

OPINION 6
END THIS PATRONAGE

WORLD 8
QUALCOMM INVESTS ₹730 CR IN JIO FOR 0.15% STAKE

SPORT 12
HAMILTON WINS STYRIAN GP

RANCHI, MONDAY JULY 13, 2020; PAGES 12-13



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OVERWHELMED WITH LOVE: ABHISHEK 10 VIVACITY

Raj crisis over for now: Cong

Final outcome after CLP meeting today even as Sachin camps in Delhi with 20 MLAs

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress leadership in Delhi claims to have resolved the immediate crisis to the Congress Government in Rajasthan at the backdrop of feud between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Deputy CM Sachin Pilot, but all eyes will be at the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting in Jaipur on Monday morning.

Pilot is unlikely to attend the meeting and is reportedly ready for a showdown with the backing of two dozen or so MLAs. "We have conveyed his (Pilot's) decision to skip the meeting) to the high command. He would wait for their call to take his decision," sources close to Pilot said.

Currently, Pilot along with his 20 loyalists' MLAs is camping in Delhi to meet Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and it was not clear till late evening whether he will proceed back to Jaipur. AICC has deputed Congress leaders Ajay Maken and Randeep Surjewala as observers and they have reached the state to foresee the impending political crisis.

Several Congress leaders were agast that Sonia and Rahul didn't bother to meet Pilot even when the situation was so grave. "This mentality has destroyed out party," said a senior Congress leader.

Echoing this frustration, senior Congress leader Kapil



A worker sanitises barricades as security personnel stand guard outside the official residence of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in Jaipur on Sunday. PTI

Sibal tweeted, "Worried for our party. Will we wake up only after the horses have bolted from our stables." AICC sources said that Rahul Gandhi is in touch with Pilot over the last couple of days and hence there will be no redo of the Madhya Pradesh scenario in Rajasthan.

Rumour had it that Pilot met Scindia in Gurugram, but these later turned out to be false. But Scindia took to Twitter to express his solidarity with his old Congress colleague saying even he has been sidelined and he felt pity on the issue.

"Sad to see Sachin Pilot be sidelined by Ashok Gehlot," Scindia tweeted.

The Congress strength in 200-member Assembly is 102, with its Rashtriya Lok Dal alliance having one MLA. After 6 Bahujan Samaj Party MLAs



Cong kills talents, Pilot sidelined in party, says Scindia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fishing in troubled waters of Rajasthan politics where Deputy Chief Minister and PCC chief Sachin Pilot is signalling a revolt over differences with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia on Sunday claimed that like him Pilot too has been "sidelined" by the Congress leadership which kills talents.

Rajasthan politics has been in the flux over last few weeks with the ruling Congress in the State charging that BJP is trying to topple the Gehlot Government and replicating the Madhya Pradesh model where Scindia recently broke

Aishwarya, her daughter +ve, Big B houses sealed

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A day after Amitabh Bachchan and his actorson Abhishek Bachchan tested positive for Covid-19, Bollywood on Sunday suffered another jolt, as his daughter-in-law and actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and granddaughter Aaradhya, senior actor Anupam Kher's mother Dulari, his brother, bhhabhi and niece tested positive for coronavirus.

In a related development, the Brihan Mumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) sanitised four bungalows of the Bachchans — Jalsa, Pratiksha, Janak and Vatsa — earlier in the day on Sunday. The four bungalows, located at Juhu in north-west Mumbai, which fall under K/West ward have been sealed and declared as "containment zones".

Abhishek, who had shortly before Saturday midnight confirmed about Sr Bachchan and her daughter tested positive for Covid-19, tweeted on Sunday evening, "Aishwarya and Aaradhya have also tested Covid-19 positive. They will be self quarantining at home. The BMC has been updated of their situation and are doing the needful. The rest of the family including my mother have tested negative. Thank you all for your wishes and prayers."

Sr Bachchan and Abhishek are currently at Nanavati Super Speciality Hospital at Vile Parle

Mother, daughter to self quarantine, Jaya tests negative; Kher's brother, mother +ve



in north-west Mumbai. "My father and I remain in hospital till the doctors decide otherwise. Everyone please remain cautious and safe. Please follow all rules!" said Abhishek in another tweet.

Sr Bachchan's Rajya Sabha member-wife Jaya tested negative for the pandemic. Confirming that his mother and other family members had tested positive for Covid-19, senior actor Anupam Kher had tweeted, "This is to inform all that my mother Dulari is found Covid + (mildly). We have admitted her into Kokilaben Hospital. My brother, bhhabhi &

niece in spite of being careful have also tested mildly positive. I got myself tested as well & I have tested negative. @mybmc is informed."

Puja at Bachchan Temple for star's quick recovery

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

True love, veneration and agony know no logic. With entire India uniting in prayers for early recovery of superstar Amitabh Bachchan and his family members from corona, fans, may his 'devotes', have started special prayers accompanied by Mahamrityunjay Jaap in this unique temple — arguably the only one in the whole universe — dedicated in the name of what they call "Jay

Shri Amitabh." Cut to Sridhar Roy Road at Tiljala area of Kolkata where Santy Patodia has converted a part of his palatial mansion into a dedicated temple of the Big B whom he worships as the living "God of the Kalyuga." The family skipped its dinner on Saturday night after learning about Bachchan's illness. "Ever since we learnt that Bachchan has corona we have started a special puja," said a woman.

Detailed report on P5

Trump wears mask months after mocking its need



AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump wore a mask during a visit to a military hospital on Saturday, the first time the President has been seen in public with the type of facial covering recommended by health officials as a precaution against spreading or becoming infected by the novel coronavirus.

Trump flew by helicopter to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in suburban Washington to meet wounded service members and

health care providers caring for Covid-19 patients. As he left the White House, he told reporters, "When you're in a hospital, especially ... I think it's a great thing to wear a mask." Trump was wearing a mask in Walter Reed's hallway as he began his visit. He was not wearing one when he stepped off the helicopter at the facility.

The President was a late-comer to wearing a mask during the pandemic, which has raged across the US. Since March and infected more than 3.2 million and

killed at least 134,000. Most prominent Republicans, including Vice President Mike Pence, endorsed wearing masks as the coronavirus gained ground this summer.

Republican Governors have been moving toward requiring or encouraging the use of masks as the pandemic has grown more serious in some States in the South and West.

Trump, however, has declined to wear a mask at news conferences, coronavirus task force updates, rallies and other public events.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL
CASES: 8,78,593
DEATHS: 23,186
RECOVERED: 5,54,356
ACTIVE: 3,00,669

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	2,54,427	10,289	1,40,325
Tamil Nadu	1,40,325	1,966	89,532
Delhi	1,12,494	3,371	89,968
Gujarat	41,906	2,046	29,198
Karnataka	38,843	686	15,411
Uttar Pradesh	36,476	934	23,334
Telangana	34,671	356	22,482
West Bengal	30,013	932	18,581
Andhra Pradesh	29,168	328	15,412
Rajasthan	24,392	510	18,103
Haryana	21,240	301	15,983
Madhya Pradesh	17,632	653	12,876
Bihar	16,305	125	11,953
Assam	16,072	41	10,895
Odisha	13,121	84	8,750
Jammu & Kashmir	10,513	179	5,979

US rifles to bolster jawans' firepower at border

74K Sig Sauer rifles for soldiers soon guarding LAC, LoC

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to equip frontline soldiers guarding the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan, the Army is all set to procure more than 74,000 assault rifles from the US. Given the current security situation, especially on the LAC in Ladakh, these rifles may be inducted through fast-track procedure.

These Sig Sauer rifles manufactured by a US firm will considerably bolster the firepower capabilities of the Indian Army infantry soldiers deployed on the 4,000-km long LAC and 750-km long LoC. Moreover, these versatile rifles

will also enhance the close quarter battle capacity of the soldiers in the counter terrorist operations in Jammu & Kashmir.

Stressing these factors, sources said here on Sunday, the Army has already bought the first batch of 72,000 Sig Sauer rifles last year. The Rs 700 crore deal on fast track basis was inked in February 2019 and the rifles started arriving in December.

Most of the lot is now in use in the Northern Command which guards the LAC, the LoC, anti-terrorist and anti-infiltration operations and the Siachen glacier.

The order for another batch of nearly 74,000 rifles will be placed as per the special financial powers granted to the armed forces for such emergency purchases, they said.



A health worker collects sample from a policeman for Covid-19 test at a Police Station in Ranchi on Sunday. Pioneer photo

CAPSULE

DIESEL PRICE NEARS ₹1 AFTER 16 PAISE INCREASE
New Delhi: Diesel price in the national Capital on Sunday inched towards the ₹1 per litre mark following a rate hike after a four-day hiatus. Diesel price on Sunday was increased by 16 paise per litre, according to a price notification of state-owned oil marketing companies. This took the retail selling price to ₹80.94 per litre in the national capital — the highest ever.

'KAPOOR HAVELI' IN PAK FACES DEMOLITION THREAT
Peshawar: The historic ancestral home of late Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor in Pakistan's Peshawar city is facing demolition threat as the current owner of the house is adamant on building a commercial complex on the site. In 2018, the Pakistan government decided to convert the "Kapoor Haveli" in Qissa Khwani Bazar in Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province into a museum, heading to a request by Rishi Kapoor who died recently at a hospital in Mumbai.

73 FRESH COVID CASES SURFACE
On Sunday 45 persons recovered from their infection. As there has been rise in infection and number of recovered persons have gone down, the state recovery rate has also gone down. The State recovery rate has come down to 61.38 per cent, while the national average is 62.92 per cent. However, for respite the state mortality rate is still low than national average. The mortality rate of State is .82 per cent, while national mortality rate is 2.66 per cent.

ITBP, BSF DG: LAND IS WITH OUR SECURITY FORCES
Gurgaon: As Chinese and Indian troops move to disengage in eastern Ladakh after a tense standoff, the chief of ITBP and BSF on Sunday said all the country's land is under "full possession" of our security and defence forces. SS Deswal, Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Border Security Force (BSF), was speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a plantation drive held at a BSF camp in Bhondsi.

SEVEN COVID DEATHS TAKE TO 31

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand on Sunday witnessed seven Covid-19 deaths — the single day highest casualties in the State after the epidemic broke out in March this year. The seven deaths were reported one each from Godda, Koderma, Dhanbad, East Singhbhum, Deoghar while two deaths were reported from Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) Ranchi. With seven deaths on Sunday the number of casualties in the State has reached 31.

In Godda district a panchayat secretary died due to

infection. The panchayat secretary working at Mahagama block of district was suffering from infection for the past few days. On Saturday night after his health deteriorated he was rushed to Godda where he took his last breath. Meanwhile, the Godda district administration has sealed Mahagama hospital and no one is allowed to enter the hospital premises.

In Jamshepur, a 55-year-old man suffering from liver ailment died due to infection. Sources said that the man had reached Jamshepur few days back after getting treatment. The man was admitted at Tata Main Hospital and was a resident of Sonari.

According to reports, Sonari resident was admitted to Tata Main Hospital (TMH) Covid-19 ward on July 3 after testing positive for corona. The deceased was suffering from liver ailment and he passed away at 2 am on Sunday, July 12. Now the patient's last rites will be performed as per protocol as it is the third Covid-19 death in East Singhbhum district. The dead body of the deceased will not be handed over to the family. Civil surgeon RN Jha informed the dead body will not be handed over to the family members and would be disposed off as the protocol by the civic body, Jamshepur Notified Area Committee (JNAC).

Hazaribag district too witnessed its third Covid 19 death on Sunday. The victim hails from Katskamsandi block of district. The man was tested Covid 19 positive three days back at RIMS Ranchi where he breathed his last.

On Sunday 80 positive cases were reported from across the state. The maximum number of corona positive cases were reported from Koderma followed by Ranchi. In Koderma 14 cases were detected while in Ranchi 13 cases were reported. Chitra

too reported 18 cases. The number of active cases is 1421, while 2308 people have recovered and discharged from hospital after recovering from the infection.

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Third death from coronavirus, administration on toes

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

City witnessed its third death from corona after a 55-year-old man died of Covid-19 at the Tata Main Hospital on Sunday morning.

District surveillance officer, AK Lal informed that the man who died of COVID today had travel history and was suspected to have contacted the Coronavirus while shuttling between Kolkata and Jamshedpur in sequel to his

MARKETS SANITISED



treatment of cancer.

"As per information gathered the deceased had been to Kolkata a number of times in

the past six months in sequel to his treatment of cancer. In fact it is a case of co-morbidity as the cancer was also in an

advanced condition. After some symptoms had appeared in him, suggesting that he might have been infected with

Key markets to be sanitised on weekends

Jamshedpur: District administration has chalked out plans to carry out special cleanliness and sanitation drives in all markets on weekends when all shops will be shut to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Moreover, the residents of adjoining Bhuiyandih Slum had also not protested like they had done earlier.

Meanwhile, sensing trouble, the administration had made adequate police arrangements to ensure an easy cremation of the victim at the Subarnarekha crematorium.

The idea is also to maintain social distancing. Meanwhile, following orders for closure of vegetable markets in three urban civic body areas...

The Kolhan Division which was under green zone, came under coronavirus map with two persons testing positive at Chakulia, under East Singhbhum district on May 12.

The 88-year-old woman who was a resident of Sonari died at the Tata Main Hospital on July 4. About an hour later an 88-year-old woman who was admitted at the Tata Main Hospital died of pneumonia at the hospital.

Several other persons tested positive have travel history from Maharashtra, Delhi, Gurugram and Chennai. The city witnessed its first COVID death when a 71-year-old man who was a resident of Sonari died at the Tata Main Hospital on July 4.

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Bokaro reports seven fresh Covid cases, 8 recovered

PNS ■ BOKARO

Seven new COVID-19 positive cases were reported in Bokaro district, while eight including one CISP cog recovered and were discharged from Bokaro General Hospital (BGH) on Sunday.

The discharged were tested negative for the Sars-Cov-2 virus for the second time and sent back to their respective homes, said Mukesh Kumar Deputy Commissioner Bokaro.

All the new patients have been shifted to Covid Hospital, and contact tracing of all is being done. The total number of active cases rushed to 39 in the district while the death toll in the district stands at two, he said.

Among the positive cases was a 33-year-old youth from Sector 4 A, who recently returned from Patna. The second case was a 28-year-old man from Sector-3 E, who also came from Bihar...

Expressing concern over the spurt in Coronavirus positive cases in the district, Kumar said everyone needs to be vigilant. Most of the cases are from Bokaro urban areas, hence security and vigilance is necessary.

He urged that everybody must apply a mask, follow social distance, and wash their hands with soap. The best way is that all of you stay safe in your own homes.

Civil Surgeon Bokaro, AK Pathak said, most of the COVID-19 positive patients had either travel or contact history in the district as the inflow of migrants is on the rise in Bokaro.

The district administration is keeping close watches on the entry of the migrant workers, students and others trapped outside the state due to a national lockdown imposed to check the spread of COVID-19 in India. The administration is working hard on virus risk mitigation plans and regarding the management of the people who are returning in the district," said Pathak.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Manindra Kumar, S/o Raju Mahto, R/o- Bodiya Basti, P.O.- Kathara, P.S.- Bokaro Thermal, Dist.- Bokaro, do hereby solemnly & affirm that I have lost my Xth & XIIth original certificates of the Pwlic School, Kathara and I have also lost Engineering course certificates of Gandhi Institute of Engineering and Technology. That all original certificates lost on 26.07.2020 at Naya More, B.S. City, Dist. Bokaro, vide affidavit sl no. 5011, dated-07-07-2020.

Covid-19 pandemic brings new opportunities: CBSE Secretary

PNS ■ BOKARO

Covid-19 has opened a range of opportunities and made schooling very relevant in this pandemic time.

It has made us design pedagogy to be specific about learning outcomes with techniques for assessments framed in small measures, said Anurag Tripathi, Secretary Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

Tripathi was addressing the students, parents and teachers all over the country from abroad in a webinar "Relevance of Schooling in this Pandemic Times" under "UDAY-The Rising" organised by DPS Chas.

Students, parents, and teachers should work together to unleash the creative potentiality of each child with a view

to providing the younger generation scope for innovation, exploration, and aesthetics, he said.

"Digital technology is going to be a part of our lives. There is no loss of learning rather there is a wide scope of growth and availing opportunities for skill-based, project-based and experiential learning experiences" added Tripathi.

There should be collaborative efforts from all sides to impact quality and holistic education while teachers should keep in mind not to rush into completing the syllabus but recognise the need of emotional healing of the students, said Tripathi.

Students' energy should be channelised in a positive direction towards attaining their aspirations through subjects of their interest, he said, adding, "Innocence of children should be protected and we must cultivate compassion, understanding and be sensitive".

For Principals and Teachers, the take away was to

be creative and provide the atmosphere for joyful learning and real-life experiences. In the near future assessments will be application, skill and competency-based, he said.

More than 2000 participants, from 200 plus schools attended the webinar and took home interesting, informative learning experiences from the exclusive interaction with Tripathi.

Dr. Hemlata S Mohan, Chairperson Center for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) shared her happiness that 1000s of stakeholders could be benefited by the webinar.

Officiating Principal Ms. P. Shalaja Jayakumar in her welcome address said, "Education in coordination with life and nature is our answer to all challenges. The new framework, in reality, will be largely dependent on digital presence, ease of virtual interactions and proceedings which we have adopted like never before."

every good sign on health parameter calling for disbanding of seal off soon. Kennedy said all of a sudden the family's Hariharu block came in focus where there were raised more containment areas than expected here. He avoided to give numbers of the containment zones here.

Agarwal has asked people to wear mask and not to take things in a manner that jeopardizes life.

Notably, villagers are facing a lot of trouble due to rising air pollution in rural areas. Air pollution born form fly ash in the surrounding villages, he added. Despite our several requests, the BSL management did not pay any heed. Later we have asked Deputy Commissioner Bokaro to solve our issue, said Shankar another villager.

Taking the matter seriously, DC directed officials to constitute an inquiry committee led by Sub-Divisional Officer Chas, so that the problems of villagers can be resolved earlier.

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Number of seal offs in Palamu countable, says Civil surgeon

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

Two more seal off in wake of Covid-19 were done in Palamu today taking the total number of containment zones to slightly above half a dozen but the general health scenario here in the district is stable and the fear of Covid-19 is minimal, officials said.

Civil surgeon Dr John F Kennedy said on Sunday that under order of DC cum chairman of district disaster management authority Shantanu Kumar Agrahari, a private hospital in Daltonganj and one petrol pump in Chhaterpur have been sealed

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Officials fear community transmission in Garhwa

NITYANAND DUBEY ■ GARHWA

Garhwa district administration is on alert after people without any contact or recent travel history outside the state tested positive for coronavirus in the past few days. Late evening on Saturday, the district recorded 24 new cases and six more surfaced on Friday, taking the district tally to 144. As many as 109 Covid-19 positive patients have recovered. Now active cases are 35 in the district.

Among the six new cases on Friday were detected in Bhandishar Nagar among returnees from Gujarat, but other five found positive in the district had no contact or travel history.

Only three of the 24 new cases detected on Saturday in Bhandishar returned from Hazaribagh. While 21 new cases were detected in Garhwa, Meral Ranka, Bhandariya block area including 10 pregnant women from this crisis situation that will be immediately call 104 or get in touch with our healthcare personnel if they have symptoms of dry cough, fever, respiratory issues and diarrhoea," Civil Surgeon Dr. N K Rajak said on Sunday.

Community transmission began in the district since two to three days," said Garhwa civil surgeon Dr. NK Rajak. He said that community transmission began when a person with no travel history to a Covid-19-affected area or known contact with a confirmed case tests positive for the disease. It indicates undiagnosed and often asymptomatic people unknowingly causing the pollution, which makes it difficult to break the chain of transmission, Civil Surgeon added. "From these cases, we can clearly assume there is spread of coronavirus infection in the district. That is why I request the public to immediately call 104 or get in touch with our healthcare personnel if they have symptoms of dry cough, fever, respiratory issues and diarrhoea," Civil Surgeon Dr. N K Rajak said on Sunday.

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BSL, BPSCL get 10 days ultimatum to control air pollution in rural areas

ASHISH SINHA ■ BOKARO

The district administration gave a ten days ultimatum to Bokaro Power Supply Company Private Limited (BPSCL) and Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) management to curtail the air pollution from fly ash waste in rural areas.

On the directive of Deputy Commissioner Bokaro Mukesh Kumar, SDO Chas Shashiprakash Singh convened a meeting with the villagers and officials of BSL and BPSCL on Saturday.

SDO directed the BSL and BPSCL officials to provide alternative routes within 10 days to solve the problem of villagers. He also asked the officials to arrange the supply of fly ash to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

SDO said, the work of



NHAI is going on in Rajganj of Dhanbad where fly ash is required in huge quantities.

According to the central government's guideline, it is also necessary to make fly ash available to NHAI while on the other hand, it is also necessary and solves the problem of villagers," said SDO.

Singh said that the vehicles or dumpers engaged in the lifting of fly ash work should be completely covered.

