

**OPINION 6**  
CHECKMATING  
CHINA

**MONEY 9**  
MANUFACTURING  
CONTRACTS FOR 4TH MONTH

**SPORT 12**  
TALENT IS NOT THE PROBLEM  
IN OUR COUNTRY, SAYS CHHETRI

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

Late City Vol. 16 Issue 207  
\*Air Surchage Extra if Applicable

BHUBANESWAR, TUESDAY AUGUST 4, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹4



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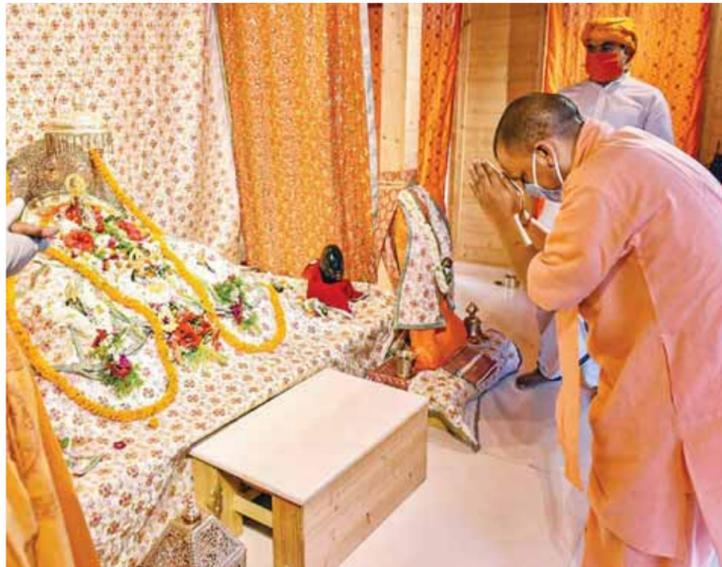
## Only 4 on temple stage with PM

Bhagwat, UP Gov, UP CM, Mahant Gopaldas to share podium with Modi during bhoomi puja; Uma to stay away from event

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share the stage with just four more dignitaries — Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Nritya Gopaldas — at the grand Ram Temple foundation-stone laying ceremony at Ayodhya on August 5.

Even someone like Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is one of the tallest leaders from Uttar Pradesh and former Chief Minister of the State, will not be on the dais. Home Minister Amit Shah will not be able to make it due to Covid-19 infection, and veteran LK Advani and MM Joshi will have to watch the ceremony on video conference from Delhi itself. Both Joshi and Advani were reportedly advised by the organisers to not travel to Ayodhya due to their age related vulnerability to Covid-19.



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers to Lord Ram during his visit to Ram Janmabhoomi premises to take stock of preparedness for the ground breaking ceremony of the Ram Mandir, in Ayodhya, on Monday PTI

Firebrand BJP leader Uma Bharti said she would, for the safety of the PM and other guests, stay away from the event and visit the site after everyone was gone. Incidentally, only a day ago she had declared she would take part in the ceremony.

The invitations are only for residents of Ayodhya. The first invite went to Iqbal Ansari, one

of the Muslim litigants in the Ayodhya case. Padma Shri recipient Mohammad Sharif, another Muslim, honoured for cremating over 10,000 unclaimed bodies, has also been invited.

The invitation card mentions Prime Minister Narendra Modi and three more names,

indicating a vastly trimmed list in the time of Covid-19. The invite also has an image of the idol of "Ram Lalla" or infant Lord Ram. Each invitation has a security code that will work only once; if the guest exits the venue they will not be allowed back in, according to Champat Rai of

the Ram Temple trust. Invites have been sent to some 175 people for the elaborate "Bhoomi Puja" organised on Wednesday in the middle of the nation's coronavirus fight. Champat Rai said the invites were finalised only after they RSVP-ed on phone calls. "We have the Covid situation,

that's why we have kept social distancing in mind. We have personally called and apologised to many people. Age is a factor too. How will Advaniji (91) come at his age? So we have carefully prepared a list around these compulsions," he said.

On inviting the Muslim litigant, Rai said: "Celebrating an event does not mean someone else should feel bad. No one should be teased."

PM Modi is expected to establish a 40 kg silver brick for the symbolic start of the construction of a Ram Temple that has been central to the BJP's core agenda and election promises for decades.

According to news agency ANI, three prominent scholars of Astrology and Vyakaran left for Ayodhya from Kashi on Monday to participate and supervise in the rituals of the 'Bhoomi Puja'.

The scholars are office-bearers of the Kashi Vidwat Parishad, an organisation of intellectuals and scholars of Veda, Astrology, Paninian, Sanskrit Grammar and Indian philosophy. The organisation represents Kashi. Three scholars, including the VHP vice-president Prof Ramchandra Pandey, member Prof Vinay Kumar Pandey and Prof Ramnarayan Dwivedi, the convener have left for Ayodhya.

## 'Sushant was disturbed at Disha's suicide link'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ongoing sluffest between the Bihar and Mumbai Police over the investigation into the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case assumed a new dimension on Monday as Mumbai Police Commissioner Parambar Singh went on record saying that he was "emotionally disturbed" after his ex-manager Disha Saliyan's alleged suicide.

A day after Mumbai BJP general secretary and MLA Ameet Satam raised suspicions over Disha's alleged suicide and indirectly linked the development with the actor, the Mumbai Police chief came clean on the issue by saying that the late actor was "emotionally disturbed" to see his name being linked with Disha.

Disha allegedly committed suicide by falling from the 14th floor of a building in Malad in Mumbai on June 8. Talking to mediapersons, the city police chief said, "When the actor saw his name being linked to Disha Saliyan's death in the social media, he was emotionally disturbed. He (Sushant) had met Disha Saliyan only once, he even asked his advocate who she was."

Singh said that the actor was acutely conscious about what was being published, appearing about him in both the media and social media.

"Sushant would Google search for articles and his name to find out what was being written about him. He would

## Mumbai top cop says late actor had met Disha for just once



also search for "painless death," "schizophrenia and bipolar disorder," the police chief said.

The Mumbai Police chief's clarification came after former Chief Minister and current Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis tore into the Uddhav Thackeray dispensation for quarantining an IAS officer from Bihar who is in Mumbai to investigate the actor's suicide case.

"It is really very strange why the Maharashtra Government is coming under unnecessary suspicion by not allowing Bihar Police to perform their duties. Instead of solving the mystery of Sushant's death, such behavior will only result into huge public outcry and disbelief amongst the people about the investigation,"

Fadnavis said in two tweets. Fadnavis charged that the Mumbai Police were adopting different yardsticks for police from different States and for different cases. "A medical team from Kerala visited Mumbai, UP Police came to investigate Vikas Dubey case, a team from the Bihar Police is already working in Mumbai since 4 days but none of them were quarantined then why only an SP rank officer is treated differently?," the senior BJP leader asked.

## Covid patient to doc

### 'Give me proper care, food or kill me'

Video underscores all's not well in Sambalpur hospital

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

"Kill me, if you can. I am not interested to live further as everyone hates me," said a patient undergoing treatment in the Covid Hospital in Sambalpur to his attending doctor. He also requested the doctor to give him proper medicine and food.

A video on this has gone viral in the social media, and pointing out the poor standards

of treatment and food. "I have requested the doctors in charge of treatment to give me an injection so that I will die soon," the patient says in the video. The patient has been in the hospital for four days. He seems under severe mental trauma, may be due to the dreaded disease.

When contacted, Sambalpur district Collector Subham Saxena said some Covid patients are undergoing psychological disorders too. "Hence, it is obvious for them to express their reactions in many ways."

"Still, doctors and other staffs have been asked to treat patients with a human touch," said Saxena, adding, "We are further arranging to send psychologists to meet such patients for proper counselling so that they can come out of trauma."

