Haryana Police face off in G'gram where 18 rebel MLAs camping

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI/JAIPUR/GURUGRAM

It was a day of high drama in Rajasthan politics, starting with leaking of sensational tapes revealing alleged linkage of two BJP MLAs and a Union Minister in "horse-trading"

bid, arrest of two middlemen, filing of FIRs, and ending with a standoff between Rajasthan and Haryana Police in Gurugram where 18 MLAs of the Sachin Pilot groups are camping in two luxurious hotels under police protection. On a day when the Gehlot-

Pilot feud reached Rajasthan High Court, Gehlot accused the BJP of attempting to destabilise the State Government by poaching on MLAs.

The Congress suspended its two MLAs — Bhanwar Lal and Vishwendra Singh — and got an FIR lodged against

them. The Rajasthan Police also booked Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat and BJP leader Sanjay Jain, accusing them of being involved in a conspiracy to topple the 18-month-old Congress Government.

The FIRs were registered on the basis of the complaint filed by Mahesh Joshi, the Congress chief whip of the Rajasthan Assembly, after the audio tapes surfaced on Thursday evening and went viral on social media amid the political turmoil in State.

They will now have to face the Rajasthan SOG probe which reached the venue they are lodged for last one week.

The police swung in action after Congress spokesman Randeep Surjewala demanded an FIR be registered against Shekhawat and Sanjay Jain, accusing them of being involved in a conspiracy to topple the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress Government.

"It should also be probed as to who arranged the 'black money' to bribe MLAs & who were given the bribe," Surjewala, who is also one of the Central Congress team member to resolve the Gehlot-Pilot tug of war, stated.

Reacting to Congress' allegations of trying to bring down the Rajasthan Government, Rajasthan Union BJP said the Rajasthan CM residence is becoming a centre of fake

audio, attempting character assassination of leaders.

"What happened today was shameful for the politics of Rajasthan that the Chief Minister's residence is becoming a centre of fake audio and attempting character assassination of leaders. Attempts have been made to drag central ministers in the matter," Poonia said.

Urging the SOG to initiate a detailed probe, Surjewala said a warrant should be issued against Shekhawat and he should be arrested if it is suspected that he could influence the investigation.

According to reports, audio clips in which Bhanwar Lal, who belongs to the Pilot camp, purportedly conspires to topple Gehlot-led Rajasthan Government under the influence of Pilot. The suspended MLA, however, refuted the allegations and termed the viral audio as "fake".

"The Officer on Special Duty to Chief Minister, Lokesh Sharma is trying to pressurise MLAs by getting fake audios made as Chief Minister Gehlot is in despair," Sharma stated in his defence.

Pilot who has not relented from his stand even after senior party leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi, Ahmed Patel asked him to come back "home", on Friday spoke to senior leader P Chidambaram.

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Modi calls for reformed UN, multilateralism

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Calling for a "reformed United Nations" and an improved UN for "human-centric globalisation", Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India was in the world body at "an important time" and seeks to get integrated with global economy with its own vision for "self-reliance" and resilience.

Addressing the United Nations, Modi said Covid-19 tested resolve of all nations and India made the fight against the coronavirus pandemic as people's movement where Government went hand-in-hand with the civil society.

The Prime Minister was virtually delivering his address before the UN at the High-Level Segment of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), his first since India was overwhelmingly elected as a non-permanent member of the powerful UN Security Council, last month.

Modi said as always during the natural or other calamities, India helped 150 nations with "speed" and created SAARC help fund to battle out Covid-19 in the South Asia region and around. As in India, he said Government reached home of poor and brought three billion dollar to "bring economy back" on the track.

"Be it earthquakes, cyclones, Ebola crisis or any other natural or man-made crisis, India has responded with speed and solidarity. In

Improved UN will be epicentre of human centric globalisation: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks at the high-level segment of ECOSOC via video conferencing in New Delhi on Friday

our joint fight against Covid, we have extended medical and other assistance to over 150 countries." He said India was the first to respond to the Covid-19 crisis and its grassroots health system helped it the "best recovery rate" adding "other developing countries can learn from India".

The PM said as the UN was born amidst Second World War, "the fury of pandemic should lead to a second birth of the UN. He said India has been elected to UN in "important time" and provide full support to the world body to bring equity in the world.

Modi, however, reminded that India has a vision of "self-reliance" and "resilience" with which it seeks to be integrated in global economy.

Addressing the UNSC on its 75th anniversary, Prime

Minister said India believed in multilateralism but it is through a "reformed multilateralism" that UN would be able to meet the aspirations of the world and that an "improved" UN should be the epicentre of "human centric globalisation".

He said India is very much mindful of its responsibility toward making a better world and referred to India's 38 million tonne reduction of carbon emission, electricity in villages and deliverance of clean fuel to 18 million people. He said India also aims to have 450 GB renewal energy by 2030.

"With our deep commitment to maintaining global harmony, to improving socio-economic equity, and to preserving nature's balance, India will play its role in full support of the UN agenda," said the Prime Minister.



A team of Special Operations Group of Rajasthan Police arrives at ITC Grand Bharat hotel where Congress MLAs are staying at Manesar in Gurugram on Friday

Pilot, 18 Cong rebel MLAs get reprieve from HC

Rajasthan HC bars Assembly Speaker from disqualification action till Tuesday

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

Rebel Congress leader RSachin Pilot and 18 other Congress dissident MLAs on Friday got a four-day reprieve from any action by the Assembly Speaker on the disqualification notices served on them after the Rajasthan High Court extended its hearing on the issue to next week.

The division Bench, hearing the dissident MLA petition against the Speaker's notices, fixed the next hearing for 10 am on Monday. The counsel for the Speaker assured the court that no order shall be passed on the notice till 5.30 pm on Tuesday.

Senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who is also a Congress leader, represented

the Speaker's office, while Harish Salve and Mukul Rohatgi, are pleading on behalf of the Pilot camp.

The Pilot camp has argued that a party whip applies only when the Assembly is in session. In its complaint to the Speaker, the Congress had sought action against Pilot and the other dissidents under paragraph 2 (1) (a) of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.

The provision disqualifies MLAs if they "voluntarily" give up the membership of the party which they represent in the House. The Congress claimed that this is the inference that can be drawn from the MLAs' conduct. But the dissident camp said Pilot never indicated any intention to leave the party.

Salve said the petitioner has only raised his voice against the "dictatorship" of the Chief Minister and has nothing to break the party.

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Shekhawat rejects audio claim, ready for probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Friday rubbished allegations that he was part of an alleged conspiracy to topple the Ashok Gehlot Government in Rajasthan. The Rajasthan Police on Friday filed an FIR against Sekhwat and two Congress MLAs on the basis of an audio tape in which they are allegedly heard striking a deal to topple the State Government.

Shekhawat said the voice in the purported audio clips did not belong to him and that he was ready for a probe.

"It is not my voice. I don't know which Sanjay Jain they are talking about. I know many people by that name. If I had talked to someone, my number should be there. You can conduct a probe. I am ready for an investigation," Shekhawat said.

BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra too rejected claims made by the Congress.

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None can take an inch of our land: Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/LEH

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday favoured dialogue to defuse tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, but remained sceptical as to what extent the ongoing talks will help resolve the differences.

He made this point during his visit to Leh hinting at the "complex" and "intricate" process of disengagement by the Armies of India and China.

Sounding this note of caution, Rajnath, without naming China, reaffirmed that India is not a weak country and no country in the world can touch even an inch of its land.

The tough statement came against the backdrop of more than eight-week stand-off between the two Armies after the Chinese intruded into India at four points.

Touring Ladakh for the first time since the face-offs

took place, Rajnath said the ongoing negotiations with China at the military and diplomatic levels should help resolve the border dispute. He, however, said he could not guarantee to what extent the issues will be resolved.

Addressing the troops at Lukung near Pangong Tso (lake), one of the four stand-off sites, the Defence Minister said talks were underway to end the

face-offs at the earliest "but to what extent it will be resolved I cannot guarantee."

His sceptic remarks came a day after the Army and the External Affairs Ministry said on Thursday the disengagement process is "intricate" and "complex" and needs "constant verification".

These observations after the fourth round of Corps Commander level talks

between the two countries came in the backdrop of continuing differences between the two Armies on Depsang and Pangong Tso. Though the Chinese have withdrawn from nearly all the friction points, the pace of pull back in Depsang and Pangong is not commensurate with the agreement between the two commanders.

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Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, with officers, poses for a photograph at a forward base in Ladakh on Friday

Tirumala won't shut its door to devotees, says temple trust

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Despite as many as 140 employees of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD), including 14 archakas, having tested positive for coronavirus over the past one month, the temple management on Friday made it clear that it had no plans of stopping the general public from the darshan of Lord Venkateswara.

TTD Trust Board chairman YV Subba Reddy held a meeting with the archakas on Thursday to take stock of the situation and ensure the daily "kankaryams" to Srivaru are not disrupted in case of any eventuality.

"So far, 140 employees, including 14 archakas, potu workers and security staff, tested positive for the virus. Of them, 70 have recovered and some of them returned to work. Only one employee is in the ICU, and we are in touch with the SVIMS authorities and monitoring the recovery. We have no plans to close the temple or stop darshan of the Lord," Subba Reddy said.

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Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL
CASES: 10,39,163
DEATHS: 26,285
RECOVERED: 6,54,056
ACTIVE: 3,58,429



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	2,92,589	11,452	1,60,357
Tamil Nadu	1,60,907	2,315	1,10,807
Delhi	1,20,107	3,571	99,301
Karnataka	55,115	1,152	20,758
Gujarat	46,516	2,107	32,944
Uttar Pradesh	45,163	1,084	27,634
Telangana	42,496	403	28,705
Andhra Pradesh	40,646	534	20,298
West Bengal	38,011	1,049	22,253
Rajasthan	27,789	546	20,626
Haryana	24,797	327	18,718
Bihar	23,300	173	14,997
Madhya Pradesh	21,082	698	14,514
Assam	20,647	56	14,106
Odisha	16,110	109	11,330
Jammu & Kashmir	12,757	231	6,558

Half of South Kashmir jail inmates test Covid positive

Srinagar: Almost half of the inmates at a jail in south Kashmir have tested positive for COVID-19, but their condition is stable, officials said on Friday, and stressed that spraying, fumigation and other steps to curb the spread of the virus were carried out at a number of prisons.

Superintendent of Anantnag District Jail Syroz Ahmad Bhat said, "Of the 190 inmates at the prison, 86 inmates have tested positive for the coronavirus infection."

"Measures have been taken to contain the spread of the infection among other prisoners. We have isolated these 86 prisoners. Forty-eight of them have been shifted to a nearby facility at high ground, while the rest have been placed in two separate blocks within the jail complex," he told PTI.

After US, India has done most Covid-19 tests: White House

Washington: After the US, which has carried out a record 42 million Covid-19 tests, India has done the second largest number of 12 million coronavirus tests, the White House has said. More than 3.5 million people have tested positive with the coronavirus and 138,000 died in the US. Globally, more than 13.6 million have tested positive and over 586,000 have died.

"With regard to (the coronavirus) testing, we've done more than 42 million tests. The second-highest number is 12 million from India. We're leading the world in testing," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany told reporters at a news conference here on Thursday.

Pak offers 3rd consular access to Jadhav after India deplores eyewash

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A day after India termed the second consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav as "neither meaningful nor credible", Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Islamabad is willing to provide a third meeting with the Indian death row prisoner, according to the Pakistani media.

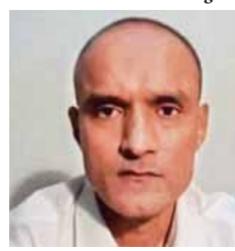
Pakistan on Thursday provided a second consular access to Jadhav, a 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, who was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017.

The Indian Government said the second access was "neither meaningful nor credible," and Jadhav appeared visibly under stress.

"The Consular Officers were not given unimpeded, unhindered and unconditional access" to Jadhav, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said in New Delhi on Thursday.

Foreign Minister Qureshi, however, said the Indian consular officers were provided access to Jadhav as desired by New Delhi.

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Gold smuggling racket: UAE Consulate attache gunman tries to kill self

KUMAR CHELLAAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The Kerala gold smuggling racket took a curious turn on Friday as Jayagosh, the gunman of UAE Consulate attache, tried to commit suicide in his house. The racket allegedly involving top Government officials and UAE attache was busted by the customs department.

Jayagosh was saved from the jaws of death by the Kerala Police team which was investigating the case following complaints from his family members that he has been missing since Thursday night.

Jayagosh tried to commit suicide by cutting the veins in his hand and was seen bleeding profusely when the cops tracked him with the help of a sniffer dog. Jayagosh, a constable working with the Armed



Reserve Camp of the Kerala Police, was on deputation to the UAE Consulate in the capital city where he worked as the gunman to the attache.

What makes the incident murky is the sudden exit of Rashed Alshemeili, the attache, from India to UAE. Jayagoshi's family members told media persons that the former was in a state of agitated mind since the exit of Alshemeili on Sunday.

Continued on Page 2

After US, India has conducted most Covid tests: White House

Washington: India has conducted the second largest number of coronavirus tests (12 million) after the US (42 million), the White House has said, differing from rankings put out by a widely tracked website. More than 3.5 million people have tested positive with the coronavirus and 138,000 died in the US. Globally, more than 13.6 million have tested positive and over 586,000 have died. "With regard to (the coronavirus) testing, we've done

more than 42 million tests. The second-highest number is 12 million from India. We're leading the world in testing," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany told reporters at a news conference on Thursday. The White House was responding to questions related to the coronavirus pandemic in the US. "We have done more than any country in the world on testing; there's no doubt about that -- 42 million tests. The country with the next highest

number is India at 12 million," McEnany said. Worldometers.info website said the US leads the world in tests, Brazil is second and India is in third place. ALSO READ: Coronavirus LIVE updates: India's case count crosses one million mark This record testing, she said, is in a very stark contrast to the previous administration. CBS is reporting that in 2009 under Obama-Biden, the Centers for Disease Control



and Prevention abruptly advised states to stop testing for the H1N1 flu and stopped counting individual cases, she said. Ron Klain, Vice President Biden's former Chief of Staff said this: It is purely a fortuity that (H1N1) isn't one of the great mass casualty events in American history. It had nothing to do with us doing anything right. This is former VP Biden's Chief of Staff. It just had to do with luck, she said. Contrary to that, this

President led the world in testing; led the world in ventilators -- redistributing ventilators for therapeutics; 13 vaccine candidates -- one going into phase three clinical trial. This response has been extraordinary and historic. We didn't pause testing; the Obama-Biden administration did, and that was a shameful decision, McEnany said. There has been encouraging news on vaccines, the press secretary said. Moderna's vaccine candi-

date is showing promising signs. They produced a positive, neutral immune response among the 45 participants in the study. This is comparable to what we see in recovered patients. The bottom line is that, so far, we are seeing exactly what you would hope to see in a vaccine. The Moderna vaccine in particular is expected to reach phase three by late July, with 30,000 participants. On the therapeutics front, I just want to note: A very

encouraging Regeneron contract. A USD 450 million contract for a monoclonal antibody cocktail. This is a bioengineered version of convalescent plasma, one of the several therapeutics available to treat Covid-19. It can be used for prophylaxis and treatment. They say they could have up to 70 to 300 thousand doses -- by the end of the summer or early fall, she said. As such there is encouraging news on the therapeutics front, McEnany added. Agencies

Arrange shelter for people hit by EDMC demolition: Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has issued directions to arrange temporary housing for people affected by EDMC demolition in East Laxmi Nagar Market area. "Directions have been issued to arrange for immediate temporary shelters for affected people in tents erected on nearby lands or in schools," Kejriwal said after a meeting with the officials. He visited East Laxmi Nagar Market area to the residents affected by the demolition of structures built alongside the road as per East Laxmi Market Master Plan. All the buildings that are being demolished are residential and the demolition has been con-

tinuing since Wednesday.

After an inspection with officials, Kejriwal said detailed study of the order of the High Court will be done, and an appeal will be filed after a careful analysis of the circumstances under which the demolition orders were issued by the Delhi High Court. Kejriwal reached the spot, where he was accompanied by MLAs Rajendra Pal Gautam, Rakhi Birla, Kuldeep Kumar, and Ajay Dutt. Taking stock of the situation, CM Kejriwal spoke to the residents of the area and assured them of support. The CM also directed the officials to ensure that the temporary housing of the affected people is completed immediately so that people, who are now shelterless have a roof over their head.

Kejriwal said, "Many jhuggis have been demolished here on the directions of the Delhi High Court. I have directed the officials to begin an in-depth study of the order of the Delhi High Court, and on how a court order for demolition can be issued in the time of this pandemic. After the analysis of the court order, we will explore all options and try to find a permanent solution to the issue. We will also arrange temporary shelter for the people here by either erecting tents on nearby land, or providing lodging facilities in schools, where all necessary arrangements such as food, water, lodging, and sanitation will be made." Apart from assuring temporary shelter to the residents, CM Arvind

Kejriwal also said that options will be explored after an in-depth study of the order of the Delhi High Court. MLAs visiting the area have unanimously said that the demolition should not happen because of the Corona pandemic. They said the demolition by the EDMC is making people suffer at a time when people are already affected by Corona. The demolition drive was restarted on Monday in the light of the old directions of the Delhi High Court to remove encroachments on the service road, which is also known as the Master Plan Road in the Laxmi Market area. Until now, more than 60 structures have been demolished which served as houses for the families in East Laxmi Market area.

Gold smuggling racket: UAE...

From Page 1

The day also saw the customs officials from Kochi taking into custody Abdul Hameed and Aboobacker Pazadath of Malappuram district in connection with the gold smuggling case. According to official sources the duo was the financiers of the gold smuggling racket. The CPI (M) State Committee which met at Thiruvananthapuram on Friday to take stock of the situation arising out of the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel in which the name of an official in the Chief Minister's Office was figured expressed its full confidence in the leadership of Pinarayi Vijayan. "It was due to the waywardness of M Sivsankar, the then principal secretary of the Chief Minister,

which led to the tarnishing of the CMO's image. The Chief Minister took effective measures immediately after he came across the reports. The CPI (M) is undertaking a house-to-house campaign to convince the people about the realities behind the scam," said Kodyiyeri Balakrishnan, the party's Kerala secretary while briefing the media about the decisions taken in the day-long meeting. Balakrishnan said the party took strong objection to the comments made by J P Nadda, the BJP national president that the gold in Kerala was red in colour. "I would like to remind him that the gold in Kerala is saffron and green in colour. It was a BMS leader who intervened in the case on behalf of the accused to get the gold consignment released from the Customs officials. The gold was smuggled by persons who are having close links with the Muslim League," said Balakrishnan.

He said that P K Krishnadas, one of the BJP leaders, was heard demanding the dismissal of the CPI (M) led government. "This shows how despair the BJP is in Kerala. The Congress and the Muslim League are hand in glove with terrorists and religious extremists. They get the support of the BJP in creating lawlessness in Kerala," alleged Balakrishnan. He said the CPI (M) welcomed the Government of India's decision to entrust the investigation of the gold smuggling case to the National Investigating Agency. "A comprehensive probe by the NIA and the Customs would bring the truth out," said the CPI (M) secretary. Ramesh Chennithala, Leader of Opposition, said that the Congress would bring in a no-confidence motion against the Government on July 27 when the House is having a one-day session to pass the finance bill.

Raj crisis...

From Page 1

Chidambaram claimed that during the phone call he reiterated that the leadership had publicly invited him for a meeting and all issues can be discussed. "I advised him to seize the opportunity," Chidambaram said to a media agency. The Congress's top leadership, the Gandhis, have reached out to the rebel leader several times over the past few days but Pilot has been largely unresponsive. This is the first known instance of Pilot dialing any senior Congress leader. Pilot also spoke to Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who is on the opposing side in the court between the 18 rebels represented by senior lawyers Harish Salve and Mukul Rohatgi and the Congress. Surjewala again said "doors were open for whoever wanted to come back". Earlier Gehlot was asked by party chief Sonia Gandhi not to attack Pilot,

whom he has accused of conspiring with the BJP and "making deals" to buy MLAs for a coup. Gehlot was to address a Press conference but it was later decided that Surjewala will brief the media on audio tapes allegedly of rebel MLAs plotting against the Congress Government. Top Congress sources said the Gandhis are keen to retain Pilot, who was a part of his close circle of aides along with Jyotiraditya Scindia, who quit the party in March and switched to the BJP. Pilot though has maintained that he is not joining the BJP but a few Congress leaders including Gehlot suspects him and says he is buying time to win over more MLAs to his camp. "We want to tell Pilot that if you don't want to go to the BJP then don't accept Haryana's hospitality. If you don't want to go to the BJP, stop talking to any BJP leader or member," Surjewala reiterated. The climax of the day was a stand-off between Rajasthan and Haryana police when the former tried

to enter a hotel in Manesar to interrogate the MLAs named in the tape. The Rajasthan Police's special operations group (SOG) ran into a heavy deployment of Haryana police personnel at the Manesar hotel. After hours of arguments during which some Rajasthan cops were also man-handled, four SOG men were allowed to enter the hotel. The Rajasthan SOG team left Manesar Hotel late evening after issuing notice to the 18 rebel MLAs. After the high drama to prevent the Rajasthan police to enter the ITC Grand Bharat in Manesar by Haryana Police, the Congress said can the BJP continue to deny their hand in the conspiracy to topple the Congress Government in Rajasthan? "They stand exposed but remain unapologetic," senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Anand Sharma told The Pioneer. Congress has repeatedly accused Pilot of being in cahoots with the BJP to topple the State Government.

None can take an inch of...

From Page 1

The External Affairs Ministry also reiterated that any unilateral attempt to change the status quo on the LAC will not be accepted by India. Given the complexities involved in resolving the LAC dispute, the Corps Commanders are likely to meet for the fifth time next week, said sources, adding the two sides are regularly verifying every 72 hours the disengagement and pulling back by either side. Meanwhile, addressing the troops, Rajnath also said, "We will not allow the sacrifice of soldiers to go in vain," in an apparent reference to the killing of 20 Indian Army personnel during the Galwan

Valley clashes with Chinese troops on June 15. Accompanied by Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat and Army Chief General M M Naravane on a two-day visit to Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, the Minister said, "India is the only country in the world that has given a message of peace to the world. We have never attacked a nation and have never staked claim to any country's land. India believes in the message - 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (the world is one family)." He also said, "We do not want unrest, we want peace. It has not been our nature to hurt any country's pride. If any attempt is made to hurt India's

pride, it won't be tolerated... we will give a befitting reply." "We are proud of our Army. I feel proud as I stand among our jawans. Our jawans have laid their lives for the country. All 130 crore Indians are saddened by the loss," he added. Earlier, Rajnath witnessed para-dropping carried out by commandos and other military exercises at Stakna forward post. "Witnessed the fire and fury of the Indian Army during the paratropping and other military demonstrations at Stakna near Leh today. Also, I got the opportunity to interact with them. I am proud of these brave and courageous soldiers (sic)," Rajnath later tweeted.

Shekhawat rejects audio claim...

From Page 1

He said the Congress was taking help of "manufactured" audio clip to blame it while not being "able" to keep its own house in order in the State. "The BJP rejects all the baseless allegations being levelled against the BJP leaders by Congress in Rajasthan. Actually, Congress is frustrated as it couldn't put its house in order," said Patra. "They want to blame the BJP for their failures by using a manufactured audio clip," he said. Pointing out to a petition filed by Sachin Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs against disqualification notices issued to them by Assembly Speaker CP Joshi, Patra said, "Both the parties that are fighting in the High Court are from Congress. BJP is not involved in any way in this matter. By levelling baseless allegation they are trying to save their own house," Patra said.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
BALANGIR (R&B) CIRCLE: BALANGIR
e - Procurement Notice
BID IDENTIFICATION No: SE(R&B) BGR / 01/ 2020-21
No. 1204 // Dtd. 07.07.2020

1. The Superintending Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Circle, Bolangir on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE for the construction of works detailed in the table below from A/ Special/ Super Class Contractors registered with the State Governments and contractors of equivalent Grade/ Class registered with Central Government/ MES/ Railways for execution of Civil works. The proof of registration from the appropriate authority shall be enclosed along with the bid.

