

OPINION 6
THE STRATEGIC RIVER

WORLD 8
EU: NOT GOING TO LAUNCH 'COLD WAR' WITH CHINA

SPORT 12
T20 WC FATE TO BE DECIDED NEXT MONTH

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

*Late City Vol. 30 Issue 161
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY JUNE 11, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

ABHAY IS AGAINST INDIA'S CASTE SYSTEM
10 VIVACITY



Delhi hospitals to display bed info

LG order includes fee details; Shah assured Covid help, says Kejriwal

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to increase transparency in allocation of hospital beds during the Covid-19 pandemic, Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi Anil Bajjal on Wednesday directed Chief Secretary Vijay Dev to ensure installation of LED (Light Emitting Diode) boards at all major health facilities to display bed availability, charges and details of persons to be contacted for admission.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said his Government will implement the "Centre's decision" and Bajjal's order overturning the decision on reservation of State-run and private hospitals in the national Capital for Delhiites as "this is not the time for disagreement and arguments". Kejriwal also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss the Covid-19 situation in Delhi. He said Shah has assured him of all cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus.

In his letter, the L-G said the Health Department may be advised to ensure that data displayed on these LED boards reconciles with that available on the Delhi Government's app.



- LED boards at all major health facilities to also display details of persons to be contacted for admission
- Aimed at increasing transparency in allocation of hospital beds
- Data to reconcile with info available on Delhi Govt's app
- Periodic surprise checks may also be conducted



The move is aimed at increasing transparency in allocation of hospital beds during the Covid-19 pandemic.



People wait to be screened at LNJP Hospital in New Delhi

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

"In order to increase transparency and to facilitate public, all major hospitals/clinics/nursing homes of Delhi should be directed to display on LED boards in large letters outside their establishments, at the entry point itself, the availability of beds, (both Covid and non-Covid, wherever applicable), along with charges, including for rooms/beds and details of contact persons for admission," Bajjal said in the letter.

The L-G, who is also the chairman of Delhi Disaster Management Authority, said periodic surprise checks may also be conducted by officers deputed by the DDMA to

ensure that correct data is displayed by health facilities and no genuine patient is denied admission or is overcharged.

On Covid-19 data, Kejriwal said the Delhi Government has "unprecedented challenges" ahead as data shows that coronavirus cases will rapidly increase in Delhi in the coming days.

Delhi will need 1.5 lakh beds in healthcare facilities by July 31 once people start coming to the city for treatment from other States, he said, asserting that the AAP dispensation will make an "honest effort" to provide medical treatment to all.

LAC parleys on to fine-tune disengagement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the two Armies mutually started pulling back their troops from the stand-off sites on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, senior commanders of India and China met on Wednesday to fine-tune total disengagement. They also agreed to continue the dialogue.

In Beijing, the Chinese Government said on Wednesday, the two armies have started implementing the "positive consensus" reached by the senior military officials of the two countries on June 6. This high-level meeting between Lt General Harinder Singh and Major General Liu Lin was aimed at "easing" the situation along the LAC.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry's reaction came after the two armies partially withdrew their troops from three of the four face-off sites. The stand-offs were on for the last one month with both the sides also ramping their troop strength on the LAC and in the operational areas.

As regards the Major

China: We will follow 'positive consensus' to ease tension



General-level talks on Wednesday at Chushul on the LAC, sources said some more rounds of such parleys will take place over the next ten to 12 days. These regular interactions ranging from Major Generals to Colonel level will ensure that the ongoing confrontation ends.

Moreover, the latest Major General level talks and the upcoming rounds will see both the sides committing and implementing the withdrawal of troops from the face-off sites, operational areas located 20 to 25 km away from the LAC on both sides and additional troops returning to peacetime locations.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

HC REFUSES TO POSTPONE AIIMS PG ENTRANCE EXAM
New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has refused to postpone the AIIMS PG entrance examination which is scheduled for Thursday, saying a large amount of resources have been mobilised to hold the exam for 40,000 students and all the safety measures like social distancing and sanitisation are being taken care of by the authorities in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

NIRAV, CHOKSI'S JEWELS WORTH ₹1,350 CR BACK
New Delhi: The ED on Wednesday brought back over 2,300 kg of polished diamonds and pearls worth ₹1,350 crore of firms belonging to Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi from Hong Kong, officials said. Out of the 108 consignments that landed at Mumbai, 32 belong to overseas entities "controlled" by Modi while the rest are of Mehul Choksi firms.

DISBURSE STALLED LOANS TO HOMEBUYERS: SC
New Delhi: Coming to the rescue of thousands of hassled homebuyers of Amrapali who saw loans being stalled by banks after the realty group ran into trouble, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all financial institutions to disburse their balance funds and restructure the amounts.

Health Min warns pvt hospitals against fleecing CGHS patients

CGHS card holders have complained of exorbitant fees, no cashless facility

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

When Kavita took her ailing 63-year-old-mother to a CGHS empanelled private hospital at Chanakyapuri in the national Capital for a medical emergency, she was left aghast when the doctors asked her to shell out ₹25,000 per day for next ten days. They insisted that her mother should get tested for Covid-19 even if she is not having symptoms. However, what added to Kavita's agony was that the hospital management also refused to consider her mother's CGHS card which enables her cashless medical facilities. "My mother had suffered brain stroke and she was in need of immediate medical treatment. But the hospital refused to see her unless I pay in cash and advance. There is absolutely no check on the hospitals which are not only charging exorbitant fees but



also refusing treatment under cashless (Central Government Health Scheme) CGHS norms," rued Kavita, who later took her mother to a Government hospital for treatment.

However, hers is not the lone case. Taking cognizance of several such complaints, the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday warned the CGHS empanelled private hospitals and diagnostic centres of strict actions if they fail to provide Covid or non-Covid treatment to CGHS cardholders.

"We have been getting widespread complaints from the CGHS beneficiaries who alleged that the CGHS empanelled private hospitals were issuing diktats and charging exorbitant fees or asking them to pay in cash, much against the

Government's mandated cashless norms. We have now asked all such hospitals for strict adherence to stipulated guidelines," said a senior health official.

As per the order, all CGHS empanelled hospitals notified as Covid hospitals by State Governments shall provide treatment to such beneficiaries as per norms for all Covid-related treatments.

"Similarly, it is directed that all the CGHS empanelled hospitals, which are not notified as Covid hospitals shall not deny treatment facilities and admission to CGHS beneficiaries and shall charge as per CGHS norms," the order said adding, that action shall be taken in case of violation of the guidelines.

Maha, TN, Delhi give Covid momentum

Another day of 10,000 plus cases, over 350 deaths

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Delhi recorded day's huge spike on Wednesday as coronavirus situation worsened across the country. Total number of cases on Wednesday stood at 2,86,833 while the pandemic has claimed 8,106 lives so far, with over 10,800 new cases and over 350 deaths.

Maharashtra recorded its highest single-day jump in Covid-19 cases with 3,254 new

cases on Wednesday as the State's tally soared at 94,041. It also recorded 149 casualties taking the death toll to 3,438. Of the new infections, 1,567 were from Mumbai taking total cases in the city to 52,667.

Mumbai's tally alone is bigger than any other State. It also recorded 97 fatalities. As many as 11 new cases detected in Mumbai's slum Dharavi, taking tally to 1,964. No fresh death was recorded in the slum colony. A total of 44,517 peo-



ple who had tested positive for Covid-19 have been discharged so far. There are 46,074, active

cases while 5,93,784 people have been tested so far.

The virus claimed one more police personnel in Mumbai on Wednesday, which took the death toll due to the infection in the State's police department to 35. Due to the death of the policeman, a 54-year-old constable, the number of Covid-19 fatalities in the city's police force went up to 21.

A Shiv Sena corporator from Mira Bhayandar and his mother, died within a span of two days from coronavirus. Two Covid-19 patients, including an undertrial prisoner, who escaped from different hospitals in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district in last three days, have been found and sent back to the medical facilities.

Continued on Page 2

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	94,041	3,438	44,516
Tamil Nadu	36,841	326	19,333
Delhi	32,810	984	12,245
Gujarat	21,554	1,347	14,743
Uttar Pradesh	11,610	321	6,971
Rajasthan	11,600	259	8,569
Madhya Pradesh	10,049	427	6,892
West Bengal	9,328	432	3,779
Karnataka	6,041	69	2,862
Bihar	5,698	34	2,934
Haryana	5,579	52	2,188
Andhra Pradesh	5,247	78	2,869
Jammu & Kashmir	4,507	51	1,671
Telangana	4,111	156	1,817
Odisha	3,250	11	2,282

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 2,86,833
DEATHS: 8,106
RECOVERED: 1,40,891
ACTIVE: 1,37,821

Op All Out: Five more ultras shot in Shopian

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Operation All Out" is in full swing to flush out hiding terrorists from their safe hideouts in South Kashmir district of Shopian. On Wednesday, joint teams of security forces eliminated five more terrorists, taking the total tally of those killed in Shopian to 14 in the last four days. Four terrorists were killed on Sunday and five on Monday in Shopian district.



Security forces personnel leave after an encounter with terrorists at Sagoo in Shopian on Wednesday

So far, 93 terrorists have been eliminated in over three dozen operations since January 2020.

According to police, a district commander of pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen and a Lashkar-e-Tayyeba terrorist were among those gunned down during an eight-hour long operation near village Sugoo Handhama in Shopian.

Sharing details of the joint operation, Brigadier Ajay Katoch said, "The cordon and search operations were launched late on Tuesday night after receiving inputs about the presence of a group of terrorists near Sugoo Handhama in Shopian".

He said around 5.30 am while search parties were moving closer to the hideout they came under heavy firing from the terrorists. The terrorists lobbed grenades to target the joint teams. Security teams took positions and retaliated, he said.

Continued on Page 2



NDRF personnel search for the missing firefighters at a pond near an oil well as Baghjan oil field continues to burn, in Tinsukia district of Assam on Wednesday. Two bodies have been recovered from the site

DMK's Anbazhagan first lawmaker to succumb to Covid

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Anbazhagan, one of the stalwarts of the DMK, succumbed to the Covid-19 at a corporate hospital in Chennai on Wednesday morning. He was a member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly and a close confidant of party chief MK Stalin.

Anbazhagan, whose 62nd birthday fell on Wednesday, is the first lawmaker in the country to die of Covid-19. He was admitted to Chennai's Rela Institute and Medical Centre on June 2 in critical condition and was on ventilator since then.

The DMK leader has represented Chepauk-Triplicane constituency since 2011. He was elected to the House for the first time in 2001 from T Nagar

constituency. Anbazhagan was actively engaged in distribution of relief materials to the people in his constituency following the lockdown declared by the Government as part of controlling the coronavirus pandemic. It is believed that the DMK leader developed infection while interacting with the people of his constituency.

Anbazhaga is the third DMK MLA to die during the last three months. The party's numbers in the Assembly has come down to 97 with his passing away and the three vacancies are unlikely to be filled because Tamil Nadu is scheduled to have Assembly election in March-April 2021 as the present House is completing its tenure by then.

Gujarat's pride: Lion count rises to 674

Gandhinagar: The population of pride of Gujarat, the Asiatic Lion, has grown from 523 in 2015 to 674 in 2020, a growth of about 29% as per the latest census.

female along with 22 unidentified sub-adults. Plus, 137 cubs were also identified. There has been a steady growth in lions' population from 284 in 1990 to 359 in 2005.

Saurashtra. For the population estimates, the Forest Department used the 'Direct Beat Verification' method, also known as Block Count Method. The exercise was carried out exclusively by the Forest Department's staff from 13 administrative divisions, involving around 1,400 personnel.

Advisory to States on holistic planning for pedestrian-friendly market spaces in cities

New Delhi: Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has issued an advisory to States on holistic planning for pedestrian-friendly market spaces in various cities, according to a statement issued on Wednesday.

consultation with the stakeholders — vendors, municipal officers, traffic police, parking facility owners, shop owners and consumers. Once the plan is made, cities can start its implementation in two phases — short and long term, it said.



Centre releases 3rd instalment of ₹6K-cr Covid grant to States

North Eastern states excluding Arunachal Pradesh. The Government on June 10, 2020 released ₹6,195.08 crore to 14 states as the third equated monthly instalment of the Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant as recommended by the 15th Finance Commission.

meet immediate funding needs of the state governments looking to restore economic activity and minimise losses to its citizens due to disruptions caused by lockdowns. Of the 14 states, the maximum grant-in-aid has gone to Kerala — an amount of 1,277 crore followed by Himachal Pradesh with revenue deficit grant of ₹953 crore.

Eight firms allotted land along Yamuna e-way to bring in ₹288 cr investment

Noida (UP): Eight industrial units have been allotted land along the Yamuna Expressway in Gautam Buddh Nagar and the move is expected to bring in investments worth Rs 288 crore besides creating over 21,000 jobs, officials said on Wednesday.



Organisation were allotted 45,000 sq metre land in Sector 33, according to an official statement by YEIDA. "With this allotment, an investment of Rs 76.95 crore will be made in the area under the YEIDA and 1,560 jobs will be created," it said.

UP government and the Noida Apparel Export Cluster. Applicants Sahu Export, Orient Fashion Exports (India), Priti Wears, B K Fashions and Maharana of India have been allotted 43,000 sq metre land in Sector 29, YEIDA said. "With this allotment, an investment of Rs 191.81 crore is expected in the area and it would also lead to creation of 19,853 jobs," it said.

Madhu Kapur's family withdraws lawsuit against Yes Bank

Mumbai: Days after agreeing to relinquish the classification of Yes Bank promoters, Madhu Kapur and her family have withdrawn a lawsuit filed against the bank at the Bombay High Court.

stock exchanges that Madhu Kapur and her family members, Shagun Kapur Gogia and Gaurav Ashok Kapur, along with a Madhu Kapur group entity, Mags Finvest Pvt Ltd, had consented to reclassify their shareholding in the bank as 'non-promoter shareholders'.

SC to hear plea against election of Congress leader in 2018 Jharkhand RS poll

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday said it would hear after four weeks an appeal filed against the verdict of Jharkhand High Court which had dismissed a plea challenging the election of Congress party's Dhiraj Prasad Sahu as a Rajya Sabha member from the state.

Prayers held at Ram Janmabhoomi site for 'early start' to temple construction

Ayodhya: Priests conducted special prayers at a Shiva shrine at the Ram Janmabhoomi site here but stopped short of symbolically launching the construction of a Ram temple, contrary to an announcement made earlier this week.

Mahant Kamal Nayan Das, who participated in the 'rudrabhishek' ritual at the Kuber Tila shrine said he prayed for an early beginning of construction of the Ram temple. Kamal Nayan Das is described as the spokesperson to Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, who heads the Ram Mandir trust which has been charged with the construction of the temple after the historic Supreme Court verdict last year.

Modi, Cambodian PM discuss virus pandemic

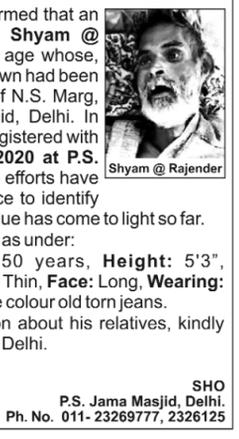
New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the COVID-19 pandemic with his Cambodian counterpart Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen on Wednesday and conveyed India's commitment to further strengthening its relationship with the Southeast Asian country in all areas.

ther strengthening its relationship with Cambodia in all areas. An official statement said the two leaders reviewed the robust development partnership between both countries, including the capacity-building programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) and Quick Impact Projects under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation framework.

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS CHANGE OF NAME I Ravi Kant Sharma S/O Sh. Ram Chander Sharma R/o C-2, 101, Eastern Heights Apartments, Nyay Khand-3, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad 201014, Uttar Pradesh have changed my name Ravi Kant to Ravi Kant Sharma for all future purpose. PD(8871)C

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person namely Shyam @ Rajender about 50 years of age whose residence and family is unknown had been found dead at patri in front of N.S. Marg, Kabutar Market, Jama Masjid, Delhi. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No: 27-A dated 04.06.2020 at P.S. Jama Masjid, Delhi.



Op All Out: Five more ultras shot in Shopian

From Page 1 According to Brigadier Katoch, "the first terrorist was neutralised around 7 am when he attempted to break the cordon. As the gun fight continued in the village orchard, where the terrorists were hiding under a surface, two terrorists were neutralised around 12 noon and the last two were eliminated around 1 pm by the joint teams without suffering any major collateral damage."

Maha, TN, Delhi give Covid momentum

From Page 1 After Mumbai, Thane reported most number of cases at 14,720 with active cases at 8,635 and total deaths at 378. With 1927 fresh cases and 19 deaths, Tamil Nadu on Wednesday witnessed highest surge in infection in the last 24 hours. The State's total has now reached 36,841 while death toll reached to 326. Of the 1,927 cases, Chennai has reported 1,390. The State capital's total now stands at 25,937. The number of persons discharged from the hospitals across the State reached 19,333 making the total number of active cases to 17,179.

the deaths due to Covid-19 pandemic. A section of the media has alleged that many deaths due to covid-19 went unreported and the State Government has constituted a nine-member committee to go into the details of persons who succumbed to the pandemic in Chennai. Delhi has recorded 1,501 fresh cases, highest in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 32,810. The national Capital has reported 48 deaths during the same period taking the total death toll to 984.

Meanwhile, three deaths were also reported from Kashmir taking the total death toll due to Covid-19 to 51 and the total number of coronavirus positive cases to over 4,500. Significantly, 165 cases recovered, 27 from Jammu and 138 from Kashmir division on Wednesday.

cases and four deaths in the last 24 hours. Total number of cases in the State is now at 11,600, including 2,772 active cases and 259 deaths. The Rajasthan Government on Wednesday imposed restrictions on inter-State movement of people because of a surge in Covid-19 cases in the state. West Bengal reported 343 fresh cases and 17 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 9328 and 432 deaths. BJP ruled State Madhya Pradesh recorded 200 fresh cases in a single day.

PUBLIC NOTICE My client Kaushalya Negi W/o Late Gajpal Singh Negi R/o H.No. SRB 96C, Shriya Riviera Apartment, Gyan Khand-3, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201014, has severed all relations (socially and economically) and disowned/debarred the late Pawan Singh Negi and daughter-in-law Bhawana Bhakuni, due to their rude behavior from her all movable and immovable properties. Hanceforth, Pawan Singh Negi and Bhawana Bhakuni will not have the right of inheritance on the property of my Client. Gyandendra Dayal Advocate

राजस्थान सरकार कृषि आयुक्तालय, राजस्थान, जयपुर पार्सल लाईन निर्माताओं के पंजीकरण हेतु विज्ञापित

From Page 1 The spokesman said the identification and affiliation of the killed terrorists is being ascertained. However, as per credible sources the killed terrorists belonged to HM and LeT. One of them is District Commander of HM.

At least 28 jawans of Central Reserve Police Force, 19 other health workers including two doctors were among a long list of 161 fresh cases of coronavirus detected in Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday. Rajasthan saw 355 fresh

Karnataka has reported 120 fresh cases, taking the total tally of corona to 6,041 in the last 24 hours. Bengaluru urban recorded two deaths in the last 24 hours while Dharwad recorded another death due to the virus. With this, the total number of deaths in the State has climbed up to 69. Bihar reported 115 more cases taking the total number of cases in the state to 5,698.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS (Ordinary Original Civil Jurisdiction) Application No. 625 of 2019 In the matter of Arbitration & Conciliation Act, 1996 And in the matter of Disputes between M/s. Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. and Mr. Narendar Vats Arising under Loan Agreement No. XVFPDLI0002002625 Dated 30.05.2017

PUBLIC NOTICE I, Akhilesh Kumar Sharma S/o Late Shri Rajender Prasad Sharma am the Owner of property bearing no. 92/2, measuring 76.66 sq. yards situated at Kaila Gaon, Ward no. 13, Vijay Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P. 201001, by virtue of Registered Will executed by Mrs. Satiyawati W/o. Sh. Shri Rajender Prasad Sharma dated 22.02.2013 which is registered as registration no. 84, vol. no. 59, book no. 3, on pages 185-194 with Sub-Registrar-V Ghaziabad UP. Any person/bank/financial institution having any claim/right, lien any objection whatsoever, should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092 along with documentary evidence under address through registered A/D within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deemed to have been waived. Vishal Mehan Mob No-6392463773 E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110092

e-mail id: se_sicbam@yahoo.com Superintending Engineer, Southern Irrigation Circle-I, Berhampur. e-Procurement Notice No. SE,SIC-03/2020-21

LAC parleys on to fine-tune disengagement

From Page 1 As of now, the two armies are yet to retreat from one site, "Finger 4" area in Pangong Tso(lake). While the Chinese have removed tents and dismantled bunkers at the other three sites as a confidence-building measure, Pangong Lake issue still persists. The two Major Generals will meet again soon to address this also, sources said. The Chinese have deployed additional troops at this flashpoint leading to heightened tension.

The other three sites now cooling off include Galwan valley (Patrolling Point 14) and the Hot Springs area(Patrolling Point 17). In fact, the Chinese intruded more than three km in the Hot Springs area and pitched tents. Sources said the Chinese have now gone back more than three km from all the three sites. India is insisting that over the next few days the Chinese should also withdraw additional

tional troops numbering more than 5,000 and heavy weapons from the LAC as a peace gesture. Meanwhile, responding to questions in Beijing, Spokesperson of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hua Chunying said, "Recently the diplomatic and military channels of China and India held effective communication on the situation along the border reached positive consensus and the two sides are following this consensus to

take actions to ease the situation along the border." Asked about troops on both sides disengaging and moving back to their previous positions, she said both sides are taking steps to ease the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). During their military-level talks on June 6, India and China agreed to follow the broad decisions taken by their leaders in the Wuhan summit in 2018 to ensure peace and tranquility along the LAC.

Mr. Narendar Vats S/o. Kishan Chand Vats H. No. L - 9, Gali No. 25, Sanjay Nagar, Mahindra Park, Delhi - 110033. Respondent To Mr. Narendar Vats S/o. Kishan Chand Vats H. No. L - 9, Gali No. 25, Sanjay Nagar, Mahindra Park, Delhi - 110033. The Hon'ble High Court, Madras on 04.06.2020 was pleased to pass an order in the above application directing you to furnish security to the extent of the claim of a sum of Rs. 23,51,462.38 on or before 20.08.2020. The above application is posted on 20.08.2020 before the Hon'ble High Court, Madras. Kindly take notice and appear either in person or through an Advocate and furnish security. M/s. D. PRADEEP KUMAR Counsel for Applicant

TACKLING CORONAVIRUS

Need to fight virus together by rising above political differences: CM

SAPNA SINGH ■ NEW DELHI
 Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said that we need to fight Corona together by rising above political differences. Urging all political parties in Delhi, including AAP, Kejriwal said this is not the time to do politics, we have to transform our battle against Covid-19 to a people's movement assuring Lieutenant Anil Baijal's directives will be implemented in letter and spirit as this is not the time for disagreements. Chief Minister's statement came after a day of State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) meeting with LG and other experts while it was announced by the Deputy Chief Minister Manish

Sisodia cases of novel corona virus expected to touch plus five lakh count.
 Citing, the state health bulletin report, Kejriwal said challenges are tough before us and under such circumstances, I would monitor ground situation myself and review necessary actions taken in the direction of creating health infra parallel to covid cases.
 "I would urge neighbouring states to help and create more facilities in their states. This is not to blame anyone and I will start going to the ground to personally inspect and prepare stadiums, hotels and banquet halls for the patients of Covid-19," he added.
 "This is an unprecedented and a huge challenge but the



government will do their best to ensure all the necessary arrangements however arranging such a huge number of beds is not an easy task but the Delhi government will do their best," Kejriwal said, adding, "This a work for the people and we all will do our best, Corona is one of the biggest challenges in the history of mankind. There can be shortfalls from our side but there will not be any shortfall in our willingness and preparedness."
 Earlier, Delhi cabinet had decided that the Delhi Government and private hospitals of Delhi will be reserved only for the citizens of Delhi till the time the Covid-19 pandemic is here whereas a day after LG and Central government overruled the decision.