SDO asked the official to make ensure that all vehicles must be covered, in case of falling, strict action would be taken against the transporters and BSL and BPSCL management.

"Continuous spraying of water should also be done by BSL management on the fly ash transporting route so that dust cannot be spread in the village," added Singh.

LOCKED AND FOUND

think of living without their, otherwise insignificant, life-lines - our domestic help.

My niece, a corporate employee, after few days of sincere WFH realized she is not receiving adequate support from seniors or juniors and started feeling bit on energy. I guess many of her peers were struggling with the new way of life.

We also heard that world over cases of domestic violence also surged. The distressing visuals of migrants sufferings, solely because of an unplanned decision of locking the country will remain in our minds for many years to come. These are only some of the unpleasant truths about lockdown.

But against the many unpleasant happenings, hidden a brighter side that's worth remembering. We suddenly had

more time in general and some nice things did happen during the lockdown. People from all walks of life pouring in to help the needy, as per their abilities, showcased that humanity is alive and will remain so. Children aged 10 or 12 breaking open their piggy banks to support the poor assured us that India will not be short of good citizens in coming days. Community kitchens enthusiastically cooking and distributing food proving once again that there are good Samaritans out there doing their bit to see that no one sleeps on an empty stomach.

Back home, my niece though felt bit low for sometime but was more than happy to celebrate her birthday the way she used to celebrate as a child. Celebrating this special day entirely with parents, after a long

gap, made it a rare occasion. Otherwise birthdays for working professionals are mostly spent in offices. Few gifts, a small office party and dinner with parents or friends at a posh restaurant have become the set pattern of a birthday celebration. This birthday brought back many long lost childhood memories for her. Having traditional birthday special delicacies peacefully at home with parents was much fun. The fun did not stop here. She had ample time in hand to return the favour on Mother's Day. Her mom was so excited to be relieved from kitchen duties the whole day.

Many families, where members are otherwise extremely busy with their professions and hardly get time to interact with each other, got an opportunity to spend enough time to speak, share and understand one another. It was a rare opportunity to cook together and have them together. After a long time drawing room discussions on everything from politics to movies to local issues happened. Children enjoyed their no-school days the most. The cards and board games got back their lost positions in the household. People enjoyed the slower space of life. No one was in hurry. The aged complaints of 'not giving time to one another' were partly resolved.

The period was also for proving culinary skills to one another. Facebook, Instagram got flooded with pictures of who cooked what. Celebrities were also in the race. There were many first timers as well. What made me more than happy was that my daughter, who actually

hates cooking, too cooked something or other which looked quite eatable. The one, which looked most interesting was the biryani she cooked on Eid with the help of her mother and a basmati rice. Moreover now I am convinced that those who say 'I can't cook' or 'I hate cooking' are not going to sleep hungry under any circumstances.

Many of my acquaintances, who in the beginning complained about missing their gyms and yoga classes discovered household chores like sweeping, mopping and dusting and enjoyed turning these to home workout sessions.

We also realized, when families started relying on themselves rather than their domestic help, deep cleaning of cupboards, drawers and almirahs finally happened after being long overdue and put aside for pre-Diwali cleaning. We also realized the contributions of our house helps in our day to day life. I am very hopeful we have all considered

their absence as paid leaves, this is the only way we can show our gratitude to them.

The time has arrived to ease out of the lockdown slowly through exit processes for the sake of economy. We are all set to be back to business with new norms. Life will go on. We will be back to some form of normalcy at some point surely. But there are some key takeaways from this crisis situation that will hopefully remain with us - family and social connections are important, we must know to nurture them even without a pandemic. We have a lot to be grateful for - yes that includes our domestic staff and all front line workers who make our lives so much easier.

Let's start our post pandemic life carefully yet enthusiastically, as slightly better versions of ourselves.

The writer is a retired bank officer and the views expressed in the article are her own.

Cops to get face shields in fight against Covid-19

NEARLY 30 COPS TEST POSITIVE

PNS ■ RANCHI

In a significant move, the Ranchi police have taken the initiative to provide face shields to frontline cops. The Ranchi police will submit a proposal to state headquarter with a demand of face shields for cops.

The newly appointed Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) of Ranchi, Surendra Kumar Jha said, "Face shields offer effective protection against the virus. It provides better facial protection and prevents wearer from touching their faces. Respiratory viruses can infect a person not only through mouth and nose, but through other ways too. A face shield with mask would be helpful for those who come in

contact with lots of people every day."

The Ranchi SSP who is optimistic of getting the face shields claim that the district police will prepare the proposal and will submit it to state headquarter soon. Apart from face shields, the district police has provided Personnel Protection Equipment (PPE) kits to police personnel at respective police stations.

The PPE kits used to prevent exposure includes gloves, a gown, a respirator with a rating of N95 or higher, and a full face shield or goggles. Apart from these, all police stations and cops on duty have been asked to use masks and sanitizers on duty.

The Ranchi police has extra precaution on safety of cops is in wake up to several police stations in State Capital witnessing Covid 19 cases. In past few weeks there has been



Police personnel wearing protective mask on duty, amid the Covid-19 Unlock 2.0, in Ranchi on Sunday
Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

a spurt in Covid cases and infection reaching to government offices, police stations and other public places. Last week, six police personnel test-

ed positive in the capital from different police stations—Bariatu, Chutia, Hindpuri, Argora and Dhurwa and one from Police Line.

As more and more cops and government offices coming in contact with infection, the

state government as precautionary measures restricted the entry of people to three major government offices buildings of Jharkhand—the Nepal House, Dornada, Project Building, Dhurwa and the CM's office—after drinking water and sanitation department minister tested positive for Covid-19.

Ranchi SSP Jha said, "After some police personnel were tested positive as precautionary measures we sanitize the police stations from which cases were reported. Contact tracing of persons was done and those having symptoms were sent to home quarantine." Complaint drop boxes have been put outside the police stations so that common people can drop their complaint at boxes rather than reaching police stations. An awareness campaign is being taken out under which cops are briefed about the preventive measures.

Maoists blow up 12 forest dept buildings in West Singhbhum

Hold forest officials captive for hours



A supplied photo of a forest department building which was blown up by CPI (Maoist) rebels in West Singhbhum on Sunday
Pioneer photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

Over 100 rebels of outlawed Left Wing Extremist (LWE) group, CPI (Maoist), blew up at least a dozen buildings of the forest department in West Singhbhum in the wee hours of Sunday after holding nearly 20 forest officials captive and thrashing them, police said.

The incident occurred at Barkela locality under Mandla police station, around 60 kilometers from West Singhbhum district headquarters. Armed insurgents snatched mobile phones of the forest officials, thrashed them and then used Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and cylinder bombs to blow up around 12 buildings, including residential ones, over a period of three hours, West Singhbhum Superintendent of Police Indrajit Mahtha said.

"Around 100 rebels entered the forest department's area at around 12am. They held the 20-odd forest officials captive and blew up buildings of the forest department till 3am," said Mahtha, adding that the rebels pasted a poster in the site of crime demanding the forest department to give forest dwellers right over the resources available in the forest.

As per data with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), West Singhbhum is among the 19 LWE-affected

districts in Jharkhand. Besides the CPI (Maoist), there are at least 17 splinter outfits active in the tribal state, police said.

"The Forest Act already gives rights to forest dwellers over the forest. The Maoists are following a misconstrued ideology," said Mahtha.

Incidents of LWE violence have been on the rise in Jharkhand since the imposition of lockdown. On May 31, Lakhinder Singh Munda, bodyguard of ASP of Chakradharpur Nathu Singh Meena lost his life along with a village chowkidar Sunder Mahto during an encounter between security forces in LWE insurgents.

In Mid of May, the Peoples Liberation Front of India (PLFI), another LWE outfit in Jharkhand had reportedly chopped the ears of two villagers at Porahat after they refused to support them, police said.

The outlawed CPI (Maoist) — the oldest and the most dreaded LWE group in Jharkhand — has also been planting pressure IEDs to target security forces in rural areas, police said. Their move, however, is causing civilian casualties as the IEDs are easily triggered by the body weight of villagers who go to forests to gather wood, they added.

Ranchi University celebrates 60th Foundation Day



PNS ■ RANCHI

RJU VC, Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Pro VC Kamini Kumar plant a sapling on the occasion of 60th Foundation Day ceremony of Ranchi University in Ranchi on Sunday
Pioneer photo

State's oldest university, Ranchi University, on Sunday celebrated its 60th foundation day.

The university administration on the occasion celebrated the day by planting saplings at its Morhabadi campus. On the occasion, RU Vice Chancellor Ramesh Kumar Pandey, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Kamini Kumar, CCDC Dr Lal Girja Singh, Nath Shahdev, Director Multipurpose Examination Hall Ashok Kumar Singh and several teachers planted saplings and vowed to make the

The officials and teachers on the occasion urged the people especially students to make balance with environment by planting more and more trees. The teachers said that most of problem people are facing today are due to disturbing ecological balance. Established in 1960, the university has its jurisdiction in five districts of Jharkhand — Ranchi, Gumla, Khunti, Simelega and Lohardaga.

JPCC begins preparation for Bermo by election

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee (JPCC) on Sunday started preparations for the Bermo Assembly by-election. In order to do so, JPCC Chief and Food Supply Minister, Rameshwar Oraon held a meeting of party officials and senior leaders at the residential office of late former MLA Rajendra Prasad Singh, located in Jaridih block under Bermo assembly constituency.

Following the social distancing norms, the meeting was attended by Bokaro Congress Committee President Manzoor Ahmad Ansari, the block president of all the blocks falling under the Bermo Assembly, INTUC officials, Panchayat representative to the district level party officials were present. The meeting was conducted by Anoop Jayamangal Singh, son of Rajendra Singh.

Addressing party leaders and office-bearers on the occasion, Oraon said that the Bermo assembly by-election is set to happen in the next few months due to the demise of former MLA Singh. He said that in this



Congress party leaders attend meeting at residential office of late Bermo legislator Rajendra Singh
Pioneer photo

by-election, the Congress candidate would win with double margin. The meeting was held with the block presidents and general party workers so that everyone could be assured that the Congress' victory in Bermo is definite, he added.

Oraon said that in the Coalition Government in the State, the party has four people

related departments, through the Rural Development Department, the Government is trying to provide employment to the people, the party's workers at village level should ensure that all the laborers get employment and they should also get wages on time, Congress workers should work to become people's voice, if it

VOWS TO WIN WITH DOUBLE MARGIN

is ensured that no one can stop the party's victory.

The Food Supply Minister said that ration cards are being made available to every needy family from the Food Supply Department, 14 percent of the government, who do not have ration cards, are the real poor, party workers should raise their voice and the Government will provide ration cards to those 14 percent poor people. He informed that efforts are also being made to provide help to the public through the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health.

JPCC Spokesperson Alok Kumar Dubey said that in connection with the by-election, JPCC Chief met separately to the block presidents following the social distancing norms. He also met INTUC officials, senior leaders and workers of the district. JPCC Spokespersons Lal Kishorena Shahdeo, Rajesh Gupta Chhotu, Amulya Neeraj Khalkho, Youth Congress leader Sunny Toppo, State Congress Committee Minority Department President Shakeel Akhtar Ansari, Nasim Akhtar, Shilpi were present on the occasion.



Fans of Bollywood mega star Amitabh Bachchan and his son Abhishek Bachchan perform 'Hawa' for their speedy recovery from COVID-19, outside a temple in Ranchi on Sunday
Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

Govt failed to provide employment to migrant labourer: Shahdeo

PNS ■ RANCHI

State BJP Spokesperson Pratul Shahdeo on Sunday said that the Jharkhand Government has completely failed to protect the interests of migrant labourers.

Shahdeo said that Chief Minister Hemant Soren had launched three schemes on May 4 to give employment to migrant labourers. 'Birs Green Gram Yojana' for afforestation of more than 2 lakh acres of the Government's land, 'Nilambar Pitambar Jal Samridhi Yojana' to conserve rainwater and to provide employment and to develop livelihoods in rural areas 'Veer Shaheed Poto Ho Khel Vikas Yojana' was launched, he added.

The Party Spokesperson said that all these plans



remained confined to paper and the work that should have been done on them did not happen.

Farmers likely to get bumper yield due to timely monsoon



Farmers prepare an agriculture field before planting paddy saplings during monsoon season, amid the Covid19 Unlock 2.0, near Ranchi on Sunday
Pioneer photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

Advent of timely monsoon in State has given farmers reasons to cheer and they are expecting that this year they will get bumper yields. Most farmers are either preparing their farm for sowing seeds of Kharif crops or started sowing seeds on time.

Agriculture experts and the farmers are also expecting a bumper crop this time after drought-like situations reported in the past two years.

Expressing happiness over timely monsoon, Mukhiya of Deori Panchayat under Nagri Block of Ranchi District Sunil Kachhap said that the farmers have already started preparation for their field since pre-monsoon which occurred just 15 to 20 days ago and now the timely monsoon gave ample opportunity to get bumper crops this year as the farmers almost completed their field preparation for paddy and other crops of the season. This is good news for the farming fraternity during the global

pandemic COVID 19 which caused them much distress during the last three months of lockdown, he added.

Monsoon has entered Jharkhand from the south-eastern, north-eastern and central districts of Odisha. For the coming three to four days, there will be monsoon clouds over entire Jharkhand and the State will witness sufficient rain. According to Meteorologist and Director of Ranchi Meteorological Center, Dr SD Kotal, normal rainfall, which is 96 to 104 per cent, is expected in this rainy season in Jharkhand.

District Agricultural Officer AK Sinha said that the department already started seeds distribution on time so that the farmers could not get scarcity of seeds. With the advent of timely monsoon the duty of the department has increased to provide seeds to the farmers before sowing, he added.

According to the data provided by the State Agriculture

Department, out of total 38 lakh hectares of arable land in Jharkhand, Kharif is cultivated in 28 lakh hectares. Of which, paddy crop alone is planted in 18 lakh hectares.

BAU's said Wadood, Agricultural Meteorologist Dr A Wadood considers this monsoon and pre-monsoon conditions to be the best for agriculture. He said that this time due to early arrival of monsoon and pre-monsoon, the fields are already ready to sow seeds of crops.

"Now when the monsoon enters the State, the farmers will not have to wait for the cultivation process. If they will sow the seeds on time, the yield will also increase," said Wadood.

A farmer from Kanke, Ranchi, Manoj Kumar Prajapati said that this time he is expecting that the monsoon will provide them enough water to get a good crop, because the monsoon came at its scheduled time and pre monsoon rain also gave them an opportunity to prepare their field on time.

Five hardcore criminals arrested with weapons

PNS ■ RANCHI

Ranchi police on Sunday arrested five dreaded criminals from a house under Chutia police station area and recovered 10 fire weapons on the basis of intelligence inputs. Addressing a press conference, Ranchi SSP Surendra Kumar Jha said that these criminals were planning to commit robbery besides they had planned to eliminate some people.

However, police refused to disclose their possible targets but sources in Ranchi police said that they had planned to eliminate some businessmen.

Arrested accused were identified as Abhijit Kumar Singh, a native of Dhanbad besides Ajay Singh, Jagat Kumar, Shivnarayan Mahto and Samir Kumar Bagchi who are identified as residents of Ranchi.

Police recovered 10 pistols and revolvers of different make besides 42 live bullets. Other than fire weapons and bullets police also seized Rs 84000 cash, four-wheeler and two-wheeler, one each, from their possession.

While they are set to be produced before the court, sources in police said that they will seek their police remand for further questioning.



SSP Surendra Kumar Jha along with City SP Saarah, Rural SP Nausahad Alam showing arrested five criminals during a press conference at his office in Ranchi on Sunday
Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

Price hike of essential commodities hits people

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a double whammy for the middle class and the poor, earlier suffering from the lockdown impact and coronavirus pandemic, prices of essential grocery items and vegetables have increased across India.

As per wholesale markets data, prices of vegetables have doubled in the past few weeks with tomato prices having reached to ₹80-90 a kg.

According to Ministry of Consumer Affairs' data, prices

of essential commodities have been increased in several parts of the country. In Pune, price of rice has touched ₹50 a kg while wheat is being sold at ₹45 in Nashik. Atta and Gram dal is being sold at ₹57 and ₹90 respectively in Mayabundar in Andaman & Nicobar. Arhar is being sold at ₹140 in Andaman & Nicobar.

In Mumbai, Moong dal is being sold at ₹150 a kg. Masoor dal is being sold at ₹115 in Siliguri. In Jammu, Vanaspathi oil is being sold at ₹150 a litre in a packet. Mustard oil in Tirupathi is ₹200 a kg.

In Mumbai, the rice is being sold at ₹33; Atta (Wheat) ₹36; Gram dal; ₹85; Arhar ₹108; Moong at ₹151 a kg; rice is being sold at ₹52 a kg;



wheat at ₹38 a kg; Gram dal at ₹68 a kg; Arhar at ₹108 a kg; Urad at ₹126 a kg and Gur at ₹50 a kg in Bangalore. In Delhi, the price of rice, Atta (flour)/wheat, gram, arhar,

sugar, potato, onion and tomato is ₹35, ₹24, ₹74, ₹96, ₹38, ₹32, ₹25 and ₹60 respectively. As compared to the last month data, there is an increase of ₹2 to 10 in essential com-

modities except vegetables in the some parts of the country. Market experts say that traders attributed the increased to high cost of transportation due to increase in diesel and petrol prices.

As far as vegetables prices are concerned, the prices have increased due to short supply and high transport cost.

In the national capital region, the wholesale prices of the common kitchen staple — onion, tomato and potato — have doubled in the major mandis (markets) across the country owing to an increase in the wholesale demand for vegetables and transportation cost.

The wholesale price of tomato has more than doubled from ₹4.8/kg to ₹50-60/kg from 3 June to July 8. In the retail market, tomato is being sold between ₹80-₹100 a kg while the mandis prices of onion have also increased from ₹6.5/kg to ₹20/kg in the same period. The wholesale rate of potatoes for the same period

are concerned, the prices have increased due to short supply and high transport cost.

In the last five weeks, diesel price has increased on 24 occasions while petrol rates have risen 21 times.

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle on July 7 totals to ₹9.17 per litre and ₹11.55 for diesel. In Mumbai, petrol is priced at ₹87.19 — unchanged since June 29, while diesel rate was hiked to ₹79.17 litre from ₹79.05.

has shot up to ₹13/kg to ₹21/kg. The spike in wholesale prices of the vegetables is also likely to inflate the retail prices of these commodities.

Traders say that the supply of fruits and vegetables is still low as farmers are said to be reluctant to bring their produce to the mandis.

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Centre asks NIC to capture FASTag details before vehicle registration

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday said it has decided to ensure capturing of FASTag details while registering or issuing fitness certificate to vehicles all over the country.

In a letter addressed to NIC, with copies to all the States and UTs, the Ministry has informed that full integration of National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) with VAHAN portal has been achieved.

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement. The VAHAN system is now getting all information on FASTags through VIN/VRN (vehicle identification number) vehicle registration number, it added.

FASTag employs radio frequency identification (RFID) technology for making toll payments on



national highways directly from the prepaid or savings account linked to it. A prepaid tag, fixed on vehicles' windscreen, allows automated deduction of toll charges, and any vehicle pass through a toll plaza with zero human contact.

"As such, the ministry has asked to ensure capturing FASTag details while registering new vehicles, as also while issuing fitness certificates to vehicles plying under national permit," the statement said.

The fitment of FASTag in new vehicles at the time of sales of vehicles of category M and N, was made mandatory in 2017.

"But the integration with bank account or they being activated was being avoided by citizens, which would be checked now. Fitment of FASTag is to ensure that vehicles crossing the National Highway fee plazas use electronic medium of FASTag payment, and cash payment is avoided."

This usage and promotion of FASTag will also be effective to minimising possibilities of spreading Covid at NH Toll Plazas, the statement said.

The ministry had issued a Gazette notification in November 2017, on this scheme. A total of 1.68 crore FASTags have been issued across the country till the beginning of May 2020.

'Indiscriminate use of Remdesivir, Tocilizumab may cause more harm than good for patients'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Even as drugs like Remdesivir and Tocilizumab have been recommended as 'investigational therapies' for the treatment of a hospitalised coronavirus patient, the Health Ministry wants the States and Union territories to tread cautiously in the usage of these medicine "as their indiscriminate use or use in conditions for which they are not desirable, may cause more harm than good."

In a video conference with states on Covid case management, officials of the Ministry asserted that in the absence of a cure, the clinical management protocol for Covid-19 would be most effective for the standard of care treatment for mild, moderate and severe coronavirus cases.

"The states have been told that the available evidence for Remdesivir suggests that it may decrease the time for clinical improvement when

"For mild cases, which are nearly 80 percent of the total cases, Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) has been recommended. The standard of care treatment strategies have shown to yield positive results," said the official

used in moderate to severe cases. However, there have been no benefits in terms of reduced mortality.

"It has to be used with extreme caution due to its potential for serious adverse effects including liver and kidney injury," said the Health Ministry official.

