

OPINION 6
TURNING THE
CLOCK BACK

MONEY 9
DIESEL PRICE NEARS ₹82/L
AFTER 15 PAISE INCREASE

SPORT 12
INTER BEAT GENOA
IN SERIE A CLASH

NEW DELHI, MONDAY JULY 27, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



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JOYFUL TO BE
BACK AT WORK:
FARHAN AKHTAR
10 VIVACITY

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Cong to take Raj crisis to people

Party plans nationwide stir to play up political crisis as a challenge to democracy; Gehlot writes to Guv again for Session from July 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The Congress has taken the Rajasthan crisis as an existential challenge to democracy and decided to hold a countrywide protest on Monday even as Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot sent a second proposal to Governor Kalraj Mishra for convening an Assembly session from July 31. The agenda for the session is to discuss the Covid-19 situation in the State, and there is no mention of the floor test in it.

The Rajasthan Governor had turned down the earlier proposal sent by the Chief Minister for holding an Assembly session on the ground that it didn't cite any reason for convening the House and it was not justified when the State was reeling under a pandemic.

Unlike in the case of Madhya Pradesh where the Congress tamely accepted the demise of the Kamal Nath Government, the party is gearing up for an all-out war against the BJP and the Modi Government against the attempt to destabilise the Gehlot regime in Rajasthan.

Party leaders feel that the Centre has unleashed all the probe agencies and is misusing the office of the Governor as part of the conspiracy to topple the Gehlot Government, and if they didn't fight it out no Opposition Government will survive in the country.



- Cong leaders feel if they didn't fight it out no Opposition Government will survive in the country
- Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said democracy in the country will function in accordance with the Constitution and echo the voice of the people, who will reject the BJP's 'conspiracy of deceit and deception'
- Sources said some leaders within the Congress are in favour of withdrawing the SLP in the Supreme Court and fight a political battle across the country

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said democracy in the country will function in accordance with the Constitution and echo the voice of the people, who will reject the BJP's 'conspiracy of deceit and deception'.

He was participating in the Congress' 'SpeakUpForDemocracy' online campaign to expose what it called the designs of the BJP to topple the Gehlot Government and other State Governments run by Opposition parties.

A large number of party leaders participated in the digital campaign.

Hitting out at the Centre, Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi said, "While there's a complete call for Covid measures around the country, we

have a Central Government and State Opposition in Rajasthan which has converted it into a 24x7 activity to ensure the downfall of a duly elected Government. This shows their priorities. Is it conceivable that any Governor will refuse or delay the meeting of an Assembly which may have a numbers test?"

Singhvi, who represented Rajasthan Assembly Speaker in the High Court, went on to add, "Suppose the Rajasthan High Court holds in favour of the State Government of Rajasthan or Speaker or Sachin Pilot, will it affect the Governor's power to call the Assembly under 174? The reference to a minimum of 21 days notice reflects the motivated nature of the Governor's

queries. Innumerable sessions have been called at a week's or

Uddhav challenges Opp to topple his Govt over attending bhoomi puja

PNS ■ MUMBAI

While during the BJP-led Opposition in the State to "topple" his Government, Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said here on Sunday though he would go to Ayodhya for the Ram Mandir's bhoomi puja on August 5, it was unfortunate that because of coronavirus, lakhs of Hindus would not be able to attend the ceremony.

"Here we have banned the

even five days' notice." Sources said the Congress is divided over fighting out a legal battle in the Supreme Court after senior leader Kapil Sibal expressed dismay over the way Rajasthan HC handled the matter related to the Speaker's power. Sibal even said if the court ignored judicial precedence this way, the lawyers will have to look for other professions.

Sources said some leaders within the Congress are in favour of withdrawing the SLP in the Supreme Court and fight a political battle across the country. The Congress filed a petition in the SC against the Rajasthan HC order restraining the Assembly Speaker from acting on disqualification notice served on the MLAs of the Sachin Pilot camp. The apex court will hear the issue on Monday.

Continued on Page 2

Modi recalls jawans' valour in Kargil on 21st anniversary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pakistan tried to "backstab" India despite its attempts to keep friendly relations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his tribute to the Armed forces on the 21st anniversary of "Kargil war" who he said won the war against the enemy perched at advantageous icy Kargil heights in Ladakh.

In his monthly radio address "Mann ki Baat", Modi while focussing on Pakistan's Kargil "misadventure" and brave response of Indian Army, also spoke about the coronavirus situation, Assam and Bihar floods and how efforts undertaken by people to bring a positive change.

Prime Minister began by remembering the martyrs of the Kargil war that was declared over on July 26, 1999.

"The world witnessed the valour of Indian soldiers," he said, adding, "Friends, at that point in time, I, too, was blessed with the opportunity to go to Kargil and witness the gallantry of our jawans. That day is one of the most precious moments of my life."

"Pakistan undertook this misadventure with sinister plans to capture India's land and to divert its ongoing internal conflicts."

"Pakistan had the audacity of trying to occupy Indian soil and deviate attention from its own internal unrest," he said.

"At the time, India was trying for improve relations with Pakistan. But as it is said, evil's nature is to fight everyone

In 'Mann ki Baat', PM speaks about coronavirus, Assam and Bihar floods



without reason. People of this nature can only think of doing evil even to those who try to do them good. That's why Pakistan backstabbed India despite India's attempts at cordial relations," he said.

"You can imagine, the enemy was perched high on the

mountains while our forces were fighting them from below. But the high morale and true of our forces won against mountains," he added.

"Thanks to the courage of our Armed forces, India showed great strength in Kargil," said Modi, recalling his own visit to the area.

"Kargil Diwas" is celebrated every year, marking the day the Indian Army recaptured all the Indian posts in Ladakh's Kargil that had been occupied by Pakistan's army 21 years ago. India lost 500 braves in the limited conflict with Pakistan.

Speaking about coronavirus pandemic, the Prime Minister urged people to spare a thought for the frontline workers before removing their masks in public.

Continued on Page 2

Now UP, Bihar join worst-hit States

Total number of cases cross 14 lakh with Maha continues to be affected hardest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have joined the list of some of the worst-affected States like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Karnataka as India's Covid-19 count crossed 14 lakh mark on Sunday.

Both UP and Bihar, which were able to play down the true extent of the pandemic by inadequate testing, have finally come to terms with the reality. On Sunday Bihar recorded 2,605 cases, which took its overall count to 38,919 cases and 249 fatalities. On the other hand, UP recorded 3,246 positive cases and 39 deaths. UP has now 66,988 cases and 1,426 death.

Bihar carried out just around 10,000 tests at an average during the last couple of days, whereas the number of positive cases stood at around 2,600-2,800. Such a high positivity rate will have few paral-

els across the globe. The weekly growth of cases in Bihar is 7 per cent way above 1 per cent of Delhi and 3 per cent of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Uttar Pradesh has now increased its testing and on

Saturday it carried out as many as 57,000 tests. But on the yardstick of test per on million, the State is way behind Delhi, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and many other States.

Delhi remained on course to flatten the corona curve as the national Capital recorded 1,106 cases and 21 deaths. This is far less a number than what the city was recording two weeks ago. Delhi has so far recorded 13,606 cases and 3,827 deaths. The city has just 11,904 active cases and nearly 75 per cent of its Covid beds are vacant in the Government hospitals.

Maharashtra recorded 9,000-plus Covid-19 infections for the fourth consecutive day on Sunday, as 9,431 people tested positive, while 267 people died of the pandemic in various parts of the State.

After it recorded the highest-ever 10,576 infections on July 22 and witnessed 9,895, 9,615 and 9,251 cases on July 23, 24 and 25 respectively, Maharashtra logged 9,431 new infected cases, taking the total number of positive cases to 3,75,799.

With fresh 267 fatalities, the total number of deaths in the State mounted to 13,656. There has been a substantial number of deaths for the past one week.

Continued on Page 2

As corona enters villages, 1-yr rural job may be must for PG medical students

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

As Covid-19 takes rural areas in its grip, the Centre is mulling to make it mandatory for all PG medical students of 2018-19 batch to have one-year compulsory rural services in its medical colleges in the country.

Sources in the Union Health Ministry said the Medical Council of India is considering a proposal in this regard and will soon take a decision on it.

States like Telangana, which admitted of community transmission in the State, have already taken such an initiative and made it compulsory for all Post Graduate (PG) medical students of 2018-19 batch to have one-year services in Government medical colleges in the State.

The aim is to have trained healthcare workers in view of the Covid-19 pandemic in the rural areas where the healthcare system is almost on the brink.

Sources in the Union Health Ministry said the Covid-19 infections have started to increase in towns and districts in various States which is quite worrisome. More so when the health infrastructure in many areas is dismal with not many doctors posted at the PHCs even for the basic services.

"Making the PG Students mandatorily work at the rural



- The aim is to have trained healthcare workers in view of the Covid-19 pandemic in the rural areas where the healthcare system is almost on the brink
- Covid-19 infections have started to increase in towns and districts in various States which is quite worrisome

services aims to meet the demand supply gap at this time when Covid-19 has taken toll on over 32,000 lives and infected over 13 lakh people," the sources said.

The Ministry said doctors

are needed for timely detection and transfer of patients. As of May 2020, there are 542 medical colleges and 64 stand alone PG Institutes in India whose qualifications are recognised by the Medical Council of India.

44% decline in Covid fatalities in first 12 days of July in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi has recorded a 44 per cent decline in the number of Covid-19 deaths in early July as compared to early June, the Delhi Government said on Sunday. The city recorded 605 deaths due to the viral disease between July 1 and 12 as against 1,089 fatalities during the same period in June, according to an analysis carried out by the Health Department.

The Delhi Government's Covid-19 hospitals saw a 58 per cent reduction in death - from 361 in early June to 154 in early July, it said. The Central Government Covid-19 hospitals saw a 55 per cent reduction in number of deaths, while private Covid hospitals witnessed a 25 per cent decline.

Hospital-wise analysis of data revealed that total deaths vis-à-vis total admissions in the Central Government's RML Hospital dropped from 81 per cent in June to 58 per cent in July, according to the Delhi Health Department.

In Safdarjung Hospital the number of deaths vis-à-vis total admissions dropped from 40 per cent in June to 31 per cent in July. In LNJP Hospital the rate dropped from 28 per cent in early June to 16 per cent in early July, it said.

Detailed Report on P3

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 14,36,018
DEATHS: 32,810
RECOVERED: 9,18,708
ACTIVE: 4,84,079

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	3,75,799	13,656	2,13,238
Tamil Nadu	2,13,723	3,494	1,56,526
Delhi	1,30,606	3,827	1,14,875
Andhra Pradesh	96,298	1,041	46,301
Karnataka	96,141	1,878	35,838
Uttar Pradesh	66,988	1,426	41,641
West Bengal	58,718	1,372	37,751
Gujarat	55,822	2,322	40,467
Telangana	54,059	463	41,332
Bihar	38,919	249	26,308
Rajasthan	36,430	624	25,954
Assam	32,229	79	23,056
Haryana	31,332	392	24,384
Madhya Pradesh	27,800	811	19,132
Odisha	25,389	174	16,793
Kerala	19,026	62	9,300

CAPSULE

RAKHI WITH MESSAGE: POK, AKSAI CHIN INDIA'S
New Delhi: Traders' body CAIT said it has released rakhis with the message 'Aksai Chin and PoK belong to India' as a tribute to Indian soldiers for their courage and determination and remembering their valour on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas on Sunday.

ASSAM FLOOD: 5 MORE DIE, SITUATION CRITICAL
Guwahati: The flood situation in Assam remained critical with five more persons losing their lives, while nearly 25 lakh people have been affected by the deluge in 23 districts.

Once den of daku, Chambal bihad readies for influx of tourists

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Bihad areas of Chambal-BGwalior belt, a unique geographical feature having gullies up to 15-20 feet deep which once used to be hideouts of dreaded dacoits, will turn into prairie grassland for agriculture and a hub of ecotourism.

The Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the World Bank has decided to convert a large area of ravines in Gwalior-Chambal belt into arable land and a preliminary report for the same will be prepared in a month.

According to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, three lakh hectare

of bihad areas that are rugged land not cultivable will be brought under agriculture purposes. Tomar held a virtual meeting with World Bank officials, Madhya Pradesh, scientists, Vice-Chancellor of Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya, Gwalior and other stakeholders to this effect.

The Chambal-Gwalior ravines that consist of sharp, steep, mud hillocks stretch across three States - Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. It covers the districts of Baran, Kota, Sawai Madhopur, Karauli, and Dholpur districts of Rajasthan, parts of Agra, Firozabad,



Etawah, Auriya and Jalaun districts of UP and Bhind, Morena and Sheopur districts of Madhya Pradesh.

This is not the first time a plan has been floated to cull out something useful from the ravines. Earlier, the Centre had launched a mega ravine reclamation project in 1971.

Till a decade ago, guns were a way of life here and the farmaans (diktats) of baaghis - local parlance for dacoits - were the law of the land in areas like Udi, Chakarpur and Dibhauli Ghat. The names and deeds of Maan Singh, Malkhan Singh, Phakkad, Lala Ram, Vikram Mallah, Phoolan Devi and Nirbhay Gujjar are still

spoken in awe here, particularly at poll time. The Chambal-Gwalior ravines are known for infertile terrain, water scarcity and frequent droughts. Farming was almost impossible, especially for the poor and those on the lowest rung of the caste ladder.

"After preparation of the initial report, subsequent meetings will be held with the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh for further course of action," Tomar said. In addition, a Chambal Expressway will be built to pass through this area and help overall development of the region," he added.

Continued on Page 2

Highest single-day spurt of 5,199 cases in K'taka

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Sunday witnessed the highest single day spike in coronavirus cases with 5,199 additions, taking the aggregate in the state to 96,141, while 82 succumbed to the virus, the health department said.



While Dakshina Kannada district reported 7 deaths, six each occurred in Belagavi, Kalaburagi and Dharwad and five each in Mysuru and Tumakuru. Most of those who died were suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Illness and Influenza Like Illness. With 82 more deaths, the Covid-19 toll rose to 1,878.

There are 58,417 active cases including 632 in the ICUs whereas the 2,088 discharges on Sunday took the total discharges to 35,838, the department said in the bulletin.

Bengaluru urban district accounted for 1,950 infections, followed by 579 in Ballari, 230 in Mysuru, 213 in Bengaluru Rural, and 199 in Dakshina Kannada among other districts. Bengaluru urban continued to record highest number of deaths.

the virus. Halamma and two others in her family contracted the virus and were home quarantined.

The woman's son, who had developed mild complications was shifted to the government hospital, District Health Officer, H L Janardhan said. On July 24, all of them recovered as the results came out negative, he said.

Among the 632 in the ICU across the state, 353 are in Bengaluru, 37 in Dharwad and 29 in Kalaburagi, the health department said.

It added that as many as 74,475 primary contacts and 64,033 secondary contacts are under observation.

As many as 33,565 tests were conducted on Sunday taking the cumulative total to 11.76 lakh, the department said. **PTI**

3,246 afflicted in UP, 39 deaths reported

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh recorded its highest single-day spike of 3,246 Covid-19 cases on Sunday, taking the state's tally to 66,988.

However, according to a health bulletin issued here by the State Government, 3,260 fresh cases were reported.

As many as 39 more people died due to Covid-19 in the State, pushing the toll to 1,426, the bulletin said. Of the fresh cases, 449 were reported from Lucknow, 202 from Kanpur, 145 from Varanasi, 128 from Ballia and 101 from Bareilly.

Gautam Buddh Nagar reported 110 fresh Covid-19 cases, Gorakhpur 107 and Moradabad 103.

On Saturday, Uttar Pradesh's case count stood at 63,742.

Of the 39 fatalities, eight deaths were reported from Kanpur, six from Ballia, and three each from Ayodhya, Bareilly and Gorakhpur.

Two deaths each were reported from Jhansi, Sultanpur and Varanasi. Baghat, Basti, Bulandshahr, Chandauli, Deoria, Jalaun, Jaunpur,

Lucknow, Meerut and Prayagraj reported one death each.

There are 23,921 active cases in the state. As many as 41,641 Covid-19 patients have recovered and been discharged, the bulletin said.

Indian spy satellite passes over Tibet, China mobilises troops

New Delhi: India's premier intelligence-gathering satellite EMISAT, operated by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has taken a good look at the positions of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in occupied Tibet.

The satellite which carries Kautilya, an ELINT (electronic intelligence) package whose "capabilities are among the most highly-classified and closely-guarded aspects of operation for military purposes on Saturday carried out a pass over PLA positions in occupied Tibet near Arunachal Pradesh," an official source said.

Built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), EMISAT's ELINT missions monitor radio signals which are used to determine the nature and location of all the sources of transmissions in an enemy area.

The satellite pass came a day after talks between India and China over the stand-off over Chinese structures on Finger 4 area along the Line of

Actual Control (LAC) in Pangong Tso in Ladakh, made no headway, even as both sides have agreed to continue their meetings aimed at disengagement and de-escalation.

Sources said the Chinese troops have also been mobilised in Depsang sector, as soldiers could be spotted digging the area on their side of the LAC. The PLA had also intruded into Depsang in 2013.

On Friday, sources said, Indian radar reconnaissance satellite RISAT-2BRI carried out a pass over Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. The base is the PLAN's first overseas military base, built at a massive cost. Recently, there were reports that three Chinese warships are in the waters near the Djibouti coast.

On July 11, EMISAT's ELINT (Project Kautilya) carried out a pass near Pakistan Navy's Ormara base (Jinnah Naval Base). The base also has submarine berthing facilities and has reportedly hosted Chinese submarines in recent years. **IANS**

Laptop incentive scheme for Class XII students resumes in MP

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday announced resumption of a state government scheme to give laptops to meritorious Class XII students.

Chouhan, who is hospitalised on being detected with Covid-19 on Saturday, made the decision after a meeting with cabinet colleagues and officials through video conferencing.

Chouhan said the scheme will benefit regular and private students who excel in the main exams of Class XII for academic session 2019-20 conducted by MP Board of Secondary Education.

Under the scheme, which was started during Chouhan's previous stint as CM, the State Government will give ₹ 25,000 to such students to buy laptops. **PTI**

Bihar's death toll climbs to 249, tally rises to 38,919

Patna: Bihar's Covid-19 death toll climbed to 249 on Sunday with 17 new fatalities, while the total case-load rose to 38,919 with 2,605 fresh instances of the disease reported in a day, a Health department bulletin said.

Of the fresh deaths, five were reported from Bhagalpur, followed by two each in Munger and West Champaran while one fatality each was registered in Patna, Aurangabad, Buxar, Kishanganj, Nalanda, Nawada, Samastipur and Sitamarhi, it stated.

So far, Patna district has recorded the highest 37 Covid-19 deaths.

Bhagalpur reported 25 deaths, Gaya 14, Rohtas 12, Muzaffarpur and Nalanda 11 each, Darbhanga, Munger and Samastipur 10 each.

Patna also tops the list of the number of Covid-19 cases with 6,514 infections. The district also accounts for 1,869 active cases.

The total active cases in the state stood at 12,361.

Other badly affected districts include Bhagalpur with 2,243 cases, Muzaffarpur 1,691, Gaya 1,583, Nalanda 1,530, Rohtas 1,519, Begusarai 1,398, Siwan 1,264.

The recovery rate in the state was 67.60 per cent and till date 26,308 people have recuperated from COVID-19 with 1,788 of them in the last 24 hours.

The total number of samples tested till date was 4.56 lakh.

Two police sub-inspectors have died of Covid-19 infection, an official said. **PTI**



Workers construct a temporary quarantine facility for Covid-19 patients, at Nehru Stadium in Guwahati on Sunday **PTI**

Covid-19 test report mandatory to attend Nagaland Assembly session

Kohima: All legislators and assembly secretariat staff will have to undergo a mandatory test for Covid-19 and carry the report to attend the one-day session on July 30, according to an official statement.

Speaker Shringain Longkumer has decided that all those coming to the premises, including ministers, advisors, MLAs, and officers and staff of the secretariat, will have to undergo the Covid-19 test and carry the report with them, the statement issued by assembly commissioner and secretary P J Antony said on Saturday.

The assembly secretariat in consultation with the civil secretariat has made necessary arrangements for testing of everyone involved, it said.

To avoid crowding around the assembly premises, the speaker also directed that the members may come accompanied by

only their drivers and one security guard, except in the case of the chief minister, deputy chief minister and the leader of the opposition. Journalists covering the assembly session have also been asked to undergo the test and carry their results while attending the session.

Longkumer said that as part of social distancing protocol, only one member would be allowed to sit per bench, restricting only 30 members within the assembly well while the rest 30 members would be adjusted in the seats previously reserved for administrative and departmental heads.

The administrative heads and other support staff would occupy the visitors' gallery, he said.

Also, only one journalist per media house would be permitted in the press gallery, Longkumer added. **PTI**

Sikkim education institutes to remain closed till Aug 31: Min

PTI ■ GANGTOK

The Sikkim Government has extended the closure of all educational institutes in the state till August 31, amid the rising number of Covid-19 cases, a minister said on Sunday.

Earlier, the Government had said that the institutes, which were shut down following the imposition of the nationwide lockdown in March, would reopen after August 3.

Teachers, however, will continue to impart lessons online, Education Minister Kunga Nima Lepcha said.

The health and safety of the students were of utmost prior-

ity for the State Government, but education, too, has to be given equal attention, he stated. The minister said his department has designed online, offline and homeschooling programmes for students to ensure they don't miss out on important lessons.

All educational institutions, government and private, shall remain closed till August 31. The situation will be reviewed again at an appropriate time, Lepcha said.

Earlier in the day, the government had extended the statewide lockdown, which was scheduled to end on Sunday, till August 1.

Hyderabad Mayor tests +ve

IANS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Mayor Gonthu Rammoan tested positive for Covid-19, said his office here on Sunday. He is asymptomatic and under home isolation. His family members have tested negative.

After one member of his staff tested coronavirus positive recently, the Mayor went into self-quarantine and underwent the test on Saturday.

Rammoan is holding review meetings with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials on various civic issues through video link.

On July 23, the Mayor had attended a programme to lay foundation stone for a flyover along with Municipal Administration Minister K.T. Rama Rao, Home Minister

Mohammed Mahmood Ali (who recently recovered from Covid-19), Animal Husbandry Minister T. Srinivas Yadav, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi and others.

He had twice undergone Covid-19 tests last month. On both occasions he tested negative.

On June 7, he had undergone the test an employee of a hotel where he had tea tested positive. A few days later, he underwent the test again after his driver tested Covid-19 positive.