HrHeal app to help G'gram patients with realtime data about beds in hospitals

PRAVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM
 The Gurugram administration has launched a mobile application 'HrHeal' to help residents and officials track the availability of hospital beds and ventilators for Covid-19 patients.
 The app also provides realtime data and analysis of Covid-19 numbers (across Haryana's 22 districts) via a public platform. The platform, which is also accessible via a web browser 'coronaharyana.in', will help officials generate custom reports using state-level data. It will, in the future, also provide realtime numbers for the State's 22 districts, including key metrics such as doubling rate, recovery rate, fatalities and test-positivity ratio.
 Data about the district's healthcare infrastructure is also available on the application. For an extant, the latest data shows that there are 944 hospitals in Gurugram, of which 26 are dedicated Covid-19 hospitals, along with 18 Isolation Centres, 4 Quarantine Centers, 8 Testing Labs and 17 Collection Centers.
 "These locations have also been mapped out to help users, along with the contact numbers of over 3,000 doctors," a senior administration official said.
 Despite this people are facing problems in getting admission at private hospitals, who allegedly deny treatment citing



unavailability of beds. They can now access information and updates about availability of beds at each and every designated hospital via application.
 "A team of district administration has also inspected these hospitals on Wednesday. Separate counter at each hospital has been designated to attend to Covid-19 patients and such similar SOS calls. If a hospital refuses to admit the patient who has been tested positive for the coronavirus, then they can contact administration Or call at 1950 and will be admitted in the hospital," the official said.
 "We want to ensure is that if people are infected and need hospitalisation, they don't have to run from pillar to post to look for facilities. We have made arrangements," he had said.
 Meanwhile, Two more patients died due to coronavirus in Gurugram on Wednesday. A senior health official, confirmed the deaths. He said that the patients succumbed to illness in different private hospitals. With this, 13 patients have lost their lives to the virus in Gurugram.
 Apart from the deaths, health officials also detected 217 fresh corona positive cases on Wednesday.
 Gurugram currently has 1,709 corona positive patients admitted in different hospitals while the total number reached 2,546.
 A number of 824 have been cured and discharged including, 184 patients have also recovered and discharged on Wednesday.

NDMC sets up medical helpline for +ve staff

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 With the aim to provide medical guidance to Covid-19 affected employees, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has set up a medical helpline for Covid-19 positive staff. At least 63 staff has been tested positive in the civic body with four deaths reported till Tuesday.
 The medical services department of the civic body has nominated a team of five doctors of different specialties for this helpline in which two specialists and three senior medical officers to provide medical assistance telephonically, a senior New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) official said.
 The helpline number will work from 8 am to 8 pm and emergency desk will operate at night from 08:00 pm to 08:00 am by the doctors deputed on emergency duties, he said.
 The official said that a total of 63



cases reported till now from the NDMC. Out of these, six people have recovered and 53 are still active, he said. "Among the 56 cases, while four have recovered, 50 cases are active as of now," he said. The first death in the NDMC was

reported on June 1, while the second on June 3. Two more deaths reported later, taking the total number to four till Monday, the officials said.
 The official said that the civic body has also set up a "Staff Welfare Cell" as a part of welfare measures to deal with the pandemic and to facilitate treatment and make all the necessary assistance available for its Covid-19 positive staff.
 The composition of the "NDMC Staff Welfare Cell" includes eight members such as Director (Welfare) as nodal officer, assistant labour welfare officer as assistant nodal officer among others, he said.
 "The welfare cell is also assigned the responsibility for sharing details of Covid-19 cases of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) employees with state nodal welfare officers. It will disseminate all relevant information relating to Covid-19 to all officers through their head of departments," he added.

HC grants time to police to file additional status report on Sharjeel's plea

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted Delhi Police time to file an additional status report on a plea by former JNU student Sharjeel Imam, arrested in a case related to alleged inflammatory speeches during the protests against CAA and NRC, challenging a trial court order granting more time to police to conclude the investigation.
 Justice V Kameswar Rao, who conducted the hearing through video conferencing, listed the matter for further hearing on June 25.
 At the outset, Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, representing Delhi Police, submitted that he needs 10 days time to file additional status

report in the matter.
 The police had filed an affidavit in the high court on June 5 opposing Imam's plea challenging a trial court order granting more time to police to conclude the investigation.
 The affidavit said he was continuously giving inflammatory and instigating speeches against the government on the issue of Citizenship Amendment Act and National Register of Citizens.
 The police said no provision of law has been violated and there are good and substantial cause for enlargement of time for investigation and contended that Imam was not entitled for any relief.
 The affidavit was filed by

the police in response to Imam's plea challenging the trial court's April 25 order by which the Delhi Police was granted three more months, beyond statutory 90 days, to complete the investigation in the case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.
 Imam was arrested on January 28 from Bihar's Jehanabad district in the case related to violent protests against the CAA near the Jamia Millia Islamia University in December last year.
 The statutory period of 90 days from the arrest was concluded on April 27.
 He has also sought default bail in the matter on the

ground that the investigation was not concluded within the statutory period of 90 days and when the police had filed an application for more time to complete the investigation, he was not given a notice as required under the law. The trial court had dismissed the bail plea.
 Police has said Imam by way of his speeches was addressing a particular religious section of the society and creating disaffection towards the government by creating unfounded fears in their minds regarding the CAA and the NRC, which is yet to be implemented in any manner throughout the country barring Assam.
 Imam has claimed in the plea that no notice was given to his lawyer informing them about the application of the special cell seeking the extension of the time to file the charge sheet in view of invoking UAPA charges against him.
 However, the police said despite the lockdown, the counsel of the accused was timely informed of the application being filed under section 43 of the UAPA through WhatsApp and a call, keeping in view the rights of the accused.
 Section 43-D (2) of UAPA provides that if it is not possible to complete the investigation within the 90 days period, then upon the report of the

public prosecutor indicating the progress of the probe and the specific reasons for the detention of the accused beyond the 90 days period, after satisfaction, the court can extend the period of the probe to 180 days.
 Imam is currently lodged in Guwahati jail in a case related to UAPA registered by the Assam police.
 The trial court had passed the order on April 25 after the police had submitted that due to global COVID-19 pandemic in the country and the ongoing lockdown, the pace of investigation was seriously disrupted.
 Initially, a case under section 124 A (sedition) and 153 A (promoting enmity between classes) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code was registered by the Crime Branch here, pursuant to the alleged speeches addressed by Imam, allegedly instigating a particular religious section of the society to disrupt/block the access to North East region of India from rest of India, police had claimed.
 The police had earlier charged Imam with sedition, alleging his speech promoted enmity between people that led to riots.
 Imam was allegedly involved in organising protests at Shaheen Bagh but came into limelight after a video showed him making controversial comments before a gathering at Aligarh Muslim University, following which he was booked under sedition charges.
 Another case was filed against Imam in Assam under the stringent anti-terror law for his remark that Assam could be "severed from India, even if for a few months" as a result of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.
 Police in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh had also lodged FIRs against the JNU scholar over his speech in which he threatened to "cut off" Assam and the rest of the northeast from the country. **PTI**

Man arrested for beating youth over love triangle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 The Delhi Police has arrested a 22-year-old man while a juvenile has been apprehended for allegedly beating and threatening a youth over a love triangle in southwest Delhi's Chhawla area.
 The accused has been identified as Bhupender Maan, a resident of Najafgarh.
 A video clips of the incident went viral on the social media. In one of the videos, the boy was seen being abused and attacked by the two men. Holding a pistol in his hand, one of the men threatens the boy and said, "I will make you a Tik-Tok star now." He was also seen slapping the boy.
 The boy is heard apologising to the men several times. In another video, one of the men

was seen attacking the boy and pointing a gun on his head. He said, "You want to be a gangster... Say sorry now." The boy then apologised to them.
 According to Anto Alphonse, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Dwarka, last week, on Saturday, a 17-year-old youth, who is active on Tik-Tok, lodged a complaint at Chhawla police station that two unknown persons had threatened him at gun point on June 3 at Pandwala Kalan village in Najafgarh.
 "During investigation, police got a tip-off and laid a trap near Jhatikara Road, Rewla Khanpur on Tuesday. Around 6 pm, Maan was apprehended," said the DCP.
 On his instance, the juvenile, 16, who shot the video on his mobile, was also apprehended. Maan told police that he is a friend of one Ashish Sehrawat, who is currently lodged in Bhondsi jail in Gurgaon," said the DCP.
 "The girlfriend of Sehrawat was also close to the victim. A few days back, the victim told the girl that Sehrawat is a criminal and has been lodged in jail on rape charges. Sehrawat somehow got to know about it. He contacted Maan and asked him to teach the victim a lesson," said the DCP.
 "Thereafter, Maan took a loaded pistol and went to the village of the victim with his associates. They spotted him while he was returning after shooting a new video," said the DCP.

Video of goon thrashed by group of men goes viral

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 A 30-year-old goon was brutally thrashed by a group of men in National Capital's Bhalswa Dairy area. A video of the incident, which took place at Gujjar Chowk on Saturday, went viral on social media.
 The man has been identified as Noor Alam. Police said that Alam is undergoing treatment at a hospital and is stable.
 In the video which were doing rounds on social media, it can be seen that the assailants first stopped the bike of the victim and then thrashed him in broad daylight. The accused used sticks for beating the man.
 There were many people seeing in the video at the spot during the incident, but no one came forward to save the person and the accused kept beating the victim.
 According to Gaurav

Sharma, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Outer north district, a police control room (PCR) call was received from Alam on Saturday saying that a group of known men attacked him and snatched his belongings.
 "During the investigation, police team found that Alam is a parking contractor and a goon in Azadpur mandi area," said the DCP.
 "Alam used to extort money from vendors in Azadpur Mandi. Last week, he tried to extort money from one Shashi, who has a shop in Azadpur Mandi. He refused to give money to Alam and told his friends Deepak and Govinda," said a senior police official.
 "When Deepak and Govinda confronted Alam about this, they were allegedly beaten up by Alam's associates," he said.

24 hrs after crime, man held for killing youth in Madangir

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 Within 24 hours of the crime, the Delhi Police has arrested a man while three juveniles have been apprehended on Wednesday for allegedly killing a 22 year-old person in south Delhi's Madangir area. The incident occurred on Tuesday night.
 The accused has been identified as Robin, a resident of Ambedkar Nagar.
 According to Atul Kumar Thakur, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), South Delhi, on Tuesday around 10 pm, information was received from Madan Mohan Malviya Hospital regarding death of one Vinay, 22, a resident of Madangir. The deceased died due to multiple stab wounds.
 "Thereafter, a case of murder was registered at Ambedkar Nagar police station. Lokesh, brother of Vinay, alleged that he, along with Vinay, Arjun and Deepak, was sitting on a pavement in E-Block, Madangir. Around 10 pm, Rahul Sharma, Sonu Kandi, Lovely, Lavesh, Robin, Hament and three juveniles came there and stabbed his brother and also fired 2 rounds," the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) said.
 Sharma, Sonu Kandi, Lovesh, Hament and two juvenile used knives for stabbing and Robin, Lovely and one juvenile used fire arms," said the DCP.
 "Complainant also alleged that one Raja, who is currently in jail in a murder case of Rohit, wanted to take revenge

from Vinay and also had threatened the deceased. Vinay earlier had a fight with Lovely and Lavesh who are twins and relatives of Raja," said the DCP.
 "On Wednesday, the accused were nabbed from Ambedkar Nagar area and two country made pistols were recovered from their possession. During investigation, it was found that Rohit, who was killed earlier, was the known of the accused persons. Raja was furious that Vinay was responsible for his arrest and kept telling his friends to take the revenge from Vinay," said the DCP.
 "Vinay is found involved in an attempt to murder case. He also had a tattoo on his chest which was reportedly inspired from a famous mixed martial arts fighter," the DCP added.

Railways transported 175.46 million tonnes of essential items

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI
 Indian Railways has transported 175.46 million tonnes of essential commodities across the country from 1st April to 9th June.
 The Ministry said that from March 24 to June 9 more than 31.90 lakh wagons carried supplies to keep the supply chain functional. Of these, more than 17.81 lakh wagons carried essential commodities.
 In order to ensure uninterrupted transportation of essential items like medical supplies, medical equipment, food, etc, Indian Railways has operated 3,861 parcel trains, it said.
 "Indian Railways continues in its endeavour to ensure availabil-

ity of essential commodities through its freight and parcel services during the nationwide lockdown due to Covid-19. It has maintained its freight corridors fully functional in spite of the Covid-19 lockdown and has been successful in meeting the needs of both the households sector and industry," the ministry said in a statement.
 A senior official said that in the month of May, Railways has transported 82.27 million tonnes of essential commodities compared to 65.14 million tonnes from 1st April to 30th April which is more than 25 per cent higher.
 The official further said that in total from 1st April to 9th June, Railways has transported 175.46

million tonnes of essential commodities through its uninterrupted 24x7 freight trains operations across the country.
 "From March 24 to June 9, more than 31.90 lakh wagons carried supplies to keep the supply chain functional. Of these, more than 17.81 lakh wagons carried essential commodities like food grains, salt, sugar, milk, edible oil, onions, fruits and vegetables, petroleum products, coal, fertilizers etc throughout the country. During the period 1st April to 9th June, Railways loaded 12.56 million tonnes of food grains as compared to 6.7 million tonnes in the same period last year," he said.
 "Transportation of essential items like medical supplies, med-



ical equipment, food, etc in small parcel sizes is very important during the lockdown in the wake of COVID-19 and after that.
 In order to fill in this vital need, Indian Railways has made railway parcel vans available for quick mass transportation by e-commerce entities and other customers including state governments," it said, adding that Railways are running time-tabled parcel special trains on select routes, to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential items.
 "Zonal Railways are regularly identifying and notifying routes for these parcel special trains. Presently these trains are being operated on ninety-six (96) routes," it said.

BJP-Cong conflict on LAC escalates

Prasad to Rahul: Questions on strategic interests of country and national security are not asked on such social media platforms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The BJP and the Congress conflict on the India-China border tension escalated on Wednesday as Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad sought to criticise Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for asking questions on "strategic issues" on twitter as the latter sought the Government to clarify whether Beijing has occupied Indian territory on the Ladakh side of the Line of Actual

Control. The Union Law Minister first questioned the understanding of the Wayanad Congress MP's on the sensitive border issue and then suggested that important questions related to strategic interests of the country and national security were not asked on such social media platforms. "We (India) want disputes to be resolved peacefully. We will say one thing very humbly that today India is the India of

2020 and not 1962. Today's India is of a courageous leader like Narendra Modi and not of Congress leaders.

"This must be understood," he said addressing a virtual rally for Himachal Pradesh, without making any direct comment on the standoff.

Prasad said that India would resolve its differences with China in a peaceful manner through dialogue and negotiations. The senior BJP leader also said that if the issue of India's differences with respect to the border issue with China were to be debated, the Congress party's handling of the matter would also come into play, hinting that it had a much worse record on neighbourly relations with China.



The Union Minister further said that the Wayanad MP did not appear to have a proper grasp of economic and strategic issues.

Lashing out at Rahul Gandhi, the Union Law Minister said that the Congress MP was someone who demanded proof of the Balakot strike and evidence of the surgical strikes which India had



conducted. The Union Law Minister affirmed that India was capable of resolving all differences over the border issue with China through dialogue and diplomatic outreach.

He regretted that the Congress leader was raising questions when all should be united and present one face to the world.

Rahul Gandhi has been criticising the Narendra Modi government over the border situation in the Ladakh sector over the past few days. He has regularly been sniping at the BJP government over the stand-off with China.

Rahul has sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi to break his silence on China occupying Indian territory on the Ladakh side of Indian border with China.

Former Congress President tweeted saying that the prime minister remained silent even as China has "walked in and taken our territory."

There is no official statement from the government on the actual status of military escalation on the India-China border and its current status.

Cong: Tackle China instead of bullying RaGa

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad criticised former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi for asking questions over the Sino-India border situation, the Opposition party on Wednesday, hit back at the Government and said while the Defence Minister was busy reciting poetry, the Law Minister was speaking on China. The party also attacked the Centre on current Indo-Nepal relationship issue.

The BJP misplaced bravado had caused 75 per cent jump in incursion at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), it said.

Congress spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said instead of toughening its China stance, the Government was bullying Rahul Gandhi and the Opposition for questioning its failure on the national security front.

Rahul Gandhi had attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his silence over the Sino-Indian standoff. Gandhi has been demanding a statement on the situation at the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

"The Chinese have walked in and taken our territory in Ladakh. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is absolutely silent and has vanished from the scene," Rahul Gandhi tweeted a day after he traded barbs with

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Former Union Minister Anand Sharma said the recent developments in the India-Nepal relations and the dispute over the Kalapani-Lipulekh area, following the publication of a new map by Nepal depicting the area as Nepalese Territory is a matter of national concern.

"India and Nepal share a historic and time-tested relationship marked by mutual respect, friendship and trust. The strong cultural ties and shared traditions between the people of India and Nepal, make the relationship unique and special. Both the countries have invested enormously in nurturing and promoting a strategic partnership recognizing and respecting each other's sensitivities," Sharma said.

He also said India and Nepal have an established bilateral mechanism to resolve any dispute and differences through negotiations. It is regrettable, that the present impasse has reached a stage, which has strained the friendly relationship. This needs to be addressed urgently.

Congress Party is of a considered view, that diplomacy and negotiations must be given a chance to resolve the present issue, the party said in a statement.

BSF jawan succumbs to coronavirus, 14th Covid death in CAPFs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A young Border Security Force (BSF) jawan, aged just 35 years, has succumbed to Covid-19, taking the total number of casualties in the force due to the pandemic to three. This is the 14th death due to coronavirus among the Central paramilitary forces.

"Constable Vinod Kumar Prasad breathed his last on June 9 at AIIMS in Delhi. He was deployed for law and order duty with the Delhi Police and admitted to AIIMS on June 5 with weakness and cough," a BSF spokesperson said.

Prasad's Covid-19 test result came negative on June 6 but his condition deteriorated two days later and he breathed his last on Tuesday at the AIIMS ICU, the official said.

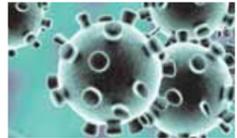
The jawan's Covid-19 test result of June 8 was found positive, he added.

Officials said Prasad did not have any co-morbidity and was in Shape-I category of health.

Shape-I in security forces signifies the top and best category of health.

Officials said the jawan was the youngest to die among the CAPFs. All other fatalities were over 45 years.

"The director general and



all ranks of the BSF are grief-stricken over his untimely demise and offer condolences to his family members.

"The entire BSF family stands united with the bereaved family in these trying times," the spokesperson said.

The nearly 2.5-lakh-personnel-strong force, tasked primarily for securing the frontiers with Pakistan and Bangladesh, has reported a total of 535 coronavirus cases till now. Out of these, 435 have recovered.

With Prasad's death, there have been 14 casualties among the paramilitary forces like Central Industrial Security Force (five), Central Reserve Police Force (four), Sashastra Seema Bal (one) and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (one).

As per official data, till Tuesday, the paramilitary forces and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) had reported a total of 1,871 coronavirus cases. While 1,217 personnel have recovered, as many as 641 are undergoing treatment.

Nirav, Choksi's jewellery worth ₹1,350 cr brought back to India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday brought back polished diamonds, pearls and silver jewellery worth Rs 1,350 crore belonging to fugitive diamntaires Nirav Modi, Mehul Choksi's overseas firms in Hong Kong.

The ED brought back 108 consignments of various overseas (UAE and Hong Kong) entities of Modi and Choksi. These valuables were kept in the godown of a logistics company in Hong Kong. These consignments weighing 2,340 kg were brought back to Mumbai on

Wednesday.

"These consignments had been sent to Hong Kong from Dubai in early 2018 and the officers of Enforcement Directorate had received intelligence input about these valuables in July 2018. The officers were continuously engaged in discussion with various authorities in Hong Kong to bring these valuables back to India. Various modalities were finalized and after completing all the legal formalities, these consignments have now been brought back to India," the ED said in a statement.

Out of 108 consignments, 32 belong

to the entities controlled by Nirav Modi and rests belong to firms controlled by Mehul Choksi.

Earlier, the ED had successfully brought back 33 consignments of valuables from Dubai and Hong Kong in Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi case. These valuables were valued on arrival and were subsequently seized in India. Independent valuer had assessed these earlier consignments to be worth around Rs. 137 crore.

Valuation and seizure formalities of the latest consignments are in progress, the agency added.

Locust swarms continue to damage crops in Rajasthan's Barmer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Swarms of locust continue to damage crops in Rajasthan's Barmer district while locust swarms spotted in Nagpur districts where drones were used to spray pesticides on crops and trees. On the other hand, India and Pakistan are likely to hold their first of six bilateral meetings on the desert locust incursion issue on June 18 under an existing institutional mechanism.

According to Vishram Meena, District Collector of Barmer, swarms of locust continued to damage crops in the district. These locusts are pink

in colour and it can fly faster. Meena said that 50 to 60 per cent of success has been achieved in controlling them. In Maharashtra, locust swarms descended in the Pench Tiger Reserve, which is spread across parts of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, flew to Ajni in Ramtek tehsil of Nagpur on Tuesday.

"On Wednesday morning, drones were used to spray pesticides on trees and crops in Ajni in the presence of State Agriculture University scientists," divisional joint director, agriculture department, Ravi Bhosle said. Locusts were found sitting mostly on 'ber',



'babool' and 'anjani' trees, he said. "Paddy is yet to be sown in the area. There is no damage to field crops," Bhosle said.

Sources said that no formal response by Pakistan to India's request on meet over locust

issue so far. But technical level meeting is now proposed to be held on June 18 under an existing institutional mechanism. Under the institutional mechanism, both the countries are expected to meet six times

either at Munabao (India side) or at Khokhropar (Pakistan side) during June-November — a period which coincides with maximum incursions of the crop-munching desert locusts. India had also offered to supply pesticide to Iran to carry out desert locust control operations in its Sistan-Balochistan and South Khorasans provinces.