Similarly, Tocilizumab studies have not shown any benefits in mortality reduction. However, if used for patients with severe conditions, proper informed consent is required. Rampant use is to be discouraged since the effect of the drug is directed at the 'cytokine storm', added the official. "For mild cases, which are nearly

80 percent of the total cases, Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) has been recommended. The standard of care treatment strategies have shown to yield positive results," said the official.

According to the Ministry, all the "investigational therapies are required to be carried out only in proper health care facilities where close monitoring of patients is possible so that potential complications can be managed."

"The ICMR strongly recommended that the focus of clinical management should continue to remain on oxygen therapy (including high flow nasal oxygen), steroids (which are widely available and inexpensive), appropriate and timely administration of anti-coagulants and high-quality supportive care, including mental health counselling for patients and clinical management of pre-existing illness and palliation of symptoms, said an ICMR official.

4,244 new cases, 68 die in Tamil Nadu

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Sunday saw 4,244 new persons testing positive for Covid-19 in Tamil Nadu with 68 deaths, as reported in the State in the last 24 hours, according to a medical bulletin by the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine.

Out of the 4,244 persons diagnosed with Covid-19 in the State, 1,168 were from Chennai. The three neighbouring districts Chengalpatt (245), Kancheepuram (385) and Thiruvallur (232) continued to be problematic spots with no change in the number of infected persons.

The scenario in other districts is no different as Madurai (319), Thoothukudi (136), Vellore (151), Virudhunagar (246) and Tirunelveli (131) showing considerable increase in the number of persons diagnosed with the pandemic.

As on Sunday, Tamil Nadu had 46,969 covid-19 patients across the State. The number of covid-19 cases detected till Monday in the State reached 1.38 lakh.

The number of laboratories in the State to test the samples rose to 105. The number of persons tested on Sunday were 41,325 while till date more than 26 million persons across the State have been tested.

Out of the 68 deaths registered on Sunday, 60 had comorbidity conditions. The only news that offered some consolation was the number of COVID patients cured of the pandemic. On Sunday, 3,617 persons were discharged from hospitals fully cured and this took the number of persons cured in the State till date to 89,532.

Nadda set to have new team with fresh faces

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The much-awaited changes in the team of BJP President JP Nadda, who has taken over the reins of the party from Amit Shah, are expected to be effected soon even as the Union cabinet too is required to fill vacant positions in the committee of top party leaders including Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj and Anand Kumar.

The sudden emergence of the coronavirus pandemic had thwarted the meeting of the party's National Council, the top policy making body, to approve Nadda's elevation from working president to the full-time chief of the BJP as also the reshuffle in the party and the Union Cabinet, according to sources.

A major reconstitution of the party's office bearers was awaited ever during the tenure of Shah but that did not happen as

a highly centralised mechanism did not apparently require more hands as many assembly polls and subsequently the 2019 Lok Sabha polls were contested under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Shah.

The untimely passing away of central Ministers Jaitley and Kumar and the elevation of M Venkaiah Naidu, another former Minister, to the Constitutional post of Vice President has created slots in the Modi Cabinet. Against this backdrop, a few hands from the party may be shifted to the government, they said.

The Parliamentary Board of the BJP, the highest decision making body, too would need fresh inductions in view of the absence of the three veterans. Swaraj, the only woman representative in the Board, could have a replacement with another woman party leader.

Booked by Delhi Police, ex-Haryana Khadi Board employee absconding

New Delhi: Naresh Kadyan, the disgruntled former Haryana Khadi Board employee booked for filing a false complaint against Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), is absconding, said a report by the Delhi Police.

The police in its probe found that Kadyan, with a "mala fide" intention to defame KVIC, had filed a false complaint against the commission of dealing with prohibited items - ivory and whale bone.

The investigators, who have filed its probe report before a court here to carry forward further investigation, now reported that Kadyan has fled his Delhi residence and that his mobile phone was not reachable.

The report said the Delhi police officer investigating the matter had gone to his residence in the national capital to serve

him a notice to join the investigation on the complaint filed by KVIC but "the residence of Naresh Kadyan was found locked."

"His neighbours informed that Kadyan is currently out of Delhi. However, on further enquiry, two security guards of the society informed the police that Palwal Police, Haryana, also had come looking for Kadyan, a few days ago and probably Kadyan has fled his house," the report said, adding, "his mobile phone could not be reached despite several attempts."

Earlier, the Delhi Police had issued a notice to Kadyan asking him to join investigation in the complaint filed by KVIC which has accused him of concealing facts and filing a false complaint against it. Issuing notice to Kadyan,

Earlier, the Delhi Police had issued a notice to Kadyan asking him to join investigation in the complaint filed by KVIC which has accused him of concealing facts and filing a false complaint against it.

The Delhi Police also asked him to appear before it on July 21 at 10 am with the original documents pertaining to various organisations formed by him where he had fraudulently used the word "National" with the name of his organisation and designated himself as Chief National Commissioner.

Kadyan, masquerading as an RTI activist and a social worker to file frivolous complaints and

harassing government officials, has been booked by Delhi Police under section 182 of IPC for giving false information in a criminal case lodged by the Union IP Estate police station in Delhi.

However, the probe report filed before Metropolitan Magistrate said the charges levelled against KVIC were 'baseless' and 'malafide' and Kadyan had been misled by the police to malign the image and reputation of KVIC.

"Since by filing a false complaint with mala fide intention and deliberately concealing the vital information in the complaint, the complainant has misled the police and is misusing the process of law to defame a reputed government organization, appropriate process may be initiated against him," police told to court.

PTI

Strokes linked to Covid patients has fatal effect: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

When Covid-19 patients have an acute ischaemic stroke (AIS), it not only has a severe but also a fatal effect, according to new findings published in Stroke.

Some of these complications include acute respiratory distress syndrome, cardiac arrhythmias, acute cardiac injury, shock, pulmonary embolism, cytokine release syndrome and secondary infection, contributing further to the worse outcomes including higher mortality in these patients, said the researchers in the study.

They had analyzed data on patients with Covid-19 and AIS treated at 28 hospitals in 16 countries this year in 2020 and compared their health with AIS patients without Covid-19 from the Acute Stroke Registry and Analysis of Lausanne (ASTRAL) Registry, from 2003 to 2019. Researchers sought to determine what clinical characteristics and outcomes of patients with Covid-19 and AIS.

Between January - May 2020, there were 174 patients hospitalized with Covid-19 and AIS. Each Covid-19 patient with AIS was matched with a patient with a non-Covid-19 AIS patient based on a set of pre-specified factors including age, gender

and stroke risk factors (hypertension, diabetes, atrial fibrillation, coronary artery disease, heart failure, cancer, previous stroke, smoking, obesity and dyslipidemia).

The final analysis included 330 patients total. In both patient groups, stroke severity was estimated with the National Institutes of Health Stroke Scale (NIHSS), and stroke outcome was assessed by the modified Rankin score (mRS).

When AIS patients with Covid-19 were compared to non-Covid-19 patients, it was found that the former category had more severe strokes, higher risk for severe disability fol-

lowing stroke and were more likely to die of AIS.

The researchers noted there are several potential explanations for the relationship between Covid-19-associated strokes and increased stroke severity: The increased stroke severity at admission in Covid-19 associated strokes was compared to the non-Covid-19 cohort may explain the worse outcomes.

"The association highlights the urgent need for studies aiming to uncover the underlying mechanisms and is relevant for prehospital stroke awareness and in-hospital acute stroke pathways during the current and future pandemics."

Researchers said the focus should be on activities linked to China's wildlife trade — both legal and illegal — including hunting areas, storage facilities, farms and markets

in Hanoi. "We need to test any wild or farmed wild animal species that could potentially be in close and frequent contact with humans in China," she said. Most researchers agreed that the SARS-CoV-2 virus probably originated in horse-shoe bats, but the route it took to get to humans remains a mystery. The virus could have jumped directly from bats to people and evolved over time into the current pandemic strain, or it could have passed through intermediate animals.

Researchers pointed out that the wildlife trade — in which many animals come into close proximity with each other and people — offers the perfect conditions for a virus in one species to spill over into another. The investigators should scrutinize the circumstances in which the pangolins in China were seized, the animal species they were housed with, and whether people involved in the wildlife trade have coronavirus antibodies, said Arinjay Banerjee, a coronavirus researcher at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. Following that trail could help scientists find a

Cong arrogance shows something is fishy: Naqvi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Attacking the Congress for its uninformed criticism of the Modi Government on a range of issues including national security and economy, senior BJP leader and Union Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Sunday hit out at it for being probed for a spate corruption charges, as asserting the "commotion of corruption" under the "carpet of clan" is "crystal clear" and thus creating "chaos" in the Opposition party.

Naqvi said arrogance of 'Merchant of Corruption' proves that 'there is something fishy' (Dul me kuch kala hai). "Commotion of Corruption under the 'Carpet of Clan' is 'Crystal Clear'. This 'Commotion of Corruption' has become 'Chaos of the Congress', he told newspaper-

sons here in a rhyming way.

The Minority Affairs Minister said that those who cannot differentiate between "burger and baingan (brinjal)", "pyaz (onion) and pizza", "ganna (sugarcane) and gur (jaggery)", "dhan (grain) and pan (betel leaf)", "solar plant and solar park" are giving statements full of ignorance on country's economy, security and reforms.

They are trying to become "Political Pantywaist in Pandemic Period". Naqvi said that India is the only democratic country of the world which, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, provided free food to 81 crore people, one nation one ration card, free gas cylinders to 8 crore families, Garib Kalyan Package worth ₹1.70 lakh crore.

He said ₹1,500 were given into bank accounts of 19 crore women. ₹190 crore given under PM Kisan Samman Nidhi during the challenges of Corona pandemic.

These steps instilled a sense of 'Development with Trust' among the people of the country, he added.

Naqvi said during the Corona crisis, the Modi Government brought historic and path-breaking reforms in socio-economic-educational fields, administration, trade, labour, defence, coal, civil aviation, power distribution, space, forest land, agriculture, communication, banking, investment.

These steps have ensured that India has converted 'disaster into opportunity' and 'increased peoples' trust in Modi's leadership, he said.

'Deep study of China's wildlife trade needed to uncover virus origin'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

China's wildlife trade should be thoroughly investigated as part of efforts to uncover the origin of the coronavirus pandemic, researchers have said even as the World Health Organization (WHO) has rushed its scientists to the dragon country, ahead of plans for a large international research team to probe the pandemic's origin.

"The mission objective is to advance the understanding of animal hosts for Covid-19 and ascertain how the disease jumped between animals and humans," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO's director-general,

recently. The team will work closely with officials and the scientific community in China to determine what kind of investigations are needed and where, said Michael Ryan, director of the WHO's emergency programme. He said a good place to start is in Wuhan, where the first clusters of atypical pneumonia emerged. Researchers said the focus should be on activities linked to China's wildlife trade — both legal and illegal — including hunting areas, storage facilities, farms and markets, "All parts of the wildlife supply chain need to be investigated," said Alice Latrine, an evolutionary biologist at the Wildlife Conservation Society Vietnam

BJP leaders visit residence of slain BJP leader Wasim Bari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Senior Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) leaders including National Vice President Avinash Rai Khanna, National General Secretary Ram Madhav and MoS PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh on Sunday visited the residence of Sheikh Wasim Bari, killed by the terrorists last week, in Bandipora and offered condolences to the close family members on behalf of the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi.

Hailing him as BJP's 'Tiger in Kashmir valley', senior BJP leaders said, "the sacrifices of

Demands proper security for party workers in Kashmir these Nationalists will not go in vain. BJP stands with family members of Bari in this hour of grief."

Bari's father Bashir Sheikh and younger brother Omar Sultan were also killed in cold blood by the terrorists while they were sitting together inside their office cum shop.

BJP leaders also demanded that the administration of Jammu & Kashmir must trace the killers as early as possible and neutralize them soon.

During their meeting with the family members Ram Madhav assured the family members that terrorists and their supporters will be taken to task. "Those people who are responsible for this act, should be neutralized," He also demanded fool proof security cover for BJP leaders and party workers.

Senior BJP leaders also handed over a Cheque of Rs.10 Lacs to the Wife of Late Wasem Bari and assured them full support in future as well.

Avinash Rai Khanna said, "We expressed our sympathies with the family and assured them of all possible help".

Record 1,933 new cases in Andhra

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh reported another record single-day tally of 1,933 new coronavirus cases in 24-hours ending 9 am on Sunday...

from different parts of the state, the highest reported on any day since the corona outbreak. Kurnool and Srikulam reported four deaths each...

NIA court in Kochi remands gold smuggling case accused Swapna, Sandeep to 3 days of custody

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI The National Investigating Agency court in Kochi remanded Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, the main accused in the gold smuggling case...

the agency to produce the accused in the court on Monday and the court would take a decision on the plea by the NIA. Later, Swapna and Sandeep were sent to coronavirus observation centres.

and Sivsankar at Thiruvananthapuram and reportedly following criminal documents. Following charges made by the Opposition parties that the CMO had a role in the gold smuggling, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to the Prime Minister asking for a comprehensive probe into the whole affair.

LeT terrorist gunned down in Baramulla

Jammu: A Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorist on an attack on a CRPF party in the model town area of Sopore on July 1 was among three terrorists gunned down by the joint teams of security forces in Rebban area of Sopore in Baramulla district on Sunday.

According to a police spokesman, "the encounter started in the Rebban area of Sopore on the basis of a pinpointed information in the few hours of Sunday". The encounter lasted several hours and the joint teams of security forces exercised restraint to avoid any collateral damage in the area.

Martyrs Day won't be observed today in J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU For the first time July 13 will not be observed as 'Martyrs day' by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir on Monday.

areas of Srinagar district to contain the spread of coronavirus from Monday. On Saturday, the total tally of positive cases crossed 10,000 mark in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

zone in case of essential services," adding "no civilian or employee shall be allowed to come out or go inside a red zone without a valid movement proof".

the decision to reimpose the lockdown in these areas of the city was taken at a meeting late Saturday evening, officials sources said. The city has witnessed a spike in local deaths of coronavirus cases over the past one week.

B'loru civic body to hire 1,700 health professionals

Bengaluru: The city civic body has initiated the process to recruit 1,700 medical professionals, doctors, staff nurses and support staff to scale up its workforce to establish 30,000 Covid care beds, an official said on Sunday.

According to the official, to establish and run 30,000 Covid care beds, 1,800 doctors and 3,600 nurses are required. The health department has calculated that one doctor per shift is needed for every 100 patients and one staff nurse for every 50 patients.

Table with financial data for INDIA BILLS RURAL FINANCE PRIVATE LIMITED, including Total Income, Net Profit, and various financial metrics.

China bigger threat to India than Pak: Pawar

TN RAGHUATHA ■ MUMBAI NCP chief and former Defence Minister Sharad Pawar said here on Sunday that China — which "has the power, vision and programme to act against Indian interests" — was a "bigger threat to India" than Pakistan.

Mr Pawar said that in recent years, China had turned not just Pakistan, but even countries like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka against India and diplomatic channels," he said.

7,827 +ve, 173 die in Maha

TN RAGHUATHA ■ MUMBAI Maharashtra on Sunday shared another milestone of 2.5 lakh in terms of Covid-19 infections as 7,827 more people tested positive for the pandemic, while 173 people died were reported from various parts of the State.

With the fresh 7,827 positive cases, the total number of infected cases rose to a staggering 2,54,427 in the state. Simultaneously, the total number of deaths — which had crossed 10,000 mark on Saturday — went up to 10,289 deaths.

India's health threat to world

each in Solapur, Nanded and Jalgaon, 2 each in Raigad, Dhule, Jalgaon, 1 each in Kolhapur, Ratnagiri, Latur, Beed, Akola and Gondiya. In addition, one person from another state died in Maharashtra.

With 61,869 infected cases and 1,646 deaths, 17,346 continued to be the second worst hit district in Maharashtra. Pune, which has emerged as the third worst affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 39,125 infections and 10,977 deaths till now.

Table with financial data for SORIL INFRA RESOURCES LIMITED, including Total Income, Net Profit, and various financial metrics.

435 infected in Kerala on Sun

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI Kerala tested more than 400 Covid-19 cases for the third successive day on Sunday. The day saw 435 persons getting diagnosed with the pandemic while there has been a steep hike in the number of persons (206) getting infected through social contacts.

24x7 puja starts at Amitabh Bachchan Temple in Kolkata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA True, love, veneration and agnoury know no logic. With entire India uniting in prayers for early recovery of superstar Amitabh Bachchan and his family members from corona, fans, nay his devotees have started special prayers accompanied by Mahamirayunja Jaap in this unique temple — arguably the only one in the whole universe — dedicated in the name of what they call 'Jay Shri Amitabh'.

Didi wishes Big B speedy recovery

Kolkata: Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee who on Saturday night called up Jaya Bhaduri Bachchan to inquire about the well-being of the superstar later tweeted "extremely saddened to hear the news of Shri Amitabh Bachchan Ji testing COVID Positive. Praying for his strength & speedy recovery. Sr Bachchan please get well soon".

Meanwhile, Bengal reported a steady rise in the numbers of daily puja of Amiti, he said pointing at the "Garbha Griha" or sanctum sanctorum of the "temple" where they have installed an idol of the superstar sitting on a throne like a God.

where they chant a specially created Amitabh Chalisa of 9 pages. After the Puja the visitors are given Prasadam. Patodia a staunch Amitabh devotee constructed the temple in a stay back in the year 2001. Since then he organizes a daily Puja here of whom he calls "my living God".

Indiabills Integrated Services Limited

Table with financial data for Indiabills Integrated Services Limited, including Total Income, Net Profit, and various financial metrics.

The Dharavi project

WHO has praised Asia's biggest slum for containing COVID-19 through community engagement and fast protocols



From being a major cause for concern to being praised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for successfully containing the community spread of the Coronavirus, Asia's largest slum Dharavi, with a population density of 2.27 lakh per sq km, has come a long way. Along with Italy, Spain and South Korea, Mumbai's slum cluster has shown that even if the outbreak is very intense and happens in an under-serviced and infrastructure-scarce settlement, it can still be brought back under control. All it needs is a synchronised human drill. Dharavi is indeed a test case of how resource-deprived zones

can fight the virus, too. Its 6.5 lakh residents live in an area of just 2.5 km, which challenges the golden mantras for fighting the pandemic, namely social distancing, frequent hand-washing and living in well-ventilated spaces. A minimum of seven to eight people live together in small, 100 square feet dwellings and queue up for water each day as piped water at home is a luxury they can only dream of. A whopping 80 per cent of the slum-dwellers are forced to use community toilets and fresh air and good ventilation is a rarity as homes and factories co-exist in single buildings lining the slum's narrow lanes. Yet, on July 7, the slum reported only one Coronavirus case and till July 10, the number of cases was just 2,359, a far cry from what was expected when the first case was discovered in Dharavi on April 1. In fact, Western Press editorials had written off Dharavi as a time bomb waiting to explode.

So what was it that the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) did to turn the tide of the pandemic? Because even as the rest of Mumbai suffered and became a hotspot, Dharavi defied all logic and did not turn into a Corona cesspool. The BMC decided to take the problem by its horns and involved the community in its chase of the virus. It set up teams to reach out to families and they reached out to almost seven lakh people in Dharavi, tracking signs and symptoms and tracing contacts of the infected. Between April 1 and July 10, a whopping 47,500 households were scanned by doctors and private clinics. More than 3.6 lakh people were screened, out of which 14,970 people were screened in mobile vans, thus supplementing the work of over-worked health centres. As many as 8,246 senior citizens were surveyed and as the key to containing any pandemic is rigorous testing, the BMC also ran fever clinics to let people get themselves checked without fear. Its teams also checked people's oxygen saturation levels and if they were below 95 per cent, they were taken to quarantine centres. The logic was that this was faster than testing and in any case it was not possible to test everyone. As it is, they were only able to test 13,500 people. The BMC also employed 350 local private practitioners and if someone was found to have symptoms, they could volunteer to be quarantined even without getting tested. Since home quarantine was never an option in Dharavi, local clubs and schools were converted into quarantine facilities where free food and health check-ups were provided. As many as 2,000 elderly were taken to protective quarantine and only critically-ill patients were admitted to hospitals while 90 per cent patients were treated inside the slum. All private hospitals were taken onboard and acquired for treatment, including Sai Hospital, Prabhat Nursing Home and Family Care. A 200-bed hospital was also set up in a record 14 days. What Dharavi did was that it focussed on community engagement. Politicians and NGOs provided thousands of free meals and rations while Bollywood actors and businessmen donated gear, oxygen cylinders, gloves, masks, medicines and ventilators. Dharavi also followed the basic rules of testing, tracing, isolating and treating all those who were sick and hence, broke the chain of transmission and suppressed the virus. And to make sure that the lockdown worked, free meals and rations were provided to residents trapped at home without work and a source of income. It's not surprising then that Dharavi has turned out to be a beacon of hope for densely populated cities in poor nations and Delhi and other cities struggling with the pandemic could well learn a lesson or two from it. Human endeavour is the biggest cure.

