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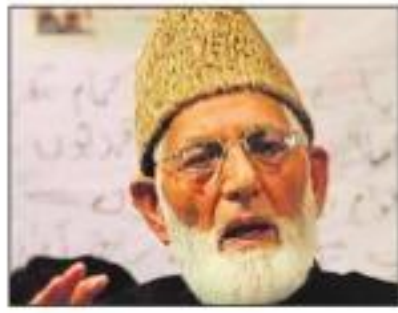
Geelani's resignation blows lid off Pakistan medical college racket and the shadow war within Hurriyat

NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN & BASHARAT MASOOD
MUMBAI, SRINAGAR, JULY 4

TWO YEARS ago, few would have imagined that questions raised within the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) about an alleged racket in medical seats in Pakistan would come to such a pass.

The bombshell resignation

of hardline Kashmiri separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani last week as "chairperson for life" of the APHC has caused a near implosion in the Hurriyat. In his resignation letter, he accused Hurriyat representatives of corruption and cosyng up to power structures in Pakistan which, ironically, is the shadow patron of the Hurriyat and whose voice he was in the Valley. He also nominated Abdullah Geelani, no favourite



Islamabad would like him to withdraw resignation but the lines have been drawn

of Islamabad, as his successor.

The unravelling of this umbrella group of separatists is a high-stakes political thriller still awaiting a denouement. How it ends could have far-reaching consequences given the political vacuum in the Valley.

Its roots go back to the 2018 controversy over medical seats, sources have told *The Sunday Express*. Geelani's reference to an "internal investigation," in his letter is

linked to this issue.

For close to two decades — beginning with the détente in the Musharraf years — Pakistan rolled out the red carpet for Kashmiri students wanting to study medicine and engineering. Until last year, students who could not get admission locally would head to Pakistan, where seats were reserved for them in colleges in PoK, Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore. Most seats

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NO WORD ON CALL FOR 'STRATEGIC REASONS'

As tensions soared after Galwan, Pompeo made quiet call to Jaishankar

Information sharing helping, good sense on Chinese build-up: Officials

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

AT THE height of tensions between India and China following the June 15 incident in Galwan Valley where 20 Indian Army personnel were killed in clashes with Chinese troops, US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo spoke to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, *The Sunday Express* has learnt.

The phone call by Pompeo, sources said, was made about 10 days ago and the conversation revolved around Washington's support to New Delhi at that time of crisis.

Since March, Jaishankar and Pompeo had spoken to each other on at least three occasions, but this was their first conversation after the Galwan Valley incident.

Sources said information about the call was not made public for "strategic reasons" since India and China were in the middle of military and diplomatic talks — the second meeting of the Corps Commanders took place on June 22 and the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCCA) met on June 24.

Washington's statement on June 17, two days after the Galwan Valley incident, was seen as neutral in tone. "We are closely monitoring the situation between Indian and Chinese



Jaishankar, Pompeo spoke about 10 days ago. File

forces along the Line of Actual Control. We note the Indian military has announced that 20 soldiers have died, and we offer our condolences to their families. Both India and China have expressed a desire to de-escalate, and we support a peaceful resolution of the current situation," a spokesperson for the US State Department had said.

But US statements in the last 10 days have seen calibration, reflecting a more vocal support. And Pompeo has been leading from the front. On July 1, briefing reporters in Washington DC, he welcomed the Indian government's decision to ban 59 Chinese apps.

"We welcome India's ban on certain mobile apps that can serve as appendages of CCP's surveillance state. India's clean app approach will boost India's sovereignty, will also boost India's integrity and national

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

2-week halt on flights to Kolkata from 6 cities with big case load

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

RESPONDING TO the West Bengal government's request to curtail flights to the state, the Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday asked airlines to suspend flights to Kolkata from Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chennai and Ahmedabad — all cities with high Covid caseload — between July 6 and July 19.

This is the first time since the resumption of domestic flights on May 25 that a state has decided to completely curtail incoming flight movements to manage the spread of Covid-19. Earlier, states such as Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Delhi had imposed restrictions on travellers in the form of quarantine and self-isolation norms.

In a letter to Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola dated June 30, state Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha had written, "...I approach you with a request kindly not to schedule any flight to West Bengal from high prevalence places viz. Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Chennai, Indore, Ahmedabad and Surat and to stop movement of flights from these cities to Kolkata or Bagdogra for 2 weeks starting 6 July 2020. I also request you to restrict the number of flights to Kolkata, Bagdogra and Andal from other cities to a frequency of once a week for each airline starting 6 July till 31 July, 2020."

Though the Ministry, which has been moving in the direction of further reopening of domestic flight movement, requested the state government to rethink its decision, Bengal is learnt to have stuck to its stand.

While Sinha had sought the suspension of flights from Surat and Indore too, the Ministry has only directed the suspension of

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VISITING THE FAMILY

IGP, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar on Saturday visited the family of Bashir Ahmad Khan, who was killed in a shootout between militants and security forces in Sopore on Wednesday. ANI

REPORT, PAGE 3

TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

124 DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN

CASES: 6,48,314

RECOVERED: 3,94,226

DEATHS: 18,655

TESTS: 95,40,132

DOUBLING RATE: 20.47**



KEY STATES TO WATCH	TOTAL CASES	SURGE IN 24 HOURS	7-DAY AVG GROWTH*	DOUBLING RATE**
■ Maharashtra	1,92,990	6,364	3.40%	21.20
■ Delhi	94,695	2,520	2.95%	24.38
■ Tamil Nadu	1,02,721	4,329	4.67%	15.41
■ Haryana	16,003	494	3.15%	22.89
■ Telangana	20,462	1,892	7.48%	9.62

* Compounded Daily Growth Rate over last 7 days ** Calculated over 7-day growth

CASE FATALITY RATIO	POSITIVITY RATE	DAILY IN, DAILY OUT
7 DAYS EARLIER: 3.08	7 DAYS EARLIER: 6.36	DETECTED TODAY: 22,771
NOW: 2.88	NOW: 6.80	RECOVERED TODAY: 14,335
Deaths as a ratio of positive cases (in %); indicator of progress in averting deaths	Positives against number tested (in %); indicator of the spread of disease	Becoming sick vs recovering; more recoveries for 14 days may signal the peak

Based on daily data from Union Ministry of Health, ICMR and states. Often daily numbers include data from previous days. As such, trends based on daily numbers are indicative, not definitive.

ICMR dials down on Aug 15 vaccine date: 'Letter to cut red tape'

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

A DAY after some of the country's top scientists and medical experts described as "unreasonable" and "absurd" an ICMR timeline to produce a Covid vaccine "for public health use latest by August 15", the Council has claimed that its letter to clinical trial sites, which mentioned the date, "was meant to cut unnecessary red tape".

In a statement issued Saturday, ICMR said: "The aim is to complete these phases at the earliest, so that population-based trials for efficacy could be initiated without delay."

The Council, however, remained silent on the unrealistic timeline and the language used in the letter dated July 2, and sent by ICMR director general Balram Bhargava to the 12 hospitals selected for carrying out

clinical trials of Covaxin, a candidate vaccine.

The potential vaccine is being developed by Bharat Biotech, a Hyderabad-based pharmaceutical company, in partnership with Pune-based National Institute of Virology, an ICMR laboratory. *The Sunday Express* has learnt that a scheduled virtual meeting Saturday of the principal trial investigators with ICMR and Bharat Biotech was postponed.

In a statement issued Saturday, ICMR said: "The letter by DG-ICMR to investigators of the clinical trial sites was meant to cut unnecessary red tape, without bypassing any necessary process, and speed up recruitment of participants. Just as red tape was not allowed to become a hindrance in the fast track approval of new indigenous testing kits or for introducing in the Indian market potential

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Chinese apps banned, Govt calls homegrown ones to rise to challenge

AASHISH ARYA & PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

LESS THAN a week after it banned 59 applications with Chinese links, the Centre on Saturday launched a challenge inviting Indian developers to come up with apps in a range of segments such as office productivity, social networking, e-learning, news, games, health and wellness, agri-tech, fin-

tech and entertainment, and speech translation, among others.

"Today there is immense enthusiasm among the tech & start-up community to create world class Made in India Apps. To facilitate their ideas and products @GoI.MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) and @AIMTInnovate (Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission) are launching the Aatmanirbhar Bharat App

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From sedition to marital rape: Home panel looks at overhaul of criminal law

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

FROM CRIMINALISING marital rape, making sexual offences gender-neutral to legalising euthanasia and revisiting sedition — a five-member committee constituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs is looking at a sweeping overhaul of criminal laws.

"Does the offence of sedition

under Section 124A require omission or any amendment in terms of its definition, scope and cognizability?" is one of the 49 questions that are being considered.

The committee, headed by Dr Ranbir Singh, Vice-Chancellor of National Law University, Delhi, has sought a round of online public and expert consultation on substantive and procedural

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EXPLAINED Refreshing the code for today

THE INDIAN Penal Code and Indian Evidence Act were enacted by the Imperial Legislative Council in 1860 and 1872 respectively. Reform of the code, its statutes is long overdue. Changing laws on key issues concerning criminality, the idea of justice and gender equality need more, wider consultations.

Day after 8 of its men killed, UP Police probe 'insider' role, suspend officer

AVANEESH MISHRA & MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, JULY 4

A DAY after eight police personnel, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), were killed during a raid to arrest history-sheeter Vikas Dubey in Bikru village in Kanpur, the station officer (SO) of the police station concerned was suspended

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Vikas Dubey's house was razed in Bikru village, Kanpur, Saturday. Police denied any role in the demolition. PTI

Ganguly brand role raises conflict of interest issues

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, JULY 4

IN WHAT raises questions of potential conflict of interest, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Saturday appeared in an Instagram post wearing a JSW Cement (Jindal Steel Works) T-shirt while "at work" as the company's brand ambassador.

JSW Sports, the sports arm of the business conglomerate JSW Group, is, along with the GMR



Ganguly posted this picture wearing JSW Cement shirt

Group, the joint owner of the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Delhi Capitals.

Speaking to *The Sunday Express*, Ganguly, who has been mentor of Delhi Capitals in the

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THE WORLD



US SENDS CARRIERS TO SOUTH CHINA SEA DURING CHINESE DRILLS

WHO URGES FOCUS ON FIRST WAVE OF CORONAVIRUS

PAGE 6

Where teachers record, relying on the silence of the night

SMITA NAIR
PANJIM, JULY 4

ONE NIGHT last month, Carmelina Rodrigues found herself stuttering in front of her amused son, who was wondering "why mummy is getting dressed up at quarter to midnight". Her neighbours, too, wanted to know "why she was muttering away in the middle of the night".

LOCKDOWN LESSONS

CHANGING CLASSROOMS

AN EXPRESS SERIES

Rodrigues, 48, is an English teacher at Pragati Vidyalaya in Ponda, and relies on the silence of the night to record online tutorials for her "children at school".

From multiple retakes to spending hours on research; from "reviewing" phone calls with students to recording late sessions at home; from working on PowerPoints, apps and images to navigating multiple online platforms — teachers in rural Goa, like many of their peers across the country, are going beyond the line of duty to engage with students during the pandemic.

"This feels like the new normal. I told my son I was getting



Teachers at Pragati Vidyalaya in Ponda. Smita Nair

ready to record lessons," Rodrigues recalls. "My school children know me as a bubbly teacher. I would never want them to feel I didn't make an effort. I can't look shabby or like Einstein with hair all undone. We have to connect through everything...everything visual, even our emotions."

The state government had asked teachers to resume duty from June 24, but many had started working on online tutorial

classes from the first week of last month, when classes usually start.

The Sunday Express visited the Ponda school, far from the comfort and convenience of the big city, to track the effort that goes behind each online class. Here, teachers used to classroom settings are facing new platforms — and challenges.

Science teacher Shital Shinkre, 51, says 18 years of teaching couldn't prepare her for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2





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DEATHS AWAY FROM HOME MAKE KERALITES PONDER ABOUT LONELY LIFE IN GULF

Although there's no data on the number of Malayalis who have tested positive so far, statistics show over 270 of them have succumbed to the virus since February in the six Gulf countries of UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

VIDEO OF THE DAY

INTERVIEW WITH MANOJ BAJPAYEE

'Saroj Khan was so patient with a non-dancer like me'

EXPLAINED

IS LIONEL MESSI LEAVING BARECLONA? Messi has called off negotiations over contract extension

EXPRESS AUDIO

'Cricket Samrat' and what the death of the magazine means

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

In the latest episode of the Express Sports podcast, we talk about why the popular magazine was a window to cricket in the Hindi heartland before TV and the internet

FROM PAGE ONE

Kolkata flights

flights from airports in six cities.

With more than 20,000 confirmed infections, West Bengal has the sixth highest caseload in the country. In the last one week, West Bengal added 5,760 new cases, 4,135 of which were detected in Kolkata and its surrounding areas of Howrah, Hooghly and North 24 Parganas.

According to flight tracking portal flightradar24.com, more than 200 flights have been landing at Kolkata airport each day.

The airports from where flights to Kolkata have been suspended are in states with the highest Covid-19 caseloads in the country, with three of them — Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune — in Maharashtra, which continues to top the Covid count in the country with 1,92,990 cases so far.

ICMR vaccine

COVID-19 related drugs, the indigenous vaccine development process has also been sought to be insulated from slow file movement.

In the letter, Bhargava had written: "It is envisaged to launch the vaccine for public health use latest by August 15, 2020 after completion of all clinical trials... You are strictly advised to fast-track all approvals related to initiation of the clinical trial, and ensure that the subject enrolment is initiated no later than July 7, 2020."

While approval for clinical trials had been given on June 29, the ICMR chief warned in the letter: "Kindly note that non-compliance will be viewed very seriously."

The letter has triggered outrage among experts with AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria describing the deadline as "a very challenging and difficult task."

Speaking to Karan Thapar for The Wire, WHO Chief Scientist and former ICMR head Soumya Swaminathan pointed out that "Phase-1 trials of ICMR/Bharat Biotech vaccine have not started".

"It cannot be given to people on August 15... it's important to follow ethical and scientific guidelines... people must believe rigorous processes have been followed... WHO recommends phase-3 trials should involve 20-30,000 people and could take years," she said.

Saying that all protocols will be followed in fast-track mode, the ICMR said in its statement: "While issues raised in public domain from time-to-time by commentators are welcome, as they form an important part of feedback loop, the best of India's medical professionals and research scientists should not be second guessed for their professionalism or adherence to the highest scientific rigour."

However, in a background note circulated the day it received approval for clinical trials, vaccine developer Bharat Biotech had said that the results of Phase I and Phase II trials would be out only by October.

"We have very little time. Trials usually don't happen this fast. They probably want to do everything at once and fast track it," said Dr Amit Bhat, the trial's principal investigator at Jeevan Rekha Hospital in Karnataka, which is among the 12 hospitals selected.

Another principal investigator, Dr Venkata Rao of Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital in Odisha, said: "It will depend on the ethical committee's approval and the human body's response. Whatever we may want, the human body takes its time to show if the vaccine works or not."

The US has created a collaboration of departments and private players under "Operation Warp Speed" for development. Other vaccines are being developed by University of Oxford, Moderna, and Wuhan Institute of Biological Products.

App challenge

Innovation Challenge," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a tweet Saturday.

As part of the Digital India Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge, the Central government has identified sub-categories for developers to build apps. These include a mobile-based microblogging application on the lines of Twitter and the Chinese Weibo (which was among the 59 banned apps); a mobile-based news application that uses cutting-edge technology to recommend the most relevant and interesting news to each user, something on the lines of banned Chinese apps Newsdog and UCNews; an application to optimise the performance of mobile devices by cleaning junk/cache files etc. the way Chinese apps Clean Master, Cache Cleaner and DU App Studio worked.

Other categories include a mobile application for "harnessing the most accurate facial and/or body mapping technology to allow for a true-to-life virtual try out of products like spectacles, clothes, etc."; a "mobile application for real-time speech-to-speech translation and camera translation of multiple languages"; "an automated web-based application that handles business-to-business lead generation and cold emailing and is completely manageable from a mobile device itself."

"This Innovation Challenge with various cash awards and incentives... seeks to create an ecosystem where Indian entrepreneurs and startups are incentivised to ideate, incubate, build, nurture and sustain tech solutions that can serve not only citizens within India but also the world," the IT Ministry said in a statement.

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ten debated. "What should be the standard of consent under Section 375 of the IPC?" the committee asked.

On revising punishment for various offences, the committee asked if "additional types of punishment — based on objectives of deterrence, rehabilitation, restoration etc — be inserted" in the Indian Penal Code. It did not, however, specify what additional types of punishment are being considered.

The IPC prescribes fines, imprisonment, forfeiture of property and the death penalty. In another question on punishment, the committee asked if there are any offences for which the quantum of punishment must be revised.

The committee also asked for a mode of rationalising fines collected from offenders and if fines under the penal code must be re-adjusted for inflation across offences, either automatically or on a one-time basis.

The committee has also started a discussion on subjects new to the legal landscape in India such as corporate homicide. In the United Kingdom, a law was enacted in 2007 to criminalise activities of a corporation, including employers, if such activities lead to the death of any person.

UP raid

pending an inquiry into links with Dubey.

Officers suspect Dubey was tipped off about the raid early Friday morning, helping him escape even as his men held off the police team. Sources said the Special Task Force (STF) that is probing the shootout is questioning Chaubeypur Police Station SO Vinay Tiwari. DGP Hitesh Chandra Awasthy confirmed that a probe was on into Tiwari's "role in the case".

Police had gone to arrest Dubey, a former zila panchayat member who carries a reward of Rs 50,000 on his head, in connection with an attempt to murder FIR.

On Saturday, Dubey's house in Bikru village was demolished. While a police team was present at the spot and said locals had accused Dubey of usurping their land to build the house, it denied any hand in the demolition later.

Admitting that they are probing if Dubey was tipped off about the raid, Inspector General (IG), Kanpur Range, Mohit Agarwal told *The Sunday Express* that Dubey's men were well-prepared for the police team "and the informant could be from the police itself." "If that is the case, the police personnel would be sent to jail and dismissed," the IG said.

A senior police officer said they were also probing if only SO Tiwari had links with Dubey, for personal gains, or more personnel from the police station were involved. "Using call details we will find out how frequently the SO was talking to Dubey," the officer said.

IG Agarwal had earlier said they had heard of an altercation between Dubey and the complainant in the attempt to murder FIR against him, in front of the SO. What has also brought Tiwari's role under a cloud is his failure to alert the police on what they could face during the early Friday morning raid. "The Station Officer has been posted in the area long enough (since January 31) to know what the situation in the village was like and if Dubey could be dangerous. When the force was going for a raid past midnight, why didn't he warn them?" the senior officer said.

ADG, Kanpur Zone, Jai Narain Singh told *The Indian Express* Friday that with better assessment of the situation, a PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary) or SWAT team could have been sent.

A team of around 20 policemen, including DSP and Bilharu Circle Officer Devendra Kumar Mishra (in-charge of Chaubeypur,

Pompeo made quiet call to Jaishankar

security, as the Indian government itself has stated," he said. The US has conveyed, publicly and privately, its unambiguous support to South Block amid the tensions along the LAC. This has been matched by some substantive cooperation at the operational level too.

The *Sunday Express* has learnt that the Indian side has got a "good sense" of the build-up of troops and weapons on the Chinese side of the LAC because of the information-sharing cooperation with the US.

While President Donald

Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spoken on June 2, before the Galwan Valley incident, Pompeo's phone conversation with Jaishankar (after the clash) is learnt to have smoothened the hierarchy workflow in Delhi and Washington.

The active cooperation in practical terms has also been accompanied by some high-voltage optics. Two US aircraft carriers kicked off joint exercises in the Philippine Sea last Sunday, a week after the USS *Nimitz* and the USS *Theodore*

Roosevelt conducted their own joint operations in the area. It is rare to see three US aircraft carriers operating at the same time in the Western Pacific, and even more unusual to have separate dual-carrier exercises so close to each other.

This week, the White House spokesperson said President Trump believes that China's "aggressive stance" against India and other countries in the region confirms the "true nature" of the ruling Communist Party of China.

On July 2, US State

Department's Deputy Secretary of State Stephen E. Biegun met India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and conveyed his country's support.

Meanwhile, Modi Saturday night greeted Trump via a Twitter post: "I congratulate @POTUS @realDonaldTrump and the people of the USA on the 244th Independence Day of the USA. As the world's largest democracies, we cherish freedom and human enterprise that this day celebrates. @WhiteHouse."

Army's big challenge: Logistics

LAC, if they continue to remain in location through the winter, is assessed to stretch the Army's lengthy supply chain for the mountainous terrain.

A military officer, who has been in-charge of logistics for the Northern Command, told *The Sunday Express* that "logistics support is going to be a challenge — from procurement to getting the supplies to soldiers where they are deployed. Routine maintenance for existing troop levels is not an issue but assessments would have already begun, and a final call will have to be taken in the next six weeks before the passes close."

The logistics supplies for troops are provided by the

Army through Advanced Winter Stocking (AWS). Supplies are transported via two routes — over the Zoji La from Srinagar to Leh; and, via the Manali route. While the Zoji La route has a turnaround time of two weeks, it is 17-18 days for the Manali axis. Both these routes close by early December due to snowfall.

It is based on the logistics calculations that pulling out of certain non-essential troops during the winter could be considered by the Army.

"The process starts with procurement for which contracts are signed in March every year. New contracts will have to be signed now and more transport, vehicles,

stocking resources will have to be arranged. Routine maintenance is feasible till the passes are open. The big challenge is ramping up the air effort which is limited by the constraints of the Leh airbase due to altitude and weather," the officer said.

Aircraft cannot take off from Leh with full load once the temperature goes above a certain limit, which makes prenoon as the cutoff for return flights during summers. The American C-130J aircraft are much better in that respect, compared to the vintage Russian IL-76 transport aircraft.

Besides supplies, the other challenge is providing special clothing for high-altitude areas

where temperatures can go down to minus 25 degrees. Another officer said certain units, moved from the plains to Ladakh in the last six weeks, are being supplied from surplus stocks held in the area while reserve stocks from depots have also been moved forward.

The habitat for additional troops, the officer said, is currently not a constraint as they can use normal tents in many locations until September.

By then, adequate numbers of snow or Arctic tents will be provided to soldiers for the winter, the officer said, adding that creation of semi-permanent habitat is not under consideration at this stage.

Bithoor and Shivrajpur), had arrived at Bikru village at 1.30 am on Friday to arrest Dubey. They were met with heavy fire by automatic weapons.

DGP Awasthy said one of the cases against Dubey they are looking at again is the murder of BJP leader Santosh Shukla on the Shivli Police Station campus in Kanpur Dehat district in 2001. Dubey was the prime accused in the killing of Shukla, who was then chairman of the Contract Labour Board. In 2003, a local court acquitted Dubey and others for want of evidence, and Awasthy said they were trying to determine the status of an appeal filed in the Allahabad High Court against it in 2005.

On Saturday, a CJB was used to demolish the boundary wall as well as a large portion of Dubey's house, spread over 10,000 sq ft, in Bikru, soon after a police team reached the village. Two SUVs parked on the premises were also damaged.

Only Dubey's father, who needs assistance moving around, and his domestic help are currently in the house, which has CCTV cameras all around.

Asked about the demolition, IG Agarwal told reporters, "Yesterday, when I visited the village, locals claimed that he (Dubey) had captured their land using threats to build the house. The house was a centre of crime and criminals used to regularly visit it. People were in anguish."

Later, Agarwal told *The Sunday Express*, "Locals complained about him issuing threats but I have no information that Vikas's house has been demolished. Police have no role in it."

No other senior police or administration official was ready to speak on the matter, and it was not clear under what legal process the house was razed. ADG Singh and ADG, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar did not reply to queries on the matter. Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Bilhor, P N Rai said he had no information regarding the demolition.

The Kanpur police is conducting raids across the state to trace Dubey and 20 others. The Lucknow police searched Dubey

and his brother Deep Prakash's houses in the city.

Dubey's house in Lucknow was found locked. Police said his wife and two sons, who live there, were not present.

Assistant Commissioner of Police, Krishna Nagar, Deepak Singh said Dubey's mother and sister-in-law were picked up from his brother's house for questioning and later released.

Ganguly

past, insisted his new role as brand ambassador of JSW Cement didn't overlap with his duties as BCCI president. "How do I influence? I am not brand ambassador of JSW Sports (which handles Delhi Capitals in IPL). I don't think the cement company is a sponsor of the (Delhi Capitals) team. I don't see any conflict in it. I am not associated with their cricket; had I been, it would have been a conflict," Ganguly said.

On a possible conflict of interest situation, direct or indirect, the BCCI constitution makes the following hypothesis: "When the BCCI, a Member, the IPL or a Franchisee enter into contractual arrangements with entities in which the individual concerned or his/her relative, partner, or close associates has an interest. This is to include cases where family members, partners or close associates are in positions that may, or may be seen to compromise an individual's participation, performance and discharge of roles."

JSW Cement's Managing Director Parth Jindal is also the director of JSW Sports and is the most prominent representative of the franchise. He is regularly seen in the dugout during matches of the Delhi Capitals team and is also a vital decision-maker at IPL auctions. As BCCI chief, Ganguly attends the IPL's governing council meetings.

Text messages to Jindal inquiring about the possible conflict of interest in Ganguly's role as brand ambassador went unanswered.

In October last year, before getting elected as BCCI president, Ganguly had informed that he had resigned as the Delhi Capitals mentor. However, he continued to be associated with cricket

brands. Presently, he endorses the online cricket fantasy league My11Circle.

The former India captain has in the past expressed his reservations on the conflict-of-interest clause in the BCCI constitution. He had said that the Board will not get the services of the best cricketers in the system because of the conflict-of-interest clause.

Goa

recording in front of a camera. "One hears concepts like G-Meet, live classes, YouTube uploads, etc. At the age of 51, I am learning all this. The first chapter on Life Science usually takes a month, but in the first two weeks, I managed two pages online," she says.

Recalling a recording of several takes, with the noise of welding work in the background, Shinkre says, "Then, my mother walked in, asking if she could fry fish for dinner."

As early as May, the Directorate of Education initiated an online training workshop for teachers across Goa. At Pragati Vidyalaya, with limited broadband and no WiFi, the teachers became students to Kalyani Joshi, 42, the in-house computer teacher. "It started with teaching them how to open Gmail accounts," she says.

Geography teacher Bhakti Desai, 33, struggled with trials for a week — camera focus, glare from projector lights, multiple cables. "In rural settings like Ponda, it also takes time to pull in material. Then someone helped us with a digital camera. Now my husband, a veterinary surgeon, records me speaking at night," she says.

The school has a strength of 240 students from Class 5-10. With the term fee at Rs 500 a year, Headmistress Bharati Srivastava says online training can be tough for many students. "There are families who cannot afford a smartphone and remedial classes will be taken," she says.

It's not just about children and connectivity, says Srivastava. "Let's focus on teachers, too. They have been putting hours in the day preparing material and engaging in live classroom settings. Later at night, they record after their fam-

ilies have been fed. Then they have to come to school physically and mark attendance," she says.

Bhaskar Khandeparkar, chairman of Goa Vidya Prasarak Mandal (GVM), which runs Pragati Vidyalaya, says, "These tutorials expose the style of the teachers' training to the management and parents too. The teachers face that added challenge."

Geelani

were fully sponsored by the Pakistan government, which used the Hurriyat, on both sides, to decide the allocation of these seats.

An indication of how many Kashmiris studied in Pakistan came when hundreds crossed the Wagah border last week and are now at Amritsar, waiting to be transported back to their homes.

In 2018, Abdullah Geelani, a Kashmiri and a former member of the Hizbul Mujahideen, who has lived in Pakistan for many years, alleged that Ghulam Mustafa Safi, then convener of the Muzaffarabad chapter of the APHC, was "selling" these seats in Kashmir.

Abdullah is the younger brother of the late Delhi University teacher S A R Geelani who was acquitted in the 2001 Parliament attack.

Last year, no students went because of uncertain conditions in Kashmir but before that, in Srinagar, it was an open secret that both the Geelani and Mirwaiz factions of the Hurriyat held sway over who got the seats, according to a beneficiary. Geelani Senior's grand-daughters, too, study medicine in Pakistan, but after allegations of racketeering first surfaced, he stopped recommending names for the seats.

The allegations are now part of a National Investigation Agency investigation in which several Kashmiris are in Tihar Jail.

"Allegations are allegations," Safi told *The Sunday Express* from Pakistan. "These allegations are fake, they have been made in a letter, there is no proof. Allegations of NIA remain as allegations until proven and substantiated."

But even before the NIA investigation, it had set off a storm in

the Hurriyat. Geelani sacked Safi and appointed Abdullah as convener in January 2019.

But Abdullah Geelani's convensorship was stormy too. He was not popular with the other Hurriyat leaders in PoK, nor with the Pak establishment.

Armed with Geelani Senior's mandate, he initiated enquiries against Safi. But Safi, said to have the backing of the Pak establishment, remained a power centre.

In his resignation letter, Geelani Senior makes a reference to these allegations, and says when "investigations" were launched by the party, "to circumvent the process of transparency and accountability... your representatives started non-cooperating with the convenor..."

Safi denied that his exit as convener of the Hurriyat's PoK chapter was acrimonious. "There are no differences between us," he said, but added that "as I am the representative (in PoK) of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat which is not part of APHC... I am not bound by the leadership of the APHC."