Officials of Centre's Locusts Warning Organisation worried that million of locusts may enter India along the monsoon winds from the Arabia sea to destroy kharif crops. The locust swarms may attack in late June and early July. Swarms of locusts

attacked India on several times since December 2019. They travelled through Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab.

The United Nation body Food and Agriculture Organisation in its latest update has warned that the locusts will oscillate in northern India before returning to Rajasthan in late June. "Successive waves of spring-bred swarms from Iran and Pakistan will arrive in Rajasthan throughout June with additional swarms coming from East Africa to Gujarat and Rajasthan from early July onwards," the bulletin said.

MoHUA recommends holistic planning for pedestrian friendly market spaces

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To make market areas Covid-19 safe and people-friendly, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) on Wednesday asked million plus cities to select at least three market places for pedestrianisation and non-million plus cities to select at least one market area for pedestrianisation in market places. MoHUA Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra has issued an advisory to all states, cities and municipal bodies to this effect.

According to advisory, the ministry said that the selection of City Market spaces for Pedestrianisation may be done by June 30. The holistic planning of the area through stakeholder consultation can be undertaken in next 3 months September 30. Survey of the vendors and other users of the market space could be carried out and completed by July 31. By the end of September, a plan may be formalised to start implementation.

"Million Plus Cities may select at least three market

places and notify them for Pedestrianisation. Non Million plus cities may select at least one market area for pedestrianisation. The planning for pedestrian friendly market space may be done in consultation with the stake holders — Vendors, Municipal officers, Traffic police, parking facility owners, shop owners and consumers. This will require proper survey of space used in the present scenario by various stakeholders," the advisory said.

A movement/direction plan has to be prepared to see

that there are designated walking paths where visitors are able to follow social distancing. Plan could be made keeping the trees and other greens intact, adding tree canopy to improve walkability with clear spaces demarcated for vending, waste collection and access to toilet facilities. Plan should also incorporate interactive spaces for public to be carved out of contiguous unclaimed and under-utilized public spaces in the vicinity of the selected market area.

Short-term recommendations include interventions

that are quick, temporary, easy to install, and ensure safety to commuters after the lockdown. The market spaces could be rearranged with quick ad temporary measures such as barricades, road closure for vehicles, etc. On-street parking space or even carriageway lanes can be repurposed to provide more walking and waiting space.

Cities may consider providing improved access through additional streets. Cyclists may be allowed with dedicated/ear-marked pathways. Provision of access to motor

vehicles for residents of the area to commute should be clearly delineated, the advisory said.

According to advisory short term measures such as temporary barricading, closure of roads for traffic, ear-marking spaces, etc. to assess the plan on the field may be started in the first week of October. The assessment of the implemented Plan through short term measures may be done by November and amendments as required may be completed by November, it also added.

Ex-chief engineer got MUV for favouring contractor, says CBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former NOIDA chief engineer Yadav Singh, embroiled in a slew of corruption cases, had allegedly received a multi-utility vehicle (MUV) for favouring a contractor in handing out seven electrical works contracts at inflated rates during 2007-11, causing a loss of Rs 1.76 crore to the authority, the CBI has said in chargesheets filed before a special court in Ghaziabad on Wednesday.

The agency has filed three separate chargesheets arising out of its FIR pertaining to the alleged cronyism and corruption of Singh in handing out contracts during his tenure at the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA).

Besides Singh, the probe agency has also charged Javed Ahmed of Gul Engineers, the beneficiary company, assistant project engineers Raminder and Vimal Kumar Manglik, besides other officials of NOIDA, which had incurred losses to the tune of Rs 1.76 crore.

CBI Spokesperson R K Gaur said the agency has filed three chargesheets in a special court in Ghaziabad against Singh and others under Indian Penal Code sections relating criminal conspiracy and cheating, besides the relevant provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The contracts related to cabling of high-powered electrical lines were given to Ahmed at inflated rates, in spite of his company — Gul Engineers — not having enough work experience, the agency alleged in the chargesheet.

The members of the tender committee, including Singh, had allegedly justified the inflated rates without going through

actual market rates, according to the chargesheets.

The agency has filed three separate chargesheets for 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2010-11, giving details of the alleged criminality in tenders awarded in the respective years.

The first chargesheet pertains to causing an alleged loss of Rs 50.20 lakh to NOIDA. It alleges that during 2007-08, Singh and other officials fraudulently entered into a criminal conspiracy among themselves and Ahmed and awarded three contracts -- for laying of feeder lines through underground cable, electrification work of flyover and shifting of 33-KV and 11-KV electrical lines -- to his company.

In the second chargesheet, Singh, Ahmed and 10 the then NOIDA officials have been named for allegedly causing a loss of Rs 54.28 lakh to the authority.

"It has been alleged that the accused public servants, during the period 2008-09, fraudulently entered into a criminal conspiracy among themselves and with the proprietor of the said private company to award two contracts pertaining to shifting of electrical lines and shifting of 33/11 KV lines to the private company," Gaur said.

The third chargesheet relates to losses to the tune of Rs 72 lakh to NOIDA. It alleged that Singh, Ahmed and nine other accused public servants fraudulently entered into a criminal conspiracy to award two contracts pertaining to construction of 11-KV underground feeders and conversion of 33-KV overhead lines into an underground system to Gul Engineers.

Singh is undergoing judicial custody after his arrest in the case in February.

Govt allots ₹4,000 cr under 'Per Drop More Crop' for year 2020-21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated Rs 4,000 crore as annual allotment to States for the fiscal year 2020-21 under 'Per Drop More Crop' component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY-PDMC).

"For the current year, annual allotment of Rs 4,000 crore has already been allocated and conveyed to the State Governments. The State Governments have identified the beneficiaries to be covered under the programme," the Ministry of Agriculture said in a statement. The process to release funds to some of the states is already under way for the year 2020-21.

The Ministry of Agriculture is implementing the 'Per Drop More Crop' component of PMKSY-PDMC, which focuses on enhancing water efficiency at farm level through micro irrigation technologies such as drip and sprinkler irrigation.

The drip micro irrigation technique not only helps in saving water but also reduces fertilizer usage, labour expenses and other input costs. The statement said Micro Irrigation Fund corpus of Rs 5,000 crore has been created with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), an apex development financial

institution in India. The objective of the fund is to facilitate the states in mobilizing the resources for expanding coverage of micro irrigation by taking up special and innovative projects and also for incentivising micro irrigation beyond the provisions available under PMKSY-PDMC to encourage farmers to install micro irrigation systems, it said.

So far, micro irrigation funds have been released to Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu for Rs 616.14 crore and for Rs 478.79 crore, respectively, through NABARD.

The area covered under these projects is 1.021 lakh hectare in Andhra Pradesh and 1.76 lakh hectare in Tamil Nadu.

During the last five years (2015-16 to 2019-20), an area of 46.96 lakh hectare has been covered under micro irrigation through PMKSY-PDMC.



Widespread face mask use can prevent Covid: Study

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Widespread adoption of face-mask combined with social distancing and some lockdown measures, could be an acceptable way of managing the pandemic and re-opening economic activity long before the development and public availability of an effective vaccine against Covid-19, according to a UK study.

In fact, said the scientists at the Britain's Cambridge and Greenwich Universities, "Our analyses support the immediate and universal adoption of face-masks by the public. These steps could help bring down Covid-19 transmission to controllable levels for national epidemics and could prevent further waves of the pandemic disease."

Published in the "Proceedings of the Royal Society A" scientific journal, the study comes days after the World Health Organization (WHO) updated its guidance, recommending people to wear fabric face masks in public areas where there is a risk to reduce the spread of the disease.

The researchers have called



for information campaigns across wealthy and developing nations alike that declares, "my face-mask protects you, your facemask protects me".

Richard Stutt, who co-led the study at Cambridge, said "the findings showed that if widespread mask use were combined with social distancing and some lockdown measures, this could be "an acceptable way of managing the pandemic and re-opening economic activity" long before the development and public availability of an effective vaccine against Covid-19, the respiratory illness caused by the Coronavirus.

In this study, researchers linked the dynamics of spread between people with population-level models to assess the effect on the disease's reproduction rate, or R value, of different

scenarios of mask adoption combined with periods of lockdown. The R value measures the average number of people that one infected person will pass the disease on to. An R value above 1 can lead to exponential growth.

The study found that if people wear masks whenever they are in public it is twice as effective at reducing the R value than if masks are only worn after symptoms appear.

In all scenarios the study looked at, routine facemask use by 50% or more of the population reduced Covid-19 spread to an R of less than 1.0, flattening future disease waves and allowing for less stringent lockdowns.

"We have little to lose from the widespread adoption of face-masks, but the gains could be significant," said Renata Retkute, who co-led the study.

TN: 1,927 test +ve on Wed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A record number of 1,927 persons tested positive for coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday taking the total number of persons afflicted with the pandemic till date to 36,841.

The day also saw 19 persons succumbing to Covid taking the death toll in the State till date to 326. The number of persons discharged from the hospitals across the State reached 19,333 making the total number of active cases on date to 17,179 according to a medical bulletin released

by the Tamil Nadu Government.

The day also saw the laboratories in the State testing 16,667 persons and this took the number of persons tested till date to 6.09 lakh.

Out of the 1,927 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 1,390 were from Chennai. The total number of cases tested positive in Chennai till Wednesday reached 26,000. The neighbouring districts of Chengalpattu (182), Kancheepuram (33) and Tiruvallur (105) continued to be areas of concern along with Chennai.

While four persons who breathed their last on



Wednesday had no co-morbidities, the remaining 15 persons had co-morbid conditions (which meant that they were suffering from serious ailments like diabetes mellitus, hypertension, bronchial asthma etc.

A new controversy has erupted in Tamil Nadu over

the deaths due to covid-19 pandemic. A section of the media has alleged that many deaths due to covid-19 went unreported and the State Government has constituted a nine-member committee to go into the details of persons who succumbed to the pandemic in Chennai city.

The committee headed by Dr P Vadivelan, director of public health would go into the details and prepare a Death Audit Report. There is already a committee of medical experts functioning in the State to find out the exact cause of deaths of persons tested positive and who are admitted to the hospitals.

3 held for death of another Kerala wild jumbo

Thiruvananthapuram:

After the death of a pregnant wild elephant last month, the Kerala Forest department, which was probing the death of another wild elephant which took place in the forest areas at Pathanapuram in Kollam district, arrested three people on Wednesday for causing the death of a 10-year-old wild elephant in April, using fire crackers.

Fire crackers are placed in fruits and coconuts and then fed to the animals to kill them.

This method of placing high-end crackers is adopted mostly to trap

wild boars and pigs which are found in the forests for their meat. The moment these animals start chewing these cracker laden fruits or coconuts, they explode and the heads of the animals get blown away.

Those who do this take away the meat and then sold to friends and close aides. At times, during such exercise, wild elephants unknowingly consume this and by now there have been two cases, where these elephants have died.

According to a top Forest official, three people who are directly involved in the

Pathanapuram incident have been arrested.

"We had formed a special team consisting of the police and forest officials and ever since this incident came to our notice after the wild elephant died, this team was on the prowl," said the forest official.

"The special team first tracked the movement of this particular wild elephant and then was after a few people. Their movement and all other things were closely monitored and finally they were tracked down and their arrest was made," said the forest official. The official

pointed out that overall six people were arrested, but the other three have been arrested for hunting wild animals and were not involved in placing the fire cracker and causing the death of the wild elephant.

Even though this incident took place in April and failed to make big headlines in the media, it was only after the incident that took place in May on the edge of the Silent Valley forests in Palakkad, where a pregnant 15-year-old wild elephant suffered serious facial injuries and later died that it came to the limelight. IANS

Goa CM bans foreign tours, recruitment as austerity drive

Panaji: In order to create finances available for Covid-19 related relief work, the Goa cabinet has resolved to curtail expenditure through string of austerity measures, which include a blanket ban on new hiring, unnecessary foreign and domestic tours, business class travel and deferring all works till December 2020, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced on Wednesday.

Sawant also said, that any expenses related to the above budget heads would have to be cleared by the Chief Minister's Office henceforth. IANS

Slight decrease in number of +ve cases in Kerala but 2 patients commit suicide

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The number of persons tested positive for coronavirus disease on Wednesday came down to 65 in Kerala.

But two suicides in Thiruvananthapuram Medical College Hospital by suspected covid patients on Wednesday added to the woes of the authorities. While one person committed suicide in the morning, the other person followed suit by the evening.

The State saw the number of hotspots going up by five taking the total hotspots to 163. Five persons have been infected through community transmission, said the release issued by the Government of Kerala.

Out of the 65 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 34 were those who returned to the State from abroad and 25 were the returnees from other States in the country

There are 1,238 patients undergoing treatment in various hospitals in the State for coronavirus.

Out of the 65 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 34 were those who returned to the State from abroad and 25 were the returnees from other States in the country.

Never said corona express: Didi on Shah's attack

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday rebutted allegations leveled against her by Union Home Minister Amit Shah who in a virtual rally on Tuesday attacked her for calling Shramik Special trains — ferrying in migrant workers from other States to Bengal — "Corona Expresses."

"Words are being put on my mouth. More than 11 lakh people have returned to Bengal in these trains but I never called the Shramik Specials Corona Expresses... rather I said that the public are calling the trains bringing in migrant workers, many of who were infected with the virus, as 'corona expresses,'" she told the media on Wednesday alleg-

ing politicians like Shah were always up to hatching political conspiracies.

Saying that "some people who have no performance to their credit are always hatching political conspiracies to malign others and mislead the general people," she said without naming the Home Minister wondering why the Central Government did not ferry the migrant workers before starting the lockdown.

"Why the Centre did not bring in the migrant workers before they got infected by the virus? Why they were stopped from returning home in the initial days and why they were ferried back when the corona virus had spread all over the place?" she asked pointing at the "lack of planning of the Central Government.

Launching a blistering attack on the Trinamool Congress supremo, Shah had on Tuesday said that Banerjee the "migrant workers were longing to go back to their relatives whereas the Chief Minister was not allowing the trains to enter Bengal. And when the Shramik Specials were launched she called these trains 'Corona Expresses'... the people of Bengal and more so the migrant workers will remember the way she mocked at them and when the elections will come they will send her out of Bengal in the same corona express trains."

Refusing to accept her clarifications Bengal BJP president Dilip Ghosh said "it is the Chief Minister's old habit of retracting after making unparliamentary comments," adding

she should be cautious in future while making such comments."

Meanwhile, the CM on Wednesday declared that the schools in Bengal will open after June 30 when lockdown 5.0 ends. She said "though the schools were to open after June 30 the Government has decided to keep them closed through the entire month of July," adding "only the remaining parts of the Board examinations that could not be taken at the beginning of the lockdown will be taken in July."

The Chief Minister also requested the private schools not to effect a fee hike considering the extraordinary situation post corona. "Many guardians have lost their jobs and many other have suffered pay cuts. So I will request the private schools not to charge

the students the increased rate of fees."

Referring to the government employees who were facing great hardships in reaching their offices following shortage of buses and non-functioning of the local trains and metro services, Banerjee said that her Government had decided to divide the duty hours in two shifts to ensure social distancing and unplug the office-going crowd.

"Considering the difficulty in coming to offices, we will have divided the office hours in two shifts. The first will be from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm and the second will be from 12.30 pm to 5.30 pm," the CM said adding the employees will come on alternate days and the government offices will work with 70 percent staff strength.

Indian Coast Guard's ship Sujay relocated in Chennai

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Though Tamil Nadu is under the spell of coronavirus pandemic, the State got "Great Victory" to guard its coastline and maritime security. Indian Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS Sujay (which means Great Victory) has been relocated from Paradip in Odisha to Chennai with effect from last Monday, according to a release issued by the Ministry of Defence.

The 105 meter long ICGS Sujay, designed and built indigenously by M/s Goa Shipyard Limited and is fitted with 30 mm CRN 91 Gun and State of the Art Navigational and Communication equipment, Sensors and Machinery would fortify the Tamil Nadu coast from intruders and also scrutinize the sea for pollution.

Though the release said the OPV is being rebased under the Operational and Administrative Control of the Commander, Coast Guard



Region (East), it is expected to add strength to anti-smuggling operations as well

as guarding the safety of Tamil Nadu fishermen from navies of other countries. There has been regular complaints by fishermen in Tamil Nadu that they were being targeted by navies of neighbouring countries from fishing in the Palk Straits.

The advance features onboard Sujaya includes Integrated Bridge System, Integrated Machinery Control System, Power Management System and High Power External Fire Fighting system. The ship is designed to carry one twin engine Light Helicopter and five high speed boats including two Quick Reaction Inflatable Boats for swift Boarding Operations, Search and Rescue, Law Enforcement and Maritime Patrol. The ship is also capable of carrying Pollution Response equipment to contain oil spills at sea.

Panchayat seeks security after Kashmiri Pandit's terror killing

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Brutal killing of Kashmiri Pandit Sarpanch, Ajay Pandita, in South Kashmir district of Anantnag has once again brought back the issue of extending adequate security and insurance cover to these grassroots workers in Jammu & Kashmir.

More than 25,000 elected representatives have been awaiting final nod from the Union Government to secure their future in the wake of the prevailing security environment in the region.

To highlight their grievances, a delegation of 22 sarpanches and panches had called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi in the first week of September 2019.

Following their detailed interaction at the highest level, the members of the delegation were given an assurance that their security concerns would be looked into besides a proposal was floated to provide an insurance cover of at least 4 lakh each

to these elected representatives. According to official sources, "a total number of 22,214 panches and 3,459 sarpanches were elected out of 33,592 panch and 4,290 sarpanch seats in J&K in 2018 panchayat polls". By-elections to over 12,000 vacant seats were still pending.

During the UPA regime also, when a series of attacks were launched on sarpanches and panches to discourage them from participating in the democratic election process, a similar delegation of elected public representatives from the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir had called on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on 27 September 2012. At that time, Rahul Gandhi had promised to look into their demand including for a compensation of ₹20 lakh each to the dependents of the sarpanches who were killed by the terrorists."

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Anil Sharma, President of All Jammu & Kashmir Panchayat

Conference said, "brutal killing of Ajay Pandita has led to panic among elected representatives across Jammu & Kashmir". He said we have been fighting for security cover and submitted our charter of demands before the concerned agencies at the highest level but so far nothing has happened on ground zero.

He said, large number of angry grassroots workers were contemplating mass resignations to put pressure on the Government. He said, terrified public representatives, living in vulnerable areas across Kashmir valley have also reached Jammu to highlight their genuine concerns. "We are going to submit a fresh charter of demands before the administration at the highest level to ensure our long pending demands are addressed and resolved at the earliest."

Meanwhile, several aggrieved sarpanches and panches staged a token protest demonstration outside Jammu Press Club to highlight their grievances.

Karnataka corona tests cross 4 lakh, recovery rate 44%

IANS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka has crossed the mark of testing four lakh people for Covid-19 till Tuesday with a positivity rate of 1.4 per cent and a recovery rate of 44 per cent, said a minister on Wednesday.

"Karnataka crossed 4 lakh tests mark on Tuesday. So far we have tested 4,00,257 samples," said Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar.

The state could manage to examine so many people by gradually raising its Covid-19 testing labs to 71 across the state. It set a target to raise the labs to 60 by May end and reached the goal early.

For several days, the state tested around 10,000 people on an average which has declined a little in the past few days.

On Tuesday, Karnataka tested 7,036 people. Of these, 6,397 reports returned negative.

The minister said Karnataka has a Covid recovery rate of 44 per cent. "With 2,605 discharges and 5,921 cumulative cases, Karnataka's recovery rate remains healthy at 44 per cent," Sudhakar added.

Currently, the state has 3,248 active cases.

161 more test +ve in J&K, 3 deaths reported

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

At least 28 jawans of Central Reserve Police Force, 19 other health workers including two doctors were among a long list of 161 fresh cases of coronavirus detected in Jammu & Kashmir on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, three deaths were also reported from Kashmir taking the total death toll due to Covid-19 to 51 and the total number of coronavirus positive cases to over 4,500. Significantly, 165 cases recovered, 27 from Jammu and 138 from Kashmir division on Wednesday.

According to the media bulletin, out of 161 positive cases, 46 were reported from Jammu division and 115 from Kashmir division. According to official sources, 17 paramedics and two doctors stationed at district hospital Udhampur were tested positive on Wednesday.

According to the bulletin, out of 4,507 positive cases, 985 cases were reported from Jammu and 3,522 from Kashmir.

Out of these 4507, 2785 cases are active positive including 712 in Jammu division and 2,073 in Kashmiri division.

In Kashmir, Shopian district continues to record a large number of positive cases. According to the media bulletin, 37 cases were reported from Shopian, 28 from Kulgam, 18 from Kupwara and 10 from Srinagar.

B'loru church devises drive-in services during Covid times

Bengaluru: A city church will conduct a drive-in worship service on Sunday where the congregation can attend in the comfort of their cars to maintain physical distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For the past 12 weeks, we have been streaming daily devotions and our Sunday services live through our website and social media handles like YouTube and Facebook with great success. However, we as a community have been yearning to meet up and worship together," Bethel AG Church International Worship Centre's pastor in-charge Reverend Johnson V said on Wednesday, about the drive-in service.

Dubbed as Worship on Wheels, the church at Hebbal in Bengaluru will accommodate cars as well as two-wheelers in a newly acquired three acre plot, named Temple of God.

The church acquired the plot in December 2019, located 200 metres away from the current church complex in Hebbal, with the aim to build a larger church building to accommodate the increasing congregation. Claiming to be the first of

its kind Sunday service in India, the church said it is making all arrangements to ensure 100 per cent contactless service.

Accordingly, there will be no seating arrangement and all other common touch points such as toilets, canteens and resource centres will be off limits. The Bethel Church will be installing multiple screens and speakers at the drive-in service, including live streaming the devotion.

"Our Worship on Wheels service will bring us together and at the same time, ensure that we honour the safety instructions given by the government. We have procured all the necessary permissions required to arrange the service and are ensuring that it will be 100 per cent contactless," said Johnson.

Planning six services on Sunday, two each will be conducted for those driving-in on motorcycles and cars and two more inside the church building for the devotees taking public transport or walking in. Services for people arriving on bikes have been scheduled at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m., cars at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. and walk-ins at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. IANS

Demand for national policy for migrant workers

IANS ■ PATNA

At least 20 lakh migrant workers have returned to their native towns and villages in Bihar, renewing their employment problem amid demands from political parties about the need to have a national policy for such labourers and workers.

Former president of the Bihar Youth Congress Lalán Kumar, while emphasizing the national policy for the migrants, said states and Central governments should whole-heartedly help them by unblocking all financial resources.

"The state governments should get their dues and Centre and states should come forward to mitigate the sufferings of the migrants," Kumar said. He said migrant workers are the worst victims of the coronavirus pandemic. "They have been treated as outsiders. The Centre facilitated the return of over one lakh Indians stranded abroad, but left the country's migrant workers to their fate. People will not forget the terrible scenes of these workers walking or cycling for hundreds of miles," said Kumar.

He said the Bihar Government has so far failed to provide jobs to these returnee labourers and workers.