Erdogan's revisionism

The world-famous Hagia Sophia museum in Istanbul, originally a cathedral, has been re-converted into a mosque



The Blue Mosque undoubtedly has its place in Istanbul but it is the Hagia Sophia which has the heart of every visitor. For rarely does one find such a secular icon in any world culture. Built as a cathedral, it has lasted since the 6th century through waves of conquests in Turkey, each era adding a layer of syncretism and a defining mark but never swamping its preceding legacy. So even though it was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest in 1453, with domes on the outside, its insides were not defaced but just covered with lime

wash and concealed. Just the practice of faith and its prayers changed. So Christian emblems, including the famous mosaic of the Virgin Mary on its central dome, were preserved through hundreds of years. And citizens internalised this co-existence as part of their DNA, one that Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, envisioned as being the progressive face of an Islamist republic, one which would endure in the contemporary world. So he decreed that it should be a museum, where every faith symbol would be respected and kept the way it was, and welcome believers from everywhere. But according to a new decree by Turkish President Recep Erdogan, this all-faith shrine will revert to be a mosque as the courts annulled its museum status following petitions by staunch Islamists.

By changing the status of Hagia Sophia, Erdogan is symbolically taking down Ataturk's inclusive and secular vision that had endeared Turkey to the world. To him, that amounts to pandering to the West. Yet that would have been the only antidote to the growing Islamophobia around the world. Powered by new-fangled radicalism, hyper-nationalism, immense nativism and a maximalist desire to lead a post-modern Islamic world, the Turkish leader has made Hagia Sophia's status a matter of Turkey's sovereignty. And a message for his core Islamist constituency that his leadership is worth its support. So though the move invited criticism from around the world, particularly the UNESCO, which said that the shrine was a part of shared world heritage and should not be appropriated by religiosity, Erdogan ordered the first prayers there and took down the site's social media handles. Of course, non-Muslim visitors would continue to be allowed in. Islamists have been campaigning for the reconversion of Hagia Sophia for long but a secular Opposition had been able to hold them off. But in a post-pandemic world, where Governments are justifying power grabs by all means, Erdogan has used this sensitive religious matter to justify his leadership, which is increasingly coming under criticism for mishandling the post-COVID economy and rising unemployment. And since Hagia Sophia was an Orthodox shrine once, his unilateral move has upset both Greece and Russia, both of which have sizeable Orthodox church followers. At a time when inter-faith dialogues have been replaced by collisions, Hagia Sophia has been a bridge in a deeply divided world. To challenge its status is to challenge civilisation itself. To define its identity sits at odds with a city that has bridged Europe with Asia. With this move, Erdogan has only stereotyped Islam further as revisionist and archaic. Hagia Sophia represented the dynamism he could have used to change the discourse and debunk myths. Perhaps even reclaim his ambition to craft a neo-Islamic world. A secular icon strengthens faith, does not erode it.

End this patronage

The so-called steel frame of bureaucracy has developed jelly in its spine, which is out to please our political masters. A systematic overhaul is needed to avoid Dubey-like encounters



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

India's most wanted gangster Vikas Dubey's death. The police encounter may have raised several questions even as politicians, civil rights activists and human rights workers have called it a "cold blooded" murder. But the fact remains that over 100 families rejoiced as the news about Dubey's encounter reached Bekaru — the non-descript village in Kanpur — where his fiefdom remained. The family of the eight policemen, who were martyred on July 3 in an ambush, expressed satisfaction, saying justice was finally done. Even Dubey's parents disowned him and said he deserved what he got.

The story of a young man, having political ambition, entering the blind alley of crime to follow the orders of his political masters is not new in Uttar Pradesh. "Yeh gaon gaon ki kahani hai" (this is the story of every village), said a lawmaker with a wry smile. A few hunters were in one pocket, a motorcycle and caste backing are enough to turn any youth, jobless and restless, into a short-time criminal. In a matter of years, he would qualify to become a full-time criminal. Sometime later, he could start contesting the elections and even win the Assembly or the Lok Sabha polls. Sometimes, even from jail.

Dubey's story is no different. He and Laljan Bajpai, who was the head of the Shivli nagar panchayat, were friends but in 1996, differences cropped up between the two. During the Assembly election, Bajpai supported Santosh Shukla of the BJP while Dubey supported Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate Hari Kishan Srivastava. Shukla lost that election. This widened the gap further. In 2001, Dubey tried to acquire land near the Shivli Inter College where he wanted to develop a market. When the manager (Sudheshwar Pandey) opposed, Dubey killed him. Then Dubey attacked Bajpai, killing three of his men, though the latter survived.

The same year, on October 12, Dubey killed Saroj Shukla inside a police station where the latter took shelter following a brawl. In reality Dubey had stage-managed this episode with his contacts in the forces to corner and eliminate him. Despite the grisly crime being committed in the afternoon and that, too, in the presence of several cops, Dubey's terror was such that the police witnesses turned hostile during the trial. The irony was that even the investigating officer turned hostile — this has probably never happened in the annals of any criminal investigation.

Little wonder then that the strongman's criminal prowess soon attracted political attention. Dubey was happy to oblige and dabbled in village and panchayat-level politics. He was first elected as the pradhan of a village and later became the member of district panchayat with the backing of two regional parties. After he decided to distance himself from politics, his wife took over the mantle and was elected as the district panchayat member. She, too, was elected with support from a regional political party. Gradually, Dubey ensured that his relatives got elected in local-level elections.

Chaubepur in Kanpur city being a Brahmin-dominated area, Dubey's caste added more strength to his muscle power. He preferred being called panditji — as Brahmins are addressed in rural Uttar Pradesh. He was a big catalytic factor in Mayawati's immense Dalit-Brahmin social experiment. With a change of Government, Dubey switched loyalty to the Samajwadi Party



(SP) and then to the BJP. At one time, Dubey even claimed that Behenji (as Mayawati is known among her supporters) had called him by his first name in a crowd of 500 people. His influence was so entrenched in the region that he would hold kangaroo courts where his word would be the only law. Those who did not abide by what he said were beaten up by his cohorts. Even when the police demolished his mansion and started an investigation against him with vigour, people of almost eight villages were afraid to talk to the police.

The police officials are quite candid to admit that had Dubey not been eliminated, he would have become a lawmaker — may be in 2022 (Assembly election) or 2024 (Lok Sabha). His political clout would have gone up. He would have engaged the sharpest of legal brains in India and would have proved in the court that he was not present in Bikaru village on July 3. Dubey would have also got a reprieve like he got in the 2001 murder case. In 2003, the then Mulayam Singh Government did not even challenge the lower courts order in the High Court.

All of this is not a new story in Uttar Pradesh. Dubey has only brought a new dimension to the political-crime nexus where short-term criminals, who hold sway in 10-12 villages and can influence a few thousand votes, hold the key to any election. Earlier, criminals preferred to stick to one party. But Dubey was different. Instead of clinging to one party, he preferred to change the party flag on his car mast as

the Government changed in Uttar Pradesh. He never joined any political party. There are people like Hari Shankar Tiwari, Virendra Pratap Shahi, Mokhtar Ansari, Atiq Ahmad, Brij Bhushan Saran Singh, Rama Kant Yadav, Sara Kant Yadav and Raghuraj Pratap Singh — the list is endless — who, despite having criminal antecedents, continued to win the elections, both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. In the mid-1980s, Hari Shankar Tiwari and Virendra Pratap Shahi created waves when they won the elections from the jail premises. But this was just the beginning. Tiwari even became a Minister while Shahi was gunned down in the 1990s.

All these tainted names carry a Robin Hood image as they help the local people financially in getting their daughters/sisters married. In turn, they live in mansions surrounded by bodyguards belonging to the same or nearby villages or their own caste/religion. For them, it's easy to earn money as they run a lucrative contract business and also have shares in Government contracts for the construction of roads, dams and bridges in their respective areas. In Government parlance, it is called the "mafia share". It's an open secret as to who the main beneficiary is in the corridors of power. Later, the dons graduate to running big criminal operations, including extortions and kidnappings and if required, murder.

This criminal-political nexus finds its reflection in the 2017 Assembly elections, too. In

its report, the Association of Democratic Reformers (ADR) had said that 143 legislators — 36 per cent of the total strength of 402 — have criminal records against them. Of this, 107 — 26 per cent of the total strength — are facing murder charges. Who are these voters electing such criminals? The time has come for some serious introspection. Is it only the political system that's responsible for this rot? If the nexus between the criminals and politicians is deepening, this is the time for the judiciary to stand up and deliver. Government records suggest that till 2018, 10,27 lakh cases were pending in various lower courts in Uttar Pradesh alone. Delayed justice means the criminals can walk away. This was very much evident in the case of Dubey, who, despite facing 60 criminal charges, including that of the murder of a Minister-rank leader, was roaming free, building his empire.

The common perception is that the police arrests only the *oam daddio* and spares the powerful. But it is the case with the judiciary. The so-called steel frame of our bureaucracy has developed jelly in its spine, which is out to please its political masters, who are the people. We need a holistic change in all sectors where crime is crushed at the very beginning so that we do not birth more Dubeyes. (The writer is Executive Editor, News, The Pioneer, Lucknow)

SOUND BITE

The rising population has become a challenge. If we want to stand with developed nations, we'll have to bring a Population Control Act.

Union Minister —Girraj Singh

Nepotism is prevalent everywhere in our culture, be it in politics, business or film. I was surprised to see a pundit pushed me to take chances with new directors and producers.

Actor —Abhay Deol

I don't know what Trump will do after the November elections. If things were to develop between India and China in a more critical fashion, I'm not sure where he (Trump) would come down.

Former US NSA —John Bolton

Is the State (UP) so powerless that it cannot safely bring an accused to trial? Or are such encounters meant to protect others linked with the accused? Links: Parties and individuals?

Congress leader —Kapil Sibal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Uninspiring but funny

Sir — In these troubling times, we need a laugh and Noah Lyles, a fast runner but not as fast as initially thought, provided it. Because of COVID restrictions, a number of sporting events have been postponed or cancelled, including the Olympics. The spirit of this sports event is to inspire us to be the best we can, faster, higher and stronger. It does truly inspire us although not this year. An alternative was found with the athletes competing in a ZOOM-like approach at different locations around the world. Lyles competed in the 200m in an apparent time of 18.90 seconds, a new world record that even he could not believe and he was right. As it turned out, he had mistakenly started in the wrong lane and, thus, ran 15 m less than others. He would have known that something was wrong as athletes at this level know what they are doing every second of the race. Obviously, this was his worst best day. We need to enjoy these occasional, small, 15 m errors as everything is too serious at the moment. If we need further

Make India's defence sector self-reliant

In the aftermath of the Chinese Army build-up in the Galwan Valley, the Government has rushed to make capital acquisitions for IAF. The Defence Ministry has cleared the proposal for the purchase of 21 MiG-29 and 12 Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter planes. The Air Chief Marshal said that an order for another 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas MK IA is likely to be placed with HAL soon. He adds that there was a higher likelihood of the Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) finishing the full development of the Light Utility Helicopter this year. Not long ago, the ruling Government had ejected the CPSU and HAL out of the deal for the acquisition of 36 Rafale fighter jets from Dassault Aviation. According to it, the CPSU was dropped for various inefficiencies and high costs associated with co-production. Ironically, the substitute for HAL as the offset partner in the contract was Reliance Aerospace Limited. In those days, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) was conducting a performance audit on the "Capital Acquisition in IAF". It was expected that the audit would bring clarity to the unexplained terms in the Rafale aircraft supply contract. But the national auditor churned out an innocuous report which was devoid of any independent analysis on the important aspects in the deal

or serious comments. It was strange that discussion on the financial and technological capability of the fledgling offset partner was not an objective of the performance audit. Strange as it may sound, the Constitutional institutions have been stingy in acknowledging the fact that India's biggest builder of warplanes, HAL, is the powerhouse in the IAF. This is not to say that the aircraft builder has always acquitted itself as an epitome of efficiency and economy. In various reports, the CAG has castigated the CPSU for inefficiency, delays and cost overruns. Nonetheless, the country needs this strategic defence manufacturer now more than ever.

Haridassan Rajan
Kozhikode

injured during police operations in 2018. This shows how the State has become dangerous due to the lack of law enforcement.

Tushar Anand
Patna

Let law take its course

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Encounter the truth" (July 11). The killing of Vikas Dubey has once again raised several questions about "encounters" being used as a tool by the police to deliver justice. Ideally, Dubey should have been brought to the court for his alleged crimes. Being a citizen of the country, he had the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. But looks like the police has little time for the due process of law. No matter how grave the accusations, it's not for the police or our political leaders to decide on matters related to life and death. The country has an efficient judiciary. The police would do well to abide by principles.

Shivansh
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Rising fuel costs slow growth

Any society that pays high for its fuel suffers as this erodes incomes, reduces purchasing power and causes a slowdown in the pace of production



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The rising prices of food items are adding to the woes of the people even as they struggle to come out of the economic impact the Coronavirus-necessitated lockdown has had on their lives and livelihoods. Now that India has moved into a phased "unlocking" stage, States like West Bengal, Assam and Uttar Pradesh are in a quandary whether to allow full opening of their economies or continue as before with select sectors being allowed to open up. This uncertainty is disrupting supply chains and creating artificial shortages in most parts of the country.

It is a double whammy. Recession has hit not only India but the entire globe. Job losses, reduction in income and fall in production are common. But in countries like India, the rising cost of transportation due to the unprecedented hike in administered petroleum/diesel prices, is telling on the people. Given the reduced purchasing power, inflation has added to the woes of consumers and farmers alike. Despite higher minimum support prices, farmers have not been able to get even the minimum cost for their produce and have been forced to sell at rock-bottom prices.

Since most restaurants, hotels and processing plants remain under lockdown, the demand for vegetables and foodgrains is low. This has a direct bearing on most farm produces. Corn for example fetched ₹2,200 per quintal in 2019 but this year it is difficult to get even one-fourth of that price. So a farmer who earned ₹20 plus lakh last year, despite better production, is content with ₹5 lakh this year. Plus, the farm sector is in trouble as input costs have increased manifold during the last few months. Even irrigating the fields costs more than double now, as the administered price of diesel has set new records. The people are certainly not beneficiaries of the crash in crude prices that around \$40 a barrel as the taxes have remained high. Any society that pays high fuel costs suffers in more than one way. It erodes incomes, reduces purchasing capacity and causes overall slowdown at a time when pace in production is a must.

However, the rising food prices are in reality a pre-Corona phenomenon. Even in December 2019, prices were rising. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 14.2 per cent on an annual basis. This was the highest increase since December 2013. The latest 20 to 40 per cent rise in prices of vegetables is attributed to higher labour costs and 15 to 20 per cent higher transportation costs. Supplies, too, have reduced by about 15 per cent due to summer rains damaging vegetable crops. The shortage of labour following the reverse migration has increased wages of farm labourers.

These all reflect in the spiralling vegetable and food grain prices. Even prices of rice and wheat have increased in the market despite a massive dose being given to the poor by the Government. It is said that in about 11 States, the free distribution of foodgrains has not happened as planned. According to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs data, 36 States and Union Territories procured 6.38 lakh metric tonnes (MT) of eight lakh MT allocated for migrant workers by the Centre for the months of May and June. However, till June 30, just 1.07 lakh MT, about 13 per cent of the foodgrains was distributed. Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Tripura had distributed not more than one per cent of the supplies got by them.

The crisis has been building up on the price front since the 2019 general elections. The Food Corporation of India (FCI) procured 36 million tonnes prior to that in 2018, the highest since 2012-13. It swelled the FCI's stocks to 75 million tonnes — 33 million tonnes of wheat and 42 million tonnes of rice. It is estimated to be about one-third of the total production. It has been utilised well for distribution till coming November. But the mismatch in distribution, the market supplies and other factors have continued to add to the prices.

Interestingly enough, despite free supplies, the prices have not come down in rural markets either. This is intriguing. It is attributed to reverse migration causing a large influx in rural areas. The prices of edible oils have also noticed significant spikes. The village markets have seen a spiral in locally-produced oils. This has happened due to the rise in mustard and other oilseeds prices, labour costs, electricity and diesel prices. Overall, expelling and freight costs have increased. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in June noted the inflationary situation. Its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) says, "The macroeconomic impact of the pandemic is turning out to be more severe than initially anticipated because of supply disruptions and demand compression. Beyond the destruction of economic and financial activity, livelihood and health are severely affected." The MPC says it is necessary to ease financial conditions further. It reduced interest rates which caused hardships and further reduced purchasing power of the most vulnerable classes. There may not be any magic wand but a soft policy approach and reduction in Income-Tax rates for now would help the common man. With a benevolent tax regime, prices too can mellow. It would reduce governance costs and add to the well-being of the country.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

AMID THE CRISIS POSED BY THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, BJP LEADERS HAVE GONE BEYOND HUMANITY AND ARE ENGAGED IN TOPPLING THE GOVERNMENT. —RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT

POINT COUNTERPOINT



THE BJP HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ALL THIS. DURING THE RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS ALSO, THEY HAD LEVELLED SUCH BASELESS ALLEGATIONS. —RAJASTHAN BJP PRESIDENT SATISH POONIA

Justice turns turtle

Law-keepers have been walking a tightrope in this part of the Hindi heartland. With the killing of gangster Vikas Dubey, they have shown how they blindly follow political masters



AMIT SENGUPTA

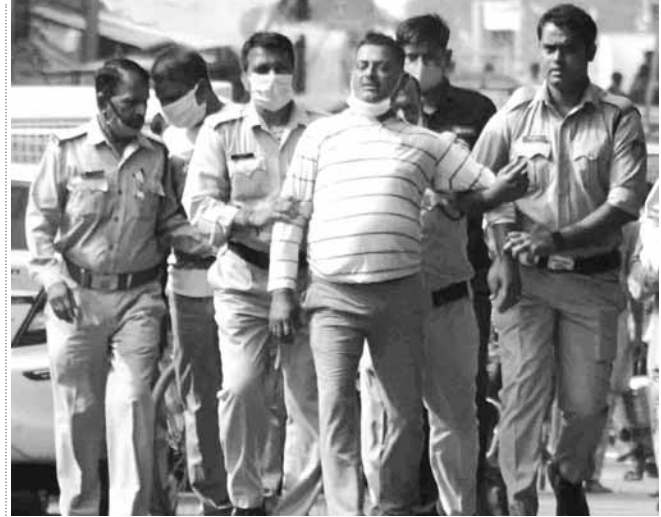
In the badlands of Uttar Pradesh (UP), things only change to remain the same. In that iconic film, *Omkaara*, made by Vishal Bhardwaj and located in the diabolical landscape of western UP where *bahubalis* (strongmen) call the shots, every character, with the caste prefix attached most often with their surnames and on their foreheads, fits into this eternally-predictable jigsaw puzzle. There is a revealing scene in this incredible gangster film of bitter realism. Langra Tyagi, obviously a Brahmin, played superbly by Saif Ali Khan with a pronounced limp, goes to a jail as a "visitor" to meet a buddy. The policeman at the "reception" is making a loud announcement. Among other instructions he is clearly stating that no arms, ammunition and so on will be allowed to be taken inside the prison. So Langra Tyagi walks up to him nonchalantly and declares for all to hear that he has arms and ammunition. The policeman looks up and jokingly dismisses him, saying: "Chal jhutte (Oh come on, you are a liar)." In recent weeks, indeed quite apparently since July 3 this year, almost a similar script played out for the world to see. And it was more volatile than the pandemic, the lockdown, the quarantine, mass migration of workers especially in UP and Bihar, joblessness and the economy that's awaiting some sort of resurrection. It had such a typically inevitable ending that even a C-Gate Bollywood script writer would blush in astonishment and embarrassment.

By now, the macabre story of the murder of eight policemen, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police, in UP and the "encounter" of the man who led the attacks on the cops has unfolded, with all its gory details in the media and social platforms. More than the detailing, which is unfolding and which is still wrapped in many hidden sleaze tales of the underground and the overground, mixing in a sinister synthesis with such lucidity, there are too many questions. All of these surround the hitherto not so popular figure of the protagonist: Vikas Dubey of village Bikar in Kanpur Dehat, Chhauber block.

A history-sheeter, gangster and criminal, with over 60 cases against him, including multiple cases of land-grabbing and murders, Dubey was known to be a typical *bahubali*. Pandering to the upper caste politicians at the local level with big ambitions, he not only wielded the gun as an insignia of his prowess but also convinced them about his invincibility in their grand design. It is slowly emerging that he had been used by politicians across the spectrum. It is also being openly said that he was bumped off abruptly and with a total lack of remorse in the darkness of the night so that he would not reveal all the shady stories of politicians and policemen up his sleeve.