The Mayor is the latest addition to the list of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leaders who have tested positive. Home Minister Mahmood Ali, Deputy Speaker Padma Rao Goud, five MLAs and former Deputy Chief Minister Kadiam Srihari have tested positive.

Bhopal gas tragedy: Organisations seek MP Govt help for victims

Bhopal: Organisations working for the Cause of survivors of the 1984 Bhopal Gas tragedy on Sunday demanded urgent help for the victims, especially widows, from the Madhya Pradesh Government in view of the Covid-19 crisis.

In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, these organisations claimed the condition of about 5,000 widowed victims has become pathetic, as they have been deprived of the monthly pension (of ₹1,000) since December 2019.

The letter has been written jointly by Bhopal Gas Peedith Mahila Udyog Sanghathan (BGMUS) convener Hamida Bi and ND Jayaprakash, co-convener of the Bhopal Gas

Peedith Sangharsh Sahayog Samiti (BGPSSS).

Jayaprakash said BGPSSS was an umbrella body of 30 NGOs working for the gas victims.

"Gas victims are being forced to live in terrible conditions when thousands of crores of rupees are still due to them by the way of compensation," stated the letter, copies of which have been distributed to media persons.

"By the Government of India's own submission in the curative petitions, currently pending before the Supreme Court, it has sought ₹7,728

crores (which is a gross under-estimation) as an additional compensation from Union Carbide Corporation and its present owners, the Dow Chemical Company," it said. There is absolutely no justification for continuing to delay the granting of additional compensation to the gas victims, the organisations said.

"It may be recalled that ₹200 was paid as an interim relief per person/per month to 500,000 residents of 36 gas-affected wards of Bhopal during 1990-1996 by the Central government due to delay in the payment of compensation. The organisations have demanded an interim relief of ₹3,000 per victim per month and of ₹5,000 to each widow or orphan per month until disbursement of additional compensation. **PTI**

Goa tally rises to 4,861 with 175 new cases

Panaji: Goa on Sunday reported 175 new Covid-19 cases, taking the total count to 4,861, a Health official said. With two more succumbing to the infection, the death toll went up to 35, he said.

A total of 230 people were discharged during the day, taking the number of recovered cases to 3,277 and that of active cases to 1,549, he added.

The deceased included two men aged 63 and 53 who died at ESI hospital in Margao. **PTI**



LOST & FOUND

Lost my documents of class 10th/Roll No T/1978/019-2011 passed ICSE, 12th/Roll No 5703778-2013 passed CBSE, BBA/Roll No 8427512-2016 passed CCS university, MBA Roll No16MB3064-2018 passed Mysore University. Pl. Cont. Asmita Singh-9350842008 **PD(8703)C**

PUBLIC NOTICE
My clients SHASHI RANDHAWA W/o Late Amrjit Singh Randhawa (S/o Late Fauja Singh Randhawa) R/o C-100A, DDA Flats, Hari Nagar, South West Delhi, New Delhi-64 have disowned, debarred their son Vikrant Randhawa & his wife Megha from all their movable and immovable properties as his behaviour has not been in conformity with the family past & many years. If anybody deals with him in any manner he/she will solely be responsible for the same & his act done by him. (Ramesh Chander Anand/Advocate), Cn-68, Western Wing, Tis Hazari.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby informed in the general public that my client Jaidev W/o Sh. Khem Chand Kalra R/o 153-B, Mandir Waii Gali, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-17, have debarred / evicted their son Mr. Prem Chand Kalra S/o Khem Chand Kalra, claiming any right, title & interest whatsoever for all the purposes & intent. They are having no connection with any kind of Moveable or immovable properties of my client and any person dealing with him/her, monetary or otherwise, he/she shall do so at his/her own risk, costs & consequences. My client shall not be liable & responsible for the same and they are not liable. **Mayank Rajawat (Advocate)** D/1853/17 Ch. No.393, Lawyers Block-II, Delhi High Court, New Delhi-110003

Uddhav challenges Opp...

From Page 1

In the second and final part of an interview published in the Shiv Sena mouth-piece "Saamana", Uddhav said, "As a chief minister, I will go to Ayodhya. I have still not received the official programme of Ram Mandir Bhoomi Puja. I will formalise my programme after receiving the programme schedule. At the same time it is the wish of lakhs of people whose sentiments are attached with the Ram Mandir as they had participated in the Ram Mandir movement. A lot of Ram bhakts have given their blood during the struggle."

Uddhav, who had gone to Ayodhya before and after becoming the chief minister of Maharashtra, said that he was attached to Ram Mandir like his father late Bal Thackeray and grandfather.

Speaking on wide-ranging issues during his interview, Uddhav challenged the BJP-led Opposition in the State to topple his government. He said that while his was a "three-wheeler" government, he is firmly in control of its steering wheel.

"The future of my government is not in the hands of the opposition. The steering is in my hands. A three-wheeler (auto-rickshaw) is a vehicle of poor people. The other two are sitting behind," Uddhav said. Uddhav said that his alliance partners in the MVA government - NCP and Congress - were "positive" and that he benefiting from the experience of the leaders in the two parties.

Taking an indirect pot shot at former chief minister and current leader of the Opposition Devendra Fadnis of the BJP, Uddhav said: "Why wait for September-October to topple my government, as is being speculated. Topple the government right now since you get pleasure in toppling. Some people derive pleasure in constructive work while some are happy in destruction. If you feel happy in destruction, go ahead."

"You say the MVA government was formed against the democratic principles but when you topple it, is it democracy?" Uddhav wondered.

Taking a snipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pet Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, Uddhav said: "A three-wheeler is a vehicle of poor people. If I were to choose between a bullet train and an auto-rickshaw, I would choose the auto-rickshaw. If people don't want a bullet train, then it will not happen."

Cong to take Raj crisis...

From Page 1

Senior Congress leader Ajay Maken, meanwhile, slammed the Modi Government, said, "It has never happened before that a democratically-elected Government wants to hold an Assembly session but is not being allowed to do so. The is a constitutional crisis and murder of democracy."

"Instead of fighting the pandemic and the Chinese at the border, the Narendra Modi-led Government is busy fighting the Rajasthan Government."

"The Governor must call for an immediate session to enable the Government to work smoothly," Maken said.

In Jaipur, Congress national spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said that the BJP's conspiracy to kill democracy in broad daylight in Madhya Pradesh and now in Rajasthan has been exposed.

"Is democracy a slave of the Delhi Durbar? Is the majority a puppet in Delhi's hands? Doesn't the rule of vote matter? If not, then raise your voice," he said.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has warned that if Governor Kalraj Mishra didn't convene the Assembly he would take the protest to Delhi in front of Prime Minister's residence.

Once den...

From Page 1

Tomar said the proposed reforms in this project will not only help to improve agricultural development and the environment, but it will also create employment opportunities for the people and lead to substantive development of this region.

"A decision in this regard was taken in a virtual meeting with World Bank representative Adarsh Kumar, who said the bank is keen to work in Madhya Pradesh," a statement said.

According to a study, about 3.97 million hectares of land in India form ravines. The States of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat account for 2.7 million hectares, or 70 per cent, of the country's ravines, it adds. Currently, Madhya Pradesh has estimated 8-10 lakh hectares of

ravines with steep but shallow gullies. This area is mainly along the banks of the river Chambal and its tributaries in districts such as Bhind, Morena, Shivpuri, Gwalior, Ujjain and Mandsaur. The Chambal river system is also well preserved with a national sanctuary supporting a good number of gharials, muggers, fish and migratory birds. While the note makes a strong case for reclaiming the ravines, the cost of levelling these jagged geographical formations is humongous.

According to officials, during the meeting it was decided that the substantive project would be prepared in collaboration and support from the World Bank to accomplish this work. "In this regard, a meeting was also held earlier with the representatives of the World Bank and it has been decided to prepare a preliminary project report within a month," officials said.

Now UP, Bihar join worst...

From Page 1

The break-up of deaths in the state since July 20 is: July 20-176, July 21-246, July 22-280, July 23-298, July 24-278, July 25-257 and July 26-267.

Of the 267 deaths reported on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 57 deaths, taking the total number of deaths in the country's commercial capital from 6,036 to 6093 and the infected cases

increased by 1,101 to touch 1,09,161 now.

In Tamil Nadu, e coronavirus pandemic continued to cause havoc. While the State saw 85 persons succumbing to the pandemic during the last 24 hours, 6,986 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19. By the end of the day, there were 53,703 active cases of coronavirus across Tamil Nadu and this took the number of cases

tested positive till date to 2.13 lakh.

The 116 laboratories across the State tested 62,305 persons on Sunday taking the number of persons tested to date to 2.26 million. The day also saw 5,471 persons getting cured and discharged from hospitals across Tamil Nadu.

Out of the 85 deaths registered during the last 24 hours, 75 died because of pre-existing morbidity or chronic diseases. The fatalities in Tamil Nadu till date reached 3,494 on Sunday.

The situation in Kerala continues to be grim as 927 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19, according to a press release issued by Health Minister K K Shylaja.

A major cause of concern is the unprecedented increase in the number of persons getting contracted with the pandemic through contacts. On Sunday 733 persons tested positive were victims of contact. Two persons succumbed to the pandemic during the last 24 hours.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK

44% decline in deaths in early July compared to early June: Report

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Citing a detailed analysis report on Covid-19 prepared by the Delhi Health Department, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal-led Government claimed 44 per cent decline in deaths between early June and early July.

Lauding the efforts of Government focused on reducing deaths, the Delhi Government said widespread testing, oximeters, responsive ambulance system, ready availability of beds using corona app and addition of ICU beds, are key factors helping to tackle corona pandemic in India's political capital.

As per Government's report, both Government and private hospitals have done a

fair job in tackling coronavirus. Delhi Government's Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital with seven per cent death rate is on top ranking for giving treatment to corona infected patients.

Analysing the report, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said, "Chief Minister Kejriwal's efforts and direct monitoring have rebuilt public confidence in Delhi Government hospitals, which have been at the forefront of this turnaround. The CM has directed the best performing and worst forming hospitals to analyse their system and suggest specific interventions that need to be scaled or changed."

According to the report, for the period 1-12 June and 1-12 July has revealed a 44 per cent

decline in deaths — from 1,089 during 1-12 June to 605 during 1-12 July.

Further, the analysis revealed that deaths in Delhi Government Covid hospitals saw a 58 per cent reduction from early June to July — from 361 deaths to 154 deaths. In comparison, deaths in private Covid hospitals saw a 25 per cent reduction from June to July and deaths in Central Government Covid hospitals saw a 55 per cent reduction.

According to the report on hospital-wise analysis of deaths revealed that death per cent rate in Central Government's RML hospital was 81 per cent in June, which dropped to 58 per cent in July. In Safdarjung Hospital — another Central Government facility, the death

rate dropped from 40 per cent in June to 31 per cent in July.

Similarly, the death rate in LNJP Hospital — Delhi Government's largest Covid hospital — dropped drastically from 28 per cent in early June to 16 per cent in early July. Delhi Government's Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital turned out to be among the best Covid hospitals in the national capital in terms of death rate — 6 per cent in early June and 7 per cent in early July.

Analysis of death figures carried out by the Health department also revealed that a large number of people who got admitted in early June arrived in critical condition and passed away within four days, many within 24 hours.

Notably, during 1-12 June, percentage of all deaths that took place within four days of admission was 67 per cent, whereas percentage of deaths that took place within 24 hours of admission was 34 per cent. In comparison, during 1-12 July, percentage of all deaths that took place within four days of admission was merely 35 percentage whereas percentage of deaths that took place within 24 hours of admission was 15 per cent.

This radical turnaround was possible due to the single-minded focus of Kejriwal on initiatives that would directly help prevent deaths, as well his daily monitoring of status of critical patients.

Jain said, "The Chief Minister has been personally monitoring daily status of crit-

ical patients and deaths due to Covid from beginning. His emphasis on timely implementation of crucial initiatives to prevent deaths has helped turnaround the situation and restores public confidence in Delhi Government's hospitals."

Analysis of deaths from 1-23 July revealed that the Government hospitals with the highest death rate are Ram Manohar Lohia (39 per cent), Safdarjung (35 per cent), GTB (22 per cent), AIIMS Delhi (20 per cent) and LNJP (15 per cent).

The report also highlighted that the percentage of deaths that took place in wards in these hospitals in the period 1-23 July was 43 per cent in RML, 42 per cent in GTB, 38 per cent in LNJP and 18 per cent in Safdarjung.



City Govt concludes 17-day Vrikshaaropan Pakhwada drive

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said in 15 days, 8.5 lakh saplings have been planted in Delhi, out of which six lakh saplings were planted by various departments and 2.5 lakh saplings were planted by people

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Sunday concluded the 17-day "Vrikshaaropan Pakhwada" campaign under the "Plant Saplings, Save Environment" plantation drive in which 8.5 lakh saplings were planted at various locations in the national Capital.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said in the last 15 days, 8.5 lakh saplings have been planted in Delhi, out of which six lakh saplings were planted by the various departments and 2.5 lakh saplings were planted by the people under the campaign.

Rai said the drive witnessed a huge participation from the people. He also thanked the officials of horticulture and forest departments for participating and making the drive a success even in the time of corona.

"The Government started this drive by planting a banyan tree at the same place on July 10. Following that, we planted trees



Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai takes part in a Mega plantation drive 'Plant saplings, save the environment' at NH-24, near the PWD Office (Yamuna bank), New Delhi on Sunday



Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

at various locations in Delhi. The plantation drive was carried out under the leadership of Chief Minister, Cabinet Ministers and various constituency MLAs," he said.

"I am happy to inform you that even in the time of the Corona pandemic, the officials of the horticulture and forest

department, Delhi Development Authority, Municipal Corporations of Delhi, Public Works Department and various other agencies have worked with such conviction to save the environment," Rai added.

Rai said, "I want to congratulate the departments that

the plantation drive has completed over 7.5 hectares of land. This drive was not only about planting, but the department also took care of things such as which variety of plants should be planted in which soil, for better preservation of the trees and fertility of the land," he said.

Explaining about the target,

he said the Government aims to plant 31 lakh saplings this year, out of which 8.5 lakh have been planted during this drive. We have kept a target of 31 lakh saplings till March 31. If we have fulfilled the target of 8.5 lakh saplings in the time of corona, I am sure that we will be able to achieve our target of 31 lakh saplings by March 31, 2020, in the coming days, he said.

"The saplings that are planted this time will be audited by a third party agency. The preservation of the saplings has been a challenge that is why the Delhi government has decided that a third party audit of the saplings planted under the plantation drive will be conducted to assess the survival rate of the saplings," he added.

Rai also announced that during the audit and analysis to be conducted at the final stage of this plantation drive, the best employees of each district will be honored with the title of "Pariyavaran Mitra".

55-yr-old ACP killed in road accident



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A day after 55-year-old Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) was killed in a road accident at Southwest Delhi's Rajokri Flyover, a Delhi Traffic Police official said the officer, who was on duty at the time of incident had earlier never intimated about any threat to the department. Police also said they are investigating the incident from all possible angles.

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava also paid tribute to the departed ACP Sanket Kaushik at traffic police headquarters in Todapur. Kaushik was posted in traffic unit of the Delhi Police.

According to a senior police official, on Saturday night around 8 pm, Kaushik was taking stock of the traffic situation, after parking his

vehicle on the roadside near Rajokri Flyover, when a truck hit him from behind.

"The mini truck's driver fled from the spot. The other policemen also chased the vehicle but could not succeed. Kaushik was rushed to AIIMS Hospital where he was declared brought dead," the senior police official said. "Police teams are scanning CCTV cameras in the area to identify the truck driver. A case under relevant Sections has been registered at a local police station," said police.

Kaushik is survived by his wife and three children. He had joined the Delhi Police as Sub-Inspector in the Year 1989. His initial posting was in Southwest. In 2006, he was promoted to the rank of Inspector and during his posting, he also served in Central district in Security and Traffic units.

Man arrested for duping women on matrimonial sites

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 34-year-old man for reportedly duping several women, especially widows and divorcees, whom he met through matrimonial sites on the pretext of marriage.

The accused has been identified as Anchit Chawla and he used to pose as a businessman and duped the women of several lakh rupees. Police said that he changed his name and location many times to prevent the police from catching him.

According to Vijayanta Arya, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Nprthwest district, the matter came to light after a woman filed a complaint at Ashok Vihar Police Station alleging she was duped by a man named Mudit Chawla, who approached her in December 2018, through a popular matrimonial site.

"She alleged that Chawla claimed to own a bed sheet factory in southwest Delhi's Palam and that he dealt in renting luxury cars to tour and travel agencies. He started interacting with her through e-mails, calls and WhatsApp. He used to demand small amounts from her which he duly repaid to win her confidence. He later convinced her to take personal loans from different banks to recover his business losses," said the DCP.

"The accused duped the woman of Rs 17 lakh till December 2019 on the pretext of marriage. When she insisted on marriage, he started avoiding her," said the DCP.

"Based on the information provided by the complainant, intelligence was gathered and required details were collected from the matrimonial website. The accused used many profiles with different names to prevent the police from catching him," said the DCP.

"With the help of technical surveillance, our team managed to trace the accused from Palam Vihar Extension in Gurgaon on Friday. During investigation, he was found to be previously involved in four other cases of similar nature," the DCP said.

Govt to look into sexual harassment complaints at workplaces

New Delhi: The Delhi Government will constitute five-member committee to overview and monitor the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 as on Sunday, Delhi Women and Child Development Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam chaired a review meeting on implementation of the law.

"I have the Department of Women and Child Development to constitute a five-member committee to overview and monitor the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The composition may include some government officers, the non-government organisation sector and members civil society," Gautam said.

To provide safe and secure environment for women in Government and non-government sectors, Gautam instructed to convene a meeting through video conferencing with Government department Heads in the first phase in order to have an interface regarding the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act at their respective departments.

The Department was directed to ensure the issuance of advertisements, in form of display and text notices, for creating awareness among citizens along with all Government and Private sector entities on the provisions, facilitation, and penalty clauses of the Act.

For this, the Department of Women and Child Development has organized several workshops along with a media campaign.

The Department has also issued necessary instructions on a regular basis to all the departments of the Delhi govt, autonomous bodies, and private sector companies for the constitution of the internal committee.

Even all District Magistrates are instructed for the constitution of the local committee as a statutory requirement under the Act. SR

NDMC plants 1,659 trees in current monsoon season

Medicinal plants like tulsi, amla, aloe vera, neem and giloy are specific part of tree plantation drive

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the aim of enhancing the green cover of New Delhi area as well as boosting the immunity of public at large by planting saplings of herbal medicinal plantation in view of covid-19 pandemic, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), have planted as many as 1,659 trees and 24,102 shrubs in the current monsoon season.

A senior NDMC official said the plantation drive, is in full swing in which thousands of shrubs and ground cover at nearby parks, gardens, main roads, surrounding areas and residential colonies had been planted in 14 circles of New Delhi area.

Medicinal plants like tulsi, amla, aloe vera, neem and giloy are also the specific part of this tree plantation drive in this year by NDMC.

NDMC has set a target of 5,116 trees and 1,50,676 shrubs plantation of various species of timber trees as well as herbal



medicinal plants for immunity boosting in the time of Covid-19 pandemic, the official said.

The civic body also included the fruit bearing trees like Jamun, Chiku, Nimboo and Anaar are being planted in its gardens, along circular roads and in residential colonies parks in the plantation drive. Besides this, 1.50 lakh shrubs ground covers will be developed during this monsoon season in New Delhi area, he said.

The official added the saplings of trees consisting of Neem, Pipal, Khirani, Ashok, Pilkhan, Arjun and Kachnar, Champa, Amaltas and Khirni had been planted along with the avenue roads at Talkatora Road, Talkatora Garden, Mandir Marg, Firozshah Road, Ashoka Road, KG Marg, Children Park, Nehru Park, Palika Niketan, Rafi Marg, Kushak Nala, Sanjay Jheel, Jor Bagh, Akbar Road, Shanti Path, PSOI Club, Lodi Colony and Lodhi Garden in New Delhi.

Once upon a time, Delhi was known as garden city but the Green area of Delhi had faced the concretisation due to increasing urbanisation, he

said, adding with the sustained efforts made by the team NDMC, the green cover of New Delhi area had been enhanced from 46 to 50 per cent during the last five years.

However, it is a matter of pride that the New Delhi area is one of the greenest areas of the Capital city, having over 50 per cent green cover and the survival rate of the sapling planted during the last few years average is more than percent overall.

"It is comprehensive efforts of NDMC, maintaining 1,500 acres of green area and 135 green avenues, ten major parks, 1,400 residential colony parks, 52 roundabouts, ten departmental nurseries, including three hi-tech nurseries, three international relationships memorial parks, many happiness areas and prestigious garden like Nehru Park, Lodi Garden, Talkatora Garden and Sanjay Jheel, Children Park, India Gate, Central Parks, Connaught Place, CWG Park, Shanti Path etc," he said.

Gurugram court summons Alibaba founder Jack Ma

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

In a major development, a district court in Gurugram has summoned Chinese E-commerce company Alibaba and its founder Jack Ma after a former employee alleged that he was wrongfully fired after objecting to censorship and fake news on the company's applications.

Pushpandra Singh Parmar, who used to work as an associate director at the UC Web office in Gurugram, has also confirmed the development about the case.

Parmar had been associated with UC Web office based in Gurugram until October 2017 and is also seeking Rs 2 Crore (approx.) in damages so far.

Civil Judge Junior division Sonia Sheokand of a district court in Gurugram has issued summons for Alibaba, Jack Ma and about a dozen individuals and Indian directors or company units, asking them to appear in court in person or through a lawyer on July 29. The judge has also sought written responses from the company.

The court has also sought written responses from the company and its executives within 30 days, as per the summons.

The case comes weeks after India cited security concerns in banning Alibaba's UC News, UC Browser and 57 other Chinese apps including TikTok after a clash between the two countries' military forces on their border.

Working on disaster not only priority but also need of hour, says Sisodia

New Delhi: Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday said working on disaster is not only priority but also the need of the hour. "We must engage community, parents and children to deal with the problem," he said.

In a programme organised on tri-centenary of 1720 earthquake in Delhi, officials said at least we can do as our tribute to victims is to equip ourselves better.

All high-rise apartments and houses in old buildings, particularly those in areas where the ground is mostly soft soil, should make it mandatory to hold a regular earthquake readiness drill, they said.