Meanwhile, former deputy chief of Bihar Mahila Congress Manju Bala Pathak said though the state government was presenting various facts and figures on the returnee migrants, it has not said anything about its efforts to provide them jobs. She alleged that in this crucial hour of the pandemic, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has confined himself to his residence. "It is unfair to expect anything from the CM". She said jobs to the migrants would exist only on files.

136 new cases take Andhra's count to 4,126

IANS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh reported 136 new Covid-19 cases, here on Wednesday, taking the state's cumulative tally to 4,126. With this, the number of active cases climbed to 1,573.

One death in the East Godavari district during the day raised the Covid-19 toll to 78.

As per the government figures issued on Monday, Andhra Pradesh's mortality rate had slipped to 1.56 per cent from 1.64 per cent on Sunday. In terms of mortality rate, the state ranks 10th, according to the government data on Saturday. The national mortality rate is at 2.78 per cent.

During the day, 72 people were discharged from hospitals, taking the cumulative tally of cured persons to 2,475.

The state's recovery rate dropped to 56.33 per cent on Monday and it ranks sixth in the country. The national recovery rate stood at 48.36 per cent on Monday.

The state is conducting on an average 9,000-10,000 tests a day. Against Tuesday's 15,085 tests, 15,384 tests were conducted in the past 24 hours ending 9 a.m., the state nodal officer reported.

Andhra Pradesh had tested 4,69,276 samples till Monday, lagging only behind Rajasthan (5,06,784), Maharashtra (5,53,063) and Tamil Nadu (5,92,970). Till Monday, 47,74,434 tests were conducted across the country.

Meanwhile, the cumulative tally of Covid-19 cases among returnees from other states rose to 933.

Maha: 149 die, 3,254 +ve

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The coronavirus crisis deepened further in Maharashtra on Wednesday, as a record 149 more died of Covid-19 and 3,254 others tested positive for the pandemic in various parts of the State.

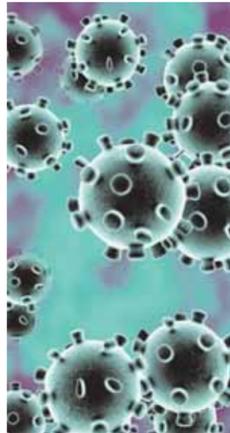
On a day when Maharashtra recorded day's highest-ever death tally of 149, Covid-19 claimed 97 deaths in Mumbai — which has been the highest-ever death tally in the metropolis.

Wednesday's death tally is ten deaths more than the previous high of 139 notched on June 5.

While Mumbai bore the maximum brunt of Coronavirus, while there were 15 deaths in Thane, 10 deaths in Pune, seven deaths in Aurangabad, five deaths each in Navi Mumbai and Jalgaon, three deaths in Ulhasnagar, two deaths each Vasai-Virar and Akola, one death each in Eed, Amravai and Gadchroli.

With fresh deaths and infections, the total number of deaths in Maharashtra mounted to 3,438, while the total infected cases jumped to 94,041.

Having taken into account 3,254 deaths reported so far and 44,517 patients discharged from various hospitals ever since the outbreak of pan-



were men while 55 were women. Eight seven of them were aged over 60 years, 49 were from the age group 40 to 59 years and 13 were aged less than 40 years. "One hundred four out of 149 patients (70%) had high-risk co-morbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease," a state health bulletin said.

In Mumbai, with 97 fresh deaths and 1,567 infections, the total number deaths has mounted to 1,857, while the total infected cases has increased to 52,667. The authorities pegged the number of "active cases" at 27,109.

Out of 5,93,784 samples sent to various laboratories, 94,041 samples have tested positive (15.83%) for Covid-19 until Wednesday.

There are 3,897 active containment zones in the state currently. Total 18,384 surveillance squads worked across the state on Wednesday and surveillance of 67.65 lakh people has been done so far.

A couple of key observations made in Wednesday's report were: The recovery rate in the state is 47.34 per cent and the case fatality rate in the state: 3.65 per cent. Currently, 5,69,145 people are in home quarantine. There are 75,727 beds available in quarantine institutions and as many as 27,228 people are in institutional quarantine. Out of the 149 dead, 94

PAPER WITH PASSION

Another great fall

Despite the Govt push on IoEs, IITs have slipped badly on the QS World University Rankings in just one year

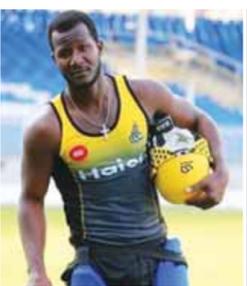


India seems to be taking a beating on all fronts. Our economy is down, just one rung short of junk rating. We are in the top 10 worst-affected countries where the pandemic is concerned and now, our intellectual pride in the knowledge economy has plunged new lows in global ratings. Our Institutes of Eminence (IoEs), thus named enthusiastically by the Narendra Modi Government, have slipped in the QS World University Rankings. Though some of our big names are still in the top 200 institutions of higher education (IHE), the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in Delhi and Bombay and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, have failed to maintain the positions they held last year. While IIT Bombay continued to be the best ranked Indian institute at 172, it saw a sharp fall from its earlier position of 152. IIT Delhi, which was at 182 last year, is now ranked 193 and IISc fell from 184 to 185 though it improved its India position. The other IITs, Madras at 275, Kharagpur at 315 and Kanpur at 350, also registered a steep decline as did premier institutions like Delhi University, Jadavpur University and Hyderabad University. It does not stop at that. Even the number of Indian IHEs ranked in the top 1,000 fell from 24 to 21. And shockingly, Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) and Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), two of the nation's most prominent private institutions, failed to make the cut this year. It would be simplistic to wish away this slide to differential standards set by pro-West rating systems but the QS Rankings are known for certain integrity and exacting norms. And while it would be easy, like China, to prop up a home rating system, fact is we need to subject ourselves to external assessment. Besides, this is not the only global list where we have fared poorly. Recently, we slipped on the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University rankings, too. IISc, which was at number 29 in 2019, dropped to 36. The IITs, including Bombay and Roorkee, slid among Asian universities. IIT Delhi and Kharagpur were the only Indian institutes to improve their positions. This means that we haven't upgraded teaching modules and infrastructure or innovated enough to compete against those who have stolen a march over us. This is worrisome since IoEs were encouraged by the Government. Even select private institutions were unshackled from regulators, given more autonomy and the public ones were given more funds. We have 993 universities, 51,649 IHEs and 14.16 lakh teaching staff for 37.4 million students. So, logically we should have more numbers in the top 200 but obviously that is not happening.

The IITs claim that for all talk of enabling IoEs, the pace of funding has been slow to register significant improvement over the last year. Given the number of our students in classes, the faculty-student ratio is far from ideal. Besides, there are very few original research papers going around, except those co-authored with other prestigious universities. Research is a key denominator of international worth and Indian varsities clearly fall short in the absence of path-breaking studies that change the way we look at things. Despite a slew of innovations, seldom does IIT research find a place in rated international journals and papers. The UGC's assessment of academicians through the Academic Performance Indicators (API) score has inflicted more damage to the overall quality of research as scholars are focussed on scoring higher points than maintaining the quality of work. And if we want to catch up indeed, then we need to roll out inter-disciplinary courses. It's a sad reflection on our pedagogy skills if less than one per cent of the 1.5 million engineers, who enter the job market every year, are hired by the top 100 companies. There are constant complaints from industries that there is a major gap between what is taught in our professional institutions and the skills they require in the real world. Ninety per cent of academic activities in India focus on imparting bookish knowledge. So how do we ensure that our youth become worthy drivers of the global talent pool? We must globalise the curriculum and methods of instruction so that our students become well-armed to participate in the global discourse and future strategies. We also need to allocate Government spending in a better manner so that we can build a better infrastructure, improve methods of research and hire world-class faculty, all of which would encourage higher-order thinking, innovation, problem-solving, critical thinking and client handling. These are, after all, skills that are required in the real world.

Sammy's question

Yes, we are extraordinarily colour-conscious people. It's time we come to terms with this and change attitudes



How can Indians be racist? This might be a logical question. After all, even the fairest of them have a tinge of brown. But Indian attitudes to those from other communities, with the notable exception of the Arabs and Europeans, are not just borderline racist but downright despicable at times. It may not be correct to tar all Indians with the broad brush of being biased but even if you go to the homes of the well-heeled and highly educated, pejorative terms like *Habshi*, *Chinki*, *Kallu* and other colourful casteist and racist slurs are

still used to describe others, including friends. While most people have become careful enough — thanks to the enactment of strict laws and the proliferation of mobile phones — to not use such terms in the public discourse, many from the North-east and visitors from Africa continue to suffer on a regular basis. India's obsession with the fair skin despite a Hindu revivalist culture of the mid-1800s that celebrated darker skin tones is evident in the way we promote fairness creams and bleaches to this day.

So should we be surprised that West Indian cricketer Darren Sammy is shocked that the term *Kallu* used by his Indian teammates in Sunrisers Hyderabad was an inappropriate one? Not at all. This is because we Indians lack cultural sensitivity or awareness towards those of other races. This is not to say that we cannot adapt. The Indian community has been trading to and from Africa for centuries — from the far Western shores to the nearer horn of Africa. That said, cultural assimilation, from cross-marriage to religious affinities, has been minimal, unlike say the Arab traders. Even in the US, while several high-profile people of Indian origin, such as Senator Kamala Harris, are great examples of blending, many Indians tend to live in relatively insular communities, which one could consider ghettos. Is there a way to change this? Yes and an easy one. Children need to be taught at schools about respecting other cultures and people at an early age. Studies have shown that racism is often internalised at a very young age. For example, the way adults treat a darker-skinned baby must be the same as the way they treat a lighter-skinned one. If India aspires to be a global power, we have to change the way we think. In fact, it is possible to argue that race is a bigger problem in India than it is in the US. We have to change and the first step towards this is to admit to ourselves that we are all indeed quite biased.

The strategic river

The Galwan River in east Ladakh continues to be important, providing direct and convenient access to Shyok and areas beyond



KK PAUL

Though just about 80 kilometres in length, the Galwan River in east Ladakh is of immense strategic importance for India. It was at the turn of the 19th century and during the early years of the last one that Ghulam Rasool Galwan, a young man, an adventurer and an explorer who was a frequent traveller to Tibet, along with a few traders, came in contact with Capt (later Col) Reginald Younghusband. Those were the days when the great game was at its peak. At that time, the British Viceroy in India was far more worried about Russia's rapid expansion towards Tibet rather than any other threat from China.

Capt Younghusband was specially chosen by the Viceroy to explore Tibet, gather intelligence and assess the possibility of any Russian expansion that could pose a threat to British interests in India. Ghulam Rasool remained attached with the British expeditions as a guide. In the later years, he started guiding other expeditions from France and Italy into Tibet, too. It is understood that in order to cross the Kongka La Pass from Shyok, he frequently used a river valley route. Though this is quite unusual, this small torrent of a river was later named after Ghulam Rasool Galwan as the Gallowan River.

In order to better appreciate the current scenario, it would be useful to know a bit of contemporary history about this river. Events moved rapidly after the Chinese occupation of Tibet during 1950-51. That the quiet cold of the high Himalayas would get "noisier" and "hotter" was realised for the first time in 1957 with the discovery of the Aksai Chin road, built in record time by China on Indian territory. The presence of this road was not discovered by any of our patrols for there were none. However, the then Indian Ambassador in China had conveyed about this when he read Press reports about the building of this high altitude road in record time to be an "extraordinary feat." This was just the beginning of the rapid deterioration in India's relations with China. Subsequent events are all too well known to be recounted here.

The situation took a turn for the worst when a patrolling party of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was fired upon near Kongka La on October 21, 1959. Ever since then, in order to commemorate the sacrifice of the 11 men who were killed during this skirmish, this day is observed as the Police Commemoration Day. As this incident made the aggressive designs of the Chinese clearer, all checkposts in the area were taken over by the Army. In the meantime, frequent Chinese intrusions into our territory as also the building of roads started receiving attention. Post this, it was decided to station posts in the forward areas that had hitherto remained unpatrolled.

It was in response to this policy that on



September 26, 1961, the then Deputy Director of Intelligence Bureau (IB), Shri Dave, sent a detailed note to the Ministry of Defence. It was recommended that "...We should reconnoitre the Galwan River valley and open posts as far as eastwards because this valley was connected with the Shyok valley through which River Shyok provided access to Indus and onwards to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. It was further recommended that if the Chinese command the Galwan valley, it would give them easy access towards Skardu and India's routes to Murgo, Daulat Beg Oldi and Panamic would be cut. Further, the unoccupied area between Pangong and Spangur lakes was recommended to be covered by new posts." At the time of implementation of these recommendations, usual differences of opinion erupted among the higher echelons of the administration. This delayed matters. Finally, a platoon of 4/8 Gurkhas was moved from Hotsprings. After trekking for a month, it came to a point overlooking the Galwan River on July 5, 1962. Our post was established by this platoon close to the Chinese post of Samzungling in such a manner that it cut off their supply route. Not only that, it also briefly detained a small Chinese patrol. The Galwan River, being strategically important for the Chinese, their reaction was

“EVER SINCE THE 1962 WAR, THE SITUATION HAS UNDERGONE A VAST CHANGE ALONG THE GALWAN POST. TODAY, WE ARE NOT ONLY NUMERICALLY STRONGER IN THE AREA BUT ALSO HAVE WEAPONRY THAT WOULD BE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE CHINESE. ACCESSIBILITY TO OUR BORDER POSTS USED TO BE A SERIOUS HANDICAP”

almost instantaneous. Their protest note of July 8, 1962, was followed up by a company strength of troops, which surrounded our Galwan post on July 10. Subsequently, more troops joined and ultimately we had a situation where our Galwan post of one platoon was completely surrounded by a battalion of Chinese with loudspeakers blaring all the time.

Among other things, the loudspeakers were exhorting the Gurkhas to side with Tibet and the Chinese. Then came the question of servicing our Galwan post because all land links had got severed. Ultimately, this had to be done by air. Later, an attempt was made to strengthen this post with 5 Jats. When the hostilities broke out in October 1962, this Galwan post was the first one to be attacked in the western sector and was overwhelmed.

But over the decades, the situation has undergone a vast change. Today, we are not only numerically stronger in the area but also have weaponry that would be more than a match for the Chinese. Accessibility to our border posts used to be a serious handicap. We also have airfields at DBO and Chushul, which are capable of handling the heaviest of loads. Besides, minor airfields have come up at Nyoma and Fukche. The most important point is the construction of a road from Dabruk to Shyok and then to

the northernmost point of DBO. This road runs almost parallel to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and is of a very high strategic value. It also virtually acts as the lifeline for our border posts.

This road completely cuts off future plans, if any, from the Chinese side to intrude westwards through the Galwan River valley. This situation had been foreseen way back in 1961 when a forward post was located in the Galwan valley but today we have a road. At that time, the Chinese had reacted to the location of the Galwan post; it is understood that now they are reacting to this road, which more or less blocks their westward passage through the River Galwan valley.

The geography of the area has not changed since 1962 but the high Himalayas are no longer impregnable. The Galwan River, which is located centrally, connects to Shyok on the road under construction. Lying in between the Chushul airport and DBO, it continues to be of great strategic importance, providing direct and convenient access to Shyok and areas beyond. It is expected that as earlier and even now, the events around the Galwan River are going to be the main focus of the ongoing talks between India and China.

(The writer is a former Governor and a Senior Advisor at the Pranab Mukherjee Foundation)

SOUNDBITE

When the BJP is not considering unemployment and starvation as a problem, how will it solve them? With Bihar polls nearing, after some days star campaigner will also start flying.

SP chief
—Akhilesh Yadav



People are at home, anxious about their future. When we don't talk about our anxiety, we bottle it up and it keeps getting bigger. There's a huge stigma around mental health.

Actor
—Huma Qureshi



Our position on racism is crystal clear: This scourge violates the UN Charter and debases our core values. A global fight against racism is needed.

UN Secretary-General
—Antonio Guterres



The condition of our farmers is worsening thanks to the unplanned #lockdown. Last harvest didn't yield good monetary value since they were unable to sell.

Congress leader
—Shashi Tharoor



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unwanted criticism

Sir — Bollywood actor Sonu Sood's act of humanitarianism rightly earned him praise from across the country. But like so many good things that are bound to face criticism, his noble act, too, became a subject of politics. Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, who also serves as the editor of the party mouthpiece, *Saamna*, claimed that the actor must have a political backer and motive for his act of helping the migrants.

At a time when our migrant workers are still struggling to make ends meet in difficult times, adding political colour to a humanitarian cause reeks of narrow mindedness. The good samaritan actor now has a new set of fans who are ready to back him. Sood has already declared that he will not let such incidents get in the way of his mission.

Javvadi Lakshmana Rao
Visakhapatnam

Testing time

Sir — The Telangana Government's move to promote all Class X students without

India must shore up health system

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), India ranks 184th out of 191 in terms of GDP percentage spend on healthcare. Including the private sector, the total health expenditure as a percentage of GDP is estimated at 3.9 per cent. Out of the total expenditure, effectively about one-third (30 per cent) is contributed by the public sector. It is quite clear that it is the private expenditure which dominates. This is an indication of the elitist and costly nature of the healthcare system in our country. No wonder then that healthcare services are thinly spread in rural areas. With India yet to see the worst of the Coronavirus spiral, cracks are already beginning to show. A shortage of hospital beds has been reported across the country.

The inherent weaknesses in the healthcare system has come to the fore from time to time. Yet nothing was done by successive Governments to improve the scenario. There were only reams of promises in political manifestoes and gaseous loads of rhetoric in public platforms.

examination is welcome. The decision taken by the Government to declare grades based on internal evaluation comes as a relief to both students and parents. Coronavirus figures are still increasing. It is wise to keep the young children away from places where there is a possibility of cluster formation.

Ravi Teja Kathuripalli
Hyderabad



With even the most developed nations like the US and China, which boast of superior healthcare systems, not spared by the virus, why should it be different for India? A change in the establishment's heart must occur, else the poor may well end paying a heavy price due to the deadly pandemic.

Kavya Singh
Via email

Better days ahead

Sir — With more than 85,000 Coronavirus cases, Mumbai has surpassed the Chinese province of Wuhan, which saw a total of 84,000 positive cases. However, there's a silver lining in a dark cloud for the city. While Wuhan recorded 3,869 deaths, Mumbai's total is significantly lower, at

almost half, with 1,760 deaths. What's more, the average rate of doubling has increased from 11 days to 23 days. Reports have also emerged that the growth curve of the infection is now flattening in some of Mumbai's worst-affected areas. These are signs that the virus has reached its peak and things are going to get better hereon.

Shambhavi
Via email

Take a cue from Mumbai

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "NCR needs a code" (June 10). Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's decision to restrict COVID-19 treatment in Government as well as private hospitals only to those with proof of residence in the city was in bad taste. Like Mumbai, Delhi, too, is in the grip of a vicious Coronavirus outbreak. And with more than 27,000 cases, the city's healthcare infrastructure is in shambles. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has himself claimed that Delhi could expect 5.5 lakh cases by July end for which, 80,000 beds would be needed. Instead of exchanging barbs, the focus of the Government must be on ramping up bed capacity to tackle a surge in the number of Coronavirus cases. Delhi must take a cue from Mumbai which has been building makeshift hospitals to meet the challenges of rising cases of Coronavirus.

Bal Govind
Noida

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Green laws blown away

It is time for those who have been protesting about the plight of the environment at OIL sites to approach the NGT over the Baghjan incident



KOTA SRIRAJ

The worst fears of the people in upper Assam's Baghjan, in Tinsukia district came true on June 9 when the Oil India Limited (OIL) oil and gas well caught fire after leaking for a fortnight. The sudden blow-out resulted in the tragic death of two firefighters besides four people suffering injuries and 50 houses getting burnt. As a safety measure, 2,500 families in the vicinity of the site have been evacuated.

Blow-outs are an uncontrollable discharge of gas from a gas production well and in this case, according to the spokesperson of OIL, the incident occurred as efforts were being made to tap a new reservoir.

The gas well, a part of 23 other drills was dug in 2006 by OIL and produces about 80,000 standard cubic metres of gas per day (SCMD) from a depth of 3,870 metres and is considered as one of the most prolific gas reservoirs operated by OIL. However, this asset of OIL is now making news for all the wrong reasons. Something which the Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) is undoubtedly not very proud of right now and would like to put behind it as fast as possible. But, the fact remains that they should have foreseen something like this before they decided to drill here.

The major risk to the delicate ecology of the region is quite evident even to the layman by the fact that the gas well is situated at an aerial distance of just 900 metres from the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park (DSNP). Taking this into account, the National Wildlife Board (NWB) conducted site visits to the oil and gas wells in the proximity of the DSNP as early as 2013 and observed that the wells were operating without prior permissions and approvals were being sought only after beginning work on the projects. The NWB report clearly highlighted the inescapable consequences any disaster would have on the delicate biosphere of DSNP.

The current disaster at Baghjan has put the specific gas well under a spotlight but the need of the hour is to put all those oil and gas wells in proximity of the DSNP under a scanner and examine and review their environmental clearances and approvals. The gravity of the situation on the ground can be understood by the fact that owing to this unfortunate incident, the forest and wildlife department has decided to form a 14-member committee to assess the impact of the incident on the environment.

This is also partly due to the discovery of a dead Gangetic river dolphin, an endangered species and livestock on the wetland, which forms a part of the Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of the park. This raises the pertinent question of how a PSU, which is supposed to set an example in following Government rules, ended up extracting oil and gas just 900 metres from the world's only riverine island wildlife reserve. There is something not right here and this needs to be probed at the earliest.

Especially because DSNP is a unique biosphere comprising wetlands, grassland and riverine forests. The park exists at the confluence of the Brahmaputra, Siang, Dibang and Lohit rivers. Spread over 764 sq km, the DSNP is flush with 40 mammals, 500 species of birds, 104 species of fish, including the endangered Gangetic dolphin and 680 varieties of plants.

The importance of this natural wealth seems to have been lost on the top brass of OIL for whom it seems to be all about the business of making money. The OIL website mentions its commitment to safety, health and the environment as a part of its corporate vision but the actual situation on the ground, as demonstrated by the events at Baghjan, says otherwise. A PSU cannot set such a poor example for the industry. There have been numerous protests by the local population regarding the operations of OIL. It is time for these activists who have been protesting about the plight of the environment at OIL sites to approach the National Green Tribunal so that the efforts to preserve DSNP can be taken to a new level.

The local Government in Assam, environmentalists and activists must join hands for the sake of nature and take a stand, so that the voice of the environment is heard and numerous voiceless animals and plants are saved from the onslaught of development, which is in fact exploitation of nature's resources. At a time when India is reeling from the impact of COVID-19, this disaster in Assam comes as a double whammy for the people who have already weathered major losses during the lockdown. Now they have emerged from the shutdown, only to find their crops damaged, houses burnt, and livestock compromised, all thanks to this blow-out.

The people at ground zero must be rehabilitated immediately and the environment restored on a fast track basis. If this is done by OIL, it will probably be the most meaningful CSR initiative the PSU would have ever undertaken.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

CHINESE INTRUDED LAND OF INDIA TILL 2012 DURING CONGRESS REGIME. I HOPE RAHUL GANDHI AND THE INC WILL AGREE WITH MY REPLY BASED ON FACTS.