## India pips USA, Brazil in daily virus cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday piped the USA and Brazil to record the highest daily rise in coronavirus cases in the world. This was the first time that India's daily spike was the highest in the world.

While India recorded 52,783 cases, the USA reported 49,038 and Brazil reported

24,801 cases. This was after many weeks that the USA's caseload came below 50,000 marks and Brazil listed below 30,000 cases.

In terms of mortality, India was again ahead of both the USA and Brazil, but Mexico recorded the highest number of death on Monday. India recorded 758 deaths, the USA

## Mexico registers highest number of deaths

467, Brazil 514 whereas Mexico listed 784 deaths.

Meanwhile, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation (WHO) has said the number of cases globally has increased more than 5-fold to 17.5 million and the number of deaths has more than tripled to 6,80,000 since WHO's emergency committee on Covid last met 3 months ago.

Dr Tedro also said several vaccines are now in phase-3 clinical trials and the world can hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection. However, there's no silver bullet at the moment and there might never be, he said.

Addressing the Emergency Committee on Covid-19, convened by the WHO Director-General under the

International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR), Dr Tedros said, "The pandemic is a once-in-a-century health crisis, the effects of which will be felt for decades to come. Many countries that believed they were past the worst are now grappling with new outbreaks. Some that were less affected in the earliest weeks are now seeing escalating numbers of cases and deaths. And some that had large outbreaks have brought them under control."



A medic wearing PPE kit collects sample from a woman for Covid-19 rapid antigen testing, in Kolkata, on Monday PTI

## Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 18,55,238

DEATHS: 38,972

RECOVERED: 12,29,329

ACTIVE: 5,86,500

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,50,196	15,842	2,87,030
Tamil Nadu	2,63,222	4,241	2,02,283
Andhra Pradesh	1,66,586	1,537	88,672
Karnataka	1,39,571	2,594	62,500
Delhi	1,38,482	4,021	1,24,254
Uttar Pradesh	97,362	1,778	55,393
West Bengal	78,232	1,731	54,818
Telangana	67,660	551	48,609
Gujarat	64,684	2,504	47,663
Bihar	59,567	336	38,508
Rajasthan	45,555	719	32,051
Assam	45,276	109	32,385
Haryana	37,173	440	30,470
Odisha	36,297	248	23,074
Madhya Pradesh	34,285	900	24,099
Kerala	26,873	85	15,278

## 10 more deaths; State Covid toll now 207

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Coronavirus infections claimed 10 more lives in the State on Monday, increasing the total death toll to 207. While Ganjam and Rayagada districts reported three deaths each, Gajapati reported two and Khordha and Kalahandi one each.

The Ganjam deceased included a 48-year-old man, a 54-year-old man and a 54-year-old woman. The deceased in Rayagada included a 70-year-old man, a 64-year-old man and a 61-year-old man.

The two fatalities in Gajapati were a 34-year-old man and a 44-year-old man. The other deceased was a 66-year-old man of Kalahandi and a 63-year-old man of Khordha.

Meanwhile on Monday, as many as 1,384 more persons tested positive in the State, pushing the total number of positive cases to 36,297, including 14,095 active ones.

• 1,384 new positive cases; total 36,297  
• Day's highest 331 in Ganjam again  
• Record 1,119 recoveries; total 23,073

Of the new cases, 873 were detected from quarantine centres and 511 were local contact cases.

The day's highest 331 cases were reported from Ganjam district again followed by Khordha 211, Koraput 97, Sambalpur 93, Cuttack 89, Baleswar 79, Gajapati 61, Balangir 51, Sundargarh 46, Malkangiri 39, Rayagada 38, Bargarh 33, Mayurbhanj 29, Nabarangpur 26, Bhadrak 25, Jagatsinghpur and Nayagarh 22 each, Jajpur 18, Angul 13, Dhenkanal and Kendrapada 11, Jharsuguda seven, Subarnapur six and Kalahandi and Nuapada four each.

However, a record 1,119 patients recovered on the day,

taking the total recoveries to 23,073. It was for the first time that the State recorded over 1,000 recoveries in a single day since the outbreak of the pandemic.

The highest 354 recovered in Ganjam district followed by Khordha 97, Gajapati 83, Jajpur 70, Keonjhar, Cuttack 50, Boudh 40, Nayagarh 37, Rayagada 35, Puri 31, Baleswar 30, Mayurbhanj 29, Bhadrak 28, Jagatsinghpur 27, Dhenkanal 24, Sundargarh 22, Kandhamal 17, Balangir and Sambalpur 16 each, Malkangiri 15, Nabarangpur 12, Kendrapada 11 Angul and Koraput five each, Bargarh four, Subarnapur three and Jharsuguda one.

## 89 more Covid infections in BBSR; total 3,038

• 107 patients recover  
• 87 new cases in Cuttack city; super spreader infects 57

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR/ CUTTACK

Bhubaneswar on Monday recorded 89 more Covid-19 positive cases, taking its total tally to 3,068. Out of the new cases, 65 were from quarantine and 24 were local contacts, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said.

The quarantine cases included 17 of Aiginia Aulu Gadi linked with an earlier positive case; seven, all males, of Police Reserve Colony linked with an earlier case; five of Gautan Nagar Basti linked with

an earlier case; four of Badagada Nua Sahi linked with an earlier case; three of Rasulgarh GGP Colony linked with an earlier case; three of Jagamar Uppar Sahi linked with an earlier case; three of Chandrasekharpur Shramik Basti linked with an earlier case; two of Unit-8 CBI Colony; two of Unit-6 linked with an earlier case; one of Pokhariptu Gopalakrishna Vihar; and one of Pokhariptu Ananta Vihar, who is a CRPF employee with travel history of Hyderabad.

The local contacts included two of BJB Nagar; two of Ganganagar; two of Unit-6 Radhakrusha Basti; one of Pokhariptu Gopalakrishna Nagar; one of Rameshwarpatta; one of Kolathia; one of Tamando Subudhipur; one of Nayapalli

near CRPF Square; one of Satyanagar near Big Bazaar; and one of Kharavel Nagar Press Colony.

However, as many as 107 patients recovered from the disease in the city on the day. In Cuttack, 87 more positive cases were detected on Monday. With this, the city's total cases rose to 1,091. Of the new cases, 76 were from home quarantine, eight local contacts, two from paid quarantine and institutional quarantine, the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) said.

A super spreader has infected 57 persons in the city, including 27 women in Malgondw Behera Sahi. On July 29, the CMC had declared Behera Sahi as a containment zone after detection 12 positive cases.

The depressions would be formed on August 4 and August 8 which might trigger heavy rain, said the Regional Office of the Indian Metrological Department (IMD) here on Monday.

The low pressure on August 4 would bring rains till August 6. Likewise, the depression on August 8 would trigger rains till August 11.

"The monsoon trough-line is now moving southward; hence, Odisha would experience rainfall. This would be a welcome relief for the much distressed farmers in the State,

## Low pressures to trigger rain in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Two low pressures formed in the Bay of Bengal are likely to trigger heavy to very heavy rainfall in the State.

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The low pressure on August 4 would bring rains till August 6. Likewise, the depression on August 8 would trigger rains till August 11.

"The monsoon trough-line is now moving southward; hence, Odisha would experience rainfall. This would be a welcome relief for the much distressed farmers in the State,

who have been hit by deficit rainfall. A low pressure area likely to form over north Bay of Bengal around 4th August," said the IMD.

The weatherman also forecast rain, thunderstorm with lightning over several places in the State for next five days and have issued yellow warning for the period.