Safi said he owes allegiance only to Ashraf Sehrai, leader of the Teh in Kashmir. Sehrai, whose militant son was recently killed in an encounter, remains a serious contender to the leadership of the post-Geelani Hurriyat, despite Geelani's naming of Abdullah as heir. Meanwhile, Abdullah was burning his bridges with Islamabad. Sources said after the August 5 decisions in Kashmir, Abdullah Geelani became a vocal voice against the Pak establishment for not doing enough to protest New Delhi's moves.

Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, too, began to question the silence of the Pak establishment. One view in Pakistan is that Geelani's resignation may have also had a Hizb push. At one stage, Salahuddin questioned how some leaders in Kashmir had escaped detention while others had not, and why those who were free had not spoken up. Geelani's resignation letter too raises this concern.

The Indian security establishment has also been saying for some months that Salahuddin has been sidelined, and the new Kashmir militant outfit, The Resistance Front, is a Pak-created front of the globally designated Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Toiba, and is a snub to the Hizb.

Meanwhile, Hurriyat leaders in Srinagar too have questioned the authenticity of Geelani's resignation letter saying he is in a state of advanced dementia, and allege the letter is a fabrication by Abdullah.

"He has been made completely inaccessible. The security around his house (Geelani is under house detention) doesn't allow any of us to meet him," said a Hurriyat leader in Srinagar.

Last month, the APHC in Muzaffarabad brought out a "report" alleging that Abdullah had foisted himself on the elder Geelani. It alleged Geelani's son Dr Nayeem had "managed" to make Abdullah the convener in 2019. Abdullah rejected the allegations. Nayeem refused to respond to the allegations, saying Abdullah was the person authorised to make statements.

On June 3, Abdullah was ousted in Muzaffarabad, and replaced by Hussain Mohammed Khatib, said to be a front for Safi. The new appointment was approved by the APHC in Srinagar at its June 5 shura, minus Geelani's participation, a flashpoint for his resignation.

Even as it opposes Abdullah, Islamabad knows Geelani remains a powerful voice, and would prefer that he withdraw his resignation, a source said.

On this side of the LoC, government sources said they were not backing anyone in the leadership stakes. Said an official: "It is enough for us that there is confusion in the separatist ranks. It's best if this confusion remains."

3 EXPRESS NETWORK

3 of Jodhpur family found dead, cops suspect suicide due to financial trouble

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, JULY 4

THREE MEMBERS of a family were found dead at their home in Shanker Nagar locality of Jodhpur on Friday, the police said on Saturday. The police identified the victims as Rajendra Suthar (52), wife Indra (47), and their son Nitin (23).

While Suthar and Nitin were found hanging, Indra appears to have been strangled, the police said.

Inspector Govind Vyas of Jodhpur West's Choupasni Housing Board (CHB) police station said they had recovered a note from the house which indicated that the family was going through financial trouble. He said the bodies were shifted to Mathura Das Mathur Hospital, and the sequence of events leading to the deaths has not been established yet.

The police are awaiting post-mortem results.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Neeraj Sharma said Nitin's friends had tried to call him, but when he did not answer they eventually called the police. He

said the father and son used to work as contractors at a factory in Boranada, and the family lived on rent. "We conducted a thorough search of the house in the presence of relatives and found a suicide note," Vyas said, adding that the note points to financial trouble.

"About four or five names have been mentioned in the note; it says he (Suthar) was in trouble because of these people. It also states that Suthar was caught up in loans he had taken on high interest rates and that these people are allegedly responsible," Vyas said.

He said the note mentions that Suthar used to return the money on time before the Covid-induced lockdown began on March 25. "Written in a local dialect, the suicide note lists the names and have also given their mobile numbers," the ACP said.

The police are yet to question people named in the letter.

The bodies were handed over to relatives on Saturday after they were tested for Covid-19, followed by a postmortem. An FIR under IPC section 306 (abetment to suicide) has been lodged at CHB police station.

14 held with 32 kg gold at Jaipur airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, JULY 4

CUSTOMS OFFICIALS at the Jaipur International Airport have apprehended 14 people who arrived from two west Asian countries on Friday with about 32 kgs of gold, officials said Saturday.

In a statement, the office of the Commissioner of Customs said that on July 3, 14 Indian nationals arrived at the Jaipur International Airport by two chartered aircraft from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). They were intercepted by the customs team and 31,9918 kg of gold valued at Rs.15.67 crore, which was concealed in their baggage, was recovered from these passengers. Some of the gold was hidden inside rechargeable emergency lights, the statement added.

Out of the 14 passengers,



Some gold was hidden inside emergency lights.

three arrived from Ras-al-Khaimah in the UAE and 12 gold bars/bricks, weighing 9.339 kg and valued at Rs. 4.57 crore, were recovered from them. Eleven other passengers arrived from Riyadh (KSA) with gold bars weighing 22.6528 kg — predominantly Suisse mark and valued at Rs 11.09 crore.

The said recovered gold bars have been seized under Section 110 of the Customs Act, 1962, officials said.

PM must follow raj dharma, India should tell China to retreat: Cong

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE CONGRESS on Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to follow his 'raj dharma' and tell the country about the reality of the Chinese 'incursions' in Ladakh. The party also invoked Jawaharlal Nehru to suggest that India's first Prime Minister never accepted the Chinese claim line and Beijing had accepted during his tenure that Galwan Valley belongs to India.

Addressing a virtual press conference, Congress leader Kapil Sibal said satellite images of Pangong Tso from May and June showed Chinese structures in the area and asked the Prime Minister to at least speak the truth.

Referring to PM Modi's visit to Ladakh, Sibal said former Prime Ministers Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri had visited forward locations to boost the morale of soldiers. Nehru, he said, visited soldiers in forward locations in NEFA in 1962 but "it appears that our Prime Minister stayed 230 kms away in Nimu, Leh". On the Prime Minister's remarks that the "era of expansionism is over", Sibal quoted letters exchanged in 1962 between then Prime Minister Nehru and then Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. He said the term Line of Actual Control was coined by Zhou in 1956 and then repeated in 1959, and before and during the 1962 war.

480 new cases; Rajasthan's Covid-19 count nears 20K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, JULY 4

RAJASTHAN REPORTED 480 infections, its highest single-day spike in COVID-19 cases so far, on Saturday, taking the virus count to 19,532 in the state, according to an official report.

Seven more people died due to the infection in the state, raising the death toll to 447, the report said.

While three new deaths were reported from Dholpur, one each were reported from Bharatpur, Jhunjhunu and Sikar. A novel coro-



PM Narendra Modi addresses party leaders and workers at the Seva Hi Sangathan programme on Saturday. ANI

MODI ADDRESSES PARTY WORKERS

PM: BJP not a poll-winning machine, it's to serve people

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

FOR THE BJP, the party organisation is not just a machine to win elections but "it means serving the people, taking everyone along, and ensuring everybody's happiness and prosperity", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

Addressing party workers from across the country on a virtual platform, Modi lauded the leaders and workers for welfare works done during the lockdown period and the pandemic, but reminded them that each one of them is in public life to serve.

"Whenever the public demands things of us, we must understand that it expects us to deliver. The Covid-19 period has helped us understand this feeling better. The society gave us a chance to serve," he said.

Modi told party workers: "For us, our organisation is not just a machine to win elections. For us, our organisation means service. Our organisation means taking everyone along. For us, our organisation means happiness of all and prosperity for all."

Modi watched presentation of workers from seven states —

Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka, Delhi, Assam and Uttar Pradesh — on their social and welfare activities during the lockdown period at a function to review the 'Seva Hi Sangathan' programme. He asked the workers to prepare a digital book on works they have done right from the mandal and district level to the state and national level. The digital books, recording all welfare and social activities as well as creative works from the respective areas, would be an inspiration to the future generation, he said.

It could be released on September 25 on the occasion of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya's birth anniversary.

After reviewing of the state units' social activities, Home Minister Amit Shah tweeted: "No organisation in the world would have done service work on such large scale. For this I congratulate National President @jpnadda and crores of workers of the BJP."

At the function, attended by BJP president J P Nadda and party general secretaries such as Rajnath Singh and Shah, among others, Modi said: "At a time when everyone in the world is busy protecting themselves, you have given up your worries and

dedicated yourself to the service of the poor and the needy. This is a great example of service."

If this had taken place in any western country, Modi said, everyone would have heaped praises on these activities.

The Prime Minister said the BJP is following the same principles its founding fathers had envisaged for it. "We considered power as a medium of service. We never made power our medium of profit. Selfless service has been our resolve, and that has been our value," he said.

Modi had special praise for Nadda, who, he said, has been providing food packets from his own home for the poor throughout the lockdown period.

He also pointed out that the BJP has turned the crisis period into an opportunity. "We will remember the pandemic as the transformation stage for BJP, digitally. Today, a lot of our workers have got better on digital platforms," he said.

He said working with a common goal during the crisis has strengthened the organisation. "When we do this kind of work, a team spirit is born. Such works also create new possibilities of person development and personality development."

He reiterated a seven-point

code for party workers — sev-abhav (service), santulan (balance), saiyan (restraint), sakaratmak (constructive), samvedana (sensitivity) and samvaad (dialogue) — and pointed out that the BJP is represented by all sections of the society. The party, he said, has 52 MPs from Dalit communities, 43 from tribal communities, and 113 MPs from backward classes.

Modi also reminded party leaders that in the upcoming festival season, they should not let people drop guard and continue to protect them from the virus, as the threat is still not over.

While noting that states such as Bihar and UP have bigger challenges due to the return of migrant workers, the Prime Minister urged party workers to extend their help and support to the government.

He said they should be ready to help the poor irrespective of whether the BJP is in power or in opposition.

In the meeting, Nadda as well as party general secretaries Bhopender Yadav and Arun Singh lauded Modi for steps taken during the Covid pandemic. While the timely lockdown saved millions of lives, the economic package is to give support to millions, they said.

PM pitches hackathons for agri innovation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

TO ENSURE innovation in agriculture and allied fields, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday emphasized on promoting start-ups and agri-entrepreneurs, and asked the Indian Council of Agriculture Research to organise biannual hackathons for solving "identified problems" in the sector.

Reviewing ICAR's progress via video-conference, the Prime Minister spoke on using information technology to provide information on demand to farmers. He also highlighted the need for developing forward and backward linkages to assure better returns for them.

"PM directed that start-ups and agri-entrepreneurs need to be promoted to ensure innovation and use of technology in Agriculture and allied sectors," said a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

"He directed that Hackathons may be organized twice a year to solve identified problems and meet design needs for tools and equipment that can reduce drudgery if

farming activity, given that a large number of farm workers are women," said the statement.

Modi also directed officials to ensure ease of access to farm equipment and transport facility from field to markets.

"PM highlighted the need to orient Agricultural Education and research systems based on agro climatic requirements to meet the demands of the Farmers. The systems are to be geared towards enhancing farmer's incomes while meeting International standards," the statement said.

During the review meeting, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, both Ministers of State in the Ministry of Agriculture, and senior officials including ICAR DG Trilochan Mohapatra were present.

The Prime Minister reviewed the contributions of ICAR in developing new breeds of cattle, sheep and goats and highlighted the need for research on "indigenous breeds" of dogs and horses.

"He exhorted the need to create awareness regarding inclusion of millets like Jowar, bajra, ragi and several other minor millets in diet to ensure healthy diet," said the statement.

Buddha's teachings can provide lasting solutions in extraordinary times: PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE TEACHINGS of Lord Buddha are especially relevant in current times and can provide lasting solutions for a world grappling with "extraordinary challenges", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday, greeting the people on Ashadha Purnima.

Addressing an event at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, marked as Dharma Chakra Day, the Prime Minister also said the government wants to develop more connectivity to Buddhist heritage sites in the country for pilgrims as well as tourists.

"Today the world fights extraordinary challenges. To these challenges, lasting solutions can come from the ideals of Lord Buddha. They were relevant in the past. They are relevant in the present. And, they will remain relevant in the future," he said in his video message.

"Buddhism teaches respect. Respect for people. Respect for the poor. Respect for women. Respect for peace and non-violence. Therefore, the teachings of

Buddhism are the means to a sustainable planet. I am very hopeful about the 21st century. This hope comes from my young friends—our youth. If you want to see a great example of how hope, innovation and compassion can remove suffering, it is our start-up sector," said the Prime Minister.

India has one of the largest start-up ecosystems and "young minds" were finding solutions to global problems, he said.

The event was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind, who, too, echoed Modi in his address.

As the pandemic of Covid-19 ravages human lives and economies across the globe, "Buddha's message serves like a beacon", he said.

President Kovind added that Mahatma Gandhi and Babasaheb Ambedkar found inspiration in the words of Lord Buddha and went on to shape the destiny of the nation. The Ambassador of Mongolia to India Gonching Ganbold, MoS Culture Prahlad Singh Patel and MoS Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju were present on the occasion.

2 militants killed, 3 jawans injured in J&K encounter

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

TWO HIZBUL Mujahideen militants were killed and three Armymen injured in an encounter in Kulgam district of South Kashmir on Saturday, police said.

According to police, a cordon and search operation was Saturday launched in Arrah area and the gunbattle began as militants hiding in the area fired at security forces.

A senior police officer in Srinagar told The Sunday Express that two militants have been killed. "Three Armymen sustained injuries in the operation and they were shifted to the hospital for treatment," he said.

In the evening, a CRPF spokesperson said that firing in the area has stopped and search is underway. "The joint troops recovered bodies of two terrorists," he said.

A JK Police spokesperson said, "One of the killed terrorists was a foreigner and identified as Ali Bhai alias Hyder. However the identification of another killed terrorist is being ascertained. The killed terrorists were affiliated with proscribed terror outfit HM."

In the afternoon, Kulgam Police had issued a statement saying, "CASO was launched in Kulgam police station jurisdiction where terrorists fired upon joint forces triggering an encounter. Updates will be given post conclusion of operation."



Security forces with the arms and supplies recovered from the encounter site in Kulgam on Saturday. ANI

Kashmir IGP assures Sopore victim's kin of 'impartial' probe

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, JULY 4

INSPECTOR GENERAL of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar on Saturday visited the family of a civilian killed in firing in Sopore three days ago and assured the family that an "impartial investigation" would be conducted into the incident.

Bashir Ahmad Khan, 65, and a CRPF person were killed during a shootout when militants ambushed a team of police and CRPF personnel on the outskirts of Sopore, in north Kashmir, on Wednesday morning.

"I, along with senior officers, visited the family today and offered our condolences. I told them that whatever is running on social media is incorrect," IGP

Kumar told The Sunday Express. "I heard them patiently and promised there will be an impartial investigation. I also offered to show them CCTV footage."

Kumar was referring to controversy over pictures of Khan's three-year-old grandson, who was with him at the time, at the site.

After the IGP's visit, family members of the deceased said they sought information about the incident. "We told them [police] that it [the incident] should be investigated and we need complete facts and information," Khan's son, Suhail, told The Sunday Express.

"They assured us that an impartial investigation will be conducted into the matter.... The family is in shock; we want justice."

MEERUT

Stalker shoots 19-yr-old, her father 2 days before wedding

AMIL BHATNAGAR
MEERUT, JULY 4

A 10 litre steel can of cooking oil, a sack full of flour and packets of dry fruits lie stacked in the corner of a house in Meerut's Shiv Puram locality. The raw ingredients for a wedding feast will now be returned after the bride-to-be and her father were shot dead, two days before the ceremony was supposed to take place.

The house is now crowded with relatives and friends paying condolences to the garlanded photographs of Raj Kumar (48) and daughter Anchal (19).

The FIR filed by a relative, Aman, 21, says the two were killed on the night of June 27 — allegedly by a stalker, who wanted to marry Anchal.

The main accused, Sagar Thakur, a neighbour, was arrested on Friday after a brief encounter, and the police said he reaffirmed the motive as mentioned in FIR.

Bhramपुरi Circle Officer Chandrakant Tripathi said: "Sagar has confessed that he

The main accused, Sagar Thakur, a neighbour, was arrested on Friday

planned to murder her since he loved her. He says he had even broached the topic of their marriage but Anchal's family refused. We have arrested five people, including Sagar's mother. One accused remains absconding."

The FIR, registered in Transport Nagar police station, states: "Our neighbor Sagar Thakur had a one-sided love affair with my sister, Anchal. He did not take in the fact that she was getting married to another person. To put pressure on us, as per a conspiracy he, along with four others, opened fire at us with the intention to kill. The bullets hit my sister, my father and my brother. My sister and father succumbed."

Speaking to *The Sunday Express* days after the incident, Anchal's mother Usha, 40, maintained that the murder motive was linked to an altercation be-

tween the victim's family and the accused during Diwali last year. CO Tripathi, however, dismissed that as a murder motive.

According to the family, Anchal received her High School results on the morning of June 27, and was satisfied having scored 62 per cent. She subsequently got busy with the wedding preparations — the in-laws were supposed to bring a 'baraat' of about 20 people from Bijnor, a relative said.

Around 11 that night, the siblings were dancing in the drawing room, and Anchal can be seen grooving joyfully in a video recorded by a sibling. Seconds later, gunshots are heard and a commotion ensues in the background, the video shows. According to family members, Sagar and four others came with guns at their doorstep and shot Rajkumar, who was lying on a bed outside.

As the children rushed outside, the accused shot Anchal thrice. She died instantly.

"They knew whom they had to shoot, and how. They did not give anyone any notice. They did not want to injure her — they wanted to kill her," Usha said.



'I didn't do it for publicity. I'm fond of gold'

Man wearing gold mask goes viral on social media

Pune: A 49-year-old man from Pimpri-Chinchwad has caught the media's attention after photos of him wearing a gold mask went viral.

Asident of Indrayani Nagar in Pimpri-Chinchwad, Shankar Kurhade has got himself a gold mask made for around Rs 3 lakh. "I didn't do it for publicity. I'm fond of gold," he said.

However, Kurhade said he was not sure if the gold mask will protect him from Covid-19. "It is not the gold or cloth mask, but social distancing and hand washing that will protect human beings from coronavirus (sic)."

Kurhade, who has studied till Class VII, said he got the idea of gold mask after watching a video clip of a man from Kolhapur wearing a silver mask. **ENS**

TN custodial deaths: Role of Friends of Police under lens

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JULY 4

THE INVESTIGATION into the custodial deaths last month of a father and son in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi has brought under the scanner a 27-year-old community policing initiative in the state, Friends of Police (FOP), with demands to dismantle the system that is "widely misused", especially in small towns and rural areas.

The probe by the state's Crime Branch-CID into the deaths of shopkeeper P Jeyaraj and his son J Bennis in Sathankulam police station on the night of June 19 has zeroed in on the alleged role of six FOP members who had been "helping the Inspector and Sub-Inspectors in routine affairs".

"We suspect that all six of them had a role in the custodial torture that happened on June 19 night and similar incidents in the past. We have identified them, and all six will be arrested," an officer linked to the probe told *The Sunday Express*.

Police have so far arrested five

officers, including one inspector and two sub-inspectors, in the case, while the government has transferred all the other officers posted at the Sathankulam station. The CBI is expected to take over the probe soon, following a recommendation from the state government.

"One of the arrested officers said they had beaten the father and son the same way they had been beating others. What we are now probing is the nature of the crime that lasted for several hours in the night, and how these FOPs also engaged in it," said the officer.

FOP, a voluntary system with no salary, was started in 1993 in Ramanathapuram district to bring the police and the public closer. It is estimated that there are around 4,000 active FOP members in police stations across Tamil Nadu.

"Volunteers can apply, and there are minimum criteria like no political affiliation or criminal background, etc. Those who apply are mostly rural youth from poor backgrounds. It is not the salary but the proximity to police that is an attraction. Some with criminal tendencies take advan-

tage of a favourable environment in the system," said another officer.

The Sunday Express spoke to three IG-rank officers and six SPs over the last two days on this initiative, and all of them agreed that FOPs "have grown like a cancer in the state police system".

"It is being widely misused in small towns and rural areas where police officers keep FOPs as side-kicks...to buy tea or food, help in vehicle checks, take seized vehicles to stations, or take people in illegal custody. In recent years, especially in southern districts like Thoothukudi, the police system is facing challenges from officers with strong caste and religious identities, who rely on the support of FOPs," said an IG-rank officer.

The officers pointed out that the police force has benefitted from similar initiatives like the Home Guard for traffic regulation and crowd control, and Village Vigilance Committees for contact tracing in Covid-19. "But the FOP system alone has faced charges," said an officer.

For instance, the 3rd Tamil Nadu Police Commission Report

submitted in 2008 said: "FOP scheme has not been evaluated by an independent body and its usefulness is doubted by a section...There are complaints, however, that some undesirable persons enrol themselves under the scheme and misuse the position..."

Recommending that the scheme should be modified as Citizen Volunteers Scheme, the report said that "the effort of Police must be to develop such rapport with the public that all citizens are friends of Police, and not only a designated few".

K Chandru, former judge of Madras High Court, said: "This is the proper time to implement the police commission report on community policing."

In a statement referring to the charges against FOPs in the Sathankulam station, G Lourduswamy, state administrator of FOP, said: "They were not members of FOP but volunteers hired for corona related work." According to him, those who are facing charges had not attended any training session and did not have FOP identity cards.

Govt looks to 'amend' parts of Disabilities Act, community protests

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's notification proposing amendment of the Right of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, to de-criminalise "minor offences for improving business sentiment and unclogging court processes" has met with protests from the community of disabled persons, activists and organisations.

While representatives of the disabled community contend that the strong 2016 Act has, for the first time, given their marginalised community robust protection under punitive measures included in the law, ministry officials point out that the Act is being examined to make laws commensurate with the offence, which may not be the case under the 2016 law.

In its notification issued on Wednesday, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, under the ministry, stated that decriminalisation of minor offences will alleviate the risk of imprisonment for actions which do not necessarily have "mala fide intent". It stated that the risk of jail is a hurdle in attracting investments — from both domestic and foreign investors — which has become more pertinent after the Covid-19 pandemic in order to revive the economy.

Three days since the department's notification, 125 signatories and disability activists/groups from across the country on Saturday wrote to the ministry in protest.

Explaining the reason for starting the "process of amendment", the department's director, and author of the notification, K V S Rao, said: "The government has undertaken the process of reviewing existing laws, many of which were devised by the British under the Indian Penal Code and had never been reviewed — such as IPC Section 377, which criminalises homosexuality. When this (RPwD) Act was formulated, many IPC Sections were added mechanically, without consideration of reformulating to keep abreast with the times."

"The notification is a call for feedback and observations from the community. The intent is not to harm the community or to pass an amendment which may be detrimental to the rights of disabled persons."

3 BSF personnel injured in attack by Bangladeshi smugglers near IB

Kolkata: Three BSF personnel have been injured in an attack by Bangladeshi smugglers along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal, officials said on Saturday.

The incident took place near the Bangshata post of the BSF in the North 24 Parganas district during the intervening night of July 3-4, they said. Troops of the 107th battalion of the force had laid an ambush in the border area and when a group of 10-12 Bangladeshi smugglers were spotted in the dead of the night (around 3:30 am), the BSF men challenged them. "The smugglers brutally attacked them with bamboo sticks and sharp-edged cleaver-like weapons," a senior BSF officer said. **PTI**

CBI case against man for acting as aide of fictitious PMO staffer

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE CBI has registered a case against a person for impersonation as associate of a fictitious "Special Assistant" to P K Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.

The impersonator allegedly made several calls to Boeing India between October and November last year and sought information about its defence deal bids, apart from asking its officials to meet Mishra and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

According to the CBI's FIR, the person identified himself as Anirudh Singh and claimed to be calling on behalf of Jitendra Kumar, "special assistant" to P K Mishra. The Prime Minister's Office is learnt to have informed the CBI that there is no such post in the PMO, nor is there a Jitendra Kumar assisting Mishra.

On November 5, 2019, Praveena Yagnambhat, chief of staff at Boeing India, informed Mishra in an email that "one Mr Anirudh Singh keeps calling our office executive secretary from his mobile...and claims that he works for one Mr Jitendra

The impersonator allegedly made several calls to Boeing India between October and November last year and sought information about its defence bids

Kumar, who is a special assistant to PK Mishra. He keeps referring to some Defence bids that we have submitted in MoD and that he has orders...for us to meet with Mr PK Mishra and Mr Amit Shah."

This email was forwarded by the PMO to the CBI, which has now registered a case.

The CBI has, in the last few years, registered several such cases of impersonation or misrepresentation in the name of the PMO.

In November, 2019, the probe agency had registered a case against a man who forged a PMO letter seeking probe against some defence. Earlier, the agency had booked another person for impersonating Mishra over the phone to seek some favours from the Puducherry administration.

Assam: After thousands attend preacher funeral, officials lock down three villages

Guwahati: After thousands of people in Assam's Nagaon district attended the funeral of a well-known preacher—the father of a legislator—fears of the spread of

the coronavirus have escalated, prompting officials to lock down three villages surrounding the field where the gathering was held. The funeral prayer gathering

for Khairul Islam — a vice-president of the All India Jamiat Ulema and a "Aamir-e-Shariat" for the Northeast — was held at his native place in Nagaon on the afternoon of July 2. Islam was 87.

The family wanted the funeral to be held on July 3, but later decided to go ahead with it by July 2 itself. Photographs shared on Facebook by his son Aminul Islam, an MLA of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) from Nagaon's Dhing constituency, shows a huge gathering at a field. **ENS**

TMC, SUCI workers killed in clashes over land in Bengal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 4

A TRINAMOOL Congress (TMC) youth worker and an SUCI leader were killed, and over 15 people were injured in clashes that broke out in South 24 Parganas district's Kulti area on Friday evening, the police said on Saturday. Each party blamed the other for the deaths, and for triggering the violence.

"Two people have died and the bodies have been sent for post-mortem. We have started an investigation. A huge police contingent has been deployed in the area to prevent further flare-up," said a senior district police official.

According to sources in the police, the workers of the two parties initially clashed over the alleged forcible occupation of an agricultural plot in Baikunthapur village in Kulti's Maipith area.

An altercation began after a group of Trinamool Youth Congress workers led by Ashwini Manna, 45, went to the village and confronted SUCI workers. In the violence that followed, Manna

was beaten to death, according to the police. TMC workers allegedly ransacked local shops and houses. One of them, identified as Bholanath Giri, was grievously injured in the violence, and is now in critical condition in a government hospital in Kolkata, said the police. The other injured people were admitted to the Barupur sub divisional hospital.

The SUCI claimed that on Saturday morning TMC-backed goons retaliated by ransacking its district committee member Sudhansu Jana's home. Later, the body of the 50-year-old was found hanging from the ceiling.

SUCI state committee member, Joykrishna Haldar alleged, "Our leader was murdered and then hanged, while his house was ransacked and set on fire. TMC is behind this. They want to spread terror in the area where our party did well in the last panchayat polls. Our workers have been protesting against the ruling party's corruption in the Amphan relief operation. To silence them, TMC is spreading a reign of terror in the area..."

MP: 21 former ministers served final notice to vacate official bungalows

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, JULY 4

AS MANY as 21 ministers in the Kamal Nath government, who had not vacated their official bungalows in Bhopal after the change of guard in late March, have been served final notices.

If they don't vacate the premises in the next couple of days, the Directorate of Estate, which functions under the home department, will be able to seek police assistance to get the bungalows vacated without any further notice.

Over the last couple of

months, the occupants have either not responded to the notices or cited corona pandemic or lack of alternate accommodation as the reason in their responses for their inability to vacate the premises, as per sources.

The deadline has coincided with the expansion of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan cabinet, which now has 25 ministers and eight ministers of state.

"Final notices have been given to the occupants. The official in-charge of execution of the final notices has been authorised to seek police force. She will first try to get the bungalows vacated amicably because the occupants are former

ministers, and then use police force for compliance," Director R R Bhonsle told *The Indian Express*.

The director said bungalows have not yet been allotted to newly-inducted ministers. He said four former ministers had in their replies told the directorate that they were allotted alternate accommodation by the Assembly Secretariat. They further said they would vacate the ministerial bungalows once they gain possession of the alternate accommodation.

Two ministers, including former finance minister Tarun Bhanot, have vacated their bungalows. Bhanot complied with the notice after his bungalow was

sealed and authorities threatened to move the luggage outside. Citing the Covid pandemic, he had contended that he was stuck in Jabalpur and could not vacate his residence. The directorate had sent the police to vacate Bhanot's bungalow as it had been allotted to BJP state president VD Sharma.

Former tourism minister Surendra Baghel said he wouldn't vacate his bungalow until alternate accommodation is provided as he lives with his family. "We did not dispossess former ministers when we came to power (in December 2018)," he said, adding he has requested Chouhan to allot him a D-type bungalow.

Gujarat cop held for 'accepting bribe of Rs 20 lakh from rape accused'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JULY 4

A WOMAN police sub-inspector (PSI) with Ahmedabad Police was arrested and sent to three-day police remand, on Saturday, for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 20 lakh from an Ahmedabad-based businessman — accused in two rape cases — in exchange for not applying a stringent act against him.

According to police officials, Shweta Jadeja, PSI and in-charge of Mahila police station (West) in the city, was arrested by a team of Detection of Crime Branch (DCB) officials in Ahmedabad on Friday after the complainant in the case, the rape accused, approached the Crime Branch and stated that Jadeja had allegedly demanded Rs

35 lakh from him, in exchange for not booking him under the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities (PASA) Act.

The PASA Act in Gujarat gives power to the police to detain an accused and send them to a prison away from their native district. The complainant claimed that he already paid Rs 20 lakh of the total amount to Jadeja on February 3. On Saturday, a sessions court awarded Jadeja a three-day remand with the Crime Branch, which will end at 11:30 am on July 7. Following this, the PSI will undergo a medical check-up and be presented before the magistrate again.