—BJP MP FROM LADAKH
JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE CHINESE HAVE WALKED IN AND TAKEN OUR TERRITORY IN LADAKH. THE PM IS ABSOLUTELY SILENT AND HAS VANISHED FROM THE SCENE.

—CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI

Who is to blame?

As speculation over Chinese intrusions and occupation of up to 60 sq km in eastern Ladakh gained ground, the Government and the Army responded by resorting to prevarication and dissimulation



DEEPAK SINHA

As the pandemic continues to rage, it is but natural that it remains our primary focus of attention. It would, however, be foolish and shortsighted to lose sight of events unfolding on our northern borders as many within the Government and the security establishment probably hoped we would. Despite the BJP's formidable perception-management skills, invariably such occurrences tend to render Prime Minister Narendra Modi dumbstruck, showing up his Government's utter lack of transparency. Especially when caught flat-footed, as has been the case, because of the Chinese incursions in Ladakh.

As speculation over Chinese intrusions and occupation of up to 60 sq kms in eastern Ladakh gained ground, the Government and the Army responded by resorting to prevarication and dissimulation. They used subterfuge, dodgy satellite pictures and pliable analysts to bolster a patently false narrative. They could not hide the fact that these intrusions were along the Galwan River Valley, the Hot Springs Area and at Pangong lake in strength, along with supporting artillery and armour.

While there are differing perceptions with regard to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) at the Pangong lake, the same is not the case at either Hot Springs or Galwan River Valley where the LAC is clearly demarcated and accepted by both sides. We are now informed, again by Government proxies and not formally, that based on the meeting between the Leh Corps Commander and his PLA counterpart, the disengagement process has been set in motion and the PLA has reportedly withdrawn approximately 2.5 km, except in the Pangong lake area. We are once again left wondering as to the credibility of this latest report and also as to whether the Government is being completely honest about the manner in which it is handling the situation.

Thus, while the incursion at Pangong lake may be explained away as arising out of differing perceptions, as the Defence Minister had suggested, the other two incursions were deliberately provocative and hostile acts probably aimed at testing our alertness and resolve. By occupying the heights, the PLA was in a position to easily interdict the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) Road in the Galwan area and deny us access to the Kongka La pass, which is on our side, in the Hot Springs area.

While the PLA's deployment at Pangong has now made it impossible for us to patrol areas claimed by us up to "Finger 8", it really has very little tactical significance. However, this ingress in Galwan also raises a far more serious question, pertaining to our ability to utilise the Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) at DBO operationally. For our military leadership, the PLA's ingress should not have come as a surprise. The Doklam stand-off led to the PLA's public humiliation at the hands of the Indian Army. Clearly no country aspiring to global leadership could accept such humiliation without a fitting retaliation. Obviously our military's top leadership must have been swayed by those within the Modi Government into believing that the PM had done enough at Wuhan to adequately assuage President Xi Jinping's feelings. One must remember that after Wuhan, Modi turned a Nelson's eye to the manner in which the Chinese successfully took control of large parts of the Doklam plateau and constructed a road through it till the base of the Zampheeri Ridge, giving us a nominal face-saver by keeping the alignment away from where the stand-off had occurred. One sincerely hopes that we are not seeing a repetition of this false narrative in the sudden turnaround that

“ AT PRESENT, DESPITE INFRASTRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS, TERRAIN AND FORCE RATIOS ARE GREATLY TILTED IN OUR FAVOUR, IN ADDITION TO THE TACTICAL ADVANTAGES THAT OUR AIR FORCE AND NAVY ENJOY, FINALLY, MODI'S RESOLVE AND FIGHTING SPIRIT MUST NEVER BE UNDERESTIMATED BECAUSE UNLIKE PANDIT NEHRU HE WILL NEVER CONCEDE DEFEAT WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN ”



has now occurred. All of this could not have come at a worse time for Modi. First, all our attempts to ward off the spread of COVID-19 seem to have fallen flat, adversely impacting our economic recovery. More pertinently, not by accident but by design, our military finds itself in a particularly poor shape. Wedded to his Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideology, Modi abhors the military for its apolitical and secular institutional stance. He has been keen to make it more acquiescent and in line with the political ideology his party embodies.

Moreover, he felt let down when his attempt to woo the ex-servicemen through the One Rank, One Pension (OROP) initiative ended in a fiasco. He then turned his anger not just on them, but against the military as a whole. As a result he has managed to demoralise the rank and file, damage their credibility and reduce the Service Chiefs and the senior hierarchy to caricatures. He has left them with endemic shortages in manpower and material and with weaponry that is largely obsolete.

Ironically, however, at the end of the day, Modi has only won a pyrrhic victory. Like the US author and motivational speaker, HH Ziegler, once said, "You are free to choose but you are not free from the consequences of your choice."

In any case this turn of events must be quite a come-down for the Government and its ideological mentor, the RSS, elements within which have become increasingly vociferous in demanding that the Government free Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), including the Gilgit-Baltistan region, from Islamabad's clutches. Indubitably, it should be an even bigger embarrassment for the Army chief, General MM Naravane, who on assuming command had gone on record to affirm that the Army was ready to recapture PoK if the Government so wanted it done.

Clearly, the Government has been responsible for once again putting us in

harm's way, much in the same manner that its previous iteration under the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee did at Kargil. It cannot be emphasised enough that while we ultimately succeeded in throwing out the intruders then, it came at an extremely heavy cost. The lives of young men were deliberately sacrificed by the very people whose apathy and disinterest were responsible for the fiasco in the first place, allowing them to get away from being held to account. If they had been, it would have exposed politicians, bureaucrats and senior military leaders, who were so focussed in the minutiae of their own personal ambitions and agenda that they had little time or inclination to devote to issues of national importance.

In the interim, nothing seemed to have changed as the Government, instead of building military deterrent capabilities, focussed on opening up military cantonments to civilians, notwithstanding its adverse implications on security. At that time, one was unable to understand the Government's motives but they are now becoming increasingly crystal clear, as it has put in motion steps that would allow it to monetise defence lands within cantonments. This would ostensibly go towards filling up Government coffers, but more importantly, fulfill the long-held aspirations of the land mafia that has eyed defence lands for its own use. Undoubtedly, they would make a killing, much of which will no doubt line party and personal pockets.

Clearly not only have we not learnt any lessons from the Kargil episode but are likely to see a repeat of the same playbook that got those responsible off the hook. Though, given that Modi never lets his reputation be tarnished, it must now be dawning on the military brass, who have never hesitated to carry out his every wish, as to who will pay the price if things go wrong.

However, that need not be so because even in these difficult times, it is worth emphasising that positives far outweigh the negatives and we must not lack faith

in our own abilities. For one, there is a very real possibility that Xi, in his haste to protect his own position within the CCP following the pandemic, may have over played his hand and underestimated Indian resolve. Just as General Pervez Musharraf did during Kargil, he may well have bitten off more than he can chew. For all its talk, the PLA suffers from a lack of combat experience, at all levels, further accentuated by its dependence on conscripts who undergo just two months of recruit-training prior to joining their units.

Moreover, despite first-rate infrastructure, its forces have to travel great distances along roads and railways, vulnerable to interdiction, to reach their deployment areas, traversing through hostile populations where insurrection is just hidden below the surface.

In sharp contrast we have a proven, battle-hardened military that has extensive experience in high-altitude warfare, led by combat leaders who are not lacking in physical toughness, courage or determination, with many among them veterans of the Kargil campaign.

More importantly, at present, despite infrastructural constraints, terrain and force ratios are greatly tilted in our favour, in addition to the tactical advantages that our Air Force and Navy enjoy. Finally, Modi's resolve and fighting spirit must never be underestimated because unlike Pandit Nehru he will never concede defeat when the chips are down.

Of course, "to jaw-jaw is preferable to war-war" and one hopes talks and diplomacy will finally resolve the issue and we will be able to return to the status quo ante. However, have no doubt if push comes to a shove, we will emerge victorious but that would not even be necessary if Modi reversed course and gave the military its due. There is much to be said for deterrence when compared to dissuasion.

(The writer, a military veteran is a Consultant with the ORF and Senior Visiting Fellow with TPE, Chennai)

Creating opportunities in a crisis

Madhya Pradesh is at a very crucial juncture where it has to focus on the future while living through the present



ROHIT KUMAR

The word "migrant" in the term migrant workers is not only distressing but also exhibits the hard reality and high level of uncertainty of their lives. Lack of skills in these workers for the kind of opportunities that are available has been a primary concern. It has not only created but has significantly increased the gap between work and the worker.

Irudaya Rajan, one of India's leading experts in population studies, says: "The one thing that the 2008 global economic crisis taught us was that jobs matter." As India is battling

COVID-19 and the widespread economic havoc caused by the outbreak, issues related to migrant workers remain to be addressed. Right from the movement to their respective villages, to generation of work opportunities for them post the lockdown, are some of the big challenges that have emerged.

The Government of Madhya Pradesh, under the leadership of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan, has become one of the first States to address the post-lockdown challenges with respect to migrant workers. He launched the Shram Siddhi Abhiyan on a virtual platform while interacting with *sarpanches* and labourers from across the State. Under this scheme, the workers will be categorised into skilled and unskilled, depending upon which the State Government would provide job opportunities. Unskilled workers would be provided with job opportunities under MNREGA whereas skilled labourers would be provided with

work according to their ability. Elaborating upon the meaning of the word, *sarpanch*, Chauhan said, "Sa' means *samandarshi* (impartial), 'ra' means *ratna* (gem), 'pa' means hard-working and 'ch' means watchman. The *sarpanch* plays an important role in protecting the village." According to Chauhan, these local institutions and their representatives will play a major role in the effective execution of various policies of the scheme and in reaching out to the last man in the village.

The State Government has also decided to provide five months' free ration to people who don't have ration cards. This will not only help the poor people tackle present-day challenges but will significantly reduce the burden on supply in rural parts of the State, as the consumption in rural areas would increase with the rise in the number of returnees.

According to the 2011 census, 72.3

per cent of the State's population is from rural areas. Therefore, the return of around five lakh migrant workers to the State would eventually increase the pressure on the rural economy, which is largely dependent on agriculture. The only way to ease this burden on the rural economy is by creating more jobs through increased investment opportunities in the State.

The State Government recently made 32 amendments in four State laws and 13 Central laws, which not only reduce the regular interference of Government officials but also create a healthy environment for investment in the private sector. Though a part of these reforms have been criticised by various trade unions and associations, the major focus should be on the output that would benefit the labourers as well. A reform does not necessarily mean complete scrapping of the law. Investment would help in creating more job opportunities in the State.

As per data, out of 22,809 gram panchayats in the State, MNREGA projects are going on in 22,695. So far 21,01,600 labourers have found employment. This is almost twice as compared to last year. Not only this, the State Government has also decided to restart the Sambhal Yojna, which was scrapped by the Congress-led Government.

This scheme primarily used to focus on workers employed in the informal sector but now it will be extended to migrant workers, too. Monetary help will be provided to the workers, right from the birth of a child to the death of a labourer. This not only highlights the proactive approach of the State Government in addressing futuristic challenges but also underlines the importance of social development for the deprived classes. Therefore, recent amendments to the labour laws and introduction of schemes like Shram Siddhi Abhiyan

would collectively address the challenges faced by the migrant workers and unemployed population of the State in the post-COVID phase.

Like the rest of the country, Madhya Pradesh, too, is at a very important juncture where it has to focus on the future and live through the present. So far, bringing the migrant workers home has proved to be one of the greatest efforts by the State Government. But the major challenge lies in effective implementation of policies. That depends on the systematic coordination between the executives and the locally-elected representatives. It would not only benefit the migrant and unemployed workers but also provide a sense of social security to them. Eventually, it would also revive the rural economy. As is often said, "The greatest opportunities lie in the most difficult challenge."

(The writer is Research Fellow at India Foundation)



FOREIGN EYE



SAVE JOBS AND THE PLANET

The harm from climate change is not as immediately obvious as that of the pandemic, but it is bigger. There are reports that the Treasury is looking at a "green industrial revolution" to create jobs. Leaving the lockdown will not be inherently climate-friendly but UK must make it so by decoupling future economic activity from carbon emissions and ecological destruction.

(The Guardian editorial)

EU: Not going to launch 'cold war' with China

Brussels: The EU's chief diplomat said on Wednesday he had assured China's Foreign Minister the bloc does not want a "cold war", as it accused Beijing of waging a coronavirus disinformation campaign.

Brussels says China and Russia have sought to undermine European democracy and burnish their own reputations during the pandemic with "targeted influence operations and disinformation campaigns".

The unusually blunt accusation came in an official EU strategy paper for tackling what officials say is a "flood" of false healthcare claims, conspiracy theories, fraud and hate speech surrounding the pandemic.

The report was published on Wednesday, a day after EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell held video talks with Chinese Foreign Minister

Wang Yi.

Borrell on Wednesday insisted the EU was "not starting anything" with China, and said he had reassured Wang during their talks.

"I told him: 'Don't worry, Europe is not going to embark on any kind of Cold War with China,'" Borrell said.

The report, which also calls on web giants such as Twitter and Facebook to do more to tackle disinformation, accuses Moscow and Beijing of "seeking to undermine democratic debate and exacerbate social polarisation, and improve their own image in the COVID-19 context".

The row raises tensions ahead of a video summit later this month between EU Council President Charles Michel and European Commission chief Ursula von

der Leyen and Chinese leaders.

EU-Chinese relations have hit a rocky patch as Brussels struggles to calibrate its response to Beijing's growing assertiveness under President Xi Jinping.

The bloc has characterised Beijing as a "systemic rival" — to the disgruntlement of Chinese officials — and sought to challenge it on human rights issues such as Tibet and Hong Kong.

But the EU has struggled to maintain a united front as 27 national governments pursue their own political and economic interests with the Asian giant.

Borrell, who in recent weeks has called for a "more robust" EU stance on China and warned Beijing does not share European values, said Governments needed to wise up. **AFP**

Columbus statue toppled in Virginia

Virginia: A statue of Christopher Columbus in Virginia has been torn down by protesters, who then set it on fire and threw it into a lake, in the latest action against monuments in the wake of George Floyd's death.

The statue, in the city of Richmond, was toppled on Tuesday night less than two hours after protesters gathered in the city's Byrd Park were chanting for it to be taken down, according to reports.

Protesters used several ropes to remove the statue, with a sign that reads "Columbus represents genocide" placed on the spray-painted foundation that once held the figure. It was then set on fire and rolled into a lake in the park, NBC 12 reported.

Elsewhere, another statue of Columbus in Boston's Atlantic Avenue in Massachusetts was beheaded.

Columbus is venerated in several states in the US for his exploration of the Americas but has also provoked more recent controversy over his role in killing, kidnapping and looting around the Caribbean islands and the American mainland in the 15th century.

Native American advocates



A demonstrator poses for a photo while visiting the site of protests near the White House in Washington on Wednesday **AP**

have also long pressed states to change Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day over concerns that Columbus spurred centuries of genocide against indigenous populations in the Americas.

In Richmond, activist Chelsea Higgs-Wise and other protesters spoke to a crowd gathered at Byrd Park about the

struggles of indigenous people and African Americans in America. "We have to start where it all began," Higgs-Wise said during her speech. "We have to start with the people who stood first on this land."

The Columbus statue was dedicated in Richmond in December 1927, and had been the first statue of Christopher

Columbus erected in the south. Its toppling comes amid national protests over the death of George Floyd and several days after a statue of the Confederate Gen Williams Carter Wickham was pulled from its pedestal in Monroe Park by demonstrators who also used ropes to tear it down. **AGENCY**

Merriam-Webster to redefine 'racism' after woman's plea

Jefferson City (US): Merriam-Webster is revising its definition of racism after a Missouri woman's emails claimed it fell short of including the systemic oppression of certain groups of people.

Kennedy Mitchum, who lives in the St Louis suburb Florissant, said people would argue with her about the definition of racism and she realized the problem was in the Merriam-Webster's dictionary, KMOV-TV reported.

"It's not just disliking someone because of their race," Mitchum wrote in a Facebook post. "This current fight we are in is evidence of that, lives are at stake because of the systems of oppression that go hand-in-hand with racism."

The revision comes against the backdrop of protests around the country against police brutality after the death of George Floyd, a black man who died after a Minneapolis police officer pinned his neck to the ground. **AP**

Tunisian parliament rejects bid for French colonial apology

AP ■ TUNIS

After a heated, 14-hour debate, Tunisia's parliament on Wednesday rejected a motion calling on France to apologize for crimes permitted during the colonial era and pay reparations.

Opponents argued that such a move would spell economic disaster, given that France is Tunisia's top trade partner and No. 1 foreign investor. It's also home to 1 million Tunisians.

But proponents of the motion said an apology is necessary to "turn the page on this dark period" in the history of the two countries and put their relations on a more equal footing.

The debate came amid renewed anger in some European countries about colonialism's crimes, stemming from protests in the U.S. Over racial injustice and police violence after George Floyd's death.

France occupied Tunisia as

a protectorate for 75 years, from 1881 until 1956. French soldiers only left Tunisian territory in 1963.

The motion to demand an "official and public apology from the French state for crimes, assassinations, torture, rape, forced deportation and looting of natural resources" was presented by the Islamist nationalist party Coalition Al Karama, which has just 19 lawmakers in the 217-seat assembly.

The debate was rejected early Wednesday after 14 hours of debate, with 77 legislators voting in favor, 46 abstentions and five votes against. To be adopted, it needed an absolute majority of 109 votes.

The bill also demanded "compensation to the Tunisian state and to all those who suffered the pain of colonization." "We are not animated by any bitterness or hatred, but such apologies will heal the wounds of the past," argued the president of Al Karama, Seifeddine Makhlof.

Sri Lanka sets August 5 date for parl polls

Colombo: Sri Lanka's twice-postponed parliamentary polls will now be held on August 5 by following the COVID-19 health guidelines, election commission chairman Mahinda Deshapriya announced on Wednesday.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on March 2 dissolved the Parliament, six months ahead of schedule, and called for snap polls on April 25. However, the election commission in mid-April postponed the elections by nearly two months to June 20 due to the coronavirus outbreak in the island nation.

The commission last month informed the apex court that the polls cannot be held on June 20 because of the raging coronavirus pandemic.

The new date was decided following a unanimous decision reached between the members of the NEC, Deshapriya told reporters on Wednesday.

"We have signed the gazette (announcing the date) and sent it to the government printer," he said. **PTI**

Over 200 Microsoft employees urge Nadella to cancel contracts with police

Washington: Over 200 Microsoft employees have urged CEO Satya Nadella to cancel the company's contracts with the Seattle police department and other law enforcement agencies amid widespread calls in the US to defund the police following the custodial killing of African-American George Floyd, according to a media report.

There has been a growing demand from a section of the Americans to defund the police after a white police officer knelt on Floyd's neck for over eight minutes despite his repeated pleas that he can't breathe on May 25 in Minneapolis.

The internal email, which included more than 250 employees, was sent on Monday, addressed to Nadella and executive Vice President Kurt DeBene, with the subject line "Our neighborhood has



been turned into a warzone", according to a report in OneZero.Medium, an online portal about tech and science.

The letter requests that Microsoft cancel the contracts with the Seattle Police Department (SPD) and other law enforcement agencies and asks the company to formally support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and calls for the resignation of the Seattle mayor.

"Every one of us in the CC line are either first hand witnesses or direct victims to the inhumane responses of SPD to peaceful protesting," the letter said, according to the copy

obtained by OneZero.

The employee who authored the email indicated that they live in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighbourhood, where protests have become increasingly violent, the report said.

"Those who choose to support the movement in ways other than boots-on-the-ground protests have also suffered the results of the SPD response," one employee wrote in the email thread.

In a statement from Microsoft, India-born Nadella said, "As a company, we need to look inside, examine our organisation, and do better."

In an earlier statement on June 1 condemning the protests, the 52-year-old Indian-origin Microsoft CEO said, "there is no place for hate and racism in our society. Empathy and shared understanding are a start, but we must do more." **PTI**

George Floyd's death is changing the world, brother says

Washington: Philonise Floyd, a brother of George Floyd, says he's testifying to Congress because he wants his brother's death to be "more than another name" on a growing list of those killed during interactions with police.

Floyd's appearance before a House hearing Wednesday comes a day after funeral services for George Floyd, who has become a worldwide symbol in demonstrations calling for changes to police practices and an end to racial prejudices.

If his death ends up changing the world for the better, And I think it will. I think it has. Then he died as he lived," Philonise Floyd says, according to an advance copy of his remarks.

He says he wants to make sure that his brother is "more

than another face on a t-shirt. More than another name on a list that won't stop growing." "I'm tired. I'm tired of the pain I'm feeling now and I'm tired of the pain I feel every time another black person is killed for no reason," Floyd said. "I'm here today to ask you to make it stop. Stop the pain. Stop us from being tired."

Floyd says, "The people marching in the streets are telling you enough is enough. Be the leaders that this country, this world, needs. Do the right thing." House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler gavelled in the session as Democrats review the Justice in Policing Act, a far-ranging package of proposals amid a national debate on policing and racial inequity in the United States. **AP**

Around the Globe

Kathmandu: Nepal's virus cases on Wednesday reached 4,364 with 279 people testing positive for the contagion in the last 24 hours, the Health Ministry said.

Harare: Authorities in Zimbabwe have started publicly naming people who have escaped from quarantine centers and urging the public to report them to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

London: Non-essential retail shops, zoos, safari parks and drive-in cinemas are among the public places allowed to open up again within COVID-secure settings from next Monday, the UK government said as it lays out plans for its next phase of lifting the strict lockdown measures in place to control the spread of coronavirus.

Berlin: Germany is prolonging its travel warning for more than 160 countries outside Europe until the end of August.

Beijing: Flooding in south and central China has caused more than a dozen deaths and forced hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, the government said on Wednesday. About 228,000 people have had to seek emergency shelter due to flooding since June 2.

Pak records highest single-day spike of 5,387 cases; WHO urges 'intermittent lockdown'

Islamabad: Pakistan has registered its highest single-day spike of coronavirus cases with over 5,000 infections in the last 24 hours, a day after the World Health Organisation urged the government to follow an "intermittent lockdown" policy to stem the spike in the disease.

According to the Ministry of National Health Services, 83 more COVID-19 patients died during the same period, taking the death toll to 2,255 and 5,387 new patients were detected in the last 24 hours.

A total of 36,308 patients have also recovered so far from the disease across the country, the ministry said.

Out of the total 113,702 cases, Punjab has registered 43,460 patients, Sindh 41,303, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa 14,527, Balochistan 7,031, Islamabad 5,963, Gilgit-Baltistan 974 and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir 444.

The Ministry said that 23,799 tests were done in the last 24 hours, taking the tally of total tests in the country to

754,252.

The virus is spreading fast but the government has refused a proposal by the World Health Organisation to follow the "intermittent lockdown" policy of two-week lockdown followed by two-week relaxation on alternate basis.