The event was designed to raise awareness about how Delhi-NCR should work towards becoming risk ready and how citizens can prepare themselves and their families to protect against earthquakes. SR

Police to intensify patrolling, conduct verification drive ahead of Independence Day

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of Independence Day, Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava has directed officers to conduct a thorough verification drive across the national Capital.

The CP also directed all the district Deputy Commissioners of Police (DCPs) to intensify patrolling in their areas and conduct door-to-door verification to ensure safety and security across the national capital to avoid any untoward incident.

The CP also laid emphasis on increasing police presence, intensive and coordinated checking at vulnerable points, verification of tenants and servants, sensitisation of cyber cafe owners, security guards, second-hand car dealers and mobile dealers among others in order to strengthen counter-

terrorism measures.

Even though hotels and guest houses aren't operational due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the officers have been asked to stay vigilant.

"In view of forthcoming Independence day, security arrangements across all the 15 police districts in the city were reviewed via video-conferencing. We have also collected intelligence inputs and are working on it accordingly. A thorough verification drive is being conducted at all places across the city to ensure the safety and security ahead of the big day," said a senior police official.

"Besides, Independence Day security arrangements, issues concerning cybercrime were reviewed and redressal of public grievances was also discussed in the meeting," he said.

Delhi Metro casts first pier under Phase-4 work

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) took another important step forward in its Phase-4 construction work as the first pier of this phase of metro expansion was casted on the Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg Metro corridor on Saturday night.

The pier was cast at Keshopur on the elevated stretch between Keshopur and Mukarba Chowk last night. A senior Delhi Metro official said this major construction milestone has been achieved despite severe shortage of manpower and other logistical challenges because of the ongoing pandemic.

"The average height of the piers on this corridor is 10 metres. However, the height of the piers will be 20 metres at Madhuban Chowk (crossing with Line 1) and 25 metres at Haiderpur Badli Mor where this line will cross line 2," he said.

At Haiderpur Badli Mor, the rail level is going to be the highest i.e. 28 metres in the history



of Delhi Metro, he said, adding that presently, the highest point is at Dhaura Kuan, where the line 7 viaduct passes at a height of 23.6 metres. The approximate distance between each pier will be about 28 metres.

Piers, in terms of civil engineering are vertical load bearing structures which act as intermediate support for adjacent ends of two spans. It forms the vertical support structures on which the elevated metro viaducts stand.

"Metro piers today dot

The 28.92 km long Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg corridor is an extension of Magenta Line and will come up with 22 stations. While 21.18 kilometres of this corridor will be elevated, 7.74 kilometres will be underground. Construction work on this particular section had started in December last year.

On July 17, the work on the underground section of this corridor commenced with the beginning of D wall construction work at the Krishna Park Extension Metro station. On June 24, DMRC had started the casting work of u-girders which would be installed on the elevated section of this corridor.

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 the metro. Out of this, 22.35 kilometres will be underground while rest will be elevated," he said.



Rajnath, Shah pay tributes to Kargil martyrs



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Naval Staff Karambir Singh, Army Chief General MM Naravane and Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria pay tribute to the martyrs on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, at National War Memorial in New Delhi

India will remember sacrifices made by soldiers: Nadda

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday said that the Indian forces combined inspiration and strategy with valour to vanquish Pakistan during the Kargil War despite facing adverse circumstances. India will forever remember the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers to secure the country's borders, he said.

Speaking at an event on the 21st anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Nadda also stressed on the BJP's commitment to the welfare of armed forces, saying the defence sector has always received Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special focus. The Modi Government implemented "one rank one pension" scheme and cleared

all dues with payment of ₹33,000 crore, he said, adding that 72 border projects are now near completion while work on them was not done during the UPA government.

The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee fought with Pakistan in the international arena during the Kargil war and had made it clear that India will not declare ceasefire until it secures its border by defeating Pakistan, he said.

Nadda also noted Modi's visit to Ladakh recently during the standoff with China and said that the Prime Minister spends every Diwali with the armed forces.

The PM himself went to Ladakh, stayed there the entire day, held meetings, boosted the morale of our jawans and



met the injured jawans, he said adding this sends a message that 130 Crore Indians, under the leadership of the PM, are standing with the Army.

Hailing the armed forces, he said Pakistan was in an "advantageous" position during the Kargil war after occupying mountain heights but

Indian soldiers drew inspiration from the challenge and fought with valour and strategy to attain victory.

"It was the toughest battle on the highest mountains," he said even as he maintained that India will forever remain indebted to the brave soldiers.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday paid rich tributes to the Kargil War martyrs saluting them for their "unwavering and indomitable courage" to ensure India is safe and secure.

"The unwavering courage and patriotism of our Armed Forces have ensured that India is safe and secure," the defence minister posted on Twitter on the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the country's victory over Pakistan in the Kargil War.

"I am also grateful to those who despite becoming

disabled in battle, continue to serve the country in their own ways and have set examples worthy of emulation by the Nation," Singh said.

"On the 21st anniversary of Kargil Vijay, I would like to salute the brave soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces who fought the enemy under the most challenging conditions

that the world had witnessed in the recent history," he added.

Singh, along with Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Naval Staff Karambir Singh, Army Chief General MM Naravane and Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria, paid tribute to the Kargil War martyrs at

the National War Memorial here.

"I congratulate all Indian citizens on the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas. The sacrifices made by soldiers, which helped us win the Kargil war, will always be a source of inspiration for the armed forces," Singh told reporters.

For his part, Shah tweet-

ed in Hindi saying, "Kargil Vijay Diwas is a symbol of India's self-respect, valour and steadfast leadership. I bow to the soldiers who with their indomitable courage drove the enemy from the inaccessible hills of Kargil and waved the tricolour there again. The country is proud of the heroes of India, who are dedicated to

protecting the motherland." On July 26, 1999, the Indian Army had announced the successful culmination of "Operation Vijay", declaring victory after the nearly three-month-long battles in the icy heights of Kargil. India lost more than 500 soldiers in the war.

The Kargil War was

declared over on July 26, 1999, after Indian soldiers pushed back the Pakistani troops, a bulk of them drawn from the neighbouring country's Northern Light Infantry, from the captured peaks.

The day is observed as "Kargil Vijay Diwas" to commemorate India's victory in the war.

Video of surrendered ultras to be distributed among youths



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

As part of the efforts to put counter narrative to the insurgent groups' ideology, the security agencies in the Northeast, Jammu and Kashmir as also Naxal-hit States have plans to organise question and answer sessions of surrendered ultras including underground guerrillas and militants. Videos of such sessions will be prepared by professional agencies and disseminated amongst youth to keep them away from violent ideologies.

In the States facing Naxal violence, the Centre has advised initiation of synergised response at Panchayat, Block and District level for moulding perception of the youth. The States have also been advised to undertake educational tour programmes for youth in such areas, officials in the security agencies said.

The Centre has further advised creation of a databank of people from Naxal areas living outside in cities/towns for studies or jobs. The enlisted persons in the databank will be utilised for carrying back messages of development and other positive information and prevent gullible persons from being attracted to Naxalism. The idea has been proposed to be taken up in 'mission mode', they said.

In addition, there is a proposal to constitute a team of five

to seven academically-inclined police officials in each of these three theatres of violence to study important cases of convicted, surrendered, reformed terrorists, Naxals and insurgents. Such teams will scientifically analyse the modus operandi used, means of radicalisation/indoctrination and available means of reintegrating them in mainstream society. The police team will also use academicians in such exercises, they further said.

In the Naxal areas, closer coordination between the police stations on inter-State border and joint exercises for 15 days or more is on the anvil.

In order to boost counter-insurgency measures, the Union Home Ministry has advised setting up of separate teams by the State police forces, Central paramilitary forces and Central Police Organisations to review security aspects like weapons, ballistics, uniform, laboratory infrastructure and the like and recommend improvements to be made in the equipment paraphernalia. The Directors General of these agencies will review the recommendations and send them to the Union Home Ministry.

In depth study of logistic chain of weapons, money and food items among others of the Naxals groups will be carried out and means will be devised to disrupt them, they added.

Guj reports highest single-day spike of 1,110 new Covid-19 cases

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Gujarat on Sunday reported the highest single-day spike of 1,110 new COVID-19 cases, taking the total count to 55,822 while 21 patients died, including 12 in Surat, the State health department said.

The cumulative death toll in the state now stands at 2,326.

The number of recovered cases rose to 40,365 with 753 patients being discharged during the day.

The recovery rate in the State now stands at 72.31 per cent.

Surat continued to report the highest number of cases in the State.

On Sunday, it added 299 new cases, taking the count in the district to 12,268, the health department said.

With 12 fatalities in the day, the death toll in Surat district went up to 544, it said. Ahmedabad reported 163 new cases, taking the count to 25,692. With three deaths, the number of fatalities in the district rose to 1,575.

Out of 21 fatalities in the day, two deaths were reported from Vadodara and one each from Gandhinagar, Jamnagar, Morbi, and Rajkot, the release said.

Vadodara reported 92 new cases, Rajkot 72, Amreli 39, Banaskantha 35, Dahod 30, Bhavnagar 31, Narmada 26, Surendranagar 24, Chhota Udepur and Patan 22 each, Junagadh 20, Jamnagar 14, Gandhinagar 19, Kutch 20, and Bharuch 19.

A total of 21,708 tests were conducted in the day, taking the total count in the state so far to 6,42,370, which comes at 333.96 tests per day per million population, the department said.

Non-profit organisation urges PM to set up national commission for migrant workers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A non-profit organisation has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take immediate steps to set up a panel for migrant workers on the lines of NHRC and National Commission for Minorities.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Sansthan (PDUSS), in a statement on Sunday said, this has "become imperative in view of the widespread problems and exploitation faced by these millions of migrants who constitute the largest nomadic workforce in the committee".

The PDUSS is a nationwide non-profit organisation working for the welfare of poor and downtrodden since 1995.

"We have urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Union government to take immediate steps for setting up a national commission for migrant workers on the lines of

National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Minorities," it said in a statement.

The PDUSS said through its founding members, Anand Mani and Vinod Shukla, it has already submitted a draft bill on the contours and composition of the proposed national commission.

"The draft and model bill have already been presented to the NITI Aayog more than two months ago," the statement said.

During the course of helping out migrant workers in the initial stages of the lockdown, when hundreds of thousands migrant workers were returning to their native places bare-foot or on cycles, trucks, buses, PDUSS felt the need for a central body that can take care of the welfare of migrant workers, it said.

Three more Covid-19 patients die in Nagaland

PTI ■ KOHIMA

A day after Nagaland recorded its first death due to COVID-19, three more people infected with the disease died, while the State's tally rose to 1,289 after 50 fresh cases were reported on Saturday, officials said.

All the four deaths occurred in Dimapur district. The state registered its first COVID-19 fatality when the test result of a 50-year-old man came out positive on Friday, three days after his death, State Nodal Officer for Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Dr

Nyan Kikon, had said. Three more COVID-19 patients succumbed since Friday and authorities were ascertaining whether they died of the infection as they had comorbidities, Health and Family Welfare Minister S Pangnyu Phom said.

The Minister also tweeted, "Fifty new cases of COVID-19 have been detected out of 344 test results received on Saturday - 20 in Mon, 19 in Dimapur, 7 in Kohima and 4 in Mokokchung."

The State now has 744 active cases while 451 have recovered.



Aerial view of flood affected area, in Darbhanga district, in Bihar

Flood situation worsens in Assam, Bihar; rain lashes Delhi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The flood situation worsened in Assam and Bihar on Sunday with five more deaths and nearly 40 lakh people affected in the two states, as another spell of monsoon rain lashed Delhi but a sultry weather prevailed in Punjab and Haryana.

The five fresh deaths raised the flood-related toll in Assam to 102. Another 26 people have died in landslides triggered by rainfall, the state disaster management authority said.

Over 24.76 lakh people are hit due to floods in 23 districts of Assam. Goalpara is the worst-hit with over 4.7 lakh people affected.

Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region Jitendra Singh spoke to Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and assured him help from the Centre and the North Eastern Council to restore and repair the infrastructure damaged in

floods. Singh said the central government is constantly monitoring the flood situation in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and other affected states in the northeast.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking regular updates on the situation, he added.

In Bihar, at least 10 people have died and 15 lakh have been hit in 11 districts. Nearly 10 lakh were affected by floods till Saturday in 10 districts.

According to the state disaster management authority, Darbhanga is the worst-affected district with 5.36 lakh people either being displaced or trapped inside home.

Several rivers such as Baghmati, Burhi Gandak, Kamlabalan, Lalbakeya, Adhwara, Khiroi, Mahananda and Ghaghra have swollen dangerously due to incessant rainfall.

Many trains on Muzaffarpur-Narkatiaganj and Samastipur-Darbhanga sections had to change their routes

while others had to short-terminated, a railway official said.

Meanwhile, a 25-year-old woman gave birth to a baby girl on board an NDRF rescue boat plying on the swollen Burhi Gandak river in East Champaran district. The woman was rescued from her marooned house when she developed severe labour pain and later delivered the baby, NDRF officials said.

The mother and the newborn girl have been admitted to a public health facility and they are stable.

A total of 21 NDRF teams are deployed in northern Bihar. Light-to-moderate rainfall lashed parts of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath conducted an aerial survey of the areas inundated by heavy rainfall in Gorakhpur district and asked officials to ensure safety of all dams. He directed the district administration to ensure adequate deployment of boats in flood-affected areas.

Inspection, application fees of all self-financed dental institutes raised

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when a majority of dental colleges in the country are facing financial hardships caused by the Covid-19-induced lockdown, the Centre has added to their woes by increasing the inspection, application and annual fee of all the self-financed dental institutes.

For instance, yearly fee for recognised self-financed dental colleges having only Bachelor of Dental Studies (BDS) Course has been doubled to ₹1 lakh while application fee for establishment of new dental colleges has been raised from ₹6 lakh to ₹9 lakh per college, as per a circular issued by the Dental Council of India (DCI), an autonomous body under the Union Health Ministry.

Similarly, for the inspec-



tions carried out at UG/PG/PG diploma course in all specialities/dental materials/diploma course in dental mechanics/dental hygienists/dental operative room assistant (DORA) level in addition to yearly fee, fees one has to shell out ₹1.50 lakh now against previous amount ₹1 lakhs while renewal/periodic/compliance verification recognition has been enhanced from ₹2 lakhs to ₹3 lakhs.

Application fee for starting of MDS Course/PG Diploma

Course in all specialities/dental materials and application fee for increase of seats in BDS/MDS has been increased from ₹3 lakhs to ₹4.50 lakhs, as per the circular.

Also, application fee for starting diploma course in dental mechanics/dental hygienists/dental operative room assistant (DORA) has been revised from Rs 1 lakh to ₹1.50 lakhs. The GST at the rate of 18 per cent is also applicable on all the payments, reads the circular.

Last month, the DCI had also instructed all private dental colleges across the country to pay full salary and stipend to the faculties, students and other employees during Covid-19 lockdown period and warned them of strict action in case they fail to do so.

The move followed several complaints from the teaching and non-teaching staff of non-payment and in many cases deduction in salaries and stipend to them by the dental colleges.

The Council also reminded the colleges about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Ministry of Labour and Employment's advisories issued from time to time, asking the private sector to not to deduct or cut the salary of the people working with the institutions in the tough times when Covid-19 has swept the world.

Modi to unveil three new high-throughput labs of ICMR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate three new high-throughput labs of the Indian Council of Medical Research on Monday through video conferencing. The three new high-throughput ICMR labs have been constructed in Mumbai, Noida and Kolkata. The labs will majorly boost the nation's COVID-19 testing capacities.

The Union Government has adopted the test-track-treat strategy for early detection and containment of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this, the ICMR has ramped up its testing capabilities to effectively deal with Coronavirus crisis.

"We have already asked the state governments and union territories to ramp up



testing capacities. Adding more labs and enhancing the capacity of the approved labs will increase the COVID-19 testing capacities in the country," said an official from the Union Health Ministry.

These new testing labs will be capable of testing over 10,000 samples in a day and

also reduce turn-around-time. The inauguration is expected to be followed by a review meeting on the current situation of Covid-19 in the state.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers Yogi Adityanath and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee

These new testing labs will be capable of testing over 10,000 samples in a day

are expected to take part in the virtual inaugural event.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Union Health Minister Harshvardhan and senior officials are also expected to be part of the expected review meeting. The meeting comes at a time when India has seen a massive surge in everyday cases. The country crossed the 13 lakh mark on Sunday. India has recorded 48,661 cases of coronavirus as the total COVID-19 tally soared to 13,85,522 on Sunday.

Will stay with BJP only: Mukul Roy

Says not in touch with TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Senior BJP leader Mukul Roy on Sunday dismissed claims that he had been marginalised in the saffron party and that he was in touch with some of his former colleagues in the Trinamool Congress which he left a few years ago following differences with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

"I am very much in the BJP... I have been in the BJP, I am in the BJP and will continue to be with the BJP in future," Roy told journalist saying his not being invited in a Bengal-specific party meeting in Delhi where most senior leaders from

charges being leveled against me."

Stories have been doing the rounds that fault lines have appeared between Roy a former Man Friday of Mamata Banerjee and his new party.

He also dismissed reports that he had got the posters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah removed from his Delhi office saying "the posters were removed as per the Election Commission orders before the Delhi Assembly elections.... Subsequently things got overlooked due to the corona crisis... and most importantly I personally did not notice them. However, I will get them fixed immediately.

On whether he would

return to Delhi at once he said he would not as "my first priority is to get my eyes operated tomorrow where after I will be under observation and then only I will be able to take a decision."

With Roy not being in the thick of things recently stories had started doing the rounds that BJP State president Dilip Ghosh had got the former Railway Minister's wings clipped following which he was gradually cosying up to his former outfit which he and the Bengal Chief Minister jointly founded in 1998.

On why he was not found on the field he said "none was supposed to be found on the field during the corona times... we had to follow certain pro-

ocols provided by the Central Government." He also dismissed reports of his annoyance at not being entrusted with any post in the party. "It is not true that I have no responsibility... I am one of the hundred members of India's largest party's national executive... Is it not enough to prove my relevance in my party?"

On the question of leadership he said "leadership is decided by the people who judge your performance. Today Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are the tallest leaders not only of the party but also of the country inspiring millions of people. This they have achieved by their performance."

927 test +ve in Kerala on Sun

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Situation in Kerala continues unabated even on Sunday as 927 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19, according to a press release issued by Health Minister KK Shylaja. A major cause of concern is the unprecedented increase in the number of persons getting contracted with the pandemic through contacts. On Sunday 733 persons tested positive were victims of contact. Two persons succumbed to the pandemic during the last 24 hours.

Thiruvananthapuram continued to be the epicentre of the pandemic. The district tested 175 persons with coronavirus out of which 164 had contracted the pandemic through contact. Kasaragod tested positive for 107 persons out of which 105 were infected through contacts.

The day saw 1,277 persons getting admitted to hospitals across the State. There are 494 hotspots in the State.

Out of the 927 tested with Covid-19 on Sunday, 76 were expatriates while 97 were those from other parts of the country. The release by the minister said 67 persons could not give any convincing answer to the question how they contracted the pandemic.

Karnataka Forest Minister Anand Singh tests +ve

Ballari (K'taka): Karnataka Forest Minister Anand Singh has tested positive for Covid-19, sources close to him said on Sunday.

Anand Singh, whose swab was collected on Friday, was found infected with the coronavirus on Saturday night.

However, he is asymptomatic, his close aides told P T I. "He has been tested positive but he is asymptomatic and is quarantined," his confidante said requesting anonymity.

He also said that a few days ago, the minister's driver tested positive. Earlier this month, Tourism Minister C T Ravi had tested positive for the contagion. Karnataka had reported 5,072 cases on Saturday while the overall tally of infections stood at 90,942. **PTI**

TRIBUTES PAID TO KARGIL WAR HEROES



(Left) The Shaheed Smarak war memorial at Colaba Military Station with Tri-Services guard and banners (right) Vice Adm Ajit Kumar Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command laying a wreath during a Tri-Services ceremony at Shaheed Smarak at Colaba in south Mumbai to pay homage to the bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty during the Kargil war in July 1999

85 die, 6,986 fresh cases in Tamil Nadu on Sun

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

There was no abatement or respite for people in Tamil Nadu as coronavirus pandemic continued to cause havoc in the State on Sunday, a day the Government had declared as a total lockdown day.

While the State saw 85 persons succumbing to the pandemic during the last 24 hours, 6,986 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19. By the end of the day, there were 53,703 active cases of coronavirus across Tamil Nadu and

this took the number of cases tested positive till date to 2.13 lakh.

The 116 laboratories across the State tested 62,305 persons on Sunday taking the number of persons tested till date to 2.26 million. The day also saw 5,471 persons getting cured and discharged from hospitals across Tamil Nadu.

Out of the 85 deaths registered during the last 24 hours, 75 died because of pre-existing morbidity or chronic diseases. The fatalities in Tamil Nadu till date reached 3,494 on Sunday.

While Chennai showed a small fall in the number of persons tested positive on Sunday (1,155), Chengalpattu registered 501 new cases, Kancheepuram accounted for 363 persons and Thiruvallur 480 new cases. The three districts along with Chennai are observing stringent restrictions and regulations because of continued hike in the number of cases.

The southern districts of Virudhunagar (385), Kanyakumari (215), Thoothukudi (248) and Tirunelveli (186) continued to be problematic zones.

Maha sees 9,431 new cases, 267 die

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI:

The recovery rate in the State stood at 56.74 per cent. The mortality rate in the State is 3.63 per cent. The State health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 1,48,601

Maharashtra recorded 9,431 plus Covid-19 infections for the fourth consecutive day on Sunday, as 9,431 people tested positive, while 267 people died of the pandemic in various parts of the state.

After it recorded the highest-ever 10,576 infections on July 22 and witnessed 9895, 9,615 and 9,251 cases on July 23, 24 and 25 respectively, Maharashtra logged 9,431 new infected cases, taking the total number of positive cases to 3,75,799.

With fresh 267 fatalities, the total number of deaths in the state mounted to 13,656.

There has been a substantial number of deaths for the past one week. The break-up of deaths in the state since July 20 is: July 20- 176, July 21-246, July 22-280, July 23-298, July 24-278, July 25-257 and July 26-267.

Of the 267 deaths reported on Sunday, Mumbai accounted for 57 deaths, taking the total number of deaths in the country's commercial capital from 6,036 to 6,093 and the infected cases increased by 1,101 to touch 1,09,161 now.