According to police, complainant Kenal Shah — managing director of GSP Crop Science Private Limited, a crop solution-based company in Ahmedabad —

is allegedly facing two separate rape cases under IPC section 376. PSI Jadeja was first entrusted with the investigation of a rape case against Shah in January this year, lodged at Mahila police station (West).

The rape case complaint is of 2019. Another rape case against Shah was being probed by Assistant Commissioner of Police (Crimes Against Women), Mini Josef, wherein the investigation was reportedly completed.

As per the remand application report filed by the police, Jadeja had allegedly threatened Shah through his brother Bhavesh Shah — a joint managing director at GSP Crop Science Private Limited — and initially demanded Rs 25 lakh for not applying the PASA Act against the accused. The bribe amount was then settled at Rs 20

lakh and in February, the accused allegedly paid the amount via an office accountant to one Jayubha, allegedly a representative of Jadeja, from a finance office in Jamjodhpur area of Ahmedabad.

The report further stated that after the initial amount was paid, a third complaint was allegedly made against Kenal by a security officer at his office, Yograjsinh, for criminal intimidation. After the third complaint, PSI Jadeja had contacted Bhavesh again and demanded an additional sum of Rs 15 lakh for not applying the PASA Act against Kenal. The complaint from the security officer was not converted into an FIR and Shah has not been jailed yet.

However, it was after the demand of Rs 15 lakh that complainant Kenal approached the Crime Branch on June 27.

SHIVAMOGGA SMART CITY LIMITED
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Web: <http://shivamoggasmartcity.in/> E-mail: shivamoggasmartcity@gmail.com Phone No: 08182-279951

No.: SSCL/CR/140/PBT/2018 Date: 03.07.2020

SHORT TERM REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL-CALL 3

Through Government of Karnataka E-Procurement Only

SSCL Shimoga invites Request For Proposal for eligible bidders as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through e-procurement on Public Private Partnership (PPP). Details of the work is as below.

SI No: 1. **Name of the work** : Survey, Investigation, Planning Design, engineering, Financing, Procurement, supply, Erection, Testing, Installation, commissioning and comprehensive operation & maintenance and transfer of 25 MW Solar power generation plant on Upper or Lower Tungka canal stretches passing through the Shivamogga City, Shivamogga District Karnataka State under Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for 25 years on DBFOT basis **EMD Amount in Lakhs** : 140.00, **Project Duration** : Implementation Period-18 Months and O&M period — 25 years

Calendar of events:
1. Blank Tender documents can be downloaded from : 04.07.2020 @ 4.00 P.M. 2. Last date for Tender Queries: 20.07.2020 @ 11.00 A.M. 3. Pre bid meeting : 22.07.2020 @ 4.00 P.M. @ SSCL office, Board Room, Shivamogga 4. Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is: 07.08.2020 upto 4.00 P.M. 5. Date of Opening of Technical bid is on : 10.08.2020 @ 4.30 P.M. 6. Date of Opening of Financial bid is : 24.08.2020 @ 5.00 P.M.

For details, registration and e-payment visit GOK e-procurement website, <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> or contract e-procurement Helpdesk at 080-25501216 / 080-25501227, For more information contact in office hours.

Sd/- Managing Director
Shivamogga Smart City Limited, Shivamogga
DIPR/SMG/No.30-07/zenkar/2020-21

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
BEED NAGAR PARISHAD, BEED
E-TENDER NOTICE NO. NP/BEED/05/OF 2020-2021
Online tenders (e-tenders) in B-1 form for the following works are invited by Chief Officer, Nagar Parishad, Beed (Phone No. 02442-22423) on Government of Maharashtra Electronic Tender Management System from the contractor registered with public Works Department of Maharashtra State.
Note: This Tender notice contains (44) Works & detailed work wise notice can be viewed on website given below from Date: 07/07/2020.
All information about E-tender is available on the following Portal.
1. <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
(Changes if any will be intimated over above portal)

sd/-
Chief Officer
Nagar parishad, Beed

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
TENDER NOTICE
Airports Authority of India invites item Rate tenders through E-Tendering system by AGM(E-E) on behalf of Chairman AAI from eligible Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) of Elevator for the work of "Construction of New Terminal Building & Other Allied structures (Phase I & II) at Patna Airport, SH: SITC of Elevators at ATC Cum Technical Block, Residential Quarters & MLCIP" for an estimated cost of Rs. 477.22 Lacs with a period of completion 5 months for SITC of elevator and 5 years for Annual Comprehensive Maintenance. Last date and time of submission of bid document is 15.07.2020 up to 18:00 hours.
For detailed information log on to CPP e-Procurement Portal reference <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app> or www.aai.aero Further clarification/corrigendum if any will be notified through e-procurement portal at <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>

6 THE WORLD

TOPOF THE WORLD



Khashoggi was killed at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018

TURKEY

Khashoggi case: Oven was lit after killing, court told

Istanbul: A Saudi consulate worker in Istanbul told a Turkish court on Friday he had been asked to light a tandoor oven less than an hour after Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi entered the building where he was killed. Zeki Demir, a local technician who worked for the consulate, was giving evidence on the first day of the trial in absentia of 20 Saudi officials over Khashoggi's killing, which sparked global outrage. Demir said he had been called to the consul's residence after Khashoggi entered the nearby consulate to seek his papers. "There were five to six people there. They asked me to light up the tandoor (oven). There was an air of panic," he said.

PAKISTAN

PIA terminates services of 52 employees: report

Islamabad: The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has terminated the services of 52 employees on various charges, including fake degrees, breach of rules, according to a media report. Last month, the national flag carrier grounded more than 140 pilots after it was revealed in the National Assembly that some of them held "dubious and fake" licences. "It is important to appreciate hardworking and dedicated employees and punish defaulters found guilty after transparent and unbiased inquiries as per law," Dawn quoted the PIA's HR department's letter to its employees.

JAPAN

Thousands flee as rains lash southern Kyushu

Tokyo: Japan asked thousands of people to evacuate their homes on its southern island of Kyushu, media said on Saturday, following unprecedented torrential rains in which 15 people are feared dead and nine missing. With the region facing the risk of further floods and landslides, authorities told 92,200 households in the prefectures of Kumamoto and Kagoshima to vacate their homes, the Kyodo news agency said. "The heavy rainfall is likely to continue until Sunday, and people in the area are required to be on maximum alert," PM Shinzo Abe said.



Trump watches the US Navy Blue Angels' flypast as he attends the US Independence Day celebrations at Mount Rushmore in Keystone, South Dakota. Reuters

Trump slams 'left-wing cultural revolution' in I-Day address at Mount Rushmore

JEFF MASON
MOUNT RUSHMORE NATIONAL MEMORIAL, JULY 4

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump on Friday accused "angry mobs" of trying to erase history with efforts to remove or rethink monuments to US historical figures and used a speech at Mount Rushmore to paint himself as a bulwark against left-wing extremism.

On a day when seven US states posted a record number of new Covid-19 cases, the pandemic moved further into Trump's inner circle. Kimberly Guilfoyle, a senior campaign official and the girlfriend of Donald Trump Jr, tested positive in South

Why event riled Native Americans

THE MONUMENT known as Mount Rushmore is part of South Dakota's Black Hills — sacred land for the Native American tribes that occupied the region before European colonisation. An 1868 treaty, upheld by a 1980 Supreme Court ruling, granted the Black Hills to the Sioux tribe, but the government kept

EXPLAINED

the land. Native American leaders say the carving of the faces of four white presidents on to the sacred hills symbolises the plunder of the indigenous population by the European colonisers and the US's refusal to honour treaties. They say the pomp of a July 4 event in the area adds salt to the wound.

Dakota before the event, according to Sergio Gor, a Trump campaign official. Trump Jr tested negative, Gor said.

The pre-July 4 holiday event drew 7,500 people, packed into an outdoor amphitheatre. Many did not wear masks, defying the

advice of health officials.

Trump has not worn a mask in public and made limited reference to the pandemic in his remarks.

Speaking underneath the famed landmark depicting four US presidents, Trump warned the demonstrations over racial inequality threatened the foundations of the US political system.

"Make no mistake, this left wing cultural revolution is designed to overthrow the American revolution," Trump said. "Our children are taught in school to hate their own country."

"Angry mobs are trying to tear down statues of our founders, deface our most sacred memorials, and unleash a wave of violent crime in our cities," Trump said. **REUTERS**

GLOBAL COVID-19 CASES RISE TO OVER 11 MILLION

WHO urges focus on first wave of coronavirus

World experiencing second peak in first wave: WHO emergencies chief

AP & REUTERS
GENEVA, JULY 4

THE WORLD Health Organisation's emergencies chief says "we need to put up a fight now" during a peak in the current wave of the coronavirus pandemic rather than focusing on when a second wave might come. Dr Michael Ryan said the world will be much better at fighting a second wave, if people can learn the lessons of fighting the first wave.

WHO officials emphasised mask-wearing, social distancing, and hygiene by individuals, along with contact-tracing and tracking of cases by health authorities as key strategies to fight the virus.

They say governments and individuals should contour their policies and behaviour based on the outbreak's status in their countries.

Ryan said the world was experiencing a "second peak in the first wave", a situation in which the virus hasn't been suppressed enough to quell transmission to end the first one.

Meanwhile, global coronavirus cases exceeded 11 million, according to a Reuters tally, marking another milestone in the spread of the disease that has killed more than half a million people in seven months.

The number of cases is more than double the figure for severe influenza illnesses recorded an-

Indian man dozes off at Dubai airport, misses repatriation flight

Dubai: A 53-year-old Indian worker in the UAE has missed an aspecial repatriation flight after he dozed off at the Dubai International Airport, a media report said. P Shajahan, who worked as a storekeeper in Abu Dhabi, was supposed to fly to Thiruvananthapuram on the Emirates jumbo jet chartered by the Kerala Muslim Cultural Centre Dubai, Gulf News reported. It was the first-ever jumbo jet chartered for repatriation. Shajahan, who had paid 1,100 dirham (\$300) for the ticket, said he had not slept the previous night as he kept waiting for the confirmation of his ticket. **PTI**

nually, according to the WHO.

Many hard-hit countries are easing lockdowns put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus while making extensive alterations to work and social life that could last for a year or more until a vaccine is available.

Almost a quarter of the known global deaths have occurred in the United States — nearly 129,000.



A wedding ceremony, under social distancing norms, at St George's Church in Leeds, England, on Saturday. Weddings are once again permitted to take place in the country, with ceremonies capped at a maximum of 30 guests. England is embarking on its biggest lockdown easing as pubs and restaurants reopen Saturday for the first time in more than three months. AP

China says G4 swine flu virus not new, does not infect humans easily

REUTERS
SHANGHAI, BEIJING, JULY 4

CHINA'S MINISTRY of Agriculture and Rural Affairs said on Saturday that the so-called "G4" strain of swine flu virus is not new and does not infect or sicken humans and animals easily, rebuffing a study published earlier this week.

That study, by a team of Chinese scientists and published by the US journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), warned that a new swine flu virus, named G4, has become more infectious to humans and could become a potential "pandemic virus".

However, China's agriculture ministry said in a statement that the study has been interpreted

SWITZERLAND

SIBERIAN TIGER KILLS ZOOKEEPER

A Siberian tiger attacked and killed a 55-year-old zookeeper at Zurich's zoo Saturday. Rescue crews were unable to save the woman, who died on the spot. A visitor reported the attack to the zoo staff, but the circumstances of the incident were still under investigation.

US sends carriers to South China Sea during Chinese drills

Navy says operation 'to support a free and open Indo-Pacific'

MATTHEW TOSTEVIN
JULY 4

TWO US aircraft carriers were conducting exercises in the disputed South China Sea on Saturday, the US navy said, as China also carried out military drills that have been criticised by the Pentagon and neighbouring states.

China and the United States have accused each other of stoking tension in the strategic waterway at a time of strained relations over everything from the new coronavirus to trade to Hong Kong.

The USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan were carrying out operations and exercises in the South China Sea "to support a free and open Indo-Pacific", the navy said in a statement.

It did not say exactly where the exercises were being conducted in the South China Sea, which extends for some 1,500 km and 90 per cent of which is claimed by China despite the protests of its neighbours.

"The purpose is to show an unambiguous signal to our partners and allies that we are committed to regional security and stability," Rear Admiral George M. Wikoff was quoted as saying by the *Wall Street Journal*, which first reported the exercises.

Wikoff, commander of the strike group led by the Ronald



The Ronald Reagan Strike Group is carrying out drills in South China Sea amid heightened tensions in the region. Reuters file

Senate seeks to sanction China officials

THE US Senate on Thursday unanimously passed legislation to impose sanctions on Chinese officials trying to stamp out political dissent in Hong Kong, sending the measure to President Trump's desk for his signature. The passage of the Bill, spearheaded by Senators Patrick Toomey, Republican of Pennsylvania, and Chris Van

Hollen, Democrat of Maryland, comes days after Chinese leaders imposed a sweeping new security law on Hong Kong. "It's not only an effort to shield freedom-loving Hong Kongers from this continuing escalation of aggression by the Chinese communists, but the Bill is a larger signal to China," Toomey said. **NYT**

Reagan, said the exercises were not a response to those being conducted by China, which the Pentagon criticised this week as "counter-productive to efforts at easing tensions and maintaining stability".

China dismissed the US crit-

icism of its drills on Friday and suggested the United States was to blame for increasing tensions.

China announced last week it had scheduled five days of drills starting July 1 near the Parcel Islands, which are claimed by both Vietnam and China. **REUTERS**

Oli fights to save PM chair, claims plot to dislodge President too

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, JULY 4

WITH THE chorus for his resignation growing within the ruling Nepal Communist Party, Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli dragged in President Bidhya Devi Bhandari into the row Saturday, claiming there was a "larger conspiracy" to dislodge not just him but also the President, and that he would take stern measures to counter the threat.

Shortly after he met Bhandari for about 50 minutes in the evening, Oli convened a meeting of ministers, office bearers of the party and secretariat members, telling them to choose between him and those opposed to him.

"I have all along stood for party unity and had no problem in handing executive powers to party co-chair Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), but ignoring all that, there is a conspiracy to dislodge me and the President from our posts," Oli was quoted by one of those present at the meeting.

He did not mention India when he spoke of a "conspiracy" — he did that a week ago, setting off a political firestorm in Kathmandu — but maintained he was being targeted, along with Bhandari, because of his stand on the border issue.

Rival Prachanda held a parallel meeting at his residence. The apprehension in his camp is that the PM and President may go in for



Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli

"measures to save themselves".

Last month, Oli steered a constitution amendment Bill to get parliamentary sanction for Nepal's new map that includes three territories with India (Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura). He later claimed that India and a section of leaders in Kathmandu were plotting to remove him from power.

On July 2, Oli refused to yield to party pressure to step down, and got both Houses of Parliament prorogued to ward off threats to post. The Cabinet recommendation to end the sessions was immediately accepted by the President.

At the meeting Saturday, Oli indicated that he may drop ministers from the rival camp. He was quoted saying "may be some of us will not be seeing each other".

There is speculation he may bring an ordinance to tweak a law that will allow him to split the party. A meeting of the standing committee, scheduled for Saturday, was postponed to Monday to give time for back channel moves to keep the party intact.

EXPLOSIVES AND NAZI MEMORABILIA WERE FOUND AT AN ELITE SOLDIER'S HOME

As Neo-Nazis seed military ranks, Germany confronts an enemy within

KATRIN BENNHOLD
CALW, JULY 4

AS GERMANY emerged from its coronavirus lockdown in May, police commandos pulled up outside a rural property owned by a sergeant major in the special forces, the country's most highly trained and secretive military unit. They brought a digger.

The sergeant major's nickname was Little Sheep. He was suspected of being a neo-Nazi. Buried in the garden, police

found 2 kg of PETN plastic explosives, a detonator, a fuse, an AK-47, a silencer, two knives, a cross-bow and thousands of rounds of ammunition — much of it believed to have been stolen from the German military.

They also found an SS songbook, 14 editions of a magazine for former members of the Waffen SS and a host of other Nazi memorabilia.

"He had a plan," said Eva Högl, Germany's parliamentary commissioner for the armed forces. "And he is not the only one."

Germany has a problem. For years, politicians and security chiefs rejected the notion of any far-right infiltration of the security services, speaking only of "individual cases". The idea of networks was dismissed. The superiors of those exposed as extremists were protected. Guns and ammunition disappeared from military stockpiles with no real investigation.

The government is now waking up. Cases of far-right extremists in the military and police, some hoarding weapons and explosives, have multiplied alarm-



The town of Calw, Germany, in the Black Forest region, near the base where KSK soldiers are stationed. NYT

ingly. The nation's top intelligence officials and senior military commanders are moving to confront an issue that has become too dangerous to ignore.

The problem has deepened with the emergence of the Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, which legitimised a far-right ideology that used the arrival of more than 1 million migrants in 2015 — and recently the coronavirus pandemic — to engender a sense of impending crisis.

Most concerning to authorities is that the extremists appear

to be concentrated in the military unit that is supposed to be the most elite and dedicated to the German state, the special forces, known by their German acronym, the KSK.

This week, Germany's defence minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, took the drastic step of disbanding a fighting company in the KSK considered infested with extremists. Little Sheep, the sergeant major whose weapons stash was uncovered in May, was a member. Some 48,000 rounds of am-

munication and 62 kg, or about 137 pounds, of explosives have disappeared from the KSK altogether, she said.

Germany's military counter-intelligence agency is now investigating more than 600 soldiers for far-right extremism, out of 184,000 in the military. Some 20 of them are in the KSK, a proportion that is five times higher than in other units. But German authorities are concerned the problem may be far larger and other security institutions have been infiltrated as well. **NYT**

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Saluting the Corona Warriors

Rajasthan Housing Board: Affordable housing for all



PAWAN ARORA (I.A.S.)
HOUSING COMMISSIONER
Govt. of Rajasthan

It was really very painful for everyone to see the migration of labourers during hot sunny days on highways including old age people, children, and pregnant ladies walking hundreds of kilometers to reach their HOME. So was the case with Commissioner Housing Board, Pawan Arora, who firmly believes that if the labourers had owned their own houses they would not have chosen to travel in such adverse conditions to their home towns because all state governments were taking care of their food and health requirements. "It gave us an idea to make the purchase of the house easy for the common man and we brought a new scheme under our ongoing BUDHVAAR NILAAMI UTSAV to sell our surplus houses on easy 156 monthly installments and we coined a slogan "10% deeliye - grah pravesh keeliye". Lockdown was on and even during the lockdown, people were restricted to move out to government offices and in certain hotspots or containment zones, curfew was also imposed so to reach out each and every one and to give equal opportunity to everyone, housing board designed the process of E-bid submission, where anyone can see the list of almost 12000 houses of various categories like EWS/LIG/MIG and HIG and know there reserve price, discount, minimum bid price, typical unit plan/map and location of that flat/apartment and through an easy process one can register themselves for e-bid submission. The scheme started from 8th June 2020, where people could submit their e-bid from every Monday 10 am to 4 pm on every Wednesday. Then at 4:30 pm on every Wednesday bids are being opened and the list of successful buyers/bidders is declared at the same time and they are being issued allotment cum demand letters for the 10% of the

bid amount within a week's time and as soon as they deposit the amount they are being given the possession of the flats/houses. The scheme has become so popular that more than 3000 people have got themselves registered online and on 1st Wednesday housing board could sell 381 houses worth rupees 58 crores, on second Wednesday 320 houses worth 45 crores, on third Wednesday 257 houses for 34 crores and on fourth Wednesday 255 houses worth 41 crores and in total within 12 days of e-bid submission 1213 houses worth rupees 178 cr have been sold and it has become a new world record of selling such a big number of properties during such a short span of time by online process. Notably, earlier in last November housing board had sold 1010 properties worth Rs. 262.5 Cr in 35 days and this was recognized by the World Book of Records and the certificate was given to CM Rajasthan and Commissioner of RHB. The scheme is still on and getting very good response from the poor and common people because the installment of the of the house is almost equal to the rental they are paying for their existing dwelling units. This is a very positive move of RHB during these covid times. It is seen that people residing in the walled city of Jaipur are more keen to buy these props or dwelling units in the outer colonies of RHB. Commissioner Pawan Arora proudly says that we are trying to live up to our slogan 'mandal ka hai sapna-sabka ghar ho apna'.

In the era of coronavirus pandemic from WHO to Central/State govt everyone issued instructions and suggested the quarantine for the positive/suspected patients and for the travelers. RHB also took a lead in this and prepared quarantine centers for almost 7500 people in a record 10 days time, RHB had 700 houses in Nalla and almost 1500 flats in Mahla and within 10 days they were converted to well equipped quarantine centers with proper light, water, cooling and toilet arrangements. If we look back, RHB was about to be shut down in the last BJP regime as the then chief minister was very annoyed with poor performance, the large inventory of almost 20000 unsold houses and the quality issues and she had restricted RHB to take up any new project and virtually RHB was on a verge of closure but as soon as the Gehlot govt came in power, CM decided to revive the board and in the first cabinet meeting he gave this tough task to UDH minister Shanti Dhariwal to improve the goodwill of RHB and revive it. The enthusiastic and experienced Dhariwal promised the



CM to implement his instructions. The charge of Chairman RHB was already with Mr. Bhaskar Sawant, who happens to be Principle Secretary of Urban Development Department and on the post of Commissioner, Pawan Arora was appointed, who having a long experience of Urban issues and is considered a very effective, and result oriented administrator. It was a big challenge to infuse energy and enthusiasm in the team of a sleeping organization and to sell almost 20000 unsold houses. Commissioner Pawan Arora showing his unique leadership skills and marketing strategy prepared a blueprint to revive the RHB. Looking to the depleted condition of the unsold inventory Arora proposed a 25 to 50% discount and the state government agreed to it and people got attracted towards RHB houses. To bring back the faith of people and to maintain transparency Arora brought the system of e-auction.

World Record in E-Auction
In the first phase the list of almost 9000 houses of all categories were made available online with their reserve price, discount, minimum bid price, location and floor plan etc. the process was so simple that only in 35 days time RHB sold 1010 houses worth rupees 162.5 cr.

After e-auction, Wednesday Auction Festival gained popularity
After the successful experiment of e-auction, Commissioner Pawan Arora started working on a strategy to maintain the same pace of selling houses and for the not so computer friendly lot RHB came up with a new scheme and named it 'Budhwar Neelami Utsav' (Wednesday Auction Festival). The properties were listed with full details on the RHB website again and any person could give his auction proposal in a sealed envelope in the offices of board from 10am on every Monday to 4pm on every Wednesday. Every Wednesday the auction proposals were opened at 4.30 pm and list of

successful bidders was declared. After e-auction, this scheme became a hit and so far more than 1500 properties have been sold in this scheme- and earned revenue of more than Rs 200 crore.

Swarna Jayanti Uphaar Yojana
The Board on the completion of its 50 years in this year launched Swarna Jayanti Uphaar Yojana between January 22 and February 19, 2020. The every buyer of Budhwar Neelami Utsav was given a Mixer Grinder as a prize. Besides this, one out of five purchasers were given an Activa Scooter as gift. Five Alto Cars were also given as bumper prize, including all the buyers in the lottery, this also attracted a lot of buyers and RHB could sell almost 1200 more houses.

By now RHB has successfully sold almost 4500 houses worth RS.500 Cr in last 8 months, which is a record and the process is still on. Once RHB regained this confidence that it will clear its large inventory of unsold house in the coming months Commissioner and his team planned for few more schemes for the common man and for some neglected sections of te society.

City Park coming up at Jaipur's Mansarovar

A huge City Park is being developed on 2,12,153 square metres of land (52.42 acres) between VT Road and Aravali Marg in Mansarovar on the directions of Chief Minister to improve the environment, beautification and to give healthy living conditions to the residents of Asia's biggest colony. Facilities such as walkways, jogging track, parking blocks, entrance plazas, water bodies, fancy lighting , sculptures, beautification, sound system, furniture, botanical garden and children play area and sanitization stations will be developed in this Park. Besides this more than 21,000 plants of different varieties will be planted here. The extended area of the park will have a huge beautiful Fountain Square

with musical fountains and beautiful landscaped area.

State's first coaching hub coming up in Jaipur's Pratap Nagar

Looking to the mushroom growth of coaching centres in residential areas and the problem of traffic, parking and poor safety of the students , On RHB's proposal Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot in his budget speech had announced a coaching hub with capacity of 60,000-70,000 students on an area of 68,000 square-metre in Pratap Nagar, Jaipur. The DPR of the coaching hub has been approved and work has also started. Apart from the well equipped classrooms- Auditorium, library, Wellness centre, gym, food court, parking, cycle track, hostels and other such facilities will be developed in the premises of coaching hub.

The construction of this coaching hub will cost Rs 231 crore and the board will get revenue of approximately Rs 416 crore from this project. There will total eight institutional towers, of which five will be built in the first phase and three towers in the second phase. Each tower will be of seven-story in which one lakh square feet area will be built. Underground parking will be developed under all these buildings. Seven storied library of 70,000 square feet, an auditorium with capacity of 800 people will also be built. Four plots of 1100 square metre each have been carved for hostel and PG. The construction of coaching hub will start in July 2020 and will complete in December 2023. The first phase will get completed by September, 2022.

Construction of Chowpatty in progress at Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota

Jaipur Chowpatty is under construction at Pratap Nagar and Mansarovar. Commissioner himself is regularly monitoring the work. Jodhpur and Kota cities will get new identity with construction of Chowpatty at Chauhasani Residential Scheme in Jodhpur and at Kunhadi Residential Scheme in Kota. With coming up of these Chowpatties, varieties of tasty food will be available and local people along with domestic and foreign tourists will get a good place for eating food and will become a centre of attraction.

Unsold shops at Jhulelal Market started selling on premium

Shops at Jhulelal Market in Mansarovar were lying unsold for almost 12 years and they were getting depleted. The Commissioner made special efforts and allotted 266 shops to Tibetan refugees at Jhulelal Market to resolve the problem of finding a suitable place every year for their temporary market. These shops

were provided to them on the fixed reserve price of 2014-15 on easy instalments. The remaining shops were sold to general public on open counter sale via lottery, there was long queue of purchasers and now these shops are re selling on premium.

Housing scheme for teachers and constables

RHB launched Mukhyamantri Shikshak Awaz Yojana for teachers and Mukhyamantri Praharis Awaz Yojana for constables at sector 26 in Pratap Nagar, Jaipur. Around 576 flats will be built in these schemes on 20,925 square metre area. Cost of a flat will be Rs 15.70 lakh and applicants by depositing 10% of the cost that is Rs 1.70 lakh could do the registration. The scheme was over subscribed and received more than 700 registrations. UDH Minister Shri Shanti Dhariwal has laid the foundation of this scheme on May 27, 2020 and work is on full swing.

Mahatma Gandhi Dastkar Nagar Yojana

Chief Minister on October 22, 2019 re-launched Mahatma Gandhi Dastkar Nagar Scheme. Looking to the poor economic conditions of dastkars (craftsman), a discount of Rs 1.36 lakh was given on the fixed price. After this discount the house cum workshop are available to craftsman for just Rs 14.99 lakh instead of Rs 16.35 lakh. Open Air Theatre, Chowpatty and a large exhibition place are being constructed there to increase the footfall of local people and tourists.

Precious land freed from encroachment

The Housing Board in last six months has freed its land worth around Rs 300 crore from encroachment. Thousands of square metres of land in Mansarovar and Pratap Nagar in Jaipur were freed from encroachment with the help of police and now action plan is being made in the public interest on these lands.

Launch of Mahatma Gandhi Sambal Awasiya Yojana, Badli in Jodhpur

New scheme Mahatma Gandhi Sambal Awasiya Yojana is proposed on 50 bighas of land in Badli, Jodhpur on which 488 houses will be built including 153 for economically weaker section (EWS) and 335 houses for low income group (LIG) on 30 bighas in the first phase. (Estimated cost of EWS house is Rs 4.65 lakh and LIG is Rs 6.85 lakh)

Launch of Ayush Market in Jaipur's Pratap Nagar

Ayush Market has been launched in Pratap Nagar near newly built Rajasthan University of Health Sciences and Narayana Hridayalaya. The RHB will get revenue of approx Rs 28 crore from

auctioning 54 commercial showroom plots.

RHB Atish Market

In Mansarovar on main Gopalpura by pass and famous Shipra Path RHB Atish Market has been developed with 94 commercial plots of which more than 20 plots have been sold on very high price.

RHB will build houses for the MLAs

Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot impressed with the performance of Rajasthan Housing Board took a big decision and made housing board the nodal agency for building houses for MLAs. It is to be mentioned that earlier JDA was made the nodal agency for this project. A meeting in regard to this project has been organised under the chairmanship of assembly speaker Shri CP Joshi. The assembly is giving the ownership rights of Jalupura and Vidhayak Nagar lands to the housing board. The RHB will dispose off these lands to bear the cost of this project.

21 residential schemes in 14 cities to be launched

RHB will launch 21 residential schemes in 14 cities of the State in which 12,351 houses will be built. Besides this, 2652 flats will be constructed under Mukhyamantri Jan Awaz scheme at five places in Jaipur. These housing schemes will be launched at Sirol, Vatika, Mahla, Indira Gandhi Nagar extension in Jaipur, Newai in Tonk, Savina Kheda, South extension-Udaipur, Devali, Bhindar, Abu Road in Sirahi; Navader-Udaipura in Dungarpur; Shapurra in Bhilwara; Shastri Nagar in Banswara; Suratgarh in Sriganganagar; Badli in Jodhpur; Bhiwadi, Shahjahanpur in Alwar; Kishangarh, Nasirabad in Ajmer and Shivbani in Bikaner.