However, uncanny questions remain, about his life and especially the manner in which he died. It is common knowledge that officers of the UP Police are reasonably good records in terms of the numbers of "encounters" under the current Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) regime, despite observations against the same by the highest court in the land. Vikas Dubey, shot dead at the age of 43 in a striped white T-shirt with a pronounced and happy potbelly, started his criminal life when he was young. His early gang work was in his village with his friends, land-grabbing, extortion and murder as his

“ LIKE LANGRA TYAGI, DUBEY WALKED WITH A LIMP. HE SIMPLY COULD NOT RUN. EVEN THEN, THE UP POLICE WAS FORCED TO SHOOT HIM DEAD. ONE WONDERS WHY? WAS HE SHOT IN THE CHEST? IF HE WAS RUNNING, WITH A LIMP, HOW COME HE WAS NOT SHOT IN THE BACK? WHY DID HE SURRENDER IN THE FIRST PLACE IF HE REALLY WANTED TO RUN? WHY DID HE NOT HIDE AND GET HOLED UP, WITH ENOUGH POLITICAL PATRONAGE, TILL THINGS COOLED DOWN? WHY DID HE NOT SURRENDER IN A COURT WITH LAWYERS IN FULL PUBLIC VIEW, AND INSTEAD CHOSE TO SEND A SYMBOLIC MESSAGE BY SURRENDERING IN A HINDU TEMPLE? ”



unique selling points. Not really a Robin Hood, or a do-gooder bandit, he was soon branded as one of the most wanted criminals in the country. He liked to be called "Pandit", proudly flaunting his Brahmin legacy. The first murder case apparently happened in 1990. Nothing happened to him in the terms of the justice system as is the undeclared norm in UP in many cases. He thereby, chose to become a lackey of a politician who shifted from the BJP to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Dubey, too, joined the BSP in 1995-96. Both he and his wife won local elections by hook or by crook.

Significantly, he was the main accused in the murder of BJP leader Santosh Shukla, who was then Minister of State, no less, at the Shilpi police station, again in Kanpur Dehat, in 2001. In a daredevil act, sending a signal to all across the police force and the political spectrum, he apparently chased the Minister inside the police station and shot him dead as a public spectacle. Two policemen also died in that incident. However, Dubey was not arrested.

He surrendered after some months, reportedly accompanied by politicians, even while the entire bureaucracy and police administration tacitly refused to proceed against him, according to the brother and relatives of the BJP politician he had murdered. Predictably, he was acquitted. Dubey was finally arrested in 2017, booked under the Gangster Act and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act. Two years later he was charge-sheeted. However, his activities continued unabated.

As is well-known, for reasons best known to him, Dubey's gang ambushed a police party looking for him on the night of July 3 in his village and killed them in cold blood. Eight cops were killed and several injured. Dubey was

reportedly tipped off by his contacts in the police force that a raid was about to be conducted on him. The gangster and his men not only took the guns of the policemen but also reportedly inflicted severe wounds with an axe on their bodies. Why he participated in this elaborate bloodbath, only he knew; something, perhaps, the nation will never come to know now.

Since then, he was known to have travelled across four State borders, undetected, and ended up, as if going for a morning walk, at the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga temple in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh (MP), on July 9. Unarmed, he surrendered, without an inch of anxiety written on his face, to the unarmed and untrained guards at the temple. He was reportedly identified when he repeatedly shouted his name for all to hear, and his identity was established through the use of the Truecaller app on the phone.

The MP Police handed him over to the UP Police, which then took him in a convoy to some unknown destination, probably Kanpur, followed by intrepid reporters in their vehicles. He was apparently made to sit with policemen, unarmed obviously, and handcuffed, in a Tata Safari. He showed no desire to escape and had willfully surrendered, obviously working on a bigger plot. There were speculations in the media and amid UP-watchers that he would be bumped off just like the rest of his close aides had been.

On July 10, as the night unfolded into another major drama, the SUV with Dubey inside, surrounded by policemen, allegedly turned turtle, on a road which did not seem to have any bumps or potholes. According to reports, the SUV, which had skid on a smooth tarmac, did not leave any tyre marks or wasn't marked. Besides, its doors were jammed. There are reports

that it was not the same one which was carrying him initially. Reportedly, the vehicle which overturned was a Mahindra SUV while he had been travelling in a Tata Safari earlier.

Thereafter, the cops came out with a predictable version: The SUV overturned, Dubey tried to snatch a gun from a policeman and run. Like Langra Tyagi, Dubey walked with a limp; he simply could not run. Even then the UP Police was forced to shoot him dead. One wonders why? Was he shot in the chest? If he was running, with a limp, how come he was not shot in the back? Why did he surrender in the first place if he really wanted to run? Why did he not hide and get holed up, with enough political patronage, till things cooled down? Why did he not surrender in a court with lawyers, in full public view, and instead chose to send a symbolic message by surrendering in a Hindu temple? What were the sleazy, sinister and shady secrets Dubey was hiding in his several decades of criminal life, so lucidly tangled within the web of UP politics?

Indeed, if Dubey was bumped off, which seems to be so at this moment, what was the hurry to enact this public spectacle so soon after his arrest and so shockingly at that? And why were the reporters following the convoy stopped again and again, and then finally barricaded?

In the badlands of UP, these questions make little sense. Indeed, those reporters who would be brave enough to ask these questions are clearly not following their beats. Law keepers have always been walking a tightrope in this part of the Hindi heartland. With the killing of gangster Vikas Dubey, the criminalisation of politics has again come a full circle. Or, should we say, that it has turned turtle?

(The writer is a senior journalist)

The rise and rise of secular sectarianism

With intensifying economic, political tensions and polarisation, the nature of internal conflicts within societies is evolving



NADEEM PARACHA

The concept of sectarianism is largely associated with factions and divisions within a religion. However, there is also now an increasingly used expression called "secular sectarianism." This is about factionalism within a secular ideology, especially one which directly or indirectly sees itself as being as grand an idea as the idea of faith. In fact, in some cases, it wants to actually replace it as a new kind of faith. Most secular ideas, however, retain a democratic respect for religion, as long as it remains relegated to dealing with the people's personal spiritual matters and does not interfere

in the worldly workings of the state. But there have been episodes where some followers of a secular ideology broke away to re-mould this ideology into a new faith that was to replace the old religion. In the late 18th century, when a violent revolution in France overthrew the French monarchy and Catholic clergy, the intellectual leadership of the revolution looked to create a secular democratic republic. However, within this group were also those who believed that the revolution had not been able to weaken the political role of Catholicism and that a new religion was needed to completely expunge it from French society. US academic Keith Baker writes that a faith called "Cult of Reason" was founded complete with temples of reason. This did not go down very well by most of their compatriots who saw it as a contradictory act. How could secularism, which insists on separating Church and State, become the source of a new State religion? Second, the detractors also pointed out that the idea of reason, in the political context at least, rationalised this separation instead of becoming a theological doctrine itself. The "Cult of Reason" was, therefore, a short-lived idea and sidelined. However, soon it was replaced by the "Cult of the Supreme Being." This was mainly conceived by the radical French republican, Maximilien Robespierre. When his faction of French revolutionaries overwhelmed the "moderates", Robespierre declared the new faith as the State religion. Historian Emmet Kennedy writes that Robespierre insisted that a belief in a godhead was important for social order but it needed to be done through reason. This, however, did not stop him from organising festivals to honour the "god of reason." This again was problematic. The "moderates" in the French assembly, that had come into being

after the revolution, had agreed to abolish the monarchy and completely abolishing the monarchy and neutralising the political power that the clergy and the Church once exercised. However, many of them were also of the view that religion's social utility need not be attacked. Robespierre, with his colleagues, agreed. But he suspected that remnants of the Church might be used to usurp his faction's power in the assembly. So, he decided to create a whole new faith to fill the void left behind the receding avenues of Catholicism. The contemporary Slovenian philosopher, Slavoj Žižek, explains Robespierre as a highly contradictory character who placed the "necessity" of violence and terror in the context of ideas that were actually opposed to those that he was promoting. In fact, in an early exhibition of secular sectarianism, he opposed the idea of separating faith from politics, by quoting the 18th

century French philosopher Voltaire as saying that the state manager would be necessary to invent him." Secondly, Robespierre fully understood how, for centuries, the Catholic Church in Europe had managed to gather tremendous degrees of political and economic power. But since the French revolution was directly aimed at abolishing this power along with the monarchy, Robespierre decided to replace Catholicism with an alternative faith. To Robespierre, the "Supreme Being" was a deity called Liberty. This, to him, was a "living deity" which was to be worshipped through democracy and reason. This then would lead to a life of virtue and the immortality of the human soul. The moderates were left horrified when Robespierre started to hold festivals which looked quite like the ones held by the fallen clergy of yore. Even though he was already ordering the beheading of critics, he also made it unacceptable to reject the new faith.

When his faction's acts became too radical, the moderates managed to remove him through an internal coup. His faith, too, was abolished. Robespierre's failure, believing itself to be purer republicanism and revolutionaries (compared to the revolutionaries), could not help but fall into a trap of the French revolution. To judge what was politically correct and what wasn't. In the 1960s, the Red Book that carried quotes of the founder of communism China, Mao Tse Tung, became a sacred text in China and Mao became a living deity of sorts. Of course, in theory, communism is atheistic, but when Mao whipped up a "Cultural Revolution" in 1966, "Maoism" almost became a religion. Those in the Chinese Communist Party, who exhibited distaste or concern towards what Mao had triggered, were cut down by fanatical mobs, waving the Red Book and claiming to be on the right side of the revolution. International

communism split into various factions. [NU] professor Ajay Gadavathar writes that, over the years, because of intensifying economic and political tensions and polarisation, the nature of internal conflicts in societies is changing. According to him, old class conflicts remain but they are being increasingly added to by conflicts within marginalised groups who were once mostly likely to remain united. He gave the examples of racial equality and women's rights groups who, after finding the need to expand their identities beyond the usual "binary" ways that race and gender are perceived and debated, have ended up spending more effort battling other such groups who may think otherwise. It's like standing in front of a mirror and shouting at your own reflection, believing the reflection to be the enemy. In a way then, sectarianism is not unique to religions alone. (Courtesy: Dawn)

UK-China ties freeze with debate over Huawei, Hong Kong

London: Only five years ago, then-British Prime Minister David Cameron was celebrating a "golden era" in UK-China relations, bonding with President Xi Jinping over a pint of beer at the pub and signing off on trade deals worth billions.

Those friendly scenes now seem like a distant memory. Hostile rhetoric has ratcheted up in recent days over Beijing's new national security law for Hong Kong. Britain's decision to offer refuge to millions in the former colony was met with a stern telling-off by China.

And Chinese officials have threatened "consequences" if Britain treats it as a "hostile country" and decides to cut Chinese technology giant Huawei out of its telecoms infrastructure amid growing unease over security risks.

All that is pointing to a much tougher stance against China, with a growing number in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party taking a long, hard look at Britain's Chinese ties. Many are saying Britain has been far too complacent and naive in thinking it could reap economic benefits from the relationship without political consequences.

"It's not about wanting to cut ties with China. It's that China is itself becoming a very unreliable and rather dangerous partner," said lawmaker and former Conservative leader Iain Duncan Smith.

He cited Beijing's "trashing" of the Sino-British Joint Declaration — the treaty supposed to guarantee Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy when it reverted from British to Chinese rule — and aggressive posturing in the South China Sea as areas of concern.

"This is not a country that is in any way managing itself to be a good and decent partner in anything at the moment. That's why we need to review our relationship with them," he added. "Those who think this is a case of separating trade from politics... You can do that, that's naive."

Duncan Smith has lobbied other Tory lawmakers to cut Huawei out from Britain's superfast 5G network. Not only that: He says all existing telecoms infrastructure also needs to be eliminated as soon as possible.

Johnson decided in January that Huawei can be deployed in future 5G networks as long as its share of the market is limited, but officials have

Australia to offer residence option to 10,000 Hongkongers

Sydney: The Australian government says it will offer around 10,000 Hong Kong passport holders currently living in Australia a chance to apply for permanent residence once their current visas expire.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's government believes China's imposition of a new tough national security law on the semi-autonomous territory means pro-democracy supporters may face political persecution.

"That means that many Hong Kong passport holders may be looking for other destinations to go to and hence why we have put forward our additional visa options for them," Morrison said.

Alan Tudge told Australian Broadcasting Corporation television on Sunday.

In order to obtain permanent residency, applicants would still have to pass "the character test, the national security test and the like," Tudge said.

"So it's not automatic. But it's certainly an easier pathway to permanent residency and of course once you're a permanent resident, there's then a pathway to citizenship there," he said.

"If people are genuinely persecuted and they can prove that case, then they can apply for one of our humanitarian visas in any case."

Morrison announced last week Australia suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong and extended visas for Hong Kong residents from two to five years.

The move comes after China bypassed Hong Kong's Legislative Council to impose sweeping security legislation without public consultation. Critics view it as a further deterioration of freedoms promised to the former British colony, in response to last year's massive protests calling for greater democracy and more police accountability.



People queue up to vote in an unofficial primary for pro-democracy candidates ahead of legislative elections in September, in Hong Kong on Sunday.

Over 2L vote in Hong Kong's pro-democracy primaries

Hong Kong: Hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers turned up over the weekend to vote in an unofficial two-day primary election held by the city's pro-democracy camp as it gears up to field candidates for an upcoming legislative poll.

The exercise is being held two weeks after Beijing overrode the territory's semi-autonomous status by imposing a sweeping national security law on the semi-autonomous territory in a move widely seen as chipping away at the "one country, two systems" framework under which Britain handed Hong Kong over to China in 1997.

It was passed in response to last year's massive protests calling for greater democracy and more police accountability.

Thousands of people lined up at polling booths in the summer heat to cast their vote despite a warning by Hong Kong's constitutional affairs minister, Eric Tsang last week that the primaries could be in breach of the new national security law.

because it outlaws interference and disruption of duties by the local government.

Organisers have dismissed the comments, saying they just want to hold the government accountable by gaining a majority in the legislature.

The legislation prohibits what Beijing views as secessionist, subversive or terrorist activities or as foreign intervention in Hong Kong affairs.

Under the law, police now have sweeping powers to conduct searches without warrants and order internet service providers and platforms to remove messages deemed to be in violation of the legislation.

On Friday, police raided the office of the Public Opinion Research Institute, a co-organiser of the primary elections.

The computer system was suspected of being hacked, causing a data leak, police said in a statement, and an investigation is ongoing.

Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp, which includes multiple parties, is attempting to join forces and use the primaries as a guide to field the best candidates in the official legislative election in September.

Its goal is to win a majority in the legislature, which is typically skewed toward the pro-Beijing camp.

To hold the primary elections, pro-democracy activists had raised money via crowd funding. They pledged to veto the government's budget if they clinch a majority in the legislature.

Under the Basic Law, under which Hong Kong is governed, city leader Carrie Lam must resign if an important bill such as the budget is vetoed twice.

On Saturday alone, nearly 230,000 people voted at polling booths set up across the city, exceeding organizers' estimates of a 170,000 turnout over the weekend.

Trump, Biden try to outdo each other on tough talk on China

Washington: China has fast become a top election issue as President Donald Trump and Democrat Joe Biden engage in a verbal brawl over who's better at playing the tough guy against Beijing.

The Trump campaign put out ads showing Biden toasting China's Xi Jinping, even though Trump did just that with Xi in Asia and hosted the Chinese leader at his Florida club. Spots from the Biden campaign feature Trump playing down the coronavirus and praising Xi for being transparent about the pandemic, even though it's clear China hid details of the outbreak from the world.

"I think it's going to be absolutely critical, but I don't know who is going to have the advantage," said Republican pollster Frank Luntz. He has been reviewing the ads and thinks China is one of the three leading issues along with the economy and the handling of the coronavirus.

China is not just a foreign policy issue in the November election. It's an issue that runs deeply through the troubles with the coronavirus, which tanked the U.S. economy.

Voters also will be asking themselves whether Trump or Biden can best defend the U.S. Against China's unfair trade practices, theft of intellectual property rights, rising aggression across the globe and human rights abuses.

"Which person looks more subservient to the Chinese leaders is the person who's in more jeopardy," Luntz said.

As the coronavirus spread throughout the U.S., a Pew Research Center poll in March found Americans with increasingly negative views of China, with 66 per cent saying they are "deeply concerned" about the virus. That was the most negative rating since the question was first asked in 2005. The same poll found 62 per cent of Americans calling China's power and influence a major threat to the U.S. compared with 48 per cent two years ago.

A NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll in late May and early June found registered voters about evenly divided over which of the candidates would be better at dealing with China, with 43 per cent saying Trump compared with 40 per cent for Biden. In the poll, 5 per cent viewed Trump and Biden equally, while 10 per cent said they were undecided.

Trump's advisers see China as an opportunity to portray Biden as deferential to Beijing when he was President Barack Obama's vice president and

US Navy welcomes 1st Black female Tactical Aircraft pilot



Kingsville (US): The US Navy has welcomed its first Black female Tactical Aircraft pilot.

"MAKING HISTORY!" the US Navy tweeted on Thursday in response to a post that Lt. J.G. Madeline Swegle had completed a naval flight school and would later this month receive the flight officer insignia known as the "Wings of Gold".

The Naval Air Training Command tweeted that Swegle is the Navy's "first known Black female TACAIR pilot".

According to Stars and Stripes, Swegle is from Burke, Virginia, and graduated from the US Naval Academy in 2017.

Officials said she is assigned to the Redhaws of Training Squadron 21 in Kingsville, Texas. Swegle's milestone comes more than 45 years after Rosemary Mariner in 1974 became the first woman to fly a tactical fighter jet, according to news outlets.

Serbia, Kosovo leaders in new talks face same old issues

Brussels: The leaders of Serbia and Kosovo resumed talks Sunday aimed at normalizing their long-strained relations, more than 20 years after Belgrade sent troops into its former territory to crush an uprising by ethnic Albanian separatists.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and Kosovo Prime Minister Avdullah Hoti were holding video talks mediated by the European Union foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, aimed at setting up a face-to-face meeting between the leaders, possibly in Brussels on Thursday. The process, known as the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, has been frozen since November 2018.

Borrell said in a video statement that clinching an agreement on normalizing their ties "is crucial for a better future for the people of Serbia and Kosovo, in the spirit of compromise and pragmatism," he said.

"These talks will require political courage from both sides. It will require commitment and engagement, in the spirit of compromise and pragmatism," he said.

Pope Francis 'deeply pained' over Turkey's move on Hagia Sophia

Vatican City: Pope Francis said on Sunday that he is "deeply pained" over the decision by Turkey to change the status of Hagia Sophia — which was originally built in Istanbul as a Christian cathedral — from a museum to a mosque.

In a very brief, improvised remark, Francis, speaking from his studio window overlooking St. Peter's Square, noted that the Catholic Church marked Sunday as International Day of the Sea.

And he said he has a little far away with my thought to adding his voice to strong objections a day earlier by the head of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches. That organization described its "grief and dismay" in noting that Hagia Sophia has been "a place of openness, encounter and inspiration for people from all nations."

The council's membership comprises Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches. Erdogan declared the monument open for Muslims despite a high court nullified the 1934 government decision.

The pope, who heads the Roman Catholic church, is

British student first ISIS supporter from UK to die in Syrian custody: Report

London: A 27-year-old student from London who fled Britain to join the Islamic State (ISIS) terrorist group in Syria in 2014 has become the first known ISIS recruit from the UK to die in the custody of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Isaiah, Mostafa's name, an Algerian origin student at the University of Westminster, was killed while attempting to escape SDF custody recently, according to a BBC report.

It is believed the death occurred during serious disorder in a jail in Hassakha, which houses ISIS prisoners from various countries. The BBC said that the death and surrounding circumstances have not been officially confirmed.

After being captured last year, Mostafa was held in a prison in north-east Syria — a former school converted into a prison — controlled by the Kurdish-led, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces.

Sources told the British broadcaster that he was one of around 10 British men and 30 British women being held by the militia, but he was the first to die in SDF custody. **PTI**

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

E-TENDER NO. 2020R511742C

1.0 Executive Director, Railway Stores(S), Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, Government of India invites e-tender for procurement of 14,400 NM Friction wedges with Non Metallic Liner for LCOF (20) C Bogies of BL/CAMB/L/CMB bogies (22.0 Tonnes Axle Load).

2.0 The interested tenders are advised to visit the website <http://meps.gov.in> for details of the tender and submission of their bids.

3.0 No manual offers will be accepted against e-tender.

4.0 Tender will be closed at 15:00 hours on 13.08.2020.

Director, Railway Stores (W), Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India.

1538/20
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Axis Bank Limited, Axis House, Tower-2, 2nd Floor, 1-14, Sector 128, Noida Expressway, Jaypee Greens, Watson, Noida (U.P.) 201301, Agri Business Centre - Axis Bank Ltd, SCF 94, Sector 61, Indraprastha Extension, Gurgaon, Haryana (U.P) 201301

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTY
Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Property and Reconstitution of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(a) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property (as mentioned in the annexure) of the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Secured Creditor will be sold on "As is where is" basis, "As is what is" and "Whichever bears the least" on 14.08.2020 at 12.00 Noon (U.P) at 201/301 for recovery of Rs.17,34,795/- including the Home Loan & LAP mentioned in the Box pending lit. 68/72020 apply with further interest as applicable. Interest, expenses, costs, charges etc incurred up to the date of actual payment and realization due to the secured creditor from Rs.15/01/2017 to the date of actual payment and realization due to the secured creditor will be Rs.79,39,200/- and the earnest money deposit will be Rs.7,35,000/-. Last Date Time And Venue For Submission of Bids With Sealed Tender With EMD on 13-08-2020 at the above mentioned address.