Apart from 57 deaths in Mumbai, there were 55 deaths fatalities in Pune, 48 in Thane, 19 in Raigad, 15 in Jalgaon, 12 in Satara, 9 in Aurangabad, 8 in Solapur, 6 in Palghar, 5 each in Nashik and Akola, 3 each in Kolhapur, Latur, Sangli, Yavatmal and Buldhana, 2 each in Dhule and Nagpur and one

death each in Nandurbar, Jalna, Hingoli, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Amravati, Washim and Wardha. In addition, one more person from another state died in the state.

With 86,358 infected cases and 2346 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 76,203 infections and 1,714 deaths till now.

In a related development, the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year touched 2,13,238.

The recovery rate in the State stood at 56.74 per cent. The mortality rate in the State is 3.63 per cent. The State health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the State at 1,48,601.

Out of 18,86,296 samples sent to laboratories, 3,37,799 have tested positive (19.92 per cent) for Covid-19 until Sunday.

Currently, 9,08,420 people are in home quarantine while 44,276 people are in institutional quarantine.

Pak violates ceasefire along LoC in Poonch

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

While the Indian Army on Sunday celebrated the 21st anniversary of its victory over Pakistan in the Kargil war of 1999 and paid rich tributes remembering heroes of 'Operation Vijay', the Pakistani Army violated the ceasefire agreement along the line of control in Poonch sector on Sunday.

According to the field reports, Pakistani troops shelled forward areas of Balakote sector in Poonch and also targeted several civilian

houses during an intense exchange of firing.

No loss of life and property was reported from the ground zero till the time of filing the report.

Both the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch are witnessing regular mortar shelling since last one week. According to local reports, the Pakistani Army was attempting to push small batches of infiltrators inside the Indian territory to launch strikes on the security forces ahead of the first anniversary of Abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the state of Jammu &

On the other hand, the Shopian police and security forces also busted a hideout in orchards of the Dachoo area. 02 UBGL Grenades, 03 grenades, AK-47 Magazine, 20 AK rounds, ICOM Radio Set & other incriminating materials were recovered. Case registered

Kashmir. Defence PRO in Jammu, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, "At about 3.15 p.m, the Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling mortars along the LoC in the

Balakote sector of Poonch district on Sunday". The Indian Army retaliated befittingly, he said. Meanwhile, different teams of security forces Sunday busted three hideouts in three different places foiling nefarious designs of the terrorists active in the region. One such hideout was busted in Loran area of Poonch

Defence PRO said terrorists plan to target forces thwarted with the recovery of two IED's. In a tweet, PRO Defence, Jammu said, "a terrorist hideout busted in Loran, Poonch. Two improvised explosive devices (IED) weigh-

ing 5 kgs and 3 kgs were recovered. Terrorists plan to target forces thwarted".

In Kashmir valley, two similar hideouts were busted in Kupwara and Shopian.

According to a police spokesman, "Kupwara Police and Army busted another module of Nacro Terrorism by seizing 01 AK 56, 02 Pistols, 20 Grenades & 10 kg Narcotics. A total number of three individuals were arrested and thorough investigations were launched after registration of FIR's in the case.

On the other hand, the Shopian police and security

forces also busted a hideout in orchards of the Dachoo area. 02 UBGL Grenades, 03 grenades, AK-47 Magazine, 20 AK rounds, ICOM Radio Set & other incriminating materials were recovered. Case registered.

Meanwhile, a day after a top Lashkar-e-Taiba commander was killed by security forces in Srinagar Inspector General of Police Kashmir range, Vijay Kumar on Sunday said, "After the killing of LeT terrorist Ishfaq Rashid Khan on Saturday, no resident of Srinagar district in terrorist ranks now".

Virus spread in UP jails: 228 test positive in Ballia

SIANS ■ BALLIA (UP)

Coronavirus is now rapidly spreading in the jails of Uttar Pradesh. A day after 128 inmates in Jhansi jail tested positive for Covid-19, as many as 228 inmates in Ballia district jail have been found to be infected with the deadly virus.

Jail superintendent Prashant Kumar Maurya said, "The infected prisoners have been accommodated in separate barracks in the jail. They are being given medication and food as per the instruction of the health department."

The lone woman inmate who has also tested positive, has been admitted to the L-1 hospital at Basantpur, the jail official added.

However, Ballia district magistrate Shrihari Pratap

that during an antigen test of 817 inmates, 228 tested positive for the virus including one staff member.

There are 1,049 inmates in Ballia prison. With Ballia's tally, the total number of prisoners infected in the state has reached 486. Besides, 25 jail staff, too, have tested positive.

All the prisoners were tested through rapid antigen kits and samples of those tested positive have also been sent for confirmatory RT-PCR test.

UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had earlier instructed all the districts to set up temporary jails. A communique was also issued by the home department in connection with the same.

However, Ballia district magistrate Shrihari Pratap

Shahi, admitted that there was no facility of temporary jail in the district. "We had set up such jails only for 'Tablighi Jamaatis', he added.

Shahi further said that large-scale sampling was done in the jail after which 16 inmates tested positive for the virus on July 22. "Following that, we organised a larger camp of 20 medical teams and got a maximum number of inmates tested," he said.

He also said that several measures have been taken to limit the spread of the virus.

"Of the total eight barracks, three barracks have been turned into isolation wards, for those coming from outside. A team of the health department has been asked to deploy its unit inside the prison," he said.

615 afflicted in J&K

Jammu: The total number of positive cases of coronavirus Sunday rose to 17,920 after 615 fresh cases were detected in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir while seven more patients died taking the death toll to 312.

According to the media bulletin, out of 615 new positive cases, 136 were reported from Jammu division and 479 from Kashmir division. Also 07 Covid-19 deaths have been reported; 01 from Jammu division and 06 from Kashmir Division, the bulletin said.

The situation continued to remain grim in Srinagar district as 209 fresh cases were detected taking the active positive cases to 2,331. 88 deaths have been reported from Srinagar district alone.

In Jammu after 3 persons (petitioner writer, security guard, sanitary worker) engaged in the premises of the DC

office complex have turned COVID +ve. The entire complex of DC office with external holding area on Wazarat road is declared temporarily as a containment zone for extensive sanitisation.

In Jammu division, frontier Rajouri district has become the worst affected hotspot as it has the highest number of 432 active positive cases. Moreover, 411 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 41 from Jammu Division and 370 from Kashmir Division.

According to the bulletin, out of 17920 positive cases, 7680 are Active Positive, 9928 have recovered and 312 have died; 23 in Jammu division and 289 in Kashmir division.

The Bulletin further said that out of 581707 test results available, 563787 samples have been tested as negative till July 26, 2020. **PNS**

2 more die in Assam; mortality rate at 0.25%

Guwahati: Two Covid-19 patients died in Assam on Sunday, taking the toll to 79, Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Both the patients -- a 53-year-old woman from Tinsukia and a 50-year-old man from Dibrugarh -- succumbed at the Assam Medical College and Hospital in Dibrugarh, he said.

"Two more Covid-19 patients succumbed to their infections. Both of them were admitted at AMCH, Dibrugarh. Deeply saddened. May God provide enough strength to their families to bear the loss," Sarma tweeted. The mortality rate in the State is currently at 0.25 per cent, officials said.

The State has reported 31,086 cases of Covid-19 in 117 days since the first person was diagnosed on March 31. **PTI**

Covid patients misbehave with Tripura doctor, Govt yet to act

Agartala: No action has been taken even after 48 hours when a section of Covid-19 patients misbehaved with a woman doctor.

Tripura Health and Family Welfare Department Director Radha Debbarma said here on Sunday that they would lodge an FIR over the incident of misbehaviour with West Tripura District Health Surveillance Officer Sangita Chakraborty on Friday.

Stating that Chakraborty, a young doctor, worked hard to take care of Covid-19 and other patients, Debbarma told IANS, "The health directorate officials after scrutinising the video of the incident would file an FIR."

Demanding 'exemplary punishment', the All Tripura Government Doctors' Association (ATGDA) general

secretary Rajesh Choudhury said they had raised the issues with higher authorities, including Sanjay Kumar Rakesh, Additional Chief Secretary (in-charge of Health and Family Welfare Department).

"If they failed to take any action, we would take appropriate legal steps," Choudhury told IANS. Terming this kind of uncivilised behaviour unexpected and unacceptable, he said a precedent had to be set to warn others.

Dr Chakraborty said she was abused and spat at by some patients being treated at a Covid care centre, here, when she had gone there on Friday to admit five women who had given birth to babies a day before.

"The women had undergone caesarian operations at

Tripura Medical College on Thursday. When they tested Covid-19 positive, we decided to shift them to the Covid care centre. We had gone there with a health department team and the police personnel. When we tried to admit them, a group of men and women obstructed the process, claiming there were no vacant beds," she said.

When requested by other doctors and nurses to return to their beds, some of them started using filthy languages, spat at me and threatened to touch me and infect me with coronavirus, Dr Chakraborty said.

"This is most unfortunate and dehumanising. We are treating them. All patients need the same care. We feel humiliated," said another doctor, a colleague of Dr Chakraborty. **IANS**

AP records 7,627 new cases, tally inches closer to 1L

Amaravati (AP): Andhra Pradesh's coronavirus tally touched 96,298 on Sunday as it raced closer to the one lakh mark with the addition of 7,627 new cases.

The COVID-19 toll crossed the 1,000-mark, reaching 1,041 after 56 fresh casualties were reported in the last 24 hours.

The latest government bulletin said 3,041 patients were discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours, taking the overall discharges to 46,301.

The number of active COVID-19 cases stood at 48,956.

Kurnool registered the highest number of 1,213 new cases in a day, pushing the district tally to 11,570. **PTI**

Guntur district also crossed the 10,000-mark in the total number of coronavirus cases.

East Godavari district continued to show a rapid increasing trend, reporting 1,095 fresh cases, taking its gross to 13,486.

East Godavari, Kurnool and Guntur districts now have over 10,000 cases each while Anantapuram is very close behind with 9,723 and West Godavari with 8,412.

East Godavari is also reporting more deaths daily as its total toll mounted to 122 with nine fatalities in the last 24 hours.

A 101-year-old woman P Mangamma of Tirupati came out triumphant in her battle against Covid-19. **PTI**



City streets wear a near deserted look at Gandhi Maidan area during the complete lockdown imposed to curb the spread of novel coronavirus, in Patna on Sunday **PTI**

PAPER WITH PASSION
Sinking under loans

With many firms on the verge of bankruptcy, the bad loan crisis will get worse unless the Finance Ministry intervenes



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, Shaktikanta Das, has a grim warning for our banks. In a worst case scenario, as the Chinese pandemic continues in India, our economy could be pushed into a never before seen recession. As it was already sputtering before the virus struck, banks, which were acutely stressed, might see bad loans possibly touch a fifth of their loan portfolio. The central bank has warned that bad loans could rise to a 20-year high as a result of the pandemic, from 8.5 per cent in March 2020 to 12.5 per cent by March 2021. If the stress is severe, it can rise to 14.7 per cent. This despite the easing measures announced by the Government, including the moratorium on loan payments for both commercial and personal loans. In the past few years, the Government has often bailed out banks by recapitalising them with taxpayer money. In return, the banks wrote off a whopping ₹1,56,702 crore of non-performing loans during the nine-month ended December 2018, taking the total loan write-off to over ₹7,00,000 crore in the last 10 years. What is particularly frightening is the lack of manoeuvring room left to the RBI and the Finance Ministry. Former RBI Governor Ujit Patel, too, came down heavily on the Government for diluting the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and the powers of the central bank, saying this “undermined the efforts made since 2014 to clean up the bad loan mess.” In his book, *Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver*, he alleged that a 2019 verdict of the Supreme Court did not find the RBI’s February 2018 one-day default regulation on the insolvency process “problematic.” However, the subsequent (June 7, 2019) circular issued by the central bank had diluted this aspect, making the insolvency regime “vulnerable and brittle.” Such moves delayed the recovery process, thus giving leeway to defaulters to escape the bankruptcy court. Then crony capitalism meant that banks were under pressure to lend to certain people and sectors without vetting their capabilities. In some cases, even the bank top brass was unaware of the identity of the borrowers and the amount written off in individual cases. Public banks have been guilty of following orders from the top and loan funds to dubious real estate projects that were never completed. And going by Patel’s book, the Government further agreed to underwrite 10 per cent of banks’ purchase of up to ₹1 lakh crore of NBFC debt. Also, loan recovery has a very poor success rate of about 20 per cent.

The current economic meltdown has pushed many companies, even previously viable ones, into bankruptcy for no fault of theirs. While there are indications that the economy is slowly getting back on track and this year’s monsoon has been good so far, it may take several months before overall demand settles back in many sectors. While rural demand will sustain some firms, particularly those in tractors or cheaper consumer products, this will not only force much of the private sector to stop hiring but potentially lay off employees, too. This would make the unemployment crisis worse in a country where 10 million youth enter the job market every year. India’s demographic dividend might be a time bomb, which may lead to social unrest. Therefore, it is important for the Government to not only ensure cheaper loans but to directly put money back into the hands of the consumers. This might have a severe cost sometime later but the consequences of not taking action today appear to be far worse. We might not have a future where a tough decision needs to be taken. There is no doubt that some of this is due to profligacy of the banks a decade ago where loans were made willy-nilly to the likes of defaulters such as Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya but the blame game is no solution to the crisis. The fallout of no action will be failed banks, in the public and private sectors, and a job crisis that will haunt India for decades.

Sanitised I-Day

Nobody minds the pared down celebrations but everybody expects the PM to lay down a post-COVID roadmap



Like everything else in the new normal, the pandemic has affected Independence Day celebrations this year. Usually held with a lot of pomp and show, with thousands of citizens, politicians, dignitaries, diplomats, military brass and invitees attending, Prime Minister Narendra Modi may not have the live audience he is used to, listening to his speech. Everybody understands that the event cannot be spectacular enough and would much rather hope that our COVID-19 management is spectacular instead. Everybody also hopes to hear a spectacular speech from Modi himself, not pushing his Government’s or his party’s agenda and listing work done but presenting a post-COVID roadmap for India. Economic revival is a far cry and the credit-based relief packages are yet to work on the ground. And one would expect incentivisation for our domestic industries if we are to become a self-sufficient manufacturing hub. So far, the Government has left package announcements to specific Ministries but people are expecting the Prime Minister to be very specific and holistic. An August 15 speech should inspire hope and courage and in pandemic times, Modi should keep to a people-oriented vision and offer solutions that make grandiloquent announcements. Still, there are some ceremonial embellishments within norms like social distancing, wearing masks and proper sanitisation. So, about 200 VIPs will be seated in a special enclosure. There will be no school children, who have traditionally been a big part of the celebrations. Last year, Modi had mingled freely among them, shaking their eagerly outstretched hands. But suffice it now that they stay healthy and the Government strengthen the digital classroom network in the farthest corners so that they do not miss out on education. However, the National Cadet Corps is expected to be a part. Of course, to restore hope, around 1,500 Corona winners, or people who have recovered from the disease, will attend. These will include around 500 local policemen. Also, COVID-19 warriors like doctors, healthcare and sanitation workers will be honoured for their frontline role. The pandemic, in the end, has been more a people’s war than the Government’s. The one good thing is that I-Day will be used to boost the “Digital India” campaign. School children may not be present at the ceremony but they can participate in online debates, quizzes and poetry competitions. The theme of “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” will also be publicised through webinars and online talks. The Government is attempting a public event with precautionary measures to perhaps lay a template for how celebrations can be managed in a post-pandemic world. It is using technology to include the masses on a national holiday and sending out a positive message by including Corona winners and warriors. By holding the event and not cancelling it completely, the Government is indicating we have to learn to co-exist with the virus and get on with our lives. That among all the uncertainty around us, there is certainty about what is seared in our memory and DNA, like August 15.

Turning the clock back

By converting the Hagia Sophia into a mosque, Erdogan has symbolically unsettled Ataturk’s vision of Turkey. He has revived the memories of Turk conquests that had tormented Europe



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Hagia Sophia is the most recognisable symbol of Istanbul (formerly Constantinople). For the last 85 years, this grand edifice has also embodied the idea of the Turkish Republic which Mustafa Kemal Pasha (later called Kemal Ataturk) founded in 1923. A cathedral for the first nine centuries of its existence and a mosque for nearly 500 years after that, it has been functioning as a museum since 1935. Recently, on July 10, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan decided to repeal Ataturk’s decree which had declared it a museum. Hagia Sophia is now officially a mosque. However, far from being dropped from the museums’ portal of the Turkish Government (<https://muze.gen.tr/>), it is still being cherished as the most important one.

Erdogan’s decision has undermined the image of Turkey at two levels. First, his act is a negation of the Kemalist legacy of Laiklik (or Laicism), according to which, the Turkish State is avowedly secular. Second, at a deeper level, Erdogan has refreshed the memories of the Turkish aggression, which left the Greeks deeply scarred from the Battle of Manzikert (1071) to the invasion of Cyprus (1974). Turkey’s international standing is likely to suffer in the West.

Erdogan’s motives have always been suspected. However, apprehensive of an intervention from the nation’s ultra-secular Army, or the fear of the road to the European Union being permanently blocked, he previously stopped short of reversing the Ankara consensus on Turkish secularism. Two decades ago, Erdogan had publicly recited a poem, “The mosques are our barracks, the minarets our bayonets, the domes our helmets and the faithful our soldiers.” It led him straight into prison for four months. He was also banned from holding any political office. The ban was later rescinded five months after his party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), swept to power in the November 2002 elections in Turkey.

Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom) was the most exquisite cathedral of the Eastern Church. It was commissioned by Justinian, the Byzantine Emperor, as part of a massive rebuilding of Constantinople, which was ravaged during the Nika riots (532 AD). “Abandoning the traditional basilican form”, says Will Durant, “they conceived a design whose centre would be a spacious dome, resting not on the walls but on massive piers and buttressed by half a dome at either end.” (*The Age of Faith*, Pg. 130). The magnificent cathedral built at a huge cost was the result of five years of labour by 10,000 workers, with Justinian intensely supervising the construction work. He inaugurated the cathedral on December 26, 537 AD. It was thus a work of love, devotion and dedication.



Hagia Sophia passed off under Turkish control on May 29, 1453 AD, coinciding with the conquest of the Constantinople by Sultan Mehmet II. Edward Gibbon poignantly describes the episode in Chapter 68 of his classic book, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Under the orders of Mehmet II, the cathedral was converted into a mosque and was named Aya Sofia. Six minarets were constructed, the icons of the walls were plastered and a crescent moon was installed upon the top of the dome.

Yet, why did the fallen cathedral continue to occupy a central place in the Greek consciousness, surpassing in a sense even the Parthenon at the Acropolis of Athens? Nine decades after Greece’s independence, as late as in 1919, the Greeks had invaded Turkey, which was then in the throes of a revolution, hoping to redeem Constantinople and hold a mass at the Hagia Sophia. This is because it is Christianity that forged a unified nation out of the Greeks. If today Greeks from Athens down to the remotest Dodecanese islands could feel and respond as one nation, the credit should go to a Constantine or Justinian rather than a Pericles or Thucydides. Ancient Greece no doubt

evokes a sense of awe and wonder. Nine-tenth of the scholarship on Greece is still concentrated on its ancient period for good reasons. However, it was actually the Byzantine period (fourth to 15th century AD) that forged the spiritual and political unity of the Greeks. While the world might consider *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to be the most influential work written in Greek ever, to a native of Greece, it is *New Testament of the Bible*. The ancient Greek religion, without a scripture, proved to be the weakest link in the civilisation. The ascending Greek philosophy and natural sciences hollowed it out completely. “The terrible conflict between philosophy and religion”, informs Will Durant, “runs through the thought of fifth century BC.” (*The Life in Greece*, Pg. 321). This was one reason behind the fall of tragedy, based on religion and mythology, and the consequent rise of comedy on the Greek stage in the fourth century BC. Second, from the very days of city-states to the era of Seleucid, Ptolemaic and Antigonid Empires, the Greeks had remained politically disunited, notwithstanding their linguistic and mythological commonality. The Byzantine empire, whose establishment coincided

with the State approval of Christianity, secured political and temporal unity for the Greeks. This civilisation was centred on Constantinople — a city inaugurated by Constantine on May 11, 330 AD — which the Greeks considered as their “eternal capital.” “Here beyond all expectations”, says Will Durant, “Greek civilisation would display a saving continuity, tenaciously preserve its ancient treasures and transmit them at last to Renaissance Italy and the Western world.” (*The Age of Faith*, Pg. 4). Constantinople, 567 years after its fall to the Turks, is still the spiritual centre of the Greek Church. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is based in St George Cathedral, Istanbul. It might be remembered that the then Patriarch, Gregory V, had triggered the Greek War of Independence on March 25, 1821, by exhorting the Greeks to rebel against the Ottoman. He was hanged for sedition at the main door of the Patriarchate, which has since then been welded shut. The anti-Greek riots of September 6-7, 1955, decimated the Greek community left in the city after the exchange of population mandated by the erstwhile League of Nations in 1923. The Constitution of Greece

(2001) makes zero reference to the ancient Greek civilisation. This is in stark contrast to the Constitution of Egypt (2014), which waxes eloquent about ancient Egypt. However, it expatiates upon the relationship between the Church and the State. The Constitution (Article 3.3) affirms that the text *Holy Scripture (Bible)* shall be maintained unaltered. The official translation of the Greek Bible into any language of the world would require prior permission of the “Great Church of Christ in Constantinople” (meaning the Patriarchate). It is not anybody’s case that the denizens of Constantinople were facing crunch of mosque space to offer prayers. There are already too many of them. “Most visitors in Istanbul”, says a travel book, “will immediately be struck by the quantity of mosques, from the domed buildings dominating skyline to the small neighbourhood mosques which would pass unnoticed were it not for the minarets” (*DK Eye Witness Travel-Istanbul*, Pg. 36). There are around 24 mosques, originally Byzantine churches, which dot the seven hills of Constantinople. Why is Turkey deliberately setting the clock back? (*The writer is an author and independent columnist. The views expressed are personal*)

SOUND BITE

At a time when there is an explosive rise in COVID-19 cases, its (UP Government’s) ‘no test is equal to no corona policy’ can lead to a frightening situation.



Congress leader
—Priyanka Gandhi Vadra

Without our mercy, without our will, without joining our groups or without any blessings from us, this girl (Kangana) has gone too far and achieved so much.



Actor
—Shatrughan Sinha

For this concept of herd immunity, you need 50 to 60 per cent of the population to have this immunity to be actually able to break those chains of transmission.