RHB act modified for empowerment

The Rajasthan Assembly has made amendment in the Board Act for the first time in the history of 50 years of RHB to empower it for removal of encroachments from its properties and to recover its dues or installments from the defaulters through seizure or attachment. Under the Rajasthan Housing Board Amendment Act, 2020, an enforcement wing has been also been constituted to implement the newly added provisions of the act.

It's a unique example which justifies the famous proverb "If there is a will, there is a way". The sleeping and almost closed RHB is running fast now and has regained its lost glory in a very short span. Commissioner Arora share its credit with the Vision of the Chief Minister , regular guidance from the UDH minister , free hand and full support by the Chairman and the entire RHB team.

Pause and Reset : Lessons to learn from the lockdown

Life was going on as usual and everything was in order until suddenly things changed. Everyday routine stopped and went off rails so fast that many of us took a long time to cope with and comprehend what is now being called the "new normal". Many are still struggling. Change, no matter how unwanted or even unpleasant it may be, is a constant of the human experience. The current state of affairs that this pandemic has pushed us into certainly qualifies as such. In manners both big and small, it has altered our outlook in life and how we function. What had value previously and held most of our attention, no longer enjoys being our priority. That space is now filled with worries about our health, unlearning some habits that no longer apply to daily life and scouring the virtual for a glimpse of the reality that others are living. And most importantly, finding the time and energy to look within.

During these extraordinary times, we have been given a chance to take a step back and push the reset button. We have all been running towards a promised source of happiness in personal and professional spheres without any breaks. Yet, the lockdown and its many and varied versions have summarily put a halt to this. Ostentatious gatherings, excessive expenditure and all which can be ultimately deemed unnecessary have been bid adieu to. If life was a picture, it has never been more in focus than at this moment. When all else is no longer in the frame, your strengths and flaws can be seen much clearer. And it is only when the unexpected happens, that you wander from your fixed path to explore other avenues. This is the time to learn, to teach and to grow together even when the physical distance separates us.

Despite the ugliness of disease and death in the world, this forced pause is also an opportunity for each one of us to grasp the value of compassion in the face of disaster, the resilience to tackle difficult situations and to applaud humanity coming together to face this common enemy. So what, if we don't see each other up close for some more time, let our hearts be fonder for it. So what, if we can no longer achieve the goal that we started the year with, let our creative juices come up with infinite new ideas. So what, if our ship does not seem to be taking the right course, open yourself to uncharted waters and find new destinations. Regardless of popular claims, it is not the end of the world and there is still a lot to look forward to!

Purvai Soni (freelance writer and poet)

Rajasthan on a war footing, helps lakhs of migrant workers return home



Dr. Subodh Agarwal (I.A.S.)
Addl. Chief Secretary, Industries,
Rajasthan Government

With COVID-19 spread threat, the industries had stopped operating from the first lockdown, and trains, buses and other transportation means remained standstill too. No one had any idea that soon the country will have on its roads and highways millions of stranded labourers, who are the pillars of the global economy, walking. We could see the tragedies, endless suffering to survive, and also the gritty triumphs of human courage with the on-road movement of lakhs of stranded who were compelled to walk home, over hundreds of kilometers.

Like many states in the country, the challenges before Rajasthan were huge and intricately coiled. The government, with no set model to manage this national crisis, started taking the best measures to trace and reach them with all possible help including tracing the movement, providing shelter, food, water, footwear, medicines, arranging bus, trains, private vehicles and supplying COVID-19 kits with masks, sanitizers, and more such essentials. Backed by the guiding principles of state Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot, the administration was clear to manage the humanitarian crisis with a human approach. Some of the thematic principles at the planning level were – # N o T o F o o t M o v e m e n t , # K o i B h u k h a N a h i S o y e , # R a j a s t h a n S a t a r k H a i , # ShrameekSpecialBus.

As per a state-level committee's interstate migration report, (till June 16, 2020) over 24.68 lakh migrant labourers had called and registered requests to help reach home. As much as 48.31% were registered for outward travel and 51.69% were registered for inward travel.

Leadership Guidelines

From the very beginning, the message of the Chief Minister was clear that 'no one would be walking on the road' for reaching home and we followed it religiously. More than 178 trains and over 14,000 inbound/outbound bus/private vehicles trips, Rajasthan Government helped about 8.42 lakh incoming migrants and 2.93 lakh outgoing labourers at a total spend of Rs 25.25 crore. Be it any mode of transportation, no migrant labourer, either outbound or incoming, was asked to pay for their journey of reaching home. Additionally, we launched Shramik Special Bus Service round the clock from May 18, 2020; made gargantuan efforts to ensure no one walks to reach their home. The state government has been able to manage the migrant labourers movement in the safest possible way in the extremely challenging lockdown situations.

For the state administration, more than money, the driving force was to be humane and feel the pain of displaced people suffering in distant lands and longing to be reunited with their families in the time of the pandemic.

State machinery in action

On April 26, the Chief Secretary formed a state-level committee for inter-state Migration and that gave us a push to create a 'winning strategy'. We put our best administration officials for testing the water. Language connect of officials were taken into consideration while deputing the interstate to connect. People in the team knew Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, and were given the task to interact with other state government's machinery to bring 'emotions' in the dealing. We then took a series of decisions in quick succession to create new roles and responsibilities for our officers to ensure that processes, logistics, and infrastructure were put in the place. It started with setting up a platform where migrants can register their request (call center), arranging trains, buses, establishing shelters and camps with provisions of food, water, medicines, and other necessities. Creating entry posts for migrants coming back, health check-ups and quarantine facilities, etc. The dedicated teams of nodal officers were in continuous touch with other state governments to manage the hassle-free travel of migrants.

Since the first train on May 1, about 1.71 lakh migrants were sent back to their homes and nearly 0.64 lakh were welcomed by the state government who came by train. Using 15 trains, almost all

migrant students of Kota and 2 special trains carrying pilgrims were sent back to their homes too. Rajasthan was one of the first states to begin the rail service for migrants.

We managed to ensure that no migrant labourer was walking on the road and no one faced the hardship of not reaching home. There were instances of people beginning to walk but as our network was vigilant, patrolling the roads, such people were rescued from troubles and accommodated into buses and trains for a safe journey. These people were first medically screened and were provided with food, water and shelter and later dropped to their destination safely. As we launched 'no to foot movement', each district reported safe travel, and no such incident was reported where an individual was seen or heard or reported to sleep hungry or without water. We also arranged private cars, travellers, wherever needed to send every individual home. What we had in mind was a thought that everyone should be with their families in this time of unusual crisis. No one should feel mentally and emotionally dejected and be with their loved ones to look after them.

Migrant workers – key pillars of growth

I would like to urge migrant workers, who have gone back to their states, to kindly consider coming back to the Rajasthan once the pandemic blows over. They are one of the strongest pillars of the state's growth. Because of them, the state growth rate was accelerating. Post their return, the industry will bring back the pace of growth in its earlier form.

Other important initiatives

While the state government was working on a war footing for managing the inter-state migrant movement, we were also observing the requests of Rajasthanian migrants stuck in abroad. The central ministry planned to bring back about 2 lakh foreign migrants of which 8,500 are registered to reach Rajasthan from different countries. Over 3,800 Rajasthanian migrants have already reached the state and more are scheduled to arrive in the coming days. As per central and state government's guidelines, all of them are going through strict health check-ups and then being sent to the quarantine centers for 14 days. Our team noticed many requests of people on paying final tribute and immersion to their loved ones. We started 'Moksha Kalash Special Buses' and till June 16, about 8,164 people travelled to Haridwar by 210 buses carrying 4,170 kalash.

The writer is Additional Chief Secretary, Industries, Rajasthan Government and Head of State Level Committee for Interstate Migration

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STOP APP

Last week, amidst a tense border standoff with China, the government banned 59 mobile applications with links to the neighbouring country.

PRANAV MUKUL, KARISHMA MEHROTRA, AASHISH ARYAN & SANDEEP SINGH on how Chinese companies came to dominate India's digital space — from apps to devices and ancillaries, there's more than a little bit of China on our phones

UNTIL RECENTLY, the most fascinating story about Valsad was its Freddie Mercury connection — the British rock musician traced his lineage to this South Gujarat town that's now a chemical industry hub. But when the town shut down in response to the Covid pandemic, Sanjay Rathod, a 29-year old who washed cars for a living, found himself out of work. He filled his long, vacant hours practising his dances moves and recording them on his smartphone, one with a broken screen and an inexpensive data pack. Soon, his videos were up on TikTok — and a new star was born. In a little over three months, Rathod, who went by the screen name 'Armaan', had earned 7 million followers on the video sharing app.

Last week, amidst a tense border standoff with China, the Centre banned the app along with 58 others for posing "emergent threats" to the country's national security. While TikTok's reach — with over 120 million active users in India — made it the most visible symbol of the government's action against China, the other apps too had a deep presence in India. According to technology market research firm Counterpoint, almost one out of every three smartphone users in India had one or more of these apps on their devices.

Tailored for the first-time Indian Internet user, these apps are among hundreds that make up China's digital presence in India, and which have been gradually edging out American competitors from the country's top downloads since 2018.

In 2018, 44 of the 100 most downloaded Internet applications in India were made by Chinese companies, a huge jump from 18 such apps in 2017, according to a report in the Observer Research Foundation.

Last year, TikTok surpassed Facebook to reach 611 million downloads in India, according to Sensor Tower, a market analysis firm.

Tech as strategic goal

But this is more than just an app story. From hardware to software, Chinese companies have dominated the digital technologies space in India over the last few years, with more than a little push from the Chinese establishment.

The Communist Party of China (CPC) has consistently viewed technology as the next frontier through which to establish its supremacy in the global market, with its 'Digital Silk Road' policy — announced in a white paper in 2015 — an attempt at expanding its digital footprints to 65 countries.

In 2016, the country's National Cyber Security Strategy adopted the phrase "strong Internet power" as a strategic objective.

Numerous other strategies, such as the Internet Plus strategy of 2015 and the National Informatization Development Strategy of 2006-2020, explicitly call for the country's largest companies such as Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent to push out products to international markets.

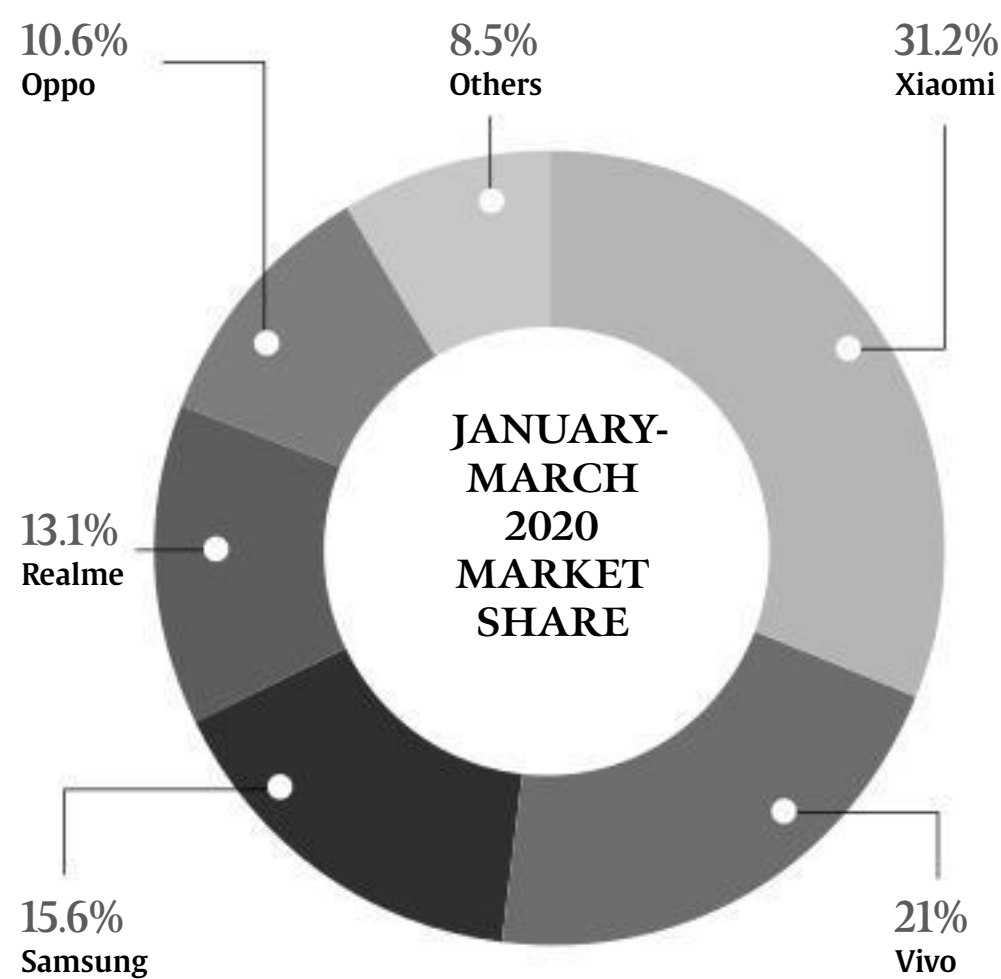
In India, the ground for this aggressive push from Chinese companies was laid in July 2014, when Xiaomi, often called the 'Apple of China', made its entry, followed by a flurry of Chinese brands such as Oppo, Vivo, OnePlus, Realme etc. The influx of these Chinese companies peaked in 2016 when Reliance Jio launched its cheap data offerings, starting with its free Internet package that disrupted the telecom sector.

Latest data by the International Data Corporation shows that among the top five smartphone sellers in the country, four are Chinese with Xiaomi topping the charts with a market share of 31.2%, followed by Vivo at 21% (see box).

This rapid increase in imports of electronic goods worried the Central government, which in April 2017 notified a phased manufacturing plan to ramp up domestic production of smartphones.

"The import of electronic goods was of the order of \$53 billion (approximately Rs 3,44,500 crore) in 2017-18. With the demand for electronics hardware expected to rise rapidly to about \$400 billion (approximately Rs 26,00,000 crore) by 2025, India cannot afford to bear a huge foreign exchange

India's smartphone market



Source: IDC Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker, May 2020
*All except Samsung are Chinese brands

CHINESE INVESTMENT IN INDIAN UNICORNS

Company	Chinese Investor	Amount (\$M)
Ola Cabs	Tencent, Sailing Capital	451
Swiggy.com	Tencent, Hillhouse Capital	328
Paytm Mall	Alibaba	222
Policy Bazaar	Tencent	150
Dream11.com	Tencent	100
Delhivery	Fosun Group	49
Byju's Classes	Tencent	40
Big Basket	Alibaba, T R Capital	**
Lenskart.com	T R Capital	**
Zomato	Alibaba, Shunwei Capital	**

**Amount not disclosed; Source: Venture Intelligence

outgo on import of electronics alone," the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology detailed in its National Electronics Policy of 2017.

The efforts to make India a manufacturing hub for electronics resulted in dozens of Chinese companies and their contract manufacturers setting up base in Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere.

Chinese equipment vendors such as Huawei and ZTE also have a significant presence in the telecom equipment space in India. India telecom companies have depended on technologies by these Chinese equipment makers to take on European giants such as Ericsson and Nokia, a partnership that has helped bring down costs.

Thus, while the smartphones were being assembled in the country, most of the high-value components such as printed circuit boards, memory devices, storage units, processors, were — and continue to be — imported, much of it from China.

This has been mainly because of the scale of Chinese manufacturing that has enabled companies to offer cheap, low-cost products. Most of the Chinese products would technologically follow premium brands such as Apple and Samsung, often resulting in a \$100-device with functionalities and design of a \$1000+ one.

Even Indian brands such as Micromax had initially resorted to importing semi-knocked-down mobile phone units from China to assemble them locally and sell at a competitively lower price. The Gurugram-headquartered company, which is now struggling to maintain its ground, once led

the Indian mobile phone market, beating global behemoths such as Samsung and Nokia. But this was before the entry of Chinese players, who together accounted for 114 million of the 158 million smartphones shipped to India in 2019.

In addition to flooding the digital market with affordable products, the Chinese also pushed the purchase of these products through micro-financing. For example, smartphone brand Oppo has jumped onto the financial services bandwagon in India, launching Oppo Kash. Realme and Xiaomi are the other smartphone makers that offer credit, investment and other financial products through their apps PaySa and Mi Credit respectively. These players are also engaged in providing services such as smartphone screen insurance, personal loan, business loan, free credit report and even mutual fund investments.

India's financial technology sector hasn't remained untouched either. Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba is the largest investor in payment app Paytm. Zestmoney, which has raised Rs 236 crore till date in the form of equity, counts Xiaomi among its investors.

The software presence

Once they had flooded the hardware market, Chinese companies launched a

EXPLAINED

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A new red line

WHILE INDIA has resisted China's signature physical infrastructure projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the neighbour's Digital Silk Road policy, launched in 2015, has helped Chinese companies make significant headway into the Indian technological space. In that light, the ban signifies a new red line, with newly erected virtual walls between the two countries.

blitzkrieg on the software side as well. The three Chinese giants, search engine Baidu, online marketplace Alibaba and WeChat developer Tencent — also known as the BAT trinity — have invested in a bunch of startups in India, including unicorns (startups worth at least \$1 billion) such as Swiggy, Zomato, Ola, Snapdeal, BigBasket and Byju's among several others.

Of the 30 unicorns in the country, more than half have major investments from Chinese firms. Twelve of these count marquee investors Alibaba and Tencent among their backers.

Simultaneously, hundreds of utilities app were launched on Apple's App Store and Google's Play, and a concerted push from the Chinese companies led to some of these becoming the most popular ones in their respective categories. These included CamScanner, which was used even by senior officials in the Indian government to scan and share documents on their mobile phones. The app was among the 59 banned last week.

Dev Lewis is among those who have witnessed the early days of this Chinese "gold rush" for the Indian digital space. Keenly aware of their own saturated user bases, Chinese companies big and small were eager to harness India's data revolution.

In 2016, with a fresh diploma in Chinese language and literature under his belt, Lewis

had his first job interview in Beijing at a little-known company called NewsDog. NewsDog was one of the forerunners in Chinese apps built exclusively for India.

Now a fellow with Digital Asia Hub, a Yenching scholar at Peking University and researcher of India-China technology relations, Lewis says, "I remember the founder said something on the lines of, 'I know nothing about India, but I know it's the only other market like China. I missed the bus in China; I want to go for India'. It was a new gold rush."

Characterised as ultra-experimentative and iterative, Chinese companies apply the Shenzhen manufacturing model — quick-to-market and quick-to-fix — for its products. ByteDance, which owns TikTok, has been called an "app factory", with at least 21 products since its founding in 2012.

Another Indian, who requested anonymity, recalls her time in 2017 working at ByteDance in Beijing, where she was tasked with looking at international products for the company (the company had no products in India then). In November that year, ByteDance bought another Chinese company, Musical.ly, which had a growing Indian base. In August 2018, it merged the company with TikTok.

"These companies consider themselves global, not Chinese. They believe that whatever success they have in China can be replicated in a lot of other markets," says the product strategist.

Chinese developers working on apps such as TikTok or NewsDog were quick to comprehend India's highly-stratified market with divisions of Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. "The themes of migration from smaller cities to bigger cities, from lower middle class to upper middle class — those are stories the Chinese can relate to." Something worked and TikTok became a household name in India.

Given the app's reach in India, global brands such as PepsiCo and Reckitt Benckiser, which makes Dettol, jumped on to the bandwagon, their video campaigns garnering views in billions on TikTok.

An expanding footprint

The increasing popularity of these apps also prompted the companies running them to invest heavily in their India operations. To begin with, to meet India's data localisation norms, major companies with China links, including Tencent, Alibaba Group and ByteDance announced the setting up of data centres within India.

Last year, ByteDance, which is based in Cayman Islands, announced an investment of \$1 billion in India over a period of three years.

Through all this, there were concerns,

much of those surrounding China's far-reaching Internet laws, which experts interpret to mean that these apps and companies could be forced to give data to their government. They say that both the 2017 National Intelligence Law and the 2014 Counter-Espionage law can be leveraged by the Chinese government to seek data from companies that run out of India and other countries.

Despite these concerns, experts say China's disproportionate presence in India's app economy has allowed the Indian government a bargaining chip, albeit a low-hanging one, in these times of tension.

"This (ban) is just a stopgap measure... to convey that the Chinese should stop what they are doing, otherwise India has levers in other respects," says Arun Mohan Sukumar, who is pursuing a PhD at Tufts University on international rule-making in cyberspace. "Whether they have the Digital Road or the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative), China just can't ignore India. Half the population is still waiting to be connected to the Internet. No matter what our growth prospects, the digital economy will mature."

The bargaining chip may be pure signalling. To be sure, the Chinese-owned MiPay, MiCredit, and RealMe Paysa handle much more sensitive financial data, and have not been touched by this ban. Yet, the ban serves to highlight the growing diplomatic dimension of these digital routes into India.

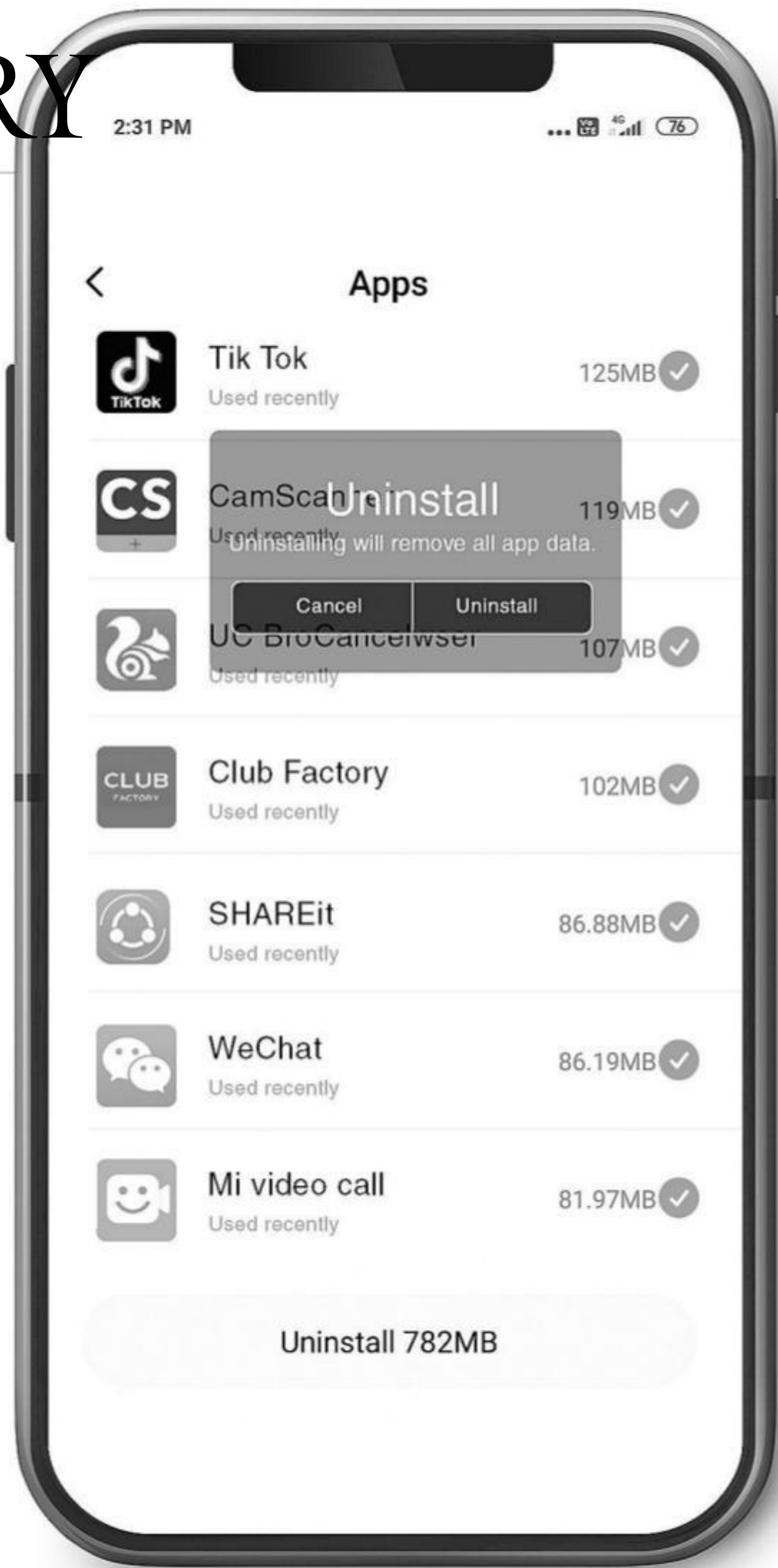
"Data privacy has become the new national security. It's natural that India would view Huawei differently from an Ericsson or a Nokia. Technology is not neutral. When you strip everything down, it's a question of who do you trust more — the Chinese, the Americans, the Europeans," said Lewis, the researcher of India-China technology relations.

While the Indian government has chosen to crack down on Chinese apps for now, the technology space offers plenty of fodder for diplomatic negotiations.

On the heels of the 2017 Doklam incident, the Defence Ministry asked armed forces personnel to uninstall 42 Chinese apps. More recently, Chinese tech company Huawei has been entangled in geopolitical concerns, as other members of the 'Quad' grouping (Japan, Australia, and US) have decided to ban the company from 5G infrastructure. India is yet to follow suit.

Speaking at the 2015 World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, Chinese President Xi Jinping was quoted in *China Daily* as saying, "Cyberspace should not become a battlefield for countries competing against one another."

But now, it seems, a new front has opened. A virtual one.



Across
THE AISLE

PCHIDAMBARAM

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It is depressing that the law concerning personal liberty remains one in theory and another in practice. Mercifully, things are changing. Recently, a Constitution Bench in *Sushila Aggarwal* (January 29, 2020) reaffirmed another Constitution Bench judgment in *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia*, (1980) 2 SCC 565 and courageously overruled eight judgments of the Supreme Court and also declared as “not good law” the view expressed in certain other judgments

IF A person is arrested, he/she must have done wrong. If the person is denied bail, he/she must be guilty. If a person is sent to judicial custody (which is different from police custody), he/she deserved to be punished with imprisonment.

Few pause to reflect that each of the above conclusions is *patently wrong*. It is our callousness towards that inviolable right called ‘liberty’ and our ignorance about how liberty is eroded that lead to a George Floyd moment in Minnesota, US, or a Jayaraj and Bennix moment in Tamil Nadu, India.

Jeyaraj and Bennix’s is not the first case of alleged custodial torture in India. In 1996, two judges of the Supreme Court took up, *suo motu*, letters from one D K Basu of West Bengal and one A K Johri of Uttar Pradesh that alleged frequent instances of custodial torture, and delivered a historic judgment on December 18, 1996 (*D K Basu vs State of West Bengal*, (1997) 1 SCC 436). That judgment has been affirmed many times; yet, sadly, nothing has changed after 24 years.

TOO MANY POLICE

An average person has a touching faith in the State in so far as the State deals with other persons, and is willing to believe that a police officer, a prosecutor, a magistrate, a judge or a doctor will always act lawfully. He/She is wrong. Listen

Rescue liberty from law

to Lord Denning:

“No one can suppose that the executive will never be guilty of the sins that are common to all of us. You may be sure that they will sometimes do things which they ought not to do; and will not do things that they ought to do.”

The seed of custodial torture is sown not *after* the custody, it can be traced to the stages of arrest, denial of bail, allowing police custody, and remanding to judicial custody. At every stage, the law is clear, but its application is often wrong and perverse.

Let’s begin with arrest. In *D K Basu*, the Court pointed out that we have given the power of arrest to many authorities other than the regular police: the CBI, ED, CID, CRPF, BSF, Traffic Police, Income-Tax, etc. Some of them claim they are not ‘police’ and are not bound by the Code of Criminal Procedure! The ED, for example, has asserted it is not obliged to maintain a ‘case diary’. Worse, we have not specified the circumstances when an arrest may be made. The National Police Commission (Third Report) had observed that 60 per cent of all arrests were “unnecessary”. The judges quoted the guidelines recommended in the Report and lamented,

“The recommendations of the Police Commission reflect the constitutional concomitants of the fundamental right to personal liberty and freedom. These recommendations, however, have not acquired any statutory status so far.”

ARREST & REMAND

The first reform is to take away the power of arrest from many authorities. The second is to declare that any authority with the power of arrest is a ‘police’ officer. The third is to severely limit the power of arrest to cases arising in specified circumstances. Remember, Jeyaraj and Bennix were arrested for allegedly keeping their shop open for 15 minutes more than the time allowed in a lockdown!

The second stage is production and remand. A magistrate/district judge will grant police custody without scarcely a thought to the need for such custody. At the end of police custody (maximum of 15 days), the magistrate/district judge will invariably send the arrested person to judicial custody. The law is very different. In *Manubhai Ratilal Patel*, (2013) 1 SCC 314, the Supreme Court said “...the Magistrate can appreciate the factual scenario and apply his mind whether there is a warrant for police custody or justification for judicial remand or there is no need for any remand at all”. Rare is the magistrate/district judge who bears in mind the underlined words.

The third stage is the doctor’s examination of a person arrested or remanded to custody. If Jeyaraj and Bennix had been examined by a doctor, properly, how could they have been given a clean bill of health?

EXCEPTION BECOMES
RULE!