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Gajapati, Rayagada, Bargarh and Boudh while thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Balangir, Subarnapur, Boudh, Sambalpur, Angul, Kendrapada Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak and Dhenkanal during the period.

## Financial institutions can function with 50% staff

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government on Monday allowed financial institutions to function within restrictions amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a letter, the Finance Department asked the district authorities and the SLBC General Manager to allow the public and private sector banks, RRBs, Odisha State Cooperative Bank, small finance banks and insurance companies to function normally with 50% staff for the large branches.

The letter, however, stated full staff for the small branches having less than five employees must be allowed to function following strict social distancing, use of mask and hand sanitisers.

"Postal employees and bank employees are allowed to move to the premises of senior citizens and differently-abled persons to deliver cash on phone calls," the letter stated.

# 'Stop auction of 9 coal blocks'

**Save tribals' livelihood, nature: Samantara to CM**

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Auction of nine coal blocks in Odisha by the Central Government would be destructive as it would displace thousands of tribals and farmers and destroy thousands acres of agriculture land. Thus, the State Government should stop it.

Lok Shakti Abhiyan president Prafulla Samantara urged this in a letter to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday.

"There will be destruction of thousands acres of agriculture land in Chendipada area where there is coal under three feet beneath the earth. Similarly, huge forest areas will be lost in both two districts of Keonjhar and Jharsuguda," wrote Samantara.

He mentioned that another

very sensitive deep green forest in the Gandhalpada area in Keonjhar district having nine lakh trees, where auction for mining of iron ores would be done by the State Government, would be affected.

"All these natural resources have to be protected and conserved not only for the present but also for future generations as generational equitable justice," he remarked.

He apprised that the Jharkhand Government has filed objection in the Supreme Court against arbitrary decision on auction of nine coal blocks there and the Union Government excluded five coal blocks in Chhattisgarh in view of its protest.

"You can also stop the anti-people and anti-nature auction of rich natural resources of our State in the interest thousands' right to livelihood and climate justice. I appeal you to stop the destruction in the name of development," Samantara urged the CM.

# Shops to open till 8 pm in Cuttack

**Masks mandatory for shopkeepers, customers**

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) on Monday issued new guidelines for shops to reopen in Cuttack city. The shops, excluding medicine shops would close at 8 pm as night curfew would be imposed from 9 pm on weekdays.

The CMC took the decision following a meeting with the bazaar committees. All the shops have been directed to display boards for maintaining social distancing for the customers.

Besides, shopkeepers and staffs should use masks in the shops. Shopkeepers would not provide goods if any customer is not wearing mask.

"The shopkeepers shall deploy staff outside of the shop for orderly parking of vehicles as well as to maintain social distancing," a notification said.

If any shop is found violating social distance measures drastic action would be taken against the shops by sealing it and imposing hefty fine.

The CMC further said one-way traffic would be introduced in congested and crowded markets.

If any area is declared as containment zone, shopkeepers would cooperate in shutting down the shops in those areas.

# Mo Bus services from today

**BHUBANESWAR:** The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) would resume its Mo Bus services in various routes from Tuesday.

Non-AC buses would ply in eight routes -- 11, 16, 18, 20,

23, 25, 27 and 33 between 7 am and 7 pm. Passengers without masks would not be allowed for boarding.

However, services would remain suspended on weekend shutdowns in August. **PNS**

# 'BJD leaders mock corona norms in Banki'

**BHUBANESWAR:** Congress leader Debashish Patnaik on Sunday alleged that former Banki MLA Pravat Ranjan Tripathy and his MLA-son Debi Ranjan Tripathy have violated Covid guidelines many times, making a mockery of shutdown and lockdown being announced by the State Government to check spread of Covid-19.

"The former BJD MLA inaugurated these petrol pumps on July 25, 29 and 31. A lot of people gathered without using masks. They didn't maintain social distancing. Earlier to these events, MLA Tripathy celebrated his birth day by organising a blood donation camp at the BJD party office. Here also Covid guidelines were violated bluntly," alleged Patnaik, former MLA of Banki.

He wanted to know why police have not accepted an FIR lodged against them. "If Congress and BJP leader are being booked for violation of Covid guidelines, why action will not be taken against BJD leaders," wanted to know Patnaik. **PNS**

# Interview of the week

## Indian spirit will delink itself from electoral politics menace



Sugyan Choudhury

A star alumnus of the Utkal University, having had bagged two gold medals from the PG Department of Physics in 1973, **Dr Kailash Chandra Mishra** took to the world of academics like a fish takes to water. Thereafter, he had added degrees like CAIIB, MBA and DLit in post-doctoral education at the Wharton's Aresty Business School, Philadelphia. A philosopher king in the empire of academia, an apostle of Oriental ethos, a management guru both at home and abroad, he is one of the best brains that this country has produced. He was Vice-Chancellor of Sri Sri University; Director of LBSIM, Delhi; Director of National Insurance Academy, Pune; Member, IRDAI Advisory Committee; Member, SEBI Market Development Committee; Member, EPFO Pension Reforms Committee; Member, RBI Reserve Management Best Practice Advisory Group; Dean, Area Chair and Professor of ASCI, SPJAIN and BOI-MDC, World Bank Temporary staff for disaster management; Board of Director and Audit Committee Chairman of UTI, Mumbai; Advisor of Planning Commission of India; Advisor to Ministry of Health on RCH and Insurance, Emeritus Professor in Management (Now attached to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, Delhi), Advisory Council member of only Insurance Product Rating Agency Beshqa.com, Bengaluru. He was decorated with many awards like Bhavan's Samman for Education, UKIERI (UK and India Joint Award) for financial skill development, Student Speaker of Columbia University, USA and Best Citizen of India award by World Biographers' Association. In an interview to *The Pioneer*, Dr Mishra spoke to **Sugyan Choudhury** on many key affairs of current economic, business affairs arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last century had seen Spanish Flu around 1918 which lasted for three years. When Covid-19 struck the world, even the serious governments and their think tanks never took it as a disaster. They were still busy listening to the distant drums created from their intellectual membrane. Crisis is at every body's door and its urgency brings out the best in human creativity. The ongoing suffering will eventually give rise to a new healthcare world in particular and new lifestyle in general.

## to restore national growth

Zealand and Vietnam have safeguarded life of their citizens ensuring smooth retention of their livelihoods. They protect systemic values of institutions. They separate electoral politics compulsions from technical imperatives like efficiency, rationality and administration with an eye on pluralism of values and culture.

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), nearly 25 million jobs could be lost world wide due to pandemic meaning income losses for workers to the tune of US\$ 3.4 trillion by the end of 2020. This will translate into a temporary fall in the consumption of goods and services; and, in turn, affect the national economies. But economies with strong economic governance capability, absorption capacity of intermediate enabling technology, genuine skill development efforts and cheap power and labour will come out strong.



Dr Kailash Chandra Mishra

## How do you see evolution of online trading in India?

Online trading or e-commerce is a great tool for productivity anywhere in the world. Amazon or Alibaba showed how quickly success can be harnessed. Online trading requires a robust platform, seamless logistics and ethical behaviour towards customers. It has no geographical limitation excepting compliance of law of the land of operation and regulatory compliances. While logistics is the forward integration of the platform, producers are the backyard integration. The Reliance Jiomart is scaling up very fast while Flipkart or Amazon had already established their presence. Online trading will flourish in India exponentially given the consumer base and changing preference of particularly urbanites. Even erstwhile brick and mortar businesses like Walmart have become online traders. There will be weeding out of some non-serious or unoptimised platforms. but in general the hybrid model of producer, platform, logistics and outlets are going to coexist in many forms. They are and will be the biggest employment providers.