WHO’s chief scientist
—Soumya Swaminathan

It does not matter where it (IPL) goes but if it goes to the UAE, it’s a great venue to play cricket in any format. Most importantly it’s going to change the mood of the nation.



Former cricketer
—Gautam Gambhir

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gender equality

Sir — When women are proving their calibre in every field, why not a Permanent Commission in India’s defence forces? Now that the Government has paved the way for it, the women’s reservation Bill, which is still in a state of limbo, should be steered through the Houses of Parliament so that gender equality can prevail in every walk of life in India.

Sravana Ramachandran
Chennai

Level-playing field

Sir — This refers to the welcome decision of the Haryana Government to accord 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayat elections. The Supreme Court had already endorsed the earlier decision of the Haryana Government mandating certain educational requirements for contesting the panchayat elections. Such decisions should be implemented at the national level. Many political parties cry for religion and caste-based quotas but oppose the reservation Bill for women. The Election Commission’s

India’s battle with China is far from over

Last week, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reportedly said that talks are on to resolve the border dispute with China in Ladakh but stopped short of giving any guarantee on the resolution process. His words indicate that things are not going smoothly in Ladakh. There is no denying the fact that the clash between the Indian and the Chinese troops, which led to the death of many soldiers on both sides, is not the last. Speculation is running high about disengagement in Galwan even as Pangong Tso Lake and Depsang have not been addressed yet. After several rounds of talks between the corps commanders of both sides as also National Security Advisor Ajit Doval’s conversations with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, it was hoped that China would expedite the process of de-escalation. However, there has been little movement and not much change on the ground.

While addressing Indian Air Force commanders, Singh sounded a note of caution about the situation in Ladakh and said that the armed forces should be ready to handle any eventuality. The Minister stressed upon the importance of being watchful on the Chinese and Pakistani sides of the borders. Singh also acknowledged



the fact that talks to resolve India-China differences were complicated. It is now up to the Indian Government to decide on how to break the deadlock. The Indian military is unprepared to manage even a one-front threat, leave alone a collusive two-front war. Though the Government has been trying to provide the Army with all necessities, the picture is grim. Faced with the triple crises of the COVID-19 pandemic, a flagging economy and the Chinese aggression in Ladakh, India now has an additional burden of ramping up defence spending.

Venu GS
Kollam

formula, mandating every political party to give at least 33 per cent of tickets to women, must be immediately enforced nationally as an interim measure. Moreover, to prevent women candidates from being misused as proxies for their male relatives, there should

be a system whereby the name or photo of said relations should not be permitted in campaigns of women candidates. There should be a uniform 33 per cent reservation for women at all levels.

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

Poor justice delivery

Sir — The disposal of cases by courts is synonymous with inordinate delay. If a criminal case takes 35 years for disposal, the courts have no reason to be in a

hurry to dispose of civil cases. The verdict delivered by a Mathura court in Uttar Pradesh convicting 11 Rajasthan policemen, who gunned down Raja Man Singh of Bharatpur and two of his colleagues in Deeg area in 1985, came after 1,700 hearings. Altogether 25 district judges heard it from time to time over a period of 35 years. How well would it be if a judge, who seriously falls ill, is asked by a doctor to come after three-four months for a check-up? Judicial reforms are absolutely necessary.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

Endless battle

Sir — In view of the mounting COVID-19 cases, State-wise data shows that India hasn’t mounted a united attack on the novel virus. Some States have been too complacent. We need to test more and the Union Government must take control of the fight to flatten the curve. There should be a national testing protocol.

Kunal Singh
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Good leaders help retain talent

Any organisation, be it a business house or a political party, should invest its time and effort to populate its talent pipeline with potential leaders



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Jet-setting corporate India and politics seldom display similar attributes. Therefore, it becomes a matter of immense interest when such similarities develop once in a while. The unbridled enthusiasm of these young leaders and their impatience to make it big in the shortest possible time make them comparable to corporate stalwarts of India Inc. The political turmoil in Madhya Pradesh triggered by Jyotiraditya Scindia and in Rajasthan by Sachin Pilot serve as apt examples of restless young leaders who want to desperately come out of the shadows of political veterans. They get solicited by competing camps with lucrative offers, just the way headhunters scoop up talent in the corporate world. It has become tough for even the most capable leaders in politics and the corporate world to retain and motivate talent. However, staff retention is critical for any organisation and has many financial implications.

According to analysts, the cost of the annual turnover for any mid-sized organisation with 1,000 workers and a 10 per cent annual turnover rate, is nearly \$7.5 million. Several expenses like the cost of recruitment, training, lost productivity and new hires form a part of this overall turnover cost. Worldwide research suggests that in the organisational context, leadership is one of the crucial determinants of staff retention. The Saratoga Institute, after comprehensive research spanning across 20 years and 60,000 interviews, found that nearly 80 per cent of the employee turnover has a direct relation with the level of dissatisfaction with one's boss. In another interesting study by Gallup Organisation, a bad leader is a reason quoted for quitting by as many as one million workers. The productivity and profitability of any group led by an incapable leader is almost half of the group managed by a competent one, says the study.

In fact, as concluded by author Roger Herman in his book, *Winning the War for Talent*, employees don't quit jobs, they quit their bosses. There is ample evidence to note that the leadership style and an innate ability to manage people has a direct impact on an organisation's capability to retain its workforce. Employees are more likely to remain with an organisation if they have a clear description of their job profiles and their expected targets and timelines. Workers appreciate an impeccable ability to choose the right person for a job or have the right job fit. Regular quality feedback and a mechanism to analyse and improve one's performance go a long way in keeping staff motivated. In addition, timely recognition to make staff happy about their contribution to the organisation is an absolute must.

Plus, if an employee has a positive relationship with his/her boss, the tenure of the employment definitely goes up along with the increase in organisational commitment. Respect and dignity have a special place for staff and a great leader is very mindful of the same. An encouraging and supporting ecosystem should be developed by leaders to help employees achieve their best. Therefore, if leadership falters, the organisation fails due to a plethora of factors like low productivity due to low organisational commitment and job satisfaction, leading to high-stress levels of workers and eventually turnover. Indecisiveness and insufficient or lack of communication with the employees, which is another hallmark of weak and ineffective leadership, can spread dissatisfaction among staff and fuel their turnover intentions. Therefore, the human resource department should not only hire managers but likely leaders.

Since in large organisations, it is not possible for leaders to have a communication channel open with all workers, training and development must be envisaged to create leaders at all checkpoints. This will nurture a culture of participation, organisational commitment and can be the best strategy to retain talent. Twenty years ago, when stability was a norm in the business world, leaders made most of the decisions with little input from employees. They gave clear what-when-how instructions. A stable business environment with small staff turnover also provided an easier path for the identification of future leaders. But today, workers need a collaborative and participative leader who understands the consequences of technological disruption in businesses and is adaptive. This has led to a paradigm shift in leadership styles — from autocratic to transformational.

A transformational leader understands the needs of the employees, motivates them and provides reasons for them to continue working for the organisation. Transformational leadership is also a better-suited leadership style in today's world with COVID-19 forcing people to work from home. Here the emphasis is on trusting people to work towards the overall organisational goals without constant supervision. The focus should be to steer high-potential employees into leadership roles through institutional mentoring programmes. Great leaders are extremely valuable to organisations as they are instrumental in retaining talent. Happy employees, in turn, make successful firms. So, leadership and employee retention have a direct relation and go hand-in-hand. Any organisation, be it a business house or a political party, should invest its time and effort to populate its talent pipeline with great potential leaders. After all, leaders can help organisations retain their talent. Is the Congress listening?

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

FAIR PLAY TO LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB, THEY'VE WON THE LEAGUE, BUT ALSO DON'T GET TOO ARROGANT WITH IT.

—CHELSEA MANAGER
FRANK LAMPARD

POINT COUNTERPOINT



YOU CANNOT HIT ME AND MY BENCH WITH SOMETHING LIKE THAT BECAUSE WE ARE NOT ARROGANT.

—LIVERPOOL MANAGER
JÜRGEN KLOPP

Time to reinforce SDGs

The UN-DESA has reiterated the necessity of fulfilling SDGs for post-COVID-19 recovery and ensuring preparedness for the monumental crisis of global climate change

AISHWARYA
RAJVANI
RIJHWANI

Owing to the Novel Coronavirus outbreak, 2020 has been labelled as the year of morbidity, increasing inequalities, decimated lives and livelihoods when, ironically, it was to be the year of ushering in ambitious deliverables under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) has reiterated the necessity of fulfilling SDGs for development, post-COVID-19 recovery and also for ensuring preparedness for a new and monumental crisis of global climate change. In view of this, it is pertinent to draw an SDG-level map on how India can walk this delicate path with enriching prospects.

Languid demeanour towards the SDGs: With respect to SDGs one and two, that deal with the goals of "No poverty" and "Food Security", India already ranks low on the Global Hunger Index (102 out of 117 countries). This is way below all its neighbouring countries. Child wasting in India is the highest rate for any nation in the world at 20.8 per cent and child stunting is at 37.9 per cent. Even Bangladesh has seen stunting decline from 58.5 per cent to 49.2 per cent between 1997 and 2011. Nepal has seen a drop in stunting from 56.6 per cent in 2001 to 40.1 per cent in 2011. India's score on hunger is 30.3, which means it suffers from a level of hunger that is "serious." Even the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has stated that over 200 million people in India remain chronically undernourished. SDG three, pertaining to "Good Health and Well-being", already finds about 1.3 billion people having limited public health facilities, let alone the sophisticated treatment needed for saving the life of a COVID-19 patient. The Indian healthcare sector manifests a poor score in terms of the doctor-patient ratio. There is one doctor for every 1,445 Indians as per the country's current population estimate of 135 crore, which is lower than the World Health Organisation's (WHO's) prescribed norm of one doctor for 1,000 people.

India also has an acute shortage of hospital beds with the National Health Profile, 2019, data showing that there are a total of 7,13,986 Government hospital beds available in the country. This amounts to 0.55 beds per 1,000 population as against the WHO's recommended standard of five beds per 1,000 population. If we were to include in-patient beds available in private, general and specialised hospitals and rehabilitation centres, this number goes up to 0.7 beds per 1,000 as per World Bank data.

The rural health infrastructure is in a sorry state as 60 per cent of the Primary Health Centres have only one doctor while about five per cent have none, as per the Ministry of Finance statistics. This is in stark contrast to the urban milieu which has nearly 60 per cent of all healthcare professionals working for 30 per cent of the population. The India State-level Disease Burden Initiative — which is a collaboration between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), experts and stakeholders from about 100 institutions across the country — states that an increase in the number of diseases like diabetes, cardiovascular illnesses in the nation since 1990 is likely to increase the fatality risk of COVID-19 patients. Emerging evidence has revealed that Type-1 diabetes may be triggered in COVID-19

“THE CURRENT CRISIS HAS RECALIBRATED LIFESTYLE PATTERNS TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS INTO PRACTISING MINIMALISM AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION, WHICH IS A CRUCIAL STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF ENDORSING SDGS IN THE LONG-TERM, KEEPING IN MIND THE EMERGING GLOBAL THREATS IN THE FORM OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESOURCE SCARCITY. MOREOVER, MAINSTREAMING ISSUES OF GENDER EQUALITY, EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION IN THE LARGER POLICY FRAMEWORK CAN HELP ACCOMPLISH MULTI-FACETED RESULTS ON THE SDG FRONT



patients, who had otherwise been non-diabetic.

In terms of SDG five (Gender Equality), India ranks a dismal 122 out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index. Meanwhile, the lockdown scenario has witnessed an almost two-fold rise in domestic violence cases, according to data shared by the National Commission for Women, a concern already raised by both WHO and UN Women.

SDG six (Clean Water and Sanitation) is in the doldrums with 163 million people in India without access to clean, drinking water. About 82 per cent of rural and 60 per cent urban households do not have piped running water, meaning juxtapositioning availability, accessibility of water and social distancing needs amid the pandemic. The outbreak has impacted the informal sector the hardest, where more than 80 per cent of the labour force of the country is employed. This part of the workforce is likely to drop deeper into poverty. Taking on SDG eight (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), India has been witnessing jobless growth as reflected in the Periodic Labour Force Survey (NLSS, 2017-2018) data, exhibiting the shrinking share of the labour force to 49.7 per cent in 2018 from 55.5 per cent in 2012 and rising unemployment.

To make matters worse, the lockdown left about 96 per cent of the migrant labourers stranded, wherein 90 per cent had no wages and 70 per cent had less than ₹200 (\$3.89) in their pockets, causing many of them to eventually return to the hinterland, generating a large pool of unemployed workers.

SDGs as building blocks to devel-

opment and post COVID-19 recovery: Contextual mapping of State performance under the SDG realm has been captured through the many indices that the NITI Aayog has released, such as the Health Index, School Education Quality Index, Composite Water Management Index and the SDG Index. These have culminated towards understanding State-level performances in these core sectors through self-assessment of needs and gaps, identification of State-specific priority sectors, informed policy planning, skill development and vitalising competitive federalism.

The National Indicator Framework developed for State rankings on SDGs by the Ministry of Statistics Planning and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) can serve as a guidebook to improve performance. Further, all the spokes of SDGs need to be adhered to, including capacity and skill-development, financial support for planning and implementation, and a long-term outlook on sustainable and inclusive development.

Beginning with SDG three, the total expenditure (out-of-pocket and public) on healthcare needs to be scaled up from the current 3.6 per cent of the GDP, which is much lower than the average of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, which ranges from eight to 17 per cent. While schemes like Ayushman Bharat have served as an important tool, investments through the Public-Private Partnership route should be pursued in other aspects of the sectors and also in building localised healthcare infrastructure steadily through greater devolution of power and finances to local governance.

For SDG eight and 10, welfare

schemes such as the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGRGS) need to be incremented with sustained budgetary allocation. During the pandemic, a notable step in that direction was taken by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti when it decided to employ the homeward-bound migrant labour force in work related to groundwater rejuvenation, irrigation and water conservation. However, there are reports that around 1.4 lakh families have reached their annual work limit under the Act. They are now pushing for wage rates to be increased and provided on an individual basis rather than on the basis of households. In the short-term, finalisation of labour law reforms to coalesce the disaggregated ones (there are around 50 Central laws) and increase of social security coverage, while working towards a greater degree of formalisation in the economy and an emphasis on labour-intensive sectors, like apparel and footwear in the medium-term, would address the challenges facing the sector. For a long-term outlook on SDGs, contributions towards SDGs must be practised at the individual level, be inclusive and mutually beneficial.

The current crisis has recalibrated lifestyle patterns to encourage individuals into practising minimalism and sustainable consumption, which is a crucial step in the direction of endorsing SDGs in the long-term, keeping in mind the emerging global threats in the form of climate change and resource scarcity. Moreover, mainstreaming issues of gender equality, education and environment protection in the larger policy framework can help accomplish multi-faceted results on the SDG front. (Raj and Rijhwani are Research Associates, TERI)

No buyers for a new Cold War plan

None of America's allies believe that China is a threat grave enough to justify a 40-year military confrontation. Or even a five-year one



GWYNNE DYER

the West because there are no comparable Western products available at a competitive price. The US response has therefore been political, not commercial. It demands that its allies ban Huawei on "security" grounds.

The first US strike was in late 2018, when it got Canada to arrest Meng Wanzhou, Huawei's Chief Financial Officer, as she was changing planes on her way to Mexico. She is still in Canada fighting extradition, while two Canadians are held in Chinese prisons effectively as hostages for her release. The initial US charge was breaking sanctions against Iran, but she's now accused of stealing American trade secrets.

Britain had agreed to involve Huawei heavily in building its new 5G network well before Johnson became Prime Minister, but he stuck to the deal despite mounting US pressure to cancel because he is taking Britain out of the European Union (EU) and into what is potentially a very grim future.

More than half of Britain's trade is with Europe, but a free trade deal after it has left looks increasingly unlikely. What countries could pick up at least part of the slack? Only the US or China, so Johnson desperately wanted to keep both of those options open. Washington, of course, wanted Johnson to foreclose the Chinese option.

Johnson stuck to his guns right down through the past year, reassured by Britain's own security services that the Huawei technology posed no threat, but eventually the US pressure became irresistible. Huawei was told that it would not be participating in Britain's 5G phone network and that all its technology in the 2G, 3G and 4G networks would have to come out by 2027.

Only days later, however, British officials whispered in Huawei's ear that all was not lost. Britain might reconsider its decision next year. Nobody said explicitly "after the US election," but obviously Britain would be keen to bring Huawei back on

board if Donald Trump loses that election in November (as he now seems quite likely to).

Word about this reached Washington in micro-seconds. (When will they learn that in the modern communications environment, anything you say to anybody instantly becomes known to everybody?) So Johnson was understandably anxious as he awaited the arrival of the American viceroy. Sorry, Secretary of State.

But it was all right with Pompeo. Johnson would only be disloyal if Trump loses, and Trump won't lose because he's going to start a new Cold War. That's the plan — but it won't work. It won't work because none of America's allies, not even one as desperate as Johnson, believes that China is a threat grave enough to justify a 40-year military confrontation. Or even a five-year one.

They are not naive about the current Chinese regime's flaws. It is a nasty, corrupt dictatorship, intolerant of dissent and oppressive towards

its minorities. But it is not territorially expansionist except in its own immediate neighbourhood (Hong Kong, Taiwan, South China Sea) and it is not ideologically attractive even to its own citizens.

The only ideological tool available to Xi Jinping is nationalism. He would deploy it if necessary to defend his own power, just as Trump is doing now, but for a sustainable cold war there needs to be a more credible sense of threat than is currently available to either party.

The idea that China is "the central threat of our times," as Pompeo put it on Tuesday, is laughable. It's a formidable competitor economically (although demographically speaking it has feet of clay), but it's simply not interested in a classic military confrontation. China does not both, for example, to maintain a strategic nuclear force remotely comparable to America's or Russia's. It truly believes that nuclear deterrence makes that kind of war insane, and keeps only enough missiles to deter

a crazed attacker. The border dispute with India is remote and petty, and will not be allowed to escalate by either side. This is true even though right now none of the two neighbours are willing to back down and are engaged in a contest of who will blink first in the icy heights of Ladakh, as their citizens watch with bated breath.

The other major powers, including the EU, are simply are not buying into the Trump-Pompeo vision of a world divided into two hostile and militarised blocs like 1945-89. Even Boris Johnson, for all his Churchillian pretensions, can't take the notion seriously and instantly hedges his bets after he has to give it lip-service. "Don't defend Trump — attack China!" said the instructions sent to the Republican Party's senatorial candidates, but it doesn't work outside the US. It probably won't work inside either.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work')



FOREIGN EYE



A BONE-HEADED MOVE BY THE US

The recent consulate closing war is entirely the US' doing and China needs to shout this from the rooftops to beat back the waves of misinformation coming from Trump's State Department. China has stayed committed to a peaceful resolution of its differences with the US — and all it's gotten for its trouble is one provocation after another. (China Daily editorial)

IN CHINA

Police corral crowds as movers leave US Consulate

Chengdu: Moving trucks and vehicles with diplomatic plates pulled out of a US Consulate in southwest China on Sunday, as its impending closure over rising bilateral tensions drew a steady stream of onlookers for the second straight day.

People stopped to take selfies and photos, jamming a sidewalk busy with shoppers and families with strollers on a sunny day in the city of Chengdu. A little boy pushed with a small Chinese flag before plainclothes police shoved him away as foreign media cameras zoomed in.



Residents take photos of the United States Consulate in Chengdu in southwest China's Sichuan province on Sunday

The capital of Sichuan province, along with Houston in Texas, has found itself in the limelight of international politics as China and the U.S. Exchanged tit-for-tat orders last week to close each other's consulates in the two heart-land cities.

Police in Chengdu have shut the street and sidewalk in front of the consulate and set up metal barriers along the sidewalk on the other side of the tree-lined road.

Uniformed and plainclothes officers kept watch on both sides of the barriers after scattered incidents following the Chengdu announcement on Friday, including a man who set off firecrackers and hecklers

who cursed at foreign media shooting video and photos of the scene.

A man who tried to unfurl a banner or sign late Sunday that he called an open letter to the Chinese government was quickly taken away.

Earlier, a bus left the consulate grounds and what appeared to be embassy staff spoke with plainclothes police before retreating back behind the property's solid black gates. It wasn't clear who or what was on the bus.

Three medium-size trucks arrived and left a few hours later, and cars with diplomatic plates departed in between.

China ordered the closing

of the Chengdu consulate in retaliation for a US order earlier in the week to close the Chinese Consulate in Houston.

The US alleged that the Houston consulate was a nest of Chinese spies who tried to steal data from facilities in Texas, including the Texas A&M medical system and the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. China said the allegations were "malicious slander."

The consulate closings were a significant escalation in the tensions between the two countries over a range of issues, including trade, technology, security and human rights.

Pakistanis head terror groups ISIL-K, AQIS, TTP; not yet blacklisted: UN report

United Nations: Pakistani nationals remain at the leadership levels in terror groups such as al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - Khorasan and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, and many of them are yet to be blacklisted, according to a UN report.

The 26th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL, al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities said that in April and May, the Afghan special forces conducted a series of countrywide operations and arrested the head of the ISIL-K Aslam Farooqi (also known as Abdullah Orozkai) and his predecessor Zia ul-Haq (also known as Abu Omar Khorasani) and others.

Farooqi, who hails from Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is the mastermind behind the deadly terror attack on a prominent gurdwara in Kabul in March that killed 25 Sikhs.

He is not blacklisted by the UN Security Council's 1267 al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee. Similarly, Haq is also a Pakistani national and has not been blacklisted yet. Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) operates under the Taliban umbrella from Afghanistan's Nimruz, Helmand and

Kandahar provinces and its current leader is Pakistan-born Osama Mahmood, who is also "not listed" under the UNSC sanctions. Mahmood succeeded Asim Umar.

The report said that the group reportedly has between 150 and 200 members from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan and "is reportedly planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader."

The Sanctions Monitoring Team report said that the "large terrorist group present in Afghanistan" Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is led by Amir Noor Wali Mehsud.

Pakistan-born Mehsud was designated a global terrorist by the UNSC sanctions committee only this month, more than two years after he was named the TTP leader, following the death of former TTP head Maulana Fazlullah. Mehsud is supported by his deputy Qari Amjad and TTP spokesperson Mohammad Khorasani, both not listed under the UNSC sanctions.

This demonstrates that the Pakistani nationals operate at leadership levels in the terror organisations and point to the terror groups' Pakistani links.