Account Number	Location / Details of the Immovable Property	Encumbrances, if any known to the Bank.
PH90306230641	Ground Floor, without roof rights, Built on the Plot No. 118, Khazir - 8183, Situated At Residential Colony Indraprastha Extension Dist Gurgaon(U.P) 201301	NO
17029005519991 (LAP)		

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in the secured creditor's website <http://www.axisbank.com/action-reduce>

Date: 13-07-2020, Sd/- Authorized Signatory

10 more people killed in landslides across Nepal

Kathmandu: At least ten people have been killed and 39 are missing due to landslides in different parts of the country in the past 72 hours, an official at the Home Ministry said.

About 40 people have sustained injuries.

At least 11 people are missing after a massive landslide triggered by incessant rainfall swept away eight houses in Nepal's eastern Sankhuwasabha district.

The Nepal government has mobilised the Army and the police to carry out rescue operations.

In total, fifty-four people

Prachanda says he will not allow NCP to split

Kathmandu: Amid the political turmoil in Nepal, the ruling communist party executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said on Sunday that he will not allow the party to split.

He said the party will not allow the party to split, he said. "If there is a dispute in the party, there are proper procedures to resolve it."

His remarks came amid speculation that the NCP could split after top party leaders, including Prachanda, demanded Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate."

Prachanda also advised the party cadres to abide by the party principles and not to run from one camp to another at the time of the crisis.

Prachanda also said some of the party's top leaders within the ruling party as anti-national and others as nationalists," he said, in an apparent reference to Prime Minister Oli's recent statement that some of the ruling party leaders are aligning with the southern neighbour to remove him from power after his government

Lanka polls: Election rallies of president, PM cancelled temporarily after spike in virus cases

Colombo: All election rallies of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa have been cancelled temporarily, the SLLP announced on Sunday, following a spike in coronavirus cases in the parliamentary elections in the island nation are scheduled for August 5. The country has so far reported 2,511 COVID-19 cases and 11 deaths.

All election rallies of President Gotabaya and Prime Minister Mahinda scheduled for July 12, 13 and 14 have been cancelled. The Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) said in a press release.

The announcement came as the country recorded a jump in COVID-19 cases since the middle of this week. Sri Lanka on Friday recorded its highest single-day spike of 300 coronavirus cases in a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts in the north central region. Fifty-seven more cases were reported on Saturday.

Sri Lanka's top election official had also expressed concern over the delay in enforcing the COVID-19 health guidelines for the August 5 parliamentary elections, warning that candidates and supporters were defying measures to contain the spread of the disease which could endanger public safety.

Mahinda Deshapriya, Chairman of the National Election Commission, said the health guidelines for conducting the elections were announced on June 2, but they have not been followed through a gazette notification.

The health guidelines require wearing face masks, frequent hand washing and maintaining one-metre distance. The number of people at poll campaign gatherings has also been reduced to a bare minimum.

President Gotabaya 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. **PTI**

Spain holds 2 regional elections amid small virus outbreaks

AP ■ ORDIZIA (SPAIN)

Over 4.4 million Spaniards in two northern regions are voting in regional elections Sunday amid tight security measures to avoid more outbreaks of the coronavirus.

Regional authorities in both the Basque Country and Galicia have prohibited over 400 people who have tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 from going to polling stations to vote. They would have to vote by mail or delegate their vote to another person. Mail-in voting has increased in both regions.

US remains India's top trading partner in 2019-20

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The US remained India's top trading partner for the second consecutive fiscal in 2019-20, which shows increasing economic ties between the two countries.

According to the data of the Commerce Ministry, in 2019-20, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at USD 88.75 billion as against USD 87.90 billion in 2018-19. The US is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. The trade gap between the countries has increased to USD 17.42 billion in 2019-20 from USD 16.86 billion in 2018-19, the data showed.

In 2018-19, the US first surpassed China to become India's top trading partner.

The bilateral trade between India and China has dipped to USD 81.87 billion in 2019-20 from USD 87.08 billion in 2018-19. Trade deficit between the two neighbours have declined to USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 from USD 53.57 bil-



lion in the previous fiscal.

The data also showed that China was India's top trading partner since 2013-14 till 2017-18. Before China, UAE was the country's largest trading nation.

India is also considering certain steps like framing technical regulations and quality control orders for host of items with a view to cut import dependence on China and boost domestic manufacturing.

Trade experts believe that the trend of widening trade ties between New Delhi and Washington will continue in

the coming years also as both the sides are engaged in further deepening the economic ties.

Presence of Indian diaspora in the US is one of the main reasons for increasing bilateral trade, Biswajit Dhar, professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said.

"Presence of Indian diaspora is creating demand for Indian goods such as consumer items and we are supplying that. A balanced trade deal will further boost the economic ties," Dhar said.

India and the US are nego-

THE BILATERAL TRADE BETWEEN US AND INDIA STOOD AT USD 88.75 BILLION

tiating a limited trade pact with a view to iron out differences at trade front and boost commercial ties.

Professor at Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) Rakesh Mohan Joshi said that although the trade pact will be mutually beneficial for both the countries, India should be a bit cautious while negotiating the pact with the US in areas such as agriculture, dairy and issues related intellectual property rights.

Ludhiana-based Hand Tools Association President Subhash Chander Ralhan said there is huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries on account of increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.

"Because of the anti-China sentiment, several US companies are exploring news suppliers in countries like India to cut dependence on China and if it will happen, then it will greatly help India to boost exports to the US," Ralhan said.

Qualcomm invests ₹730 cr in Jio for 0.15% stake

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries on Sunday said it has secured ₹730 crore from wireless technology leader Qualcomm by selling a small stake in its technology venture, adding to a slew of investments since April that has crossed ₹1.18 lakh crore.

"Qualcomm Ventures' investment will translate into 0.15 per cent equity stake in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis," the company said in a statement. The investment, the company said, will deepen the ties with Qualcomm that will help Jio rollout of advanced 5G infrastructure and services in India.

With this deal, Reliance has sold 25.24 per cent stake in Jio Platforms Ltd - the unit that houses India's youngest but largest telecom firm Jio Platforms. In total, Jio has raised ₹1,18,318.45 croresQualcomm, which is the 12th marquee firm to have set a sight on

India's hottest digital play

in as many weeks, values Jio Platforms at ₹4.91 lakh crore, the statement said.

Proceeds from the stake sales in Jio Platforms along with the ₹53,124 crore raised in a rights issue in June and from sale of a 49 per cent stake in its fuel retail network to BP last summer for ₹7,000 crore, will help the company become net debt-free, Reliance announced last month, once the promised funds come in (75 per cent of the funds from the rights issue will come in next year).

As of March, Reliance had a net-debt of over ₹1.6 lakh crore. Qualcomm is the world's leading wireless technology innovator and the driving force behind the development, launch and expansion of 5G.

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries, said, "Qualcomm has been a valued partner for several years ahead of the development of connecting everything by building a robust and secure wireless and digital network and extending the benefits of digital connectivity to every-

one in India". "As a world leader in wireless technologies, Qualcomm offers deep technology knowhow and insights that will help us deliver on our 5G vision and the digital transformation of India for both people and enterprises," he said.

Steve Mollenkopf, CEO of Qualcomm Incorporated, said, "With unmatched speeds and emerging use cases, 5G is expected to transform every industry in the coming years."

"Jio Platforms has led the digital revolution in India through its extensive digital and technological capabilities. As an enabler and investor with a longstanding presence in India, we look forward to playing a role in Jio's vision to further revolutionise India's digital economy," he said.

The transaction is subject to customary conditions precedent.

Morgan Stanley acted as financial advisor to Reliance Industries and AZB & Partners and Davis Polk & Wardwell acted as legal counsel. PTI

FPIs pull out ₹2,867 cr in July so far

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors have pulled out ₹2,867 crore from Indian markets in July so far, mainly on account of profit booking after surge in Indian equities. The overseas investors pulled out a net ₹2,210 crore from equities and ₹657 crore from debt segment, taking the total net outflow to ₹2,867 crore between July 1-10, according to the depositories data. The latest withdrawal has come after investment of ₹24,053 crore by FPIs in domestic markets in June. Besides, FPIs have been net investors in the last quarter ended June as "valuations have become extremely rich after the sharp rally and disappointing Q4 FY20 earnings season", Ruskim Oza, executive vice president, head of fundamental research at Kotak Securities, said. After remaining net buyers in June in the Indian equity markets, FPIs have gone slow with respect to their investments in Indian equities in July so far, said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research at Morningstar India. PTI

Stressed NBFCs, HFCs seek about ₹10,000-crore financing support under special liquidity scheme

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Sunday said financing requests of close to ₹10,000 crore have been received under the special liquidity scheme worth ₹30,000 crore for stressed NBFCs and HFCs whose financials further deteriorated due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The scheme was launched on July 1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has provided funds for the scheme by subscribing to Government-guaranteed special securities issued by a trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Limited (SBI-CAPL).

"RBI has also issued a circular to NBFCs and HFCs on July 1, 2020 to apply for the Scheme. SBI-CAPL has received 24 applications requesting about ₹9,875 crore of financing as on July 7, 2020 which are being processed," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The first applications have been approved and the remaining are also under consideration, it said.

The Investment Committee of Special Liquidity Scheme (SLS) Trust has approved investment of up to ₹200 crore in commercial paper issued by the applicant.

Non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) came under stress following a series of defaults by IL&FS group firms in September 2018.

During the latest review of the Atanirbhar Bharat package by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, progress of various schemes was discussed, including the ₹3 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme for the MSME sector hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Banks have sanctioned loans of about ₹1,20,000 crore and the ₹3 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for the MSME sector, the statement said.

However, disbursements against this stood at ₹61,987.90 crore till July 9, 2020 and 100 per cent ECLGS for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Besides, front-loaded special refinancing facility of ₹30,000 crore has been sanctioned by NABARD during COVID-19 to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and cooperative banks. This special facility will benefit 3 crore farmers, consisting mostly small and marginal farmers in meeting their credit needs for post-harvest and kharif sowing requirements, it said.

With kharif sowing already on in full swing, ₹24,876.87 crore out of the ₹30,000 crore has been disbursed as on July 6, it added. With regard to the ₹45,000 crore Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme 2.0 for NBFCs, it said banks have approved purchase of portfolio of ₹14,000 crore and are in process of approval/negotiations for ₹6,000 crore as on July 3, 2020.

On the taxation front, ₹50,000 crore liquidity infusion has been made through TDS/TCS rates reduced by 25 per cent for transactions made from May 14 to March 31, 2021.

Earnings, macro data, global cues to dictate market trend: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Trading sentiment in the equity markets this week will be largely guided by quarterly earnings from major companies like Wipro and updates related to macroeconomic data announcements, analysts said.

Management commentary from companies would be keenly watched for insights into how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected various sectors, they added.

"This week, participants will first react to the macroeconomic data and then focus would again shift to earnings announcements. Needless to say, global cues and updates related to COVID-19 will also remain on their radar," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Retail inflation data will be announced on Monday, followed by WPI inflation numbers on Tuesday.

The June quarter earnings season has started which holds key significance as it faced the

Retail inflation data will be announced on Monday, followed by WPI inflation numbers on Tuesday

maximum brunt of lockdown. Thus, management commentary would be keenly watched out for and could keep the markets volatile in the near-term," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.

Major companies scheduled to announce their quarterly earnings this week include Wipro, Federal Bank, Bandhan Bank, Infosys and HCL Technologies Limited.

"The outlook for the market is volatile as the earnings announcements have begun after a washout quarter for most industries."

This uncertainty combined with profit-booking happening after the recent rally, means that

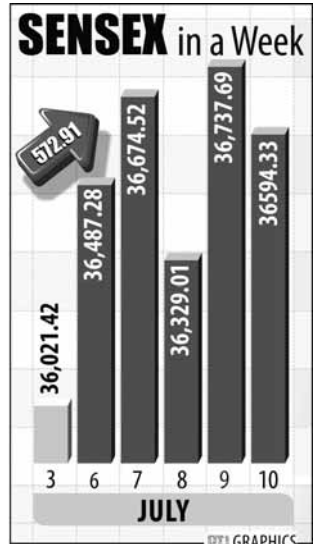
volatility is expected to continue in the markets and investors would do well to be cautious and stock-specific in this market," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 572.91 points or 1.59 per cent.

"In general, the bigger trend triggers will emerge on the back of how developed countries and the foreign funds behave and respond to the post-COVID-19 dynamics. Domestic factors may not have any major impact going ahead for the next few weeks," said Jimeet Modi, Founder & CEO, SAMCO Securities & Stockbrokers.

India added a record 28,637 cases of coronavirus infection on Sunday, pushing the country's COVID-19 tally to 8,49,553, while the death toll climbed to 22,674, according to the health ministry.

Globally, COVID-19 cases have topped 1.25 crore, with over 5.61,000 deaths.



Large number of MSMEs approaching banks for collateral-free loans: Survey

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A large number of businessmen in the MSME sector have approached banks for collateral-free loans to tide over the crisis following coronavirus outbreak, a Care Ratings survey said.

According to the survey, nearly 70 per cent of respondents have approached banks for collateral free and Government guaranteed loans, and the majority of them intend to borrow less than ₹1 crore. It further revealed that banks have so far sanctioned loans to around one-third of the applicants and the cost of borrowings is 8-9 per cent for most of the borrowers.

The rating agency said the survey was conducted over 2 weeks - between June 23 - July 7 - and saw the participation of 345 respondents from a cross-section of sectors.

The size of the business of the respondents in terms of turnover ranged from less than ₹25 crore to ₹100 crore.

"The majority of respondents (over half) have availed moratorium from banks while fewer (27 per cent of those it is applicable) have been able to do so from NBFCs," the survey said, adding that the lockdown has severely impacted the bulk of the respondents (over 60 per cent).

It also revealed that fall in demand, contraction in cash

flows, finance, labour shortage, logistical constraints and increasing receivables are amongst the main challenges faced by the segment due to the lockdown.

A third of the respondents have faced revenue losses of over 50 per cent in the last three months.

Also, over 60 per cent of them have been unable to pay full salaries to their staff. However, only a quarter of those surveyed have retrenched their staff, it added.

Further, nearly half the respondents felt that they stand to benefit from the change in definition of MSMEs and a major part plan to increase their size.

Nearly 70% of the respondents have approached banks for collateral free and Govt guaranteed loans

FICCI survey predicts 4.5% contraction in India's FY21 GDP

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

With economic activities coming to a halt amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, the Indian economy is expected to record a negative 4.5 per cent growth rate in the current financial year, according to the FICCI's Economic Outlook Survey.

The minimum and maximum growth estimate stood at (-) 6.4 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively, for FY21, it said. The quarterly medium forecasts indicated 14.2 per cent contraction in the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of FY21, it added.

The signs of an impending slowdown have been sharply accentuated by the Covid-19 pandemic-induced lockdown.

The Covid-19 pandemic has severely hit global as well as domestic growth.

The current round of survey, conducted in June, drew responses from leading economists representing industry, banking and financial services sectors.

Economic activity-wise annual forecast indicated a median growth of 2.7 per cent for agriculture and allied activities for FY21. Agriculture seems to be the only sector with a silver lining.

There's an apparent upside as far as performance of industry was concerned this year as 12.07,2020, more than 1.42 lakh additional saplings have been planted in different locations across the country.

The rural sector, supported by a steady agriculture performance and hopefully a limited

number of Covid-19 cases, will be a key demand generator this year, as per the survey.

Labour availability and feeble demand remain major issues. Therefore, fresh investments would be difficult to come by in the near-to-medium term, the survey predicted.

Absence of demand stimulus, a second wave of the pandemic and continuation of social distancing and quarantine measures would weigh heavily on growth prospects, it said.

"With demand and investment outlook muted, robust government expenditure has been the only saviour.

Nonetheless, growth is likely to bottom out after the second quarter of FY21," FICCI survey said.

22 Covid patients treated successfully at Tapan Sinha memorial hospital

New Delhi: Medical Department of Metro Railway has made elaborate arrangements to treat COVID-19 positive patients at Tapan Sinha Memorial Hospital. Dedicated medical team comprising of doctors, nurses, and other paramedical staff have so far treated twenty-two(22) COVID-19 positive patients at this hospital. Twelve (12) other COVID suspected patients have also been treated at this hospital so far. All these patients are now cured and have been discharged. They have expressed their satisfaction about the treatment and other arrangements being provided to COVID patients here. No Covid patient has so far died in this hospital.



hepa filters has been set up at Tapan Sinha Memorial Hospital. Adequate number of beds, ventilators (both invasive and non-invasive), pulse oxymeters, oxygen cylinders have been provided at this

ward. Separate medical team comprising of specialized doctors, nurses and other staff has been successfully treating patients maintaining all protocols round the clock at this ward.

Railway Schools review meeting held in CLW

Chittaranjan: A review meeting chaired by Shri Praveen Kumar Mishra, General Manager on the functioning of 11 Railway schools of Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) was conducted today in the admin office meeting room.

SD Patidar, PCPO and Chief Executive Officer of CLW Rly Schools accompanied with Principals of Railway schools taking the prevailing precautions for COVID-19 situations

with social distancing and mask wearing. General Manager has given emphasis and advised for improving the academic curriculum, improvements in quality of education and infrastructure development of the 5 secondary and 6 primary schools of railways.

It is hoped with this synergy the performance of Railway schools will improve and students will bring more laurels in academics for the CLW.

MEGA TREE PLANTATION DRIVE AT CISF CAMPUS SSG Mass Tree plantation by CISF

New Delhi: As desired by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a mega tree plantation drive is being organised in all CAPFs across the country. Under this mega tree plantation drive, reiterating our commitment towards Environmental Protection as part of our "Organizational Social Responsibility" for a green & clean India, CISF has launched a pan India massive plantation drive in which the Force personnel will plant more than 7.23 lakh saplings in its units & formations located in different parts of the country.



Till June, 2020, more than 1.66 lakh saplings have already been planted. During the mega plantation drive held on 12.07.2020, more than 1.42 lakh additional saplings have been planted in different locations across the country.

On 12.07.2020 at about

1000 hrs, at a function organized at CISF campus, SSG, Greater Noida, MA Ganapathy, SDG (APS), Vikram Singh Mann, IG (APS-I), other senior officers and personnel planted more than 3,000 fruit bearing and other traditional Indian plants like Neem, Sheesham, Peepal, Banyan, etc.

CISF has pledged to plant and nurture more number of saplings into trees in the next phase of this mega tree plantation drive. Planting more than 1.42 lakh saplings in a single day is a humble contribution of CISF for a green & clean country.

These saplings would be protected and taken care of to ensure that they grow into large trees.

Trend Slazer

Nepotism is everywhere: Abhay

Actor **ABHAY DEOL** says he went the extra mile in his career to make his own path and called his uncle, veteran star **Dharmendra**, whom he fondly calls his "dad", his inspiration.

Abhay took to Instagram, where he spoke about nepotism prevalent everywhere. He also shared a picture of himself along with Dharmendra.

"My uncle, whom I affectionately call dad, was an outsider who made it big in the film industry. I'm glad there is an active debate on the practices behind the scenes. Nepotism is just the tip of the iceberg. I've only ever made one film with my family, my 1st, and I'm grateful to be blessed and have that privileged," he wrote alongside the image.



'This year has been very kind to me. The viewers have been so affectionate. **Essaying Nitin in Mafia was a fun challenge and it really helped me vicariously experience the societal difference between the haves and the have-nots. It was also an intense experience for me because Nitin navigates the unfair world and is dealing with his inner demons.'**

—**Namit Das**

ABHISHEK BACHCHAN says he is "overwhelmed" with the reaction his debut web-series *Breathe: Into The Shadows* has garnered.



"I am so overwhelmed by all your love and support for *Breathe: Into The Shadows*. As an actor, our greatest joy is to receive a positive response to our hard work. Reading all your beautiful comments all day has been so wonderful and emotional," Abhishek wrote alongside a picture he posted on Instagram. In the photo, the actor is seen with the cast and crew of the show.

Rebel reveals weight loss secrets

Actor **REBEL WILSON** has been inspiring many with her weight loss journey over the past six months. Now she has revealed how she got "just in the dirt" to get in shape.

The 40-year-old Australian actor has been showcasing her changing figure after hours of dedicated workouts, and now she has opened up about some of her workout secrets.



She said: "Obviously a lot of TV shows and films got shut down, so my work has been delayed. So I'm just getting ripped. I'm exercising every day."