## What do you see of the economic fallouts of this pandemic in India?

Vulnerability is the key. Pandemic is a global phenomenon, which will shrink economic size and growth of most countries. Countries which have developed Venezuela syndrome where governments at top are corrupt and unimaginative, people are lazy as they are used to government largesse harnessed either from exploitation of natural resources or still worse from borrowings, are most certain going to be in distress with hunger, crime and unemployment. Governments with good leadership like Germany, New

India livelihood situation during this period can be highlighted by some major trends in the national-level employment. As per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), around 47% adults are working in the country with dependence multiplier of 3, almost 52% workers are self-employed followed by casual workers 25% and the remaining 23% are regular or salaried workers. Of these, the casual workers are the most vulnerable due to the irregular nature of their work. Almost 96% of the self-employed are either own-account workers or unpaid family worker or sole workers with only 4% constituting employers or entrepreneurs. These sole workers are as vulnerable as casual workers.

Special Insurance Scheme for Covid Health workers, PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, augmented PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, PMGKY components, augmented MNREGA, National Rural Livelihood Mission and few other welfare schemes are announced for providing relief to such vulnerable workers. The package of 1.7 lakh crore announced for the purpose may not be adequate given the dimension and duration of vulnerability. The stimulus package looks very cosmetic and without application of economic and welfare mind.

The unemployment situation is growing bleaker. Government should not continue to be in denial mode. Problem can be assuaged only if it is honestly recognised. GDP had already decelerated its growth due to unimaginative economic governance even in pre-pandemic days. During pandemic de-growth is obvious but post pandemic, there may be a U-shaped recovery if economic governance is adequately toned up. Indian spirit will delink itself from electoral politics menace to restore its growth.

# 2 looter gangs busted in city; 8 held

**70 smartphones, 23 laptops, 9 bikes seized**

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

In a significant achievement, the Commissionerate police busted two looter gangs by arresting as many as eight gang members of both the gangs.

Police have seized 70 smartphones, 23 laptops and

nine motorcycles from their possession.

The accused were identified Ranjan Satpathy (20) of Chakeisiani, Sanjaya Behera (23) of Mali Sahi, Mantu Paikray (38) of Palamandap Sahi, Baramunda, Chandan Pradhan (27) of Mahabir Nagar, Samantrapur, Bhagabata Prasad Mohapatra (32) of Tangi Sahi, Gurujanga, Sk Zaved (37) of Hata Sahi Muslim Basti, Nimapada Alok Behera (28) of Gop area in Puri, and Pradip

Das (33) of Nimapada.

The accused belong to two groups of robbers. One of the groups used to lift laptops and mobile phones in Khandagiri and Tomando areas of the city and later disposed it off to buyers.

The other group was involved in snatching mobile phones and motorcycles from people during early morning hours after finding the victims alone, police sources said.

# Badminton campus at K Stadium soon

**₹45 cr to be spent**

**BHUBANESWAR:** To promote badminton as part of a move to make India a sports powerhouse, the State Government, the Dalmia Cement (Bharat) Limited and Indian Badminton coach Padmabhushan Pullela Gopichand would together set up a badminton high performance centre at the Kalinga Stadium campus here.

The Bhoomi Pujan for the centre was performed at the

academy site in the presence of Sports and Youth Services officials on Sunday.

The eight-court centre would come up at an expense of Rs 45 crore. Apart from latest sports amenities and facilities, the centre would have boarding and lodging facility for 40 players and eight coaches. Further, with a sitting capacity of about 500 spectators, the centre would be capable of hosting both national and international events in the future, informed a release.

# 6 bureaucrats given new charges

**BHUBANESWAR:** In a bureaucratic reshuffle, the State Government on Monday shifted six IAS and OAS officers and entrusted them with new responsibilities.

OAS officer Sanat Kumar Mohanty, currently Additional Secretary, ST/SC Development, has been transferred as district Collector, Khordha.

Outgoing Khordha Collector Sitansu Kumar Rout, also an OAS officer, has been posted as Additional Commissioner of Consolidation and Settlement,

Brahmapur.

IAS officer Keerthi Vasani V has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in charge of Covid management in Ganjam district.

Subhankar Mohapatra, also an IAS officer, has been appointed as Sub-Collector, Balliguda, Kandhamal district.

IAS officer Suryawanshi Mayur Vikas has been appointed as Sub-Collector, Sambalpur and IAS officer J Sonal as OSD in charge of Covid management in Gajapati district. **PNS**

# State's first plasma donor honoured

**PNS ■ KENDRAPADA**

Aul MLA Pratap Keshari Deb on Friday felicitated Manoj Kumar Baral (32), who donated plasma after his recovery from Covid-19 and saved two lives.

Deb visited the village of plasma donor at Radhanagar under Aul block. Baral is the first plasma donor in the State. The MLA presented him a shawl and flower bouquet and praised his effort in the corona battle.

Notably, Baral, who was detected the first covid positive patient in the district on April 6, was working as a plumber in



Abu Dhabi. He had returned from Abu Dhabi on March 21.

"We are proud for the noble gesture of Manoj for

saving the life of two Corona patients by donating his plasma. He is an example for others," said the fellow villagers of Manoj.

# 32nd foundation day of DAV Public School CSPur

## Ideas and skills, not facts are need of the hour



KALYANI PANDA

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic has brought a great upheaval in the total education system. A time has come when future is faced with uncertainties and unpredictable repercussions. Students have been segregated from real classrooms and the environments of schools. They do not come face to face with their familiar teachers who not only build their careers but also mould their personality, character and life itself. However, being a change agent is not as easy as it seems. It requires microscopic planning, great

precision and constant attention.

There was a time when teaching was confined within traditional lecturing to give the students theoretical and rule-based knowledge and information required for making a good scoring in examinations. Gone are the days when students used to be passive listeners only inside the four walls of a classroom. In the present scenario, a teacher's role has been changed to that of a facilitator. A question that often draws our attention is what actually the role of a teacher is in the 21st century. Is it to provide contents, facts, dates and formulas? Absolutely not. In fact, teachers are no more the source of information. Simply because children can get facts and data on anything any time anywhere. A simple click of mouse or touch on smart phones, Facebook, Wikipedia and, most importantly Google, can give them limitless information. Therefore, our curriculum should be focussed more on ideas and skills rather than facts and contents.

Now, question is what are these skills and ideas and how can they be achieved? It has

been rightly said that learning is not the product of teaching; it is rather the product of activities of the learners. Classroom activities not only enhance concept clarity but also create a vigorous ambience to enable the students to explore and experience things themselves and, thereby, develop various skills and ideas. The term which is aptly appropriate in this context is Experiential Learning, a way to apply academic content to real life. Students can be engaged in activities related to real life situations so that they can discover and learn various things practically rather than by goggling. On the basis of a chapter, they can be assigned with a variety of situations to build skills like critical thinking and analysis, problem solving and decision making, etc. We have to rethink on the kind of problems we ask the students to solve and the tools we use. Students are to be trained to use the ICT tools not to entertain themselves but to discuss, collaborate, compare and publish their ideas.

Development of ICT skills like searching, commenting, posting, subscribing, linking,

networking, editing, uploading, tagging, etc., are highly essential for online teaching. Apart from that, value-based teaching can bring remarkable attitudinal changes in students which will help them to generate positive thinking, willpower, readiness and courage to meet challenges, compassion, tolerance, etc., and ultimately can transform them into decent and civilised human beings. Competency-based education is another approach to allow the students to learn on the basis of their own abilities to master a particular skill at their own paces. Visual makes communication easier. So, teaching through Art Integration, which has recently been made compulsory by the CBSE, is absolutely a commendable step. Art-integrated activities like making projects, sketching, painting, debating, role play, power point presentation, etc., can be connected with teaching to strengthen the link between education and culture and develop knowledge, skills and values.