In a letter to Punjab province Health Minister Yasmin Rashid dated June 7, WHO Country Head, Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala said the coronavirus has spread to almost all districts in the country with big cities making up the majority of the cases.

Mahipala has recommended an "intermittent lockdown" approach.

However, advisor on Health Zafar Mirza told the media that "no such policy is under consideration".

The WHO country head pointed out that after the partial relaxation on May 1, and complete relaxation on May 22 the infection rate has increased on both occasions. **PTI**

African virus cases pass 2,00,000, still climbing

Johannesburg: Africa's coronavirus cases have surpassed 200,000.

That's according to the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The 54-nation continent has 202,782 cases and 5,516 deaths.

While Africa still represents a tiny percentage of the world's total COVID-19 cases, well under 5%, officials in South Africa and elsewhere have expressed concern as the number of infections continues to climb.

South Africa leads the continent with 52,991 cases, with almost two-thirds of them in the Western Cape province centered on the city of Cape Town.

Egypt has 36,829 cases and Nigeria has 13,464. **AP**

Malaysia reopens after 3-month lockdown

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia reopened nearly all economic and social activities Wednesday after a nearly three-month lockdown successfully brought down viral infections.

Malaysians can now travel for domestic holidays, get haircuts and shop at street markets. Schools and religious activities also will gradually resume.

While happy to be back at work, hairstylist Shirley Chai she is nervous about the strict health rules for hairdressers, especially the one-hour limit for each client.

"I couldn't sleep at all last night. Very excited because everything is changing," she said at her salon in a Kuala Lumpur shopping mall.

Malaysia has entered a "recovery" phase until the end of August with certain prohibitions still in place, but officials warn restrictions will be reinstated if infections soar again. **AP**

Suspected Boko Haram fighters kill 69 in Nigeria's northeast

Maiduguri (Nigeria): Suspected members of the Islamic extremist group Boko Haram have killed at least 69 people in Nigeria's northeast, residents said on Wednesday.

Tuesday's attack in Foduma Kolomaiya village in the Gubio area of Borno state likely was in retaliation for resistance against an assault weeks ago, residents said.

"They came on motorcycles and vehicles and killed people at will in an attack that

lasted more than two hours," said Rabiu Isa, a member of a local defence force.

"In all we counted 69 corpses but the death toll may be higher because some people are still missing." Many others were wounded.

A leader of the local defence group, Malam Bunu, said the fighters returned Wednesday morning to kill a herdsman who had escaped the massacre.

"Then set the entire village

ablaze before they left," Bunu said. "As I am talking to you now, the village is still smoking." Gubio lies nearly 100 kilometers (62 miles) northwest of Maiduguri, the Borno state capital. Residents are mostly herders who have resisted Boko Haram hostilities over the years.

After the initial attack nearly 1,200 cattle were stolen, Bunu said. An air force fighter jet fired shots at the fleeing fighters, he said. **AP**

SWEDEN HALTS PROBE INTO 1986 MURDER OF PM OLOF PALME

Stockholm: Sweden on Wednesday dropped its investigation into the unsolved murder of former Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme, who was shot dead 34 years ago in downtown Stockholm, saying that decision was made because the main suspect died in 2000.

Palme was gunned down on Feb 28, 1986, after he and his wife Lisbet Palme left a movie theater in the Swedish capital. The murder shocked

the nation and shook the Scandinavian country's image as being so safe and peaceful that politicians could wander around in public without protection.

More than 100 people have been suspected in the crime and the unsolved case has been surrounded by conspiracy theories, ranging from foreign involvement, rogue Swedish police with right-wing sympathies to an act by a lone shooter.

The case was being closed because the main suspect, Stig Engstrom, died in 2000, the case's chief prosecutor, Krister Petersson, told a news conference in Stockholm on Wednesday.

"Stig Engstrom is deceased, and therefore I am not able to start proceedings or even interview him, that is why I decided to discontinue the investigation," Petersson told reporters. "Since he has died, I cannot indict him." **AP**

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Kitab Singh, S/o Late Bhagwana, R/o D-1/455-456, Sultanpuri, Delhi, Age: 80 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Mentally weak, wearing White T-Shirt, Grey Pajama and Black Shoes in feet, has been missing/kidnapped from area of P.S. Sultanpuri, Delhi, since 07.04.2020. In this regard a DD No. 112-A, dated 07.04.2020 has been registered at P.S. Sultanpuri, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO P.S. Sultanpuri, Delhi DP/133/OD/2020 Ph. No.: 011-25472410, 25472166

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead at Main Road, Chandni Chowk, Infront of Shishganj Gurudwara, Delhi on 05.06.2020. In this regard a DD No. 26A, Dated 05.06.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved in mortuary of Subzi Mandi, Delhi for 72 hrs. for identification. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 30-35 years, **Height:** 5'2" Feet, **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **Hair:** Black, **Wearing:** Red colour T-shirt and Yellow colour Pajama.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O P.S. Kotwali, Delhi Ph.: 8750870121 DP/263/IN/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) namely **Jyoti D/o Sh. Shankar R/o Deepak Rathi Ka Makan, NDPL Wali Gali, Ishwar Colony, Bawana, Delhi Aged-About 18 Years has been reported missing since 26.05.2020 at 3:30 PM from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi vide FIR No. 333/20 U/S 363 IPC Dated 27.05.2020 has been lodged at Police Station Bawana, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:-**

Complexion: Shallow, **Height:** 5'1", **Built:** Strong, **Face:** Oval, **Wearing:** Blue coloured jeans pant & gray coloured t-shirt and brown coloured slipper in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Bawana, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Sd/- SHO, Bawana, Delhi Tel.: 011-27752534 DP/250/ON/2020 Mob.: 7065036321

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Saloni D/o Late Neeraj Kumar R/o 311, Village Nangal Thakran Pana Milkan Lal Chowk, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 28.05.2020 at 2.50 PM from the area of P.S. Bawana, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 338/20 dated 29.05.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi. The description of missing/kidnapped girl is as under :**

Name : Saloni, **Father's Name :** Lt. Neeraj Kumar, **Age :** 17 years, **6 month, Height :** 5'2", **Face :** Round, **Complexion :** Fair, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing :** Black colour Kurti & shky blue colour spax Chappal in feet.

If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
e-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641

SHO P.S., Bawana, Delhi Ph.: 011-27751949 27756090 DP/252/ON/2020

S&P keeps India's rating intact at lowest 'BBB-'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Global rating agency S&P on Wednesday retained India's sovereign rating at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-' for the 13th year in a row, even as it said the economy and fiscal position will stabilise and begin to recover from 2021 onwards. Affirming the outlook "stable", it said though risks to long-term growth are rising, India's ratings reflect the country's above-average real GDP growth, sound external profile and evolving monetary settings. S&P Global Ratings has forecast India's economy to shrink by 5 per cent in the current fiscal. It, however, has projected GDP growth to be 8.5 per cent in 2021-22 and 6.5 per cent in 2022-23. The Indian economy grew at the slowest pace in 11 years at 4.2 per cent in 2019-20. "While risks to India's long-term growth rate are rising, ongoing economic reforms, if executed well, should keep the country's growth rate ahead of peers," S&P said in a statement. Affirming 'BBB-' long-term and 'A-3' short-term foreign and local currency sovereign credit ratings on India, S&P said

it "reflects the country's above-average real GDP growth, sound external profile, and evolving monetary settings". "India's strong democratic institutions promote policy stability and compromise and also underpin the ratings. These strengths are balanced against vulnerabilities stemming from the country's low per capita income and consistently elevated fiscal deficits that contribute to high general government debt, net of liquid assets," S&P said. The rating affirmation comes within days of Moody's Investors Service downgrading by a notch India's sovereign rating to the lowest investment grade with negative, citing growing risks that Asia's third-largest economy will face a prolonged period of slower growth amid rising debt and persistent stress in parts of the financial system. Fitch Ratings too has a 'BBB-' rating on India, with a stable outlook. Fitch Ratings also forecast a 5 per cent contraction in India's GDP in 2020-21 fiscal and a rebound in the next to 9.5 per cent growth. S&P said the economic hit from COVID-19 will exacerbate India's weak fiscal settings, but the country will get into the path of fiscal consolidation over the next three years. "The stable outlook reflects our expectation that India's economy will recover following the containment of COVID-19 pandemic and the country will maintain its sound net external position. The stable outlook also assumes that the government's fiscal deficit will recede markedly following a multi-year high in the fiscal year 2021," S&P said. S&P said the global economic downturn resulting from the pandemic, along with strict domestic measures aimed at containing the spread of the local epidemic, are hitting the economy hard, and will likely result in a significant fall in activity in the first quarter of this fiscal year (i.e. Three months from April 1, 2020). "Productive capacity has been severely disrupted during this period, and millions of workers have left their jobs to return home, sometimes crossing the country to do so. India's labour markets have therefore weakened dramatically, and may take some time to heal," S&P said.

SUPREME COURT TO RBI

Allow banks to disburse loans to Amrapali homebuyers

PIANS ■ NEW DELHI

In a relief for embattled home buyers, who are yet to claim possession of their houses in the stalled Amrapali Group projects, the Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the banks to release loans given to the homebuyers, which were declared as non-performing assets (NPAs). A bench, headed by Justice Arun Mishra and comprising Justice UU Lalit, pointed out that banks have certain reservations regarding the funding of NPA accounts. "In view of current social and economic conditions, the court may direct the RBI to keep its circulars/guidelines relating to NPA in abeyance and permit all banking and financial institutions, etc. to disburse loans to home buyers notwithstanding the status of accounts as NPAs," said the top court in its 36-page judgement. The bench noted the restructuring of the loans should be done as per the RBI's present norms. It directed the banks and financial institutions to release loans to home buyers. Those loans have been sanctioned, notwithstanding the fact that their accounts are declared as NPAs. "Let there be restructuring of the loan amount. It may be released under

the current norms of the RBI for releasing loans and the rates fixed by the RBI," added the bench. The top court observed that banks and financial institutions be directed to work out a long-term restructuring of all home buyers' loans in Amrapali projects as well as any charges on the Amrapali projects held by banks and financial institutions. Counsel appearing for the banks pointed out that they are ready to release the loan to the home buyers. However, they would release the loan to a particular home buyer in a phased manner and as per the stage of construction. Homebuyers' counsel

Kumar Mihir said: "The judgement clarifies a lot of issues regarding funding and once banks implement this order, the work can start on all the projects." The top court-appointed receiver submitted that the RBI may be directed to advise all banks and financial institutions such as insurance companies, and employers of the establishments which have sanctioned home loans to home buyers to disburse all balance loan amounts to the home buyers whose accounts are regular, and that they will abide by instructions issued by the receiver in this regard. The court said: "The disbursement of further loans

may be based on the present rate of interest fixed by the RBI; this we order in the peculiar facts of the case. It may be released stage-wise and long-term restructuring of the loans may be done so that construction is completed and buyers are able to repay the loan." The top court also provided relief to the real estate companies which have not completed many housing projects in Noida and Greater Noida. The court said that Noida Authority should not charge heavy rate of interest from the real estate companies for the delay in the payment, and the rate should be kept at 8 per cent.

Central Govt undertakes skill mapping to help workers

Central Govt undertakes skill mapping to help workers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Government is undertaking a comprehensive skill mapping exercise of labourers in conjunction with States as part of efforts to provide them work opportunities closer to their homes, officials said. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is working through its implementation arm, the National Skill Development Corporation, in partnership with an artificial intelligence company on creating a platform to map skilled and certified workers with demand clusters based on industrial requirements. "We are initially exploring this exercise with our sector skill councils. The skill management information system aims to create a local ecosystem in every region to minimise the need to depend on migrants, as well as to provide workers with opportunities closer to their homes," said an official. The initiative will help both companies and workers, said Government authorities, adding that as businesses start resuming operations, there is an increased need for skilled professionals and the platform will help meet this demand.

Petrol price hiked by 40 paise per litre, diesel by 45 paise

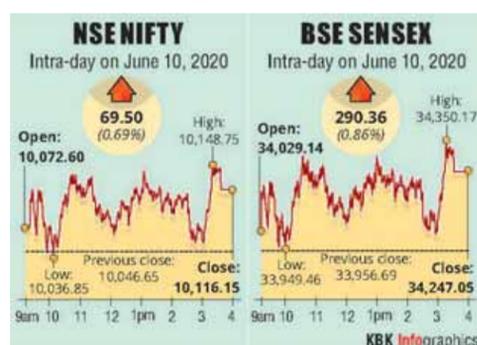
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price on Wednesday was hiked by 40 paise per litre and diesel by 45 paise, the fourth straight daily increase in rates after oil PSUs ended an 82-day hiatus in rate revision. Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to ₹73.40 per litre from ₹73, while diesel rates were increased to ₹71.62 a litre from ₹71.17, according to a price notification of State oil marketing companies. Rates have been increased across the country and vary from State to State depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT. This is the fourth daily increase in rates in a row since oil companies on Sunday restarted revising prices in line with costs, after ending an 82-day hiatus.

Markets tick higher as bank stocks spurt; Fed policy eyed

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices resumed their upward trend on Wednesday after a one-day pause as Reliance Industries and bank stocks saw robust demand amid mixed global cues. Overcoming a choppy start, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled 290.36 points, or 0.86 per cent, higher at 34,247.05. Similarly, the NSE Nifty climbed 69.50 points, or 0.69 per cent, to 10,116.15. IndusInd Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 7.93 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, Reliance Industries, HDFC, Axis Bank and SBI. On the other hand, Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj Auto, Tata Steel and ONGC were among the laggards, skidding up to 3.92 per cent. Global markets were mixed ahead of the US Federal Reserve's latest policy outcome, which will be the first since the US began to reopen and the first since Friday's blockbuster jobs report. Buying in bank stocks led benchmarks higher during the day, traders said. Persistent foreign fund inflows too buoyed the sentiment, they added. On a net basis, foreign institutional



investors bought equities worth ₹490.81 crore on Tuesday, provisional exchange data showed. "Bulls firmly in control today and heartening to see some of the stressed private sector banks as well as public sector banks rally ferociously which apparently means things are in fact not as bad as it is made out to be. "Improved market breadth in itself presents several opportunities for savvy investors," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities. BSE bankex, realty, finance, energy and healthcare indices rose up to 1.79 per cent, while auto, metal, oil and gas, capital goods and consumer durables settled up to 1 per cent lower. Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rose up to 0.92 per cent. In rest of Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the red, while Seoul and Tokyo settled with gains. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a negative note in early deals. International oil benchmark Brent crude futures tumbled 2.26 per cent to USD 40.25 per barrel. On the currency front, the rupee settled on a flat note at 75.59 against the US dollar. The COVID-19 death toll rose to 7,745 and the number of cases climbed to 2,76,583 in the country on Wednesday, according to the Union Health Ministry.

Need strong fixed line infra, wifi hotspots in rural areas for robust connectivity: TRAI chief

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India needs to strengthen its fixed line infrastructure that currently transports only 6-7 per cent data against the global average of 46 per cent, TRAI Chairman RS Sharma said on Wednesday. Sharma also called global companies like Facebook, Google and Amazon showing interest in the telecom space as an "interesting phenomenon". India has created many digital systems that are churning out huge amounts of data, and the country will have its own use cases for 5G, tapping into opportunities in multiple areas like Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, big data, healthcare and others, Sharma said while addressing ASSOCHAM webinar on 'Digital: The next revolution'. On spectrum, he said that the regulator has already given its recommendations, including for 5G radio waves, and it is for the government to take the necessary steps. "Up to 4G there is

no dearth of spectrum, we have even given recommendation for 5G. Of course, telecom operators always keep saying you have given high reserve price... As far as we are concerned the horse has left the stable. It is with the government, and they will take the necessary steps," he said. Sharma rued that India has only 100,000 wifi hotspots as compared with France, which has 1.8 million hotspots. "...we need inclusive policy, wifi hotspots in remote and rural areas will be one of the steps to ensure that digital connectivity is available to everybody at their reach," Sharma said. More needs to be done on fixed line connectivity, he added. "India is a peculiar country where you have 1.2 billion mobile connections and we boast that our mobile networks are transporting data more than mobile networks of US and China put together.

Centre extends validity of certain e-way bills till June-end

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Govt has for the third time extended the validity of e-way bills generated on or before March 24 till June 30. "Provided that where an e-way bill has been generated under rule 138 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Rules, 2017 on or before the 24th day of March, 2020 and whose validity has expired on or after the 20th March, 2020, the validity period of such e-way bill shall be deemed to have been extended till the 30th day of June, 2020," the Central Board of Indirect Taxes said in a notification. CBIC had in April extended the validity of e-way bills generated on or before March 24 and having expiry between March 20 and April 15 till April 30. Last month, it was further extended till May 31. In another notification, the CBIC has granted time till June 30 for rejecting refunds where the time limit for issuance of ofalls between March 20 and June 29, 2020. While ₹115.21 crore was garnered by way of levying a fee on ATM transactions, the bank said in a response to a Right to Information filed by Madhya Pradesh-based RTI activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur. In response to a query about the AMC on debit cards, New Delhi-based PNB said, "AMC for Punjab National Bank is ₹150 per year plus taxes. AMC for Kisan Credit Cards, Mudra, PMJDY and cards issued under other Government schemes is nil."

Annual maintenance fee in FY20 PNB collected ₹268 cr as ATM transaction charges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab National Bank collected around ₹268 crore as ATM transaction charges and annual maintenance fee on debit cards during 2019-20 fiscal, according to an RTI reply. The public sector lender collected ₹152.88 crore from customers by levying annual maintenance charges (AMC) on debit cards. While ₹115.21 crore was garnered by way of levying a fee on ATM transactions, the bank said in a response to a Right to Information filed by Madhya Pradesh-based RTI activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur. In response to a query about the AMC on debit cards, New Delhi-based PNB said, "AMC for Punjab National Bank is ₹150 per year plus taxes. AMC for Kisan Credit Cards, Mudra, PMJDY and cards issued under other Government schemes is nil."

Revision in the route of 02925/02926

New Delhi: It is notified for the information of the all concerned that the 02925/02926 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Special Express (Paschim Express) train will run via Ambala Cantt -Chandigarh-Amritsar instead of Ambala Cantt-Rajpura-Amritsar from October 5, 2020, from Bandra Terminus and from October 7, 2020, from Amritsar. Due to revision in route, existing stoppage of 02925/02926 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Special Express (Paschim Express) at Ambala City.

KIND ATTENTION RAIL PASSENGERS!

IMPORTANT PUBLIC NOTICE

In order to ensure safe and comfortable journey for our bonafide passengers, they have been advised to reach their designated railway station viz. New Delhi, Delhi Jn., Anand Vihar, Hazrat Nizamuddin and Delhi Sarai Rohilla Stations, 90 minutes before the departure of their train. It has been observed that many passengers arrive at station 8-10 hours before the departure of their train causing overcrowding inside the station premises and queue outside the station, thus making it difficult to maintain the mandatory norm of social distancing. Passengers are therefore advised that in case its unavoidable, they may come maximum of 4 hours before the departure of train. The entry in the station premises before 4 hours of the departure of their train shall not be allowed, as is being followed in case of Airports. This is being implemented for the larger benefit of our valued bonafide passengers as a short term measure.

Railway Enquiry No. 139 Security Helpline No. 182

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Serving Customers with a Smile

Aro granite industries Ltd.
(CIN L74899DL1988PLC031510)
Regd. Office: 1001, 10th Floor, DLF Tower A, Jasola, New Delhi 110025
Phone: 91-11-41886169 Fax: 91-11-26941984
E-mail: investorgrievance@arogilite.com Website: www.arogilite.com

NOTICE TO THE MEMBERS - UPDATE E-MAIL AND OTHER INFORMATION

In furtherance of Green Initiative of the Government and in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (Act) and the uncertain situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Company proposes to send all the documents like Annual Reports, General Meeting Notices and other communication to the Members in electronic form, whose e-mail addresses are Registered with the Depository Participant (DP) or with the Company. We once again request the Member(s) who have not yet registered their e-mail addresses, particulars of active bank account and other relevant details in response to various Notices sent by the Company pursuant to the SEBI Mandate, to promptly register the same with their DP or the Company or with the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agent: M/s. Alankit Assignments Limited, 3E7, Alankit Heights, Jhandewalan Extension, New Delhi-110055 (RTA) and also provide the following details to the Company through e-mail at investorgrievance@arogilite.com or ria@alankit.com / ramap@alankit.com:

First / Sole Shareholder Name :	
Registered Folio No. :	
Address with PIN Code :	
E-Mail :	
PAN :	
Contact No. :	
Particulars of Bank Account	
(a) Bank Name :	
(b) Branch Name and its Address :	
(c) Telephone No. :	
(d) Bank Account No. :	
(e) IFSC Code of Bank Branch :	
(f) MICR No. :	

Please provide self attested copies of PAN Card, cancelled cheque with Name or first page of pass book (if name of first holder is not appearing on cancelled cheque) and address proof (Aadhar Card/Voter ID card, Passport, Utility Bill).

This initiative is in mutual interest of both the Member and the Company. The Members will instantly get all communications sent by the Company through e-mail and also get direct credit of the Dividends as may be declared by the Company, from time to time to their Bank Account. On request, we shall also provide you all communications under the Act in physical form. Trust, the Members will appreciate and immediately respond in their own interest.

For **Aro granite industries Ltd.**

Place: New Delhi Date: 10.06.2020	Sabyasachi Panigrahi Company Secretary
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Note: Members are also requested to keep the DP/Company/RTA informed as and when there is any change in above mentioned details.

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)
E-Tender No. 2019RS18743TC
CORRIGENDUM NO. 1

1.0 Eligibility Criteria indicated in Clause 14.2 of General Tender Conditions of Bid document of e-Tender No. 2019RS18743TC may be treated as cancelled and replaced by the Eligibility Criteria as given in Corrigendum No. 1 on IREPS website, uploaded on 10.06.2020.

2.0 All other terms and conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.

Executive Director, Railway Stores (S),
Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi 1335/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Unknown S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown** was found dead in front of Nigam Bodh Ghat, Kashmere Gate, Delhi on 03.06.2020 in the area of P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. In this regard a case has been lodged vide **DD No. 23A U/s 174 Cr.P.C dated 03.06.2020** at P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under:- **Age: 45 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Grey colour shirt and multi colour lungi.** If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

SHO
P.S. Kashmere Gate, Delhi
Ph: 011-23967889, 8750870123

DP/266/N/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that a boy (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Magesh S/o : Lt. Pasram R/o : O-166, Sector-1, DSIIIDC, Bawana, Delhi** has been missing since 16.05.2020 from the jurisdiction of P.S. Bawana, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 334/20 dated 27.05.2020 has been registered at Police Station Bawana, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:- **Age: 16 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built : Medium, Identification: A Tattoo of "Magesh" on left hand.** Any person having any information/Clue about this missing boy, may inform **SHO, Bawana, Delhi** at E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in or Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

SHO
011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
Outer North Distt., Delhi
Ph. No. 011-27752534

DP/247/ON/2020

SIIDCUL-29, IIE, SAHASTRADHARA ROAD (IT PARK), DEHRADUN
Phone No. 0135 - 2708100 Fax No. 0135 - 2708109 Web site : www.siidcul.com

NIT No : 31/SIIDCUL/2020 **TENDER NOTICE**

SIIDCUL invites online bids for Supply, Installation with socketing, Testing & Commissioning of Haulage Rope at Madan Negi Tipri Ropeway at Tehri. Detailed bid document can be downloaded from website of SIIDCUL www.siidcul.com or www.uktenders.gov.in. Last date of submission **13.07.2020, 02.00 PM**. Corrigendum if any will be published on above mentioned websites.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

RAJASTHAN STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Head Office, Parivahan Marg, Chomu House, Jaipur

RFP for Supply, Deploy and Maintenance of FASTag on RSRTC Buses

Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC), Jaipur invites bids from eligible bidders who have necessary qualifications and experience to carry out the work for **RFP for Supply, Deploy and Maintenance of FASTag on RSRTC buses** in a time bound manner. Details of this tender notifications and eligibility criteria can be seen in the NIT exhibited on website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://transport.rajasthan.gov.in/rsrtc> and <https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> from 06 June 2020 onward.