The fourth stage is bail. Few magistrates/district judges will reject the prosecutor’s opposition to bail, at least at the first or second hearing. Every jail is filled with under-investigation or under-trial prisoners when, under the law, they should be on bail. The law was laid down by Krishna Iyer J in *Balchand* (1977) 4 SCC 308. Since then, ‘Bail is the rule, jail is the exception’ has become a hallowed principle. However, few magistrates/district judges apply the rule, they are happy to apply the exception!

In the Jeyaraj and Bennix case, for the alleged petty offence, they should not have been remanded to any custody, police or judicial, and should have been granted bail on production.

It is depressing that the law concerning personal liberty remains one in theory and another in practice. Mercifully, things are changing. Recently, a Constitution Bench in *Sushila Aggarwal* (January 29, 2020) reaffirmed another Constitution Bench judgment in *Gurbaksh Singh Sibbia*, (1980) 2 SCC 565 and courageously overruled eight judgments of the Supreme Court and also declared as “not good law” the view expressed in certain other judgments. To err is human, to correct the error is justice.

There is yet hope for those who find themselves in a situation like Jeyaraj and Bennix did before they died.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen_singh

Nationalism
with a new
nuance

THE WORD nationalism has acquired a rancid, venomous meaning in Narendra Modi’s new India. Instead of meaning love and pride for your country, it has become a weapon to be used against anyone who does not show blind faith in government policies and unquestioning devotion to the Great Leader. Ironically, in this time of serious hostilities with China, the Prime Minister, and the BJP that is now imprinted with his personal stamp, have adopted the Chinese version of nationalism. It is a version that exists in all totalitarian countries but should be considered an abomination in our proud democracy.

The one thing we have that makes us a much, much better country than China is our democracy, so those people who have taken it upon themselves to create this new definition of nationalism are truly India’s biggest enemies. And, it is they who we see on primetime debates banging their strident, jingoistic drums and hurling abuse at anyone who dares question the Prime Minister on any of his policies. Sadly, some of the loudest, noisiest drums are being beaten these days by famous TV anchors. They seem to have forgotten that most fundamental of journalistic principles, which is to speak truth to power.

Modi has had a terrible year. Never in his long political career has he been more in need of people who tell him the truth. If someone had dared tell him the truth when the Shaheen Bagh protests happened, he would have learned that the women who were ready to protest through Delhi’s icy cold winter nights, often with small children in their arms, did so because they were genuinely terrified of losing their right to be Indian citizens. They were not idiots so they knew that it was not the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that was the threat but the way in which it was linked by the Home Minister to the National Register of Citizens (NRC). The Home Minister said menacingly and often that these two things were linked and then used Shaheen Bagh to try and win votes in the Delhi election.

The BJP lost. But, the poison that was spread in the name of nationalism and anti-nationalism had no antidote by then and Delhi saw Hindu-Muslim riots for the first time in decades. These happened even as the Prime Minister and his high officials were entertaining Donald Trump in Rashtrapati Bhavan. The media contingent that travelled with the American President came from the world’s oldest democracy and saw where the story was. They lost interest in the State visit and concentrated on the riots that killed more than 50 people.

When the violence ended, Covid-19 arrived. By then the poison of communal hatred had seeped into the political fabric of Delhi. So, senior BJP leaders tried to blame Muslims for spreading the virus. Rumours spread across the country that Muslims hated India so much that when they were taken from the Tablighi Jamaat conclave to hospitals to be tested, they spat at nurses and doctors in an attempt to spread the disease. A speech by the head of this Islamic group played repeatedly on news channels in which he was heard urging Muslims to continue praying in mosques because what better place to die than while at prayer. Speaking of which, where is Maulana Saad? How is it that so many months on he still manages to hide from justice?

When it became clear that the Chinese virus was spreading well beyond the borders of Delhi the Prime Minister responded with what is now acknowledged as the strictest lockdown in the world. It happened at four hours’ notice, and none of his close advisors appears to have noticed that when migrant workers lost their jobs in the cities they would be forced to flee to their rural homes. When Barkha Dutt walked with them on national highways to bring their stories to us, she was called a traitor many, many times on social media by people whose handles announce their political loyalties.

The lockdowns have not done much more than slow down the spread of Covid-19 but people in the Prime Minister’s inner circle are telling him that if it were not for him there would have been corpses piled high in the streets of our cities. If the media were doing its job, he would be told instead that the virus is going to stay for a while and that if we do not deal with our huge economic problems people will be dying from hunger and not disease.

It is in this terrible time that the Chinese have chosen to make incursions into our territory in the Galwan Valley. The brutal massacre of 20 Indian soldiers will go down in military history as one of the most barbaric acts of war ever. The Chinese are still on our territory and they are showing every sign of making permanent bases in the Galwan Valley. It was good to see the Prime Minister visiting troops in Ladakh last week but what he needs now more than ever are real nationalists around him. People who dare to tell him the truth about how he can lead India in this year in which his leadership is being so tested. Real patriots and nationalists are those who speak truth to power in the fullest sense of that term. Modi needs them today more than ever.

inside
TRACK

COOMIKAPOOR



CABINET CARPENTRY?

AT A meeting last week in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met senior RSS functionaries Dattatreya Hosabale and Krishna Gopal as well as BJP president J P Nadda and general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh. However, none of Modi’s ministers were present. The meeting has fuelled speculation that a Cabinet reshuffle is on the cards by August. There are conflicting views as to the likely changes, if the move fructifies. Some believe that only middle-rank portfolios will be switched since the PM wants certain politicians replaced by domain experts and those with technical know-how. The entry of former Congress stalwart Jyotiraditya Scindia looks near certain. However, the buzz in some quarters is that even a senior ministerial portfolio could see a change.

JOINT OPERATION

Indian Intelligence agencies believe that Pakistan and China are acting in tandem. Additional Pakistani troops have been moved closer to the LoC in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir sector as well as near the Punjab and Jammu borders. The Chinese People’s Liberation Army, which was very active from May 1 to May 18, has massed troops at 18 locations near the LAC. In seven locations in Ladakh they had crossed the border, and of these, in five positions they moved 3 to 4 km inwards. The Chinese forward movement was accompanied by the building of huts, bunkers and roads. Since then there has been some pull-back of Chinese forces.

BYPASSING CHIEF

GENERAL BIPIN Rawat became the first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in January this year. But since the post is newly created, the profile and duties of the CDS on a daily basis are still unclear. It is learnt that sometimes Chief of Army Staff General M M Naravane is taken back when General Rawat talks directly to Army officers on defence matters, going over his head.

WAITING IN WINGS

Attorney General K K Venugopal, 89, was keen to step down after his three-year tenure ended earlier this year, due to his advanced age. But, he was persuaded to accept a year’s extension. The government is

in talks with senior counsel Harish Salve, currently based in London, to eventually take over the AG’s post. Salve has impressed Prime Minister Modi after his legal victory on Kulbhushan Jadhav at the International Court of Justice. He charged a token fee of one rupee for the complex case. Salve has requested a grace period of eight months to decide on the offer, as he has some personal work to tie up first.

CUP AND LIP SLIP

The Congress believed it had sewn up the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Manipur, and would also succeed in toppling BJP Chief Minister N Biren Singh, since it had persuaded a few disgruntled former Congress MLAs who has switched to the BJP to return to its fold. But there is many a slip between the cup and the lip. Thanks to some deft moves by Assam Deputy Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Biren Singh survived, at least temporarily. The Congress was so flat-footed that it sent Ajay Maken and Gaurav Gogoi as election observers for the Rajya Sabha poll without first finding out the quarantine rules in Manipur. When the observers landed in the state, they were sent into quarantine since they had failed to book return tickets for the same day. The Congress also did not reckon that blood is thicker than water. Though Congress MLA Imo Singh is from an old Congress family, he is the chief minister’s son-in-law and took full advantage of the relationship. Imo Singh jumped ship as did several other turncoats. The BJP may have won this round, but the question is how much longer Sarma will remain content to play second fiddle to CM Sarbananda Sonowal in Assam, considering he is the BJP’s master strategist for the entire Northeast.

VETERAN’S VICTORY

When the 77-year-old Lingayat leader B S Yediyurappa was appointed Chief Minister of Karnataka it was presumed it was a stop-gap arrangement and the real power in the state would lie with BJP General Secretary (Organisation) B L Santhosh, who would eventually succeed him. But BSY’s masterful handling of the Covid pandemic in Karnataka has silenced his critics. Even though Bengaluru is the third largest city in India, its Covid-19 figures and death rate are lower than all other metropolises such as Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Ahmedabad. The experienced BSY enlisted the cooperation of the Opposition and the minorities, in the all-out war against the disease. The CM heeded the advice of medical experts and senior bureaucrats. Santhosh may have had his way in selecting non-entities as BJP candidates for the three Rajya Sabha seats, but BSY remains boss of Karnataka. An impressed Amit Shah consulted the Karnataka CM for advice on how to tackle the pandemic in the National Capital Region.

History
HEADLINE

AMRITH LAL

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THE MALABAR rebellion, also called Mappila revolt, continues to be a contested and polarising event nearly a hundred years after it took place. It has now grabbed the headlines after a film project on one of the rebel leaders, Variyankunnathu Kunjahammed Haji, was announced. One right-wing group in Kerala has announced that it will contest the attempts to “glorify” Haji and the revolt with a year-long campaign “to expose the atrocities committed on Hindus” during the rebellion. Three more films are reportedly in the works — the upcoming centenary of the rebellion is sure to offer political and commercial opportunities.

The rebellion was a remarkable event that saw people in southern Malabar, predominantly Muslims, wage an armed struggle against the British for nearly six months beginning August 1921. In sociologist D N Dhanagare’s words, “gross neglect of the basic tenorial security, the deterioration of landlord-tenant relations and the political alienation of the poor peasantry were the important formative conditions” of the rebellion. According to Dhanagare, three different political movements merged to trigger the rebellion — one of these, the tenancy movement, was rooted in local agrarian grievances (particularly in south Malabar); the other two were the Khilafat (Caliphate) movement and the Non-Cooperation movement, launched jointly by the All-India Khilafat Committee and the Indian National Congress. The talukas where the Khilafat agitation turned violent, had a significant presence of Muslims, who nursed political, administrative, economic and religious grievances against the British — Malabar had witnessed over three dozen Muslim peasant revolts against the British and landlords in the 19th century. The tenancy movement in the 1910s had foregrounded the agrarian issues that affected the peasants, many of them Muslims, causing unease among the landlords, most of them upper caste Hindus, and the colonial administration.

However, the turning point was the visit of Maulana Shaukat Ali and Mahatma Gandhi to Malabar in August 1920, which attracted Muslims in large numbers to join the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements. By February 1921, the British authorities started to ban Khilafat meetings and even arrested senior Congress-Khilafat leaders. The crackdown transformed the character of the movement and influenced local leaders and cadres, whose notions of justice was shaped by religious values and memories of past resistance to the colonial forces, to resist the British forces with arms.

The rebellion started on August 20 when

Don’t strip Malabar
rebellion off its layers

The rebels captured after a battle with British troops. Wikimedia Commons

the army and police raided the Tirurangadi mosque, an important religious centre headed by Ali Musaliyar, who soon emerged as a leader of the rebels. Attempts by senior Congress-Khilafat leaders such as Muhammed Abdurahman Saheb, Moidu Moulavi, KM Moulavi, MP Narayana Menon and K Madhavan Nair to pacify the rebels failed. Following the Tirurangadi incident, Khilafat workers mobilised across the region. They were targeted by the army, which triggered more mobilisations and violence. The rebels targeted public officials and buildings, and those who collaborated with the administration. The rebels initially forced the British administration to flee from the region, but army and police returned with reinforcements to put down the rebels.

The anarchy that followed the collapse of administrative and leadership structures was exploited by rabid and criminal elements among the rebels to further sectarian and communal agendas, including destruction of property, killings and forced conversions of Hindus.

The religious edge in the Khilafat agitation — Khilafat movement demanded the restoration of the Turkish Caliphate, which was for many Muslims both a temporal and spiritual institution — had turned many Hindus lukewarm to the rebellion, and later, when the rabid voices gained prominence, to side with the British administration, which furthered the communal divide. Scholar M Gangadharan has argued that many rebels harboured the suspicion that Hindus, including Congress workers, could be sympathetic to the British and whenever the rebels turned into mobs took to violence against non-Muslims. However, Gangadharan, historian KN Panikkar and others point out that the top rebel leaders including Ali Musaliyar and Variyankunnathu Kunja-

ammed Haji discouraged and opposed forcible conversions and looting and destruction of property belonging to non-Muslims. R H Hitchcock, the police official who led the British forces against the rebels, was to write that neither was the rebellion brought about only by Muslims nor all Muslims were supportive of the rebels.

The British authorities put down the rebellion in the most brutal manner — official estimate is 2,337 rebels killed, 1,652 wounded and no less than 45,000 taken as prisoners. Sumit Sarkar in *Modern India* quotes an Arya Samaj source that claimed about 600 Hindus were killed and 2,500 forcibly converted during the rebellion. Unofficial estimates say that nearly 10,000 rebels were killed and thousands of their family members and relatives deported to the Andamans. Police brutality in Malabar was most visible in the Wagon Tragedy incident (November 1921), in which 67 prisoners died of suffocation after they were forced to travel in a closed railway carriage.

There were few gains from the rebellion whereas it adversely affected Hindu-Muslim unity in Malabar and beyond, and reinforced the stereotype of the Muslim as a religious fanatic that British administrators, who wrote about the Mappila agrarian revolts of the 19th century, had created.

The Malabar rebellion is a layered story with multiple strands that defy simplistic narrations. Erasing any of these strands or experiences — the anti-colonial impulse, religious content, agrarian moorings, police brutality — would result in an incomplete, lopsided picture of the event with potential for dangerous interpretations in our fraught present. Surely, uncritical valorisation of the rebellion or spinning a singular Hindu victimhood narrative cannot do justice to the complex tragedy that the rebellion was.

Out of
MY MIND

MEGHNAD DESAI



WHEN THE English Ambassador George McCartney went to Beijing in 1793 to pay respect to the Chinese Emperor, he was at pains to deny that he had ‘kowitzed’. He had gone because Great Britain had a trade deficit with China. The British wanted Chinese tea but had nothing to offer in return. The Chinese did not fancy English woollens.

But parts of India had come under British control and soon Indian opium was going to China to pay for tea. When the Chinese wanted to ban opium imports,

Whose Asian century? Clearly, China’s

the British launched the Opium Wars. After 1840, China had to give way to western powers.

Asia, especially Iran, India and China, had been the dominant rich economies till 1750. After the naval adventures of Columbus and Vasco da Gama, the Europeans first concentrated on American continent. But then, half a millennium later, it was Asia’s turn. The European World Order was constructed in 1815 after the Battle of Waterloo. First Britain and then America ruled the world. The Anglo American consortium won the battle for European hegemony in two World Wars and then the Cold War by 1991.

It has been said for sometime that the

twenty-first century will be Asia’s, but no one knew which Asia. In Europe, it was Western Europe plus North America. Now it is quite clear that it is East Asia and more particularly China which will denote Asia.

China has been preparing for this moment for decades. Mao wasted 30 years after the Revolution in his fantasy economic experiments costing 30 to 40 million lives. But then came Deng Xiaoping. Indeed he was always there biding his time. Even now the Chinese worship Mao not Deng. Deng did not seek permanent office. After retirement, he continued to work as Secretary of the Bridge Club of senior comrades in the Zhongnanhai. He abandoned his core beliefs in socialist economics and

transformed China by a singular application of the Capitalist model adapted to China. China’s transformation within the 30 years following 1978 has been the fastest of any economy anywhere. Deng has to be one of the Greats of the Twentieth Century.

More than the economy was his subtle way with foreign policy. He signed the UK-China Treaty on Hong Kong playing a softly softly strategy, agreeing to One Country Two Systems. He had learnt from Chinese history that as England had done in McCartney’s days, pretend to bow while waiting for your turn to strike. The British left for it. Of course, they already knew that they were no longer the top

power but just a client of the US.

Xi Jinping has now followed Deng’s rulebook. He has unilaterally broken the Treaty. The Hong Kong Treaty was like Article 370. It was designed for international display. Now that the time has come, China has torn it up. The timing is important not just because China is more powerful. The Western Alliance has fallen apart. The battle for European hegemony was over in 1991, with the collapse of the USSR. Trump has shown that America is no longer interested. The UK has Brexit. Xi knows that the US will not fight the UK’s battles, nor will the UK, whatever protest it mounts.

The Asian Era is here, like it or not.

10 ECONOMY

CRUDE WATCH

OIL FALLS BELOW \$43 ON VIRUS FEARS

London: Oil fell below \$43 a barrel on Friday as a resurgence of coronavirus cases raised concern that fuel demand growth could stall, although crude was still headed for a weekly gain on lower supply and wider signs of economic recovery. **REUTERS**

FOUR MONTHS LEFT FOR DEADLINE

Banks sanction 36.7% of govt's MSME package, lag in disbursements

Private lenders disburse ₹13 lakh per customer, public sector banks ₹2.65 lakh

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, JULY 4

WITH FOUR more months left for the deadline, banks have sanctioned 36.7 per cent of the targeted Rs 3 lakh crore under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) scheme for stressed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as per Finance Ministry data.

As per the scheme, banks can lend Rs 3 lakh crore till October 31, 2020, of which Rs 1.10 lakh crore has already been already sanctioned by banks to 34.69 lakh borrowers till July 1, according to official data. However, disbursements lag at 47 per cent of the sanctions at Rs 52,255 crore to 14.03 lakh borrowers as of July 1. This works out to 17.41 per cent of the Rs 3 lakh crore target.

After a slow start, private banks are slowly catching up by sanctioning Rs 47,108 crore to

MAHARASHTRA GETS MAXIMUM LOANS FROM PSBs

■ Private banks have disbursed Rs 18,906 crore under the package to 1.45 lakh borrowers as on July 1, according to official data
■ Of total sanctions of Rs 110,343 crore, public sector banks sanctioned Rs 63,234 crore to 12.58 lakh borrowers. However, average disbursement per

borrower by private banks was Rs 13.07 lakh while PSU banks disbursed an average of Rs 2.65 lakh per borrower
■ Among states, Maharashtra got the maximum loans from PSU banks with 2.62 lakh borrowers getting sanction letters for Rs 6,578 crore loans

4.19 lakh borrowers under the package. The current pattern of loan disbursements indicates that private banks are opting for bigger loans of around Rs 13 lakh per borrower, while public sector banks prefer small loans in the range of Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 3.50 lakh per customer.

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Of the total sanctions of Rs 1,10,343 crore, public sector banks sanctioned Rs 63,234 crore to 12.58 lakh borrowers. However, average disbursement per borrower by private banks was Rs 13.07 lakh, while PSU banks disbursed an average of Rs 2.65 lakh per borrower.

Among states, Maharashtra received the maximum loans from PSU banks, with 2.62 lakh borrowers getting sanction let-

ters for Rs 6,578 crore loans. Of this, Rs 3,310 crore has been disbursed to 94,377 borrowers so far. In Tamil Nadu, MSME loans worth Rs 6,390 crore have been sanctioned to 3.21 lakh borrowers while 1.26 lakh customers got Rs 3,695 crore disbursements so far. In Uttar Pradesh, total sanctions were Rs 6,001 crore and disbursements at Rs 3,259 crore.

State Bank of India (SBI) has sanctioned loans worth Rs 20,281 crore and disbursed Rs 12,885 crore. Canara Bank sanctioned Rs 8,237 crore and disbursed Rs 4,342 crore. Though the government has given guarantees on repayment, private banks initially had a lacklustre start.

Kotak Mahindra Bank Vice-Chairman and MD Uday Kotak recently admitted that private banks have started a little slow, but assured that in the next few weeks there would be significant flow of credit from private sector banks under the scheme — both in terms of loans sanc-

tioned and disbursed.

Many private banks were pushing for relaxation in the eligibility conditions for the government's MSME package in view of the revision in turnover limit for MSMEs from Rs 100 crore to Rs 250 crore. Bankers and industry bodies have already taken up the issue with the government.

SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar said the new definition of MSMEs, which included both turnover and investment limits, has made things simpler and will lead to improved flow of credit to the sector. "SBI is the largest lender to the sector and is increasingly utilising digital technology platforms to enable hassle free credit flow to the MSME industries," Kumar said while addressing the MSME meet organized by the CII.

Under the scheme, 100 per cent guarantee coverage will be provided by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGC).

INTERVIEW WITH ZYDUS CADILA CHAIRMAN

'Initially, there were a lot of challenges ... but everyone rallied and the govt was very proactive'

WHILE SEVERAL manufacturing industries were subjected to the nationwide lockdown announced in March, pharmaceutical firms had to keep operations going as their goods were considered essential. Zyklus Cadila chairman PANKAJ R PATEL, in an interview to PRABHA RAGHAVAN, explains how the Ahmedabad-headquartered drugmaker overcame supply chain challenges during the lockdown and tried to keep the pandemic from entering the workplace. Edited excerpts:

What challenges to operations and personnel did Zyklus Cadila face during the nationwide lockdown?

From day one, we've been working very diligently to make sure the right precautions are being taken. Being (part of the) pharmaceuticals industry, we cannot stop (operations) because medicines are required and have to be produced. While there was a problem — there was a lockdown — there were challenges for transportation, challenges of the (spread of the virus during the outbreak), how do you protect your people? That was the biggest worry we had.

We provided them with masks, we provided them with protective (equipment), we measured their temperatures. These are standard (practices).

But, what we did more was, where they were working, we created compartments so that they can't actually come in contact with each other. We tried to segregate (our workers) — only 50 per cent coming to work and not 100 per cent. (Even our) canteens were (arranged) the same way. So, (we've) tried to avoid physical contact as much as possible.

If somebody was not coming

UNLOCKING THE ECONOMY WISHLIST & ROADMAP AN EXPRESS INTERVIEW SERIES



PANKAJ R PATEL
CHAIRMAN, ZYKUS CADILA

to work, we also traced them and continued doing the tracing. Suppose somebody not coming now has got COVID because his wife got COVID or his neighbour got COVID and he contracted (it from them). The moment we know anybody in our company is in close contact (with them), we isolate them and put them into quarantine. We keep on doing this and, through that, ensure that the pandemic doesn't come into the workplace.

During the initial phases of the lockdown, we'd learnt that pharma operations across the industry had been disrupted, especially movement of essential goods across state borders. Did you face these issues and how did you adapt?

I remember. You know, (like) with hydroxychloroquine tablets ... we were the manufacturers. Everything was locked up and nothing was moving, and our production was being done at Sikkim. Then, it had to be sup-

plied, so what to do?

We had to charter a flight to get this (supply to the destination). So, goods which would have a selling price of roughly Rs 35 lakh, we had to airlift for (nearly that amount) to supply. We did all that. That was important (to do), because, in pharma, we believe that supply is most important and that risk is a consequence of business. So, we were using air chartering, to make (supply of our medicines) happen.

And, gradually, exemptions were granted for pharmaceutical goods to move around... One of the good things is that our supply chain is very well set up. Typically, every pharma company would have a depot in every... state, and each depot would have at least 30-40 days stock. So, those first 30-40 days, there was stock (of medicines) lying at the state level and intra-state movement was not a problem.

That is why one could supply. By that time (at the end of the first 30 days), inter-state permits were given and (supply) could be replenished.

Initially, there were a lot of challenges... but I think everybody rallied and the government was very proactive. They had formed a special group in the government whom we could always go and tell (about problems) and get it resolved. This was happening every-day ... supply chain (issues) were discussed at the highest level in the government also to make sure that pharmaceutical goods shortages didn't happen.

With restrictions slowly easing, what is the outlook for your operations going forward?

Currently, our plants are operating at 80 per cent (capacity) ... and production is almost normal.

BRIEFLY

Air France and sister airline to cut 7,580 jobs

Nantes: Air France confirmed plans to cut some 7,500 jobs including 1,000 at sister airline HOP! on Friday, as staff protested over its response to the collapse in travel due to the coronavirus pandemic. The French flag carrier, part of Franco-Dutch group Air France-KLM, said it had lost 15 million euros a day during the worst part of the crisis.

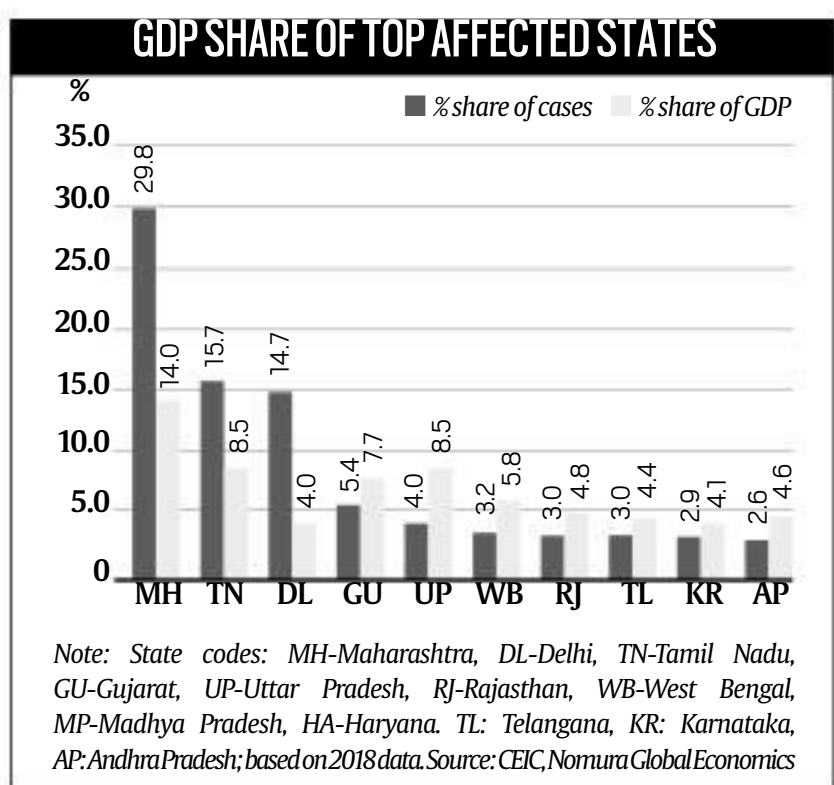
China regulator names and shames truants

Shanghai: Chinese regulators adopted shock and awe tactics Saturday to target misbehaving shareholders of banks and insurers by naming and shaming 38 corporate investors for having "gravely" violated rules in their first such exercise.

US apparel company files for bankruptcy

Bengaluru: Apparel company Lucky Brand Dungarees is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, it said on Friday, becoming the latest retailer to fall victim to the pandemic. **REUTERS**

'Rebound in economy based on pent-up demand, consumption plateauing as COVID-19 cases rise'



ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE PICK-UP in economic activity after the easing of lockdown is now looking to be shortlived, with indicators including workplace mobility trends and business resumption indices plateauing and remaining below the pre-pandemic levels after mid-June. Amid rising COVID-19 cases across the country, the pickup seems to have been driven by the pent-up demand, raising concerns of excess supplies after this phase, which is then likely to result in a lower-than-expected growth in the second half of 2020-21 financial year.

The worst-affected states — Maharashtra, Delhi, Tamil Nadu — accounting for 60 per cent of

the cases have the lowest levels of workplace mobility, Japanese financial research firm Nomura said in a report. The economic uncertainty is arising as the top 12 worst-affected states, which comprise approximately 84 per cent of the pandemic cases, account for about 66 per cent of the country's GDP, it said.

"The recent evidence that mobility has started to plateau after the initial acceleration — whether due to public or private reasons — amid a rising number of COVID-19 cases nationally, suggests a rising risk that, after an initial burst, activity may start to stabilise at a level that is still substantially below pre-pandemic levels. Indeed, at the regional level, flattening appears to be taking place across most states... if consumers remain cautious, as

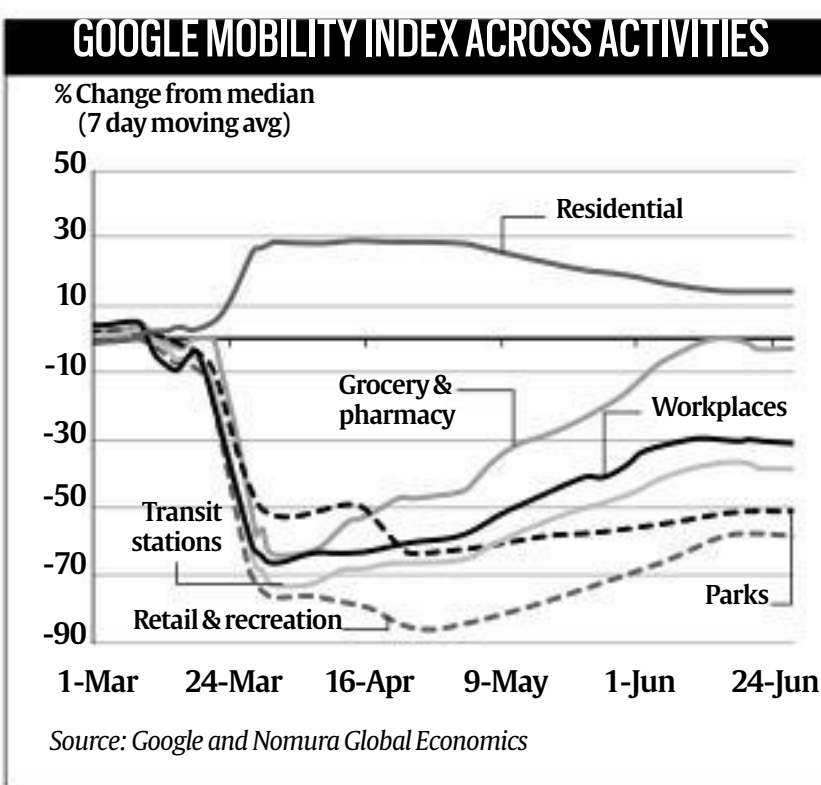
reflected in the mobility curve, while the supply-side continues to catch up, then the risk is that firms could become saddled with excess inventories after the initial pent-up demand phase, leading to lower-than-expected growth in H2 FY21," Nomura said in its report.