2. Nature of Work	: Road work
3. No. of tender	: Road : 05 Nos.
4. Tender Cost	: Rs.10, 000/-
5. Class of Contractor	: A/ Special/ Super Class.
6. Date & Time of sale & Receipt of Bids	: From Dt.21.07.2020, 10.00 A.M. to Dt.05.08.2020 up to 05.00 P.M.
7. Date of opening Bid	: Dt.07.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>. All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE MODE only.
Superintending Engineer,
Balangir (R&B) Circle, Balangir
OIPR-34131/11/0001/2021

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
E-Tender Notice
Tender no. JHS/DYCEE/WS/T/03/2020-21 Dt. 08/07/2020
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Wagon Repair Workshop, JHANSI for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed E-Tenders for the following work.

Tender No.	Description of work	Approx Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Tender Form
JHS/DYCEE/WS/T/03/2020-21	Electrification work for A to 1 parts connected with multiple sections at Wagon Repair Workshop JHANSI.	₹ 1981970/- (Rs. Nineteen lakh eighty one thousand nine hundred seventy only)	₹ 39600/- (Rs. Thirty nine thousand Six hundred only)	₹ 2100/- (2000+100 ST)

Completion Period: 07 months. Date of Closing & opening : 10.08.2020 at 15.00 Hrs. and opening 15.30 hrs.
1. Tender will be closed at 15.00 Hrs. on 10.08.2020 and is available on Indian Railway E-Tendering website www.ireps.gov.in.
2. For Detailed information please visit Indian Railway E-Tendering website www.ireps.gov.in. 760/2020 V
North Central Railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL,
PUBLIC GRIEVANCES & PENSIONS
(DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL & TRAINING)

Applications are invited for the post of Vigilance Commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission.

The details of eligibility, etc. and the proforma for sending particulars for consideration for the post may be downloaded from the Department of Personnel and Training website: www.persmin.nic.in. The last date of receipt of applications in the Department is **17th August, 2020.**

davp 32201/11/0003/2021

Pilot, 18...

From Page 1

He said this was his exercise of the freedom of speech of legislators and will not amount to "defection". "If there is an act outside the Assembly, it will not come in the 10th schedule. If there is a difference of opinion with the CM or you speak against him, then he will not fall in the category of disqualification," he said, adding, "Acts outside the House are not a violation of anti-defection law." He said a party whip applies only when the assembly is in session. He said the whip is not applicable to meetings in homes and hotels. Salve said, "Registering an FIR accusing the Deputy CM and MLAs of treason is an armed-twisting tactic." "Pilot has put forth his point by telling the truth. It does not fall under the category of disqualification," Salve said, adding, "Pilot and others have put forward their views in the party, and have not resigned. Nothing has been done against the party's reputation with any of their activities. Our stay in the hotel is not a violation of party rules." Former Attorney General and senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi, also argued that this matter didn't come under the ambit of the 10th schedule. "Pilot's group did not revolt. Freedom of speech is the legislators' authority," he said, adding, "The legislators, within the party, raised their voice. This cannot be brought under the ambit of disqualification." Singhvi said the petition of Pilot and 18 other MLAs is premature and hence not maintainable. He said the petition should be dismissed and the MLAs should be asked to raise the contentions before the Speaker. The Bench adjourned the hearing till Monday and asked

Tirumala won't shut its door to devotees, says temple trust

From Page 1

The TTD Board chairman's assertion comes even as the honorary chief priest, Ramana Dikshitulu, too has raised concern over priests and employees testing positive. "@ysjagan 15 out of 50 archakas carona +ve quarantined. Still 25 results awaited. TTD EO and AEO refuse to stop darshans. Obediently following anti hereditary archaka and anti brahmin policy of TDP and CBN. Disaster if this continues. Please take action," Ramana Dikshitulu tweeted, tagging Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. But the chairman said the honorary chief priest should have given his suggestions to the TTD Board instead of putting them out on social media. Ramana Dikshitulu was removed as chief priest of the temple in 2018 after he crossed the age for retirement. He had also alleged the TTD of financial wrongdoings. However, Reddy reappointed his honorary chief priest to serve the temple as an adviser after his YSR Congress Party came to power in May 2019. Reddy said most of those who got infected with coronavirus are from the Andhra Pradesh Police who have been working with the temple. "Only one of them is having severe symptoms," he said. "We have no plan to close Tirumala temple. Senior priests will not be put on duty. Priests and employees have requested separate accommodation," Reddy said, adding a separate facility for making food for the employees will be set up. The TTD chairman maintained that so far no devotee who arrived for darshan has tested positive for coronavirus. "None of the employees got the infection from devotees. It was mainly through their relatives and people in their neighbourhood," he said, adding that Srivari darshan for devotees will continue at Tirumala with precautionary measures. "We are pooling young archakas from other local temples," Subba Reddysaid. "The safety of archakas is of paramount importance. We made it clear that if the situation gets worse, darshan for devotees will be stopped, but 'kainkaryams' will be done without any hindrance," he stated. He added that the archakas suggested they be given separate accommodation and meals so they can stay in isolation. "They also suggested that of the 40 archakas of the main temple, those who are aged above 60 years be sent to home quarantine or posted at Tirupati. We asked our officials to consider their suggestion," Subba Reddy said.

Pak offers 3rd consular access...

From Page 1

Qureshi said Pakistan was willing to provide yet another consular access to India, The Express Tribune reported. "They had objected over the presence of security officials during the meeting, we are willing even to remove those officials. If India wants another access then our offer is open. If they (India) want to meet him tonight or tomorrow, we are ready," the paper quoted Qureshi as telling a news channel. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson said that New Delhi was informed about the decision. "Pakistan is awaiting India's response," said the spokesperson. Earlier, Dunya TV reported that the "Indian government has been officially informed about the third access". Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari lashed at the government for promulgating an "illegal and unconstitutional ordinance" to facilitate Jadhav. "Has he benefited from the relief given to him or not?" Bilawal asked while addressing a press conference in Sukkur city of Sindh. India approached the International Court of Justice against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence. The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July last year that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay. The first consular access under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations 1963 was earlier provided by Pakistan on September 2 last year. Though the Pakistan foreign ministry had assured India that the consular access on Thursday would be unimpeded, unhindered and unconditional, it turned out that the arrangements of the meeting were not in accordance with the assurances made by Islamabad, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Srivastava said. Pakistan claims that its security forces arrested Jadhav from the restive Balochistan province on March 3, 2016 after he reportedly entered from Iran. India maintains that Jadhav was kidnapped from Iran where he had business interests after returning from the Navy. PTI

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

Govt distributes 1.5L medicinal saplings

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to increase the green cover, the Delhi Government has distributed 1.5 lakh saplings this monsoon season. While the environment department has planted 50 thousands saplings, the Government has identified 13 medicinal plant species specially for their immunity-boosting properties against Covid-19 being distributed free of cost from the various nurseries of the forest department spread across the state.

The medicinal plants are - curry leaves, gooseberry, neem, bahera, jamun, guava, arjun, sahnaj, wood apple and lemon.

"In a scenario where the world was grappling with the harsh realities of the climate crises; the citizens and respective governments of Delhi had

been commendably working against all odds to increase the green cover of Delhi for the last 27 years," Delhi government said.

Pertinently, in the year 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic threw an important revelation on the ecological function of forested habitats as buffers to decrease the likelihood of spread of animal pathogens to human beings.

"This could not emphasize more the role of trees and forests as the true guardians of life on earth. Hence it becomes even more imperative for governments and citizens to join hands to protect the environment, forests and trees, government said.

Van Mahotsav has traditionally been an effective means of involving citizens in the greening of our earth and



its conservation. The Department of Environment and Forests, organized a Vriskhropan Pakwada or Tree planting fortnight from the July 10 to July 26, 2020 to mark the Van Mahotsav, 2020. The fortnight was inaugurated with a ceremonial plantation on the July 10 by Gopal Rai, the Honorable Minister

Environment and Forests wherein plantations was done by the Hon'ble Minister and all senior officials of the forest department followed by token distribution of seedlings present at the site.

To highlight that increase of green cover and planting of trees is a duty of all citizens; all ministers of Delhi are a part of the Vriskhropan Pakwada and ceremonial plantings and token distribution of trees was done by Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister July 13, Kailash Gehlot, Minister of Transport, Law and Justice, Administrative, Reforms, Information Technology and Revenue on July 16 and Rajendra Pal Gautam, Minister of Social Welfare, SC & ST, Gurudwara Elections, Cooperative, Women and Child on July 17.

DMRC starts work of ph-4 Janakpuri-RK Ashram sect

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Friday commenced construction work of the underground section of phase 4 on the Janakpuri West - RK Ashram Marg corridor.

A senior Delhi Metro official said that the work commenced for the construction of Diaphragm Wall at the Krishna Park Extension Metro station and the tunnel segments shall be used for tunneling with "Tunnel Boring Machines" (TBM) on a 1.4 kilometer stretch between Janakpuri West and Keshopur.

The Janakpuri West - RK Ashram Marg Metro corridor consists of a total of 7.74 kilometres of underground lines, he said, adding that the 28.92 km corridor is an extension of Magenta Line and will come up with 22 stations. Construction work on this particular section had started in December last year.



D walls are structural concrete walls constructed in deep excavation based projects. These walls are often used at congested sites, close to existing structures, where there is restricted headroom, or where the excavation is of a depth that would otherwise require the removal of much greater volumes of soil. The excavated area is secured by these walls and then the construction work of the underground station is commenced. This technology

has been used for Delhi Metro's underground stations right since Phase 1.

"The tunnel segments are being cast at the state of the art casting yard developed at Mundka. The casting yard will make 2,100 rings for the tunneling work," he said.

This Work was awarded in the month of December last year on engineering, procurement and construction basis. In spite of all constraints like shortage of labourers and materials due to lock down, the milestone could be achieved on time. On the 24th of June, the casting work of u-girders for the same corridor was started.

The official said that under phase four, 61.679 kilometres of new Metro lines shall be constructed across three different corridors comprising 45 metro stations. "These new sections shall provide interconnectivity among the already operational sections of Delhi Metro. Out of this, 22.35 kilometres will be underground," he added.

Traders' body seeks ban on Chinese machinery, equipment

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As a part of its boycott Chinese goods campaign, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has sent a communication to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh urging him to impose ban on usage of Chinese construction machinery and equipments having Internet of Things (IOT) devices which are able to transmit sensitive information to owners of the company in China.

CAIT national president B C Bhartia in letter to Rajnath Singh said that in various critical projects in border areas, security sensitive areas, highways, infrastructure projects various machines supplied by China and its spare parts are being used quite often.

"In many cases, Indian Companies doing such Construction jobs are using Chinese machines which are installed with Internet of

Things (IOT) devices which transmit machine operating parameters including location in real time," he said.

Bhartia said that if such machines are used in strategically important locations of Construction work in border areas or any other sensitive area which is of much importance for defence, all the data of the machine as also their locations, operating hours and other strategic details can be transmitted to the servers owned by the owner of Chinese companies located in China.

"we have been given to understand two prominent companies using Chinese construction equipment are Putzmeister owned by SANY China and Schwing stetter India, owned by XCMG China" are involved in various such projects. Their machines are duly equipped with IOT devices as stated above and the data accrued by these machines can be used for other purposes," he said.

The CAIT has urged the minister to take a note of the seriousness of the issue and take necessary steps to impose restrictions on using such machines particularly in border and other sensitive areas in the larger interest of the security and sovereignty of the country.

CAIT national president B C Bhartia in letter to Rajnath Singh said that in various critical projects in border areas, security sensitive areas, highways, infrastructure projects various machines supplied by China and its spare parts are being used quite often

Man arrested for killing mother-in-law

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old man has been arrested by Delhi Police for allegedly killing his mother-in-law after his wife left to her parent's house and did not return. The incident occurred on Thursday.

The accused has been identified as Ravi, a resident of Mohan Garden. Police said that the weapon used in crime, an ice pick, was also recovered from the possession of the accused and he is also found previously involved in three criminal cases including attempt to murder, culpable homicide and rape.

According to Anto Alphonse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka district, on Thursday around 12.30 am, police received information that a person has attacked his mother-in-law with an ice-pick in Mohan Garden area.

"He has also severely injured the relatives of the woman who tried to intervene. Later, police rushed to the spot and apprehended him. The injured were shifted to Tarak Hospital where Shashi Bala (62), a resident of Rama Park, declared brought dead. She received multiple stab injuries on her chest, arms and abdomen," said the DCP.

"The other three injured persons - a man, his wife and their 10-year-old son - were later shifted to DDU hospital for the treatment. Interrogation revealed that in 2019, Ravi was arrested in a rape case and remained in jail for nine months," the DCP said.

"Ravi's wife and daughter had shifted to his mother-in-law's house and they were not willing to come back. He was angry with this and believed that his mother-in-law was behind it," said the DCP.

"Ravi planned to kill his mother-in-law and purchased an Ice pick. On Thursday when the victim had come out of the house to see off her relatives, the accused attacked her. When her relatives came in her rescue, they were also attacked," the DCP added.

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Patients attend the morning Yoga session, organised by Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), at Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre and Hospital, Radha Soami Beas Chhatrapur, in New Delhi. Total 282 patients have been admitted to the centre so far Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Gang of robbers busted, 3 held

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the arrest of three accused, the Delhi Police has busted a gang of robbers who allegedly used to target "cash collection agents" in National Capital. Police said that recently the accused had robbed off the bag containing cash from an Amazon employee in South Delhi's Chattarpur area.

The accused have been identified as Kundan (19), Raja (20) both residents of Sangam Vihar area and Hafiz Alam (19), a resident of Khanpur while the fourth accused identified as Javed, a resident of Sangam Vihar, who was released on Parole in the Covid Pandemic is still at large.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DSCP), South district, on July 15, a complain was received from an Amazon cash collecting employee where he stated that he had collected cash from various shops located in the area of Devli and Dakshinpur.

"While he was on his way to office at Chattarpur and reached MB Road near Lado Sarai a TSR hit him from behind and he fell down as well as sustained injuries. Thereafter, three boys got down and started beating him and took away his bag containing cash and ran away in the TSR," said the DCP.

"The complainant further told police that the amount of cash could be around Rs 50,000 as the same was in sealed packets given by different shopkeepers. A First Information Report under section 392/34 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Saket police station and investigation was taken up," said the DCP.

"The TSR was identified by the police team and on 16 July the TSR was stopped and checked. The TSR was driven by one Kundan and from his possession one country made weapon was also recovered. On his instance, Raja and Hafiz were also nabbed," said the DCP.

"During interrogation, the accused revealed that they along with another associate Javed, who was released on Parole in the Covid pandemic had robbed the complainant. The accused further told police that they had the information about the Cash Collection agent going towards Chattarpur with huge cash," said the DCP.

"Manhunt has been initiated to nab the remaining accused and further, investigation of the case is in progress," said police.

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Nigerian held for duping people on pretext of business deals

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 37-year-old Nigerian for allegedly duping people on the pretext of making their business partners in National Capital.

The accused, identified as Chidubem Gabril Okafor, from Nigeria. Police said that he had duped four to five people during the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South district, Okafor used to pose as a trader and asked people to send him herbal seeds, oils, etc. from India.

"The accused told them that they will be treated as partners and will get profit share for each sale. Okafor, his girlfriend Monica and their accomplice used to ask these people to deposit money in their bank accounts for ED clearance and excise duty," said the DCP.

"These bank accounts were opened on the basis of fake names and addresses. Acting on the specific inputs, police arrested Okafor in south Delhi on Wednesday evening and recovered Rs 1,90,000, two ATM cards and four mobile phones from his possession," said the DCP.

BJP protests against 'inflated' power bill

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP on Friday started "Bijli Jan Andolan" at power offices of all 70 Assembly constituencies of Delhi against the "loot" in electricity bills due to Delhi Government and power companies collusion, party president Adesh Gupta said.

Following social distancing, party president, leader of opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and MP Meenakshi Lekhi, MLA Vijender Gupta, Ajay Mahawar staged demonstration at DERC headquarters in Malviya Nagar.

Gupta handed over the memorandum to the DERC Chairman regarding the problems due to huge electricity bills to the people of Delhi. In the same sequence, national vice-president and MP Dushyant Gautam at Krishna Nagar, former MP Manoj Tiwari at Dilshad Garden, MP Ramesh Bidhuri at Kalkaji, MP Gautam Gambhir at Laxmi Nagar power office participated in the demonstration.

BJP president said "It is a matter of shame for Arvind Kejriwal, who promised of Paani Maaf, Bijli Maaf if he comes to power, but today when he is in power, he himself sending huge bills by imposing power purchase



BJP MP Manoj Tiwari and senior leader display placards during a protest demonstration against the Arvind Kejriwal Government, on the issue of allegedly inflated electricity bills, in New Delhi on Friday

charge, pension surcharge, fixed charge and other surcharges in collusion with discoms.

"These bills are also being

sent to the trades, industries, shops and all establishments which were closed during the lockdown and electricity was not used there, even domestic

consumers are being sent bills without subsidy," he added.

Gupta said that the power companies which are already in profit need to impose sur-

charges on the electricity bills, it is clear that Kejriwal is looting the people of Delhi with the collusion of the power companies.

Crime mapping to help effective patrolling in G'gram



PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

Adopting a more scientific Approach to patrolling, the Gurugram police have started a crime hot-spotting exercise in different parts of the city.

As part of the initiative, PCRs and Riders have already been deployed at different checkpoints across the city based on a centralized crime mapping system.

The initiative is aimed at creating a 'crime map' of the city that will show the police what to expect when and where. This knowledge, the police say, will help them take preventive steps.

Based on the crime map and centralized system, a decision about the deployment of manpower on jurisdiction-

based beats have been taken. There are around 40 police stations in the city, over 79 patrol vehicles and 123 riders to go around each jurisdiction on shift basis.

All these patrolling vehicles are directly connected to the Police Control Room Gurugram. If any PCR or Rider goes out of its jurisdiction, its notification will be received through the Geo Fencing system to the Police Control Room, on the basis of which its correct location can be obtained and that PCR or Riders can be contacted.

Apart from this a total number of 2,500 policemen have been deployed (24x7) in three shifts on these PCRs, Riders and check points and weekly holiday will be given regularly to the policemen. In each shift the job hours of the

cops will be eight hours only. These patrolling vehicles have been equipped with wireless systems, GPS and Geo fencing with features of public address systems.

Earlier, the policemen used to be deployed randomly on patrol duty. "In a particular area, if there are more number of crimes, we will deploy more policemen during that time and with this initiative a response time will be improved, people will be able to get police help in less time," said KK Rao, Commissioner of Gurugram police, adding that based on new inputs, the crime map would undergo changes and so would the patrolling. This would also save manpower considerably.

The police chief further informed that these police personnel will not be indulged

in any other duties.

"This centralized program has been released only after crime mapping and thorough study of Gurugram district. For this, the police have also gone through previous crime data (Theft, Robbery and Vehicle theft etc.) and information from the criminals caught were also studied," Rao said.

"After this it was seen that from which place, at what time, day or night such incidents are happening. Which built-up area is causing more incidents and what are the escape routes to avoid arrest by criminals," he added.

All area Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Station House officers have been asked to carry out the exercise in areas that come under their

jurisdiction.

Across the district, the mapping has been completed and preventive measures, including enhanced patrolling, are being put in place.

Meanwhile, residents say crime happens during the day too and most offenders are well-dressed when they approach victims.

"The district has around 40 police stations, the mapping has been done and beat officers are deployed on the basis of the findings," Rao said.

"At the crime prone areas, the exercise has been completed. Hence, we have studied the trend and are fixing CCTV cameras in important localities. Beat officers have asked all residents to inform the local police station if they are going out of station," he added.

ASSEMBLY POLL IN BIHAR 2020

EC holds virtual meeting with all political parties

Opposition parties have sought deferment of polls due to rising corona cases in State

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a demand by the Opposition, and also a ruling alliance partner, to defer the impending Bihar Assembly polls, the Election Commission on Friday held a virtual meeting with the non-National Democratic Alliance (NDA) parties, including the Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), CPI (M), Hindustan Awam Morcha (HAM), CPI (M) and CPI(ML) to discuss the conduct of Assembly polls in the State.

Sources in EC said that the meeting was convened with political parties of Bihar to discuss the conduct of coming Assembly polls. "It's a routine process to discuss with all stakeholders including police, political parties, para military forces before taking the final decision on the conduct of polls," sources added.

"Even though the poll body has already geared up its preparation for the Bihar Assembly polls, they may find it difficult to hold elections in these testing times, till the infections curve is flattened in the State. A large number of officials are required to hold elections, which may also be a challenge," said an officer of EC on the condition of anonymity.

The Bihar Assembly will complete its current term on November 29. After the expiry of the term, the State will go under President's Rule if elections are not held on time.

The Opposition parties have demanded that the Assembly polls be postponed

EC seeks views on poll campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission later wrote to all national and regional political parties seeking their views and suggestions on conduct of election campaign during the "pandemic period". In its one-page letter, the commission sought their replies by July 31.

for safety and security in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. They questioned why the ruling party wants to conduct the polls when people are dying and elections will become the super spreader event in the State.

While the BJP has said the Opposition wants the election to be postponed as it's scared of losing, NDA ally in Bihar, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), also joined the Opposition chorus and wants to postpone the elections.

Experts feel elections will become a super-spreader of coronavirus infections in the State and October-November will be the peak of Covid-19. The Nitish Kumar Government has imposed complete lockdown in the State till July 31 after a massive surge in coronavirus infections. Taking note of it, the Centre has decided to send a special team to assess the

situation. Before the virtual meeting with the poll body, the opposition parties in the State wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora urging him to reassess conducting the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls. Contending that the COVID-19 situation in Bihar is "rapidly worsening", the parties called for an informed decision regarding holding the elections.

They requested the CEC to evolve a mechanism that protects the health of democracy as well as that of people. According to them, there was a possibility of Bihar having more than a million novel coronavirus cases by October-November, when the election is scheduled to take place.

Pointing out that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Bihar badly, the political parties highlighted the existence of 89 containment zones in Patna and lockdown being re-imposed in 16 districts of the State.

Currently, there are 21,764 confirmed novel coronavirus cases in Bihar out of which 14,018 patients have been discharged while 197 fatalities have been reported. Moreover, they claimed that there are many more infected people who haven't been tested.

The Opposition parties, wondered how the poll panel will ensure physical distancing of at least two yards in a state with a population of around 13 crore and electorate of 7.5 crore.

Modi's constant blunders have weakened India: Rahul



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Friday renewed his attack on the Modi Government saying the Prime Minister's constant blunders have fundamentally weakened India.

Rahul also dissected into the reasons that, he claimed, prompted China to take such an aggressive stance against India over the past few months. The Gandhi scion who did a lecture series with few top world experts on economic and health fields, started a video campaign to highlight the failures of the NDA Government.

From India's foreign policies to the economy and relations with its neighbours, Rahul touched upon several aspects that, he said, the Modi Government has destroyed over the past six years, resulting in the Chinese action now.

"Since 2014, the PM's constant blunders and indiscretions have fundamentally weakened India and left us vulnerable. Empty words don't suffice in the world of geopolitics," Rahul stated.

In the video, Rahul asks, "What is it about India's situation that has made China act in such an aggressive way? What is it about this moment in time that allowed China to take such an aggressive stand against a country like India?"

Rahul has been tweeting regularly criticising the government over the deadly face-off with China in the Galwan Valley area, in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the line of duty and 76 were injured.

"A country is protected by its foreign relationships, its economy, neighbourhood and the feeling people have. Over

India's international standing is higher than ever, Jaishankar hits out at RaGa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday came out strongly yet again to hit out at Congress MP Rahul Gandhi for questioning the Modi Government's foreign and economic policies saying India's partnerships with other nations are stronger, the country's international standing is higher than ever and New Delhi engages Beijing on more equal terms politically.

In a series of tweets, while Jaishankar came out with an elaborate response to Rahul's attack, he also advised the former Congress chief to "ask the analysts".

A month ago, Jaishankar had asked Rahul to "get the facts straight" on the fact that all troops on border duty always carry arms, especially

the past 6 years, India has been disturbed and disrupted in each of these sectors. Earlier, India could maneuver in geopolitics with the help of these relations but now India doesn't enjoy these partnerships anymore," he said.