The report said that al-Qaida is covertly active in 12 Afghan provinces and its leader Aiman al-Zawahiri remains based in the country.

Afghanistan writes to UNSC over 'violations' of its territory by Pak forces

United Nations: Afghanistan has written to the UN Security Council over continued "violations" of its territory by Pakistani military forces and said it will ask the 15-nation UN body to take necessary measures and actions to end them if the situation is not de-escalated bilaterally.

Afghanistan's Permanent Representative to the UN Adela Raz wrote to the President of the Security Council, Germany, to report on the most recent violations of the Afghan territory by Pakistan's military forces and said the "incursion" represents a reiteration of violations as Kabul had previously expressed its concerns to the Security Council in February and August 2019.

Raz said in the letter that on July 15, Pakistan military forces began "unprovoked artillery attacks" against Afghan border posts and civilian resi-

dential areas in the Sarakano and Asad Abad districts of Kunar Province.

The attacks included 12 heavy artillery strikes targeting Asad Abad district and more than 160 artillery rounds fired at Sarakano district. In addition to four casualties among members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces, the attacks claimed the lives of six civilians, including two women, and eight injuries and resulted in significant damage to civilian property.

"We would like to once again reiterate, as we have in previous communications, that the issue of violations of Afghan territory by Pakistani military forces has continued despite numerous appeals made to the Government of Pakistan, bilaterally and through other measures, to cease their illegal and provocative activities in our sovereign territory.

"In that regard, the government of Afghanistan expresses, once again, its strong condemnation of Pakistan's failure to adhere to its obligations under the principles of the Charter of the United Nations" as well as international law and international humanitarian law, she said in the letter.

Raz said the Afghan Government is "currently working to de-escalate the situation bilaterally, but should this fail, it will call on the Security Council to take measures and actions necessary to bring about an end to the violations identified above."

She also requested that the letter of complaint regarding Pakistan's continued activities be circulated as a document of the Security Council and "kept on record for reference should attempts at de-escalating prove unfruitful."

Arrests and clashes follow anti-Netanyahu protests in Israel



Tel Aviv: Police said on Sunday they arrested more than a dozen Israelis in country-wide protests the previous night that drew thousands of people in a growing and persistent show of force against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his handling of the coronavirus crisis.

Thousands of people demonstrated outside Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem and hundreds gathered in a seaside park in Tel Aviv, demanding Netanyahu's resignation and slamming his response to the crisis.

For the first time since the wave of protests began weeks ago, hundreds also assembled outside Netanyahu's private

home in the upscale coastal town of Caesarea, where heavy security greeted them.

Demonstrators across bridges and intersections waved black flags, the symbol of one of the movements behind the protests that is demanding Netanyahu's ouster.

The protests are emerging as among the biggest challenges to Netanyahu's lengthy rule since demonstrations over the cost of living in 2011 drew hundreds of thousands to the streets.

They come following what critics say is Netanyahu's fumbling of the coronavirus response and in the shadow of Netanyahu's corruption trial, which resumed earlier this month.

Blast in market of north Syrian border town kills 8: Report

Beirut: A bomb that exploded Sunday morning in a vegetable market in a north Syrian border town controlled by Turkey-backed opposition fighters killed eight and wounding 19, an opposition war monitor and the state news agency reported.

The blast scorched market stalls and scattered produce in the town of Ras al-Ayn along the border with Turkey.

The state news agency SANA said the blast was caused by a car bomb while the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the explosion was caused by a motorcycle rigged with explosives.

The Observatory said some of the wounded are in critical condition adding that the dead included a woman and a child. Turkey's Defense Ministry blamed the attack on Kurdish insurgents, as it has in dozens of other such incidents.

Ankara has blamed explosions that killed and wounded dozens of people in northeast Syria in recent months on Kurdish fighters linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has waged a decades-long insurgency inside Turkey. It views the Kurdish fighters as terrorists, though the same fighters had partnered with the US Against the Islamic State group.

North Korea locks down border city over suspected virus case

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un placed the city of Kaesong near the border with South Korea under total lockdown after a person was found there with suspected COVID-19 symptoms, saying "the vicious virus" may have entered the country, state media reported Sunday.

If the person is officially declared a coronavirus patient, he or she would be North Korea's first confirmed case.

The North has steadfastly said it has had no cases of the virus, a claim questioned by outside experts.

The lockdown was declared Friday afternoon. The North's official Korean Central News

Agency said the suspected virus patient is a runaway who fled to South Korea three years ago before illegally crossing the border into the North early last week.

KCNA said respiratory secretion and blood tests showed the person "is suspected to have been infected" with the coronavirus. It said the person was placed under quarantine. People who had been in contact with the suspected patient and those who had been to Kaesong in the last five days were also quarantined.

Chinese lab creating anthrax-like pathogens in Pakistan fake news: FO

Islamabad: Pakistan and China have concluded a secret deal to expand potential bio-warfare capabilities, including running research projects related to the deadly anthrax, an Australian media report has alleged, prompting Pakistan to dismiss it as a "politically motivated and fake story."

In an article published on July 23, Australia's investigative newspaper The Klaxon said China's Wuhan Institute of Virology has signed a covert three-year deal with Pakistan military's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DESTO) to collaborate research in "emerging infectious diseases".

The Wuhan Institute of Virology has drawn the international spotlight in recent

months because the novel coronavirus is thought to have originated in Wuhan. There had been speculation the disease may have emerged from that laboratory, however most experts have since discounted the theory.

In a statement on Sunday, the Pakistan Foreign Office (FO) described the article as a "politically motivated and fake story" and said it was composed of "distortion of facts and fabrications that quote anonymous sources".

"There is nothing secret about the Bio-Safety Level-3 (BSL-3) Laboratory of Pakistan referred to in the report. Pakistan has been sharing information about the facility with the States Parties to the Biological and Toxins Weapons

Convention (BTWC) in its submission of Confidence Building Measures," the FO said.

It said the facility is meant for diagnostic and protective system improvement by Research and Development on emerging health threats, surveillance and disease outbreak investigation.

Pakistan strictly abides by its BTWC obligations and has been one of the most vocal supporters for a strong verification mechanism to ensure full compliance by the states and parties to the convention, the FO said.

The BTWC is a 1975 multilateral disarmament treaty banning the production of chemical and biological weapons.

BLACK LIVES MATTER



A demonstrator lays down in front of federal officers during a Black Lives Matter protest at the Mark O Hatfield United States Courthouse on Sunday

Courthouse set on fire during protest in California

Oakland: Protesters in California set fire to a courthouse, damaged a police station and assaulted officers after a peaceful demonstration intensified late Saturday, Oakland police said.

Demonstrators broke windows, spray painted graffiti, shot fireworks and pointed lasers at officers, the Oakland department said on Twitter.

Several tweets called for peace and asked organisers to "help us provide safe spaces and safe places for demonstrators."

The protest began earlier Saturday evening with groups such as the "Wall of Moms," similar to a group that formed in Portland, Oregon, as protesters faced off with US agents

deployed to that city to guard a federal courthouse.

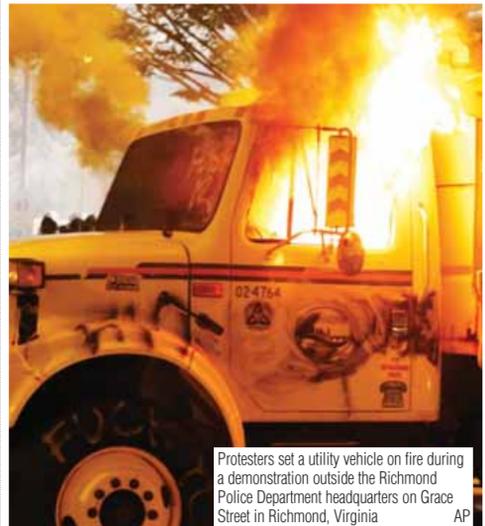
President Donald Trump had sent the federal agents to clamp down on protests that have occurred nightly since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25.

The protest in Oakland began peacefully, but turned violent later into the night.

An "unlawful assembly" was declared by police around 11:30 pm and officers asked the crowd to disperse.

The fire broke out at the Alameda County Superior Courthouse and was contained a short time later, news outlets reported. Police said protesters at one point were "breaking windows and chanting racial slurs at residents."

Fires set, windows shattered during raucous Virginia protest



Protesters set a utility vehicle on fire during a demonstration outside the Richmond Police Department headquarters on Grace Street in Richmond, Virginia

Richmond (US): A city dump truck was set on fire as protesters faced off with police in Virginia's capital during a demonstration in support of protesters on the other side of the country in Portland, Oregon.

Virginia State Police and Richmond police worked to clear the crowd of a several hundred demonstrators late Saturday. City police declared an "unlawful assembly" around 11 pm, and what appeared to be tear gas was deployed to disperse the group.

Protesters had been planning for days the demonstration that was called "Richmond Stands with Portland," news outlets reported, in an apparent reaction to ongoing tensions between protesters and

U.S. Agents at the federal courthouse in Oregon's largest city. Weeks of nationwide unrest have struck several US cities since the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25. Saturday's protest in Richmond started at a park and then demonstrators marched to police headquarters, according to news outlets.

Police tweeted a photo of rocks, batteries and other items the department said were thrown at its officers during the protest. A video also showed an officer extinguishing a mattress on fire in the middle of a road.

Glass windows were also shattered at a Chipotle restaurant and a Virginia Commonwealth University dorm, the Richmond Times-Dispatch reported.

'Whitening' creams undergo a makeover but colourism persists

Dubai: The world's biggest cosmetics companies have been selling a fairy tale that often goes something like this: If your husband's lost interest in you, if your colleagues dismiss you at work, if your talents are ignored, whiten your skin to turn your love life around, boost your career and command center stage.

No company has had greater success peddling this message across Asia, Africa and the Middle East than Unilever's Fair & Lovely brand, which sells millions of tubes of skin lightening cream annually for as little as USD 2 a piece in India.

The 45-year-old brand earns the Anglo-Dutch conglomerate Unilever more than \$500 million in yearly revenue in India alone, according to Jefferies financial analysts.

Following decades of pervasive advertising promoting the power of lighter skin, a re-branding is hitting shelves globally. But it's unlikely that fresh marketing by the world's biggest brands in beauty will reverse deeply rooted prejudices around "colourism," the idea that fair skin is better than dark skin.

Unilever said it is removing words like "fair," "white" and "light" from its marketing and

packaging, explaining the decision as a move toward "a more inclusive vision of beauty."

Unilever's Indian subsidiary, Hindustan Unilever Limited, said the Fair & Lovely brand will instead be known as "Glow & Lovely." French cosmetics giant L'Oreal followed suit, saying it too would remove similar wording from its products. Johnson & Johnson said it will stop selling Neutrogena's fairness and skin-whitening lines altogether. The makeover is happening in the wake of mass protests against racial injustice following the death of George Floyd, a black man pinned to the ground

by a white police officer in the US.

It's the latest in a series of changes as companies rethink their policies amid Black Lives Matter protests, which have spread around the world and reignited conversations about race.

Activists around the world have long sought to counter Unilever's aggressive marketing of Fair & Lovely, with the brand's advertisements criticized by women's groups from Egypt to Malaysia.

Kavitha Emmanuel founded the "Dark is Beautiful" campaign in India more than a

decade ago to counter perceptions that lighter skin is more beautiful than naturally darker skin. She said multinational companies like Unilever did not initiate skin tone bias, but have capitalized on it.

"Endorsing such a belief for 45 years is definitely quite damaging," Emmanuel said, adding that it has eroded the self-worth of many young women across India.

For women raised on these fixed standards of beauty, the market is awash in products and services that can both brighten pigmentation from skin damage and outright lighten skin.

Man fatally shot at protest in Texas

Austin: A man was fatally shot at a protest in Texas when he approached a vehicle and the driver inside opened fire, police said.

The shooting happened just before 10 pm. During a protest in Austin, police spokesperson Katrina Ratliff told reporters early Sunday. The man was taken to a hospital where he was later pronounced dead.

The vehicle had honked, turned down a road and then sped toward protesters, witness Michael Capochiano told the Austin American-Statesman.

Extreme risk aversion to have adverse outcomes: RBI Guv

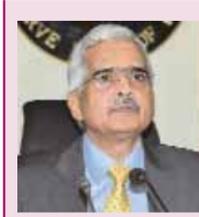
IANS ■ NEW DELHI

As the economy reels under the pandemic and post lockdown woes, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das is of the view that extreme risk aversion by financial institutions will have adverse outcomes for all.

Noting that India's financial system remains sound, Das, in his foreword to the RBI's latest Financial Stability Report, wrote that in the current environment, the need for financial intermediaries to proactively augment capital and improve their resilience has acquired top priority.

"In the evolving milieu, while risk management has to be prudent, extreme risk aversion would have adverse outcomes for all," he wrote.

The Governor's statement gains significance as concerns have been raised that banks are



In the current environment, the need for financial intermediaries to proactively augment capital and improve their resilience has acquired top priority—Governor Shaktikanta Das

still risk averse and are largely shying away from lending in general, except for the sovereign guaranteed ECLGS loans for MSMEs.

The Financial Stability Report for July 2020 also shows that bank credit, which had considerably weakened during the first half of 2019-20, slid down further in the subsequent period with the moderation becoming broad-based across bank groups. "Subdued bank credit shows clear signs of risk aversion," the report said.

The Governor also said that currently there is growing disconnect between the movements in certain segments of financial markets and real sector activity.

The pandemic hit India in a period of growth moderation and the ensuing disruptions in demand conditions and supply chains have been aggravated by global spillovers, he added.

"Of late, signs of a gradual recovery from the nationwide lockdown are becoming visible," Das said.

RBI may go in for further 25 bps rate cut, feel experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank is likely to go in for a minimum 25 basis points cut in key lending rate in the forthcoming monetary policy review as the need to revive the coronavirus-hit economy is pressing notwithstanding marginal uptick in inflation, feel experts.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor, is scheduled to meet for three days beginning August 4 and announce its decision on August 6.

The central bank has been taking steps proactively to limit the damage to the economy caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns to prevent the spread of the disease.

A fast-changing macro-economic environment and deteriorating outlook for growth necessitated off-cycle meetings of the MPC – first in March and then again in May 2020. The MPC cumulatively cut the policy repo rate by 115 basis points over these two

meetings.

Higher prices of food items especially meat, fish, cereals and pulses pushed the retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) to 6.09 per cent in June. The government has tasked the RBI to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+, - 2 per cent).

The central bank mainly factors in CPI while arriving at its monetary policy.

"We anticipate a further asymmetric cut of 25 basis points in the Repo Rate and 35 basis points in the Reverse Repo Rate, in a split decision from the MPC," opined Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA.

Expressing similar views, Union Bank of India managing director and CEO Rajkiran Rai said, "There is a possibility of a 25 basis points cut or they may hold on (the rate)."

Nayar said further said although the retail (CPI) inflation has exceeded the MPC's target range of 2-6 per cent for three consecutive months in the lockdown and

initial unlock period, it is expected to recede within this range by August 2020.

Industry chamber ASSOCHAM, however, wants the RBI to focus more on loan restructuring given the problems being faced by the industry. "Industry requires an urgent restructuring of loans across all the sectors to avert large scale defaults."

As is clear from the latest RBI report, restructuring is imperative both for the banks and borrowers.

"The restructuring of the loan should be amongst the main priority of the monetary policy committee," said ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood.

A treasurer with a state-run bank was of the view that the RBI is likely to keep the accommodative stance and they may not cut the rate this time.

"Right now, there is an ample liquidity in the system and transmission of rates is happening. Reduction of rate at this time may not serve any purpose," the treasurer

remarked.

The monetary policy was already in an accommodative mode before the outbreak of COVID-19, with a cumulative repo rate cut of 135 basis points between February 2019 and the onset of the pandemic.

Siddhartha Sanyal, Chief Economist and Head – Research, Bandhan Bank said the RBI "looks set to continue" with its 'accommodative' monetary policy stance, targeted infusion of liquidity and further calibrated lowering of interest rates," he said.

Aarti Khanna, the founder and CEO of credit helpline 'AskCred' said the RBI should take steps to allow banks to restructure debt in the stressed sectors of the economy such as tourism, entertainment, and travel.

"So, while rate cuts are welcome, they would serve little purpose unless steps are taken to revive demand (expansionary fiscal policy by the government) and proactive steps are taken by RBI to

address the looming bad debt issue," she said. Tanuj Shori, the founder and CEO of Square Yards, said given that economic activities are still struggling to gain strength, the MPC should consider further relaxation in policy rates.

"However, besides lower interest rate, the government should also consider reducing stamp duty, to boost the real estate sector which employs more than 50 million people in India and is a major contributor to the country's GDP," he said.

Meanwhile, Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte India do not expect any rate cut this time.

"Despite low interest rates, there is low demand for credit as evident from rising bank deposits. Consumers are wary of spending on big ticket items and will likely prefer to save more instead, as they are concerned about the uncertainties. Businesses are unlikely to borrow for investments because of excess capacity," she said.

Cabinet Secy-led panel to select candidate for RBI deputy Guv post on Aug 7

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A search panel headed by the cabinet secretary is scheduled to interview short-listed candidates on August 7 for the post of RBI deputy Governor, sources said.

As per the earlier schedule, the interview was to take place on July 23 but was deferred due to some reasons. The post had fallen vacant after senior-most deputy governor NS Vishwanathan demitted office three months ahead of his extended tenure on March 31 on health grounds after serving the monetary authority for 39 years.

The Financial Sector Regulatory Appointment Search Committee (FSRASC) has a list of eight names who would be interviewed via video conference, the sources said.

The selected name from the interview will be sent to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by the PM for final approval, they added.

Besides the cabinet secretary, other members of FSRASC include the RBI

Governor, financial services secretary and two independent members.

This vacancy of RBI deputy governor has been reserved for the central bank's internal candidate, who would look after the key supervisory and regulatory functions at the Mint Road. As per the RBI Act, the central bank should have four deputy governors – two from within the ranks, one commercial banker and another an economist to head the monetary policy department.

At present, the RBI has three deputy governors – BP Kanungo, MK Jain and Michael Debabrata Patra. Earlier this year, the government extended Kanungo's tenure by a year with effect from April 3, 2020.

Kanungo, whose term was to end on April 2, had taken charge as a deputy governor in April 2017. The deputy governor appointments are made for an initial period of three years and the person is eligible for reappointment. The deputy governor gets a fixed salary of Rs 2.25 lakh per month plus allowances.

CAIT releases rakhis with message Aksai Chin, PoK belong to India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net sellers in Indian markets in July so far on account of both domestic and global factors, including rising number of coronavirus cases and increasing tension between the US and China.

According to the depositors data, overseas investors invested ₹2,336 crore in equities but pulled out ₹2,422 crore from the debt segment, leading to net outflows of ₹86 crore from Indian markets between July 1-24. In the previous month, FPIs were net buyers to the tune of ₹24,053 crore.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director – manager research, Morningstar India said that FPIs have adopted a "cautious stance" with respect to investment in Indian markets. There is a surge in coronavirus cases globally, tension is increasing between the US and China, and Indian economy is still limping.

"These may act as a deterrent for foreign investors," he said. However, he noted that a high quantum was invested

FPIs withdraw ₹86 cr from Indian market in July so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

by FPIs in equities during the last week.

Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww noted that FPIs are investing majorly in the insurance and IT sector.

"Pharma and consumer durables are also gaining popularity," he added. The IT sector has posted good numbers and most of the companies have performed more or less in line with the expectations, he noted. This might add to the sector's appeal. Regarding the debt segment, Srivastava said, "FPIs are yet to gain the level of conviction on Indian debt markets to invest substantially. The pattern of FPI flows into the debt markets indicate that, given the current scenario, they are probably not finding the segment an attractive investment destination." Going forward, he said the FPI flows would be dictated by several factors as the scenario globally continues to evolve. "On the domestic front, the challenges with respect to rising COVID-19 cases and recovery of economic growth remains," he added.

While Ind-AS 103 pertains to business combinations, Ind-AS 116 relates to principles for recognition, presentation and disclosure of leases.

Govt amends certain Indian Accounting Standards

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has amended certain Indian Accounting Standards (Ind-AS), including the standard relating to leases amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Ind-AS 103, 116 and some other standards have been amended by the Corporate Affairs Ministry.

While Ind-AS 103 pertains to business combinations, Ind-AS 116 relates to principles for recognition, presentation and disclosure of leases.

In the wake of the pandemic, many lessors have extended rent concessions to lessees. However, applying the Ind-AS 116 requirements for changes to lease payments

Debt MFs see ₹1.1 lakh cr inflow in June qtr on investment in liquid schemes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Driven by investments in liquid schemes as also banking and PSU funds, debt mutual funds saw an inflow of ₹1.1 lakh crore in three months ended June 2020 after witnessing massive redemptions in the preceding quarter.

Most individual categories that invest in fixed-income securities, or debt funds, saw inflows. However, credit risk, overnight, ultra-short duration, medium duration and dynamic bond funds saw withdrawals.

The positive inflow pushed the asset base of debt mutual funds to ₹11.63 lakh crore at June-end from ₹11.5 lakh crore at the end of March, according to data with Association of Mutual Funds on India (Amfi).

Inflows into debt mutual funds were at ₹1.1 lakh crore in the three months

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As per the data, inflows into debt mutual funds were at ₹1.1 lakh crore in the three months ended June, compared to outflows of ₹1.13 lakh crore in the January-March quarter. Investment into such funds was at ₹19,690 crore during the quarter ended June 2019.

Nearly 80 per cent of the total inflows during the quarter under review in the fixed-income segment came through liquid funds, where most of the

FATF review of India's anti-money laundering & terror financing regime pushed to 2021 due to Covid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The much-awaited Financial Action Task Force (FATF) mutual evaluation of India's anti-money laundering regime and legal measures framed to check financial crimes, scheduled for this year, has been postponed till early next year in view of the coronavirus pandemic, officials said.

They said the on-site review to be conducted by experts of the global body was scheduled to begin in Sep-Oct but the FATF secretariat in Paris has conveyed to India that the review is being tentatively pushed to Jan-Feb next year. The FATF is a global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog that sets international standards to prevent illegal activities in the economic and financial channels of a country and its inter-connected linkages across the world.

It conducts "peer reviews of each member on an ongoing basis to assess levels of implementation of the FATF recommendations and provides an in-depth description and analysis of each country's system for preventing criminal abuse of

Aditya Puri raises ₹842 cr by selling HDFC Bank shares, holding down to 0.01%

PTI ■ MUMBAI

HDFC Bank chief executive and managing director Aditya Puri has sold more than 74 lakh shares of the private lender to raise ₹842.87 crore, according to regulatory filings.