Google's workplace mobility index rose by 37 percentage points by mid-June from April (on a 7-day moving average basis) but since mid-June, the mobility curve has plateaued, with the workplace mobility index worsening by nearly 2 percentage points, despite the continued relaxation of measures under Unlock 1.0.

Restricted activity could be the consequence of public intervention in the form of recurring lockdown restrictions imposed at local levels or privately driven

with individuals making a conscious decision to practice social distancing due to the alarming rise in infections, it said. The incremental tightening of lockdown measures at local level may also be one of the reasons behind the plateau in the mobility curve.

The pace of India's recovery out of the pandemic will be determined by how quickly activity normalises across states, Nomura said. It expects India's GDP growth in April-June to plummet to -15.2 per cent from 3.1 per cent, which is then expected to remain in the negative territory for the next three quarters (-5.6 per cent in July-September, -2.8 per cent in October-December and -1.4 per cent in January-March next year, averaging -6.1 per cent in FY21).



ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JULY 4

AHEAD OF the first instalment payment deadline on July 7, the income tax department has brought in changes to the challan for paying the equalisation levy by expanding its scope to include non-resident e-commerce players supplying goods or services online.

The move comes after the United States Trade Representative (USTR) last month initiated investigations into taxes adopted or under consideration by 10 nations, including India, on revenues of US digital service companies like Netflix, Airbnb, Uber, LinkedIn and Spotify, and companies were seeking further clarification.

India — in amendments to the Finance Act, 2020 in March-end — had expanded the ambit of the equalisation levy for non-resident e-commerce operators involved in supply of services, including online sale of goods and provision of services, with the levy at the rate

Equalisation levy at 6% has been in force since 2016 on payment exceeding ₹1 lakh a year to a non-resident service provider for online advertisements

of 2 per cent effective April 1, 2020.

Equalisation levy at 6 per cent has been in force since 2016 on payment exceeding Rs 1 lakh a year to a non-resident service provider for online advertisements. This is now applicable for e-commerce companies that are sourcing revenue from Indian customers without having tangible presence here in the country.

The income tax department has modified challan ITNS 285 (relating to payment of equalisation levy) to enable payment of the first instalment by non-resident e-commerce operators. The amended challan now adds "e-

commerce operator for e-commerce supply or services" under 'Type of Deductor'. The challan also seeks mandatory PAN of the deductor. Further, it provides for 'Outside India' option while seeking address details.

Nangia Andersen LLP partner Sandeep Jhunjhunwala said along with this modification in the payment challan, the Central Board of Direct Taxes has cleared the clouds on requirement of PAN by making it a mandatory tab in the challan. "This has rather imposed a burdensome and challenging task for non-resident e-commerce players to apply for and obtain Permanent Account Number within one business day in the midst of curbs, lockdown and pandemic affected business life and also organize the mode of payment through an Indian bank account or debit card issued by an Indian bank," he said.

Non-resident digital companies were waiting for a detailed FAQ to get clarity on issues surrounding the equalisation levy.

No international flights till July 31: Why has DGCA extended ban?

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE DIRECTORATE General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday extended the ban on international flights from July 15 earlier to July 31, further elongating the period after which scheduled international passenger flights could operate normally.

Why did the DGCA extend the ban?

According to senior government officials, the ban was extended on account of a sense that it will take some more time for India to prepare before it can resume scheduled international operations.

The resumption of international flights depends mainly on the destination country allowing Indian citizens into its borders or removing travel restrictions that they put in place over the last few months in light of the pandemic.

As per officials, the ban was extended on account of a sense that it will take some more time for India to prepare before it can resume scheduled foreign operations

Have any countries relaxed restrictions for Indians?

Contrarily, as some jurisdictions are opening up their borders for travel, they have left out some major countries including India, the US, Brazil, where the COVID-19 spread is still on a rise. A group of 27

European Union countries agreed on an initial "safe list" of 14 countries earlier this week, and travellers from countries in the safe list will be allowed to travel for non-essential purposes. This list is set to be reviewed every two weeks.

Additionally, the UK government has also established travel corridors with 59 jurisdictions, from where passengers will be allowed to enter the UK July 10 onwards without having to self-isolate them, unless they travelled to a country not mentioned in the list in the preceding 14 days of their arrival. The UK's safe list also does not include India.

Is India planning to establish travel corridors?

On Thursday, Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Arvind Singh had told reporters that India was in advanced stages of discussions to establish individual travel bubbles with the US, Canada and several European countries.

On these lines, US-based United Airlines has announced flights on Delhi-Newark route on July 10, July 12 and July 15 to carry passengers from India to the US.

While the airline will ferry passengers from India to the US, it has not been permitted to fly passengers from the US to India.

End of runway for 747 jumbo as Boeing placed final part orders

REUTERS
SEATTLE, JULY 4

BOEING CO and suppliers set the final number of parts it would need for the 747 jumbo jet programme at least a year ago, signalling the end for a plane that democratized global air travel in the 1970s but fell behind modern twin-engine aircraft, industry sources said on Friday. Boeing's "Queen of the Skies", the world's most easily recognized jetliner with its humped fuselage and four engines, marked its 50-year flying anniversary in February 2019, clinging to life thanks to a cargo market boom fuelled by online shopping.

But the end for the program has been hanging in the air for years amid falling orders and pricing pressure. The coronavirus pandemic has also crushed passenger travel and demand for new jets.

The last order for a passenger version came in 2017, when the US government asked Boeing to repurpose two 747-8 jetliners for use as Air Force One by the US president. Boeing declined to confirm that it was pulling the plug on the



A Lufthansa Boeing 747 at aircraft storage and recycling company Tarmac Aerosave in Tarbes, France. *Reuters file*

747 program, first reported by Bloomberg News on Thursday. "At a build rate of 0.5 airplanes per month, the 747-8 program has more than two years of production ahead of it in order to fulfill our current customer commitments," a Boeing spokesman said.

"We will continue to make the right decisions to keep the production line healthy and meet customer needs," he added.

The end of the 747 would follow Airbus SE's phasing out of its A380 jumbo jet. In June, the last

convoy of outside parts for the world's largest airliner crawled towards an assembly plant in south-west France.

The death of the 747 program could also mean charges and lay-offs for halting production at the mammoth wide-body plant outside Seattle. It could also have financial implications on newer programs such as the 787 Dreamliner and the latest model of 777, which would have to bear a larger share of the plant's huge overhead if the 747 line went dark.

Govt considers replacing multimodal transportation act with national logistics law

PRESSTRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

THE COMMERCE ministry is considering to replace the multimodal transportation of goods act with a full fledged national logistics law with a view to promote growth of the sector, a senior government official said on Saturday.

Special Secretary in the logistics division of the ministry, Pawan Agarwal, said a National Logistics Efficiency and Advancement (NLEAPS) is under consideration and this law tends to define various participants of the logistics space and create a light regulatory ecosystem.

"What the logistics sector is all about is not very clear to us as of now and in that direction, we need to clearly define what the logistics sector is and what are the various elements in it. In this direction, there is a thinking and I am just sharing that thinking that the earlier legislation multimodal transportation of goods act... We are considering to replace it with a full-

WHAT IS MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION?

■ Multimodal transportation includes a combination of more than one mode of movement, such as rail, road or sea, for end-to-end delivery of goods.

fledged national logistics law." NLEAPS is under consideration, he said at a webinar organised by industry chamber PHDCCI.

Multimodal transportation includes a combination of more than one mode of movement, such as rail, road or sea, for end-to-end delivery of goods.

The Special Secretary sought views of the industry on the new law.

He said the logistics division is also working on how to modernise and formalise the logistics services and promoting digitisation in the sector, which is key for the smooth movement of goods.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

eye



SPOTLIGHT

Strawberry Fields Forever

Fifty years after they split, the Beatles remain the original rockstars



BOOKS

● Review of Shantanu Datta's *Calling Elvis*

● How to Talk to Your Child About Death: Children's writer Anita Roy on her new book about an ecological catastrophe



MOUSUMI MANDAL/PICTURE COURTESY: SAHAPEDIA

THE GATHERING STORM

What a centuries-old folk theatre form unique to the Sundarbans tells us about human fragility, survival and surrender in the tide country

Dipanita Nath

HOW DOES a goddess defeat a storm? When Amphan swept through the Sundarbans on May 20, theatre actor Anita Mondal, who lives in Annpur, a remote village on the islands, crawled under a *charpai* with her husband and children. "Even if the walls fell, we would live if we hid under the bed," she says over the phone, a month later. Clutching a bag of precious belongings, she heard the wind tear down huge siris trees and coconut palms, and blow away the thatched roof of their house. As the ground began to tremble, they grabbed the legs of the *charpai* to keep it from flying away.

As the storm raged, Mondal was praying for help from the protagonist she plays on stage on calmer days — Bon Bibi, the deity of the forest and the central character of *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan*, a musical drama unique to the Sundarbans. "We do not have a roof but I feel blessed. Bon Bibi saved our lives," she says.

The Sundarbans boasts of almost 30 troupes that perform *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan* in various islands through the year. Traditionally, the performances are held near Bon Bibi temples or villages bordering the forests, in the light of solar lamps and bulbs powered by generators. Mondal has essayed the role of the goddess for 20 years now, which means something in the Sundarbans, where the audience comprise people who go into the mangroves to collect honey, prawns, fish or crabs every day. They see the play as a part of their daily life, for it is by the grace of Bon Bibi that they believe they survive in tiger country.

Like everything else in the Sundarbans, Amphan has ravaged through the art form and its practitioners. The pink sari that Mondal's Bon Bibi used to wear on stage has been wrapped in a plastic packet and put away. The spaces where the *palagaan* used to be played are now sites of destruction. The island has not had a single performance for more than three months, the longest in recent memory. Its poetry lies submerged in brackish water. "I have no work so I am sitting at home. The only time I go out is to get *traan* (relief)," says Uttam Barik, a rickshaw-puller from Gosaba, one of the main islands of the Sundarbans, and a third-generation performer.



In the largest continuous mangrove forest in the world, humans reside a short distance from a thriving population of crocodiles, snakes, sharks and man-eating Royal

Bengal Tigers. Many of them depend on the forest for their livelihood as fishermen, crab-collectors and gatherers of the thick and strong honey that grows in combs on the hetal, gorjon, goran and sundari mangrove trees.

The people of Sundarbans believe that you can enter the forest anytime you like. Whether you will leave it depends on Bon Bibi. Last month, alone, one man went out to get firewood from the forest and another to fish. Tigers took them both. Hence, the 54 inhabited islands of the 102 deltaic islands of the Sundarbans are studded with temples to Bon Bibi and her twin brother, Shah Jongoli.

Legend has it that Bon Bibi was born far away in Saudi Arabia. Her father was Fakir Ibrahim, who lived in Medina, and her mother was Gulal, a woman from Mecca. "Bon Bibi realises that they have been sent to earth to fulfil a divine purpose and must leave Medina and that is how she reached the Sundarbans," says Kanaail Sarkar, 66, author of *History of Sundarbans* (2011), who was born in Lahripur, a village in Gosaba.

The *palagaan* recounts her birth and the story of Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli's triumph over the fierce Dokkhin Rai and his mother Narayani, who represent tigers. It is the third part of the story, *Dukhey Jatra*, which is most performed in the Sundarbans. "In the play, we are a group of honey-gatherers who go to the forest with a little boy called Dukhey. His mother wants him to stay home but cannot afford to feed him as they are desperately poor. When you have nothing to eat, you have no choice but to go to the forest to work, just like us. Unfortunately, Dukhey does not return from the forest. The honey-gatherers tell his mother that he has been taken by a tiger and will never return to her lap again," says Barik. In the forest, the child calls out to the goddess for protection. Bon Bibi rescues Dukhey and restores him to his mother.

"When I visited the Sundarbans in 2014 for research, I stayed in several remote villages of Gosaba. Something fundamental about the people, especially those who were very poor, was that they identified themselves with Dukhey and thought of themselves as Bon Bibi's children," says Amrita Sen, assistant professor in the department of humanities and social sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur.

In one of the most ecologically fragile regions of the world, a strict code, tied to the belief in Bon Bibi, governs human acquisition. The islanders believe that one must enter her kingdom without carrying any weapons. "...the islanders often explained that Bonbib (sic) had left them the injunctions that they were to enter the forest only with a pure heart/mind' (*pobitro mon*) and 'empty hands'



POULOMI DAS/PICTURE COURTESY: SAHAPEDIA

THE FARTHEST SHORES

(Above) A performance of the *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan*, people of the Sundarbans live in close proximity to tigers, crocodiles, snakes and sharks

(*khali haathe*). The islanders explained that they had to identify completely with Dukhe, whose unflinching belief in Bonbib had saved him," writes anthropologist Annu Jalais in *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarbans* (2010).

"You must also not take more than you need," adds Sen. You may enter only if you have nothing to eat at home and have to seek your livelihood in the forest. You must not defecate in the forest, smoke *beedi* or wash utensils. "I never carried any weapons when I went into the forest to fish or catch crabs. Bon Bibi would be angry if I did. She is the one who protects me in the forest," says Sanjit Mondol from Pakhiralay, a village on Gosaba island. What if he were attacked? "When a tiger chooses you, there is nothing to do anyway," he says.

Sanjit is a regular member of the audience of *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan*, whose story can be found in a 19th-century text called *Bon Bibi Johuranama* (*The Chronicles of Bon Bibi's Glory*). "It is difficult to confirm whether the performative text of the *palagaan* precedes the printed *johuranamas* or vice versa," writes Mousumi Mandal, assistant professor, Presidency University, in *Bonbib'r Palagaan: Tradition, History and Performance*, on Sahapedia. The language of the *johuranama* is Musalmanni Bangla, written in the Bengali script, but with the book opening to the right, in the Arabic style. "Her worshippers do not think of her in terms of 'Muslim' or 'Hindu' but as a 'forest super-power' who extends her protection over individuals of all communities equally," writes Jalais. "When people read Bon Bibi *johuranama*, they punctuate the verses with a chorus of 'Allah Allah Bol' (Say the name of Allah)," adds Meheebub Sahana, a research associate in the School of Environment, Education and Development, University of

Manchester, the UK.

There are no documents to confirm when the performances started, a problem with most folk art forms in India. Sahana says that the Bon Bibi cult spread during and after the Great Bengal Famine of the early 1770s, which killed lakhs. "Since agriculture was destroyed by the famine, people who lived and farmed in the upper parts of the Sundarbans, came to the lower parts of the islands to fish and live off the forest. They became *bonojeevi* or people who work in the forest. As the pressure of humanity grew on the forests, there was the inevitable clash with wild animals, especially tigers," he adds.



In the *palagaan*, human protagonists are not the heroes but the subjects or prey of nature — a lesson that the pandemic is spreading across the world. People reduced to their primal condition — frail skin and bones, fear and helplessness — against the whims of nature is the old normal. And so, the actors of *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan* not only educate or entertain but also advocate total surrender. "When we go into the forest, we think, *Ja hobey hobey, sheta porey bhaba jaabey, Jodi phiri toh bhalo, na phiri toh ki kora jabey?*' (Whatever has to happen will happen. If I return home, it would be good. If I don't, nothing can be done about it)," says Sanjit.

In a scene in the play, the fishermen are in the middle of the huge Raimongol river, which is so vast that you cannot see its end, when clouds sweep through the sky. They do not ask the waves to recede. They submit, asking the boatman, to row the boat quickly and take them ashore, with the help of Bon Bibi. "When you see a wild animal, you should not fight but move out of its way. If a tiger has chosen you,

only Ma Bon Bibi can save you," says Anuja Adhikari, 37, from Lahripur village in Gosaba, who also plays the deity in the *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan*. She runs a *kirana* shop and catches fish and crabs in the forest. "The money I bring home runs the family. The only time I forget my troubles and feel happy is when I act and sing as Bon Bibi. I have faith that Bon Bibi will look after us," she says.

A few years ago, when she was returning home after playing Dukhey's mother in *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan*, Adhikari smelt the animal nearby. "The tiger had crossed the river from the forest into the village. I kept telling myself, '*Ma achche, oshubida hobey na*' (Mother will look after me)," she says. She found the tiger in a cattle shed of a milkman. "If the tiger had not found its *aahar* (food) in a cow that day, I wouldn't be alive. Through my performances, all I want to tell people is to have faith that Bon Bibi will save you," she says.



Battered by cyclones through the ages, and now buffeted by the pandemic as well as Amphan, the Sundarbans is down to its last dreg of resilience. Life on the islands will only become harsher with the rise in sea temperatures and climate change. In this turmoil, the *palagaan* will also have to adapt, as it has in the past. While night-long ritual performances were still held, tourist lodges had become the new platform in the last few years, with shows tailored to suit foreigners or metropolitan Indians looking to experience an exotic Indian art.

But, increasingly, it is becoming hard to keep the faith. A few years ago, Sanjit used to play Dukhey in *Bonbib'r Palagaan*. The family had a fishing boat at the time that cost Rs 15,000. During cyclone Aila in 2009, the boat was tied tightly to a tree by the side of the river. "When we went back after the storm, it was in splinters. Machine parts had been flung on the bank. Aila also destroyed our house, broke the river's dam and flooded the island," says Sanjit. He decided to end his career on stage. "I could also see that the days of *Bon Bibi'r Palagaan* were numbered. A lot of people are not accepting of the Bon Bibi faith anymore," he says. Today, the 23-year-old is a construction worker in Tamil Nadu and other parts of West Bengal and an eco-tourism guide in the Sundarbans.

On the other hand, the island has sent out its first graduate from the National School of Drama in Delhi. Sajal Mondol, 38, who graduated in 2011, chose to return home to work in the local theatre form. He staged a major show of the *palagaan* in 2013 in the Sundarbans and Kolkata and was supported by the state's ministry of culture. But he, too, discovered that the Sundarbans did not offer opportunities to an artist.

Across the world, theatres are shutting down as a virus stipulates new rules of social interaction. Will the *palagaan* be staged again? Adhikari says, "Things will be all right, have faith in Bon Bibi. The pandemic will be over soon and we will, once again, sit together to pray and perform. After all, Sundarbans will not be Sundarbans without Bon Bibi."

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Wild Love

On dating and mating rituals among the birds and the bees

MOST GUYS think they know how to woo the girl of their dreams. Some serenade girls with guitars under their balconies (or spout mushy poetry), others strut around in tight T-shirts flexing their biceps and showing off their abs. Yet others spray themselves with aftershave, drive around in Lamborghinis (usually leased) and buy expensive jewellery (or take the girls to obscenely expensive restaurants). There are those, usually bulging with biceps, who go berserk (like bull elephants in *musth*) and bash up anyone and everyone who comes anywhere near their chosen one. Some might even take their girls up to their palatial penthouse apartments. Then, there are those smitten jokers who can only shake their heads in speechless wonder and go "duh!" when they behold their beloveds.

Well, what goes on in the animal kingdom is no different, so that's a bit of an ego deflator for us at the top of the evolutionary pile. We must also keep in mind one almost universal truth: in most cases, it's the girls who choose who they want to be with. Also, animals tend to carry off courtship with much more élan and style than we do!

Let's start off with the insect and arachnid world. The tiny, but gorgeous, peacock spider does an elaborate fan dance in front of his beloved to convince her of his love — and that she should please not eat him during the courtship. Most male spiders — wimps in comparison to their lady friends — have a seduction routine that serves to chill their ferocious girlfriends, or they bring them silk-wrapped gifts (cockroaches do nicely), which the female cannot resist opening while the male does his part and beats it. Moths and butterflies spray irresistible "come hither" perfumes (pheromones) around themselves, summoning one another from as far as 11 km away.

Birds, of course, have been through the entire menu, so to speak. A cock sparrow will stick out his chest and strut in front of his girl, looking, frankly, like a *neta* trying to impress a Field Marshal. Indian myna gents show a surprising humility — they'll duck their heads and raise their crests and chortle deep loving things around their girls. Floricans jump sky high as if bouncing on a trampoline and sage grouse puff themselves up like air-bags and strut around one another. Perhaps, the most wonderfully dignified strut-display I've seen was that of the endangered great Indian bustard. Sometimes, feathers may well fly as the gentlemen try to beat one another up, to show the



WATCH ME SOAR

Gadwalls exchanging flying kisses mid-air

lady that they are stronger and more virile.

But, birds are probably most famous for their singing. Magpie robins, decked out in shiny tuxedos, will produce flute concertos that Mozart could have written. I once came across a Brahminy myna (starling) looking like a dishevelled hobo, throwing his head back and singing his heart out, eyes rolling wildly, crest resembling a mohawk hairstyle. The shama is said to outclass the magpie-robin and ornithologist Salim Ali rated the grey-winged blackbird number one on his playlist. Like so many of us, there are birds who think they can sing, but are tone-deaf, and assume volume can make up for this. The Indian prinia and the tailorbird can deafen you from 50 paces away, and I once encountered a couple of shiny black koel gentlemen yodelling their heads off at each other at 110 decibels, with not two feet distance between them. Their ruby eyes bulged belligerently as they shrieked and their speckled lady friend got so nervous that she slunk off with another gentleman hanging back in the bushes!

Some birds prefer dancing, the peacock being the prime example of this. He'll unfurl his tapestry into a great shimmering fan, suggestively wiggle his brown wing feathers as he twirls round and round. His harem pretends to be uninterested, but you can bet that if a wannabe princess makes a move towards him the reigning queen will fly at her enraged. Personally, I prefer the mad, exuberant dance of the Sarus crane — a bird known for its lifelong fidelity, indulging in an exhilarating cabaret act that would have been at home at the Moulin Rouge.

The famous baya weaver is a skilled architect and builder and woos his lady by weaving a beautiful vase-like nest out of grass. He boasts loudly about its assets (central air-conditioning, CCTV, gold-plated faucets, etc). But once he has settled one bride (if she accepts), he will then go and build another palace for another bride and so on! Many of the raptors indulge in spectacular aerial acrobatics to impress their ladies while birds like parakeets and owls are plain old-fashioned romantics — offering tidbits and then getting on with some passionate French kissing.

Male mammals, too, will strut around or roar to show who's boss: the snootiest strutter has got to be the black-buck that will prance around his harem like a prancing, snorting, his skewer-like horns flat against his back. Often in the mammalian world, violence breaks out between competing males, but they try their best to avoid injury or worse because then, your romance is over. This, alas, is so unlike us.

Fifty years after they split, the Beatles remain the original rockstars

Seema Chishti

WELL BEFORE television ushered in the age of the celebrity, The Beatles were rock stars. Fifty years after their break-up, the Liverpool lads remain so. A BBC radio documentary on the quaint subject of the evolution of song fade-outs, made in 2010 by Stuart Maconie, paid tribute to how the Beatles revolutionised even that aspect of music. The two-minute long fade-out for *Hey Jude* in 1960 marked a complete break in how the ending of songs was to be imagined.

A special issue of *LIFE* magazine this April, marking The Beatles split half a century ago, offers a small window into why the band mattered. It describes how on their 1964 visit to New York, people "ran through the street against traffic, past mounted policemen, as they swarmed the Plaza Hotel, where the Beatles were still staying three days after their appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*." The audience of 73 million for the show was not the only landmark. Fans watching The Beatles leave the plaza, included "New York Catholic archbishop Francis Cardinal Spellman, who had been born in the previous century."

Hitting their prime two decades after the sun had set on the British empire, it was the Beatles, after the English language and the BBC, who ended up opening doors for British culture the world over.

When they were not touring, they kept "office hours" at the now tourist hotspot, London's Abbey Road studio — industriously managed by producer George Martin and other technicians. In some exceptionally productive times, they were able to record up to four songs a day, two before the lunchhour break and two after. From 1962 to 1970, they did a whopping 210 songs, almost all recognisable decades on — complete with clear sharp voices, complex music and lyrics.

The jury is out on whether the lyrics would command an honour in the way Bob Dylan's could. *Let it Be* (1970), an all-time hit, remains a world-class ballad for all times but the Beatles never made the angst or dark side of the 1960s their primary preoccupation. They signalled concern on world events, but were original in what they had to say about it.

The Beatles prospered right through the polarising Cold War (1947-91) and their song *Back in the USSR* (1968) involved a cheerful shout-out to Ukraine girls "who really knock me out". There is also the runaway hit, *Revolution* (1968), which mellifluously invokes the ways of Chairman Mao. In an interview with *GQ* in 2018, Paul McCartney does mention *Blackbird* (1968) as being his expression of protest against racism, but the Beatles were no exhorters to the marching public.

The quality of their songwriting may not have literary flourish, but whatever they did had the signature of freshness and elegance. *A Day in the Life* (1967) was literally stitched up from reports picked from news dailies, so it had the ability to speak to Everyman. The way they invoked common people in their music, talking about their names, hopes and hopelessness, touched a chord: *Paperback Writer*



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

(Above) The Beatles with Ed Sullivan from their first appearance on Sullivan's television show in February 1964; wax statues of the band members at Madame Tussauds, New Delhi



TASHI TOBGYAL

(1966), *Dear Prudence* (1968) and *Eleanor Rigby* (1966). Weeks would pass, and their songs would be stuck on top of radio charts.

In November 1963, at the Royal Variety concert in London at the Prince of Wales theatre, with the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret watching from the royal box, John Lennon urged those in the cheap seats to clap

very loudly, and "for the rest of you, will you please jangle your jewellery?" The fact that they could get away with it, with their boyish charm and grins, only reflected the extent of the popular support they enjoyed.

India was to have its own special relationship with The Beatles via meditation, the sitar and the tabla. Mahesh Yogi hosted them at his *ashram* in Rishikesh, providing a new musical influence. After the split, George Harrison persisted with the sensibility he had got attuned to here.

The story goes that when The Eagles were parting ways in the middle of their association, news reporters asked them when they would sing together again. One of them muttered angrily: "When hell freezes over." So that was the name of the album, *Hell Freezes Over*, when they came back to making music

together in 1994.

There is no such comforting tale about The Beatles.

Perhaps, they ruled the music scene for so long only because they parted close to their peak. John Lennon was murdered tragically in New York just 10 years after the split, but not before he had delivered legendary hits even by himself. George Harrison died in 2001.

Paul McCartney remains the most visible connect to pop-history's greatest band of the 20th century. Last year, the reclusive Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney appeared together at a concert to wild cheer, when McCartney presented his latest album *Egypt Station* to reasonable acclaim. What did they first perform together on July 14, 2019? *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967), of course.

A Sport and a Pastime

Despatches from the world of dating apps, as ideas about romance and intimacy evolve to meet the challenges of the pandemic

Divya Sethu

"PUT YOURSELF out there!" If you're single, you've heard this statement a lot. Never mind that it is vague and overused, but in the time of a pandemic, it's also the one thing we can't do. As the world remains in COVID-19's grip, with countries either in lockdown or enforcing strict social distancing, a singleton's search for love needs to be put on hold. Meeting people on dating apps comes with risks of its own, but were I to "put myself out there" right now, catching the coronavirus would just be an addition to a long, already existing list of threats.

I envy couples who manage to remain intimate even when miles apart. According to the meme floating around about how dating is now serious business because you're essentially choosing your apocalypse partner, these couples seem to have it figured out.

Most of my closest friends are in happy, fulfilling relationships right now. Two, who are in a long distance relationship with their boyfriends, told me they keep in touch through text and video calls, watch movies together online, and sometimes even have dates where they eat meals together.

Doing that with the people I've met on dat-



GETTY IMAGES

ing apps doesn't seem like it's worth the effort.

As my friend Poomima, a 22-year-old digital-content producer based in Noida, puts it, "I'm not on dating apps to talk. So if I'm doing that right now, it seems like doing all the work without any reward."

"I would like to meet new people and actively look for a more meaningful relationship now. We're conditioned to shift importance to aesthetics instead of wit, intelligence, or any other positive attribute. Essentially, we swipe for looks, supplemented by mediocre bios," another friend of mine, Pooja, 22, a student at a university in Toronto, says. So if I'm only focusing on how a person looks, how do I pretend to care enough to sustain a conversation?

Some of my friends who are active dating-app users are treating this situation as

an opportunity for lead-hunting. "It's like I'm keeping a repository for now. I talk to them just so it doesn't get awkward after the quarantine ends," says Pakhi, 21, a marketing associate in Pune. However, she admits that the lockdown has made her want to meet more people and form more meaningful connections in the future.

The idea of seeking a casual relationship right now seems redundant. We look for comfort in familiarity in times of uncertainty. We want to retreat into the security and safety of a relationship. These are not things that casual dating offers. From where we stand now, perhaps for once, dating apps and the instant gratification that they offer won't be enough to sustain us in a time when loneliness and feelings of isolation are peaking.

This is because swiping on dating apps right now has more to do with finding some brief validation of one's desirability, some sort of anchoring in a world of love that one can't fully participate in right now. It has little to do with actually wanting to be in a relationship or even just going out on a date. But when I look at those around me who are in relationships, I realise that what I yearn for is to have stability. Unlike in the world of hook-ups, long-term relationships can navigate the lack of physical intimacy that this lockdown has presented us with, and build on the principles of love, trust and companionship.

So hang in there, singletons, because I do believe our apocalypse partners are out there. Hopefully, they, too, are maintaining social distance and washing their hands right now.