The Congress leader then went on to talk about India's current relations with its neighbours and said that the Modi government has managed to anger Nepal, Bhutan and even Sri Lanka, who used to be friends of the country earlier. He also talked about economic aspects. "Our economy was something that we could boast about going to the world. We have seen the worst economic growth in 50 years.

when leaving post. "Those at Galwan on 15 June did so," Jaishankar had tweeted after Rahul had criticised the Government asking who had ordered unarmed soldiers to go to the stand-off point.

On Rahul's latest attack, Jaishankar said India's major partnerships with United States, Russia, Japan, Europe, etc. are stronger and international standing higher. "India engages China on more equal terms politically," he said.

Jaishankar said India now speaks her mind more openly on contentious issues like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that violates Indian sovereignty, on Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), on maritime disputes in the South China Sea, and on United Nations-sanctioned terrorists who are harboured in Pakistan. "Ask the media," he suggested Gandhi validate.

He said the Government has addressed the border infrastructure imbalance legacy. "Compare 2014-20 with 2008-

14. Budget up by 280%, road building by 32%, bridges by 99% and tunnels by 6 times. Ask the jawans," wrote Jaishankar.

Jaishankar also pointed out to Rahul 'skipping' the topic of Pakistan and said Islamabad surely notes the difference between Balakot and Uri (the air and surgical strikes against terror launch pads in POK) on the one hand and Sharm-el-Sheikh, Havana and 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks on the other.

Further, he listed out India's Hambantota Port agreement between Sri Lanka and China that was concluded in 2008 (under UPA). Colombo couldn't pay back the debt owed to Beijing and had to lease out the strategically located port to China for 99 years. "Ask those who dealt with it," said Jaishankar even as he listed a series of shortcomings of the erstwhile Congress-led UPA Government on dealing with Maldives, Afghanistan and Bhutan.

Unemployment is highest in 40 years. The economy is an absolute disaster," he asserted.

He said the Chinese aggression along the Line of Actual Control can be attributed to the "trouble" India has with its foreign policy, economy and the relationship with its neighbours in the last six years.

He said India's relationship with other countries has become "transactional". We have a transactional relationship with the US, and we have disturbed our relationship with the Russians. We have a transactional relationship with Europe," he said.

"Earlier, Nepal was a friend. Bhutan was a friend, Sri Lanka was a friend. Our neigh-

bourhood, other than Pakistan, was working with India and saw itself as being partnered with India. Today, Nepal is angry with us. If you go to Nepal and speak to the Nepali people, they are furious with what has happened," Rahul said. "Sri Lankans have given a port to the Chinese... So we've disrupted our foreign partners, we've disrupted our neighbourhood."

"So today, you have a country which is economically in trouble, trouble as far as foreign policy is concerned, in trouble with its neighbours and that's why the Chinese have decided that this is possibly this time to act. And that is why they have acted," the Congress MP said.

Dubey tried to escape, police fired in self-defence: UP Govt to SC



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The police party escorting gangster Vikas Dubey from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh to Kanpur had to "fire back in self-defence" as he tried to escape and was killed, the Uttar Pradesh Government has said in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court.

The UP Government has constituted a 3-member SIT, headed by UP additional chief secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy on July 11, to look into the crimes committed by the dreaded gangster and the alleged collusion between Dubey, police and politicians, the affidavit said.

Dubey was killed in the encounter on July 10.

"The only option available to the escort party, under the circumstances was to fire back in self-defence," Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police Hitesh Chandra Awasthy, in the affidavit filed on behalf of the state, on a plea seeking a court-monitored probe by the CBI or the NIA into the encounter killing.

The top police officer denied that Dubey had surrendered at Ujjain and said that the accused who was on the run was identified at the Mahakaal Temple by the Samiti authorities as well as the policemen at the temple premises.

The DGP also dealt with the question as to why Dubey was not handcuffed and said, "There were 15 police personnel and 3 vehicles to escort the accused directly to the court at Kanpur. He had to be produced at Kanpur within 24 hours before court"

Upload rapid antigen testing data on ICMR portal, States, UTs told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure that all positive cases are brought to the authorities for isolation, quarantine or treatment at the earliest, the Government has decided to keep a number of tests being done in the States. It has asked them to upload rapid antigen testing data on the ICMR portal on real-time basis.

In a letter to all States and Union Territories, ICMR DG Balram Bhargava said that "with the use of rapid antigen tests, more and more tests are being carried out and therefore, it is absolutely necessary that all such testing data is uploaded on the ICMR database on real-time basis."

"It is expected that to provide safe healthcare services, all government hospitals/labs as well as all private NABH/NABL hospitals/labs may initiate antigen testing and also apply for obtaining login credentials for data entry into the ICMR portal."

Antigen test is a promising tool for quick diagnosis of COVID-19. ICMR has advised the use of this test for quick detection of COVID-19 patients in containment zones and hospitals.

In an effort to facilitate and further liberalise testing, ICMR has generated five common login credentials for each district of each State/UT, which may be shared with all the Government and private facilities selected for antigen testing.

Bhargava pointed out that in this Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that testing is further enhanced and reporting of the same is done seamlessly states should identify all government and private facilities who would be providing COVID-19 diagnosis through antigen-based

Over 6.35 lakh patients have overcome Covid scourge and are healthy now: Health Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Coronavirus caseload may have zoomed past 10 lakhs but those infected too are also on the fast recovery track with the Union Health Ministry saying that at least over 6.35 lakh patients have overcome the disease and are healthy now.

The Ministry in a statement said that the actual caseload of Covid-19 cases in the country is only 3,42,756, as on date.

More than 6.35 lakhs (63.33%) of the total cases have recovered. The ministry also highlighted that India, being the second-most populous country in the world with 1.35 billion people, has 727.4 cases per million.

On the global scale, cases per million population in India are 4 to 8 times less than some European countries. "The case fatality rate at 18.6 deaths/million of the country is one of the lowest in the world. The collaborative efforts of all States/UTs for house-to-house surveys, contact tracing, surveillance of containment and buffer zones, perimeter control activities,

assays. The ICMR has also asked the states to ensure that all the antigen testing points are appropriately linked with RT-PCR facility, where symptomatic negatives will be tested. The Union Health Ministry said that ramping up

aggressive testing and timely diagnosis has resulted in early identification of the infected persons. This has helped in early treatment too," said the Ministry.

The "Test, Track and Treat" strategy of the Centre being implemented by the State/UT governments is proving to be an appropriate strategy to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. India has seen a steady increase in the number of patients recovering of COVID, said the Ministry.

While the strategy to deal with the spread of infection remains focused on early detection with wide-spread and easily accessible testing, the intensive contact tracing is aimed at restricting the spread.

The Containment strategy implemented across the Containment and Buffer Zones stresses on house-to-house survey and surveillance of patients with focus on the elderly and people with comorbid conditions.

This has ensured that the Covid cases are identified in a timely manner and treated as per the severity of the symptoms either at home or in hospitals, the Ministry said.

of testing capacity has resulted in more than 3 lakh tests being conducted per day. In the last 24 hours, 3,33,228 samples have been tested while the cumulative number of 1,30,72,718 samples tested has resulted in 9473 testing per million for the country.

Bharat Biotech starts human trial of vaccine at PGI Rohtak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The clinical trials of the much-awaited Made in India 'Covaxin', the Corona vaccine of Bharat Biotech, kicked off on Friday with three volunteers being administered with the drug at the Post-Graduate Institute (PGI) of Medical Sciences in Rohtak in Haryana as part of the first phase of clinical trial on the humans. Other sites are being finalised, said the company.

Senior Professor and Head, department of Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine, Dhruva Chaudhry, also the co-principal investigator, said that the three volunteers were short-listed out of the total eight after health checks to ensure proper liver function and absence of infection and were administered the vaccine, according to reports.

"All three tolerated it well. There were no complaints. We observed them for two hours before releasing them. The immediate component of allergic reaction has been taken care of. We will now look for any soreness at the local site over the next 24-48 hours," said Dr Chaudhry, taking care of the clinical aspect of the

process at the institute. Dr Chaudhry said the vaccine had been tested successfully on the animals for safety and response and the process had not entered the first phase of clinical trials on humans. He said the process might take six months and the final assessment on the safety and the antibodies produced would be made by the safety board.

Covaxin has been in news since ICMR director-general Balram Bhargava shot off a letter on July 2 to 12 hospitals and research centres, asking them to enrol subjects for human trials of Covaxin, so that the vaccine is ready for public use by August 15.

Later, the ICMR sought to clarify that the letter was written with an aim to expedite the trial but in keeping with all the safety norms.



Coronavirus का इसानी पर ट्रायल

Starting from one diagnostic lab in January 2020, the country has 1244 labs today, with 880 labs in the government sector and 364 in the private sector, said the official. Bhargava said ICMR has been receiving multiple requests from various public sector units, small private and Government facilities, temples, etc for initiating rapid antigen testing.

"The key strategy to save lives and protect livelihoods remains 'tests, track, treat'. Our continuous endeavour is to increase testing capacity and provide more and more access to people for testing. ICMR recently approved a point-of-care rapid antigen test for diagnosis of COVID-19, in addition to the already existing molecular diagnostic tools," the ICMR head said in the letter.

Master Plan of Bhagirathi ESZ OK'd to speed up Char Dham road project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to pave the way for a faster execution of the Char-Dham road project in the Himalayan region, the Union Environment Ministry on Friday approved the Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) of Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone from Gaumukh to Uttarkashi covering an area of 4179.59 sq km.

The ZMP is based on watershed approach and includes governance in the area of forest and wildlife, watershed management, irrigation, energy, tourism, public health and sanitation, road infrastructure, etc, said Union Environment Minister Prakash Javedkar after a review meeting held here.

The Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification issued way back in 2020 mandated the State Government of Uttarakhand to prepare ZMP to be implemented under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee.

"The approval of ZMP will give a boost to conservation and ecology of the area and also

CPI(M) urges Govt to withdraw EIA notification

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) on Friday urged the Government to withdraw the notifications regarding the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2020, alleging that the draft in this regard has several provisions to support business houses and circumvent judicial findings. In a detailed letter to Environment Minister Prakash Javedkar, CPI(M) polit bureau member Brinda Karat

to undertake developmental activities as permitted under ZMP," said Javedkar. The ZMP was approved at the review meeting of the Char Dham road project in Uttarakhand which was chaired by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat, among

said that the provisions in the EIA draft suggests to overcome the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) orders and even go to the extent of circumventing the orders of the Supreme Court. "Most objectionable is the fact that in the entire document the concerns of activists who are going to be the most affected community due to the dilution of environment regulations do not form any part of the notification," she said.

others. The Char Dham Project proposes to connect Yamnotti, Gangotri, Badrinath and Kedarnath which host Char Dham Yatra in the State of Uttarakhand. The all-weather Char Dham Road has in all 53 projects of 826 km length, involving an investment of ₹ 12,000 crore.

Ex-babus, social activists seek impartial probe into Delhi riots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Many former bureaucrats and police officers, advocates, Left ideologists and social activists on Friday petitioned President Ram Nath Kovind demanding the institution of a Commission of Inquiry into the Delhi riots, accusing partiality in the ongoing probe by the Delhi Police.

Retired police officers Julio Riberio, Saleem Ali, ex-bureau-



crats Wajhat Habibullah, EAS Sarma, activist Aruna Roy and lawyers like Prashant Bhushan were among the 72 signatories accusing total partiality on basis of religion by Delhi Police in the riots-related cases. Apart from allegations of

saving BJP leaders from the cases, the activists and retired officials accused the Delhi Police of custodial torture of Muslims and of those who participated in the protests against CAA-NRC. "A credible and unbiased probe is crucial to ensure public trust. The investigation cannot be allowed to become a fishing and roving expedition aimed at causing a chilling effect on dissent and protest in the country.

BSF smashes Maha boy's dream to meet girlfriend in Pak

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The hopes of a 20-year-old boy from Osmanabad in Maharashtra to meet his "girlfriend" in Shah Faisal, Karachi, dashed to the ground when he was apprehended by the alert BSF just 1.5 km short of the Indo-Pak border in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat before he could illegally cross over to the

other side of the international boundary between the two countries.

The boy, Siddiqui Mohammad Zishan, had befriended the Pakistani girl through Facebook and WhatsApp and travelled from Osmanabad to Rann of Kutch on a motorcycle using Google map.

The crime branch of the

Maharashtra Police had shared information with Gujarat police regarding a missing complaint lodged by Zishan's parents at their native place in Osmanabad.

The Gujarat police in turn shared the information with the Border Security Force (BSF) following which the troops of the border guarding force were alerted. The troops appre-

hended him at 9 PM on Thursday.

His mobile location was traced to be in and around Dholavira (Kutch, Gujarat). During the search operation by the BSF in the afternoon on Thursday (July 16), a black colour Bajaj Pulsar bike (Registration Number: MH 16 D 3702) was recovered near Fossil Park in Kutch district

which he had used to travel from his hometown and abandoned it before leaving towards the border area, a BSF spokesperson said here in a statement.

On preliminary enquiry, he was identified as Siddiqui Mohammad Zishan Mohammad Salimuddin, aged 20 years the BSF said. The apprehended boy is a

The boy fell in love with a girl namely Samra from Shah Faisal Town, Karachi, on facebook

resident of Khwaja Nagar, Osmanabad, Maharashtra.

"He was in a dehydrated state and revealed that he had gone unconscious for about two hours in the Rann," the spokesperson said.

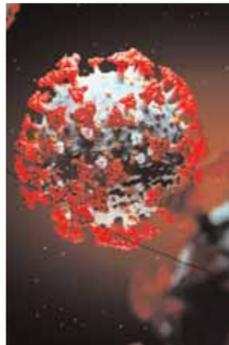
PAN Card/Adhar Card/ATM CARD (UCO Bank) and mobile phone were recovered from his possession. "He revealed that he fell in love with a girl namely Samra from Shah Faisal Town,

Karachi, Pakistan on Facebook and both of them were in contact with each other through Facebook and WhatsApp. He wanted to go to Pakistan and had used the Google map for navigation. The person has been handed over to the police for further investigation and verification of the story given by him," added the official.

Record 2,602 new cases in Andhra

Total cases 40,646

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh has yet again reported an all-time single-day high of 2,602 new coronavirus cases in the last 24-hour cycle ending 9 am on Friday, the third day in a row, taking the State's total tally to 40,646.



Wednesday. As per the latest update, the deaths occurred in 12 of the 13 districts.

There are now 19,814 active cases since 20,298 corona patients have been cured and discharged in Andhra Pradesh.

Health officials said that eight districts recorded new cases running into triple figures -- East Godavari's highest 643 cases, Guntur 367 cases, Chittoor 328 cases, Kurnool 315 cases, Anantapur 297 cases, Srikakulam 149 cases, Nellore 127 cases, and West Godavari 109 cases.

Vizianagaram with 89 cases, Kadapa (55), Prakasam (53), Krishna (37), and Visakhapatnam (23) were low-incidence districts.

On Friday, the state reported 42 deaths, slightly lower compared with an all-time high of 44 deaths on

while two deaths each were reported from Kadapa and Visakhapatnam. Vizianagaram and Krishna districts reported one death each.

As of Friday morning, 837 persons were discharged from hospitals and Covid treatment centres.

Only eight positive cases were detected among returnees from other states to Andhra Pradesh. Of these, six were returnees from Telangana and two from Karnataka.

Till date, 2,461 corona cases have been reported among state returnees. The active cases in this category are 356, as 2,105 persons have recovered till date.

Friday morning also saw two new corona cases among overseas returnees -- one from Kuwait and second with travel history to South Korea.

The corona patients in this category total 434, with 381 persons cured and discharged.

As of Friday, 53 patients in this category are under treatment in the State. **IANS**

Community spread detected across T'puram coastal regions: Kerala CM

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Situation in Kerala has gone out of control as a record number of 791 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Friday, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Briefing the media at Thiruvananthapuram, the Chief Minister said community transmission has set in along the entire coastal region in the district.

"An unprecedented serious situation is prevailing in Kerala. Out of the 791 new additions to the list of Covid-19 pandemic, 532 got infected through social contacts while we are yet to find out how 42 persons got afflicted. There were two deaths in the State. We have to declare a total lockdown along the coastal region by tomorrow," said the Chief Minister.

He said there were 246 new Covid-19 patients in Thiruvananthapuram district while Ernakulam district came second with 115 new patients. As on Friday there are 11,066 active cases in the State and 285 hotspots. The day also saw hospitalisation of 1,152 persons in the State. There are 6,029 persons undergoing treatment as on date across the State, said the CM. The Chief Minister said the testing too has been ramped up in the State. "Till date we have tested 2.75 lakh persons across the State," he said.

Instances like health professionals and health workers getting afflicted/infected with the virus is also a cause of concern, said the CM.

Maha: 11,194 die in 120 days

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

11,194 deaths in 120 days!!! This has been the tragic Covid-19 saga that has unfolded in Maharashtra, ever since the coronavirus claimed first life in the State on March 17, when a 63-year-old man succumbed to the pandemic at the Kasurba Hospital in Mumbai.

With the total number of Covid-19 triggered deaths having risen to a staggering 11,194 on Friday evening, an average of 93 (93.28) died per day in the state during the last 120 days. Initially restricted to major urban areas, the pandemic has now spread to 36 districts, including the hinterland districts of Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Gondia in eastern Maharashtra.

In terms of deaths, Maharashtra with 11,194 deaths accounts for 43.32 per cent of the total 25,602 deaths in the country. On the infection front, the state with 2,84,281 positive cases, accounts for 28.37 per cent of total 1,00,3832 infected cases in the state. The mortality rate, which had at one stage on April 9 touched 6.34 per cent that incidentally was the third highest in the country, has now come down to 3.94 per cent as against the country's average of 2.55 per cent.

With the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the

second week of March this year touched 1,58,140. The recovery rate in the state stood at 55.63 per cent. The mortality rate in the state is 3.94 per cent. The state health authorities has pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,14,648.

Of the 11,194 total deaths reported in the state till Thursday evening, Mumbai -- which is the worst Covid-19 affected city in the state -- has accounted for 5523 deaths (49.33 per cent). In terms of infections, Mumbai with 97,950 positive cases has accounted for 34.45 per cent of the total 2,84,281.

Maharashtra has come a long way since invoked the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 and framed 'The Maharashtra Covid-19 Regulations, 2020' and March 13 March 14 respectively. During the first phase of lockdown i.e March 31, the state recorded 10 deaths and 302 patients.

Till the second lockdown, by April 15, the state notched 187 deaths with 2,916 cases, comprising Mumbai's 114 deaths and 1,896 patients.

During the third phase of lockdown till April 30, the state recorded 459 deaths with 10,498 patients.

By July 16 when the easing of lockdown was underway, Covid-19 had spread its deadly tentacles to all 36 districts in the state, but only one district -- Chandrapur -- has remained 'death-free' so far.

In what has come as a silver lining in the cloud, Mumbai's Dharavi slum has been a success story. It was this Asia's largest slum that the Brihanmbai Municipal Corporation and the Maharashtra government successfully adopted "chase the virus" at Dharavi slum in north-central Mumbai where the authorities have contained the spread of virus to that extent that Asia's largest slum reported just one fresh case on April 10-11. Being densely populated (2,27,136 persons/sq. km), Dharavi had 491 cases in April 2020 with a 12% growth rate and a case doubling period of 18 days. The proactive measures adopted by BMC reduced the COVID-19 growth rate to 4.3 per cent in May 2020 and further to 1.02% in June. These measures also ensured an improved case doubling time to 43 days in May 2020 and 78 days in June 2020.

Several challenges presented themselves to BMC in Dharavi where 80% population depends on community toilets. BMC adopted a model of actively following four T's -- Tracing, Tracking, Testing and Treating. This approach included activities like proactive screening. While 47,500 people were covered by doctors and private clinics in house-to-house screening, about 14,970 people were screened with the help of Mobile Vans, and 4,76,775 were surveyed by BMC health workers.

IED expert among 3 JeM ultras killed

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

At the beginning of the annual Amarnath yatra, a joint team of security forces on Friday gunned down three terrorists including one of the most wanted IED experts of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror outfit in Nagad area of South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

The slain terrorist, identified by the police as a Pakistani national Waleed, was eliminated by the soldiers of 9 Rashtriya Rifles in a close combat while he was attempting to flee along with the civilians.

So far, 14 terrorists have been neutralised in seven counter terrorist operations in the month of July 2020.

According to intelligence inputs, "one of the most wanted terrorists killed in the operation was tasked by their handlers in Pakistan to target the Amarnath yatra this year along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway".

Sharing details of the suc-

cessful operation, Sector Commander 9 Rashtriya Rifles, Brigadier VS Thakur told media personnel in South Kashmir's Kulgam district, "Army has also received credible inputs that terrorists are intending to target Amarnath Yatra somewhere along the Jammu-Srinagar National highway". He, however, assured the pilgrims, "Army is fully ready to foil any misadventure by these terrorists for smooth conduct of Amarnath pilgrimage."

Interestingly, Shri Amarnath Shrine Board authorities are yet to formally announce the final date of start of the yatra this year. The proposed date of launch of the yatra was July 21.

In Srinagar, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar told reporters, the slain terrorist killed in the operation figured in the list of 12 most wanted commanders. He said, so far two of them have been gunned down and now 10 others are

left. We are working round the clock to track down their whereabouts before launching operations.

Sharing details of the joint operation, Brigadier VS Thakur told reporters, "soon after receiving the credible inputs from the Deputy Inspector General of Police, South Kashmir about the presence of two to three terrorists hiding in the area a siege was laid at around 4:30 am in the morning in Nagad area of Kulgam".

He said the operation was full of challenges. "The first challenge was that there was a single road access to the house where these terrorists were hiding and the closest base was 10 to 12 km's away".

He said that the second challenge was the safety of civilians of the house where terrorists had taken refuge.

"Our troops showed restraint and didn't even resort to speculative fire at the target house," he said. He said as part of the standard operating procedure, an appeal was made to

the civilians to evacuate the house.

"Two terrorists fired indiscriminately upon the forces with small arms and also lobbed grenades with an Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL)," Brigadier Thakur said, adding that both were killed without causing any harm to civilians or the house they were hiding in.

He said when civilians were coming out, one remaining terrorist who was wearing a pheran (traditional Kashmiri gown) with a weapon inside, tried to move out with the civilians.

"He was physically stopped and when he tried to use his weapon, there was a hand to hand fight between him and a soldier of 9 RR, who successfully shot the terrorist down. He said, in the milee three army personnel also received injuries and were rushed to the nearby hospital, where they were undergoing treatment and were stated to be stable.

BJP MP says WB Police want to 'encounter' him

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

BJP MP from Barrackpore, Arjun Singh has alleged that the Bengal Government was trying to eliminate him in a police encounter.

"The police seem to have been attempting an encounter with me, my son Pawan Singh -- an MLA from Bhatpara constituency, my wife and other family members," Singh has alleged wondering "In fear of losing your seat how will you stoop Didi (Mamata Banerjee)?"

Once a Trinamool Congress strongman, known for his close proximity to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee before switching sides to the saffron outfit before 2019 general elections when he defeated Dinesh Trivedi the sitting Trinamool MP, Singh has been engaged in a fierce turf war with the TMC for a control over Barrackpore which has witnessed a number of shootouts in recent times.

Singh's comment came soon

after a team of senior police officials descended at his house with to carry out search operation in the premises. "I told them you cannot search the place on basis of information. You don't have a warrant or any evidence. They said they cannot show me proof officially to which I said that they cannot search the house of an MP and MLA just like that" Pawan Singh later said adding the "they had come with ulterior intentions."

Refuting Singh's charges senior Bengal Minister and the president of TMC's North 24 Parganas district Jyotipriya Mullick said "He has been in the TMC for years and we know him very well. He can do anything to stick to power and money. He is running a goonda raj in Barrackpore and whatever he is saying is a part of perpetrating that goonda raj."

Saying that the people of Bengal will not spare the BJP and those of Barrackpore will give him a befitting reply Mullick said "not only the TMC but all other parties are afraid of Arjun Singh in Barrackpore.

TN sees 4,538 fresh cases, 79 deaths on Fri

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The Covid-19 pandemic claimed 79 lives in Tamil Nadu on Friday, the highest fatalities on a single day. The day also saw 4,538 new persons getting tested positive for coronavirus taking the number of active cases in the State to 47,782.