In our day to day lives, we touch a lot of surfaces which might be infected by microbes and bacteria. And there are certain contact points which are difficult to avoid. For instance, can you guess the number of fingers which would have touched that doorknob you just rang? Can you guess how many people hold the doorknob you just turned? Or to be precise, was it used by someone who was infected with the novel Coronavirus? Well, a contaminated doorknob can infect a household or an entire office floor. Since a drastic change in the way doors are designed is not possible immediately, many are finding new and easy ways such as using our sleeve, elbow or forearm to move the handle. But the question is, for how long can we adjust with such temporary solutions because you can't socially distance yourself from a door, can you?

The pandemic has sparked calls for the introduction of building codes and design innovations for all future structures to comply with infection control measures. Fundamentally, we want to be creating buildings that minimise the amount of sickness people have at their workplace or commercial places. A combination of technology, smart accessories and functional designs can improve the way we handle a door. So how are doors going to be redesigned for the post-COVID times?

AUTOMATION IS KEY

Every problem leads to innovations and solutions, and so has the case with doors. Design thinkers say that it is important for them to look at new inclusive design solutions, which are meant for the masses. The door designs could be many but automation will play a big role now. Puja Mathur, Interior Designer, Arcadia Design, says, "The door can be either controlled by an app on a cell phone or should be voice-activated. The other option is automatic doors controlled by a button that can be activated with just an elbow." Or may be even a foot-tap. She adds that the most low-tech design solutions like foot-operated kick pedals at the bottom of the door will prove most effective in pandemic proofing.

Agreeing with her, Meena Murthy Kakkar, Design Head and Partner, Finvasage, says that foot-pedals have been prevalent in the market and are the most cost-effective solution. For areas such as public restrooms, this is the most apt solution. Since there will be no choice for a typical hand-knob, the public will have to use it. However, for other public areas such as malls, automatic, motion-detecting doors, which are already in use in some venues, will be the way forward. With no contact, they will provide the best solution.

However, certain rooms such as cabins for the management and others, where there is restricted access, doorknobs or handles cannot be done away with. Therefore, rather than a design change, Meena suggests a sanitisation kiosk or a hand sanitiser. Since the number of people using the door is limited, this can



OPEN SESAME

In post-COVID times, technology, smart accessories, voice-activated levers and more functional doors will take over the conventional doorknobs and handles, says **SAKSHI SHARMA**



be an effective strategy.

"Automated doors with no door handles and voice control locking systems eliminate contact and help prevent the spread of infection. Doors integrated with technology will be the key change in future," says Anika Mittal Dhawan, Founder and Director, Mold Design studio.

However, architect Aparna Kaushik feels that a drastic change in the way doors are designed is not possible immediately. She says, "First preference would be to react to knob finishes that do not react to the disinfectants. Knobs that can be easily cleaned are the need of the hour. It is also important to use knobs made of materials such as copper that do not harbour microbial activity for long."

Pierluigi Lualdi, Partner and director R&D, Lualdi, also believes that handles should be redesigned according to new materials that can interrupt the contamination.

CHANGING DOORKNOBS

The world is changing and we need to adapt to a new, more germ-conscious way of living. Puja says that for many in the design community, the rapid spread of COVID-19 has caused them to re-evaluate their work. What it might mean to design for a world that will never be the same, especially when it comes to how we gather in public spaces, offices, airports, hotels, gyms, hospitals and condominiums. "The method to solve the problem of door handles acting as a transmission route for viruses and

microorganisms is the door opening and closing mechanism that was developed without manual operation. The device for opening the door with the tap of a foot pedal was built into the bottom of the door leaf. The function of the door handle and door lock is not affected. The foot door opener makes the door handle superfluous in most cases. This eliminates the risk of contamination. In addition, the transport of items that must be carried with both hands, for example, a tray, is facilitated. Automated doors, voice activated doors, elevators, cell phone controlled room entry are the future," says she.

Puja adds that another means of opening doors without using the hands is provided by door handles designed to be operated with the forearm. When used correctly, the forearm operated door opener reduces the risk of cross-infection. The brass door opener helps to decrease the spreading of germs while performing daily tasks. It is economical too. Another such opener is Arm pull, a touchless and hygienic door handle. Pull with your arm and elbow every time you use the doorknobs.

Meena lists some new design solutions which have emerged as cost-effective and easy to use. One is the Hygiene Hook, designed by Steve Brooks. It reminds one of the toothpick strategy used to operate lifts. It is a portable hook, which an individual carries with him/her and use it to open doors and handles of the places s/he visits. Simple and ingenious. Another such innovation is the hands-free door handle by Wyn Griffiths. He designed a door handle using a 3D printer, which can attach itself to a door with a crook to open it. He hopes the hospitals and other public spaces can make full-use of this to help reduce chances of infection. Once used, it can be sanitised and re-used as well.

RFID cards, touch-free access cards, which are used in hotels, will

hopefully see an increase in usage as an entry permit through automated doors. Biometric scanners for fingerprints or number pads will now lose their feasibility. Pallavi Vijaydeep, lead interior architect, Housejoy, mentions some emerging design solutions — voice-controlled smart doors, simple accessories at the bottom of the door that allow you to pull using your feet and personalising portable door accessories through which you can hook on to the handle to open it.

"There are multiple solutions that people are coming up with to temporarily attach to the existing doors or door handles like key chains with hooks or attachments to open the door with your arm but the most effective are the sensor based systems like wave to open functions, touchless door bells and switches," says Anika.

Since home automation is becoming big, a solution employing motion sensors can be used to open and close the doors. Foot-operated kick pedals can also be used if they can be designed in a non-invasive manner, keeping the aesthetic part in mind, suggests Aparna. However, contrary to what other designers and architects suggest, Pierluigi says, "They are all absolutely unfriendly and not natural. The challenge for the future is not to fall in the trap of technology (hardware or software) for every simple action of daily life."

WILL SAFETY OVERPOWER DESIGNS?

Since the ultimate aim of design is functionality and comfort, safety always overpowers design, believes Aparna. For example, when we design large windows, there is always a safety concern, but we go for laminated, unbreakable window panes to allay this fear. Similarly, in the design of the door too, safety and practicality will have to be woven with the aesthetics.

However, Pierluigi feels that if that happens we will live in ugly

spaces. This will generate a bounce back to design in the private space to outbalance the homologation of public spaces. "Designers need to incorporate safety with design in our design plans. Some defensive yet aesthetically beautiful designs need to be employed. The current situation will segregate the timelines as BC (Before Corona) and AC (After Corona), where all the elements and spaces will be designed with minimum human contact," says Puja.

For Meena, aesthetics evolve with time and as designers, they are sensitised to adapt to the changing requirements. She says it is their job to ensure that feasible design solutions are developed, wherein safety and good design go hand in hand. "Safety is always a priority, however, design elements that incorporate the new normal will require a balance between aesthetics and safety measures," says Pallavi.

HOW WILL THEY GO HAND IN HAND?

"Man sensors are where the seamless merging of technical advancement with decor takes place as they are nearly invisible and can be operated without any kind of touch," says Aparna.

Possibilities are endless. Pallavi feels that people are opting to limit contact with doors will prefer trendy designs. Technology, smart design and accessories will make it functional.

"With time, we also see new innovations in materials, which can add to our design aesthetics. For example, we are seeing the 3D printers designing face-shields for our front-line workers," says Meena.

"We need to rethink how we introduce interfaces that replace touch with gesture in the workplace. For instance, waving your hand to trigger an automatic door removes the need to touch handles. As it says, *Voice Does the Buddha's Work*, use your voice. Google, Siri, Alexa have transformed the way we think about virtual assistance. These controls have normalised the voice control with home devices allowing people to speak directly to their light fixtures, electronic gadgets like geysers, air conditioners, doorbells, curtains etc. Same way combine in the workplace setting by 'unlock the office door,' says Puja.

She also lists how the intricately-carved door or a glass door which leads to your workplace or home can be merged with technology by concealing the wires or the mechanism. The integrated swing door can trigger an automatic door unit, power supply and user interface — all designed into one. "The technological advancements will merge with design and decor without interrupting the overall look but evolve with the safety and effective solutions to prevent contaminations from virus or germs that can be found on a doorknob," adds she.

Well, even though there are a thousand ways already in progress to ensure touchless movement between spaces, we are now left here to see how much they work to become the new normal.

Beyond the usual

Actors **TYE SHERIDAN** and **OLIVIA COOKE** say that the whole experience of working with director **STEVEN SPIELBERG** in the film *Ready Player One* has been amazing as he is calm and prompt. By **TEAM VIVA**



Tell us about the identity of 'Wade' and 'Parzival'?

Tye Sheridan: Wade and Parzival are two very different people and Parzival is everything that Wade is not. When we meet Wade, he is kind of this kiddish guy who is an introvert and goes into Oasis, a game, where he expresses it all.

What would like to say on Motion Capture?

Tye: We shot everything that takes place in the Oasis first in Motion Capture studios. We were wearing these suits, headcams and there were dots all over our face so that they could record our facial expressions, put those on our avatars and create a new world

around us. There is a real time monitor so that every environment that we walk around in the Oasis, what we shoot around was virtually created. A mocked-up version was there on the monitor to actually get a sense of what it may feel like. That was extremely helpful and at any point you were shooting, you could look in the monitor and you see yourself, your avatar walking around tracking your movements at every stage. So, you understand where you are in the space and who you are.

Tell us about the Stacks?

Tye: As it is based on a book, there are certain environments and scenes that you take away and are

really excited to do that in the film. Stacks was everything that I expected it would be and it's just great that the production has done some incredible work on the film. It was crazy to see expectations turning into reality in this film.

Who is Art3mis?

Olivia Cooke: She is Artemis, the Greek goddess of hunt. She is very determined and has her eyes on winning and taking control of the Oasis for the greater good. She is a loner and doesn't have many friends. She is so driven to achieve her goal.

Tell us about the Gunters?

Olivia: Gunters is a slang for

the egg hunters. They are kind of ruthless and rebellious. They really want to find the egg for the greater good. They are anti-establishment and want to win for the good of the Oasis and the World.

How was it working with Steven Spielberg?

Tye: He was very engaging with us. He loves actors and I think he is a great director. He is open to try different things and go to different places but most of the times, he knows exactly what he wants. The whole experience has been quite amazing. I've learnt maybe more in this film than my entire career.

Olivia: I first met him in the auditions, and I was so nervous, but he instantly knew that he has this effect on people within his working time. He is a genius and lovely, calm and soothing too. He works very quickly. I found that in the auditions, he thinks on the spot and keeps on telling things in between the scenes, this actually works. He is always on his toes to play the game. It was fun working with him.

Tell us more about the attraction between 'Parzival' and 'Art3mis'?

Tye: Quite early in the story I meet this girl who Parzival or Wade is actually obsessed with. She is a pretty famous Gunter in the Oasis and a lot of people recognize her. He has a crush on her, and she pushes his buttons. There is something about her that he likes. And Olivia playing this character, it was really smart.

Olivia: It's fun to explore the attraction and romance between them. It is not on Artemis' radar at all. She has all these people around all the time but her eyes were on winning the competition and the egg so she can make a better future for everyone and help people in the future. Speaking to Parzival and the talking about things just takes her by surprise.

(The film premieres on PIX on July 12 at 1 pm and 9 pm.)

WEBBED



DARK DESIRE

Married Alma spends a fateful weekend away from home that ignites passion, ends in tragedy and leads her to question the truth about those close to her. Starring Maite Perroni, Erik Hayser and Alejandro Spletzer, season 1 releases on July 15 on Netflix.



CURSED

Armed with mysterious powers and a legendary sword, young rebel Nimue joins forces with charming mercenary Arthur on a mission to save her people. Starring Katherine Langford, Devon Terrell and Gustaf Skarsgard, season 1 releases on July 17 on Netflix.

THE KISSING BOOTH 2

With college decisions looming, Elle juggles her long-distance romance with Noah, changing relationship with bestie Lee and feelings for a new classmate. Starring Joey King, Joel Courtney and Jacob Elordi, season 2 releases on July 24 on Netflix.



Studies have shown a significant relation between mental stress and the development or depletion of the immune system.

Here are a few simple measures to release those dopamines and endorphins. By DR MANOJ KUTTERI

Ever experienced certain physical changes with no stimuli? Ever fall ill with no external factor to contribute to it? Well, believe it or not, it is on the reasons which could cause unexplained physiological and biological ailments or changes. According to many psychological experts and doctors, the mind and body are proven to be interconnected. What goes on in the mind can cause major changes in the body. Similarly, physical aches and pains can also disturb our mind resulting in anger, depression or other mood changes. More often than not, we tend to brush away the stress and pressure our mind goes through, especially in times as severe as these. There's a constant overflow of information, news, fake rumours, social media toxicity and the daily struggles of work-life balance. With so much on our plate, it becomes difficult to pay attention to all aspects of life and unfortunately, on our check list, mental health and psychological stress is marked as the last thing to address.

When the news of the pandemic first broke out, we stocked up on supplies and started brewing the age-old remedies at home. However, we left a major chunk of 'health' out of consideration — mental and emotional well-being. Humans are social beings, majority of our lives were spent with people swarming around us — trains, buses, offices or the local coffee shop. The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown restricted us in the confines of our homes, making normal social interaction a bleak possibility. This seemingly un-caring lockdown robbed us the time to go through our thought



journal and tap into our emotional self. Whereas in most cases, this might be a good thing, a lot of unaddressed feelings tend to pop up. Psychiatrists say that the number of calls related to anxiety and stress have increased significantly since the onset of the lockdown. The same is the case in household violence due to surge in anger and emotional outbreak. "Over the last few days, there has been a surge in the number of patients calling in to say that they are anxious about the state of affairs. It was a trickle which now has become an avalanche," says Dr Kersi Chavda, consultant psychiatrist, PD Hinduja Hospital and MRC. "Psychiatry will play a major role now," he adds, speaking of the psychological support that is essential during such times.

In tough times like these, the slightest trigger can cause stress and be more impactful than it was before. For instance, the daily updates on the news or over-burdening from work can cause a heavier impact on our mental health than it did before. This adverse impact will soon be exhibited by our body in ways such as lowering of metabolic rate, headaches, mood-swings and appetite malfunctions. The part which should concern us the most is the relation of stress to our immune system, especially in the current scenario. Studies have shown significant relation between mental stress and the development or depletion of the immune system.

LOCATE, TARGET, BYE-BYE STRESS

The first step to take down this demon we call stress would be to know its origin. We deal with situations differently and may have different reactions to the same stimulus. It is important that we sense and make note of our triggers to deal with the problem at large. This helps us pin point the underlying issue which in turn will lead to a more wholesome resolution to the problem. So take a magnifying glass and look at the picture with more attention to the details.

STAY ACTIVE

While gyms and classes are shut, we need to get creative with our workout ways. Don't laze around only because you are home! For fitness freaks, make your room, your fitness habitat. Venture into different ways of staying fit. One of the most excellent forms of exercise that does not require much space is yoga. It's a workout and stressbuster all in one. For the ones who want their heartbeats to go higher, opt for in-house cardio and HIT workouts to keep those muscles pumping. Avoid staying in one place for too long and keep the body moving.

MEDITATE

Despite your daily routine, get in touch with your inner self frequently. Try to reflect and calm your mind so you can tackle challenges with a clearer head. Meditation is a great way of de-stressing and calming your nerves. There are many tutorials and videos to choose from. One can opt for guided meditation and ease into the process gradually. It not only de-stresses but also increases focus, efficiency and concentration.

DISTANCING FROM THE SCREEN

While social distancing might be the new norm, adopt screen distancing as well. It is understandable that most of our work from homes function straight out of our laptops, we need to minimise our screen time in order to avoid the stress and strains that it causes our eyes and other sensory organs. Put a cap on the number of hours you work on your laptop and your screen and rest, spend it in the real world.

GO BACK TO BASICS

In our daily schedules, to meet deadlines and please clients, we have lost touch with our basics — our hobbies. Hobbies are an extension of an individual's personality and this lockdown has given us the opportunity to re-develop them or maybe discover entirely new ones. The list goes on from cooking, gardening to petting fish or just staring into the sky. Indulge in something that makes you connect back with yourself and watch the stresses fade away.

SLEEP TIGHT

We've all discussed how this quarantine has messed up everyone's sleep schedule. This is possibly because our body needs time to adapt to the change in our daily cycle. Find the amount of sleep that keeps you active. Don't over-sleep or sleep deprive your body since it adversely impacts our immune system by causing physical and mental fatigue. It is more important to get a deeper sleep than a longer one.

EAT WELL

Keep your diet filled with vitamins and minerals that help contrast your immunity. Aim to have a well-balanced diet and avoid the usual munchies that don't strain your digestive system or make it over-work. Having a clean and nutrition rich diet will not only help externally in terms of a good body, but also show positive effects on the body internally and accelerate your immunity rate.

(The author is the wellness director at Atmantan Wellness Centre.)



Time to create a non-violent world

The debate of disarmament has been going on for some time now but why hasn't it then resulted in a real change, asks RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJJI

An unbiased review of the world, especially with regards to events happened in the recent past, would say that despite bold steps taken for development, there has been a constant deterioration in the overall state of affairs of the world. Everyday, we wake up to read in the newspapers that a new war has begun in some part of the world, a previous conflict has escalated or that police has fired on a mob. The world seems to be in a state of utter confusion and great turmoil. Political, economic and communal structures seem to be in a state of constant repair. There are efforts everywhere for mending and patching up, yet daily, we appear to be drifting away from a healthy, normal and peaceful condition.

Arrogance, insatiable lust for name and fame and an unstoppable race for power and position seem to have gripped even the minds of religious high-ups. The situation has become so bad that one can not utter a word of advice in good faith even to friends and relatives. The system of brothers or juniors today. Faith, love and non-violence are now non-virtues and are now considered as signs of weakness will or a submissive culture.

One is asked to be smart, assertive, extrovert and very dominant in the way of being clever, manipulative, cunning, rude and boisterous. There is indiscipline rampant in many institutes of learning and education. There is flagrant violation of law even by those who are supposed to be the custodians or the protective arms of law. In short, there is tension almost everywhere. The world is in a state of being manipulated, cunning, rude and boisterous. There is indiscipline rampant in many institutes of learning and education. There is flagrant violation of law even by those who are supposed to be the custodians or the protective arms of law. In short, there is tension almost everywhere.



What is deadlier: Virus or conflict?

Keeping in mind its geographical and strategic location, the health infrastructure of Poonch in J&K needs to be redesigned so that its people can avail timely treatment for both injuries from ceasefire violations and Coronavirus. By YOUSUF JAMEEL

It has been only six months since the novel Coronavirus started making headlines and the decade-old conflict in the region started getting altered. Till July 10, total number of cases reported from across the world were 12,495,228 while the number of deaths reported were 559,447. In India, total cases reported in the last few weeks were 8,00,000. Though, a strict lockdown was implemented across the nation with the intention of 'controlling' the virus but as soon as the lockdown was lifted, numbers proliferated and there has been no turning back.

Due to inability to handle such unprecedented number of patients, the healthcare infrastructure of several states crumpled including metropolitan like Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad. Several horrifying reports of how hospitals denied admission to patients, the ill-treatment of admitted persons, data forgery and the high 'rate list' for treatment uncovered the false claims of the administration — both state and central. If such is the scenario in places that feature 'state-of-the-art' facilities in their hospitals, one can only imagine the availability of medical facilities in the extremely remote, rural areas of the country — which are also exposed to more immediate threats along with COVID-19.

Walking kilometers for a paramatol

In the interior hamlets of the hilly states, where there are no roads, villagers spend hours to reach the government health centres only to find them locked.

Or if it is their lucky day, they may get a nurse to attend them even if they will find their regular medicines but finding a qualified doctor in such areas is a distant dream. To receive medicine for common cold and flu, people have to trek for several kilometers to reach a Primary Health Centre or a Sub-Centre.

Falling sick in a border village

One such region that has been lagging years behind in the context of development is the border region of Poonch, Jammu & Kashmir. The unavailability of strong health infrastructure in this conflict-affected district has several repercussions as it is not just the diseases that communities have to fight but the bullets and shells that are fired from across the border.

Poonch is often in news for tension at the border owing to years of international conflict. The news about ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC) is often accompanied by reports of injuries and deaths of the locals who become the victims of collateral damage.

In this frequent exchange of fire, villagers who get severely injured are taken to the only hospital operating at the district level — the Rajiv Gandhi Singh Hospital. This hospital



lacks sophisticated equipment and expertise. The injured person is often rushed to the Government Medical College in Jammu city, which is approximately 250 kms from Poonch. Most of the times, the injured patients succumb to their injuries on their way to the hospital.

No roads to the hospitals

Explaining the lack of basic facilities in the border areas, Abdul said, "It is not possible to rush the injured to the hospital immediately as there are no roads in the villages tucked away in the mountainous regions and this is one of the major reasons why so many lives have been lost due to firing."