In this way, a shift from mark-centric approach to learner-centric approach is definitely going to give a new

dimension to the teaching-learning process in the present pandemic situation. It is not an exaggeration that teachers of the DAV Public School Chandrasekharpur are always ready to be the change agents. Since its inception from 4th of August 1989 till date, this school has been setting its own benchmarks in holistic and quality education for the all-round development of its students focussing on their performances in scholastic, co-scholastic and extracurricular activities following the latest trends of pedagogies and methodologies in education. It has been the right platform for an ideal amalgamation of Vedic traditions propounded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati with the latest development in science and technology to produce worthy citizens for the motherland.

No change is possible without conflict. So, let's overcome all conflicts and start from small steps to see its miraculous impact on our dear students.

(The writer is a senior faculty of the Dept of English, DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur)

# 2nd sero survey in BBSR in mid-August

**Operation now undertaken in Brahmapur**

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

In view of rising Covid-19 cases, the State government in collaboration with the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) would conduct a second phase random serological survey in Bhubaneswar in mid-August.

RMRC Director Sanghamitra Pati said the second-phase sero survey is crucial as its outcome would reflect the infection status of July. "Someone requires four weeks to get infected and develop antibodies and a complete immunity. That's why we will



conduct serological survey in phases," said Dr Pati.

On July 14, sero survey was conducted in the city which showed the infection status of June. Around 1.4% of the city's population developed antibodies, she informed.

She said that after Puri and Bhubaneswar, a serological survey was kick-started in

Brahmapur on Monday. The survey is being jointly undertaken by RMRC, Brahmapur Municipal Corporation and MKCG Hospital in 25 wards in a random manner. The sample target is 2,500. While 1,500 samples would be collected from community, 1,000 would be drawn from high-risk groups, she added.

**Power of love, devotion**

**Old man nursing +ve wife tests -ve**

**PNS ■ JAJPUR**

True love can keep coronavirus at bay even if some people may differ with this argument.

Kailash Pradhan (67) of Kaliapani under Sukinda block in Jajpur district had got his wife Goli (62) admitted to the Acharya Harihar Institute of Cancer at Cuttack. A few days ago, the institute was shut down after many patients and staffs tested Covid-positive. Goli was advised to stay in home quarantine where she was later found infected with coronavirus.

Since Goli always needed support of her husband for taking food and medicine, she was allowed to stay at home under the observation of local Covid hospital doctors.

After Goli was treated for 14 days and declared Covid negative, the health officials conducted a swab test of Kailash to find if he was infected with the disease while tak-

ing care of his wife. To the utmost surprise of the doctors, the man tested negative.

"Since we do not have any other family members, I had to take care of my wife. By the grace of God, she has got cured of Covid-19 and I have been found Covid negative. God is very kind to us," told Kailash.

What is quite surprising is that Kailash never wore any mask or hand-gloves while feeding and taking Goli around for a stroll in the courtyard of their house. He used his towel to cover his mouth and nose and used plain soaps for cleaning clothes and articles.

"This is a clear case of strong feeling on the part of a person for his beloved. He has defied all logic of science and we can say he has conquered Covid-19 by his true and perpetual love for his wife," said former Minister Prafulla Chandra Ghadai.



**MP seeks steps to curb crocodile menace in K'pada**

**Writes to Union Min**

**PNS ■ KENDRAPADA**

Local MP Anubhav Mohanty submitted the Management Action Plan (MAP) for the management and conservation of mangrove areas in the State during the year 2020-2021 to Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar and requested to release the required funds for effective implement of the plan.

Mohanty in the letter to Javadekar informed that the State Level Sanctioning Committee(SLSC) was held on

May 28 in which the MAP of the management and conservation of mangroves areas was approved. He too brought to the notice of the Union Minister about the frequent crocodile attacks in the district of Kendrapada and the loss of human lives along with the sorry plight of injured victims.

Most of the victims of such attacks are from the fishing community who depend on water to collect their livelihood. But the water bodies are infested with crocodiles. Though barricades are erected and human entry is forbidden during the mating and nesting season of the crocodiles, but human-mammal conflict is on the rise, said MP Mohanty, urging the Minister to take tangible and immediate action.

**₹13,805-cr petrochem unit at Paradip okayed**

**PNS ■ PARADIP**

The Indian Oil Board has given its go-ahead for implementation of an Integrated Para-Xylene (PX) and Purified Terephthalic Acid (PTA) complex project at Paradip at an estimated investment of Rs 13,805 crore at the Board meeting held here.

The PX-PTA complex shall be integrated with IndianOil's Paradip Refinery, which is operational since 2015.

Chairman, IndianOil, SM Vaidya said, "This plant, along with the upcoming MEG (Mono-Ethylene Glycol) plant of 357-KTA (kilo tonnes per annum) capacity at Paradip, would be a ready source of feedstock for the Indian Oil's upcoming 300-KTA textile yarn manufacturing project at Bhadrak and can similarly facilitate other textile and polyester projects in the region. We are sure that these investments, along with investments in other downstream projects will boost entrepreneurship not only in

Odisha but in the entire Eastern India that would contribute to the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' vision of our nation."

The PX/PTA project would be completed by early 2024. The petrochemicals complex will have a PX production capacity of 800,000 tonnes per annum, which would be the feedstock for production of PTA. The production capacity of PTA would be 1,200,000 tonnes per annum. IndianOil's MEG production facility is already under implementation at Paradip and will become operational towards the end of 2021.

The project is estimated to generate approximately five million man-days of employment over the three-year construction period with direct and indirect employment opportunities for more than 2,000 technically skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manpower in the various areas of operations, maintenance of units and logistics for handling the product value chain.

**Substandard plantation works**

**NREGA funds bungling in K'jhar Forest Dept to fore**

**RAJENDRA K SAHU ■ CHAMPUPA**

When Keonjhar Collector Ashish Thackre sanctioned Rs 98 crore from the DMF to enhance the MGNREGA wages from Rs 201 to Rs 298 at that time it was thought that the migrant labourers will no more go out of the district and durable assets like ponds, roads, plantation of forests will be created but if the recent allegation of low quality of plantation work by Keonjhar Forest department is any indication, it is a great setback not only to the MGNREGA and DMF but Government's effort to contain distress migration.

Sources revealed that in order to create village forest, Rs 13,18,700 had been sanc-

tioned from MGNREGA for plantation in 50 hectares of land in Pentadihi forest in Deobandh section under Ghatgaon range. As per rules, before planting of seedlings, it is required to dig pits in the month of April, May and June but it is alleged the Forest department was going to complete the project by digging below size pit instead of specific size of one feet deep and one feet diameter in the third week of July.

It is alleged that by digging below size pits, the Forest department was trying to misappropriate the wages of 5 work days which is Rs 1,490 per hectare in digging pit. There is also bungling of funds in use of fertilizer and manure on each hectare of land.

As the allegation flies thick

and fast, Ghanashyam Mahanta, ACF in Charge of Champua, who is known to very close to DFO Santosh Joshi, has been assigned the implementation of MGNREGA work by sidelining Ajaya Sahu, ACF in charge of Ghatagaon range.

Similarly, another close man of DFO, Keonjhar, Deputy Ranger of Ghatgaon Range Pitambar Naik against whom departmental inquiry was initiated for his alleged involvement in a fraud case when he was Deputy Ranger in Telkoi, was placed in a prized post and the field officer to implement the MGNREGA.

Now, it is demanded here that a proper inquiry and action against the errant officials be taken.