Till date the State had traced 1.6 lakh persons afflicted with coronavirus, according to a release by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The State administration is in a relentless fight with the pandemic as it has ramped up the number of covid testing centres across the State.

On Friday Tamil Nadu had 109 fully equipped laboratories and the State tested 47,539 persons on a single day. Till date the State has tested 1.75 million persons.

Out of the 79 deaths reported during the last 24 hours, 78 were with co-morbidities, which underscores the Government's campaign that those suffering from serious ailments like diabetes, kidney failures and cancer should be vigilant against covid-19.

The stories from the districts too were not encouraging. While the capital city of Chennai showed a hike (1,243 patients), the situation remained grim in the neighbouring districts of Chengalpet (125), Kancheepuram (110) and Thiruvallur (220).

In Tamil Nadu, 17 out of the 38 districts have more than 100 Covid-19 patients. The day also saw 3,391 persons getting discharged fully cured of the pandemic.

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E-TENDER NOTICE
Digitally signed online bids for Two Part, Open Tender through Central Public Procurement Portal (<https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>) are invited on for the following Works.

1. RFP No. TNCC-035/2020 : Assistance/Support Services for Maintenance of all Electrical Installation within the Premises of NRTC, Gothapatna, Bhubaneswar.

2. RFP No. TNCC-036 / 2020 : Supply, Activation & Maintenance of Electronic Meal Cards for Employees of NALCO

For details please visit www.eprocure.gov.in or www.nalcoindia.com. Any Updates / Amendments / Extension/Corrigendum will only be hosted in above websites. **AGM (Elect.), T&C**

601 afflicted in J&K

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

More than fifteen hundred cases of coronavirus have been detected in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the last three days while 36 patients have died due to covid-19 during the same period.

On Friday, the total tally of coronavirus cases reached 12,757 cases after 601 fresh cases were detected while 9 more patients died in J&K. So far, 231 patients have died, 18 in Jammu division and 213 in Kashmir division. On July 15, 493 positive cases were reported and on July 16, 490 cases were detected, sending alarm bells ringing among the health administrators working round the clock to control the situation from slipping out of hands.

According to the media bulletin, with 601 fresh cases of coronavirus the

total number of cases Friday reached 12,757. Out of this 5,968 are still active positive while a total number of 6,558 patients have recovered. Around 84 percent cases are active positive across 10 districts of Kashmir valley while 16 percent cases of active positive patients are spread across Jammu division.

Srinagar district alone has so far reported 31 percent active positive cases while Jammu district has only 3 percent active positive cases.

Srinagar district continues to record the highest number of positive cases in Kashmir valley. On Friday, 150 cases were detected in Srinagar followed by 82 cases from Shopian and 62 from Baramulla.

In Jammu division, Ramban district recorded the highest number of 41 cases followed by 21 from Kathua and 16 from Jammu district.

J&K Govt changes laws to aid construction of Armed Forces facilities outside cantonments

J&K Development Act, 1970, to provide for special dispensation for carrying out construction activities in Strategic Areas".

According to a statement issued by the Department of Information and Public Relations, "The amendments proposed by Housing & Urban Development Department will pave way for notifying certain areas as 'strategic areas' in terms of the requirement of armed forces and in such areas, the regulation of construction activity shall be through a special dispensation. The move is aimed at simplifying the procedures and shall facilitate time-bound development of infrastructure of strategic importance," it added. **PNS**

Till now, various Cantonment boards were chiefly responsible for all the construction activities permitted within the jurisdiction of various cantonments in J&K.

On Friday, "The Administrative Council which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, G.C. Murmu, gave its nod to the proposal of amending the Control of Building Operations Act, 1988, and the

8,308 +ve, 258 die in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 infections crossed 8,000 mark for the second consecutive day in Maharashtra on Friday, as the state recorded 8,308 positive cases, while a staggering 258 persons succumbed to the pandemic.

A day after recording 8,641 Covid-19 infections and 266 more deaths, Maharashtra witnessed 8,308 infected cases taking the total number of positive cases inched close to 3 lakh-mark to touch 2,92,589.

With 258 fresh fatalities, the total number of deaths in various parts of the state mounted to 11,452 on Friday evening.

Of the 258 total deaths, Mumbai accounted for 62 deaths, which took the total number of deaths in the metropolis from 5523 to 5585, while the total number of Covid-19 cases rose by 1,214 to touch 99,164 now.

In addition to 62 deaths in Mumbai, there were 57 deaths in Thane, 45 deaths in Pune, 25 in Nashik, 12 in Palghar, 9 in Solapur, 8 in Raigad, 6 in Nanded, 5 each in Satara and Aurangabad, 4 each in Jalna and Jalgaon, 3 in

Ahmednagar, 2 each in Kolhapur, Latur, Amravati and Osmanabad and one each in Ratnagiri, Hingoli, Beed, Nagpur. There was one more death -- from another State.

With 71,345 infected cases and 1964 deaths, Thane continued to be the second worst hit district in Maharashtra.

Pune, which has emerged as the third worst affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 49,037 infections and 1,282 deaths till now.

Meanwhile, the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year touched 1,60,357.

The recovery rate in the state stood at 54.81 per cent. The mortality rate in the state is 3.91 per cent. The State health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,20,480.

Out of 14,84,630 samples sent to laboratories, 2,92,589 have tested positive (19.70 per cent) for Covid-19 until Friday. Currently, 7,24,602 people are in home quarantine while 44,284 people are in institutional quarantine.

Hindus in TN protest in Gandhian style against blasphemy attempt

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu witnessed a novel protest by Hindus on Thursday in true Gandhian style against attempts by those owing allegiance to various Dravida movements to denigrate Lord Murugan and the famous hymn 'Skanda Sashti Kavacham' composed by Devaraya Swami (b;1820) in praise of the Lord.

Black Alliance, a collective by various Dravidian and evangelist groups had through their social media video 'Karuppar Koottam' had portrayed Skanda Sashti Kavacham as Aabasa Purnanam (Tamil for obscene epic).

For the Hindus in the State, Skanda Sashti Kavacham is a rare hymn that united all cutting across castes and tribes. It is also the most popular hymn sung in the State to invoke Lord Muruga for his blessings.

It was alleged by various Hindu outfits ranging from the BJP to Hindu Munnani that the anchor of the show Surendra Natarajan maligned the sanctity of Hindu Gods by portraying the Kavacham (Tamil for armour) as obscene and it was an act of blasphemy.

L. Murugan, state chief of the BJP staged a protest demonstration in front of his own house along with other party leaders observing the Covid-19 guidelines.

But nowhere was the demonstration as powerful as the one that took place in Thiruchendur, the town in Thoothukudi district, which is home to the famous seaside shrine of Lord Muruga.

Thousands of residents in the coastal town came out of their houses and recited the Kavacham in its typical Ragamalika format incorporating the eternal Abheri, Shubhapanthavari.

Kalyani and Thodi that make the listeners fold their hands in reverence to Lord Muruga.

Murugan had filed a police complaint against Natarajan and 'Karuppar Koottam' for humiliating the Hindu Gods and for blasphemy. Natarajan alleged that the BJP leaders mistook him for DMK and hence foisted the case.

Smuggled gold is saffron and green in colour: CPI(M) to BJP

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M) State Committee, the powerful body of the party in Kerala which met at Thiruvananthapuram on Friday to take stock of the situation arising out of the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel in which the name of an official in the Chief Minister's office was figured, expressed its full confidence in the leadership of Pinarayi Vijayan.

"It was due to the waywardness of M Sivsankar, the then principal secretary of the Chief Minister that led to the tarnishing of the CMO's image. The Chief Minister took effective measures immediately after he came across the reports. The CPI(M) is undertaking a house-to-house campaign to convince the people about the realities behind the scam," said Kodyeri Balakrishnan, the party's Kerala secretary while briefing the media

about the decisions taken in the day-long meeting.

Balakrishnan said the party took strong objection to the comments made by JP Nadda, the BJP national president that the gold in Kerala was red in colour. "I would like to remind him that the gold in Kerala is saffron and green in colour. It was a BMS leader who intervened in the case on behalf of the accused to get the gold consignment released from the Customs officials. The gold was smuggled by persons who are having close links with the Muslim League," said Balakrishnan.

He said the Party asserted its trust and confidence in all the actions taken by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. "It was the high handedness of M Sivsankar, the then principal secretary in the Chief Minister's Office that led to a situation where the CMO's image came under scrutiny. But Sivsankar was suspended from office and new persons have been appointed in his

place. The Government has effectively handled the issue," said the CPI(M) secretary.

Balakrishnan said that P K Krishnadas, one of the BJP leaders was heard demanding the dismissal of the CPI(M) led government. "This shows how despair the BJP is in Kerala. The Congress and the Muslim League are hand in glove with terrorists and religious extremists. They get the support of the BJP in creating lawlessness in Kerala," alleged Balakrishnan.

He said the CPI(M) welcomed the Government of India's decision to entrust the investigation of the gold smuggling case to the National Investigating Agency. "A comprehensive probe by the NIA and the Customs would bring the truth out," said the CPI(M) secretary.

Meanwhile two more persons were taken into custody by the Customs officials from Malappuram in connection with gold smuggling.

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Pilot trapped

Gehlot continues his leverage with the Congress, brandishing legislators and now incriminating audio tapes



It doesn't look like conditions are conducive for Sachin Pilot to continue as a Congressman for too long, leave aside in Rajasthan, which he had nurtured as his political *karmabhoomi* and for which he is claiming rightful accommodation. And if he is indeed disqualified or declared unattached, should the courts not be happy with his explanation on why he defied diktats for party meetings or why his dissent is freedom of speech, he would be out in the cold. But he's not giving up the fight yet. Given the vituperative campaign mounted against him, it appears that while he may be a vote-catcher, he is not a power converter or as artful a politician as his rival from the old guard, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. The latter continues to have a hold on the legislators and the organisational matrix, something that had compelled the Congress high command to name him Chief Minister while making Pilot his deputy despite him shoring up the party's tally across the State. Gehlot has been trying to drive Pilot away from the very beginning, limiting his powers. Then came the sedition charge, accusing him of trying to topple the Government in connivance with the BJP during the Rajya Sabha polls, although the Congress won that round. But it worked as a perfect trap with Pilot walking into it and declaring his freedom from imposed indignities. And now to make sure that his loyalists desert him in a fruitless and asymmetrical battle, Gehlot has released audio recordings of topple game plans between MLAs close to Pilot and the BJP. The party went so far as to name Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in an FIR, saying it had his voice on tape. The Congress has suspended rebel MLAs Bhanwar Lal Sharma and Vishendra Singh from primary membership, a clear signal to Pilot that his fate would be no better. Pilot still denies the overthrow attempts and says he is not joining the BJP but stacked up against a visible show of strength, has little legroom to defend himself. He may appear offensive but fact is Gehlot fuelled his impatience and instead of settling intra-party differences like the smooth administrator he is, let them fester. The CM has herded a majority of the legislators, promised rewards to them and threatened Pilot camp MLAs with disqualification, saying they would stand to lose. And with the police investigation and audio clips, he has managed to convince the Congress central leadership that Pilot had indeed overreached his ambitions to the extent of confabulating with the BJP. The stern statement endorsing Gehlot's line of argument coming from Central emissary Randeep Singh Surjewala is proof enough that Gehlot has again been able to leverage numbers to justify his continuity as a chieftain. This despite certain reconciliatory voices of senior leaders and the Gandhi scions who held off Pilot from making a rash decision. Gehlot has also made sure that by embarrassing and calling out the BJP, which was attempting a subtle kind of Operation Lotus, and weaning away some MLAs off Pilot, the latter looks less attractive as an investment.

The Rajasthan imbroglio shows why the Congress will always be a party of status quo since its old hawks, who have been allowed to unquestioningly harvest their own fiefs while humouring the central leadership, will simply not allow any scope for improvement or inspire the young to take over the baton. If any paratrooping attempt is made, then they threaten rebellion and given the years of familiarity at the local level, they have a far stronger federal appeal and strength of personality to fall back upon. Ask Pilot, who has made inroads but his appeal is just incremental to the resources of Gehlot. He is still a challenger to the chieftain. It shows that even the younger Gandhis, Rahul and Priyanka, have no say as Gehlot went ahead with his belligerence despite their warnings. Gehlot can easily turn himself victim of the younger dynasts, claiming he has always pledged his loyalty to them. And since the States are mostly with the old guard, even Rahul and Priyanka are not confident of swinging things their way and assuage the ascendant ambitions of the younger lot. The Young Turks are no longer young, now in their middling 40s and 50s, and are desperate to register some career benchmarks than continue to be faceless foot soldiers. And given India's changing political landscape, the dynamism of younger federal leaders and a more performance-driven verve in public discourse, they just don't want to wait in a queue. The old hawks are 60 plus themselves and had actually seized the reins of leadership quite young. So they will never understand this angst. Perhaps that's why Rahul himself, frustrated at 50, had stepped down as party president last year. Yes, the old guard wants Rahul back as leader, not for any altruistic reason but simply because the old warriors want to use his surname to shield themselves from taking responsibility for the party's falling fortunes. As for Pilot, he has to lie low for a while than seem power-hungry and even with his own outfit, clustered around prominent Gujjar votes, he would still have to, at some point, deal with the BJP. Then he would have to forget chief ministership for 2023 as BJP has no less claimants. Meanwhile, the Congress may be missing the woods for the trees. Trees which stand despite being reduced to stumps.

Blowing bubbles

Are 'air bubbles' between nations a way of getting international passenger travel going again?



With India having created "air bubbles" with some countries such as France, the UAE and the US and advanced negotiations on with Germany and other nations, it is heartening to see that international commercial air travel is restarting. An "air bubble" is a form of a bilateral air traffic agreement but one that follows the entry rules set by various nations related to registration and quarantine protocols. In India, for example, travellers from abroad are still mandated to undergo one week's institutional and a week's home quarantine. The "air bubbles" also prevent direct "sixth freedom" air traffic, a connecting one. International travellers will not, for example, be able to connect through Dubai or Paris airports while coming to India unless specifically allowed by the Indian Government. However, one wonders how an immigration-free zone such as Europe's "Schengen" area will be managed. The increased flights will hopefully see better utilisation of air fleets and present airlines an opportunity to make some money. However, if experience from India's domestic flights resuming operations is any indication, the volume of passengers might be minimal after an initial rush as few people have an urgent non-personal reason to travel this time.

So these "air bubbles" could be a start as it remains to be seen whether commercial air traffic can ever re-emerge from the pandemic. For example, many airlines made significant volumes of connecting air traffic but with restrictions as well as the risk-averse nature of most people to deal with another large airport, how will airlines like Emirates and Singapore Airlines cope? Emirates, for example, has already retired the earliest of its A380 superjumbo aircraft and laid off thousands of employees as the Indian air traffic that sustained that carrier has vanished overnight. Even storied airlines like British Airways have announced that they will retire their entire Boeing 747 fleet, joining Australia's Qantas and Dutch airline KLM in retiring the "Queen of the Skies." While airlines highlight how safe travel onboard is, drastic reductions in service, thanks to the pandemic, and the lack of passenger confidence have made certain that many of them will not re-emerge from the crisis. Bubbles or not, the aviation industry itself sits on a precarious bubble.

Insights from the ground

Until a viable vaccine is found, finding new ways to cope with the unexpected seems to be our only recourse to brace against the unexpected challenges thrown by the virus



ANUPMA MEHTA

Life is not the way it's supposed to be... The way you cope is what makes the difference — Virginia Satir.

When the famous US family therapist Virginia Satir talked about coping with life's adversities, she was unlikely to have had images of a pandemic like COVID-19 in mind. But her words have a grim relevance today as we learn to live with the unforeseen and unprecedented situation caused by the Coronavirus. A recent telephone survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), through its Data Innovation Centre, documents several insightful findings about public behaviour and the health and economic outcomes of both the virus and the lockdown imposed by the Government to curb its transmission.

The findings explain the surge as most respondents, while adhering to safety protocols, admit that they took advantage of the "unlock" phase to step out of the house when there was no pressing need. At the same time, the economic trough has been gloomy even after opening up with a high percentage of the workforce losing jobs or facing salary cuts. This despite a majority going back to work in the "unlock" phase.

The survey, titled, *The Delhi Coronavirus Telephone Survey (DCVTS)*, was undertaken in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) in three rounds, between April 3 and 6; April 23 and 26; and June 15 and 23 respectively. The most notable finding during the first round of the survey was the successful communication by the Government of the dangers associated with the virus and the consequent need for a stringent lockdown — nearly 87 per cent of the respondents asserted their support for the lockdown to be extended for two more weeks beyond its original end date of April 14, notwithstanding the hardships caused by it.

The study also throws light on other aspects of dealing with COVID-19, including the level of awareness among the people about the risks and symptoms of the disease; their threat perceptions in terms of the chances of contracting the virus and their attitudes relating to mandated safety protocols such as hand hygiene, social distancing and the use of masks. In addition, it highlights the impact of the lockdown on the incomes and livelihoods of all sections of society.

Pandemic makes inroads: With the virus making nascent inroads into the country during late March and



early April, it was important to explore awareness levels about the disease and the possible prevention measures among the general public. A strange paradox that emerged in the first round was the dissonance between people's perceptions about the dangers posed by the virus and the possibility they envisaged of getting infected themselves.

While almost 95 per cent of them averred that the virus was highly dangerous, as many as 65 per cent of them did not expect themselves or any of their household members to get infected. This sense of confidence in the ability to sidestep the infection was obviously put to the test after the easing of the lockdown in June, which has been followed by a massive surge in positive cases in Delhi and the adjoining areas.

Immediate impact of the lockdown: With a complete shutdown of all activities and commercial establishments starting March 25, the first phase of the NCAER survey indicated that 25 per cent of the rural and 33 per cent of the urban residents suffered shortages of essential items, including food supplies, cooking fuel and even medicines. Subsequently, however, while shortages of essential supplies somewhat eased when the respondents were interviewed during the second round of the survey in the third week of April, people's worries had now squarely shifted to the economic impact of the lockdown. The predominant concern during this period was the decline in incomes and loss

of livelihoods due to the closure of offices and businesses.

During DCVTS-2, an overwhelming majority of the respondents — 82 per cent — reported loss of income or wages, especially daily wage workers and employees in small businesses. Further, among these, 72 per cent of casual workers complained that their incomes and wages had suffered "very much", indicating that the brunt of the economic distress was borne by workers from the informal sector. Even among the salaried class, 38 per cent of the workers either received truncated salaries or were relieved of their jobs.

Interestingly, and perhaps as a saving grace, farmers did not seem to be overly affected. Only 34 per cent reported a drop in incomes during the lockdown. This because most of them were busy harvesting the Rabi crop and doing preparations for the Kharif crop during this period.

Focus on safety measures during "unlock" Phase I: The most conspicuous results of the NCAER's DCVTS were observed in the third round, which virtually stood at the cusp between the lockdown and phased "unlocking." Characterised by the opening up of a range of commercial activities and establishments, this period in early June was critical to determine how far people were adhering to safety measures against the disease. Some level of complacency was witnessed after the "unlocking" as 73 per cent of the respondents reported going out for some reason during the period of one

week prior to the survey.

More worryingly, as high as 61 per cent of the respondents above the age of 60 years had ventured out of their homes despite the advisory to elderly people to remain indoors as they fall in the high-risk category. Overall, there was a general adherence to the precautionary measures specified by the Government and health authorities, with 95 per cent of the surveyed people affirming that they were wearing masks or face coverings while going out; 66 per cent reported frequent use of hand sanitisers; and only 0.8 per cent of the respondents claimed that they did not follow any precaution at all.

Economic repercussions of COVID-19: In what could signify a gradual economic revival post the lockdown, 78 per cent of the households reported that their members had resumed going to the workplace in the second and third weeks of June. But the trajectory of loss of livelihoods and incomes for daily wage workers and small businesses reported in the second round of the survey continued in the third round, too.

Thus, DCVTS-III showed that more than 70 per cent of the households relying on wage work and business as the main source of income suffered extensive loss of earnings. A large section of these households was also compelled to borrow money to counter financial distress. In fact, medium and small businesses have literally withered under the onslaught of the economic earthquake unleashed by the virus, with 52 per cent of

them reporting suspension of activities during the lockdown in May and June and 12 per cent shutting down completely.

Have welfare measures mitigated financial suffering? Apart from documenting the adverse impact on incomes and wages, the third round of DCVTS also focussed on the role of Government programmes and measures to ameliorate the suffering of the marginalised sections. It was found that a large number of households — 58 per cent of the total surveyed and 61 per cent in Delhi alone — were given extra rations through the use of Aadhaar cards and e-coupons. About 35 per cent received cash transfers from the Government in May and June, taken together. While most of the fund transfers were achieved through Jan Dhan accounts, the Government also used other schemes like the Ujjwala Yojana and PM Kisan programme to offer financial relief to the affected households.

So what does the future portend? The results of three rounds of the NCAER survey could offer some insights to policy makers for negotiating the rough road ahead as we brace to meet the persistent challenges of a virus that refuses to go away. Until a viable vaccine is found, possibly by next year, turning to Virginia Satir's practical advice to find new ways of coping with the unexpected seems to be our only recourse.

(The writer is Consultant Editor at NCAER. Views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

Talks are on to resolve the ongoing border dispute but I cannot guarantee to what extent the situation will be resolved.



Union Minister
—Rajnath Singh

A race is fair, the result is valid only if the starting point was the same for every player. If not, the comparison and the ensuing onslaught will take away the dignity of the sport eventually.



Actor
—Taapsee Pannu

For democracies and freedom-loving people around the world, it is an imperative that we push back against the challenge that the Chinese Communist Party presents to us all.



US Secretary of State
—Mike Pompeo

Give me six months to train, let me play three Ranji games, I'll score runs for India in Test cricket. I don't even need six months, give me three, I will score runs.



Former Indian captain
—Sourav Ganguly

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Step in right direction

Sir — The Supreme Court's order allowing people suffering from disabilities the same benefits of relaxation in public education and employment as Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) candidates is welcome. It is significant because until now they used to get relaxations on age limits but not in marks and in competitive exams like civil services.

They are often not able to get the benefit of reservation in education and employment because they do not meet general standards. They face multiple barriers, not just social attitudes but barriers in infrastructure, information, communication, administration and the judicial system. It is the duty of the Government to enable a level-playing field where people with disabilities can participate on an equal basis with others. Extending relaxations will have wide-ranging implications. This will see more disabled people being able to get into careers of their choice. The mind is still supreme.
Ravi Teja Kathuripalli
 Hyderabad

China's Iran gamble costs India dearly

This refers to the editorial, "Trouble in Chabahar" (July 16). Historically, India and Iran have stood shoulder to shoulder. Be it Kashmir or Babri Masjid, Iran has been with us. India, too, reciprocated by importing its oil requirements from Iran. Chabahar port, a joint project of India, Iran and Afghanistan, is connected with India's west coast. The initiative signifies India's trade outreach to Russia and Central Asia bypassing Pakistan. According to a 2016 agreement, India was to develop a 628-km rail line from the port to Zahedan along the Afghanistan border. Since India couldn't effectively circumvent American sanctions on Iran, the latter decided to go ahead with the line on its own. Normally, it wouldn't have been of much consequence but for certain geopolitical developments. First, India is getting closer to the US and has also stopped buying oil from Iran. Second, Indo-China and US-China relations are at their worst. China smelt an opportunity and seduced Tehran with a \$400 billion cheque. In return, China gets oil at cheap rates. With this, China acquires strategic hold over Iran and also prepares it militarily.
 Iran knocking India out of the rail project has this



damaging China connection. Chabahar is billed as India's response to Pakistan's China-operated Gwadar port. In due course of time, Chinese investments in Iran are likely to render Chabahar irrelevant and may cease to be the centerpiece of Iran's "Looking to the East" policy. Our strategic ties with Iran are under the Dragon's siege. The agreement cocks a snook at the US and also provides China control over the Iran-Pakistan coast. Opening up of a new geopolitical flash-point is, of course, a bonus.

SK Prabhakar
 Gurugram

Trouble with Iran

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Trouble in Chabahar" (July 16). Iran's decision to drop India out of the Chabahar rail project has come as a major setback for

India. The Chabahar port itself is of immense strategic value. Not only does it promise the development of regional maritime transit traffic between India, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia but is important from the business point of view as it helps us fulfil

regional aspirations. India's failure to build the rail link between the Chabahar port and Zahedan in the stipulated time proved costly.