Not just adults but children are also not spared from the increasing number of ceasefire violations. On July 30, 2019, a 10-day-old baby was injured in Shahpura border area of Poonch district along with her mother, Fatima Jan. The mother somehow survived but the child died on arrival at the hospital. As recent as on July 8, 2020, a civilian was killed while two others were injured in ceasefire violation by Pakistan in Balakote sector in Poonch district.

It is not just the lack of roads, several regions of this district do not have any medical facility at all. Villagers have been left to fend for themselves. Pregnant women, heart patients, elderly people have to be carried on cot through the tricky trails of hilly area. Situation gets worse in winters when it becomes difficult to walk on snow, carrying an ill person tied to a cot.

"The residents of Morban village, which is about 15 km from main market, have been neglected by the administration for a long time now. In the absence of roads and medical centres in the village, patients at times have to be carried on shoulders to the nearest medical facility located in Mandi," rued Abdul Rashid, a social worker from Shahpura village. He told us about Shamima

June 2020 has witnessed 411 incidents of ceasefire violations. While 382 occurred in May, 387 incidents were reported in April and 411 in March. February witnessed 366 ceasefire violations and in January, the count stood at 367. Largely, the target of these firings are the forward posts, villages and civilians residing along the Line of Control (LoC) and the international border. In view of the increasing incidents of ceasefire violations, the health infrastructure must be strengthened not just in Poonch but all the border regions of Kashmir. An appeal has also been made by local representatives to the higher authorities in which the plight of people of border areas has been highlighted.

Virus versus conflict

While the world is worried about the spread of the virus, villagers in Poonch have different concerns. The need of the hour is to redesign the health infrastructure of Poonch district keeping in mind its geographical and strategic location. The ongoing conflict will take its own time to resolve but increasing availability and accessibility of medical facilities can ensure timely treatment of the injured persons, decreasing the death rates.

—Chartha Features

Remain calm because peace equals power.
—Joyce Meyer

COVID-19 CAN BE TRANSMITTED IN WOMB

COVID-19 can be transmitted in the womb, say researchers as a case study provides evidence of its intrauterine (in the womb) transmission from mother to infant.

A US baby girl born prematurely to a COVID-19 infected mother is the strongest evidence to date that intrauterine transmission can occur, according to the findings published in the *Pediatric Infectious Disease Journal*.

"Our study is the first to document intrauterine transmission of the infection during pregnancy, based on immunohistochemical and ultrastructural evidence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the fetal cells of the placenta," said study lead author Amanda S. Centers from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.



WORKING MEMORY HELPS SOCIAL DISTANCING

People with higher working memory capacity are more likely to follow the recommended social distancing guidelines to fight COVID-19, says a study.

Working memory is the psychological process of holding information in the mind for a brief period of time — typically, just seconds. The amount of information working memory can hold briefly — its capacity — is predictive of many mental abilities such as intelligence, comprehension and learning.

The study, published in the journal *Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences*, showed that individuals with higher working memory have an increased awareness of benefits over costs of social distancing. The results also suggest learning social distancing as a new norm requires an effortful decision process that relies on working memory.

TAKING PROTEIN AT NIGHT LINKED TO DIABETES

Consuming protein at night increases the blood sugar level in the morning for healthy people, leading to health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity, say researchers.

Previous research has shown that a snack a few hours before a meal can help control blood sugar levels, which may partly explain why the first thing we eat each day (that is, breakfast) tends to increase blood sugar more than other later meals.

"This study investigated whether waking up at night to consume some protein might keep blood sugar lower the next morning," study authors from the University of Basel in Switzerland wrote.

Surprisingly, the blood sugar response to breakfast was higher when participants had consumed protein rather than plain water at 4 a.m. These unexpected findings may be informative for people trying to improve their control of blood sugar levels, the researchers said.

The study was presented at the Physiological Society's virtual early career conference called Future Physiology 2020.

INSTAGRAM PROMOTES VAPING FOR YOUTH

Facebook-owned Instagram has become a fertile ground for e-cigarette companies to promote vaping to young people, an artificial intelligence (AI)-based study has revealed.

By using AI, researchers from Aalto university in Finland were able to analyse hundreds of thousands of posts from a six-month period, and found that a large portion of posts are promoting controversial flavoured e-liquids to the young audience.

"While most advertisements have clear rules about what can and can't be advertised, we don't see this on social media," said Dr Aqdas Malik who studies public health and the internet.



PASTEURISING BREAST MILK INACTIVATES COVID

Researchers have found that pasteurising breast milk using a common technique inactivates severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) making it safe for use.

According to the study, published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)*, current advice is for women with COVID-19 to continue to breastfeed their infants.

In Canada, it is standard care to provide pasteurised breast milk to very-low-birth-weight babies in the neonatal intensive care unit until their own mother's milk supply is adequate.

"In the event that a woman who is Covid-19 positive donates human milk that contains SARS-CoV-2, the method of pasteurisation renders milk safe for consumption," said study researcher Sharon Ungler from the University of Toronto in Canada.





Ganguly seeks shortened quarantine for team India in Oz

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BCCI President Sourav Ganguly wants a shorter than mandated quarantine period for the Indian team when it travels to Australia for a Test series this year as "we don't want the players to go that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks".

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the rules of the game, players have to be in quarantine for two weeks and be tested for the virus before they can take the field in empty stadiums for now.

But Ganguly is hoping that the Indian team will get some relaxation during its tour of Australia, comprising four Tests, including a day-nighter, later in the year.

"...We have confirmed that tour. In December we will be coming. We just hope the number of quarantine days get reduced a bit," Ganguly told *India Today* show *The Inspiration*.

"Because we don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very, very depressing and disappointing. We are looking at that, the quarantine thing," he said.

"And, as I said Australia and New Zealand have been in good positions... Melbourne. So from that point of view we will be going there

and hopefully the quarantine days will be less and we can get back to cricket."

Australia has over 9,000 confirmed cases and more than 7500 of them have recovered.

Ganguly felt that India will be facing a different Australian side but believes that they still stand a chance because of how good they have been over the past few years.

"It is going to be a tough series. It is not going to be what it was two years back. It is going to be a strong Australia but our team is as good," he said.

"We have the batting, we have the bowling. We just need to bat better. The best teams overseas bat well."

"When we were so successful in England, in Australia, in Pakistan we were getting 400-500-600 in Test matches. I said that to Virat as well."

Ganguly said that the series will be more important to Kohli's tenure as captain of the side than the World Cup.

"Because you are Virat Kohli your standards are high. When you walk out to play, when you walk out with your team, I, watching on TV, don't expect you to just play well against Australia. I expect you to win. So you have to live up to the standards. For his captaincy tenure this will be a good position to be in," he said.

"The World Cup," said the former India captain.

BLACKWOOD MATTERS

Jermaine leads run-chase with 95 to help WI beat England by 4 wickets & go 1-0 up

AFP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Jermaine Blackwood falls short of his second Test hundred by five runs but his 95 off 154 balls made sure that Jason Holder's Windies spoil Ben Stokes maiden Test as England's captain and win the first Test of three-match *#raisthebat* Test series by 4 wickets on the final day at Ageas Bowl in Southampton on Sunday evening.

Chasing the target of 200 runs to go 1-0 up in the series, Caribbean's Blackwood batted with responsibility to not just cancel the hosts' initial advantage but also put his side on the cusp of famous win as cricket returns after almost four months shutdown but to coronavirus hitus.

At the time of tea, West Indies came through an early wobble to lead by 143 for 4 at tea and 57 runs from victory.

Jermaine Blackwood was 65 not out and had revived the tourists with a 73-run partnership with Roston Chase before Chase was out for 37.

Before they came together, West Indies was 27-3 and struggling in pursuit of a target of 200 to take the series lead at the Rose Bowl.

Jofra Archer's two early wickets gave West Indies problems in a seemingly straightforward chase. Archer removed Kraig Brathwaite (4) and Shamsh Brooks (0), and Mark Wood bowled Shah Hope for 9.

West Indies had the added problem of opener John Campbell retiring hurt after being hit on the toe with a yorker from Archer. The West Indies team said Campbell would come out to bat again if needed.

The indications were that he might be needed after pace pair Archer and James Anderson pinned the West Indian batsmen down and made it tough for them at the start of their second innings.

Archer, the fast bowler who was born in Barbados, made the breakthrough in the sixth over when Brathwaite played on. Archer had Brooks low in his next over and the victory target didn't seem so easy anymore.

Hope played two cover drives for four to ease the early pressure but Wood



West Indies' Jermaine Blackwood plays a shot during his 95-run innings on fifth day of 1st Test AP

PACER SHANNON GABRIEL FINISHED WITH 5-75 FOR THE WEST INDIES AFTER COLLECTING THE TWO WICKETS ON SUNDAY MORNING THAT WRAPPED UP THE ENGLAND INNINGS

came into the attack and knocked out Hope's off stump as he tried to hit another and England had the upper hand.

Blackwood's half-century settled the West Indies in the second session. He hit eight fours and was aided by Chase.

Chase was caught behind off a mean bounce to give Archer 3-35 in the second innings but the West Indies fightback was in full flow and that was the only wicket to fall in the second session.

Shane Dowrich (15 not out) joined

Poms should drop Denly, feels Vaughan

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan feels the

out of form Joe Denly should be the one making way for skipper Joe Root in the second Test against the West Indies instead of young Zak Crawley.

In the second Test, scheduled to begin on Thursday in Manchester, either Denly or Crawley is expected to be replaced by Root, who missed the series opener to be with his wife for the delivery of their second child.

"England have a decision to make on Denly. Crawley surely has to stay in the side," Vaughan told *BBC Sport*.

Joe Denly played the way he has played in all of his 15 Tests. It's been the same story. He did the hard yards then made a mistake," Vaughan added.

Denly, who plays at No 3, struggled with the bat in the opener, scoring 18 and 29 in the first and second innings respectively. The 34-year-old has failed to breach the 40-run mark in eight innings.

Denly, who made his debut last year, averages 29.53 in 15 Tests and has failed to capitalise on good starts. His highest score of 94 came against Australia in 2019.

On the other hand, 22-year-old Crawley scored his second half-century in five Tests with a superb 76-run knock in the sec-



Former England captain Michael Vaughan feels the out of form Joe Denly should be the one making way for skipper Joe Root in the second Test against the West Indies instead of young Zak Crawley.

ond innings at the Ageas Bowl on Saturday.

"It's not even a conversation. You could argue that Denly was very lucky to have played 15 Test matches. There are a lot of players who have played only eight Tests and got hundreds," said Vaughan, who led England in 51 of his 82 Tests.

"He has missed his chance and they have to stick with Crawley. I'm sorry for Denly — he's just not good enough," he added. **PTI**

Blackwood put on an unbroken stand of 43 for the sixth wicket. West Indies had a minimum of 42 overs left in the last session of the match to make the 57 runs it needed.

Archer earlier made 23 with the bat as England was bowled out for 313 in its second innings.

Pace bowler Shannon Gabriel finished with 5-75 for the West Indies after collecting the two wickets on Sunday morning that wrapped up the England innings.

England scored 204 in its first innings and West Indies replied with 318.

SINGLES

SWEAT ISN'T POSSIBLE EVERYWHERE: BHUVI
KOLKATA: India fast-bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar feels it is going to be a challenge with the saliva ban to shine the ball in place as sweat is not possible everywhere in the world. "Sweat is not possible everywhere in the world, definitely it's going to be challenging. Hope things get better soon as they were," Kumar said on Sunday during a Twitter chat with fans using the hashtag *#AskBhuv*.

SHeldon JACKSON TO PLAY FOR PUDUCHERRY
MUMBAI: Prolific batsman Sheldon Jackson, who played a pivotal role in Saurashtra's maiden Ranji Trophy triumph in the season gone by, will compete for Puducherry in the domestic circuit this year, a decision which the cricketer said was "not easy". The right-hander scored 809 runs in the 2019-20 season in 10 matches. "This has been one of the hardest decisions that I had to make and it's not been easy for me but I feel it's the right time for me to move on and play as a professional in some other team or state," Jackson said. Former Test bowler Pankaj Singh has also returned to Puducherry after missing the last season due to injury while Paras Dharma has been retained as the third guest player.

ZAHA SUBJECTED TO ONLINE RACIAL ABUSE
LONDON: English Premier League side Crystal Palace's Wilfried Zaha has been subjected to racial abuse on social media, the forward shared screenshots ahead of Sunday's Premier League game at Aston Villa. "We got up to this today," Zaha wrote along with the post on Twitter where he shared the screenshots. "This is an absolute disgrace and should not be happening. We stand with you, Wilf, and anyone else who has to suffer such horrific abuse." Palace said on Twitter.

VIDIT TO LEAD IN ONLINE CHESS OLYMPIAD
CHEMNAN: Grandmaster Vidit Santosh Gujrati was on Sunday named as the captain of the Indian team that will take part in the Online Chess Olympiad 2020, scheduled to begin on July 22. The India No 2 has been nominated as the skipper in consultation with former world champion and the country's top player Viswanathan Anand and the All India Chess Federation selection committee. The team also includes P Harikrishna, Aravindh Chithambaram, world rapid champion Koneru Humpy, D Harika and R Praggnanandhaa among others.

CHETAN CHAUHAN TESTS VIRUS POSITIVE
NEW DELHI: Former India cricketer & Uttar Pradesh cabinet minister Chetan Chauhan has tested positive for Covid-19. The development of Chauhan testing positive for the dreaded virus emerged late on Saturday night from the tweets of former India players Aakash Chopra and R P Singh, who wished him a speedy recovery. "Chetan Chauhan ji is also tested positive for COVID-19 sending best wishes in his direction too...Get well soon, sir," Chopra tweeted. "Just heard about @ChetanChauhanCrji Chetan has tested positive for #coronavirus. Praying for his speedy recovery," R P Singh wrote.

CADIZ PROMOTION PARTY PUNCTURED
MADRID: Cadiz missed out on a chance to secure promotion to La Liga on Saturday as they lost 1-0 at home to Fuenlabrada, after fans defied social distancing guidelines by gathering en masse outside the stadium before kickoff. Cadiz only needed a draw to earn promotion to the top-flight for the first time in 15 years and with spectators still locked out of stadiums due to Covid-19 safety measures, thousands of fans created a carnival atmosphere outside instead. **Agencies**

Hamilton wins Styrian GP in Mercedes one-two

SPIELBERG: A dominant Lewis Hamilton secured his first win of the season and the 85th of his career with a perfectly-judged victory from pole position as Mercedes reeled off a one-two finish in Styria's Grand Prix.

The six-time champion bounced back from a disappointing display in the season-opening Austrian Grand Prix on the same Red Bull Ring circuit a week earlier with a consummate display.

Team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who won the curtain-raising race, finished 13.7 seconds adrift in second to deliver first Mercedes one-two in Austria since 2015 with Max Verstappen in third.

The pair took Hamilton to be split again pre-race but some drivers were absent as Hamilton led the protests in support of the *Black Lives Matter* movement by taking a knee.

"It's great to be back up here and thanks to the team," said Hamilton. "This feels like it has



Lewis Hamilton celebrates with Styrian Grand Prix trophy after win AP

been a long time coming after a difficult weekend last time."

Bottas said he had enjoyed his battle with Max Verstappen. "Starting fourth, this was a damage limitation for me," he said. "I tried, but we are just a bit too slow," admitted Verstappen.

Bottas leads the embryonic championship ahead of Hamilton with Lando Norris third.

Verstappen was slowed by slight car damage in the final stages, ahead of his team-mate Alex Albon, who defended stoutly to finish fourth.

Norris came home a remarkable fifth for McLaren after passing both of Racing Point's pink Mercedes cars during a thrilling final lap. Sergio Perez taking sixth after starting from 17th on the grid, and Lance Stroll seventh.

Daniel Ricciardo was eighth for Renault, Carlos Sainz clocked fastest lap and finished ninth in the second McLaren and Daniil Kvyat 10th for Alpha Tauri.

Both Ferraris were eliminated after crashing together at Turn Three on the opening lap, Charles Leclerc apologising to Sebastian Vettel, who is in his last season with the team, for his ill-judged dive down the inside that resulted in a disaster for the Italian team. **AFP**

Man City secure top 4 ahead of CL verdict

AP ■ BRIGHTON

In-form Raheem Sterling scored a hat trick as Manchester City began a potentially turbulent few days by blowing away Brighton 5-0 to secure second place in the English Premier League.

Gabriel Jesus and Bernardo Silva also were on target to help City emphatically and a run of three straight away losses.

Sterling took his goal tally in all competitions to 27, making it the most prolific campaign of his career to date.

City was at its mesmerising best and, on another day, would have won by an even greater margin as Jesus and Kevin De Bruyne each hit the goal frame.

Sterling made the breakthrough, expertly



Raheem Sterling scores a hat trick as Manchester City beat Brighton 5-0 AP

bending a finish into the bottom right corner from 20 yards (meters) after he was allowed too much space when Jesus nodded Riyad Mahrez's searching pass into his path.

City doubled its advantage two minutes before the break when De Bruyne's outswinging

corner from the right was helped on by Rodri, allowing Jesus a simple tap-in at the back post.

De Bruyne curled a free kick against the post just after the restart, with Brighton goalkeeper Mathew Ryan grateful to clutch Sterling's follow-up effort.

Sterling quickly atoned for squandering that chance by heading in Mahrez's delightful cross from the right to put the result beyond doubt with 37 minutes still to go.

City's play was verging on exhibition stuff at times and, just three minutes later, Silva added another by finishing off a rebound after Ryan failed to hold his initial effort.

Sterling had time to secure his treble — and it arrived nine minutes from the end, in bizarre fashion.

After falling to the ground inside the box, the England international, also somehow managed to head the ball goalward and make it seven goals in as many games since the restart to claim the match ball as Dan Burn failed to clear on the line.

Ronaldo's spot kicks save Juve

AFP ■ TURIN

Cristiano Ronaldo scored two penalties as Juventus snatched a dramatic 2-2 draw against Atalanta on Saturday to take a massive step towards a ninth straight Serie A title.

Lazio's 2-1 loss to Sassuolo earlier in the day gave Atalanta, on an 11-match winning streak heading into the game, the chance to move second and cut the gap to Juve to six points.

But despite trailing twice and being outplayed for long periods, Maurizio Sarri's Juventus moved eight points clear at the top with six matches remaining as Ronaldo took his tally to 28 league goals this season. "We can't make calculations yet, we can't take our foot off the gas until we are mathematically champions," said Juve captain Leonardo Bonucci.

It was an ultimately frustrating outing for Atalanta who stay third, nine points off the pace, after conceding both spot-kicks for handball.

"What are we meant to do, cut our arms off? You can at most put your arms



Cristiano Ronaldo scores a penalty to level the match AP

in front of your body," Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini told *DAZN*.

"The interpretation of the rule is not the same here as elsewhere. Other countries don't give penalties like that."

Atalanta grabbed the lead in the 16th minute, scoring for the 25th consecutive match in all competitions.

Papu Gomez was the creator, wriggling free in midfield before exchanging passes with Duvan Zapata before sliding the ball back for the Colombian to drill

Vidal keeps Barca in fight

AFP ■ VALLADOLID

Lionel Messi made it 20 assists for the season in Barcelona's stogy 1-0 win over Real Valladolid on Saturday, even as his team's La Liga challenge appears almost over.

Messi teed up Arturo Vidal's winner as Jose Zorrilla to become the first player to provide 20 assists in Spain's top flight since Xavi Hernandez in 2009.

Victory for Barca means Real Madrid cannot clinch the title on Monday by beating Granada but only an incredible collapse will prevent them from putting their name on the trophy later in the week.

If they beat Granada, Madrid will win La Liga by prevailing at home to Villarreal on Thursday, regardless of Barcelona's results.

Overall, Madrid need only five points from their remaining three matches to secure their third La Liga title in eight years.

Yet even as Barca's turbulent domestic campaign draws to a close, Messi continues to shine.



Lionel Messi celebrates with Real Valladolid's defender AP

Arturo Vidal celebrates with Lionel Messi after scoring Barca's opener AP

defenders, triggered more remarkable milestones.

As well as matching the best La Liga total for assists by one player in the last 11 years, Messi extends his own career-best number of assists in a single league season.

He also becomes only the second player in the 21st century from the five major European leagues to hit 20 goals and 20 assists in the same campaign, after Thierry Henry

Griezmann likely to miss title run-in

Barcelona: Barcelona forward Antoine Griezmann is set to miss his side's final two La Liga games after sustaining a thigh injury during Saturday's win over Real Valladolid.

Griezmann came off at halftime and a statement from Barca on Sunday said he had injured his right thigh.

The club did not say how long the France striker would be out for although newspaper *Sport* said he would be sidelined for three weeks, ruling him out of Thursday's home game against Osasuna and their final match, away to Alaves, next Sunday. **AFP**

in 2002-03. Later, third-placed Atletico Madrid made sure of their place in the Champions League next season with a 1-0 win over Real Betis despite playing more than half an hour with 10 men. Diego Costa grabbed the only goal from a Yannick Carrasco free-kick in the 73rd minute after VAR had earlier ruled out two goals.