**In Baleswar district**

**5,525 ineligible KALIA beneficiaries get notice**

**PNS ■ BALESWAR**

During the corona period while financial condition of the people across all walks of life is miserable, in the first phase scrutiny, as many as 5,525 beneficiaries of the KALIA scheme in the district were identified as ineligible.

These beneficiaries were served notices by the Agriculture Department asking them to refund the sum of money.

With the available data in the department, it is found the highest number of ineligible beneficiaries are from Remuna block with 1,150, followed by Sadar (879) and Bahanaga (567). The ineligible beneficiaries have been detected from 12 blocks.

While the ineligible beneficiaries are worried how to refund money in the current pressing time, some activists have targeted the Government alleging that during poll time they were lured by the ruling party and now the Government was cracking whips on them.

The officials responsible for the mistakes or flaws in selecting the beneficiaries should be taken to task and the amount should be recovered from their salaries rather than from the beneficiaries, they demanded.

District Agriculture Officer Prasanna Mahapatra stated that notices to the ineligible beneficiaries had been served and action would be taken as per the instruction of the Government.

**Mo Parivar holds blood camp in Brahmapur**

**MLA Panda donates blood for 2nd time in 3 months**

**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

The Odisha Mo Parivar organised a blood donation camp at the Blood Bank of the MKCG Medical College Hospital here on Friday.

Parivar general secretary and local MLA Bikram Kumar Panda inaugurated the camp by donating blood. It was the second time Panda donated blood in the last three months. As many as 20 volunteers donated blood amid social

distancing. Among others, BJD leaders Sanjeet Panigrahi, Madan Dalai, Dhanajay Rao, Sanjay Jena and P Asha Rani were present.

Besides, the Sabuja Vahini,

the 11th time. With 12 units collected from this camp, a total of 182 units of blood were collected from all 11 camps.

Sabuja Vahini president Shibaram Panigrahi, Blood



Anchalika Vikash Parishad and the Brahmapur Blood Bank jointly organised a blood donation camp titled 'Asantu Gadhika Rakta Sampark' for

Bank officer Dr Sashmita Behera, Susanta Kumar Panigrahi, Satyanarayan Das, Bishnu Prasad Dash coordinated the programme.

**₹1.5-crore gutkha seized; 8 detained**

**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

Sub-Collector Sindhu Dattatraye Bhausaheb and Kukudakhandi Tehsildar Ipsita Priyadarshini along with police conducted raids on two gutkha-making units at Gurunthigaon and Marthipalli village and seized 177 bags of gutkha worth Rs 1.5 crore on Saturday.

They also detained eight persons in this connection.

Sadar PS IIC Santoshini Oram said the gutkha unit raided at Gurunthi gaon is owned by Sambhu Sahu. Gutkha packets worth Rs 50 lakh and four machines were seized from his factory.

The other gutkha factory belonged to Rabi Sahu. As many as 157 bags of gutkha were seized here, informed SDPO Jayanta Mohapatra.

**PPT sets up Covid Care Centre**

**PNS ■ PARADIP**

The Paradip Port Trust's (PPT) 50-bed Covid Care Centre (CCC) at the Port Club for its employees became functional on Monday.

PPT Chairman Rinkesh Roy assured that the port authorities would leave no stone unturned to fight the pandemic.

Asymptomatic or port employees having mild symptoms would be housed in the CCC and provided with face-masks. Home isolation for mild/asymptomatic cases is recommended if a separate room with toilet is available under the same roof. All the houses in the port township don't have such facilities.

If anybody is legally subjected to home isolation, all



other families in the same building might be in dilemma. Hence, mild or asymptomatic people may be in a better condition at the Covid Care

Centre. The biomedical wastes would be safely disposed of. All protocols of Covid management would be strictly followed.

**26 Covid vaccines under clinical trials across world**



**TATHYA ■ BHUBANESWAR**

As on today, 165 types of Covid-19 vaccines are undergoing either clinical or pre-clinical trials. Among these vaccines 26 are being screened under clinical trials, while 139 vaccines are known to be registered for pre-clinical evaluation around the globe.

Quoting from the source of World Health Organisation (WHO), young scientist from Bhubaneswar, Dr Swayam Prakash busy in such research work in the USA told that such

a vaccine for human consumption is likely to be available by November.

He stated specifically that all the clinical trials are supposed to undergo three clinical stages known as Phase-1, Phase-2 and Phase-3 before being declared fit for human usage and subsequently for large-scale manufacturing.

Dr Swayam further mentioned that in the race to deliver a vaccine to get respite from the pathogenic SARS-CoV-2, at least 6 vaccines are being developed from collaborative efforts among world's leading universities and big pharmaceutical companies.

Currently out of the 26 vaccines undergoing clinical trials, USA alone is involved in developing 4 vaccines such as Moderna/NIAID, Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies, Novavax and Kentucky Bioprocessing, Inc. Also, at the front run is China in the race to produce Covid-19 vaccine with clinical trial of five vac-

cines in its territory. UK and India are involved in preparing vaccines each within their territories. UK is developing two vaccines with the Oxford University/AstraZeneca; and Imperial College London. While Cadila Healthcare Limited, and Bharath Biotech are either performing Phase-1 or transitioned into Phase-2 clinical trials in different parts of India.

Scientists in five other countries like Japan (Osaka University/AnGes/Takara Bio), Russia (Gamaleya Research Institute), South Korea (Genexine Consortium), Germany (Curevac), and Canada (Medicago) are also frontrunners to develop Covid-19 vaccine and progressed into different phases of clinical trial with their research.

Amidst all global chaos and fast changing geo-politics, scientists from big pharmaceutical companies and leading universities also came forward

and six joint vaccine development programmes are being conducted at this moment in collaboration among nations. Such joint research programmes are conducted by Australia-South Korea (Vaxine Pty Ltd/Medytox), Australia-UK (University of Queensland/CSL/Seqirus), USA - Singapore (Arcurus/Duke-NUS), USA-UK-China (Clover Biopharmaceuticals Inc./GSK/Dynavax), USA-Taiwan (Medigen Vaccine Biologics Corporation/NIAID/Dynavax), USA - Germany - China (BioNTech/Pfizer/Fosun Pharma).

Also, the International Vaccine Institute, which is an organization of the United Nations Development Programme is preparing a Covid-19 vaccine which is transitioning into Phase-2 clinical trial in collaboration with the Inovio Pharmaceuticals, USA.

**'Covid-19 patients neglected in Ganjam'**

**FIRs lodged against Govt, Tata Covid Hosp officials**

**KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAPUR**

The Bharatiya Bikash Parishad (BBP) led by its State president Surendra Panigrahi went to Brahmapur Police District SP office and lodged two separate FIRs, one against Ganjam district Collector Vijaya Amruta Kulange, Commissioner of BeMC Chakravarty Singh Rathore and Ganjam CDMO Dr Umashankara Mishra and the second FIR was reported-

ly lodged against Dr Umashankara Mishra, Dr Jagannath Patra (the CEO of HiTech Medical College, and Dr Sambit Rout (Medicine Specialist of the same hospital) here on Friday morning for their negligence in providing proper and effective healthcare services to the Corona affected patients in Ganjam district.

Some of the key allegations stated in the FIR include non-issue of certificates/test reports to those Corona suspected/infected patients who undergo swab test or antigen test and keeping the patients and their relatives in dark about the outcome of the test reports leading to the death of the poor patients, deliberately informing the patients/or their relatives verbally about the positive report after 7-12 long days of the test instead of giving original copy of the

report giving rise to community spread and refusal of 108 ambulance to pick up serious patients to hospital etc.

Citing an example, the FIR pointed out that, an employee of the Forest Department of Bhanjanagar locality whose swab sample was taken for testing was informed positive much later. Even after giving swab sample for testing, the suspected patient came in close contact with hundreds of people and spread the virus to the community.