But this isn't the first time that an ambitious overseas infrastructure development project

has faced an inordinate delay in its completion. Take the example of the Pancheshwar dam project in Nepal, which has been hanging fire since 1991, or the trilateral highway between India, Myanmar and Thailand. New Delhi must show the will to confront this challenge or be prepared to pay the price.

Kirti Bahawan
 Kanpur

No lockdown, please

Sir — With Coronavirus infections near one million, many States have imposed lockdown once again in selected areas for varying intervals. Earlier lockdowns being an example, neither could they yield any positive result nor could we enhance preparedness. Lockdowns can never be a permanent answer. It's time we make peace with the virus and start living with safeguards in place. Sanitizers, masks and social distancing should be the *sine qua non*.

Prathna
 Via email

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Polls can wait, Bihar cannot

It is time the EC, the Centre and State governments and political parties rise to the occasion and put the welfare of Bihar and its people first



SARVESH TIWARI

Uncertainty over controlling the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing globally and in India, too, with the Centre and State Governments being clueless about handling the outbreak and the socio-economic challenges arising from it. At a time like this, who wants an election in Bihar or anywhere else in the country, for that matter? However, the ruling NDA has other ideas and is going ballistic about the elections despite its dismal performance in managing the situation arising out of the outbreak. With the lowest testing rate in the country and the infection spreading fast, Bihar will soon have more than 10,000 active cases, as it registered 1,385 new infections on July 16, taking the number of active cases up to 7,289. The State will very soon be dealing with the floods that usually happen during the monsoon season, and as if that is not enough, the Government has failed to control the annual outbreak of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome popularly known as *chamki bukhari*. Several children have already died of it.

Right now, the priority of the Government should be saving lives and providing livelihoods to migrant labourers who were forced to travel 1,200 km and more on foot when they were left to fend for themselves by their employers in the metro cities. Reduced to living in wretched conditions and unsure of the future, it is the duty of the Government to plan for them. What we see, however, is the thirst to cling to power and rush the State into an election due to the NDA's confidence in its political arithmetic, even as the pandemic shows no signs of abating.

While the Election Commission (EC) has conducted polls on a much bigger scale in the world's largest democracy with great efficiency, the current circumstances come with unprecedented challenges. First, the EC will have to ensure strict implementation of the guidelines for preventing the spread of the contagion. This itself is going to be a major problem for the EC to solve. Here, technology can be of some help, but given the fact that Electronic Voting Machines have invited doubts in the past, a new technological intervention will find few takers, especially in a backward and politically-charged State like Bihar. Disinfecting polling centres, enforcing physical distancing, provision of gloves and masks, use of hand sanitisers and providing separate enclosures for voters with temperature are bare essentials when Coronavirus cases are rising alarmingly across the country, barring a few States. The elections may spread over a much longer period of time and may require not only a huge deployment of security forces but also of healthcare staff in the hinterland.

Many have given the example of elections in South Korea. It is an unfair comparison because of the population factor alone. While the State of Bihar has a population of nearly 10 crore, the east Asian nation has just 5.16 crore people. Plus, the state of South Korea's infrastructure and logistical preparedness, credible technological tools and level of education and development make it a different ball game altogether. Bihar generally witnesses a high voter turnout. However, the intensity of participation in the present scenario is anybody's guess and will be quite a blow to the basic duty of the EC, that all voters must cast their vote, freely and fearlessly.

The electoral blitzkrieg unleashed by the BJP hasn't gone down well with the people of the State who are lamenting the poor COVID-19 arrangements and general administrative apathy towards the handling of the outbreak. Take for example, Nautan village in Champaran district. Here the quarantine centre is in a very bad shape and lacks basic necessities like fans and bulbs. The state of hygiene and toilets is pathetic and people are staying there in deplorable conditions. I am saying this authoritatively as I was personally involved in taking care of the labourers who returned to the State and failed to receive any help from the Government. The Centre and State should be vigilant and improve conditions in places like these. Test kits and Personal Protective Equipment are in short supply. Voices talking of misappropriation of funds and graft are getting louder in the State which is yet to see community-level checking of infections.

This is an opportunity to bring people together, create social bonhomie and a social alliance cutting across caste lines. This is the time to show solidarity with businessmen who have suffered losses, labourers who have returned home in penury but have acquired some skill and experience working in the metros. There are enough funds with the Government and re-engaging them only requires political will. This is the right time to ignite the latent constructive energy of Bihar. It is time the EC, the Centre and State governments and political parties rise to the occasion and put the welfare of Bihar and its people above all. There are enough constitutional provisions that make way for polls later. Hopefully, the pandemic would be under greater control and Bihar, too, would be better prepared to hold the elections by then.

(The writer is a Bihar-based politician and political analyst)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE FAITH IN THE GOVERNMENT BUT IN THE INTEREST OF JUSTICE, I REQUEST YOU (AMIT SHAH) TO INITIATE A CBI ENQUIRY INTO SUSHANT'S SUDDEN DEATH.

—ACTOR
RHEA CHAKRABORTY



THERE IS NO NEED TO GIVE THE CASE TO THE CBI. OUR POLICE OFFICERS ARE CAPABLE AND ARE CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION IN THE RIGHT WAY.

—MAHARASHTRA HOME MINISTER
ANIL DESHMUKH

Games politicians play

The way in which the anti-defection law has been brazenly thwarted calls for its review, including the need to debar anyone from becoming a Minister without first getting elected to the legislature



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

The high political theatre in Rajasthan and earlier in Madhya Pradesh has yet again brought to the fore the efficacy or otherwise of the anti-defection law enshrined in the Constitution by the 52nd Amendment, which was later further amended by the 91st Constitution (Amendment) Act, in 2003. The sum and substance of these constitutional amendments is that a member of the legislature, whether of the Union or the State Legislature, shall be disqualified, if s/he is disqualified under the Tenth Schedule. The precise grounds for disqualification of a legislator, as per the Tenth Schedule are, if s/he has voluntarily given up his/her membership of such political party, or if s/he votes or abstains from voting in the House contrary to the direction or the whip issued by the political party s/he is a member of.

However, in the case of merger of not less than two-thirds of the members of the legislative party with another party, the anti-defection law will not apply. The competent authority to decide the question of disqualification is the presiding officer, the Chairman/Speaker, which, after the judgment of the Supreme Court in the Kihoto Hollohan vs. Zachilhu and others, case in 1992, can be a subject of judicial review.

The burning question is whether Sachin Pilot, Congress MLA in the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha, has incurred disqualification under the Tenth Schedule. He has been removed from the post of Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan and the post of Pradesh Congress Committee president, for breaching party discipline. There were reports of the Rajasthan Congress legislative party having issued showcause notices to Pilot and his loyalist legislators to explain why disciplinary action should not be initiated against them for defying the party. Pilot surprised everyone by moving court and the Division Bench of the Rajasthan High Court has taken up the petition filed by him and 18 MLAs against the disqualification notices issued to them by Assembly Speaker CP Joshi. The court has not allowed any action against the leader and the MLAs till Tuesday.

The fact remains that every party is empowered under its constitution to enforce discipline within its ranks for the larger objective of attaining its political goal. No doubt, without discipline, political parties would be reduced to a mere horde of power-hungry people without any sound political moorings and identity. The moot point is whether the Congress Party can get Pilot and his loyalist legislators disqualified under the anti-defection law. Apparently, Pilot and his fellow MLAs have neither defected, nor voted or abstained from voting against the party whip in the Vidhan Sabha. The law of defection, in a way, can be likened to the three principles of criminal jurisprudence which require twin tests of *mens rea* and *actus reus* in order to constitute a criminal offence. Mere probability of defection cannot be a ground for disqualification, except that a political party can expel such members from the legislature party. Such members can be declared as "unattached" by the Speaker but cannot be disqualified in view of the clear legal provision.

How political parties govern themselves —

“THE LAW OF DEFECTION, IN A WAY, CAN BE LIKENED TO THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE WHICH REQUIRE TWIN TESTS OF MENS REA AND ACTUS REUS IN ORDER TO CONSTITUTE A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. MERE PROBABILITY OF DEFECTION CANNOT BE A GROUND FOR DISQUALIFICATION, EXCEPT THAT A POLITICAL PARTY CAN EXPEL SUCH MEMBERS FROM THE LEGISLATURE PARTY.”



whether they promote democratic, collegial or high command-centric leadership — is their internal matter on which they flourish or perish in course of time. In an all-India political party, inherently, there will be internal struggle among the leaders for higher positions. Eventually, it is the survival of the fittest, i.e. the leader who garners maximum support within the party. Yet, such a leader cannot last long if he is autocratic, exceedingly self-centred and undermines the dignity of his colleagues and party functionaries who gave their sweat and blood to build the matrix.

In Rajasthan, there is a political limbo for the moment and the ball is now in the court of Pilot. It is up to him whether he resigns along with his fellow MLAs from the Congress Party and the legislature and contests another election by forming a new party or joins the mainstream rival party, which of course he has openly ruled out.

To acquire power "is a general inclination of mankind, a perpetual, restless desire that ceases only in death." To nurture ambition is not prohibited by the anti-defection law which only seeks to curb the evil of unprincipled defection.

Interestingly, politics, being a river, is not always the same. In Madhya Pradesh, Congress Chief Minister Kamal Nath had to resign when he saw the writing on the wall, which made it clear that he had lost majority support in the Vidhan Sabha. What happened was inconceivable but its roots lay in the autocratic, exclusionary and factional politics of the Chief Minister.

Jyotiraditya Scindia, disgruntled with the Congress Party, accused it of "rampant corruption" and resigned from the Vidhan Sabha along with 22

MLAs loyal to him. This brought about the fall of Kamal Nath and the reinstatement of Shivraj Singh Chouhan of the BJP as the Chief Minister.

Scindia later joined the BJP with his supporters on March 11. But in a brazen mockery of the Constitution, 14 MLAs of the 22 Scindia loyalists, who had resigned from the Vidhan Sabha, were inducted into the Council of Ministers in the second Cabinet expansion. Of the 34 Ministers, including the Chief Minister, 14 are Scindia loyalists, creating acrimony within the BJP. What is most intriguing is that these 14 Scindia loyalist Ministers are not members of the Vidhan Sabha. Articles 75(5) and 164(4), couched in almost identical words, provide that "a Minister who for any period of six consecutive months is not a member of the Legislature of the State, shall at the expiration of that period, cease to be a Minister." Now these 14 Ministers will have to get elected before the expiry of six months from the date they were sworn in.

The Constitution provides an enabling mechanism to induct talent in the Council of Ministers if it is not available within the duly-elected legislature. There have been many instances in the past, especially at the Union level, when non-members were made Ministers and later they were elected to the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. For instance, PV Narasimha Rao was not a Member of Parliament (MP) when he was sworn in as the Prime Minister of the country. He later contested from Nandyal in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh and got elected to the Lok Sabha.

Similarly, Deve Gowda was not an MP when he was sworn in as the Prime

Minister in 1996. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha. In February 1995, Pranab Mukherjee, not an MP then, was sworn in as Minister and he briefly held the External Affairs portfolio but could not be elected to Parliament due to a certain tussle with the then redoubtable TN Seshan, the Chief Election Commissioner of India. Mukherjee had to resign and he was later made the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission by Narasimha Rao. In the same way, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, a career Indian Foreign Service officer, was inducted into the Narendra Modi Cabinet and later elected to the Rajya Sabha.

But in Madhya Pradesh, this enabling mechanism was used wholesale to promote a political rift, create a split and engender the downfall of an elected Government. Obviously, no disqualification was incurred, so to speak, on the ground of defection. But the question is much larger, as it involves the spirit of the anti-defection law. The Constitution (52nd Amendment) was enacted to curb the evil of defection, considering it a serious threat undermining the very foundations of democracy and the lofty principles which sustain it.

The manner in which the intent of the anti-defection law has been brazenly thwarted calls for its review, including the need to debar anyone from becoming a Minister without first getting elected to the legislature and debarring such members from contesting elections for at least three years.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary Lok Sabha, an author and writes on constitutional and parliamentary matters.)

Food policy must focus on quality, not quantity

India must abandon policies that prioritise staple foodgrains above all other crops. It must diversify its food systems



PRABHU PINGALI

So successful have India's food policies been that the country has regular bumper crops of wheat and rice. For instance, the nation's foodgrain production is estimated to have touched a record 295.67 million tonnes in the 2019-20 crop year (June-July) — the fourth-consecutive year that the country has witnessed record production — buoyed by good rains, according to Agriculture Ministry's latest data. This is up by 10.46 million tonnes from the previous year.

Yet despite this major success in producing India's staple foodgrain, and in part because of it, nearly 210 million Indians remain under-nourished, and many more suffer from other forms of malnutrition, like micronutrient deficiencies and obesity. The crux of the problem is that

India's agricultural sector produces more than enough foodgrain but fails to meet demand for vegetables, pulses and other nutrient-rich foods.

If the country is to make good on its commitment under the United Nations' second Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to achieve zero hunger and provide access to nutritious food for all, India must abandon policies that prioritise staple foodgrains above all other crops. It must diversify its food systems and focus not on the quantity it produces, but the quality.

This is the conclusion of a newly-published study, the 2020 *Food, Agriculture and Nutrition in India*, that provides a detailed analysis of the state of hunger and malnutrition in the nation. Using district-level data and maps, the report highlights stark geographical differences in the extent of the hunger problem and identifies potential paths forward.

Over the last four decades, the country has made significant progress in reducing hunger, at least in terms of meeting the minimum calorie requirements. However, as evidenced most clearly in the high prevalence of

child stunting, micronutrient malnutrition is endemic. The needle on progress in the reduction of child stunting has hardly budged over the decades, with 43.3 million stunted children in the country. Even as the nation struggles to tackle these problems, it faces an emerging threat in the rapidly rising number of adults who are overweight or obese, and consequently, in the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Much of the disparity in nutritional outcomes in India can be traced back to different levels and rates of development among the States. In the underdeveloped, agriculturally-unproductive States of central and eastern India, cereal grains dominate diets and rates of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are high. States in the north and south of the country, with developed agricultural sectors and thriving manufacturing and services industries, have lower rates of undernutrition, but high rates of obesity.

Addressing both ends of the malnutrition spectrum requires enhanced availability and access to diverse and nutritious foods that are

affordable for impoverished people. To achieve this goal, continued high-level investments in agricultural infrastructure and research are needed to sustain past gains in productivity growth and exploit new opportunities for growth, such as the renewed interest in millet and pulses. India must re-orient agricultural policy away from its traditional focus on staples and towards enhancing the productivity and supply of coarse cereals, pulses, fruits, vegetables and livestock products.

A successful re-orientation of the agricultural policy on the national level will require solutions at the local level. Localised cropping systems across the country must be rethought to boost productivity and increase crop diversity while prioritising sustainability. For example, in eastern India, where staple agriculture is less productive on account of poor infrastructure and agro-climatic conditions, less water-intensive crops, such as pulses, coarse cereals and oilseeds, should be adopted.

Not only will such changes increase India's supply of nutrient-rich foods, helping to make them more

accessible and affordable, it will also increase farmers' incomes, empowering households to devote more resources to nutritious foods.

Farmers with small holdings also need support to overcome steep transaction costs due to low economies of scale, poor market connectivity, low bargaining power, and inadequate information about prices and quality standards.

This is particularly true for perishable products like fruits and vegetables, which are among the most nutrient-rich. By investing in rural market infrastructure, enacting market reforms and supporting farmer aggregation, India can enable its small-holding farmers to improve their livelihoods while producing more diverse agricultural products.

Research also shows that empowering women to play a greater role in agriculture and household decision-making improves nutrition outcomes. Likewise, improving infrastructure for clean water and sanitation leads to better health and nutrition results. These strategies should be pursued in conjunction with changes in agricul-

tural policies. Additionally, food assistance programmes should be reformed to offer more nutritious foods. Household diet preferences suggest a move away from staple grains but the Public Distribution System (PDS) is still limited to wheat and rice. By building the market infrastructure to support the production and procurement of non-staples, the Government can diversify the PDS to include nutritious foods like coarse grains and pulses.

The zero-hunger challenge is a multi-sectoral task and requires explicit strategies for convergence of policies and programmes across Ministries at the Central, State and local government levels. Breaking out of disciplinary and organisational silos is crucial for ensuring success.

Achieving zero hunger in India is a significant challenge but can be met if the country re-orient its policies to unleash the full, untapped potential of the agricultural sector, with an emphasis on producing nutritious, non-staple crops.

(The writer is Founding Director, Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition)



FOREIGN EYE



A CRISIS IN THE MAKING

The union is in jeopardy if Prime Minister Boris Johnson treats Scottish concerns over Brexit as casually as he treats everything else. The likelihood that he will blunder into a constitutional crisis in Scotland and weaken the union with rhetoric that stokes an English nationalist backlash is high. He does not want to be recorded in history as the man who broke the UK, but there is no sign that he has a strategy for avoiding the confrontation.

(The Guardian editorial)

China says it's not trying to replace US, won't be bullied



Beijing: China isn't seeking to confront or replace the United States as the world's top technological power, but will fight back against "malicious slander" and attacks from Washington, a foreign ministry spokesperson said Friday, responding to a litany of recent accusations from the Trump administration.

Hua Chunying said China's chief concern was improving the livelihoods of its citizens and maintaining global peace and stability, despite what critics say is an increasingly aggressive foreign policy that looks to expand Chinese influence in the military, technology, economic and other spheres.

"As an independent sovereign state, China has the right to safeguard its own sovereignty, security and development interests, to defend the achievements made by the Chinese people with hard

work, to refuse any bullying and injustice against China, and to fight back against malicious slander and attacks by the US against China," Hua told reporters at a daily briefing.

Her comments came in response to a speech Thursday by Attorney General William Barr in which he cautioned American business leaders against promoting policies favourable to Beijing. He

asserted that China at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic had not only dominated the market on protective gear, exposing American dependence on Beijing, but had also hoarded supplies and blocked producers from exporting them to countries in need.

Barr also accused hackers linked to the Chinese government of targeting American

universities and businesses to steal research related to coronavirus vaccine development, leveling the allegation against Beijing hours after Western agencies made similar claims against Russia.

"The People's Republic of China is now engaged in an economic blitzkrieg — an aggressive, orchestrated, whole-of-government (indeed, whole-of-society) campaign to seize the commanding heights of the global economy and to surpass the United States as the world's preeminent technological superpower," Barr said.

Numerous Trump allies have issued strongly worded messages over China in recent days, coming at a time when bilateral relations have fallen to their lowest point in decades over issues from accusations of technology theft to China's claims in the South China Sea.

Hua dismissed Barr's accu-

US officials have lost their minds: China

Beijing: US officials have "lost their minds and gone mad" in their dealings with Beijing, China's foreign ministry said Friday, in the latest verbal salvo between the two superpowers.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing have run high this year and some of the most outspoken critics of China in American congress were this week hit with sanctions, days after the US imposed visa bans and asset freezes on several Chinese officials.

US Attorney General Bill

Barr added fuel to the fire on Thursday when he accused Beijing of mounting an "economic blitzkrieg" to replace Washington as the world's preeminent power and spread its political ideology around the world.

But foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Barr and other American officials were criticising China to distract from domestic political problems.

"These people, for self-interest and political gain, do not hesitate to hijack domestic

public opinion... to the point where they have lost their minds and gone mad," she said.

Hua added that China had no intention of challenging or replacing the US and said she hoped that Washington could "return to rationality" in its China policy.

"A sparrow cannot understand the ambition of a swan," she said.

"This is a serious misjudgement and misunderstanding of China's strategic intent." **AFP**

Atlanta Mayor: Trump broke city's mask rule, ignored science

Atlanta: Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp sued the city of Atlanta over its face-mask requirement just after President Donald Trump arrived in the city without wearing a mask, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms said Friday.

In an interview on CBS "This Morning," Bottoms questioned the timing of the lawsuit filed shortly after Trump's Wednesday visit to the city, calling the litigation "really odd."

"I pointed out that Donald Trump violated that order when he landed at our airport and did not wear a mask," she said.

She said Kemp "is a Trump loyalist and he seems to work very hard to please the president of the United States, and that is often at the expense of the people in our state."

Asked whether she thinks Trump encouraged Kemp to file the lawsuit, she said she couldn't speak about whatever conversations they had.

But she added that Trump "was violating the rules of our city in just a blatant disregard for the science." Kemp defended the lawsuit during a press conference Friday morning, accusing Atlanta officials of playing politics and not enforcing State orders already in effect.

Kemp said the lawsuit was filed "on behalf of business owners, their employees and hardworking Georgians throughout the region who continue to struggle to make ends meet." "Mayor Bottoms mask mandate cannot be enforced, but her decision to shutter businesses and undermine economic growth is devastating," the Republican governor added.

Kemp and Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr, in a state court suit filed late Thursday, argued that Bottoms has overstepped her authority and must obey Kemp's executive orders under state law. **AP**

Nepal's ruling communist party calls key meet on Saturday to end Oli-Prachanda infighting

Kathmandu: Nepal's ruling communist party on Friday decided to convene a meeting of its top decision-making body on Saturday to try and end the tussle for power between beleaguered Prime Minister and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" that has divided the party.

The decision to hold a meeting of the 9-member Central Secretariat was taken hours after the party postponed for the fifth time the Standing Committee meeting till Sunday to give more time to Oli and the rival faction led by Prachanda, the executive chairman of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) to have more talks.

According to Prime Minister's press secretary Surya Thapa, the NCP has called a secretariat meeting after the two top leaders have agreed to call a conclave of the highest body of the party ahead of the 45-member Standing Committee meeting on Sunday in a bid to strike a power-sharing deal by sorting out their differences.

During previous meetings, Oli has refused to resign or give up his position as chairman of the NCP as demanded by the faction led by Prachanda.

The party has also decided to hold a crucial meeting of its 441-member Central Working Committee (CWC), Ganesh Shah, a Standing Committee member, told PTI. **PTI**

Taliban make big changes ahead of expected talks with Kabul

Islamabad: In one of the most significant shake-ups in years, the Taliban put the son of the movement's feared founder in charge of its military wing and added powerful figures to its negotiating team ahead of expected talks aimed at ending Afghanistan's decades of war, Taliban officials say.

As head of a newly united military wing, 30-year-old Mullah Mohammad Yaqoob, brings his father's fiercely uncompromising reputation to the battlefield.

Equally significant is the addition of four members of the insurgent group's leadership council to the 20-member negotiating team, Taliban officials told The Associated Press.

The shuffle overseen by Taliban leader Mullah

Hibatullah Akhunzada is meant to tighten his control over the movement's military and political arms, the officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the inner workings of the movement.

Analysts say the shake-up could be good news for negotiations with Afghanistan's political leadership in Kabul, and a sign of just how serious the Taliban are taking this second — and perhaps most critical — step in a deal Washington signed with the insurgents in February.

"I'd say it appears to be a positive development because the Taliban are creating a delegation that seems more senior and more broad-based than they've used to date, or than

might be strictly necessary for the opening stages of talks," said Andrew Wilder, vice president of the Asia Program at the Washington-based US Institute of Peace.

"If you want to see the glass as half full this strengthened Taliban delegation could be interpreted as a sign that the group is planning to engage in serious discussions," he said.

When the US signed the deal with the Taliban on February 29, after more than a year and a half of negotiations, it was touted as Afghanistan's best chance at peace in four decades of war.

It was also seen as a road map for the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, ending America's longest war. **AP**

UN blacklists Pak Taliban terror group's leader

United Nations: The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan terror group's leader Noor Wali Mehsud has been designated as a global terrorist by the UN for participating in the financing, planning and perpetrating acts on behalf of and in support of entities associated with al-Qaeda.

The UN Security Council's 1267 ISIL and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee added Mehsud, 42, to the ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List on Thursday, subjecting the Pakistani national to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo.

The Sanctions Committee said that Mehsud was listed for "participating in the financing, planning, facilitating, or perpetrating of acts or activities by,

in conjunction with, under the name of, on behalf of, or in support of" entities associated with al-Qaeda.

In June 2018, Mehsud was named the leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), following the death of former TTP leader Maulana Fazlullah.

The TTP was blacklisted by the UN on July 29, 2011 for its association with al-Qaeda.