All That Jazz

A glimpse into the world of some of the greatest musicians of the last three decades and their impact on the etiquette and aesthetics of music

Susmit Bose

WOW, MAN, what an eclectic compilation! Conversations, interviews and reportage with some of the greatest masters of music, from Roger Waters, Ian Anderson, Mark Knopfler, John McLaughlin, Sting, Jean-Luc Ponty and Carlos Santana to L Subramaniam, Louis Banks, Sivamani, Ranjit Barot, Junoon and Anant Datta, and Srikanth Acharya, the contemporary folk group Bhoomi and Tapas 'Bapi' Das of the baul jazz and blues group Moheener Ghoraguli. I like this genre in the regional languages, and Shantanu Datta does well to include them in the book. I wish he had also included the pioneers, Kabir Suman and Anjan Dutt. Datta has the credibility to write *Calling Elvis*. The book describes him "as a journalist (who) has been placed at the forefront of music reportage for much of the past three decades". He lives up to the reputation.

I find that interviews of artistes, especially musicians, and, particularly, rock and pop artistes are very fluid, random and too casual. Perhaps, it is because they are not 'in the moment', which is when they are composing or performing. But Datta manages to hold them captive by his questions. I liked the interviews with John McLaughlin, Jean-Luc Ponty and Herbie Hancock, exploring their relationship with Miles Davis, "the Picasso of jazz". Datta's interactions with humble men like Sting and Carlos Santana are heartfelt.

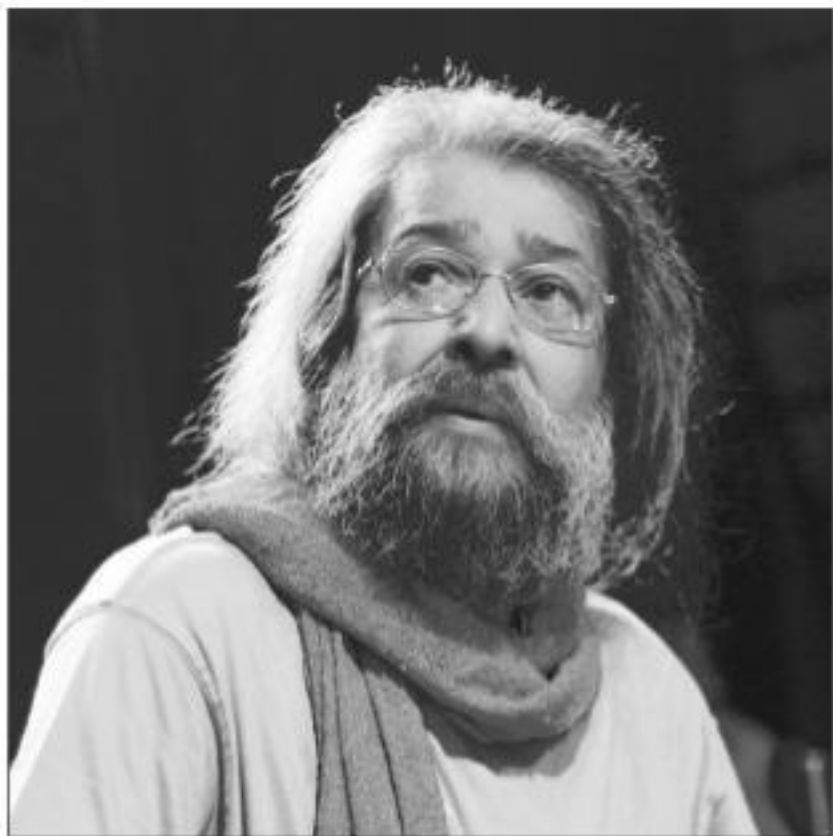
These are mature musical conversations and one learns so much about the etiquette and aesthetics of the art. Aspiring artistes would do well to imbibe the wisdom of these musicians. I must confess that I don't understand the idea of fusion music, and don't like the term because it undermines music itself, but if artistes from varied genres getting together and performing is what explains fusion, then I am all for it. 'Jamming' is not the word.

I also did not understand why the book had to be pegged so heavily on the interviews and conversations, as Datta calls them. They're great add-ons to the story, but the reportage is much more than that. It's about the music of the times when it was practised, and the temperament of artistes. As Miles Davis said, "I am not what I do; I do what I am." Datta's writing on Western music and the scene in Calcutta is very profound. His next book, perhaps the sequel to *Calling Elvis*, should be about Western music in India and the strong influences that it is structured on. The music scene in Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and Madras could have completed the story.

I loved Datta's tribute to Dilip Balakrishnan of Great Bear — and later, frontman, vocalist and songwriter of the group *High* — and to Usha Uthup's tenacity in doing what she has done. I was also hanging out in Calcutta at that time and it all rings so true. I



EXPRESS ARCHIVE



PHOTOS COURTESY: SHANTANU DATTA



CALLING ELVIS
BY SHANTANU
DATTA
Speaking Tiger
230 pages
₹399



PHOTOS COURTESY: TEJAN BALAKRISHNAN



PHOTOS COURTESY: SHANTANU DATTA

THE RIGHT NOTES

(Clockwise from top left) Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock in Mumbai; Dilip Balakrishnan; Louis Banks at his 75th birthday celebration; Bapi Das

met Devdan Sen of Great Bear in Amsterdam many years ago and we reminisced about the times, and similarly with Louis Banks and Pam Crain, who sang for one of my albums. Thankfully, I am in touch with Nondon Bagchi and Usha Uthup to get my fix of the late Sixties and early Seventies in Calcutta. I remember Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh playing me some nonsense verse on the tabla when I was a boy. It sounded like hip-hop.

Datta's inclusion of the music store Braganza is wonderful. Old man Braganza presented me with a 12-string guitar in the Seventies, which I still have and cherish. George Harrison, Ian Anderson, Ian Carr of Magna Carta and several other musicians from the West visited Braganza to buy Indian instruments. There was also Hemen-da or

Hemen Babu, who made a scale-change harmonium for my father. I am glad that there is also a mention of Melody, the record store which was a meeting point for young musicians in Calcutta.

The book is a must-read for music lovers and practitioners. Datta's *Calling Elvis* is a job well done. In his own words, "As tributes go, this one, by one who grew up in Calcutta, and drew on experiences our magnanimous country throws up every day, may seem woefully inadequate, given my own shortcomings and the varied nature of the conversations. But it is a tribute nevertheless... if for nothing else, then for the singers of the world, their tunes and symphonies yet to come."

Susmit Bose is an urban folk singer and songwriter

Shadow Lines

Was he a social radical till the end, or did he lose his way? A biography of M Karunanidhi seeks to demystify the politician



POWER PLAY

Karunanidhi (right) with MG Ramachandran

Mahesh Rangarajan

AT THE time of his death in August 2018, M Karunanidhi was the titan among leaders of his home state of Tamil Nadu and one of India's senior-most politicians. From 1938, when he took to the streets against the Congress government's promotion of Hindi in school education, right to his last electoral battle in 2016, when his party finished second, he stood out as a fighter. But he was also a writer, playwright and screenwriter, an orator and a man of letters. Novelist and veteran journalist Vaasanthi offers rare insights into the man and his mind. The young Karunanidhi experienced caste exclusion when he saw that his father, an expert nadaswaram player, left his chest bare when he met a member of the upper-caste landed gentry, or *mirasdar*. The idea of a unified Tamil society which addressed issues of exclusion would take him first into the militant Dravida Kazhagam, and, then, with his mentor CN Annadurai, to the Dravidar Munnetra Kazhagam.

A deep pride in Tamil language and culture was not unique to the young idealist, activist and editor. But he was gifted with the written and spoken word and skilfully organised political workers. The loss of his first wife, terms in jail and a hand-to-mouth existence deepened his commitment. By the early 1960s, he was a key leader in a rising regional party. As a senior minister, he was well placed to succeed Annadurai when he died of cancer in 1969.

The first two terms in office saw more than the expansion of reservations and steps to claim more autonomy for the states. The horrific Kilvenmani massacre of Dalits (1968) in the Thanjavur delta exposed the pressing need for redressing agrarian inequality. Legislation for fair wages and a higher minimum wage was followed in 1970 by halving the land ceiling from 30 to 15 acres.

By aligning with Mrs Indira Gandhi in the historic Congress split of 1969, the DMK leader also entered the national stage. In the wake of the Indira wave of 1971, he managed to manoeuvre the national party out of state politics while allowing it a share of Lok Sabha seats. Despite a falling-out over the Emergency and the dismissal of his government, he was able to forge ties with the Congress later — with Indira in 1980 and with Sonia in 2004, he was the ally of an all-India party that swept back into office.

The ascent to the top and the subsequent falling-out with MG Ramachandran are well-known: close friends became rivals and parted ways three years later. The MGR decade, till his death in 1987, was a trial by fire for the DMK and Karunanidhi could not dent the chief minister's base. As atrocities mounted in Sri Lanka, both men sought to play on Tamil sentiments. By the time India intervened in 1987-90, they were already on opposite sides, the one backing a federal nation and the DMK coming close to endorsing Eelam. But as chief minister in 1990-91, Karunanidhi was unable to control the Tigers; their rival K Padmanabha was brutally murdered in June 1990. Even before Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, and his government's dismissal, Karunanidhi was seen as being soft on terror. This gave J Jayalalitha the perfect launching pad to power in 1991.

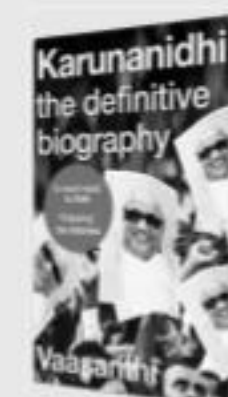
Karunanidhi was in power twice after that, and in these terms, including the last in 2006-11, he retained his focus on social and economic inclusion. But succession was a problem. He reacted strongly when asked who his heir would be, asserting that the DMK was a democratic party, not a religious order. Yet by the mid-1990s, the choice of his son MK Stalin was clear. The long spell of power of the Congress-led alliance in Delhi saw the party embroiled in the 2G spectrum scam controversy, and a long jail spell for his daughter Kanimozhi. Sadly, lineage and kinship became central issues, even in a movement with a radical social message.

Karunanidhi's determination, visible when he was arrested by Jayalalitha in 2001, was paralleled by a deep vulnerability. Vaasanthi portrays his anguish at his daughter's arrest. Was he losing the plot by that time? Certainly, the damage done by the 2G scam was beyond what the party had imagined. Vaasanthi draws on Karunanidhi's writings and speeches, stray remarks and editorials. The emergence of the *Kalaigarnar* as kingmaker and shaper of policy in Delhi in 1996, and in the long spell in coalitions virtually unbroken until 2014, gets due attention.

Other than K Kamaraj in the 1960s, no Tamil leader ever wielded such influence. In the *Kalaigarnar*'s case, there was a near-unbroken spell in office as coalition partner from 1996 to 2014. This made a regional party a major player in economic decision-making at the federal level. Vaasanthi rightly shows the deep affinity he had for the late VP Singh, mainly on account of the Mandal Commission.

And, yet, the man remains an enigma. Was he a social radical till the end, or did he lose his way? Can regional nationalism survive once its colossus has departed? Much food for thought here. Vaasanthi's prose is beguilingly simple. Its skilful play of shadow and light preoccupies long after you finish reading.

Mahesh Rangarajan teaches history and environmental studies at Ashoka University



KARUNANIDHI:
THE DEFINITIVE
BIOGRAPHY
BY VAASANTHI
Juggernaut Books
274 pages
₹ 599

How To Talk to Your Child About Death

Anita Roy on her new book, and why the ongoing ecological catastrophe stems from our inability to face up to being mortal

Paromita Chakrabarti

EDITOR-WRITER Anita Roy, 55, has played a pivotal role in Indian publishing for children and young adults. In 2004, she set up Young Zubaan, an imprint that promotes diversity in children's publishing; she was also one of the founding members of the popular Bookaroo Festival of Children's Literature in 2008. In this interview, the UK-based Roy speaks about her debut YA novel on death and ecological destruction, and darkness in children's literature. Excerpts:

Gravepyres School for the Recently Deceased is out at a time when the world is facing its own fragility. What made you contemplate a book on death?

There's a point in the novel when Jose, the main protagonist, remembers his grandfather saying: it's amazing how it's the one thing that is 100 per cent guaranteed to happen to everyone, and, yet, no one ever imagines it will ever happen to them. It is extremely difficult to contemplate the fact of your own mortality. The psychiatrist Irvin Yalom has a phrase for it: 'staring at the sun'. In his book of the same name, he writes: 'I feel strongly — as a man who will himself die one day in the not-too-distant future and as a psychiatrist who has spent decades dealing with death anxiety — that confronting death allows us...to re-enter life in a richer, more compassionate manner.'

There's a great question I was once asked: 'What is the opposite of death?' Immediately, the answer comes, 'Life!' but that's wrong. The opposite of death is birth. Life, when you really get down to the truth of the matter, has no opposite.

I wanted to find a way to begin to explore some of these quite difficult, philosophical and spiritual matters in a way that made them accessible to kids. In a way that did not fudge or soft-soap the heartbreaking fact of death's finality, but ended on the tremendously positive note of interconnectedness.

To be honest, I worried about the book coming out just as the COVID-19 crisis was accelerating all over the world, when death is so much 'in the air'. Would people dealing with real grief, real loss, be offended at the lightness of tone, the humour, the laughter? A good friend of mine died of COVID-19 last month and I can almost hear her cackling at the thought.

Death may be sad — I want a much, much bigger word but it will have to do — but it is serious not solemn, mysterious rather than morbid. The ecological catastrophe that we are currently experiencing stems from the same inability to deal honestly and openly with our own mortality. We have bought into the myth that life — or at least our human lives — can be lived without limit or consequence. A large part of the story of *Gravepyres* is also about the disastrous consequences of trying to stop the natural flow of time, the natural processes of death, decay and rebirth.

Do you see the pandemic affecting how we approach grief as a community? How differently do you see children reacting to bereavement?

I hope that one of the many things that we learn as a community is how connected we are. I have been astonished by how much compassion has been shown by people — helping others became (for a time at least during lockdown, here in the UK) a sort of national characteristic.



TILL DEATH DO US PART

Gravepyres School for the Recently Deceased is Anita Roy's first novel, meant for young adults

It has also focused our concern on the most vulnerable — the elderly, those in care homes. How we care for our elderly is how we, too, will be cared for when we reach that point. How we treat the sick is how we, too, will be treated. How we grieve is how we would hope others might grieve for us — for love and grief are minted together to make that precious coin.

How has it affected children? Well, I don't know — but I do worry. I worry that it has promoted a sense that the world outside is a place of danger and other people are a source of infection. I worry about building empathy in a world where hugging is seen as transgressive and possibly fatal.

A lot of children's literature, both contemporary and traditional, have quite dark themes. When do you think the trend arose to present a rosy view of

the world to children? And, again, how did we return to keeping things real?

In India, 15-20 years ago, there was a strong sense that there were certain topics that weren't suitable for children, certain things you could and couldn't — and shouldn't — say. The emphasis was on single-issue, morally improving tales, usually involving clumsily drawn anthropomorphic animals. Things have massively improved thanks to a slew of creative and imaginative writers and illustrators coming up through the ranks, whose work has been championed and supported by commissioning editors, mostly women! Children's publishing in India today is a much broader church, with books that 'keep it real' and others that gleefully keep it fantastic! The whole spectrum is necessary.

If I look at the current crop of titles for children (middle-grade as well as young adult) they seem to be falling over themselves to explore dark themes. Drug addiction, conflict, sexual abuse, racism, sexism — it seems like there aren't any subjects that are off the table. There are many, many positives to be had from this: not least the empathy-building work that children's literature is so very good at. The importance of seeing 'people like me' in the stories that you read is vital for children to grow up having a healthy sense of who they are and what they might hope to become.

There's a delightful mix of English, Arabic, Indian, French and Spanish being used in the afterlife in *Gravepyres*. Do you envision it as more accommodating of our many cultural influences?

I am all for cultural confluence. Maybe, it has partly to do with my own background — half-Bengali, half-English, who grew up in the UK but spent half my adult life in India. With access to films, books, videos and music from every corner of the globe, today's children are much more open to other cultures than, perhaps, they would have been in the past — and Indian children, in particular, are adept at swimming in different cultural and linguistic streams. And, at the end of the day, we are all united in our shared mortality. We're all going to die — whether you are Inuit or Sentinelese, from Buckinghamshire or Johannesburg.

14 EXPRESS ADDA

The Indian EXPRESS
E-ADDA

In an e-Adda hosted by *The Indian Express*, Uday Shankar, President, The Walt Disney Company (Asia Pacific) and Chairman, Star & Disney India, spoke on broadcasting in the time of Covid-19 and tensions with China, the possibility of conducting IPL and why TV will survive in India



(Clockwise from above) Shankar was in conversation with The Indian Express Group Executive Director Anant Goenka and National Sports Editor Sandeep Dwivedi

‘The IPL experience is important for the love of cricket, to signal that life triumphs’

VOICE BANK



On the crises that surround us

I think it's a perfect storm. The Covid-19 crisis is a really serious one, it's likely to affect everybody. The silver lining is that India has still done better than a lot of other countries. While some of the economic fears were exaggerated, as it is turning out to be, some of them were actually understated. So, as we play along, over the next few months, my biggest problem is that it's difficult to take a fix on the economy, primarily because we still don't have a fix on the trajectory of the infection itself. And on top of that, the whole Chinese tension on the border.

On the ban on Chinese apps

This is an unprecedented mix of storms and crises that we are living through. And rationality is not the default mode for anyone at this time. Probably, there are other, better ways of handling this, frankly, because it doesn't help anyone or resolve the tension. But in a real world, symbolism sometimes gets the better of rational decision-making.

On the rise of the sentiment against globalisation

We are going through a massive reaction against globalisation. We're seeing the rise of protectionism. The advocates and drivers of globalisation should have been mindful of all this, because unbridled globalisation was going on, without any concern for people at the bottom of the pyramid. If globalisation meant lots of FDI and money that came in, foreign goods were also flooding the market. It would lead to a reaction. And that is where a model like Star India is a relevant model that everyone should think about. Star is a foreign company, owned by foreign entities, first by News Corp and Fox, and now by The Walt Disney Company, which has acquired the 21st Century Fox company, but Star is — in the minds of the consumers, of the people here — in its brand, culture, content and product, in every respect, a truly Indian company. And that is a model where it's a good mix of globalisation and localisation.

On the impact of boycott of Chinese firms and products

First of all, in national interest, every government has the right to decide what they want to do, and everybody has to comply with that, whether we like it or not. But, the second point — and that's a very material point — when we invested in cricket, we did not invest on the back of companies from any country, or of any specific companies. We invested in cricket because we believed it had power, which comes from its popularity and depths of its engagement with Indian consumers. If people like something so passionately, there will be people who would be willing to put money behind that. There's a monetisation model that you can create. So, if company X or Y is not there, because in the larger social or national interest, it's been decided, we'll have to figure out a

AAMIR KHAN, ACTOR



I've worked very closely with Uday when we were doing the TV show *Satyaamev Jayate*. He was the one who came up with

the title. Star was going to be hosting the show, but I also wanted it to air it on Doordarshan, a competitive channel. It's a very strange condition that I put... he did not hesitate. He's someone who really sees beyond just the financial aspect of things.

I had heard horror stories about Aamir. I was told that he just decides everything and it's impossible to work with him. And I have to say, one of my most fulfilling experiences was that project. I am a big believer in regular entertainment, people have so much drudgery in their lives that they need to be taken into a make-believe world. But when you've got their attention, I equally believe you should seed some relevant messages. And Aamir turned out to be a believer in the same agenda.

RAHUL JOHRI
BCCI CEO

What is the future of broadcasting, especially pay TV, and do you see digital subscription revenues overtaking pay TV?

Television has a future in this country. But one of the biggest challenges that it is facing is the whole pay ecosystem, and the way it has been devastated, or it has never been allowed to take off. And that is why we are not able to invest enough in content, and not create robust business models. Despite all the promise, I don't believe that digital streaming services are anywhere at that scale where they can replace television.

ANIRUDH CHAUDHARY
FORMER TREASURER, BCCI

How do you prioritise the following this year: the Indian bilateral series, Indian Premier League, and the ICC T20 World? And how far ahead in time is virtual reality in cricket production?

Right now, there is no clarity on when the tournaments will be held. With ICC T20 tournament, not having clarity doesn't help. In case of IPL also, we know that the BCCI is keen to get it back but they are in no position to tell us. But technology-wise, this is a huge opportunity. With this disruption, there is pressure on everyone to innovate.



different monetisation model.

On Unilever stopping advertising on Facebook and what it shows

The advertisers are beginning to re-

ABHINAV BINDRA
OLYMPIC SHOOTING CHAMPION

To what extent would COVID-19 accelerate fragmentation of sports content, production and consumption?

VVSLAXMAN, FORMER INDIA CRICKETER



With the pandemic, live sports action also has been affected tremendously. How can we tackle this?

The fragmentation is happening, but I like to see this as segmentation. The multiple channels that are getting created, are making the reach of the sport bigger. In the short term, it might look like audiences are getting fragmented, but over a period of time, these are all multipliers for delivering the content to a larger universe of fans. Right now, the most important thing is for people to be safe and as soon as we can create a reasonably safe bubble for bringing live sports back, that's the most important thing.

UDAY KOTAK
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK

Where do you see the future of entertainment and sports in the new digital world post-Covid?

There is going to be a Renaissance because the more channels of reaching the consumer that we find, the richer the health of the industry will be. The industry begins to choke when the supply lines are choked.

SANJIV MEHTA, CEO & MD, HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED



With spectator sport taking a backseat, how do you see the future?

If we use the Covid-19 disruption as an opportunity to take sports to more people and create a fuller, richer and more fleshed-out experience for those who are not in the stadium, then the sports can get bigger.

NANDAN NILEKANI
NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, INFOSYS

The startup that you have done by creating a whole new tournament around Kabbadi and telecasting it, has made watching the

sport so popular.

RISHANK DEVADIGA
PRO KABBADI PLAYER

Has there been some planning for the Pro Kabbadi season this year?

Kabbadi is a close contact sport, and we have to be extremely careful as and when we do it, because we have to create a safe bubble.



ANANT NATH, EDITOR, THE CARAVAN

How reflective is TV programming of our societal issues, including class, caste, ethnicity and race?

There is no such thing as an Indian society; there are multiple layers and nuanced structures along both the geographical and the socio-economic hierarchies. And the challenge of doing programming in India, especially on TV,

is that you are forced to look at a common denominator, else you are at the risk of losing attention.

GAUTAM GAMBHIR
FORMER INDIA CRICKETER, LOK SABHA MP

Do you have any plans to promote hockey, our national sport?

You have to realise that whatever sport league we get involved with, we can only do as much. If there is not a groundswell of excitement around the sport, it's tough for us to be able to do everything. Hockey has real potential, and that's why we are involved with it and I think Indian hockey is looking better today than it was 10 years ago.

RAMIT BHATNAGAR
COO, M/J GLOBAL

RAJESH MEHTA
FOUNDER, ENTRY-INDIA

Do you see this trend lasting where mainstream cinema movies release on OTT platforms?

I don't think it's a substitutive trend; it's one more stream for releasing cinema. We have just announced the premiere of seven films on Disney+Hotstar over the next two months, and some of them are really big. There is an appetite for films but there are only 52 weeks in the year and only 52 Fridays. So direct to digital releases or premieres is a great initiative.

SHYAM BAGRI
FOUNDER, BAGRI'S

How can the OTT platform be used for advertising?

On Disney+Hotstar, we have the complete ability to customise and deliver your message to the target audience and in parts of the country that you want the message to go. Even in a city, we can target it to your specific requirements.



KARAN JOHAR, FILMMAKER

How do you manage to maintain social distance from the entertainment and sports fraternity, and yet engage with them professionally?

I'm not a product of this industry. I came through news and now I see this as a job. I have deepest respect for everybody that I deal with, but in order to maintain objectivity, it's important to maintain some amount of distance.

feel, this cuts across the spectrum. Whether the liberals are as intolerant of the non-liberal point of view and vice-versa.

On whether the trolling of Karan Johar will affect *Koffee With Karan*

I don't think this will be a factor. The trolling itself was unfortunate. The loss of a promising young life (Sushant Singh Rajput) is very tragic. But to play politics and to push personal agenda on the back of that is really repugnant. And, just because somebody's life has been lost, no matter how tragic it is, but all those who are living do not become culprits just because of that.

On the possibility of sports commentators being dropped because of public opinion

I think there is a distinction that we need to make between cricket journalists and cricket commentators. You are a journalist, you are at liberty to say what you want to say, and your only discipline comes from the discipline your paper and your reader imposes on you. A commentator is not, in my view, a journalist. A commentator is part of the entire package to make the game more entertaining.

On the changing role of broadcasters

The role of the broadcaster in determining the nature of the content has got reduced. And, people talk about the BCCI having played a very regressive role in that, but it's the same everywhere. As broadcasters, we often feel creatively, the only thing we understand is how to make exciting content across genres. And yet, you'd be shocked to see the kind of rigid framework in which sometimes people insist that we cooperate. Actually, the broadcaster is getting more marginalised. The only time he has a say is when the broadcaster is saying how much they are going to pay for it.

On whether cricket viewership will move from TV to digital

In India, television has a long runway, it will still continue to go for a long time in my view. It is one of the few countries where still new TV homes are being added. India is one of the cheapest markets to buy television. And, yet, the way the world is moving, in this country, we believe that in the next four-five years, there will be about 700-750 million handheld screens, and about 200-250 million TV screens. Clearly, handheld devices will become very important. Good thing is that a large part of the same consumer switches seamlessly between TV and digital.

On when to expect the IPL

We all know that we are living through a perfect storm. The good news is that the BCCI is very keen to do something because they know that — both for the love of cricket and also for signalling to the country that life triumphs — it is important that people get the IPL experience and then there are other tournaments that are lined up. But we really don't know when they will happen, because we don't have a fix on the trajectory of the virus itself. Though we are ready internally, discussing, planning, we don't want the tournaments to be held until it is reasonably safe.

For longer version, go to
www.indianexpress.com

Greenwood brace helps Man Utd to 5-2 win over Bournemouth

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANCHESTER, JULY 4

TEENAGE MANCHESTER United striker Mason Greenwood enhanced his burgeoning reputation with wonderful finishes off either foot for a double in a 5-2 win over relegation-threatened Bournemouth in the Premier League on Saturday.

The 18-year-old Greenwood took his goal tally in all competitions for the senior team to 15 in his breakthrough season at United and the quality of his strikes showed why he is being rated as one of English soccer's most highly rated talents. His first goal, which canceled out Junior Stanislas' 16th-minute opener for Bournemouth, was lashed home with his left foot after being fed by Bruno Fernandes.

After a penalty from Marcus Rashford and a brilliant 25-yard finish by Anthony Martial, Greenwood got his second with an individual strike that saw him drift round left back Diego Rico and fire an angled right-footed shot into the top corner in the 54th minute. "Mason is one of the best, if not the best finisher, I have worked with and seen," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said. "He is so calm. He knows where to finish if it is on the training ground, here or in his garden at home."

That restored United's two-goal lead at 4-2 after Josh King's penalty for Bournemouth, and Fernandes added a fifth off a free kick from the edge of the area in the 59th.

A third straight victory, in which the team has scored at least three times in each game, maintained United's push for Champions League qualification. Solskjaer's side stayed three points behind third-place Leicester with five games remaining.

Buffon sets Serie A record

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon set an outright Serie A record on Saturday with his 648th appearance in Italy's top flight. The Turin derby game against Torino moved the 42-year-old Buffon one ahead of AC Milan great Paolo Maldini, who set the record in 2009. Buffon matched this record on December 18 against Sampdoria. It was Buffon's 915th club match as a professional.

Dan there was none

Retirement of badminton's greatest player leaves a void as an era of excellence ends

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JULY 4

FOR 142 long, deluded weeks before the London Olympics, Lin Dan allowed Lee Chong Wei to sit on top of the world as No.1, hoping for his own stab at greatness when the Games fetched up. Dan, in fact, strung him along till 19-all in the third in the final.

Then in one smooth move — or three — of a prowling jungle cat, the Chinese reigning champion, gently pulled the rug from under the Malaysian's feet to lord over the big moment of reckoning — not for the first time in his career, nor the last.

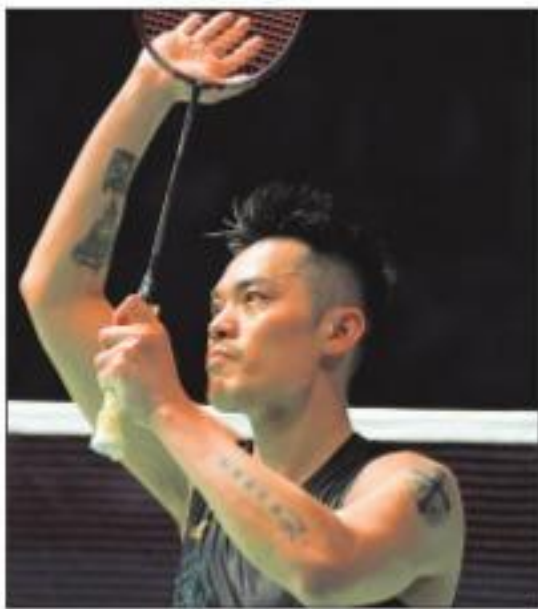
Badminton's greatest men's singles player, the unanimously beloved Chinese, anointed Super Dan at Wembley by Peter Gade (another World No.1 bereft of the Olympics gold) after his first All England triumph in 2004, called time on his career on Saturday after pain and (diminishing) physical abilities won the inevitable battle against perseverance for the ageing 37-year-old.