UBN No. - RT C2021WSO00014
Raj.Samwad/C20/906 दिनांक संज्ञा 11/2020-21 Dy. General Manager (IT)

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking)
Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001
Tel: (0135) 2763672-75 (Ext. No. 211 & 126) Website: www.uktdndres.gov.in
E-mail ID: cgmup@yahoo.com CIN : U40109UR2001SGC025867

Corrigendum against tender for Client Membership for Purchase of Power from Power Exchange(s) through traders/utilities (Indian Energy Exchange and Power Exchange of India Ltd.) No. 07/CE(COMM)/UPCL-07/2020-2021

The slight modifications have been made against tender specification No. 07/CE(COMM)/UPCL-07/2020-2021 is as under:-

Sl. No.	Venue	Superintending Engineer (Commercial), UPCL, Victoria Cross Vijeta Gabar Singh Urja Bhawan, Kanwali Road, Dehradun-248001
1.	Last date and time for purchase of bid documents	15.06.2020 upto 17:00 Hrs.
2.	Last date and time of submission of tender document	16.06.2020 upto 13:00 Hrs.
3.	Date and time of opening of tender document	16.06.2020 at 15:00 Hrs.

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

SE (Commercial)
No. 259/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Dated: 09.06.2020

SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION, Use LED Bulb, Save Electricity (Toll Free No. 1912) "Pay Electricity bill online 24x7 from www.upcl.org. (For information on Electricity Theft, informer may report to Toll Free No. 18001804185 / Fax No. 0135-2760911

Trend Blazer

Abhay against our caste system

Actor **ABHAY DEOL** feels people in India should raise their voice against the caste system in the country.

The actor also stressed that Black Lives Matter movement is all for equality, not preference.

"All life is supposed to have equal value, but we have seen enough evidence time and again, that it's not always the case with black lives. 400 years of slavery has left their communities with little opportunity," Abhay wrote in his post, through which he tried to explain the problem with #AllLivesMatter.

He added, "The @bklivesmatter movement is all for equality, not preference!"



The right to live as a human and earn a livelihood is asserting itself despite the mad swirl of the virus that is threatening just that. And so it is that India, despite seeing an unprecedented spike in the virus, is daring to live with it, choosing life over fear. Doors to some malls and shopping multiplexes in non-containment zones in the country were thrown open to the public after a lockdown of 2.5 months on June 8. Around 250 malls were made operational from the 650-odd large malls over 100,000 sqft, ensuring all measures for customer safety. A portfolio of norms was forwarded to all the opening malls by the Shopping Centres Authority of India (SCAI), taking innovative measures to ensure sanitisation of everything in malls, from shoes to tires.

However, given that the cases in the country have been rising by thousands each day, are the malls even gaining enough footfalls? Has the public been able to walk in fearlessly? Well, looking at the statistics, the results vary hugely as per the geography and the hotspot areas. Clearly, the confidence level is low in metros, which are badly swamped. Those who stepped out here were mostly young people. But in low incidence areas, people did venture out tentatively.

Phoenix Mills Ltd witnessed an overall 2,000 footfalls in its mall at Bengaluru. "The customers appeared to be excited and shopped in good numbers," as per the mall authorities. They also mentioned that customers were not too large in numbers during weekdays. However, they are waiting for the next weekend to gain a better idea about the situation. Accordingly, they will analyse and prepare themselves for the future. They highlighted that customers have been disciplined, observing all the guidelines and are adhering to it.

Select Citywalk, Saket, New Delhi, reported that 50 per cent of the total shops opened on the first day and the rest will open in the coming days. Middle-aged and elderly people were lesser in number though youngsters visited in huge numbers. Electronics, apparel and cosmetics showed good sales. It reported that the customers showed good adaptability to the absence of changing rooms. As per data by SCAI, brands like H&M showed good sales. Many Apple phones and MacBooks have also been sold.

Given a high number of cases in the city, extra attention to customer safety has been ensured inside the mall premises. A disinfection tunnel has been installed by the DRDO at the entrance. Going through the tunnel, however, is not compulsory but a choice. It is mandatory for people to remain below the tunnel for 20 seconds before entering the mall. The disinfection tunnel is about seven feet.

Anuva Mehra, a resident of Malviya Nagar, who visited the mall on Tuesday, said, "I liked how the arrangements were made to help people enter the mall with a sense of relief and safety. I believe that all such steps are important to be followed religiously. The crowd entering



UNLOCKING THE FEAR

TEAM VIVA analyses footfalls and the public response as shoppers revisit malls after a long time, reclaiming a bit of the old



the malls should also be handled properly."

DLF Shopping Malls said in a statement that they will reopen their gates in a phased manner by the week-end. It said, "We will take this week to open our malls across Delhi and NCR in a phased manner. All arrangements will be made to ensure the safety of shoppers."

Mall of Travancore mentioned that it was seeing a lot of customers walking in and the supermarket is getting good number of footfalls. Retailers at the mall have also reported positive results for their first-day sales.

The Junction Mall, Durgapur, told us that people are shopping with them even though Kolkata isn't very safe at the moment but they adhered to the strict guidelines which the mall has implemented for safety. Looking at the footfalls on day one, authorities are hopeful that the number will rise in the com-

ing days. However, looking at the customer reactions, they are mixed. While some believe that safety can be ensured by following proper guidelines and taking all necessary steps, some are still fearful about what may come. A footfall of over 3,000 has been reported till now (70 per cent footfall on day one).

Mall of Amritsar, Punjab, reported more than 50 per cent of the footfalls covered till second half of the first day. They have marked the parking areas and are following all the guidelines. The mall has also installed various centres for sanitisation within its premise. The mall authorities said, "The first few days are crucial for customers to get accustomed to the new rules and regulations. They have trained everyone from retailers to outsource staff. They didn't face any challenges till yet." Looking at the products they are buying, Mall of Amritsar saw customers buying more apparel and cosmetics. As per SCAI's data, brands like Nykaa and Shopper's Stop showed good sales.

Moving further, Pacific Mall, Dehradun, saw customers enjoying their visit to the mall after a long time. It witnessed a "decent" footfall. The numbers haven't been too high but good to begin with.

While the reactions received in the past three days have been a mix of both good and bad, there are some cases where the fear still lingers more than excitement of getting out of the home. For Phoenix United Mall, Lucknow, the first hour was a little difficult as it saw less customers. However, later in the day, it saw 1,500 customers till 4 pm. Two stores of the mall crossed ₹10 lakh sales. Retailers looked quite excited. Food courts were opened with bigger retailers. While brands like KFC and Pizza Hut are doing well, salons are also following regular disinfection by using fresh towels and PPE kits, hence, grabbing more footfalls.

Ramit Mishra, a local resident, who visited the Phoenix United on day one, said, "There is certainly a sense of fear and anxiety in public right now but this is how the reality is going to be in the coming future. We have to learn to live with this new virus and make terms with such a safety-conscious world. We have still seen enough of the free world but I urge new parents to adopt a new lifestyle where shopping and eating out will have new definitions and also, teach the same to the future generations. This will make it easier for the children to adapt to healthy and safe habits. Entering and roaming around malls will never be the same."

On the other hand, the DLF Mall of India, Noida, didn't open. It is following every guideline given by the government and SCAI. It shall be opening the mall soon in the coming days. Customer confidence is their focus and owners are making sure that all customers feel safe coming to the mall. They have developed an app that will display the holding capacity of the customers in the mall. It shows red, green, and yellow alerts, which decide the customer entrance possibilities. The app gives access to customers from home as well as from outside the mall.

'I decided to turn producer because I wanted to leverage the position that I had — to produce good films and not for me to star in. I'd wonder why a certain type of films were not being written. I realised it was not very common for great roles to be constantly written for women in our industry. So, I wanted to take this step.'

—Anushka Sharma

Actor **SIDHARTH MALHOTRA** is a big fan of **Amitabh Bachchan**.

Sidharth conducted an interactive session with fans where he answered many questions about himself.

When a user asked him about who's his favourite actor, Sidharth responded by saying, "Amitabh Bachchan."

He also shared his views about his film *Brothers* and co-star **Akshay Kumar**, who he said is like a "big brother."

Sidharth will be seen next in *SherShaah*, which is based on the life of Param Vir Chakra-awardee **Vikram Batra**.



Judi now in 'good spirits'

Actor **JUDI EVANS**, who is known for portraying **Adrienne Kiriakis** in the show *Days Of Our Lives*, nearly had both her legs amputated while battling COVID-19.

Evans' representative said that the 55-year-old actor spent the past 23 days in the hospital after testing positive for the deadly virus.

adding, "She had what is known as the COVID blood clots in her legs and she nearly had both legs amputated on two different occasions. She had mild symptoms — fever, aches, a cough and the blood clots."

The representative also shared that she is in "good spirits" after a terrible month, which included surgery while she was still conscious.



The recent tragedy with the pregnant elephant in the Palakkad Hills of Kerala has brought elephants back into the spotlight for simple concerns like the environment, the need for conservation and the protection of wildlife at all times.

Amid this, a post by Dheeraj Paul had more than 1,000 likes on Instagram. The image was that of a tusker and a baby in the National Park in Kenya (2017). The images showed elephants among forest corridors and vast acres of land for them to walk in and a water body nearby so that they could quench their thirst. However, it's pity to see how their living conditions change when they are close to human habitation and in turn, danger.

Train accidents in India

Another tragic accident could be traced back to 2010 when a group of seven elephants was being run over by a goods train in West Bengal. Hit by a Guwahati goods train in Jalpaiguri district in West Bengal, the tragic incident marked the highest number of elephants killed in a single train accident, once again highlighting the propensity of this threat to them in the country. Reports state that more than 160 elephants have been killed in train accidents in India since 1987.

African and Asian population upheaval

Looking at the world statistics, the WWF observes that while some population in Africa are secure and expanding, primarily in southern Africa, numbers are continuing to fall in other areas, particularly in central Africa and parts of East Africa. With an estimated 4,15,000 elephants left on the continent (as per 2015 data), the species is regarded as vulnerable, although certain populations are

Lighten the heavy trunk

Comparing the population statistics of the past years and the recent tragedy with the pregnant elephant in Palakkad Hills, human habitation has time and again proved to be a danger for the species, says **UMA NAIR**



being poached and are headed towards extinction. This is largely due to the illegal ivory trade.

Asian elephant numbers have dropped by at least 50 per cent over the last three generations and continue to decline. With only 40,000-50,000 left in the wild, the species has now been classified as endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The Great Elephant Census

One of the icons of the Savannah, the African elephant is now in danger of complete extinction. The collapse of African elephant (*Loxodonta Africana*) population was documented in 2016 by the Great Elephant Census, an inventory conducted by aerial surveys, covering 18 countries. Between 2007 and 2014, their numbers decreased by 30 per cent to 3,52,000 individuals, while their

number rose to around 12 million a century ago, and another one million in the 1970s.

The IUCN suggests that the loss recorded in a decade is "the worst in 25 years." Reasons point towards ivory trade and trafficking, responsible for poaching around 20,000 animals per year, even if the situation has improved considerably compared to the 1980s, when it was estimated at 100,000 the number of elephants killed each year for their tusks.

The Great Elephant Census also revealed that the number of pachyderms living in the savannahs of Africa fell by 30 per cent between 2007 and 2014. And this decline is accelerating, now at a rate of eight per cent per year.

While researchers recall that Africa was able to count "more than 20 million elephants before European colonisation," and that their number was still estimated at one million in the 1970s, there remains only a third today; or 352,000 in 2014 against 496,000 in 2007. The distribution is very uneven. Botswana, Zimbabwe and Tanzania are home to almost three-quarters of the species. But the demographic trend is decreasing over most of the continent, with the exception of a few countries where it is stabilising (like in Kenya) or even recovering (in Uganda in the East, or in Benin, in Burkina Faso

and Niger in the West).

Danger of extinction

Newspapers in the West recently reported that Botswana sold licences to shoot dead dozens of elephants for tens of thousands of pounds each in what experts are warning could be a "major global conservation disaster." The country has auctioned off 60 of their huge mammals for a total of 25.7 mn Botswanan pula — £1.8 mn or more than ₹30,200 each.

Conservationists fear greatly of the risk of hastening elephant extinction. And sadly, African organisations that wanted to bid at the auction and put the money towards local community projects instead of shooting animals, were angry at being excluded from the bidding.

Their numbers in the country have grown since the 1990s and as humans have expanded farmlands, elephants have increasingly taken crops, prompting officials to promote hunting to ease the "human-elephant conflict."

However, some environmentalists fear licensed hunting could fuel demand for body parts and so encourage even more illegal poaching, opening the path to their extinction. The ban on ivory is the only thread that protects elephants. Trophy-hunting of elephants often brings a slow, painful death. With its population dwindling and increasingly scattered, its impact could be disastrous and possibly contribute to their extinction.

In India, the Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change had plenty to ponder about and as a government that cares India needs population control measures to decide between habitats for humans and wildlife. Nature parks and sanctuaries are the need of the hour.

Photo: Dheeraj Paul Studio



The stomp doesn't stop

IIFA is set to host the party of the year with its online concert on World Music Day

Who knew a Coronavirus pandemic would make people sit at home for months, long to hang out with friends at some cafe or keep them away from dancing on that perfect Saturday night? Well, parties are somewhat back with a bang, but, online!

One such is by the International Indian Film Academy, IIFA, which is hosting the biggest celebration of Indian party music with IIFA Stomp Online on June 21 to celebrate World Music Day.

The IIFA is all set to not only further entertain people but also spread the message of positivity and togetherness with the Ultimate 'Virtual Party Experience'. This is in continuation of IIFA's initiative #IIFAHumSabSaathHaIn #IIFASTayAtHomeConcerts — the digital concert series, featuring various multi-talented Indian artists, singers and musicians LIVE, that was created to bring people across the world together and share the feeling of unity

and solidarity in the fight against Coronavirus, #IndiaFightsCorona.

One can get front-row access to the party experience, which will feature various Indian artists, singers and musicians like Sumit Sethi, Amann Nagpal, DJ Rink, DJ Shaan Gidwani, DJ Ravi Drums, Akbar Sami and many more.

Andre Timmins, Co-founder-Director, Wizcraft International, said, "In continuation to IIFA's #IIFASTayAtHomeConcerts, and following its positive response from fans globally, we are pleased to spread the message of positivity and bring about togetherness. We aim to not only entertain the audience by providing access to their favourite artists and performers in the comfort of their homes but also represent and share the feeling of unity and solidarity. What better time to celebrate Bollywood than World Music Day?"

(The event will go live from 7.30 pm to 11.30 pm.)



TOWARDS A GREENER WORLD

Recently, on World Environment Day, the Western Railway introduced various initiatives for conservation of nature. Its general manager ALOK KANSAL stressed upon the need to protect biodiversity

The World Environment Day was observed by Western Railway on June 5 with this year's theme — *Celebrate Biodiversity*. It aims to spread awareness about conserving our environment.

To mark the occasion, Alok Kansal, General Manager of Western Railway administered a pledge to Additional GM, all principal heads of various departments, divisional railway managers and other senior railway officers through video conference from his residence in Mumbai, to save plants. He took the lead by planting a sapling at his residence. On the occasion, Kansal said that he believes in the mantra, "We should take care of nature and nature will take care of us." He exhorted the same message while addressing the video conference on this occasion. He also planted a sapling in the garden of his residential premises on this occasion.

According to a press release issued by Ravinder Bhakar, Chief Public Relations Officer of Western Railway, various specific efforts and initiatives have been undertaken by Western Railway under the leadership of General Manager, Alok Kansal, for mitigating environmental impacts and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, which have resulted in desired outcomes.

In view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation, along with the video conference there was a power point presentation too, which was presided by Kansal along with Additional GM, all PHODs & DRMs and other senior officers. Speaking on the occasion, while addressing the HQ & divisional officers in a VC, Kansal stressed upon the need to take all possible steps in



General Manager of Western Railway, Alok Kansal administering a pledge to save plants

the day to day working of Railways to conserve environment and find ways to protect biodiversity.

Some of the major issues discussed included: Reduce pollution — Solid waste disposal plants, Effluent treatment plants; Conserve resources — Plastic recycling; Conserve water — through rain water harvesting systems, water recycling plants,

water audits, automatic coach washing plants and Conserve Energy — Energy audits, HOG, Sky pipe lighting. Taking forward this commitment to ensure environment friendly initiatives, the department is steadfast to guarantee a safer and cleaner environment and is doing efforts to conserve as well as preserve the beauty of our mother earth.

On the occasion, Western Railways social media platform have come out with a motivational video which spreads the message in a subtle manner. In the story, Baba Vantastic with his vast knowledge of earthly affairs gives the discourse to this disturbed follower that humans should be thoughtful and kind to nature. Baba Vantastic motivates people to save the environment for a greener future and preserve the environment.

BHEL commissions 270 MW thermal power plant

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has commissioned one 270 MW thermal unit at the 4x270 MW Bhadradi Thermal Power Project in Telangana.

Located at Manuguru in Bhadradi in Kothagudem district of Telangana, the project was awarded to BHEL by Telangana State Power Generation Corporation Limited (TSGENCO). Notably, this is the first unit to be commissioned at this project and work on the balance three units is also in an advanced stage.

Significantly, following the commissioning of the 1x800 MW Kothagudem thermal power project, this is the second unit to have been commissioned as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between TSGENCO and BHEL for construction of new thermal power plants totalling 6,000 MW in the state. In Telangana, BHEL is also executing the 5x800 MW Yadadri project for TSGENCO and the steam generator package at the 2x800 MW Telangana STPP for NTPC.

BHEL's scope of work in the

project includes design, engineering, manufacture, supply, construction, erection, testing and commissioning of four thermal sets of 270 MW on EPC basis. The key equipment for the contract was manufactured at BHEL's Trichy, Hyderabad, Haridwar, Bhopal, Ranipet, Bengaluru and Jhansi plants, while the company's Power Sector — Western Region, Nagpur has done civil works and erection / commissioning of the equipment.

BHEL has been a partner in development of Telangana, with BHEL supplied sets contributing to 88 per cent of the coal-based power stations installed in the state. Projects equipped with BHEL supplied sets such as Ramagundam and Kothagudem have consistently been winning meritorious productivity awards from the Ministry of Power for their performance.

It leads in the Indian Power Sector with a vast installed base of more than 1,90,000 MW of power plant equipment globally and has been a partner in the country's vision of achieving self-reliance in energy.

STEP UP YOUR GAME

NHPC, India's hydropower major, which has diversified its portfolio to include solar power business has contributed an amount of ₹ 1 crore to International Solar Alliance Corpus Fund as part of first installment. NHPC is eyeing on becoming corporate member of the ISA to avail the benefits of its membership. Its membership will open up collaborative opportunities with world bank, ADB, AIIB, EIB, EBRD, AfDB, NDB and GCF (ISA's financial partners) as syndicate/consortium to fund infrastructure projects. NHPC will also have access to low cost fund from solar bonds to be raised by ISA knowledge partners such as London Stock Exchange among others, who are ISA's sub-sovereign partners. The membership will give NHPC new financing opportunities in emerging markets of ISA Member Countries, which in turn, will facilitate its entry into the markets in member countries. Becoming a corporate member of the ISA, would pave way for NHPC to mark its presence in other countries in near future. NHPC will also be joining the "Annual



Executive Director (Renewable Energy), NHPC, RK Jaiswal, handing over bank advice of ₹ 1 crore to Upendra Tripathy, IAS, Director General, International Solar Alliance as part of first installment

Conclave of ISA Corporate Partners" and get an opportunity to shape the ISA policies, programs, activities and functions that could further or supplement or align with its own policies.

The bank advice of contribution was presented to Upendra Tripathy, IAS, Director General, International Solar

platforms & PRS of Mumbai Central station. ♦ Green Rating Certification & sun pipe Installation for Valsad Depot. ♦ Green Rating Certification of various establishments of Western Railway, Mumbai. ♦ IGBC building certification of Jagjeevan Ram Hospital, DRM Office Building, and CCG HQ building is under process. ♦ Certification of environment standard ISO 14001:2015 for 38 NSG/SG stations of Mumbai Central Division along with surveillance audit and training. ♦ Environment Regulatory Requirement under Air Act, Water Act & Hazardous Waste Management Rules and Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 by obtaining due consent to operate or establish or both (as applicable for the units) for six railway stations. ♦ An automatic coach washing plant is being commissioned at Coaching Depot Mumbai Central. ♦ Setting up of waste water treatment plant through Phytoremediation, Cap-225 KLD on "Turn Key Basis" at Dahisar Railway Colony. ♦ Procurement of eco-friendly disposable napkins cotton rich spun lace non-woven for Surat & Valsad Depot. ♦ Improvement of maintenance facilities of EOG coaches at Mumbai Central and Bandra terminus. ♦ Supply and installation of 128 stainless steel dual pole mounted dustbin.

The department exhorts its passengers to join hands with them in the cause to dispense their duties in order to conserve our nature for the better future of our coming generations.

Some of the projects by Western Railway in the pipeline are: ♦ The work of recharging and reviving existing dry open wells along with rainwater harvesting facility at Valsad, Bilimora and Udhna is being undertaken. ♦ Solar energy plant of 1 MW capacity to be installed at Bandra Terminus on Power Purchase Agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India. This will facilitate power procurement at ₹ 3.50 per unit as against a much higher rate, currently being purchased from various agencies. ♦ Installation of sky pipe day lighting system (182 Nos) at

commissioned capacity of 100 MW and is all set to develop new renewable energy projects to the tune of 7500 MW in coming two to three years. It recently conducted successful e-auction for 2000 MW of solar projects. Out of this, it has issued Letter of Awards (LOA) to solar power developers for interstate transmission system (ISTS) grid connected photovoltaic projects aggregating to 1600 MW installed capacity.