"Under Noor Wali's leadership, TTP has claimed responsibility for numerous deadly terrorist attacks across Pakistan, including an attack targeting Pakistani security forces in North Waziristan in July 2019 and a bomb attack against Pakistani soldiers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in August 2019," the Sanctions Committee said. **PTI**

China's mighty Yangtze river crests again, new floods feared

Beijing: Engorged with more heavy rains, China's mighty Yangtze River is cresting again, bringing fears of further destruction. The seasonal floods that already have left 141 people dead or missing have grown in force since last month.

The heavy rains are putting renewed pressure on the massive Three Gorges Dam that straddles the river upstream of the city of Wuhan in Hubei province.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the rate of flow in the reservoir behind the dam would hit a record for the year on Friday night, at 55,000 square meters (almost 600,000 square feet) per second.

Rivers in the Yangtze system have broken their banks in places, and in Hubei, a helicopter was used to drop stones into the breach to block the rushing waters.

Flooding since the beginning of the month has forced

evacuations of around 1.8 million people in 24 provinces, mainly in southern China. Direct losses attributed to flooding are estimated at more than 49 billion yuan (\$7 billion), according to the Ministry of Emergency Management.

Flood waters reached as high as 1.4 meters (almost 5 feet) in Linshui county in the southwestern province of Sichuan, the ministry's rescue department reported. **AP**

UN says it needs billions more to give virus aid

Berlin: The United Nations is increasing to \$10.3 billion its appeal for humanitarian aid funding to handle the fallout from the coronavirus crisis around the world.

Jens Laerke, a spokesman for the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, said in Geneva on Friday that "the number of people in the world who need humanitarian assistance has more than doubled because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of the global lockdown of

economies and societies."

At the beginning of the year, humanitarian agencies targeted around 110 million people, he said. They now need to reach 250 million in 63 countries. Laerke said the U.N. Initially asked for \$2 billion in late March for the immediate response. That was increased to \$6.7 billion in May. He said the appeal does cover basic health services but the bulk of it is related to non-health needs, such as food, water, sanitation and shelter. **AP**

US says Covid retesting not needed by most

Washington: The US government's top official in charge of coronavirus testing is urging Americans not to get retested for COVID-19 to confirm they've recovered.

Assistant Secretary for Health Admiral Brett Giroir said Thursday that repeat testing is not necessary for most people who are infected but remain at home. He said such testing is "clogging up the system."

US health officials will soon issue guidelines explicitly recommending against the practice, except for patients in the most severe cases.

Americans in many states continue to face long lines at testing sites and lag times obtaining their results. The problems are due to a combination of pressures, including increased testing demand, supply shortages and bottlenecks at laboratories processing the tests.

US officials are aiming to increase the use of rapid tests to shorten turnaround times. Those tests can usually be developed in 15 minutes or less and can be performed at testing sites, doctor's offices and clinics.

They tend to be less accurate than the tests that need to be developed at clinical laboratories. **AP**

Bangladesh hospital owner arrested over Covid-19 test scam

Dhaka: The owner of a hospital chain in Bangladesh that swindled money from thousands of patients by issuing fake coronavirus test reports has been arrested in a border area while he was trying to flee to India, according to media reports.

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) arrested Regent Hospital Chairman Mohammad Shahed from Sathkhira village bordering India on Wednesday and airlifted him to Dhaka before handing him over to the police.

The RAB sealed off the headquarters and two branches of Regent Hospital in Dhaka after it emerged that the hospital authorities had swindled thousands of unsuspecting patients out of millions of takas on the pretext of coronavirus treatment, the bdnews reported.

It also initiated a case against 17 people, including Shahed, on charges of issuing fake COVID-19 test reports and other irregularities.

The case alleges that the hospital authorities duped nearly 6,000 patients out of Tk 20.1 million (USD 237,129) by issuing fake coronavirus tests reports even though it was

supposed to provide free treatment for COVID-19. They later billed Tk 19.6 million (USD 231,231) to the health directorate.

According to reports, Shahed belongs to the governing Awami League party headed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and is a member of its foreign affairs subcommittee.

Shahed has 56 cases against him and was absconding since the RAB raided his hospitals. Another doctor and her husband were also arrested recently on similar charges of falsifying test results.

JKG Health Care Chairman Sabrina Sharmeen Husain, a government cardiac surgeon and the wife of the hospital's CEO Ariful Chaudhury, was arrested for providing false reports without testing the swabs collected from the people for COVID-19 tests.

The National Revenue Board on Friday instructed banks to freeze the accounts held by Shahed and Sabrina, the daily reported. The apex tax administration authority has written to the central on the issue, according to a top NBR official. **PTI**

Chola Enter a better life

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited
Corporate Office: No.2, Dare House, 1st Floor, NSC Bose Road, Chennai – 600 001.
Branch Office: 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005 Contact No: 9899245509, 9818460101

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION CUM SALE (To be treated as notice u/s 8(6))

Pursuant to taking possession of the secured asset mentioned hereunder by the Authorized Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited, under the **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002** for the recovery of amount due from borrower/s, offers are invited by the undersigned in sealed covers for purchase of immovable property, as described hereunder, which is in the Possession on, 'As is where is basis' 'As Is What Is Basis' and 'Whatever Is There Is Basis' particulars of which are given below:-

S.N.	Borrower(s) / Co-Borrower(s)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Description of the Immovable property	Reserve Price	Earnest Money Deposit	Total Loan Outstanding as on 17.07.2020	Type of Possession
1.	(Loan Account No. X0HEDHE00000655496/ X0HEDHE00000827889 Delhi Branch) VJAY KUMAR (BORROWER) GUNJAN KUMAR, HEMA KUMAR, ASHWANI KUMAR (CO-BORROWER) All are having address for communication at :- C 43 Surya Nagar Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201001 ALSO AT-340/48, Friends Colony, Industrial Area, G.T. Road, New Delhi – 110095.	06-10-2016 RS.2,39,82,042.74 (Rupees Two Crore Thirty Nine Lakh Eighty Two Thousand Fourty Two and Paise Seventy Four)	FLAT NO-2.GROUND FLOOR ON BACK PORTION PLOT NO-C-43,SECTORE-7 SURYA NAGAR,GHAZIYABAD-201010 WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS,SUPER COVERED AREA 1050 SQ.FT.	Rs.58,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Eight Lakh Only)	Rs.5,80,000/- (Rupees Five Lakh Eighty Thousand Only)	Rs.3,59,76,779.11/- (Rupees Three Crore Fifty Nine Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Nine and Eleven Paise Only)+ further interest till realization of payment	Physical
2.	(Loan Account No. X0HEELD00001685860 Delhi Branch) BOBBY BHARGAVA (BORROWER) NEELIMA BHARGAVA , M/S VENUS INTERNATIONAL (CO-BORROWER) All are having address for communication at :- 702,7TH FLOOR,APPARTMENTS SWASTHA VIHAR DELHI, NEW DELHI – 110092. ALSO AT-307 SECTOR 37 UDYOG VIHAR PHASE VI, GURGAON – 122001.	23-07-2019 RS.1,50,70,700.50 (Rupees One Crore Fifty Lakhs Seventy Thousand Seven Hundred and Fifty Paise Only)	FLAT NO-702 ON 7TH FLOOR A DMEASURING 1734 SQ. FT. PLUS PARKING SPACE IN BASEMENT NO.B-11 SITUATED AT TOMER APARTMENT SWASTHA VIHAR DELHI-110092.	Rs. 1,42,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Fourty Two Lakh Only)	Rs. 14,20,000/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Twenty Thousand Only)	Rs.1,67,23,680/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Seven Lakh Twenty Three Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Only)+ further interest till realization of payment	Physical

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF AUCTION

- Last Dat of Submission of Sealed Bid/Offer** in the prescribed tender forms along with EMD and KYC is **03.08.2020** within **5.30 Pm** at the **Branch Office:- 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No.6, Main Pusa Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi - 110 005** mentioned herein. Tendres that are not filled up or Tendres received beyond last date will be considered as invalid tender and shall accordingly be rejected. No interest shall be paid on the EMD.
- Date of Opening of the Bid/Offer (Auction Date)** for Property is **04.08.2020** at the above mentioned branch office address at 10.00 A.M. The tender will be opened in the presence of the Authorised Officer.
- Date of Inspection of the Immovable Property** is on **27.07.2020** between **10.00 am to 3.30 pm**.
- Further Interest will be charged as applicable, as per the Loan Agreement on the amount outstanding in the notice and incidental expense, costs, etc., is due and payable till its realization.
- The notice is hereby given to the Borrower/s and Co-Borrower/s, to remain present personally at the time of Auction and they can bring the intending buyers/purchasers for purchasing the immovable property as described herein above, as per the particulars of Terms and Conditions of Sale.
- The Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) are hereby given 15 DAYS SALE UNDER THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002** to pay the sum mentioned as above before the date of Auction falling which the immovable property will be auctioned and balance, if any will be recovered with interest and costs. If the Borrower pays the amount due to Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited, in full before the date of sale, auction is liable to be stopped.
- The detail terms and conditions of the auction sale are incorporated in the prescribed tender form. Tender forms are available at the above mntioned branch office.
- The Immovable property will be sold to the highest tenderer. However the Authorised Officer reserves the absolute discretion to allow inter se bidding, if deemed necessary. The property as mentioned will not be sold below Reserve Price.
- Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited is not responsible for any liabilities whatsoever pending upon the property as mentioned above. The property shall be auctioned on 'As is Where is Basis', 'As is What is Basis', and 'Whatever is There is Basis'.**
- The Total Loan Outstanding amount is not the loan foreclosure amount. All other charges (if any) shall be calculated at the time of closure of the loan.
- The Demand Draft Should be made in favor of 'Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited' Only.

Sd/-
Authorised Officer

Place: Delhi/NCR Date : 18-07-2020
Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited

Nepal planning to resume flight services from Aug 5

Kathmandu: The Nepal Government is planning to resume domestic and international flight operations from next month with the country making steady progress in its fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

The Tourism Ministry is working on a tentative plan to start domestic flights from August 5 and international flights from August 17, an official close to Minister Yogesh Bhattarai told PTI. The first round of flights will be to and from capital Kathmandu, he said.

The number of active coronavirus cases in Nepal dropped to about 6,000 this week, while the recovery rate remains impressive at 66.12 per cent. In total, the Himalayan nation has report-

ed 17,445 COVID-19 cases. The COVID-19 death toll rose to 40 on Friday after a 73-year-old man's death due to coronavirus complications was confirmed. The deceased was a diabetic and suffered from a heart condition.

The Tourism Ministry will recommend the COVID-19 Crisis Management Centre — headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ishwor Pokharel — to resume flight operations from next month, the official said.

A cabinet decision is required to resume the flight services. The Nepal government had suspended air travel in the third week of March to contain the spread of the virus.

However, charter flights were operated to deliver medical equipment and for repatriation. **PTI**

Emirates resumes flights to Iran

Tehran: Iran's state-run IRNA news agency is reporting that the United Arab Emirates flag carrier airline has resumed flights to Tehran after five months.

The Friday report said an Emirates Airline flight landed in Tehran's Imam Khomeini international airport. It was the first flight since late February when the airliner stopped its flight after Emirati authorities found two Iranians who were infected with the coronavirus.

Emirates planned to have one flight per day to Tehran-Dubai-Tehran with a Boeing 777 jetliner. The outbreak in Iran has killed at least 13,400 people amid 264,561 confirmed cases. **AP**

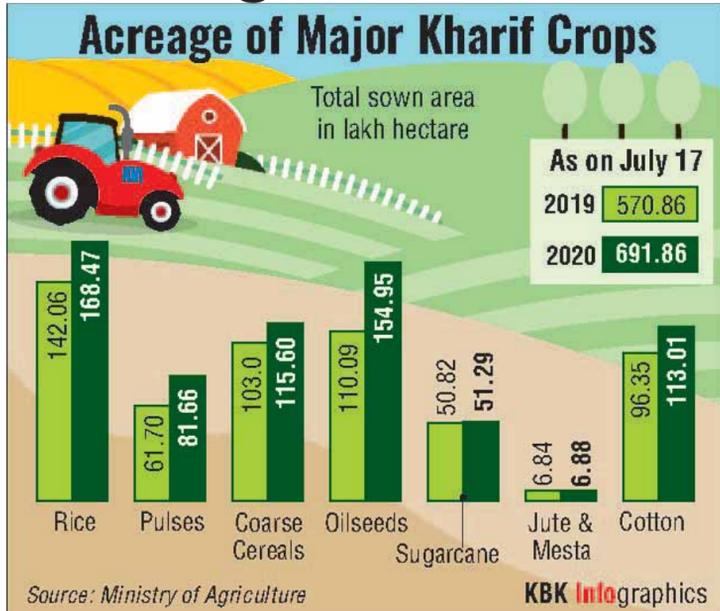
No impact of Covid-19 on kharif sowing: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

There has been no impact of COVID-19 pandemic on kharif (summer) sowing as the total area planted to rice and other crops has increased by 21.20 per cent to 691.86 lakh hectare so far in the current season, the Agriculture Ministry said on Friday. The country has so far received good rainfall and water level in 123 reservoirs across the country is in good position, it said in the latest sowing data. Sowing of kharif crops begins with the onset of southwest monsoon from June, while harvesting starts from October. Rice is the main kharif crop, besides bajra, arhar, urad, moong, groundnut and soyabean.

"As on July 17, total kharif crops have been sown on 691.86 lakh hectare area during the corresponding period of last year, thus increase in area coverage by 21.20 per cent," the ministry said. So, there is no impact of COVID-19 on progress of area coverage under kharif crops as on date, it said.

Among kharif crops, area planted to rice has increased by 18.59% to 168.47 lakh hectare



as on July 17 from 142.06 lakh hectare in the year-ago period. There has been significant increase in the planting of oilseeds and pulses so far during the ongoing kharif season.

Pulses area has gone up by 32.35% to 81.66 lakh hectare, from 61.70 lakh hectare, while that of oilseeds acreage has increased by 40.75% to 154.95 lakh hectare compared to

110.09 lakh hectare in the said period. Area planted to coarse cereals has increased by 12.23% to 115.60 lakh hectare so far as against 103 lakh hectare a year ago.

ACREAGE UP 21.20 PER CENT SO FAR

April 8-July 11

I-T refunds worth ₹71,229 crore issued to 21.24 lakh taxpayers

New Delhi: The Income Tax Department has issued refunds worth ₹71,229 crore to over 21 lakh taxpayers during April 8 to July 11. This includes personal income tax (PIT) refunds of ₹24,603 crore issued to 19.79 lakh individuals and corporate tax refunds amounting to ₹46,626 crore to over 1.45 lakh taxpayers during this period.

"It is further emphasised that all the refund related cleaning up of the tax demands is being taken up on priority and is likely to be completed by August 31, 2020," an official statement said.

It said that the government has laid great emphasis on providing tax related services to the taxpayers without any hassles and is aware that during these difficult times of COVID-19 pandemic, many of the taxpayers are waiting to see that their tax demands and refunds reach finality as quickly as possible, the statement added.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes further asked taxpayers to provide immediate response to emails of the department for quick processing of their refunds. PTI

HIT BY INDIA BAN Chinese app makers begin laying off local staff

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

With India banning 59 Chinese apps on June 29 amid border tensions with the neighbouring country, the affected companies have begun reducing their workforce in the country as they stare at huge losses.

Alibaba subsidiary UCWeb, the company behind the apps UC Browser and UC News which feature in the list of apps banned by India, has already stopped service in the country, leading to job cuts at its Gurugram and Mumbai offices.

"We have complied with the government's recent directive concerning 59 apps and stopped the service," a UC spokesperson said in a statement.

Earlier, in a statement on July 7, UC Browser warned its India users that their data will not be accessible after July 10.

"We are in the process of complying with a recent government directive... As our services may be affected, please back up all data you deem important from the UC app to your device no later than the

AIOVA, which represents more than 2,000 sellers across the country, demanded immediate settlement of dues to sellers

10th of July, 2020," said the statement.

"After that date, your data will no longer be accessible, as services will be under review," it added.

Meanwhile, e-commerce player Club Factory, which is also banned by India, sent an email to sellers to inform them about suspension of settlement of their pending dues until the ban was lifted, All India Online Vendor Association (AIOVA) said in a legal notice on Thursday.

AIOVA, which represents more than 2,000 sellers across the country, demanded immediate settlement of dues to sellers.

Not settling dues of sellers who delivered goods to consumers is a clear violation of Reserve Bank of India guidelines, the notice said.

However, TikTok, owned

by Chinese unicorn ByteDance, might take the biggest hit by the ban as its largest user base (nearly 120 million before the ban came into force) is in India.

ByteDance is expecting a loss of \$6 billion after three of its apps were featured in the list of 59 banned apps in India, according to a report in China's state-run Global Times.

TikTok CEO Kevin Mayer earlier, however, reportedly assured ByteDance employees that India's move to ban the app would not lead to salary cuts and layoffs in the country.

A Global Times report last week quoted an industry expert who said that a large number of Chinese companies may shut their India offices and let go of their local staff. Experts expect a wave of job layoffs due to the ban on Chinese apps, said the report.

Sensex rallies 548 pts as financial energy stocks spurt logs weekly rise

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Markets darted up for the third straight session on Friday as robust corporate results gave fresh impetus to investor bullishness, even as the country's COVID-19 case count breached the 10-lakh mark.

After trading on a positive note through the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex witnessed a burst of buying towards the end of the session to close at 37,020.14, up 548.46 points, or 1.50 per cent.

Similarly, the wider NSE Nifty surged 161.75 points, or 1.51 per cent, to close at 10,901.70.

During the week, the Sensex advanced 425.81 points or 1.16 per cent, while the Nifty gained 133.65 points or 1.24

per cent. ONGC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack on Friday, rallying 5.52 per cent, followed by Titan, Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, M&M and Bajaj Finance.

Only five Sensex constituents closed in the red -- TCS, Nestle India, Infosys, HCL Tech and Axis Bank, shedding up to 1.45 per cent.

According to traders, stock-specific buying driven by earnings boosted the markets, while a strengthening rupee also added to the buying momentum.

"IT companies like Infosys, Wipro are amongst a few who witnessed stock frenzy this week and gave an impression of a good head start to the earnings season... The earnings performance by IT players has

brought about renewed confidence in D-Street which was supposed to (witness) a 'washout quarter'.

"Going forward it is expected that such performances will be largely discounted with a kneejerk reaction without significant price movements," said Jimmeet Modi, Founder & CEO Samco Group. IT firm HCL Technologies on Friday posted a 31.7 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,925 crore for the June 2020 quarter.

BSE oil and gas, energy, consumer durables, finance, bank and auto indices rallied up to 5.05 per cent, while IT and tech ended in the red.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices jumped up to 1.55 per cent in line with the benchmarks.

Meanwhile, with a record single-day surge of 34,956 cases, India's COVID-19 tally zoomed past ten lakh on Friday, just three days after it crossed the nine-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

Global markets were mixed ahead of a crucial European Union meeting over the Euro 750-billion recovery fund, while spiking coronavirus cases in the US and other countries weighed on sentiment.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended in the green, while Tokyo closed lower.

In Europe, stock exchanges in Germany and the UK were trading with gains, while those in France witnessed losses in early deals.



International oil benchmark Brent crude futures slipped 0.97 per cent to USD 42.95 per barrel.

In the forex market, the rupee appreciated by 16 paise to close at 75.02 against the US dollar.

Future policies need to be tailored to support economy amid Covid-19: RBI ED

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Future economic policies need to be tailored towards supporting the economy, depending on how effects of pandemic play out, RBI executive director M Rajeshwar Rao said on Friday.

He said the first set of responses from the Reserve Bank of India was to ensure

that the markets continue to function and ensure solvency in the financial sector.

Several measures, including reduction in Cash Reserve Ratio, special finance facility, Long Term Repo Operations (LTRO) and Targeted Long Term Repo Operations (TLTRO) were announced, he said at a webinar organised by Assocham.



Noida: Narendhra Bhoochan, Chief Executive Officer, Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority said various work like disease control, sanitation campaign, looking into drinking water system, water logging problems, fogging arrangements, are being carried out in Gautam Budh Nagar by the Uttar Pradesh Government on weekends. A special campaign for special sanitation, sanitisation and surveillance is also on in which GNIDA CEO coordinates with the district administration.

Examination starts in North India's Nitra laboratory



NITRA situated in Sector 23, Sanjay Nagar, Ghaziabad (File Photo)

ASHOK NIRWAN ■ GHAZIABAD

Now the corona warrior NPE kit and mask quality will be tested in Ghaziabad itself. National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) approved laboratory of PPE Kit and Mask has been commissioned by Northern India Textile Research Association (Nitra), attached to Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The special thing is that Sanjay Nagar, Sector 23 is also approved by Bureau of Indian Standards. It is a kind of testing school of its kind in North India. Director General of Nitra, Dr. Sri Arindam Vasu stated that only PPE kits and masks of high quality will help in protecting Corona warriors and the general public from the infection of Corona.

ISS launches workplace virus disinfection



It uses ATP technology to scientifically measure the outcome of cleaning

New Delhi: As office workers are not sure whether the work-station is safe during Covid-19 times, global workplace experience and facility management company ISS has launched a new disinfection and hygiene solution named Pure Space. It uses ATP technology to scientifically measure the outcome of cleaning. ATP stands for Adenosine triphosphate, a molecule found only in and around living cells, and can therefore be used to measure the concentration of microorganisms and the level of hygiene. This factual, evidence-based method helps dispel any doubts that an area is clean and ready for working. "ISS has a responsibility to help society break the chain of infection. To do that, we have developed Pure Space with our scientific knowledge of large-scale cleaning, disinfection and workplace experience," says ISS Group COO, Troels Bjerg.

PSBs sanction ₹19,668 crore loans to 71 MSME hubs under credit guarantee scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Friday said public sector banks have sanctioned Rs 19,668.87 crore to 71 MSME hubs across the country under the Rs 3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS).

Disbursement in these clusters stood at Rs 12,871.50

crore as of July 15 to entities belonging to micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector, hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis.

The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the Rs 20-lakh crore Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month.

India's forex reserves rise by over \$3 billion

IANS ■ MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$3.108 billion during the week ended July 10. According to the Reserve Bank of India's weekly statistical supplement, the reserves grew to \$516.362 bil-

lion from \$513.254 billion reported for the week ended July 3. India's forex reserves comprise foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, special drawing rights (SDRs), and the country's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

S.No.	N.I.T. No.	NIT-08-20-21-W-2
1.	Name of work with its location	Construction of trower wagon siding at MUT and JDW on GZB-SRE SECTION.
2.	Approx. Cost of work	As per IREPS Notice
3.	Earnest Money	As per IREPS Notice
4.	Completion Period	As per IREPS Notice
5.	Cost of tender on Cash/by post	As per IREPS Notice
6.	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	31.07.2020 to 14.08.2020 upto 15:00 hrs. Opening of tender: 14.08.2020 at 15:00 hrs. on.
7.	Similar Nature of Work	As per IREPS Notice
8.	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

NIT-08-20-21-W-2 Dated: 15.07.2020 1576/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of tender through SINGLE Packet System for the under noted work:-

1.	Name of work and location:	Plantation of 2310 no. of plants, transportation of 70 no's trees and maintenance of plants/trees on land of Railway in Delhi area Delhi Rohtak Section.
2.	Completion period of the work:	04 MONTHS
3.	Approx. Cost of work:	Rs. 72.31 LAKH
4.	Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	Rs. 144630/-
5.	Sale/availability of tender document on Railway Web site	Tender documents will be available on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 03.08.2020 to 17.08.2020 upto 11.30 hrs.
6.	Last date/Time of upload of tenders	17.08.2020 upto 11.30 hrs Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS web site w.e.f 03.08.2020 to 17.08.2020.
7.	Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	17.08.2020 at 11.30 hours (Immediately after closed of uploading of tender) (D2). In case of two packet system, Financial bid of the eligible tenderer would be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later on.
8.	Opening of tender	17.08.2020 at 11.30 hours (Immediately after closed of uploading of tender)

Tender Notice No. 370-ACS-C-SSB Dated: 15.07.2020 1574/2020
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Metro Railway, Kolkata
Kolkata's Pride
DESIGN, SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF VARIOUS SIGNALLING WORK

PCSTE, Metro Railway, Kolkata for & on behalf of the President of India invites e-Tenders against Open e-Tender due to open on 24.08.2020 at 15.00 hrs. Manual offers are not allowed against the tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Name of Work : Design, Supply, Installation, testing & Commissioning of Electronic Interlocking system (indoor & outdoor) at Dumdum Cantonment & Bimanbandar station and Design, supply, installation, testing & commissioning of Train Protection and warning system (TPWS) Track side system along with other different signalling equipment like- MSDAC, AFTC, Data Logger, TMS, etc. with Automatic Signalling work in section from Noapara to Bimanbandar of Metro Railway, Kolkata. Tender value: ₹ 26,03,22,253/- Earnest Money : ₹ 14,51,600/- Cost of Tender Documents: ₹ 10,000/- Completion Period : 12 (Twelve) months. The Tender can be viewed at website https://www.ireps.gov.in The tenderer/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate & must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidders can participate on e-Tendering. All relevant paper must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-Tender.