Chong Wei is the original perseverer; the greatest and first amongst unequals shown this chimera by Lin Dan, whose extraordinariness lay in dangling the chance of a win before his opponents before pouncing at victory every single time. At Beijing in 2008, Chong Wei had been packed off in 40 odd minutes, the savagery of 21-8, 21-12 loss sparing him protracted heartbreak.

Dan courted badminton greatness by loyally chasing big occasions, and turned inducing these dramatic disappointments in Chong Wei's life, into fine art.

Two World Championship finals at London (2011) and Guangzhou (2013) on either side of the 2012 Olympics title came in similar drawn out, teasing fashion, elevating badminton to extravagant opera. Finals that could've gone either way, but Lin Dan insisting on stamping his class on every finish to build the legend of his dominance. For there came five World Championships, two Olympic titles, six All England's, 66 tournament victories and 666 career wins including a clutch of team titles in Thomas and Sudirman Cup as well as the Asian, to headline shuttle's most successful career.

Nearing the end of his 20-year-long ca-



Lin Dan has two Olympic & five World Championship titles to his name. AP

reer, Super Dan had 9 first round losses in 19 matches in the last year to be dubbed 'First Round Lin'. At the 2016 Rio Games, he even lost the semis to old nemesis Chong Wei and returned without a medal, like in Athens. A bunch of upstarts from around the world now fancied their chances against him, though he casually made the 2017 World Championship and 2018 All England finals to show he hadn't completely lost his aura.

"Every forceful jump was a desire for victory. I have dedicated everything to this sport I love," he announced on *Weibo*. The postponement of Olympics owing to Covid, had meant he would've needed to labour another season to leapfrog Chen Long and Shi Yuqi to reach Tokyo, though he had been training in right earnest — at the same facility as China's fastest sprinter, to keep up his speed.

His past two seasons had seemed propelled by sponsor's nudges, though you would be a fool to ignore preps of a man who in the lead-up to one of his Olympic titles ran under blazing sun at noon in high temperatures to bolster his capacity.

Also having broken free from China's national training system, he had once defiantly declared after winning one of his last titles, "All the Chinese coaches are sitting there in the corner. And I want to prove to them that even if I am 33, I, Lin Dan, can still win." But

His shot armoury was Paris, New York and Milan fashion weeks rolled into one for setting trends, slavishly mimicked across the shuttle world

that was after a successful decade and half of being nurturedly leashed to the regimented Chinese system.

Dan arrived on the scene as a junior World champion, highly touted after wins as a teenager in Korea and Denmark, but with a big booming flashy game that predictably didn't pay the dividends early on.

Beijing would prove to be the start of the Super Dan epoch as a raucous home crowd matched his roaring bloodlust for his first Olympic title.

As such, Dan's game can be clearly demarcated into pre- and post-Beijing: an outrageously attacking lefthander to start with making use of his exceptionally quick arm speed till 2008 to cutting down pace later and playing a stubbornly steady game to preserve his body for that blazing speed was unsustainable.

Dan had that spinning smash, hit hard and steep and a follow-up net shot where he was aggressive and would go on peppering opponent's body line like a radar guided missile to shred their defense. There was that impossible forehand clear where he would retrieve from the edge of the lines running back, dragging the shuttle back into play by sheer force of will, yet sending it back with such ferocity and precision that a defensive scramble turned into a winner deep into the rival's backcourt.

All of that, shots seeming simple but pulled off after hours of training and strengthening the body as well as repurposed returns by taking the shuttle mighty late — found followers religiously attempting to ape his style. His shot armoury was Paris, New York and Milan fashion weeks rolled into one for setting trends, slavishly mimicked across the shuttle world. And though the 21-point system would've largely constricted his flair — one never knows what he could've done with his many round the body trick shots if the 15 or 11 point format

was prevalent and he didn't eschew flash — there was yet another dimension to his game as a southpaw even if it didn't look as pretty as Bao Chunlai's or Lee Hyun Il's.

Perhaps the most underrated aspect of his game was his economy of movements — a graph that Roger Federer traversed in another sport to prolong his magic. Chong Wei would be bouncing about, the length, breadth of the court and in the air above. Dan would return to the T like a horse unfailingly gallops into its barn, and barely exert himself more than what was needed.

For all his dominance spanning his career, Lin Dan rarely looked like he was stepping on the gas, to disintegrate his opponent. Unlike Chong Wei whose switch of gears was a visible hustle bustle signalling a change in pace and bursting of nerve, Dan would ease into kill mode smoothly without a wrinkle on his visage. Former international Arvind Bhat recalls how Lin Dan would put in a full hour's warmup of hitting with sparrers just before a match — drops, parallel, flicks, box, just knocking around and was seldom seen sitting in the crowd doing nothing before his games.

An introvert who rarely smiled — not out of arrogance but from staying manically focused — Dan remained China's elusive genius, not very talkative even after winning his big titles. After winning the world title at Hyderabad in 2009, he would come into the media room donning a Shaquille O'Neal tee — a mere change of shirt for him, as he would look befuddled when asked about the NBA star.

But badminton's famous four — Dan, Chong Wei, Peter Gade and Taufiq Hidayat — had a world of their own and in their own classy way, they went about taking the game to unprecedented heights in quality, even if they were all far too reticent (or cool) to get chatty about smashes in English and open up their world to a larger base. Though comparable to tennis' Big Four, the shuttle quartet never tried too hard to stake claim to a similar space (maybe to the game's detriment). But for those who followed a feathery bird mangled magically by four sorcerers of that era, the enchantment was self-sufficient. Chong Wei turned poet at Dan's departure from international badminton when he tweeted, "Your final wave...all four disappear...Within the hush of silent tear."

Not averse to contesting for DDCA prez post: Jaitley Jr

NIHAL KOSHIE
NEW DELHI, JULY 4

ROHAN JAITLEY, son of former union minister the late Arun Jaitley, said he is "not averse to the idea" of contesting for the post of president of the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA). Arun Jaitley was DDCA president for over a decade till 2013 and the main stadium in the capital, which hosts international matches, is named after him.

"I have had a lot of people across the board who have come and met me and discussed various things. I have been requested to do it (contest for president's post). I have told them that I will keep it in mind certainly, but let the electoral process start. My intention is the welfare of the association. It should be brought back to the glory days. At the appropriate time, I will convey whatever my decision is. I am not averse to the idea," Rohan told *The Sunday Express*.

Over the past month, various groups within DDCA have been calling on Rohan, who is a lawyer, and have claimed that he has agreed to contest for the post of DDCA president. On Saturday, DDCA secretary Vinod Tihara said: "Looking at the mess in the DDCA, we need someone who can unite all groups and someone who everyone will respect and listen to for guidance. If Rohan Jaitley decides to contest for the president's post of the DDCA, I think he will be a unanimous candidate. The contest will be for the other five posts in the DDCA. According to me, Rohan Jaitley is the best person to lead the DDCA and run the association smoothly."

DDCA joint secretary Rajan Manchanda, who has a running feud with Tihara since the annual general body meeting in December, was also in favour of Jaitley's potential candidature.

"What we are aiming for is to ensure that Rohan Jaitley is elected unopposed and it is a unanimous decision. A majority of the members are ready to support him. If other groups within DDCA are supporting him, it will be beneficial for the association," Manchanda said.

On June 17, the Delhi High Court had directed the DDCA to hold elections within six weeks.

BRIDGE

Dealer South

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ A10982	♠ KQJ73
♥ KQ3	♥ A105
♦ J9763	♦ 107543
♣	♣

Miraculously, you and your partner arrive in 6S (your great bidding, of course) and the opening lead from silent opponents is the DK. Plan the play. With a void in both hands, you can ruff all your diamonds in dummy and all your clubs in hand (a cross-ruff). As you hold so many of the top trumps, it is unlikely that any one will ever overruff you (after the S2 and S3 have scored, the rest of your trumps are unbeatable). This means you will take ten trump tricks. Not a bad start.

Before crossruffing, however, it is a very good idea to cash your side-suit winners (hearts) first. If you wait, a defender may be able to discard a heart or two as you merely crossruff. Later, when you try to cash your heart winners, a spade may suddenly appear on the table — one of your spades! And since you will be out of trumps by then, down you go.

So how many heart tricks should you try to cash before crossruffing? These are the numbers: a 4-3 break occurs a bit more than 62% of the time, and a 5-2 break occurs 30.5% of the time.

At IMP scoring, where making your contract is the most important thing, there is no good reason to risk cashing the third round of hearts. If it gets ruffed and a trump comes back, your crossruff is ruined and there is a good chance that you will wind up with just 11 tricks. Take the money (two hearts and ten trumps) and run.

What about Matchpoints, where overtricks are more important? Take two hearts and run even faster! Have you noticed that you are in a slam with 20 HCP between the two hands? In a world of point counters, how many pairs do you think will get to this slam? Baby, you are in the contract of your life — I've seen hands like this passed out! Don't risk going down for an overtrick when you already have ALL the matchpoints.

At Matchpoints, you can risk your contract for an overtrick(s) when you are in a normal contract and have the odds in your favour. But when you are in a great contract (or a doubled contract) play it safe!

You are South, declarer in 3NT

NORTH	SOUTH
♠ 875	♠ AKQ
♥ 876	♥ AK4
♦ 75	♦ AK32
♣ A10754	♣ 832

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass 2NT
Pass 3NT	Pass	Pass	
Pass			

West leads the S4, presumably from a holding headed by S J 10 9. Spades don't worry you, but you have only eight sure tricks. No suit other than clubs seems to offer the possibility of extras. What is your plan?

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

— continues to ruin my life - Bill Watterson (7)

HRZAE

EPTIR

AEGNLT

BBGRUY

ANSWER: Really continues to ruin my life - Bill Watterson
SOLUTION: HAZEL, TRIPLE, TANGLE, GRUBBY

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2276

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Basque ball game (6)
- Extended musical composition (8)
- Aches, pains, suffers (8)
- More profound (6)
- Blending, mingling (6)
- Holiness (8)
- Porch (7)
- Rotten; bribable (7)
- Resisted or repulsed (8)
- Swaps, deals in (6)
- Trifles (6)
- Neither begged for nor stolen? (8)
- Instruction session (8)
- Local inhabitant (6)

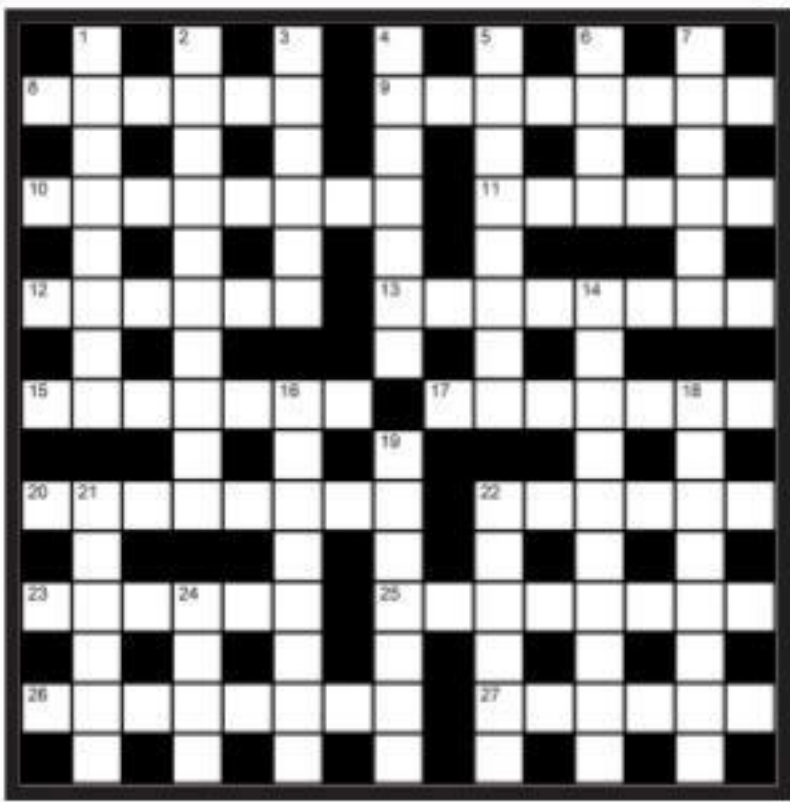
DOWN

- Show live on TV (8)
- Make more difficult (10)
- Finish to pedestrian way (6)
- Be made up of (7)
- Spanish dance (8)
- Underground mammal (4)
- Deflect, turn (6)
- Red fired clay (10)
- Coastal area of Croatia (6)
- Maintain (8)
- Eccentric person (7)
- Scolding (6)
- Crowd of people (6)
- Stringed instrument (4)
- He may produce stupor - in his readers? (6)
- Scepticism for a French unfinished bell that is loud (8)
- About fifty workers in a pea cannery and they work slowly (8)
- Right breed of cattle from Ireland (6)
- Unconsciously sound reasons for discovering minerals beneath the poles (6)
- Gives prominence to regular items (8)
- Floor covering which is French in some degree (7)
- The churchmen who keep to one colour on board (7)
- Determined to lay about with our steel (8)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Larks in a strange land (3,5)
- Money you don't get for nothing? (4,3,3)
- Reportedly filches metals (6)
- Doesn't encourage delays (4,3)
- A beverage custom, timeless, in an Arab sheikdom (3,5)
- Try out a wiry muscle? (4)
- Cancel a French season after being led astray (6)
- Dirty, unhappy, lacking application, private ... otherwise nice! (10)
- Egghead joked that he was properly prepared (8)
- Supposes the bird got locked up in the cupboard (8)
- The man without even the



- The Australian gardener? (6)
- All you can hold for a penny that's exciting! (6)
- Sat back playing flute (8)
- Marlborough's house-dog (8)
- Gotten up like a siren, perhaps (6)
- Larks in a strange land (3,5)
- Money you don't get for nothing? (4,3,3)
- Reportedly filches metals (6)
- Doesn't encourage delays (4,3)
- A beverage custom, timeless, in an Arab sheikdom (3,5)
- Try out a wiry muscle? (4)
- Cancel a French season after being led astray (6)
- Dirty, unhappy, lacking application, private ... otherwise nice! (10)
- Egghead joked that he was properly prepared (8)
- Supposes the bird got locked up in the cupboard (8)
- The man without even the

- opportunity for a quick snack (3-4)
- Wickedly ill, surrounded by nameless envy (6)
- Underworld spring causing consternation (6)
- Queue for a job? (4)vessel (6)

Solutions to 2275

QUICK CLUES Across: 8 Fluent, 9 Authored, 10 Revamped, 11 Unhand, 12 Fedora, 13 Rosemary, 14 Delater, 16 Idleness, 20 Assailed, 23 Sawyer, 25 Tobago, 26 Bulgaria, 27 Well Well, 28 Sits Up, Down: 1 Aloe vera, 2 Legato, 3 Stoppage, 4 Yard-Arm, 5 Struts, 6 Bonhomie, 7 Keener, 15 Sparable, 17 Disclose, 18 Specious, 19 Outbark, 21 Slipped, 22 Cooper, 24 Wraith, CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 8 Before, 9 Charcoal, 10 Price-War, 11 Laddie, 12 Off Air, 13 River-Man, 14 Legends, 16 Hat-Pins, 20 Lamppost, 23 Unsaid, 25 Tee Off, 26 All Right, 27 Live Long, 28 Not Bad, Down: 1 Pee Riffle, 2 Watcha, 3 New World, 4 Scores, 5 Pexbox, 6 Acid Drop, 7 Marina, 15 Exploded, 17 Aqualing, 18 Nail-Head, 19 Strange, 21 Amelia, 22 On Foot, 24 Stints.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday July 5

You can afford to be optimistic about the future, largely because of all the efforts you have put in. A friend will support you, so make plans and a workable strategy.

Monday July 6

You're back on form and your rising confidence may be seen in the Moon's alignments. You might still be inclined to keep to yourself, which may come as a surprise to people.

Tuesday July 7

Your feelings for a certain person could be surprisingly strong. You're also in a confident mood and will take the lead. There will be positive pay-offs over the next year.

Wednesday July 8

You're tougher than you seem. It's an ideal moment to increase the energy you're putting into professional and worldly ambitions. You can handle practical problems with great efficiency.

Thursday July 9

You may begin to get ready to implement repairs and improvements at home which are overdue. You should also take the initiative if family affairs are floundering.

Friday July 10

An element of chance is introduced into your ordered and regulated routine. That allows you to exert free will, for if cracks appear, you can make new arrangements.

Saturday July 11

You're passing through a period of maximum inspiration, but also of potential confusion. If your confidence begins to suffer, get back to the facts.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You're right in the middle of a period of financial opportunity. For some of you this may necessitate a brief crisis before things get better. For all of you the long-term prospects are excellent. Tuesday and Wednesday favour all domestic undertakings and family gatherings. Thursday and Friday place the emphasis on professional and worldly ambitions.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Opportunities are coming your way. You have two choices. Either you may ride out the storm and risk losing control. Or you may actively seize the initiative and assert your presence, insisting that others pay attention to what you need and want. Thursday's lunar alignments offer you the key to personal success.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

It's certainly a busy time, but you seem to be rather under the weather, or in danger of succumbing to emotional stress. You may not see eye to eye with one particular colleague. The advice is to relax and see to it that you have sufficient time to yourself.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Mars and Venus, planets of energy and desire, are especially active at the moment. Your stars are nothing if not passionate, but do remember that when strong feelings surface, they can swing either way. As the old saying tells us, love and hate are different sides of the same coin.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Your stars are a mixed bag this week. Although you have excellent reason for optimism, if you fail to take note of reality you may find that the ground is swept from under your feet. Deal with all disagreements, otherwise family members are liable to take offence.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

It's time to talk, and I don't just mean about day-to-day affairs. You've a lot on your mind and friends and relatives can't advise you unless they know what you're really feeling. If you are frank, open and honest now, you'll stand a better chance of avoiding potential misunderstandings towards the end of the week.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The overwhelming impact of your planets is felt on your finances. There are some expensive purchases lined up, but far-sighted Librans will be concentrating on saving. It's also a serious time, a moment to contemplate life's many unanswerable questions. Try to find some space for yourself, reviewing your progress so far, and making plans for the future.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

You're bound to be the centre of attention — at least for a few more days. All eyes are now on you, and when the Moon offers you its support early in the week, you will be challenged to display your social and healing skills. By this I mean that while other people are falling out, you must come to the rescue.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)

You may be pulled up short by something that happens towards the end of the week. Your sense of self-preservation will stop you doing anything silly, but you'll still have to step in to help a close friend out of a tight spot. Someone at work may need placating, so do your best.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your social stars are becoming increasingly lively, but no less serious for that. Most of you were never that interested in small talk and now, more than ever, you'll want to mix with old friends and companions who offer some sort of close commitment. At work, focus on long-term plans.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

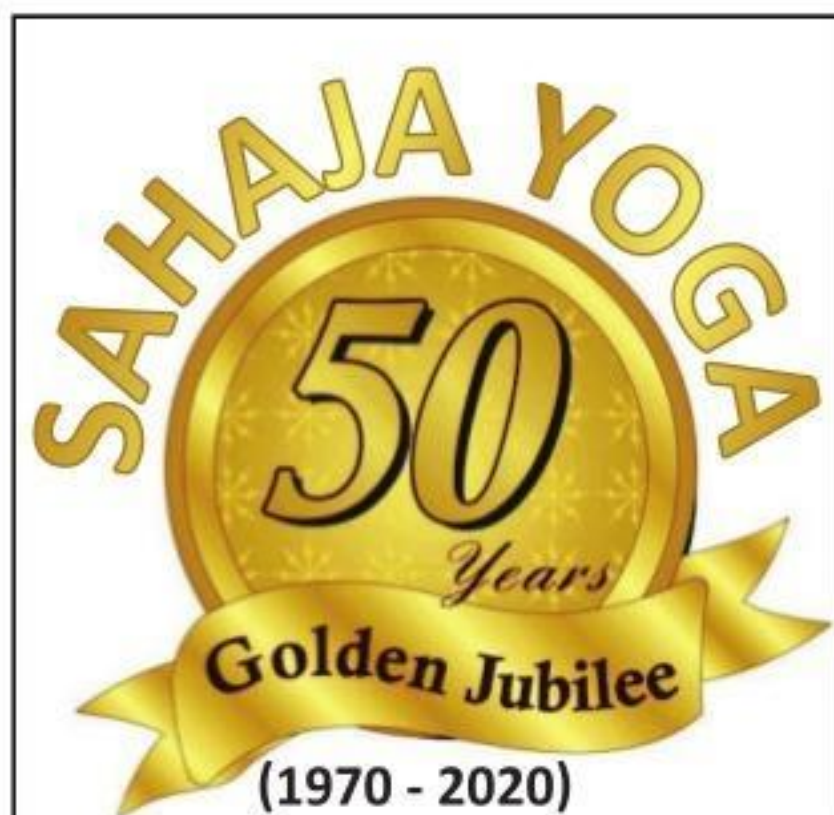
Intense trends strengthen as your planets form and reform their relationships. If you're contemplating either a change of job or a new community commitment, now is the time to pull out all the stops. Don't compromise your principles. Family life is on a fundamentally positive path, even if there is a glitch.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You're passing through a far-seeing, adventurous moment. Travel stars grow stronger and all Pisceans with wanderlust will be itching to fly to foreign parts as soon as possible. Your mystical nature is also on the move and you may be rediscovering some strange interests. Legal and educational questions should be cleared up.

Guru Poornima

SAHAJA YOGA



HER HOLINESS SHRI MATAJI NIRMALA DEVI
Founder of Sahaja Yoga
Giving Self-Realisation by Kundalini Awakening



QUALITIES OF A REAL GURU

A GURU CONNECTS YOU TO THE DIVINE:

The first and foremost quality of a Guru is that he makes you meet God, means he raises the Kundalini and establishes your relation with the all-pervading power. It was asked to Guru Nanaka and he said, "Sahib mili hain so hi Satguru." Meaning, the one who makes you meet the Divine is the only one who is the Satguru, who is the Guru. Then he has categorized them as agurus, kugurus etc. But the one who is a Satguru, the one who is the real Guru is the one who makes you meet God, makes you meet this Divine power.

YOU CANNOT PURCHASE A GURU:

A Guru has to take full responsibility of the well-being and righteousness of the disciple, with the same intensity as the mother. Guru is the one who connects the disciple to the Brahmachaitanya. You cannot purchase him. If you buy a Guru then he is your slave, he cannot be a Guru.

A GURU HAS TO BE A REALIZED SOUL OF A VERY HIGH QUALITY AND GREATLY EVOLVED:

The Guru has to be a real Guru, not one who is just exploiting the disciples and who is not authorized

by God. There is a gap between human awareness and Divine awareness, a very big gap, and that gap can be only fulfilled by a Guru who himself is complete. Today is a Poornima day, 'Poornima' means the complete moon. The Guru has to be a complete personality to talk about the Statutes of the Lord and to elevate his disciples to this level of understanding, by which they imbibe those statutes. He is there to fulfill this gap, and for that it is essential that every Guru has to be a realized soul of a very high quality and greatly evolved.

A GURU NEED NOT BE AN ASCETIC: If you see the lives of all these Gurus, they were married, they had children, they lived a normal life. Yet in their own personal life they were absolutely detached people. A Guru need not be a person who is an ascetic, or he need not be a person who is living in the forest. He could be a common householder, he could be a king. All these outward manifestations of one's life do not matter.

(Guidance given by
Her Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi)

ALL THE REALISED SOULS AND GURUS SPOKE OF UNIVERSAL LOVE AND PEACE

"When you live in the realm of the Divine Power, the *Brahma*, it looks after you."

— Raja Janak



"Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren."

— Abraham

"Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself is true power."

— Lao-Tse



"There is only one path and that is the path of Truth."

— Zoroaster

"See the Divine in the Human Being."

— Shri Shirdi Sai Baba



"You shall therefore keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that you may be strong."

— Moses

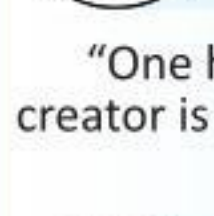
"The unexamined life is not worth living."

— Socrates



"Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

— Confucius



"One hour's meditation on the work of the creator is better than seventy years of prayer."

— Prophet Mohammed



"See the brotherhood of all mankind as the highest order of yogis; conquer your own mind, and conquer the whole world."

— Guru Nanak

Guru Is He Who Connects You To God

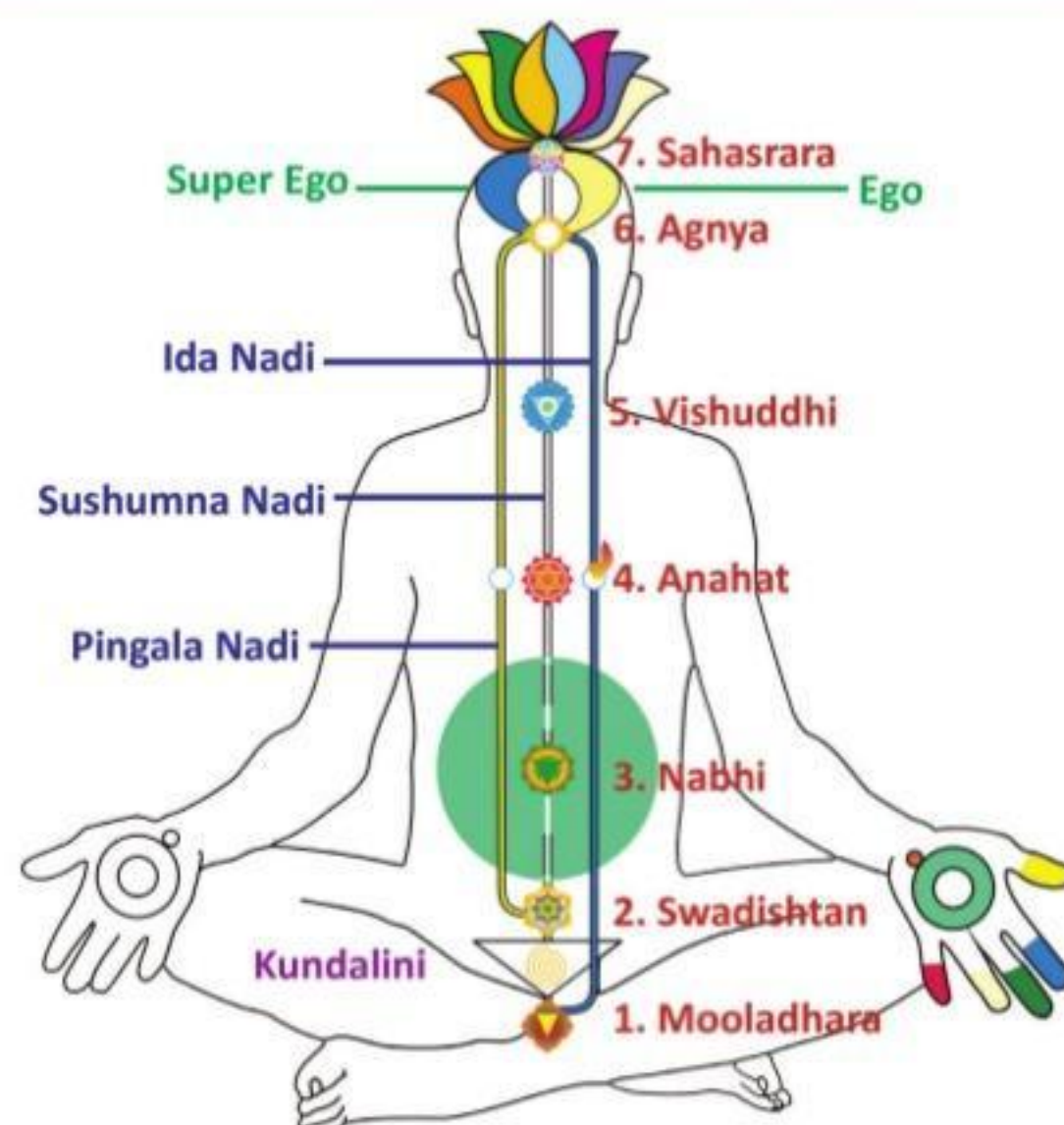
7 Touchstones For Seekers of a True Spiritual Master

Seekers of truth tend to look for a Guru to guide them through the ordeals of life and channelize their seeking of God. This is to caution them of false gurus mushrooming in India, ready to rob them of their faith, money, health and common sense.

1. Is money taken at any time? If it's not free, it's a fraud. The truth cannot be owned, nor can it be bought or sold.
2. If he or his agents pursue you like salesmen and take money, they are an organized business. The more valuable the path, the less organized it is, unlike a business.
3. What experience do you get? A transitory experience is not necessarily divine. Visions, voices, astral projections, auras, levitation, predictions, communication with the dead and other similar feats are dangerous.

4. If it teaches giving up family and property in the name of austerity or renunciation, it's a swindle you are about to subject yourself to.
5. Are you asked to clothe in unusual dress, sit in strange postures, perform wild chanting, or wear rings or some sort of an ornament? God is beyond these and the power of pure desire is all that matters.
6. What do you get? Does the Guru make you *dharma* (righteous/ virtuous and not religious)? If he teaches that a particular religion is superior to others, he is faking spirituality.
7. If you are guided towards either sexual liberation or austerities, you are in a wrong place, ready to be physically exploited by fake gurus and their agents of deceit.

Good luck to you on your path of seeking!



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