It is also in talks with the state governments and UTs like Telangana, Odisha, Rajasthan and Leh to take our solar journey to a bigger canvas for more than 4000 MW of solar power. It is also accordingly exploring the viability of developing various RE Projects in different commercially viable models such as hydropower projects blended with solar power, pumped storage projects in remote areas with solar power in pumping mode and floating solar project. NHPC has planned to add 10000 MW Solar Power under the various schemes of MNRE in addition to hydro-capacity addition of 5000 MW by 2025.

Justice Mohd Rafiq, Chief Justice of Odisha High Court, recently laid the foundation stone for administrative block of Madhusudan Law College, Cuttack, to be built by NBCC. Dignitaries of high court and bar council, officials of the college and NBCC were also present on the occasion.

abandoned circular railway which are to be dismantled along the proposed new metro railway underground alignment between the Jessore Road and Biman Bander Station in order to make it infringement free.

It is to be noted that there are 104 spans along the old



In this together

The Rajasthan Government interacted with diplomats and investors from various European countries through a webinar

In a webinar with the diplomats and investors from various European countries on June 9, DB Gupta, Chief Secretary, briefed them about the opportunities and USPs of Rajasthan as well as transparent policy framework of incentives and concessions provided by the state. He also highlighted the advantages of the state with regard to connectivity, Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor, availability of skilled manpower, resource advantages as well as infrastructure strength.

In the webinar, Gupta led the Rajasthan team comprising Additional Chief Secretary, Industries, Dr Subodh Agarwal, Managing Director, RIICO, Ashutosh AT Pednekar and Commissioner, Industries, Muktanand Agarwal.

This webinar was organised by Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd (RIICO) in collaboration with European Business Group Federation (EBG Federation) to invite investments from European companies. European Business and Technology Centre (EBTC) and European Economic Group (EEG) were also a part of the dialogue. Diplomats from various European countries including Czech Republic, Royal Embassy of Denmark, Embassy of Italy, Embassy of Switzerland, Embassy of Bulgaria, Embassy of Belgium amongst others along with representatives of many multinationals operating in Europe participated.

More than 30 companies across various sectors like pharmaceutical, agro sector, fertilisers sector, cement sector, skill development sector, power sector, tourism sector participated in the webinar.

Responding to the questions of the participants, the Chief Secretary assured fast disposal of their existing issues. He also mentioned that the state has taken several steps regarding Ease of Doing Business. The participants were appreciative of the infrastructure facilities and response from the government machinery in Rajasthan.

Dr Agarwal informed the participants that Rajasthan is the first Indian state to allow MSMEs to start ventures without obtaining approval or clearances under the state laws, and the One-Stop Shop that Rajasthan is mobilising for fast-track approvals.

The participating diplomats and Raman Sidhu, Chief Executive Officer EBG Federation, suggested devising a platform for regular interaction with embassies and potential investors.

Pednekar informed that such interactions would be held regularly. He also mentioned that positive suggestions received in the webinar would help in giving future direction to the efforts.

The Rajasthan government is looking at possibilities of entering into MoUs with trade bodies like EBG Federation to speed up investment from foreign investors. Further interaction with foreign investors and diplomats are lined up in coming days, with next interaction being planned with French companies on June 12.

IN SHORT



Justice Mohd Rafiq, Chief Justice of Odisha High Court, recently laid the foundation stone for administrative block of Madhusudan Law College, Cuttack, to be built by NBCC. Dignitaries of high court and bar council, officials of the college and NBCC were also present on the occasion.

A COLLECTIVE JOURNEY AHEAD

For those of you who may not know, the phrase "trigger warning" is used to state that the following content, be it text, photos, audios or videos, may contain distressing material. It can be potentially triggering for people who have had bad experiences of similar kind or are sensitive to such distressing material. You may find this very millennial-sounding term on social media before instances of graphic violence, rape and abuse are showcased in any form. And when I say that you may find it, I mean that you will most likely see something like this because trigger warnings are becoming worryingly common around us day by day.

Whether it is cases of bullying at schools and colleges, mob lynching, sexual assault, vitriolic and graphic trolls online, animal abuse or even capital punishments; there are so many triggers everywhere from home to popular culture that even the trigger warnings aren't enough. The collective trauma that this society is doling out on itself without a second thought to the consequences, is rapidly becoming a vicious and self-sustaining cycle. The normalisation of this extreme response to things

may seem nothing more than a harmless joke at its point of inception, but what used to be fictional gore has now come out in the reality of our streets.

Although 2020 seems to be an especially horrible year, all things considered, it is not just today, this week, this month or even this year that is bad. It is an ongoing process of which we reap the horrible effects. The process of othering, dehumanisation and then violent verbal and physical degradation of that other have now become a part of a very natural response to an entity or action that we dislike. This response has become so instinctual that it is also a response that blurs the line between like and dislike. While most sexual violence and assault is a power play, a conquering of the other, perpetrators also sometimes claim to have an attraction towards the victim. Is that how you show people that you like them? What is the difference between liking and disliking, if that is your standard response?

While popular culture and some disturbing Bollywood films continue to pollute the idea of healthy interpersonal relationships for many gen-

erations, who is teaching young impressionable minds the right way? Let's take a look at the alternatives here:

News channels that proudly spew false information, hate speeches and degrade women openly. Our beloved social media that is filled with trolls that seem to be backed by powerful benefactors or live in the blanket freedom that this toxic environment of normalisation and virtual anonymity has provided them. Locker room talk seems to have moved on from the physical to virtual spaces, still being that dangerous cesspool of hate, misogyny and unchecked budding criminals. What about families, after all everything starts at home right? Most of us are not consciously taught such life skills at home, we only learn what we see in our own families. In a country where marital rape is considered fine, where sisters learn far more lessons in propriety than brothers, where brothers are taught far more unnecessary and toxic masculinity, where do we even begin the process? What about those people who are not a part of this very traditional picture of what a family is? Whatever gender we identify

with, we are all the products of this same rotten culture of dehumanisation. We are the perpetrators in our active participation and passive complicity of it. Every time someone violently threatens someone and we stand by silently, every time our friends degrade and mock someone different from us, every time we abuse our so-called freedom of speech and expression by infringing on someone else's basic rights, we are all contributors to the problem. We have cultivated the habit of justification of such actions in the perceived provocation by others. What we fail to understand is that two wrongs don't make a right. The world lives in law-abiding societies for a reason, because if we start to take direct violent and extreme action against each perceived wrong, then what will remain of us?

Our unified existence as humans on this earth is already divided by the smaller communities of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, social class, caste and what not? The reasons to differentiate and isolate from others are many, but at the end of the day, we do share a common and limited space. A harmonious and peaceful existence

with others is necessary to be able to thrive in a society, but what are you and I doing to achieve that?

Large scale changes at a systemic level in society start with us. As Gandhi (a man unfortunately no longer as revered as before) had said, be the change you wish to see in the world. Why not take interest and get to know something rather than dismissing it just because it's unfamiliar? Curiosity in the face of the unknown is required instead of blind fear and hatred. The only way to move forward and be better is by educating ourselves, self-correction and holding each other accountable. The circumstances that we are pushed into may not always be to our liking, but once we are there, it is also in our hands to make the best out of it. And not just the best for one individual, a collective journey ahead to being leveler strangers that someone passes by too. Create an environment where smiles come easier, kindness is the norm, help is readily given and your heart is no longer chained up in trigger warnings.

(The writer is Purvai Soni, freelance writer and poet.)

Surviving through the odds

Works of new projects like Noapara-Bimanbander Metro Extension Project have been going on even during the lockdown.

One of the most tough works on this alignment has been dismantling of four most critical redundant piers situated in the middle of the crowded VIP road and airport entry road under which metro railway tunnel is being constructed. It has been decided to dismantle these piers by vibration-free diamond wire sawing. One of the piers (P-81 having diameter of 1.5 metre) has been dismantled recently with diamond studded cutter belt in only seven hours without making any dust or noise pollution. Dismantled portions of this pier have been unloaded quickly by two 70 T and 35 T cranes with all safety precautions at the intersection of the two very busy roads of Kolkata.

It is to be noted that there are 104 spans along the old



Severed pier cap being unloaded by cranes



Jemi open to innovation to promote women's cricket

PTI ■ DUBAI

India batswoman Jemimah Rodrigues and New Zealand captain Sophie Devine believe that innovations like the use of shorter pitches and smaller balls can be tried out to boost popularity of women's cricket.

Shorter pitches, smaller balls and super-subs (substitutes) were among the topics discussed by Rodrigues and Devine during a one-hour 100% Innovations session moderated by former Australian cricketer and leading commentator Mel Jones.

Devine, who was the top run-getter for New Zealand at this year's ICC Women's T20 World Cup, feels introduction of a smaller ball could change the dynamics of the women's game.

"I think if we are stuck with traditional formats, we'd be missing out on a lot of new players, new kids to the game. So, I think it's really an exciting idea to say that we might be able to encourage people along that make it tailored towards the female side of things," she said.

"It's always good to have a little trial and error and see what works. I'm probably a big fan of looking at a smaller ball, but keeping the pitch the same size, where I think pacers are going to be able to bowl quicker, spinners are going to be able to turn the ball more.

"Hopefully, the ball should fly a bit further as well whereas still keeping the traditional length of the pitch," the Kiwi added.

Rodrigues, who also played for India in the T20 World Cup, was open to the idea of a shorter pitch if it could get in more fans.

The Indian, however, feels women's cricket shouldn't be compared with men's game.

"To be very honest, I would go with, you know, like let's not compare it (men's and women's cricket) that much. Because, you know, at the end, you have got to accept the fact that there are slight differences between the two," Rodrigues said.

"But, yeah, I mean, we can also be open to (a shorter pitch), try it out. If that is going to help the game improve and take it to the next level, then why not?" "You know, kind of get a thought to it, think about it, because at the end of it, we want to promote the game. We want to get more people to watch the game and more people to even join the game. So, yeah, I think it is a good idea. I think, you know, you can be open to it," she added.

During the session, both players also discussed the importance of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games for women's cricket.

Rodrigues said she had always dreamt of winning a medal at a multi-discipline event while Devine indicated that just being at the games village would be a wonderful experience.

T20 WC fate to be decided next month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A decision on the fate of this year's T20 World Cup in Australia was on Wednesday deferred until next month by the International Cricket Council, which also decided to give the BCCI another six months to obtain mandatory tax exemptions for hosting tournaments.

The three-hour meeting of the all-powerful ICC Board, held via video conference, didn't spell out anything on the nomination process to find outgoing chairman Shashank Manohar's successor.

However, the ICC decided to continue investigations into the leak of classified e-mails and all board members were made party to the inquiry.

But no decision was taken with regards to T20 World Cup in Australia scheduled to be held in October-November but looking increasingly uncertain because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is understood that Australia's sports minister Richard Colbeck's positive message about the health situation Down Under may have also played a role in ICC keeping the decision on hold while discussing "contingency options".

"We will only get one chance to make this decision and it needs to be the right one and as such we will continue to consult with our Members, broadcasters, partners, Governments and players and to ensure that we make a well informed decision," ICC chief executive Manu Sawhney said in a statement.

Sawhney made it clear that the ICC will try its best to conduct the event in Australia even though Cricket Australia hasn't shown as much keenness in organising the event this year as it has for the high profile India series



at the end of the year.

"The situation surrounding the global pandemic is evolving rapidly and we want to give ourselves the best possible opportunity to make the right decision for the whole sport. The health and well-being of everyone involved is our priority and other considerations fall out from that," Sawhney added.

With no decision taken, it is expected that outgoing chairman Manohar will not take a final call on the future of the event as he will be stepping down this month.

However, there was no word on why there was no clarity on the election and nomination process for the next chairman.

Saliva ban won't affect us, says white ball specialist Chahar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's white ball specialist Deepak Chahar feels that ban on use of saliva will not have an impact in white ball cricket, especially in T20s, where he primarily plies his trade.

The Agra based 27-year-old Chahar, who played 3 ODIs and 10 T20s for India, however admitted that things will be different as far as red ball cricket is concerned.

Speaking on the issue, Chahar told *Star Sports* show *Cricket Connected*, "I don't think it will impact us so much because the white ball only swings for 2 overs. If we talk about the T20 format, the wicket is good for only 2-3 overs and the ball swings for 3 overs, so it reduces the need to shine the ball."

Babar has potential to be like Kohli: Younis

PTI ■ KARACHI

Former Pakistan captain Younis Khan doesn't believe in comparisons but feels young Babar Azam has the potential to become a legend of the game, like Virat Kohli in five years time.

Younis, the newly-appointed batting coach of Pakistan, described Kohli as the top batsman of modern day cricket, but said Azam has the capability of breaking many batting records.

"I don't like these comparisons. Look at Kohli he is at the top of his game right now. He is without any doubt the top batsman today and has performed in all formats," the 42-year-old told reporters on Wednesday.

"Babar has also performed in all formats in recent times but the way I look at it, where Kohli is today, what he has achieved until now, Babar will be there in five years time.

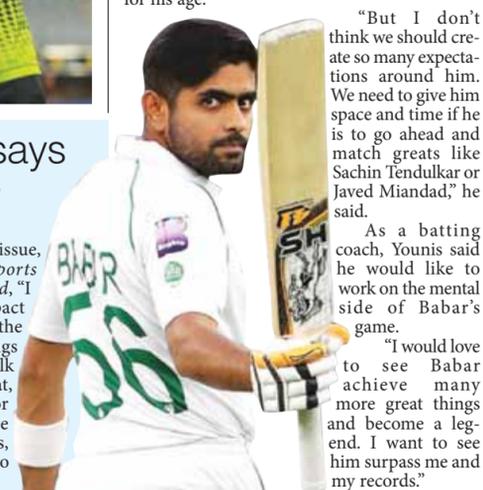
"I would say after four five years if we make comparisons that would be more suitable," he added.

Younis said at 25, Babar had achieved a lot for his age.

"But I don't think we should create so many expectations around him. We need to give him space and time if he is to go ahead and match greats like Sachin Tendulkar or Javed Miandad," he said.

As a batting coach, Younis said he would like to work on the mental side of Babar's game.

"I would love to see Babar achieve many more great things and become a legend. I want to see him surpass me and my records."



ECB in talks with India, SA for women's tri-series



LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is currently in talks with their Indian and South African counterparts to host a tri-series later this year.

Indian women's team were supposed to play a bilateral series comprising three ODIs and three T20Is against England which remains postponed for the time being.

ECB Chief Executive Tom Harrison is

hoping there will be some international women's cricket this year if everything goes as per planned.

"Ultimately, we will get some international cricket, all being well. The plan is to get some international cricket for the England team later this summer. We're talking to the BCCI and Cricket South Africa about bringing their women's teams over to play a tri-series," Harrison said.

However, Harrison said a decision on inviting India for the tri-series will depend on how the country combats the contagious disease which is raging in the subcontinent.

Confirming the talks, BCCI GM Cricket Operations Saba Karim told *IANS*, "We were supposed to travel to England in July for limited-overs series. Now that has been postponed and we are waiting for fresh dates. There are some talks going on as to when to hold the series."

Holder urges Windies to 'grasp' England chance

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

West Indies captain Jason Holder has urged his side to grasp the opportunity provided by a Test series in England as international cricket prepares to return after the coronavirus shutdown.

The West Indies arrived in Manchester on Tuesday ahead of their three-match series in July and Holder was in a buoyant mood during a conference call.

"Oh, man, I've been sat at home for the last couple of months doing nothing," he said on Wednesday.

"So to be getting some cricket, doing something I love and have loved doing from the time I started doing it... and I think most of the



guys feel the same way.

"We haven't had competitive cricket for a while. We don't even know what is going to happen after this series. So I think it is an opportunity that we should all grasp."

While the West Indies trio of Darren Bravo, Shimron Hetmyer and Keemo Paul refused an invita-

tion to tour, Holder was adamant no member of the 25-strong squad had been coerced into making the trip.

"We've all made a decision to come over here, not been forced, and we've done it because we want to be here, we want to play cricket," the fast bowling all-rounder said.

"Everybody had their free will. I just think it's a case that at some point or another we had to resume some kind of normalcy.

"To be honest, I feel pretty safe. I must commend the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) — they've been outstanding."

Asked how his players would cope with being cooped up in a hotel for weeks as a precaution against the spread of Covid-19, Holder replied: "We have been to some places... in the subcontinent you don't go outside the hotel too much. So I am pretty much classing this as a subcontinent tour.

"It is what it is and it could be the new norm for a while."

Federer out until 2021 after knee surgery

AFP ■ LONDON

Twenty-time Grand Slam singles champion Roger Federer on Wednesday said he will be sidelined until 2021 after undergoing his second knee operation in a matter of months. The 38-year-old Swiss said he underwent follow-up arthroscopic surgery "a few weeks ago" after undergoing a similar keyhole procedure in February.

Federer, whose last Grand Slam win was the 2018 Australian Open, said he "experienced a set-

back during (his) initial rehabilitation". "I plan to take the necessary time to be 100 percent ready to play at my highest level," he said in a statement on *Twitter*. "I will be missing my fans and the tour dearly but I will look forward to seeing everyone back on tour at the start of the 2021 season."

The announcement is likely to renew speculation about retirement for Federer, who holds the record for men's Grand Slam singles titles and last month topped Forbes' list of the world's highest earning athletes.



Merseyside derby at Goodison

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool's clash with Everton on June 21 will be played at Goodison Park after Liverpool City Council gave the go-ahead for both sides to complete their remaining Premier League fixtures at home.

Victory at the home of their Merseyside rivals would see Liverpool clinch a first league title in 30 years if Manchester City lose at home to Arsenal on June 17.

That had led to concerns that fans could congregate around both clubs' grounds in the city in breach of coronavirus restrictions.

Goodison is less than a mile from Liverpool's Anfield



stadium.

However, a meeting between the council, police, clubs and fans' groups on Wednesday agreed to allow the match to proceed in Liverpool rather than at a neutral venue.

"We are satisfied that the considerable evidence and guidance provided by the Government, Everton and

Liverpool football clubs, public health colleagues and Merseyside Police will ensure that the outstanding fixtures for the 2019/20 Premier League season can be safely and securely played at both Goodison Park and Anfield," said Wendy Simon, deputy mayor of Liverpool, who chairs the Ground Safety Advisory Group.

Liverpool said further discussions this week will "provide clear and regular updates for supporters throughout this process".

Should City not drop points against Arsenal or Burnley in their first two games back, Liverpool could win the title on home soil at Anfield against Crystal Palace on June 24.

Virat & Smith are dominant all over the world: Finch

MELBOURNE: Australia limited-overs skipper Aaron Finch feels Virat Kohli and Steve Smith are players who can play well across the globe in any condition and that is what separates them from the rest.

"I think in Test cricket, Virat and Smith's record at home and in away games is unbelievable. Virat had a tough series a few years ago in England against James Anderson. But then he came back to England in 2018 and dominated the series," Finch told *Sports Tak* in an interview.

"Smith has never really struggled anywhere, to be fair. He is an unbelievable Test player. The most impressive thing



about both of them which probably separates and puts them above anyone else is how dominant they are all over the world," he added.

"It's one thing to dominate in your country, at wickets you are comfortable in. To do it all around the world is extraordinary. Sometimes they get out early, but that's just cricket. But they very rarely miss out, and when they go, they go big," Finch said.

Finch opined Smith has an edge when it comes to the longest format of the game.

"I think Smith just has an edge in Test cricket. Virat probably has played on wickets that have deteriorated a lot quicker when the ball started spinning big, and going a little bit lower a bit more often," he explained.

Chanu to seek damages over doping case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The International Weightlifting Federation has dropped the doping charge against Indian weightlifter K Sanjita Chanu due to "non-conformities" in the handling of her sample but the Commonwealth Games Gold-medallist has also demanded an apology and compensation for the "trauma" she has endured.

The IWF made the decision based on the recommendation of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). The 26-year-old, who claimed innocence since the beginning, was informed about the final verdict via an e-mail, signed by IWF's legal counsel Lilla Sagi.

"I am happy in the sense that I am finally and officially clear from the



doping charges. But, what about the chances I have lost? Who will take the responsibility of the mental trauma I have been living with?" Chanu said.

Chanu won her CWG Golds in the 2014 and 2018 editions of the mega-event. She holds the Commonwealth Games Snatch record in the 53kg

weight category. "Who will take the responsibility for the mistakes that happened at every possible level? You put an athlete under suspension for years without a final judgment, and one fine day you send an e-mail saying that you are now free from charges?" she added.

Chanu said the IWF

has robbed her of the chance to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics due to its callous attitude and it must issue an apology and compensate her for causing her mental harassment.

"Is this some kind of joke? Does IWF not care about the career of an athlete? Was it the intention of IWF to spoil my Olympic chances? Every athlete's ultimate dream is to get a medal in the Olympic Games, and at least participating in the Games. For me, that chance had been snatched by IWF," she said.

"This is not how IWF is supposed to function. IWF must apologise and give a genuine explanation. The responsible body or organisation or individual must be penalised. I will go to higher authority and demand compensation from IWF," she said.

MLS returns July 8 with 26-team tourney

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

Major League Soccer plans to return from its coronavirus pandemic shutdown with a 26-team tournament without spectators starting July 8 at Orlando, Florida, the league announced on Wednesday.

The MLS Is Back Tournament, which runs through August 11, will feature group-stage matches that will count in the North American league's regular season, which was halted after two weeks due to the deadly virus outbreak in March. The event, which will include 16 consecutive match days in the group round, will be staged at ESPN's Wide World of Sports complex at Walt Disney World in Orlando and feature extensive medical protocols for players, including COVID-19 tests on the day before each match.

Teams will begin arriving in Orlando as soon as June 24 for pre-season workouts, with clubs able to arrive no later than seven days before their opening match. The World Cup-style format will see a continuous schedule of matches almost every day with games kicking off at 9:00 am, 8:00 pm and 10:30 pm and each club playing three group stage matches.



Leverkusen end Saarbrücken's fairytale



AFP ■ VOLKLINGEN

Saarbrücken's unprecedented German Cup run came to an end at the semi-finals on Tuesday after a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Bundesliga outfit Bayer Leverkusen.

The fourth-tier side, whose last competitive match was in March, beat top-flight clubs Cologne and Fortuna Duesseeldorf on their way to becoming the first team from that level to reach the last four of the cup.

Saarbrücken coach Lukas Kwasiak had said a place in the July final at Berlin's Olympic Stadium would be tantamount to the "rebirth of Jesus", but there was no miracle on Tuesday. The away side were quickly two ahead thanks to goals from Moussa Diaby and Lucas

French court suspends relegation from Ligue 1

PARIS: France's highest administrative court on Tuesday blocked the relegation of Amiens and Toulouse from Ligue 1 while rejecting Lyon's appeal against the decision to declare the season over. The judge in the Council of State "validates the end of the season and the standings but suspends relegation," read a statement summarising the ruling.

The judge also ordered the LFP to re-examine with the French football federation the proposed format for the top division next season, which could feature 22 teams in Ligue 1 — two more than usual.

Alario within the first 20 minutes.

Both were set up by Kerem Demirbay, whose pass for Diaby's opener in particular highlighted the gulf in class between the two teams.

The hosts never recovered from those early blows, and just before the hour mark Leverkusen struck a third, with Demirbay once again the man to lay on the decisive pass for Bellarabi to smash home.