Open Tender Notice No.: S&T/Works/BA-2020
FASTER • SAFER • SMOOTHER • CLEANER

HDFC BANK Retail Portfolio Management : Plot # 31, Najafgarh Industrial Area, Tower-A, 1st Floor, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, New Delhi - 110015.

POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV (RULE 8(1))
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC BANK LTD. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 25/07/2020 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. MS NATURE CURE & YOGA TRUST, 2. DR. RAGHAVAN MURALEEDHAR NAIR S/O SHRI K R PILLAI, 3. MRS. RUKAMANI NAIR W/O SHRI R.M. NAIR, 4. MR. AMREESH TYAGI S/O SHRI OMKAR SINGH, 5. MR. RAHUL BHATTNAGAR S/O SH. VIRENDERA SWARUP BHATTNAGAR, 6. MR. KSHETRIMAYUM CHAOBA SINGH S/O KSHETRIMAYUM TOMEL SINGH, 7. MR. NAOREM BABALLI SINGH S/O N. GOURACHANDRA SINGH, 8. MR. KSHETRIMAYUM DOREN SINGH to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 13,73,15,458/- (Rupees Thirteen Crore Seventy Three Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Eight Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 on this 15th day of July, 2020. The borrower(s) in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of the HDFC BANK LTD. for an amount of Rs. 13,73,15,458/- (Rupees Thirteen Crore Seventy Three Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Eight Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc., less amount paid if any. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
RESIDENTIAL FLAT NO. 17, FOURTH FLOOR, ADMEASURING 1400 SQ. FTS, BLOCK-B-1, SITUATED AT LAWYERS CGHS LTD., MANU APARTMENTS, BUILT UP ON PLOT NO. 6, MAYUR VIHAR, PHASE-1, NEW DELHI-110091, OWNED BY MR. RAGHAVAN MURALEEDHARAN NAIR.

DATE :- 15/07/2020 Authorised Officer
PLACE :- NEW DELHI HDFC Bank Ltd.

INDO COTSPIN LIMITED
REGD. OFFICE : 78 K.M. DELHI MILE STONE, G.T. ROAD, NH-1, VILLAGE JATTIPUR, POST BOX NO. 3, POST OFFICE SAMALKHA, PANIPAT - 132103
CIN : L1111HR1995PLC032541 Website: www.indocotspin.com
Email: IDrajpal@rajpal.com, IDrajpal@rajpal.com

Statement of Standalone Un-audited Financial Results for the Quarter / Year Ended June 30, 2020 (Amount Rs. in Lacs)

PARTICULARS	3 MONTHS ENDED	YEAR TO DATE FIGURES FOR CURRENT PERIOD ENDED	CORRESPONDING 3 MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR
	30/06/2020	31/03/2020	30/06/2019
	Un-audited	Audited	Un-audited
Total Income from operations (net)	123.84	997.37	141.22
Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary activities after Tax	0.37	10.64	1.06
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary Items)	0.37	10.64	1.06
Paid Up Equity Share Capital Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of Previous Year)	420.05	420.05	420.05
Earnings Per Share (before Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each) Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.37	214.38	1.06
Earnings Per Share (after Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each) Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.00	0.25	0.03
	0.00	0.25	0.03

NOTE:
i) There is no qualification on the un-audit report for the quarter ended 30/06/2020
ii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Quarterly Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange websites: www.bseindia.com, tele. +91-9896034879 For Indo Cotspin Limited

Place: Panipat Sd/-
Date: 17/07/2020 Bal Krishan Aggarwal
Managing Director
DIN : 00456219

RAJASTHAN STATE GANGANAGAR SUGAR MILLS LTD.
Regd. Office: 4th FLOOR, NEHRU SARAKAR BHAWAN, BHAWANI SINGH ROAD, JAIPUR-302006
CIN:UJ542R1919455G000265
Tel: 0141-2740841, Fax: 0141-2740676, Email-ID: dgmpurchase.rsgsm@rajasthan.gov.in

No. RSGSM/2020-21/PUR/EO/25 Date:16-07-2020

Expression of Interest
Rajasthan State Ganganagar Sugar Mills Ltd. (RSGSML) is a govt. of Rajasthan undertaking carrying out production and business of country liquor. Rajasthan Made Liquor, IMFL, heritage liquor along with sugar and rectified spirit of late the company has started production of hand sanitizer. In the period of Covid-19 pandemic, RSGSML launched alcohol-based hand sanitizer and made it available to the institutions and general public at reasonable rates and also provided it for free distribution to government as a social cause. As the RSGSML hand sanitizer has received favourable response from the market, it has been decided to create a proper distribution and supply system so that a good quality product become available to people on reasonable rates. With this aim, RSGSML invites reputed distributors/ organizations/ firms indulged in distribution of FMCG/ drugs/ cosmetic/ other retail products to join it as a distributor for selling the RSGSML made hand sanitizers of various packaging in open market. Hand sanitizer has now become a part of life and its market has grown exponentially in last three months and it's going to stay. Being a GoR company, the RSGSML sanitizer has a good will in market for quality and value for money. RSGSML, therefore, seeks to invite interested firms fulfilling stipulated qualification requirements for appointment as distributor for (1) Rajasthan & (2) Rest of India. Only those applicants qualified pursuant to this expression of interest (EOI) document will be invited to participate in the subsequent request for proposal (RFP) stage (two stage bidding). Details of the EOI may be seen in the document available on eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, rajxessce.gov.in. For any other queries may contact DGM (Purchase), RSGSML at 0141-2740841 or email-dgmpurchase.rsgsm@rajasthan.gov.in.

Pre-bid meeting date and time	On 27.07.2020 at 03.00 p.m.
Last date & time of uploading of response EOI form by the bidders	Till 19.08.2020 at 06.00 p.m.
Date & time of opening of qualification bid	On 20.08.2020 at 03.00 p.m.
Period for which rates are invited	Two Year (terms to be negotiated after two years, if extended)
RFP	intimate separately
UBN: GSM2021RFP0001 Raj.Sanwadi/C/20/2418	General Manager

SHORT CIRCUITS

AYUSHMANN KHURRANA

This lockdown has really fuelled my interest to learn new things and I have just started reading up on Salvadore Dali, the iconic, surreal Spanish artist. My interest to know about his life and works peaked when I watched *Money Heist*. I really wanted to know more. He was many of various talents.

SUSHMITA SEN

My series *Aarya* has reaffirmed my belief that being a mother is all about being a warrior and protecting your family by all means. *Aarya* carries so much pain but she internalises it all to fight and save her children against all odds. The reimagined animated video truly brings out the best of it and highlights her journey.

CHUNKY PANDEY

It turned out to be an exciting role for me (in *Abhay*, season 2). It is my digital debut, too. I have never played anything like this before. My character looks normal but not when it comes to finding ways to feed his cannibal instinct. Looks can be deceptive. The entire cast and crew have done an incredible job.

SONAM K AHUJA

I don't know how everyone feels but I was blown to bits when I read about Nadia (actor and stuntwoman, Mary Ann Evans). I was stunned. Being an actor, I know how important our physical health and appearance is. There's a reason why most actors today don't perform their own stunts.

DAKOTA FANNING

Late actor Brittany Murphy just taught me to always have fun. She was such a ray of light and had a playful spirit. She made every day special for me. She was so wonderful. She meant a lot to me.

CONVERSATION 45 MINUTES

SUPERMOM'S SUPERFOOD

Actor and writer SOHA ALI KHAN tells CHAHAK MITTAL about the little everythings of her health routine during the lockdown, how her growing up years influenced her food habits and why almonds have been timeless ingredients for nutrition in a *Badam Pe Charcha*

Remember how your mother would stuff your mouth and blazer pockets with soaked almonds while you were headed to school for your exam or a job interview? Yes, even when you were getting late, she would insist, "*Zarur kha lena, isse buddhi chalegi.*" Well, such *nuskhas* (home-made remedies) of an Indian mother might seem a little too much to follow at times, but they've certainly worked, time and again. And yes, not just mothers, but science agrees too — almonds boost memory.

Actor and writer Soha Ali Khan, who has been quite cautious about her food habits and exercise, shares her story of how she began consuming almonds and continues to find them as essential ingredients for health.

Excerpts of our '*Badam pe Charcha*' with her:

◆ **How relevant do you think a conversation about everyday kitchen ingredients is during this time of pandemic when people are becoming really health conscious?**

Of course, the lockdown and the Coronavirus pandemic have been hugely challenging and worrying in so many ways. But we have to look at the positive side of everything. The idea is to see what we can learn and how we can use this time as fruitfully as we can. We have been locked down for three to four months now and we are still unsure until when this will continue. We need to try and get some more control over certain things.

People have wanted to learn mythology, new diet patterns and what not. This is the time when you can kick start that. I would say being healthy should always be the priority for everyone. And now because you are not eating out at restaurants, you are not attending parties, you can have a control over what you eat and this is the time to be mindful. Everybody knows that Indian food is so good for health. It has got all the right spices and ingredients. If you cook it properly, it actually addresses a lot of your medicinal and nutritional concerns. Besides our nuts and grain heritage could help us develop healthy snacks. For example, almonds are superfoods because of all the incredible minerals in them like zinc, copper, healthy fats and dietary fibre. A handful of almonds everyday can really help you curb your hunger, gain energy and grow physically and mentally stronger.

◆ **How do you think nutrition tricks and parenting remain the same even as generations evolve?**

There are certain things that will continue because they are timeless. Just like a good advice! As long as every generation's experience about a certain thing is the same

and proven, it is going to be handed down. For example, almonds are easy to consume, store and have a long shelf life. When the lockdown was announced, I actually stocked almonds first. And if you keep them in the right temperature in the right way, then they last for up to two years. So it's a very good food to have in the house.

◆ **For many, consuming the same food everyday might become boring. But that's what the lockdown has given us — the same routine everyday. How do you ensure variety?**

Of course, there could be a sense of boredom at home, especially for those who travel often. Nowadays, every meal is cooked at home and you might get a little restless with that. But all of us, including (daughter) Inaaya (laughs), have tried our hands at cooking something new. Inaaya loves to bake. We have to even control it at times. We give her the ingredients and she actually mixes them in a bowl. She is trying to learn about quantities, maths and chemistry of different things. Even Kunal (Kemmu, actor and husband) has learnt to make some new dishes. He recently tried his hand at making *dum aaloo* for the first time. It's a Kashmiri dish that his mother specialised in. Well, now, it's empowering for him that he can cook it for himself too.

When everyone at home cooks something in their own style, it changes the monotony a little bit. And now, due to social media and YouTube, everyone has found a little chef in themselves. They are coming up with new recipes. Adaptive learning is a wonderful part about human nature.

◆ **Before the pandemic, there used to be various kind of routines and diet mantras that people followed. But now that we are indoors, 24x7, what do you think is going to be the new normal for fitness?**

Yes, outdoor activities are going to be shut for some time now. And gyms and parks will be closed. However, like I said, finding a positive side to things are important. So, anyway it's monsoon time. In cities like Mumbai, it gets difficult to be outside at this time. Hence, for workout, I have adapted to yoga because for it, you don't need to be in a gym or need equipment or be outdoors. All you require is a mat or even a towel. It's the best form of exercise, which can be done at any age. The best part about exercising at home — you don't even have to pay for them. There are also a lot of other online workouts. There are stairs, too. Just walking up and down the stairs is quite an amazing form of exercise.

◆ **In your book, *The Perils of Being Moderately Famous*, you have talked about how certain rules and regulations come with being born in a royal family. So how have your growing up years influenced your health habits?**

Yes, upbringing always shapes you. Especially when you become a parent, you tend to adopt the same style of parenting that your parents had around you. And coming back to physical exercise, we were quite a sporty family. My father loved and played sports. We, as kids, were always playing badminton or cricket or tennis. We used to be constantly active, running around, going for campaigns. We were very physically active as a family. Even in Delhi, playing *pithu* and all outdoor games were our hobbies. It was all about group sports. These days though it is about individual regimen.

Also, I have learnt about getting the right nutrition from my parents. Even the whole almonds theory came from my mother. She used to soak them overnight and give them to us in the morning before we went to school. This is how I have seen the benefits of almonds from a young age. Hence, I have also habituated my child to it and make sure she doesn't miss it a single day.

A 'royal family' is just a tag or a name! It's just an usual family growing up which has traditions and routines of their own just like every other family has.

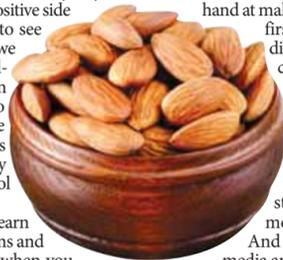
◆ **How difficult is it to write a book about yourself, laying your life bare in front of people that you didn't even know or those who knew you?**

Well, while writing the book, I felt that I needed to be honest because otherwise, it isn't fair to the readers who pay for a book and don't even find its content worth it. Why then write a book at all? I would say I have the ability to laugh at myself and not take myself very seriously, which is why I am happy to share a lot of things that have happened in my life. I've always felt that somewhere somebody relates to you.

Also, it was to debunk myths people have about you coming from the royal family of Pataudis, being an actor, or living a life that they can't imagine. Ultimately, when you write these things down, it strikes a chord within lot of people — young women, students, travellers, people who enjoy cricket and other things associated — and they build a connection. It's about just that at the end of the day.

◆ **What would you say is your fitness mantra?**

I personally love yoga. It's the best for one's mental, physical and emotional well-being. For others, I would say doing anything that gets your heart rate elevated for at least half an hour or an hour per day, whether it's through dance, Zumba or Pilates.



LAUGH IT OUT 45 MINUTES

The comedy battle

Comedians BRIAN QUINN and JAMES MURRAY from *The Impractical Jokers* get candid on who is the funniest joker of the group and their ideal choice of partner to take on the craziest of pranks



Such is the world of *Impractical Jokers* as Brian Quinn, James Murray, Joe Sal indulge in hilarious antics that leave the audience teary eyed as they simply cannot control their laughter.

Talking about the latest season of *Impractical Jokers*, Quinn and Murray recently revealed who is the funniest amongst the four of them and also whom would they team up with for a Joker vs Joker battle. Quinn mentioned, "The funniest in the group depends

on the joke being said. Murray has the ability to make one word funny, none of the other guys have that. He says the word 'No' in a way, it never isn't funny to me. Nobody else could do that but Murray." He then replied, "We all have moments when we shine exceptionally, we also have moments when we fail exceptionally. Quinn, Jo and Sal are the funniest guys in the groups to me."

Speaking on who they would pick for the heated Joker vs Joker Battles, Quinn said, "It depends on the moment; it depends on what we are doing. Sal is useless at a lot of situations but then I am useless too in certain situations. It is always shifting." To which Murray added, "I would say my least favorite is Sal, he throws me under the bus. I feel like Quinn is my favorite in Joker vs Joker. He and I have a good rapport together." To which Quinn replied, "I agree with that, we balance each other out in those situations."

CELEB TALK 30 MINUTES

Exciting time for me: Sanya

It has been a time of double treat for actor Sanya Malhotra who had back to back reasons to celebrate.

Recently, the trailer of her next, *Shakuntala Devi* was released and she has been garnering wide appreciation ever since. Now, her film *Ludo*'s announcement came in and she is super thrilled.

Sharing her excitement on the forthcoming line up with various reasons to celebrate, Sanya shares, "This is a very exciting time for me, first the trailer of *Shakuntala Devi* was released and then *Ludo*'s release on Netflix was announced. And the response that I'm getting for the trailer as well as *Ludo*'s announcement is overwhelming. I've been flooded with congratulatory calls from family and friends since how yesterday and I'm happy with both announcements lined up together. With back to back good news, it's always more the merrier, special while we are stuck on lockdown."

The actor has time and again, treated the audience with her phe-



nomenal performances on-screen and her latest one being, *Shakuntala Devi* is where one will be witnessing her play the real life character of Anupama Banerji, daughter of Shakuntala Devi.

Sanya has been getting immense appreciation from the audience and critics, alike for her screen presence. The actor also did a little dance recently to celebrate the trailer release.

Sanya's bold and never seen before avatar also won over us with the glimpse of *Ludo* that recently was announced to be releasing on OTT platform. The fans are eagerly waiting and how.

The efforts that Sanya has put in her character are truly visible and it looks extremely promising. It's not just her looks, the body language and dialogue delivery but also everything looks extremely polished.

With a promising line-up of films, Sanya has many reasons to celebrate. *Shakuntala Devi* is all set to release on July 30 on Amazon Prime Video. Her next project, Anurag Basu's *Ludo* is along with Guneet Monga's *Pagglait*.



Her love letter to Kashmir

Artist AABHA HANJURA tells SAKSHI SHARMA that her fifth single, *Nunbane*, from the album *Sounds of Kashmir*, is about love that is sung in the Valley. This is her attempt to connect with her roots and popularise the folklore she grew up with

higher education and interacted with people from different states, people started stereotyping her and asking cliché questions.

"A few years ago when I went to Kashmir after having lived in a 'normal' city like Bengaluru, I went as somebody who had seen both sides of the story. When we visited our home, the one my father built with his sweat, blood and tears, a lot of memories came alive. It was a bit surreal that somebody else lives there now — a kind of a bitter-sweet experience. Along with that, I also realised that the place has some sort of pain looming in the environment. I interacted with a lot of people there and realised that the pain was a common denominator for all of us. We all suffered in our own ways and everything was so beautiful, yet painful," she tells us.

This inspired her to create art that would possibly change the dialogue on Kashmir and also bring her a few steps closer to the roots. The idea for her first album, *Sounds of Kashmir*, was born then. "I believe that when your roots are cut in front of you, you try harder to grow them back. This album is thus my little love letter to Kashmir. It's something I've created with hope and love in my heart for the Valley's sound to travel outside Kashmir. Hopefully, it resonates all over the world," adds she. Recently, she has come out with her fifth single from this album — *Nunbane*. Excerpts:

Q What is the meaning and significance of *Nunbane*? Whom would you attribute it to?

Nunbane literally means the apple of my eye or my beautiful one. This is a sweet romantic song about love that is sung in the valleys of Kashmir. It was written by this poet called Mehmood Gami and is an ultimate ode to love. It is attributed to everybody whom I love — my partner, parents, family and friends. During these tough times of crisis, all of us have realised the value of love a bit more than we used to earlier. I feel we have come closer to our loved ones. So this is a song which you can essentially dedicate to anybody you love, even if you are far away, just like I am to Kashmir.

Q The song is the fifth single from your forthcoming album, *Sounds of Kashmir*. What does the album aim to achieve?

The album aims to pay tribute to Kashmir's folklore. It also aims to stir a new dialogue about the land and bring people closer to its rich culture, language and music. I hope to take that mountain sound to the world stage, and hopefully, people will enjoy music and always remember it.

Q Recently, in an interview, you had said that the song was shot in Jaipur as it is culturally vibrant and it has that 'khushboo' of Indian folk. But the song primarily deals with the love and romance of Kashmir...

Well, the whole song has been created sonically in a folk fusion style, which marries elements of Indian folk like *dholak* and *tabla*, along with electric and acoustic guitar. All these are the very contemporary elements and on top of it, there is rustic Kashmiri saaz like *Rubab*, *Tumbaknari* and *Santoor*. So, the whole sonic identity of the song borrows from the Indian folk vibe. When I heard the song, it took me to a space which had to be rich. So I tried staying away from the obvious choice of Kashmir, which I would have loved to, but then there would have been no contrast. I also love doing visual storytelling in the songs. Even if you see my song, *Hukus Bukus*

or *Roshewalla*, I have done that. I am always experimenting with visual storytelling in my music videos as that is a part of the process that excites me as an artist.

Q How did you manage to focus on Kashmiri culture and traditions with Jaipur as the backdrop?

I think the idea was to bring out a fun contrast, which has actually come out in the video and people are enjoying it. I was really trying to do something different and push the envelope a little; the marriage has worked out pretty well in its own unique way.

Q The rustic folk of Kashmir and Rajasthani folk-rock ensemble are two different genres. How challenging was it to combine the two and create something rooted?

Yes, they are completely two different genres. Honestly, combining them was not challenging as we knew we wanted something very different. As an independent artiste, one's endeavour is to do something that is beyond the ordinary and that is what I always try to do. I approach music with the idea of blending cultures. And this was an effort in the same direction. It was appreciated all over as a lot of people from different parts of the world could relate to this in their own way, so I guess that's what we tried to achieve.

Q Given the political unrest in Kashmir, how do you think such songs and lyrics are important for people to keep their spirits high?

Yes, there is political unrest in Kashmir. Also, we all are pulled down in our own ways in the post-pandemic world. I think the job of an artiste is to create songs about hope so that people can resonate with their music. *Nunbane* is a happy bright song, about a universal emotion, so I hope it brings a smile on people's faces and cheers them up.

Q How smooth or difficult it is to create music on something so relatable and personal?

Sometimes it's smooth and sometimes very difficult as you have to detach yourself from the past experiences to give a fresh narrative. As a songwriter, you have to let go of some perspectives, which is not easy because it is too personal. This is a difficult battle altogether, but this is the only way I can do things which are organic and real. I have to keep my music authentic. So I have tried to keep that part of the process smooth.

Q Do you want to use your art to tell the story of Kashmir aloud that can have a far reaching impact?

Chalo Chinaro Ke Gharo is a song that tells the story of thousands of Kashmiris, including mine. It is told in a way that you see the story of separation and reunion, all engulfed in this magical world of a fairy tale. This is the way I want to tell these stories but the whole thing has to be very organic and real. I don't run away from telling a political story. I come from a conflict-ridden state (now UT) and some of those influences will naturally creep into my art and music because this is what I am. But I always stick to things flowing naturally and never do it just for the sake of doing it.

Q What are your future projects? Do you have a similar approach to any of your other works too?

The idea is to finish this album and move on to some new projects. There are some interesting collaborations in the pipeline and varied directions that I am taking with my music. I sing in different languages, so I am excited about exploring all that. I also sing in Punjabi, Dogri and Hindi. There is a lot of music waiting, I don't try to limit myself as an artiste or put myself in a box. I will keep on doing music in as many ways and expressions as they come.



Snow-capped mountains fronted by chinar trees, saffron fields, Kahwah tea, mirror-still lakes and a sumptuous autumn season, Kashmir is a blessed land. One that some had to leave and could never return to. This angst birthed the artiste in Aabha Hanjura.

Says she, "When I did visit my home in Kashmir, I got a new perspective on life. I grew up in Jammu, which was unstable in its own way. There were curfews, bandhs, bomb blasts and a policed regime. My family was forced to flee like thousands others in 1990. But even then it was not as intense as Kashmir. I was too young to understand the circumstances, so I grew up oblivious to the political and emotional realities of the situation. The pain was felt strongly by my parents, grandparents and those who were of an impressionable age to process the situation. I saw pain in my grandmother's and father's eyes who used to miss Kashmir a lot. But they never stopped rebuilding from scratch." When Aabha moved out to pursue

'I believe that when your roots are cut in front of you, you try harder to grow them back. The album is thus my tribute to Kashmir. It's something I've created with hope and love in my heart for the Valley's sound to travel and resonate all over the world'

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Ministry of Labour & Employment
O/o Chief Controller of Accounts
Principal Accounts Office (HQ)
Room No. 518, Shram Shakti Bhawan
Rafi Marg, New Delhi-110001

Applications are invited from retired government/autonomous bodies/central PSUs officers retired not below the Level (pay level of AAO) or equivalent for the engagement of consultants on contract basis for internal audit of the schemes under various units of Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE). The eligibility criteria, scope of work and other details terms and conditions are available at our website: labour.gov.in.