The share sale, which was executed between July 21 and 23, brought down Puri's holding in the most valued Indian lender to just 0.01 per cent from the earlier 0.14 per cent.

The sale comes months ahead of Puri's retirement from the bank, which he led to become the largest by assets among private lenders and the second-largest overall over 25 years.

He sold 74.20 lakh of the 77.96 lakh shares in the bank and Puri's remaining holding of the bank shares is now 3.76 lakh shares valued at over ₹42 crore as of the last close.

A bank spokesperson explained that the shares were allotted to Puri over a period of time at different price points and stressed that they were not given at par with the face value of the share.

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Diesel price nears ₹82/L after 15 paise increase

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Diesel price in the national capital on Sunday inched towards the ₹82 per litre-mark following the second consecutive day of price hike.

Diesel price was increased by 15 paise per litre, according to a price notification of state-owned oil marketing companies. This took the retail selling price in the national capital to the highest ever rate of ₹81.94 per litre.

Rates vary from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT. This is the second consecutive day of price increase. Rates were hiked by 15 paise on Saturday. The price increase on Saturday came after a four-day hiatus in rate revision.

Petrol prices on Sunday remained unchanged. Prices of petrol have remained static at ₹80.43 per litre for almost four weeks. Petrol rates were last

changed on June 29. Prior to hitting the freeze button, petrol price had been increased on 21 occasions since the oil companies reverted to daily price revision on June 7.

The cumulative increase in petrol came to ₹9.17 per litre. Diesel rates have continued to be revised sporadically in July. The cumulative increase in diesel price since June 7 now totals ₹12.55 per litre.

In Mumbai, petrol is priced at ₹87.19 - unchanged since June 29, while diesel now costs ₹80.11 a litre.

Prior to June 7, oil companies had for 82 days not revised petrol and diesel prices as they adjusted a record increase in excise duty by the Government against the fall in rates warranted due to international oil prices slumping to a two-year low.

Commenting on oil prices, ICICI Securities said sharp recovery

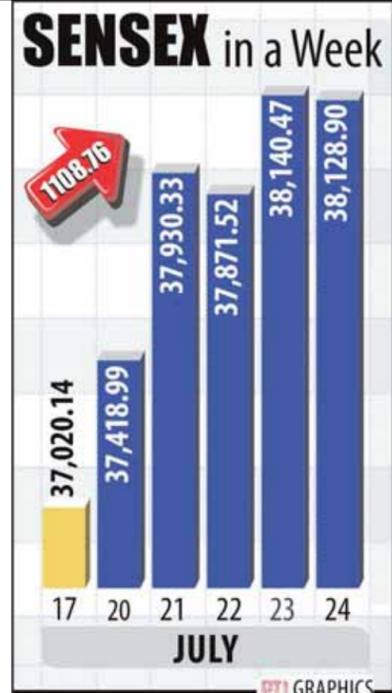
in oil price from lows in April was driven by fall in global supply surplus from 22.7 million barrels per day (bpd) to demand-supply balance in June.

"Global oil supply in June fell by 13.7 million bpd from April levels, while demand recovered by 9.1 million bpd during the same period as per IEA. Falling supply and recovery in demand led to demand-supply balance in June vs supply surplus of 22.7 million bpd in April," it said.

It said lockdowns due to the second wave of infections have hurt demand recovery in the US and India.

As per EIA data, total US, gasoline and diesel demand decline was steeper in the week ended July 17 than in the preceding 4-6 weeks.

"In India, petrol and diesel consumption decline is steeper at 12-21 per cent year-on-year in July 1-15 vs 9-16 per cent in June 16-30," it said.



Corporate earnings, geopolitical events to set market course this week: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic equity markets this week will largely be steered by corporate earnings, developments on US-China relations front and Covid-19 trends, analysts said.

Globally, investors seemed treading cautiously last week amid deteriorating US-China ties and an uncertainty about economic recovery due to still surging Covid-19 cases in many countries. Last week, China ordered the US consulate in Chengdu to be closed, in retaliation for the US closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston following spying allegations. On the coronavirus front, India's overall cases tally climbed to 13,85,522 and the death toll from the virus infection rose to 32,063 on Sunday, official data showed.

Globally, the number of Covid-19 cases has topped 1.6

Crude oil movement and rupee-dollar trend would be monitored by investors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India have also unsettled investors, with its related delay in business and earnings recovery. Global markets were also affected on account of rising US-China tensions. Any further developments in this front will impact trade this week," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services. On the corporate earnings side, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tech Mahindra, HDFC and Reliance Industries are among the companies to file their quarterly financial results this week. Another major event that markets would track is the

Fed interest rate decision on Wednesday.

Last week, the BSE SENSEX logged gains of 1,109 points or 2.99 per cent and the NSE Nifty rose 292 points or 2.68 points.

"Investors will keep a close eye on the upcoming earnings commentary, US-China escalation, impact of coronavirus on the economy and development on vaccine," said Sumeet Bagadia, Executive Director, Choice Broking.

Also, crude oil movement and rupee-dollar trend would be monitored by investors, analysts said.

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said, "After the recent spike in Nifty, market is expected to consolidate for a couple of days, given flaring US-China relations and persistent rise in virus cases. Thus, the market volatility is likely to continue."

Trend Slazer

Joyful to be back at work: Farhan

Actor-filmmaker FARHAN AKHTAR finds getting back to work a relief and a joy but he also understands the importance of being socially responsible right now.

"Getting back to work is a relief and a joy but given the times we're in, it's important to be socially responsible and keep the environment hygienic for the crew and cast. They work to create. We work to keep them safe. #MasksDistanceAction," Farhan tweeted. Amid the relaxation in lockdown, Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan's production house Excel Entertainment resumed shooting for their next two projects *Hello Charlie* and *Dongri To Dubai* taking all necessary precautions.

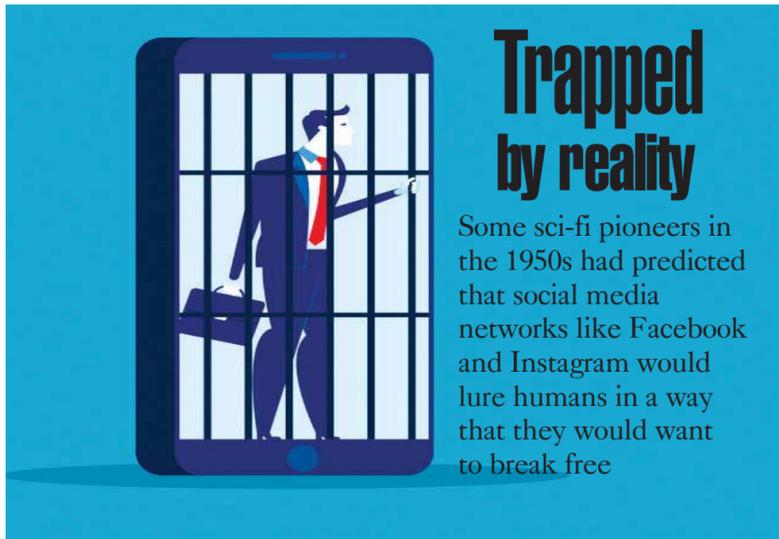


Science fiction writers predicted in the 1950s that social networks like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter will trap billions of people one day, in such a way that they will struggle to break-free, thus becoming perfect examples of modern-day robotic prosumption.

Products where producer and consumer are blurred are called the "prosumer" so consumers also play a part in a product's creation, as with social media and Augmented Reality (AR) games. Science fiction authors like pioneer Frederik Pohl foresaw AR video games, the rise of social media and trends of hyper-consumption in the 1950s.

"Pohl's work highlights the ability of science fiction to provide a better understanding of possible futures and the lasting impacts of modern and emerging technologies, allowing people to see what the world may become in a way easily understood by a mass audience," said Dr Mike Ryder from Lancaster University Management School.

Social media users are perhaps the best example of modern-day robotic prosumption,



Some sci-fi pioneers in the 1950s had predicted that social media networks like Facebook and Instagram would lure humans in a way that they would want to break free

ern-day robotic prosumption, "mindlessly producing and consuming content, while social media firms sell their data and target them with ads that feed

back into the cycle. Users struggle to be break-free through a fear of missing out (FOMO)."

New research, published in the *Journal of Consumer Culture*

highlights many parallels between the futures created by sci-fi pioneer Pohl in the 1950s and the modern world.

In the worlds imagined in

Pohl's works, advertising firms are in charge, exploiting customers for profit and priding themselves on their ability to shape human desire, where social status and consumption are intrinsically entwined, and where characters become hyper-consumers, threatening the stability of the local area.

"Science fiction is an important tool for testing 'what-if' scenarios, speculating on what the future might bring. Pohl's worlds of hyper-consumption, robot workers and ecological disaster are even more relevant today than they were in the 1950s," said Ryder.

In *The Space Merchants* (1952, with CM Kornbluth), protagonist Mitchell Courtenay is forced to spend his low wages on goods to help make his work bearable, which creates an ongoing cycle of debt.

His behaviour becomes more like that of a machine, a producing-consuming robotic prosumer, unaware he is trapped in a cycle. This pre-empted the real-world criticism of Vance Packard, who depicted a dystopia where marketers use psychological tech-

niques to influence behaviour to the point consumers do not realise they are being influenced.

"Humans become more and more like machines, such that consumption itself becomes a mechanical process, creating a dystopian world where the only freedom is the freedom not to consume, one limited to the very rich," explained Ryder.

Take Airbnb for example, that acts as a broker for users who are both the producers and consumers of goods, paying to rent rooms, while making money through renting out their own.

Uber drivers and passengers are able to rate each other, making the consumers a sort of product, and AR video games such as *Pokemon GO* see players become part of the product, appearing in each other's games and competing for the same objectives.

According to researchers, social theorists and policy makers need to take science fiction far more seriously to help prepare for the world of tomorrow. "The challenges that arise from new technologies should be considered before they happen."

—IANS

THE TRUTH IS OUT

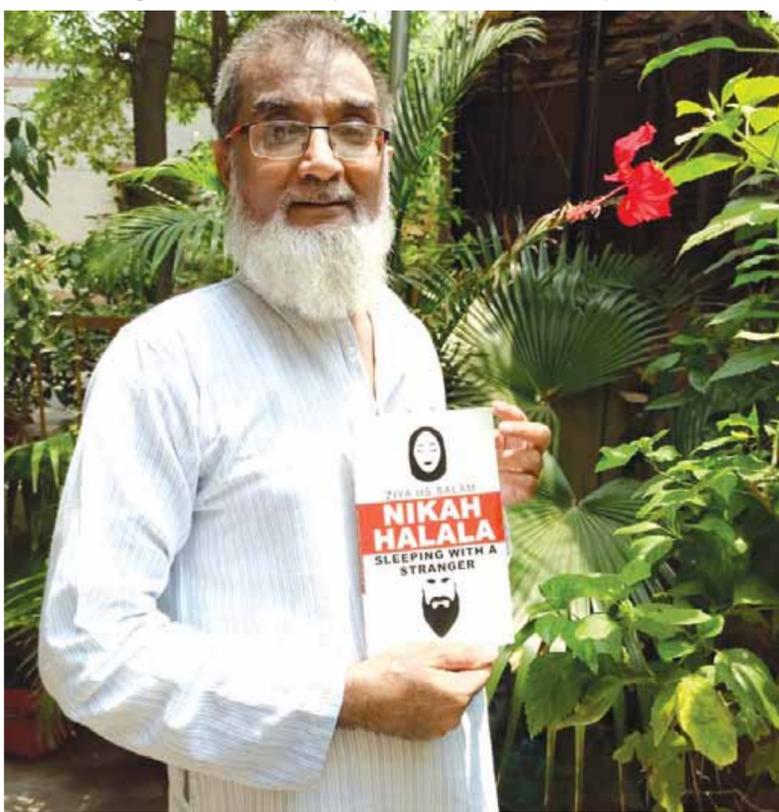
On a regular summer day in 2019, a journalist had gone to a madrasa with a spy camera and a fictitious story of a known PhD scholar who wanted to remarry her husband after an instant triple *talaq* but didn't know the way out. He was referred to some of the people around and a man came up with a suggestion — *nikah halala*. "Marry her to a carpenter who works here," he said. He would divorce her in two days after consummating the marriage, post which she could go back to her previous husband. When the journalist refused the offer, stating the social incompatibility between the two as a reason, the man offered his own candidature. And in turn, he asked for ₹30,000, an amount which the journalist refused as he couldn't afford it with an income of ₹25,000 and a family of four. After some bargaining, the man finally came down to ₹15,000.

Journalist and writer Ziya Us Salam amusingly recalls this story on the other end of the phone, while talking about his recent book, *Nikah Halala: Sleeping With A Stranger*. It aims to present the realities of marriage and divorce in Islam, marking the differences between how the Quran looks at relationships and how the people misuse them. While the holy book does not mention instant triple *talaq*, the tradition of *nikah halala* is unique to the Indian sub-continent that claims to bring squabbling couples together but ends up making a mockery of the faith and punishes women for the crimes of men.

Ziya says that *Nikah Halala...* has been written as a comparative volume after the book, *Till Talaq Do Us Part: Understanding Talaq, Triple Talaq and Khula* (2018). "After the book, there was a lot of curiosity among people about *nikah halala*. Many people who read it told me that they wanted to know more about the concept and how it functions in our society. I had also at the time come across some people who had a different perspective. I felt I must clarify before the average reader what the Quran says about *nikah halala* and what is the reality of the practice in India," adds he.

The *nikah halala*, according to Muslim Personal Laws, dictates that a woman must consummate her marriage with another man if she wants to go back to her former husband, whom she has divorced. However, there are a number of misconceptions around the practice, which not only lead to its manipulation but exploits women hugely. So how does the book address these myths? Ziya tells us, "I have spo-

ken about the Quranic injunctions of the subject. The three verses of the Quran — from 229 to 231 — talk about the divorce, multiple divorce and the *nikah halala*. As per the divorce section, the Quran allows it twice. The man can divorce his wife once, post which there is a three-month waiting period. In that span, the woman has to stay with her husband and the two can try to reconcile. If the man takes back his words and establishes the reconciliation in bed, the *talaq* is ruled out and the marriage continues."



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'I definitely have a special relationship with comedy because that was the first genre I found success in. It is something that comes to me naturally. It's not like I prefer only comedic scripts but I prefer comedic scripts over other dramatic roles. For me, what matters is how good the screenplay is, how good my part is and the director, of course.'

—Ranvir Shorey

Actor SONAKSHI SINHA has joined Special IGP of Maharashtra Pratap Dighavkar and a team of cyber experts on an initiative to end cyber bullying on social media.



"Social media was made with the intention to spread love and positivity. Unfortunately, it has become a toxic place with the rampant rise of cyberbullying and mental harassment. I have been a victim of trolls and abuses myself," said Sonakshi about joining the campaign, *Full Stop To Cyber Bullying*.

'Everything can't be critically acclaimed'

Actor JOEY KING says she understands the fact that not every film she does has to be critically-acclaimed.

She was speaking in the context of her latest release, *The Kissing Booth 2*, which hasn't impressed the critics much.

"I understand that critics weren't all over this film, but that's the thing. It's not meant for critics to be like, 'Wow, what a film!' It's meant for people to watch and have a great time," she said.

Joey's performance in *The Act* had been universally applauded by fans and critics alike. "I'm thankful that I got to do *The Act*, where critics were like, 'Oh, that's awesome'. But also not everything you do has to have critical acclaim," said she.



WEBBED

PROJECT POWER

An ex-soldier, a teen and a cop collide in New Orleans as they hunt for the source behind a dangerous new pill that grants users temporary superpowers. Starring, Jamie Foxx, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Dominique Fishback, the film releases on Netflix on August 14.



WORK IT

A brilliant but clumsy high school senior vows to get into her late father's alma mater by transforming herself and a misfit squad into dance champions. The film releases on Netflix on August 7.



THE HATER

A duplicitous young man finds success in the dark world of social media smear tactics — but his virtual vitriol soon has violent real-life consequences. The film releases on Netflix on July 29.

Reverse migration of the workers and the distressing visuals of their hardships while returning to their villages during and after the lockdown have raised some important concerns. Be it the video of a migrant worker improvising a wooden cart and pulling his pregnant wife and infant daughter in their arduous journey, or that of an exhausted woman dragging her suitcase on a highway, while her five year old son, worn out by exhaustion and weariness, sleeps on the suitcase — these visuals stare at us with tell-tale stories of despair.

Asha (name changed), a seven-year-old girl, was in charge of guarding her four-year-old sibling when a relief worker on COVID-19 met her at the bus stop. Waiting patiently for her parents to return home who had gone to look for food from families nearby, the girl revealed that they were originally from Bihar. This little family of road construction workers were living in a slum in Sirathu Tehsil at Kaushambhi district, Uttar Pradesh. They had no idea how to go back to their village. "We don't even have money for food. How will we travel?" asked the seven-year-old.

The nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of the pandemic has changed many lives, mostly those of the marginalised. The media coverage of the sufferings of the underprivileged families was limited to the impact on their daily lives. As we move forward, it is time that we discuss the detailed impact of the decisions that were taken in the past few months on the lives of children. The front-liners at CRY (Child Rights and You), during the relief work have witnessed the helplessness of several children like Asha who stare into a dark, bleak future.

Impact on children's health and hygiene

Health of children belonging to the lower strata has always been a major concern. Due to lockdown, the situation got worse — children who accompanied their parents while migrating back to their villages faced immense challenge of food and water during travel. The issue of hunger is going to loom large over them in the times to come. Due to the closure of schools, the mid-day meal facility is not in place, which in turn is leading to depleting nutrition levels in children.

They are now deprived of immunisation, basic health provisions and hygiene. ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) and Public Health centres were completely shut during the lockdown, bringing all essential services like Polio vaccinations, routine immunisations, availability of IFA (Iron & Folic Acid) tablets, take home rations (THR) and pre-natal / post-natal care of pregnant women to halt in most of the states. Thus, the risk of undoing the gains of previous years in improving infant and



STORIES OF HOPE AND DESPAIR

PUJA MARWAHA puts the spotlight on children of migrant workers as their health and education remain neglected amid the COVID-19 crisis and suggests the way forward

maternal mortality rates and immunisation targets is very high. The suspension of the usual sanitation and hygiene services at the community level have also increased the chances of higher incidences of diarrhoea, jaundice, typhoid and other water-borne diseases.

Plight of the working children

Sadly, many children (especially in the 15-18 age group) migrate alone for work. During the lockdown period, they were either not paid or were deserted by their employers. The children who were working under hazardous conditions are at an extreme risk as the employers cannot disclose their identities (due to the illegal hiring), making their rescue or provision of relief impossible.

Threat to children's safety and psycho-social well-being

To watch their families suffer creates deep sense of anxiety, insecurity and



extreme psychological pressure on children, leaving them vulnerable for life. The long lasting emotional impacts of such incidences on their lives and overall personality are immense. The children of the workers have seen thousands of

people around them crying, dying and begging for food and life. Their plight is beyond comprehension.

Additionally, they are at an even higher risk of physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and even trafficking. Trafficking is a huge threat in overcrowded areas, trains/buses, transit camps where such predators are extremely active. Inaccessibility to education at this stage also exposes children to crime and other abuse besides leaving them homeless.

This acute and severe stress on children during their formative years can impact their self-esteem and decision making abilities lifelong, thereby impacting their learning outcomes and retention in school.

Lag in education

Even before the pandemic, the frequent movement adversely impacted the continuity of education for children of migrant workers. Many children get

enrolled, but didn't attend school due to seasonal migration. Either they remain out of school or attend pre-school centres run by civil society organisations at work sites.

This year, however, will keep many more children away from school pushing them into child labour. Due to the gap in schooling, loss of family's income and loss of interest as they have no access to online or broadcast classes, many children might never return to schools.

The way forward

Various child rights organisation in India, including CRY, have been providing relief and rehabilitation services to vulnerable children and communities. They are reaching out to the government and frontline workers to provide essential services. But there are miles to go and the government, civil society organisations and the private sector must join hands in this journey.

The focus must be on education and survival. It is very important that children get enough food and nutrition. Food packets, milk and other weaning products must be a part of the package for younger children. Protein-rich nutrients and food diversity will boost their immunity and strength. We must also realise that uncooked food is of little help as migrants do not have access to kitchens.

Those still returning to their native villages should be provided with usable public toilets with proper sanitation, and for their dignity as well. Quarantine facilities, relief and transit camps at state borders, block or panchayat level must arrange safe and child-friendly shelters where nutritious food, water and sanitation facilities must be provided.

The overcrowded and under-performing Public Health Centres in villages need necessary financial and other support to be able to tackle health emergencies. They must also attend to and admit the returning migrants without discrimination.

In all of this, we must not forget our girls. They are vulnerable to being left behind and married off as a result of abject poverty. We also tend to forget about their menstrual health during emergent times.

It is time for local governments to step up to the task. Tracking all children of migrant families, registering them, extending ICDS services to even unregistered ones, maintaining continuity of immunisation, supplementary nutrition and other maternal and child care services are the imperatives of the hour. Appropriate measures need adequate investments, and that truly is the call of the day for the government at every level. For, in words and in action, we must all be in this crisis 'together', leaving behind no child and marginalised family.

(The writer is the CEO, CRY (Child Rights and You).)

—Charkha Features

Myth vs reality

It's a misconception that only political and economic success can bring happiness to life. Other spiritual realities and values are important too, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ J



Most of the world believes that with the advancement of science and technology, humans have been liberated from blind faith and superstition. They have now been enabled to understand the difference between the truth and the myth. But when one observes things more closely, one finds that, even in this era of high tech and scientific sophistication, there are quite a number of current beliefs that belong to the category of myths, yet the intellectuals are committed to them. One of these beliefs that is savoured as truth is that the good of the society is defined by democratic and political processes and not by the maturity of the spiritual aspect of the personalities involved.

Even though one can easily see that there are thousands of social and political problems in countries, where democratic and other political processes are at work, yet one overlooks these afflictions and continues to enjoy this current myth as truth.