Last date of submission of applications: 31/07/2020

Note:- Any change or amendments to this notice will be posted on the above website only

Senior Accounts Officer
Principal Accounts Office (HQ)

davp 23101/11/0002/2021

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an Unknown male person was found dead at footpath, SPM Marg, Novelty Cinema, Lahori Gate, Delhi on dated 14.07.2020 In this regard a DD No. 43A dated 14.07.2020 at PS. Lahori Gate, Delhi. The description of dead body is given as under Name : Unknown, R/o : Unknown Age : 35 years, Height : 5'4", Built: Thin, Face: Round, Complexion: Sallow.



Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far, if any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned. SHO PS. Lahori Gate, Delhi Ph. : 011-23953776 Mob. : 8750870122 DP/383/N/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Riya D/o Jai Bhagwan, R/o H.No. A-66, Gali No. 4, Chandan Park, Prem Nagar-III, Delhi, Age : 17 yrs., Height : 5 ft., Complexion : Fair, Face : Round, Wearing : White Colour Top and Blue Colour Jeans, has been missing / kidnapped since 09.07.2020 from the area of P.S. Prem

Nagar. In this regard a case FIR No. 271/2020 dated 09.07.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS. Prem Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. if anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in, Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax : 011-24368639 SHO DP/237/RD/2020. PS. Prem Nagar, Delhi Ph.: 011-25489080, 9868872688

SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one lady (depicted in the photo), Name: Smt. Meera, W/o: Sh. Nav Bahar, R/o: H.No. B-1/331, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi, Aged: 28 years, has been missing from the area of P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi since 19.06.2020 vide DD No. 08A, Dated 23.06.2020, has been lodged at P.S. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:



Height: 5'1", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Eyes: Black, Clothing: Pink Colour Suit and Salwar and Brown Colour Relaxo Sandle in her feet. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing lady, may inform SHO, Gazipur, Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.nic.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 S.H.O PS. New Ashok Nagar, Delhi Ph: 011-22610839, 22610954 DP/106/ED/2020.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo), Name: Muskan D/o Mukesh Kumar R/o H. No. 234, G.T. Karnal Road, Khampur, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 26.06.2020 from her house. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 283/20 u/s 363 IPC dated 28.06.2020 has been registered at Police Station Alipur, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-

Age: 15 Years, Height: 5', Complexion : Fair, Face: Round, Hair: Black, Wearing : Pink colour suit and grey colour salwar. Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Alipur, Delhi at E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Phone: SHO 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Alipur, Delhi Fax No. 011-24368639 Outer North Distt., Delhi DP/345/ON/2020 Ph. No. 011-27202265, 7065036325

Appeal For Identification



General public is hereby informed that this person Name : Unknown S/o : Unknown, R/o : Unknown, Age : 38 Years, Sex : Male, Height : 5 Ft. 5 Inch, Complexion : Shallow, Face : Long, Built : Normal, Wearing : White Colour Baniyan and Blue Colour Lower, has been found dead on 11.07.2020 at Under Hanuman

Setu, Jamna Bazar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 18-A Dated 11.07.2020 has been lodged at PS. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following. SHO DP/381/N/2020(UIDB). PS. Kashmere Gate, Delhi Ph.: 011-23967889, 8750870123

SEARCH FOR MISSING WOMAN



General public is hereby informed that this woman namely Chanchal W/o Ravi Kant R/o H.No. 57, Gali No. 2, C-Block, Part II, Mukundpur, Delhi Age : 25 years, Height : 5', Face : Round, Complexion : Fair, Build : Thin, Identification : Mentally disturb, wearing blue colour jeans, grey colour top and pink colour shoes in feet, has been missing since 26.06.2020 at about 10:30 A.M. from her house. In this regard DD No. 56-A dated 26.06.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing woman may kindly inform to the following. E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO : P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph. : 011-27811934, 7065036328 Fax: 24368639, Tel.: 24368638/24368641 DP/235/ON/2020

HDFC BANK Retail Portfolio Management : Plot # 31, Najafgarh Industrial Area, Tower-A, 1st Floor, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, New Delhi - 110015, We understand your world

POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the HDFC BANK LTD. under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 25/01/2020 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. MIS NATURE CURE & YOGA TRUST, 2. DR. RAGHAVAN MURALEEDHAR NAIR S/O SHRI K R PILLAI, 3. MRS. RUKAMANI NAIR W/O SHRI R.M NAIR, 4. MR. AMREESH TYAGI S/O SHRI OMKAR SINGH, 5. MR. RAHUL BHATNAGAR S/O SH. VIRENDERA SWARUP BHATNAGAR, 6. MR. KSHETRIMAYUM CHAOKA SINGH S/O KSHETRIMAYUM TOMEL SINGH, 7. MR. NAOREM BABALU SINGH S/O N GOURACHANDRA SINGH, 8. MR. KSHETRIMAYUM DOREN SINGH to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 13,73,15,458/- (Rupees Thirteen Crore Seventy Three Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Eight Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 on this 15th day of July, 2020. The borrower(s) and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of the HDFC BANK LTD. for an amount of Rs. 13,73,15,458/- (Rupees Thirteen Crore Seventy Three Lakhs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred and Fifty Eight Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc, less amount paid if any. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
PROPERTY LAND AREA ADMEASURING 1.5 ACRES I.E. 7260 SQ. YARDS, SITUATED AT CGHS GANDHI NIDHI, PATPARGANJ, DELHI-110091. THIS PROPERTY DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS I.e. (a) AREA ADMEASURING 0.961 ACRES EQUIVALENT TO 4651.24 SQ. YARDS AND (b) AREA ADMEASURING 0.539 ACRES, EQUIVALENT TO 2608.76 SQ. YARDS, OWNED BY MIS BAPU NATURE CURE HOSPITAL & YOGASHARAM AN UNIT OF MIS NATURE CURE & YOGA TRUST.

DATE : 15/07/2020 Authorised Officer
PLACE : NEW DELHI HDFC Bank Ltd.

R341 kings of Spain

Benzema's double leads 10/10 Los Blancos to 34th La Liga title

AFP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid were crowned La Liga champions for the 34th time on Thursday after Karim Benzema scored twice in a 2-1 victory over Villarreal which clinched the title with one game to spare.

Benzema's double included a second-half penalty at the empty Alfredo di Stefano Stadium as Madrid moved seven points clear to end Barcelona's two-year hold on the trophy. Barca had to prevail against Osasuna at home and hope Madrid slipped up but their fading challenge ended with a 2-1 defeat at Camp Nou, despite a brilliant Lionel Messi free-kick.

It means Madrid claim their third La Liga title in 12 years, after a relentless run of form since Spanish football resumed on June 11 following the coronavirus pandemic.

Zinedine Zidane's side have won 10 games out of 10 since the restart. They have conceded four goals in that time and never been behind in a match. "For me this is one of the best days in my professional career," said Zidane. "After lockdown and everything, it's astonishing."

Asked if it trumps the Champions League titles Madrid won in his first spell as manager, Zidane said: "This is better than anything. It takes a tremendous effort to win La Liga. After 38 matches, you have more points than anyone else. It's bloody fantastic."



Real Madrid players celebrate with the La Liga trophy after they beat Villarreal on Thursday

RMCF/Twitter

Madrid have also been awarded five penalties during the run-in, some of them controversially, and this one caused a stir too as Sergio Ramos tried to roll the ball to Benzema, who finished, but had entered the area too early.

Much to Villarreal's irritation, Madrid were allowed to retake and this time Benzema made no mistake, before Vicente Iborra headed in what proved a late consolation.

"It's a prize for all the work we've done, this is the reward," said Ramos. "We have one more match and we want to win 11 out of 11."

SETIEN UNDER PRESSURE

After three months away, Barcelona had returned sitting top of the table but draws with Sevilla, struggling Celta Vigo and Atletico Madrid allowed Madrid to take charge. Barca were also in first place when they sacked Ernesto Valverde in January and while the club's problems go deeper than their coach, Quique Setien's position will come under scrutiny.

"Things have to change," said Messi. "Everyone here in the club will be feeling very angry about what has happened this season and that's normal. The players feel like that too." Messi

added: "We have to be self-critical, starting with the players, but across the whole club."

Yet few could argue Madrid deserve the title and it was fitting that Benzema delivered it, his double taking his tally for the season to 26 in all competitions. His first came after 28 minutes when Casemiro stole possession in midfield and freed Luka Modric. He slid through Benzema, who fired through the legs of Sergio Asenjo.

Ramos had scored five goals himself since the restart and could have had a sixth after he was tripped by the dangling leg of Sofian Chakla. But his ploy to

tee up Benzema backfired when his teammate encroached too early. Benzema converted the retake. Iborra headed in Mario Gaspar's cross to set up a nervy finish but Barcelona were still being held by Osasuna.

Messi's curling free-kick into the top corner had cancelled out Osasuna's opener from Jose Arnaiz, once of Barca B. But Osasuna had a final trick up their sleeve as Roberto Torres finished at the back post to wrap up Barca's miserable night at the end of a turbulent season. Real Mallorca's hopes of survival are over after they lost 2-1 at home to Granada.

"Madrid did its part by winning all its matches, which is impressive, but we also helped them to win this league. We have lost a lot of points which we shouldn't have done. We have been very inconsistent"

— LIONEL MESSI

"There are people who say that happiness makes no noise, but I'm the happiest person in the world on the inside right now. Many thanks to everyone for the support"

— ZINEDINE ZIDANE

"Everything Zidane touches turns into gold. We believe in him and in his work. He's the one who has to make the difference"

— SERGIO RAMOS

"We really wanted to win this league title and that is what we have done. Zidane is the architect of this title win. He is a blessing from heaven"

— FLORENTINO PEREZ

"To return after spending three months locked in our homes and to win 10 matches in a row is incredible, but I always believed in my team and knew we could win it"

— THIBAUT COURTOIS

"Another title in the bag. Real Madrid truly came together as a team during these tough times. Congratulations!"

— ROHIT SHARMA

What now for broken Barca?

Barcelona: Lionel Messi has rarely been known for speaking out but he could not help himself when analysing what has been a disastrous season finale for Barcelona and did not hold back after Thursday's limp 2-1 La Liga defeat at home by Osasuna.

Calling his side "weak", "inconsistent" and "very easy to score against", the club captain called for urgent changes after surrendering the league title to Real Madrid, saying it was no good to use their rivals' relentless form as an excuse.

"Messi explodes", ran the cover of newspaper *Mundo Deportivo*.

Barca's attentions now turn to the Champions League, a trophy they have somehow failed to win since 2015 despite mostly reigning supreme in Spain in that period.

But few would back them to win the mini-tournament in Lisbon in August, least of all Messi, who does not even fancy their chances of hurdling their last-16 tie with Napoli, which is poised at 1-1 ahead of the second leg at the Camp Nou on August 8.

"I said a while ago that it would be very hard to win the Champions League if we kept playing like this and it turned out it wasn't even good enough to win the league", he said.

"If we want to win the Champions League we need to change many things, otherwise we will lose to Napoli too."

"We need to clear our heads, this break should give us the opportunity to take some air as things have been very bad from January to now."

Messi's words were a particularly scathing statement of the reign of coach Quique Setien, who was appointed in January after the club sacked Ernesto Valverde when they were top of the table on goal difference.

Setien, meanwhile, did not give exactly give himself a vote of confidence, admitting he was uncertain if the club would keep faith in him for the Champions League campaign. "I hope so, but I don't know. I agree with Messi on some things and that we need to take a hard look at ourselves," he said.



Inter pass

Sanchez boosts Nerazzurri's faint title hopes



MILAN: Antonio Conte hailed inform Alexis Sanchez as an "extra weapon" as the Chilean inspired Inter Milan to a 4-0 win over lowly SPAL to move second in Serie A, six points behind leaders Juventus.

Sanchez's Inter career started off badly, with injuries holding him back, but the on-loan forward is now proving to be a key player in Inter's title challenge.

"He is a rediscovered footballer, with the right hunger," said Conte. "He suffered a lot, he is now well, he is an extra weapon for us."

Conte's side revived their title challenge, taking advantage of defending champions Juventus' draw with Sassuolo on Wednesday, with Atalanta a further point adrift in third with five games left to play.

Former Manchester United and Arsenal forward Sanchez teed up Antonio Candreva for the opener eight minutes before the break in Emilia-Romagna.

Cristiano Biraghi added a second on 55 minutes and then crossed for Sanchez to head in on the hour mark. Ashley Young picked out Roberto Gagliardini to tap in a fourth with 16 minutes to go.

Fans allowed back into English sports from next week

LONDON: Spectators will be allowed back into some sports events in England from next week as coronavirus prevention measures are tested ahead of a planned wider reopening of stadiums in October.

Domestic cricket on July 26-27 is set to be the first sport that fans are allowed to watch in person since March. Some spectators will also be allowed into the world snooker championship in Sheffield from July 31 and the Glorious Goodwood horse racing festival on August 1 is also part of a Government scheme piloting the return of fans.

"From October we intend to bring back audiences in stadia... In a Covid-secure way subject to the successful outcome of pilots," British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in Downing Street on Friday.

Stadium capacities will be restricted and staggered entry times, social distancing measures and one-way systems will be required.

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 2-0 to keep the pressure on Leicester after their top-four rivals defeated Sheffield United as the battle for Champions League qualification heated up on Thursday.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side had no margin for error after Leicester's 2-0 victory earlier in the day and they responded thanks to goals from Marcus Rashford and Anthony Martial. United's fifth win in their last six league games leaves them in fifth place in the Premier League.

They are level on points with fourth-placed Leicester, trailing them on goal difference, and one point behind third-placed Chelsea.

With the financial implications of failing to reach the Champions League certain to be painful for United, Solskjaer's men will be under intense pressure in their final two league games. After Sunday's FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea, United host West

TOP 4 RACE IS ON

Man Utd, Leicester win to guarantee final-day shootout



Man United's Marcus Rashford, second right, scores the opening goal against Crystal Palace

Ham on Wednesday before a decisive showdown at Leicester on July 26.

United could also qualify for the Champions League if they win the Europa League, which is set to resume in August.

Rashford broke the deadlock in

first-half stoppage-time when the England forward cleverly deceived two Palace defenders with a drag-back and slotted home from close range. Palace complained vehemently that they should have been given a penalty moments earlier when Wilfried Zaha

went down after contact from Victor Lindelof.

Referee Graham Scott waved away their appeals and VAR didn't change the decision, with replays showing Lindelof got a slight touch on the ball. Palace were denied again in the second half when Jordan Ayew's goal was ruled out for offside by VAR.

Martial killed off Palace in the 78th minute with a clinical finish after good work by Rashford.

At the King Power Stadium, Leicester earned their first win in three games thanks to goals from Ayoze Perez and Demarai Gray. Thrashed 4-1 by Bournemouth on Sunday, Brendan Rodgers' team took the lead in the 29th minute with Perez's first goal since January. Gray's deft finish sealed the points from Jamie Vardy's pass in the 79th minute.

Leicester's next match is at Tottenham on Sunday before the Manchester United clash on the last day of the season.

At Goodison Park, Aston Villa's hopes of avoiding relegation were seriously damaged by their 1-1 draw against Everton.

SINGLES

LEEDS UNITED BACK IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE BIRMINGHAM: Championship leaders Leeds United have officially been promoted back to the Premier League after 16 years on Friday when second-placed West Brom dropped points against Huddersfield.

THIAGO CLOSE TO JOINING LIVERPOOL: REPORTS LIVERPOOL: Thiago Alcantara is on the verge of joining Liverpool after stalling over signing a contract extension at Bayern Munich, according to a report in *Bild* on Friday. The paper claims Klopp wants to sign the playmaker but the clubs have yet to agree a transfer fee. According to *Bild*, Liverpool are not willing to pay more than 25 million euros, while Bayern want around 40.

HUMPY BEATS WORLD NO 1 YIFAN, ENTERS FINAL CHENNAI: India's top player Koneru Humpy pulled off a 6-5 win over world No 1 Hou Yifan of China on Friday to reach the final of the fourth and final leg of the Women's Speed Chess Championships. She will now face the winner of clash between former world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk and Sarasadat Khademalshari.

SERENA TO RETURN TO ACTION IN KENTUCKY LEXINGTON: Serena Williams will make her return to the WTA Tour at a new hardcourt tourney in Kentucky in August. The Top Seed Open organizers said that 23-time Slam champion Serena & 2017 US Open winner Sloane Stephens will be in the field when play begins on Aug 10.

FIFA LIFT PUNJAB FC'S TRANSFER BAN CHANDIGARH: Former I-League champions Punjab FC's three-window transfer ban for non-payment of dues to North Macedonian footballer Hristijan Denkovski has been lifted by the sport's global body FIFA, the club announced on Friday. The I-League club was handed a three-window transfer ban by FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber (DRC) after it failed to clear Denkovski's dues.

VETTEL FASTEST IN HUNGARY 2ND PRACTICE BUDAPEST: Four-time Formula One champion Sebastian Vettel posted the fastest time for Ferrari in a rain-soaked second practice for the Hungarian Grand Prix on Friday. He was .272 seconds ahead of Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas and 1.32 clear of McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr. Defending F1 champion Lewis Hamilton, who was fastest in the first practice for Mercedes, was one of seven drivers not to post a time in the second session.

ITALY LOOKING TO ALLOW FANS RETURN IN SEPT KUALA LUMPUR: Italy will not be looking to allow a return of fans to the stadiums for football matches before September, the country's Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora has said. Spadafora said that the Government is working with FIGC and league officials to allow the re-entry of fans to the stadiums in time for the start of the 2020/21 season.

Stokes stars as England dominate Day 2

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Ultra-careful centuries by Ben Stokes and Dom Sibley allowed England to declare against the Windies on 469-9 and reinforce their command of the second Test two days in on Friday.

Giving themselves an hour to bowl at the visitors, England profited by dismissing John Campbell on 12 to leave West Indies 32-1 at stumps and seeking a face-saving draw.

The West Indies won the first Test, but has trailed at Old Trafford for most of this Test after wasting the initiative on Thursday.

Its morale was hammered on Friday as Stokes made 176 and Sibley 120 in a laborious stand worth 260, England's biggest at home in nine years.

The batsmen came together when England was a precar-



Ben Stokes celebrates after hundred

ious 81-3 on Thursday afternoon and the West Indies attack was finally focused, but Sibley, the opener, and the mercurial Stokes hunkered down. Their crawl continued on Friday, increasing England's advantage hour by painstaking hour.

Sibley was first to a hundred — his second in Tests — just before lunch. He gave a big fist pump to celebrate his 312-ball century, the slowest in Test cricket since November 2014.

Stokes, on 99 at lunch, soon after brought up his 10th test hundred with a reverse sweep. It was his fourth hundred in 12 tests.

Sibley's innings ended when he tried to up the run rate. He smashed spinner Roston Chase to Kemar Roach as he ran round from midwicket. Sibley faced 372 balls for his second highest test score, behind only the 133 he made against South

Africa in Cape Town in January. He hit only five boundaries in more than nine hours at the crease.

Ollie Pope was then trapped plumb in front of the stumps on 7 by Chase, but Stokes, joined in the middle by Jos Buttler, had already begun to take advantage of the tired West Indian fast bowlers.

Stokes was dropped on 157 by Shai Hope at gully off Shannon Gabriel, and eventually dismissed after tea on 176, his second highest Test score.

Stokes tried to reverse Roach and edged behind. He faced 356 balls, and hit two sixes and 17 fours.

Roach earned his first wicket since September, 71 overs into this series. Then he got another off the next delivery, when Chris Woakes edged his first ball to gully.

Buttler added 40 and Sam

Curran 17, giving Chase a fifth wicket, though Roach bowled more impressively to return 2-58 from 33 overs.

England should have been all out, but Gabriel failed to run out Stuart Broad with the stumps at his mercy, and Roach let a shot from Dom Bess pass through his hands and over the boundary for a six.

Bess and Broad earned a bonus 20-plus runs as they plundered 42 runs from 39 balls before the declaration.

Broad, who had been angered at being dropped from the first Test, opened the England attack but a wicket wasn't taken until medium-pace Sam Curran replaced Woakes and trapped Campbell after a review.

Fellow opener Kraigg Brathwaite was 6 not out, and nightwatchman Alzarri Joseph was 14 not out.

UAE favourites to host IPL, India training camp

NEW DELHI: The United Arab Emirates has emerged as the top contender to host India's training camp along with Ahmedabad and Dharamsala being the other options discussed at the BCCI Apex Council meeting.

With India's Covid-19 case load exceeding a million mark, UAE is favourite to host this edition of IPL which is scheduled to be held between end September and mid-November. Indian cricketers, who have not played since March due to the Covid-19 pandemic, could well resume their training in Dubai, the likelihood of which will increase significantly if the UAE gets to host the cash-rich league.

The issue was discussed in the virtual Apex Council meeting on Friday but the final call will be taken by the IPL Governing Council.

"If the IPL is held in the UAE, then it only makes sense the Indian cricketers train there before the tournament. They have a good infrastructure in place. UAE is the most likely choice for the IPL with India getting increasingly unsafe (due to Covid-19), a BCCI official said.

"The other likely options are training camp in either Dharamsala or Ahmedabad (at the renovated Motera stadium) with a bio-bubble in place. But the cases continue to increase in India, so UAE will be the safest option," the official added.

The BCCI has zeroed in on September-early November window for the T20 extravaganza but for that, the ICC needs to announce the cancellation of the T20 World Cup, scheduled in Australia.

India has potential to break medal jinx in Tokyo: Sreejesh

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Having encountered both success and failure from close quarters in a career spanning 14 years, national team goalkeeper PR Sreejesh believes a "much-improved" India has the potential to break its Olympic medal jinx in Tokyo next year.

India's last success at the quadrennial sporting extravaganza, though, came 40 years ago in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, where they won the last of their eight Gold medals.

However, Sreejesh feels that Indian hockey has progressed by leaps and bounds in recent times. "I feel like there is not



much of a difference now, we have shown that in our FIH Pro League matches earlier this year, that we can beat anyone, and not

India men to open campaign against NZ

NEW DELHI: Desperate to end its four decade medal jinx, the Indian men's hockey team will open its campaign against New Zealand at the Tokyo Olympics on July 24 next year.

The women's side will be up against Netherlands in their first match on the same day. Men's team will next

Australia on July 25, followed by matches against Spain (July 27), Argentina (July 29) and Japan (July 30).

After their Games opener against Netherlands on July 24, Indian Eves will play Germany (July 26), Great Britain (July 28), Argentina (July 29) and Japan (July 30).

PNS

just beat, but also dominate with our style of play.

"With one year left for our preparations, I think it (Tokyo Olympics) is going to be the biggest tournament for me as well, and something tells me that

it is going to be a huge year for Indian hockey," he said.

"We can really bring that elusive Olympic medal back to our country if we perform to our potential in Tokyo next year," Sreejesh said.

fastUp In the last couple of months I have realized that we must choose our battles. We are surrounded by many injustices in our country that require urgent attention and action to fix them. If we wait only for the ones that attack us personally, we will always live for "my way vs your way" and that way leads us nowhere.

So I've remained silent, with the intent to listen, but not respond. Slowing down my point of view, but quicker to hear the pain of someone else. I knew that words would be lacking and that my understanding is not close to where it needs to be.

I surrender my opinions and take the knee as an intercessor. I acknowledge that South Africa is still hugely divided by racism and it is my personal responsibility to do my best to emphasize, hear the stories, learn and then be part of the solution with my thoughts, words and actions

I have gotten it wrong before. Good intentions were failed by a lack of perspective when I said on a platform that - I don't see colour. In my ignorance I silenced the struggles of others by placing my own view on it.

A race problem is a human race problem, if one part of the body hurts, we all stop, we empathize, we get perspective, we learn and then we tend to the hurting part of the body.

So I am saying that all lives don't matter UNTIL black lives matter. I'm speaking up now, because if I wait to be perfect, I never will. I want to leave a legacy of empathy. The work needs to continue for the change to come and whether we agree or disagree, conversation is the vehicle for change.

"All lives don't matter until black lives matter" former SA captain Faf du Plessis said on Friday, lending support to the fight against racism that has gripped the world with renewed vigour after George Floyd's death

Instagram