It is an open secret that the countries which are

considered as genuinely democratic, both constitutionally and practically, are also suffering badly from fear psychosis and a tearing sense of insecurity. There are a large number of people there who are victims of mental issues such as depression, paranoia, broken marriages, fragmented families, drug habits, child abuse, increasing tendency to indulge in violence, suicides and much more. Yet the myth prevails that full democratic processes and latest economic theories create conditions of heaven, so spirituality can take a back seat. This new kind of economic and political myth makes people conveniently forget that a mentally disturbed person, who is facing inner turmoil, creates disturbance in the whole society. The truth, therefore, is that the disorder, turmoil and violence that prevail in the society are a reflection of the war that is there in the minds of people. Hence, peace in the society cannot be restored by political science or economics, but by practices that bring solace to the tormented spirit.

Let us not overlook the fact that consciously or unconsciously, every person is seeking some form of self realisation so that s/he can express his or her own potentialities. It would, therefore, amount to denying the undeniable truth that there is a spiritual dimension of man's existence and we can overlook it at our own peril. Undoubtedly, the right type of political and economic processes are necessary but to think that these can bring happiness to life without enriching the spiritual aspect of man's personality is like considering a myth as truth.

It is an irrefutable fact of life that man has a physical and also a spiritual dimension of his life. Therefore, one cannot continue to live happily in a state of separation from an important part of himself. It is a pity that in this era of science and technology, man always talks only about the social, economic and political realities in an empirical and utilitarian language. He forgets other realities and values which are spiritual in their nature. But the time has come when man must wake up once again to the truth that he has a social dimension. Hence, the myth that man is merely a physical being with only economic and political dimension has to be broken. Only when we have this holistic perspective of life, we will be able to have a self-realisation ethic. Only then, we will be able to have development of the full human potential.



It is rightly said for Jammu and Kashmir that it has always been more than just a mere place. The state, now UT, breathes within its locals and visitors alike with a pulse that they can sense, a heartbeat that they can feel and an expression that they can personally. Even though the beauty of Jammu and Kashmir never fails to amaze people, there are several development challenges that its people have to face every day. Only if the UT administration had been serious in the field of tourism, multiple development challenges of unemployment, backwardness and poverty could have been addressed. Although many places in the UT, especially in Kashmir province have been developed and are quite famous among tourists, there are many remote districts in Jammu region that need special attention.

Located at a distance of 235 km from Jammu, Poonch district is situated in between the banks of Poonch River and Betar River. The fact that there are rivers on both sides of the city adds to its beauty and makes the place more charming. Approximately 20 km from Poonch city, the area of Tehsil Mandi is adorned with snow-capped mountains fronted by chinar trees, waterfalls and endless streams of numerous rivers. About 32 km from here is the border area of Saujiyan, blessed with a sumptuous autumn season. At a distance of

GO THE LAST MILE

Remote districts of Jammu need special attention as they lack basic infrastructure and proper sanitation, making day to day living difficult, says MOHAMMED RIYAZ MALIK

only a few kilometres, the area of Nediyan Dhok begins, where one can find himself standing in a lush and green forest setting with the scent of pine needles wafting in the air. In between the forest, there is a billowing and noisy river as white as milk and as cold as ice. There are pastures around the green fields where cattle roams. The sounds of local people's songs and the houses built are reminiscent of the ancient times.

Tanveer Ahmed, a 30-year-old man, who came here for leisure, recalls, "Even when there was no road, there were people coming in around the spring season. Now that the road has been built, more tourists are coming here. But they all deal with certain problems."

While the world is reeling under the pandemic, residents of the above-mentioned places and a few other several unexplored destinations, have different concerns. They lack even the basic infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals and sanitation,



making it difficult for day to day survival.

The most difficult time comes when the season changes and rains and storms start here. This is one such example why the residents require special attention from the higher authorities. The various locations in the valley

have a great potential for tourism but again, due to the situations prevailing in the past few decades, there had been some limp seasons in the tourist arrivals. There is dire need and intervention of leaders at different levels to get back the tourism footfall. And it's only possible

when the development will take place, when all the facilities will be easily available for tourists at a particular destination. The residents believe that if the area is brought on the tourism map in the right way, hundreds of youngsters will not be forced to stumble for employment. It's only

due to the negligence that they are facing such chaotic times.

"The government usually spends huge amounts just to enhance and improve the appearance of a place in order to bring in tourism footfall. But here, the matter is way different. With the sound of gushing water, aroma of pine trees and the vibrancy of saffron, the valley is already blessed with natural beauty, which surprises everyone. There is just a need to uncover the area, which is still in the shadows," feels Gulbar Ahmed Lone, a 25-year-old resident of Gagrian.

Educated youth, here, could have made the best of their livelihood by joining the tourism sector, but this has not yet been possible due to the inattention. The people here want to ask their leaders the question of how long will they have to suffer from such difficult situations. Will there be a permanent solution soon to eradicate all these issues and boost in the tourism sector? Well, the journey might be long but the destination seems certain. Hard work is difficult, but the fruit of that hard work has always been sweet. Demand for bringing footfall needs to be further intensified. We need to extend our support to the tourists, so that their journeys can be made easier and the lesser known locations can be put on the tourist map, which will in turn lead to employment of thousands of unemployed youth.

—Charkha Features

In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love. —Mother Teresa

21 EXISTING DRUGS COULD TREAT VIRUS

A global team of scientists has identified 21 existing drugs that stop the replication of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

Notably, four of these compounds were found to work synergistically with remdesivir, a current standard-of-care treatment for COVID-19, said the study published in the journal Nature.

"Remdesivir has proven successful at shortening the recovery time for patients in the hospital, but the drug doesn't work for everyone who receives it. That's not good enough," said senior author of the study Sumit Chanda, Professor at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in California, US.

"As infection rates continue to rise in America and the world, the urgency is to find affordable, effective, and readily available drugs that can complement the use of remdesivir, as well as drugs that could be given prophylactically or at the first sign of infection on an outpatient basis," he added.



PLANT-BASED DIETS IMPROVE TYPE 1 DIABETES

Plant-based diets rich in whole carbohydrates can improve insulin sensitivity and other health markers in individuals with type 1 diabetes, say researchers.

Two case studies, published in the Journal of Diabetes & Metabolism, followed individuals with type 1 diabetes who adopted plant-based diets rich in whole carbohydrates — including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. "Decades of research has proven that a plant-based diet can be beneficial for those with type 2 diabetes. Now, groundbreaking case studies are offering hope that the same may be true for those with type 1 diabetes," said the study authors from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in the US.

Previous studies have found that low-fat, plant-based diets can be beneficial for those with type 2 diabetes. Research has also shown that those eating a plant-based diet have approximately half the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, compared with non-vegetarians. There were further findings to justify the study.



WHAT AN EFFECTIVE VACCINE MEANS

With the global pandemic still in full swing, scientists around the world are working to develop an effective vaccine for COVID-19 virus in record time but they don't all agree on how to get there and what "effective" really means.

In the study, published in the journal Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), the experts spoke with researchers, doctors and business leaders to shed light on some of the challenges vaccine developers are facing.

"As of mid-July, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that over 160 vaccine programmes were in progress, an unprecedented effort toward a common goal," wrote the study author Ryan Cross from C&EN in the US.

For SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, that part is the spike protein, which the virus uses to attach itself to human cells. Both types of methods can be time-consuming, and traditional approaches are potentially dangerous because companies need to grow large amounts of virus.



CHOCOLATE ONCE A WEEK KEEPS HEART HEALTHY

It seems like chocolate is good for the heart as researchers have said that consuming chocolate at least once a week is linked with a reduced risk of heart disease.

The study, published in the European Journal of Preventive Cardiology, suggests that chocolate helps keep the heart's blood vessels healthy.

In the past, clinical studies have shown that chocolate is beneficial for both blood pressure and the lining of blood vessels.

"I wanted to see if it affects the blood vessels supplying the heart (the coronary arteries) or not. And if it does, is it beneficial or harmful?" said study lead author Chayakrit Krittanawong from Baylor College of Medicine in the US.



FAMILY WELL-BEING AFFECTED

The ongoing disruptive changes from efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are having a substantial negative impact on the physical and mental well-being of parents and their children, say researchers.

Families are particularly affected by stressors stemming from changes in work, school and daycare schedules that are impacting finances and access to community support networks, according to the survey of parents across the US, published in the journal Pediatrics.

"COVID-19 and measures to control its spread have had a substantial effect on the nation's children," said study researcher Stephen Patrick from the Children's Hospital in the US.



No cricketer close to Stokes: Gambhir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nobody in world cricket is even close to England all-rounder Ben Stokes, who is "in his own league," reckons former India opener Gautam Gambhir.

England's World Cup hero Stokes has been in top form in the ongoing Test series against the West Indies. He scored a magnificent 176 to help England win the second Test.

He has a tally of 313 runs apart from nine wickets in two Tests.

"You can't compare anyone in India at the moment with Ben Stokes. Absolutely not, because Ben Stokes is in his own league," Gambhir said.

"What he has done in Test cricket, in one-day cricket, in T20 cricket, I don't think so there's anyone, let alone in India, there isn't anyone who's even close to him in world cricket at the moment," he was quoted as saying in *Star Sports show Cricket Connected*.

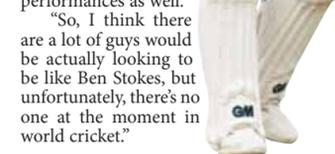
The 38-year-old Gambhir said Stokes is a cricketer whom every captain would like to have in his team.

"That is the kind of impact player you need in every line-up. It would be a dream for every captain to have someone like Ben Stokes — whether he's batting, whether he's bowling, whether he's fielding," said Gambhir, who played 58 Tests between 2004 and 2016.

Stokes led England in the first Test against the West Indies in the absence of Joe Root, though they lost the series-opener.

Talking about Stokes' leadership qualities, Gambhir said, "He's a leader in his own capacity. You don't need to be called a captain to be a captain. You can be a leader by your own performances as well."

"So, I think there are a lot of guys would be actually looking to be like Ben Stokes, but unfortunately, there's no one at the moment in world cricket."



Man Utd, Chelsea claim top 4

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester United and Chelsea sealed Champions League places on Sunday as Bournemouth and Watford fell through the trapdoor on a dramatic final day of the longest Premier League season.

Liverpool were crowned champions last month but there were many issues at stake in the final 90 minutes of a campaign that started on August 9 last year and was interrupted by a three-month coronavirus shutdown.

United finished third after a nervy 2-0 win in a Champions League shootout against Leicester while Chelsea ended in fourth spot after beating Wolves 2-0 thanks to two goals on the stroke of half-time.

At the other end of the table, Bournemouth and managerless Watford dropped to the Championship while Aston Villa fans breathed a huge sigh of relief after they got the draw they needed at West Ham.

Leicester, in fifth spot, will play in the Europa League next season where they will be joined by Tottenham, who drew 1-1 with Crystal Palace to leapfrog Wolves.

Frank Lampard's Chelsea required just a draw to seal Champions League qualification for next term and two goals in first-half stoppage time gave them breathing space.

Mason Mount whipped in from a free-kick to give Chelsea the lead and the home side went further in front almost immediately, when Olivier Giroud slid home.

United, whose form has dipped in recent weeks after they pulled themselves back into contention for the Champions League, were locked at 0-0 at half-time at the King Power Stadium.

But they finally broke the deadlock in the 71st minute, when Bruno Fernandes scored from the penalty spot after Anthony Martial was upended. Jesse Lingard scored late to seal the win.

The result is a huge lift for Solskjaer, whose team slipped well off the pace earlier this season, but is a bitter blow for Brendan Rodgers' Leicester, who have been camped in the top four for almost the whole campaign.

Watford, who sacked Nigel Pearson earlier this month, started in disastrous fashion when they conceded a penalty in



Manchester City's David Silva is applauded by team mates at the end of Premier League match AP



Bournemouth's Philip Billing sits on the field after their match against Everton at Goodison Park AP

the opening minute at the Emirates.

Craig Dawson floored Arsenal forward Alexandre Lacazette and, after a lengthy VAR review, Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang tucked home the resulting spot-kick.

Their fate was effectively sealed by further first-half goals from Kieran Tierney and an Aubameyang overhead kick, though a Troy Deeney penalty and a Danny Welbeck strike gave them hope.

Bournemouth beat Everton 3-1 at Goodison Park but needed West Ham to

beat Aston Villa to survive.

Jack Grealish's late goal for Villa was a hammer blow but the home side dramatically levelled a minute later through Andriy Yarmolenko. However, Villa held on to secure their Premier League survival.

An early goal by Harry Kane put Tottenham in front against Crystal Palace but Palace equalised early in the second half through Jeffrey Schlupp.

That was enough for Jose Mourinho's men to finish in sixth position.

FIGURATIVELY

33 Kevin De Bruyne was directly involved in 33 Premier League goals this season (13 goals & 20 assists), the most by a central midfielder in a single season since Frank Lampard's 36 in 2009-10 (22 goals & 14 assists)

4 Frank Lampard finished fourth in his first season as a manager with Chelsea, the highest finish by a debuting English manager since Frank Clark with Nottingham Forest in 1994-95

325 Leicester finished fifth in the 2019-20 Premier League season, despite ending the day within the top four positions on 325 occasions during the campaign

1 Bournemouth have been relegated from the Premier League for the first time, ending a run of five seasons in the top-flight

100 Manchester City have scored 100+ league goals in a top-flight season for a fifth time, an English record (also 1936-37, 1957-58, 2013-14 and 2017-18)

5 Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk has become only the fifth outfield player to play every single minute in a season for the title-winning side in Premier League history

99 Liverpool finished the season with 99 points, the second-highest return in English top-flight history behind only Manchester City's 100 points in 2017-18

32 Liverpool won 32 Premier League games this season, a joint-record in the history of the English top-flight alongside Manchester City (32 in both 2017-18 and 2018-19)

33 At 33 years of age, Jamie Vardy has become the oldest player to win the Premier League golden boot

Liverpool beat Newcastle 3-1 to finish the season on 99 points and second-placed Manchester City finished the season with a flourish, thrashing Norwich 5-0 to reach 102 goals for the campaign.

Elsewhere, Brighton beat Burnley 2-1 and Southampton beat Sheffield United 3-1. Leicester's Jamie Vardy won the Golden Boot with 23 goals.



AP ■ MANCHESTER

Stuart Broad was only one wicket away from becoming just the seventh bowler to take 500 Test wickets as England closed in on a series victory over the West Indies at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Broad's haul of 6-31 in 14 overs saw the West Indies bundled out for 197 in reply to England's first-innings 369 that featured his dashing 62.

England's second-innings 226-2 declared saw opener Rory Burns make 90 as the West Indies were set a huge target of 399 for victory.

And there was still time for Broad to reduce the tourists to 10-2 at stumps on the third day.

Broad had the struggling John Campbell caught at first slip for a duck by England captain Joe Root and then moved to 499 Test wickets when night-watchman Kemar Roach was caught behind.

Broad bowled the final over of the day's play, with his last ball just missing Shai Hope's outside edge.

The only bowlers with more than 600 Test wickets are a trio of former spinners — Sri Lanka's Muttiah

Windies need 389 to win



Muralitharan (800), Australian Shane Warne (708) and India's Anil Kumble (619).

The only seamers ahead of Broad

are his longtime England new-ball colleague James Anderson (589) and the retired pair of Australia's Glenn McGrath (563) and the West Indies'

Courtney Walsh (519).

Broad took all the West Indies wickets to fall on Sunday.

His burst of 4-14 in four overs ended the visitors' first innings after they had avoided the follow-on and Broad had stumps figures of 2-8 in three overs.

England's second innings saw Burns and Dom Sibley (56) share a stand of 114 — England's first century opening partnership in a home Test since Alastair Cook and Alex Hales put on 126 against Pakistan at Edgbaston in 2016.

England captain Joe Root was 68 not out when he declared, amid concerns Monday's play could be washed out.

No side has made more in the fourth innings to win an Old Trafford Test than England's 294-4 against New Zealand in 2008.

Root declared when Burns, bidding for his third Test century, skied off-spinner Roston Chase to substitute wicket-keeper Joshua Da Silva.

Lukaku stars as Inter go 2nd

AFP ■ GENOVA

Romelu Lukaku scored in neither half as Inter Milan claimed a 3-0 win against struggling Genoa to move second in Serie A behind Juventus who can win a ninth title in a row on Sunday night.

Antonio Conte's title ambitions took a knock with back-to-back stalemates against Roma and Fiorentina.

But Inter pulled back ahead of Atalanta, and within four points of leaders Juventus, who are poised to claim a 36th Scudetto when they play Sampdoria in Turin.

Lukaku nodded in Cristiano Biraghi's cross after 34 minutes in the northwestern port city, with the former Manchester United forward accelerating to finish off an individual effort three minutes into injury time. The 27-



Romelu Lukaku celebrates after scoring

in all competitions.

Alexis Sanchez, on-loan from United, was also on target with eight minutes to go, picking up Victor Moses cross to volley in

for his fourth league goal this season.

FOUR GOALS OFFSIDE

In Naples, Napoli beat Sassuolo 2-0 with the visitors having four goals ruled offside — two in either half. Three were chalked off by VAR.

Albanian defender Elseid Hysaj opened the scoring for Napoli after eight minutes in the San Paolo Stadium.

Filip Djuricic then had two goals ruled out as did Francesco Caputo and Domenico Berardi following VAR viewings before Brazilian Allan sealed the points for the hosts three minutes into injury time.

Seventh-placed Napoli — already through to the Europa League as a result of their Italian Cup victory — extend their lead on pursuing Sassuolo, in eighth, to 11 points.

Anderson and Broad complement each other

MANCHESTER: Veteran pacers James Anderson and Stuart Broad complement each other well and their performances over the years have only proved that age is just a number, feel former England cricketers.

Both Anderson and Broad are in their mid-30s, but former England captain Alec Stewart believes the duo should play together for England as long as it is possible.

"A lot has been said and written about whether Broad and Anderson are on their way out and if they should play together," Stewart, who has scored 8463 runs in 133 Tests for England, was quoted as saying on *Sky Sports — Cricket Debate*.

"Well, they have shown that forget what their age is and what their birth certificates say — if you are good enough (age doesn't matter). Pick on performance and what people can do."

"I appreciate having an eye on the future but, here and now, Broad and Anderson taking the new ball is as good as there is and they showed all their qualities."

Former England pacer Dominic Cork agreed with Stewart, saying Anderson and Broad's different styles of bowling augur well for the team.

"I understand these are back-to-back Test matches and England



want to make sure they (Anderson and Broad) play the majority of games," said the 48-year-old, who took 131 wickets in 37 Tests for England.

"But they are closing in on 1,000 Test wickets between them and complement each other really well with their different styles of bowling. Jimmy understands the art of wobble seam and then when he swaps ends he tries to swing it, while Broad seems to be learning even more."

"While they are both fit and want to play, they play every single Test match for me. Unless there are injury doubts, they are the first two on the list."

Broad and Anderson have played 117 Tests together, but have fielded together only three times in the last 15 Tests. PTI

Hazard has sunk under weight of expectations: Capello

FIANS ■ MADRID

Former Real Madrid manager Fabio Capello believes Eden Hazard has struggled to deal with the weight of the Real Madrid shirt following his high-profile move from Chelsea.

Hazard joined the Spanish club from Chelsea on a five-year contract for a reported 100 million euros (\$116.54 million) ahead of the 2019-20 season.

The Belgium international inspired Chelsea to two Premier League trophies during his time at Stamford Bridge but has failed to hit similar heights

in Spain, with injuries limiting him to 21 appearances in all competitions this season.

"He hasn't been the player he was at Chelsea and he was injured for a long time, he hasn't adapted," Capello told *Marca*.

"I've always thought of him as a great player but the Real shirt weighs heavily and Hazard has sunk this year. It's clear that he'll be better next season," added former England coach Capello.

With Hazard strugg-

ling for form, the onus was on Karim Benzema to shoulder the goal-scoring responsibilities and the French striker enjoyed one of the best seasons of his career, netting 21 league goals and firing Real to a record-extending 34th La Liga crown.

"He's become a benchmark for Real. He has taken on responsibility that he didn't have when he played with Cristiano Ronaldo, he has a nose for goal and he's shown it," added former England coach Capello.

CHENNAI: Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand suffered his fifth straight defeat in the \$150,000 Legends of Chess online tourney, going down 2-3 to Peter Leko of Hungary.

The former world champion got off to a good start and won the first game of the best-of-four contest. The next two games were drawn before Leko levelled by winning the fourth.

The Hungarian then claimed the Armageddon (a tie-breaker) to ensure Anand remain winless and at the bottom of the points table.

Anand, who is making his maiden appearance on the Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour, had earlier lost to Peter Svidler, Magnus Carlsen, Vladimir Kramnik and Anish Giri. PTI

Halep withdraws from Palermo Open

PALERMO: Second-ranked Simona Halep withdrew from the Palermo Ladies Open on Sunday following a quarantine ordinance issued by Italy's health ministry.

"Given the recent rise in Covid-19 cases in Romania and my anxieties around international air travel at this time, I have made the

tough decision to withdraw from Palermo," Halep tweeted.

"I want to thank the tournament director and the Italian ministry of health for all efforts on my behalf."

The August 3-9 tournament announced on Sunday that the Romanian player's manager, Virginia Ruzici, had informed Palermo offi-

cial of the decision.

The move comes after Italy's health minister on Friday signed an ordinance requiring all those who have in the last 14 days stayed in Romania or Bulgaria to quarantine.

STOSUR TO SKIP 2020 SYDNEY: Former US Open champion Samantha Stosur

Anand suffers fifth straight defeat

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Beating Oly champion Li Xuerui was turning point of my career: Sindhu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

World championship Gold medalist PV Sindhu on Sunday said initial failures at the international stage were disappointing but defeating the then reigning Olympic champion Li Xuerui at the China Open in 2012 strengthened her resolve to succeed in the senior circuit.

Sindhu had burst onto the scene when as a 16-year-old she had stunned London Olympics Gold medalist Li in the quarterfinals of China Masters. A year later, she claimed a maiden Bronze medal at the prestigious World Championships.

She eventually went on to win five medals in the prestigious tournament — two Bronze, two Silver and a Gold, besides the Olympic Silver medal four years ago in Rio de Janeiro.

"When I started playing I was doing well but international standards are not the same. In the beginning, I kept losing in first rounds, qualifying rounds. I realised I needed to go out harder, that is when I



kept working hard," Sindhu told paddler Mudit Dani on his show *In The Spotlight*.

"I used to feel sad and thinking what mistake I'm making, I am also working hard as others."

"I think that turning point I would say I got in 2012 where I beat Li Xuerui, she was current Olympic champion at that time. Since then I worked extra hard and I have been improving step by step, year by year."