Similarly, when the health condition of a resident of Prahallad Nagar area and a chronic diabetic patient Manoj Praharaaj deteriorated on July 27, the family members contacted 108 for Ambulance and after reaching the ambulance, the driver outright refused to take the patient to hospital and started arguing for 90 minutes which led to the death of the

patient leaving two small children which amounts to murder, the FIR said.

Had the administration given clear instruction to instantly pick up the patient to hospital, his life could have been saved, the FIR stated. The Parishad demanded stern action against the erring officials under the relevant provisions of IPC.

Similarly, the second FIR which was lodged against the three prominent senior officers in charge of healthcare systems of the Tata Covid Hospital, namely, Ganjam CDMO Dr Umashankar Mishra, CEO of HiTech Medical College Dr Sangram Patra and Authorised Officer of Covid Hospital Dr Sambit Rout alleged that, these officers have deliberately suppressed the covid test reports, responsible for community spread, misbehaving with the patients and their relatives in

filthy language, threatening in the name of police, negligence in treatment and pushing the patients and their relatives to undergo mental stress.

Citing examples of key instances in support of its allegation, the FIR pointed out that, the Covid Hospital authorities deliberately suppressed the death of Basanta K Sahu, a resident of Ganapatnagar who died on July 24 while under treatment, but the Covid Hospital management surprisingly chose not to inform the relatives of the deceased even after 4 days of the death and kept the family members of the deceased in dark. Similarly, T Dillip Patra, a resident of Bijipur Tota Street was admitted into the Parala Maharaja CCC on July 15, but three days after he was discharged on the ground of no symptoms. When Patra again suffered from breathing prob-

lems, he was admitted into Tata Covid Hospital where he died due to non availability of oxygen and negligence of doctors on duty, the FIR pointed out.

Likewise, Anuradha Panigrahi, a native of Digapahandi, was admitted in to the Parala Maharaja CCC along with her husband Jitendra Panigrahi, her father in law and mother in law on July 10. When the health of her old parents deteriorated, they were shifted to the Tata Covid Hospital on July 12 where Anuradha's husband, father in law and mother in law died due to non availability of oxygen and negligence of doctors. More shockingly, even after long 12 hours of oxygen stock was exhausted, neither any doctor or nurse attended to them nor oxygen was provided which led to their death, the FIR stated.

These instances are only a few, the complainant said.

**Balangir: 12 CRPF men Covid +ve**

**PNS ■ BALANGIR**

The Covid-19 scenario is getting worse in Balangir with each passing day.

As many as 51 people were diagnosed as positive on Monday and the cases were mostly from the municipality area and periphery villages and from local contact sources.

Significantly, 12 CRPF jawans were diagnosed as Covid-positive besides two Covid warriors on the day.

So far, the number of Covid cases in the district has risen to 514 with 208 active ones. A total of 306 patients have recovered.

However, the total number of beds at the Balangir Covid Hospital is only 200.

**2 patients die in mishap in B'swar**

**BALESWAR:** Two patients were killed on the spot when an SUV carrying them rrammed into a truck from the rear at Soro College Chhak in Baleswar district on Monday.

The deceased were identified as Sheikh Mortaza and Jamal Shah. The vehicle carrying them from Mukundpur in West Bengal was heading towards the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. Two other occupants the SUV were also injured seriously. Being informed, police reached the spot, recovered the bodies for postmortem and rescued the injured and admitted them to the Soro Community Health Centre. The injured were later shifted to the Baleswar District Headquarters Hospital. **PNS**

# Gyms, yoga centres to reopen with new dos and don'ts



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From maintaining a distance of six feet to using a visor rather than a mask, from following respiratory etiquette to a strict no to kids and elderly persons with co-morbidities, the Union Health Ministry on Monday outlined the dos and don'ts for gyms and yoga centres ahead of their reopening from August 5.

Come Wednesday, it will be a new normal at gyms and yoga centres when these institutes will reopen as a part of the third phase of easing of lockdown in the country.

The Union Health Ministry's guidelines maintain that elderly people above 65 years, people with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years should not use gymnasiums or yoga institutes in closed spaces.

Also, yoga institutes and

gymnasiums located in Covid-19 containment zones shall not be permitted to open.

Yogic kriyas are to be avoided or planned in open spaces. Users to be put in batches and allocated staggered timings to avoid overcrowding of people while entering and exiting the fitness centre.

Each batch could have a gap of 15-30 minutes in between to keep rush at bay and facilitate cleaning and disinfecting process, the release stated. "Those having oxygen saturation level below 95 percent should not be allowed to exercise," as per the guidelines.

"Individuals must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet as far as feasible," it says adding that wearing of masks and face covers is mandatory, however, those may cause breathing difficulties during exercising, therefore, the government said that people can

## 'Remote patient monitoring system' developed to keep tabs on covid patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers at IIT-Madras' Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC) and Helyxon, a healthcare startup, have developed an AI-backed remote patient monitoring system for Covid-19 to keep tabs on critical parameters like temperature, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate and heart rate.

Equipped with geo-fencing tracking alerts, the OXY2 can keep a tab on the patient's vital parameters and inform the medical staff about any aberration.

Costing between ₹2,500 to ₹10,000 depending on configuration, the device has already found usage among 2,000 patients in public and private hospitals, and at homes, with another 5,000 devices in the

pipeline.

"The device is completely self-contained, portable, wireless and can be clipped on to patient's finger and data is streamed to a mobile phone or central monitoring system.

"The temperature is measured at the armpit and blood oxygen level, and other parameters at the finger itself. The device is reusable and has a lifetime of over a year," said Prof. Mohanasankar Sivaprakasam, Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC), IIT Madras.

The core technology was validated by a year-long multi-centric study at various Chennai-based medical institutions for the accuracy and performance with reference to current standards.

The scientist said that specific to Covid, the reduction of

close contact with patients by doctors and nurses, savings in PPE and monitoring equipment was found to be a significant advantage by hospitals.

Based on the clinical inputs, the team engineered this device in response to demand for low cost, simple and easy to use devices for monitoring patients anywhere at hospital or home.

Commenting on the product, Mr. Vijai Shankar Raja, founder and managing director of Helyxon said, "It is more than a monitoring device.

"Based on feedback from doctors and hospital management, deployment of OXY2 reduces overall load, stress and anxiety in the healthcare system, saves hospital beds for severe cases, and increases confidence for patients at home."

use a visor as a preventive measure.

Frequent hand washing and using hand sanitisers have been emphasised besides a strict practice of "respiratory etiquettes" have been advised as per the guidelines.

"Cover mouth and nose while sneezing/coughing with a tissue, cloth or flexed elbow and dispose off used tissue properly," the guidelines stated.

The owners and managers of gymnasiums and yoga institutes have been directed to

plan fitness activities keeping the floor area of 4m2 per person. Equipment and machines should be placed at a distance of 6 feet. Utilisation of outdoor space, if any, has been encouraged.

The institutes have also

## HRD Ministry comes up with new alternative academic calendar for classes 6 to 8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Ministry on Monday announced a new alternative academic calendar for classes 6 to 8 which is a continuation of the previous 4-week calendar.

The Calendar contains detailed guidelines for teachers on the use of technology & social media tools to impart education while the students are at home. It further aims to empower our students, teachers, school principals & parents with positive ways to deal with #Covid19 via online teaching-learning resources and achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

The academic calendar consists of subject-wise directives for eight weeks and detailed guidelines on using social media tools and technology for education is a reference for teachers to continue teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic.

HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank had released the academic calendar for the primary classes of 1 to 5. The academic calendar for the upper-primary classes was developed by the National



Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

"Alternative Academic Calendar for upper primary stage (Classes VI to VIII) for four weeks was released earlier. I have launched the academic calendar for the next eight weeks today," Pokhriyal said on twitter after announcing the calendar.

read. Only asymptomatic people are to be allowed admission while thermal screening of all users has to be carried out mandatorily.

A minimum distance of six feet is to be maintained at all times. Staggered batches and proper arrangement at parking spaces, corridors and elevators to avoid overcrowding and ensure social distancing. The administration is required to maintain a detailed account of check-in and check-out time of the users along with their details including name, address and contact information.

## TENSION ALONG LAC

### CSG to review outcome of fifth round of Corps Commander-level talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China stalling a pull back and India insisting on a complete disengagement from "friction points" at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, the all-powerful China Study Group (CSG) on Tuesday will review the outcome of the fifth round of Corps Commander level talks that were held on Sunday. The CSG comprises top brass of the defence, external affairs and home ministries besides the National Security Advisor (NSA).

The military-level talks between Lt General Harinder Singh and Major General Liu Lin at Moldo near the LAC in Chushul, Ladakh, on Sunday, lasted more than 10 hours after starting at 11.00 am. While an official statement is yet to come, sources said here on Monday that India asked China to step up the withdrawal of its troops from the Pangong Tso (lake).

In fact, the CSG in its meeting last week also favoured complete disengagement by China as a major confidence building measure to defuse tension. The government may give details of the latest round of Corps Commander talks to end the 10-week-old impasse at the LAC after the crucial CSG session on Tuesday, sources added.

The CSG was set up in 1976 by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to advise on policy issues relating to China and includes top secretaries and military and intelligence officials. It was initially headed by the Foreign Secretary.

Though appreciating the position that China has substantially reduced and withdrawn its troops from Galwan valley, Gogra and Hot Springs, the Indian security establishment is, however, concerned that the Chinese troops have not withdrawn from the contentious Pangong Tso. In fact, the first face-off took place at this place on May 5 when the Chinese intruded more than five km into India and obstructed an Indian army patrol. It led to exchange of blows.

Since then, the Chinese bolstered its troop strength there forcing India to take preventive steps to thwart any major challenge, sources said adding as per the latest satellite photographs of the Pangong Tso the Chinese have not gone back though agreed upon in the last round of Commander-level talks.

The Chinese continue to occupy positions in depth on slopes along 'Finger 5' and on slopes extending towards 'Finger 8.' India maintains the LAC is at Finger 8. Mountain spurs are called Finger. However, China is



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

### Govt releases draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy, 2020

#### Its purpose is to place India among leading countries in defence, aerospace sectors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a fillip to defence manufacturing in the country with the focus on 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliance), the Government on Monday came out with a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020. The main objective is to achieve a turnover of more than ₹1,75,000 crore (25 Billion dollar) including ₹35,000-crore worth of exports in aerospace by 2025.

Giving details of the draft of the policy, now in public domain for inviting suggestions, officials said the main focus is on providing a framework to position India amongst the leading countries of the world in defence and aerospace sectors.

The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as an overarching guiding document of the defence ministry to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production

capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.

Besides achieving a turnover of ₹1,75,000 Crores, the policy also aims to develop a dynamic, robust and competitive defence industry, including aerospace and naval shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of armed forces with quality products.

Moreover, the document focuses on efforts to reduce dependence on imports by giving a push to Make in India through initiatives like domestic design and development. Also to promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains, the draft said.

The policy brings out multiple strategies under the following focus areas like procurement reforms, indigenization, support to MSMEs/Startups, optimise resource allocation, investment promotion, FDI and ease of doing business amongst others.

insisting that the LAC is at 'Finger 4.'

Besides deploying on the crucial spurs, the Chinese have also built a jetty in the Indian side of the Pangong Lake and moved several fast interceptor boats thereby posing a threat to the Indian security interests, they said.

Flagging its concern on the tardy pace of disengagement, India last week said the process of disengagement of troops in eastern Ladakh has not yet been completed though some progress has been made.

This was a counter to China's claim that frontline forces of the two countries have "completed" this exercise at most locations along their border. After the last round of talks between the Corps Commanders, the statement said

## MHA invites feedback on criminal laws from public, stakeholders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry on Monday invited suggestions from subject experts and all stakeholders for the incorporation or amendments in criminal laws. The Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws, a joint forum organised by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and National Law University, Delhi, has opened a separate page on their website for the public to make suggestions regarding various criminal laws including Indian Penal Code (IPC) and CrPC.

"National Level Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws set up by MHA has been inviting professionals, functionaries

and stakeholders involved with Indian criminal justice system to submit their suggestions," said MHA. The Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws is created to recommend reforms in a principled, affective, and efficient manner which ensures safety and security of the individual, the community and the nation, said the statement.

NLU Vice Chancellor Prof Ranbir Singh is the Chairperson of the Committee. Other members are NLU Registrar Prof GS Bajpai, Prof Balraj Chauhan, Vice Chancellor of Jabalpur Law University, noted lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani and former judge GP Thareja.

## Expression of opinion cannot constitute contempt of court: Prashant Bhushan to SC



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The expression of opinion, "however outspoken, disagreeable or unpalatable to some," cannot constitute contempt of court, activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan said on Monday in his reply to a show cause notice issued by the Supreme Court.

The top court on July 22 issued notice to Bhushan for hearing on August 5 the criminal contempt proceedings initiated against him for his two alleged derogatory tweets against the judiciary, observing his statements prima facie

"brought the administration of justice in disrepute".

In a 142-page reply affidavit filed through lawyer Kamini Jaiswal, the activist lawyer has referred to several apex court judgements, speeches of former and serving judges on contempt of court and the "stifling of dissent" in a democracy and his views on judicial actions in some cases.

Bhushan also stood by his two tweets.

"The respondent (Bhushan) states that expression of his opinion however outspoken, disagreeable or however unpalatable to some, cannot constitute contempt of court. This proposition has been laid down by several judgments of the Supreme Court and in foreign jurisdictions such as Britain, USA and Canada," he submitted.

## Declare locust attack as national disaster: Gehlot to PM

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding that the locust menace affecting many States of the country be declared a national disaster, according to a statement on Monday.

In the letter, Gehlot said the locust outbreak was an international problem and the Centre should coordinate with all affected countries to tackle the menace, the statement said.

The Chief Minister said that it would be appropriate to declare the locust menace as national disaster due to possible damage to crops of kharif and rabi crops, and the weak economic condition of farmers and states due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

It will further strengthen the capacity of states to deal with locust outbreaks, the chief minister said.

Gehlot informed Modi that locusts had started coming in Rajasthan from April 11 and 32 out of the 33 districts had been affected.

In addition to Rajasthan, locust attacks have been reported in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh,



Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

This has become a multi-state problem, he said in the letter.

Locust outbreaks have been seen on such a large scale in the country after several decades. In such a situation, declaring this problem as a national disaster will be in the interest of all the affected states and the farmers, Gehlot said.

Locust swarms were controlled quite effectively by the joint efforts of the Centre, Locust Warning Organisation and the state government, but still the farmers lost about Rs 1,000 in rabi crops, he said.

In 2019-20, about 6.70 lakh hectares in 12 districts of

Rajasthan was affected by locust. In 2020-21, locust control has been done in about 3.83 lakh hectares so far, Gehlot said.

According to the earlier estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the locust outbreak arrived early in the state and is expected to be much higher this year, the statement said.

In such a situation, the Centre should take appropriate steps in time, he added. Gehlot underlined that the locust outbreak was an international problem and they must be stopped at their point of origin in order to check the origin of new locust groups.

## IMD issues red alert for extremely heavy rain for Mumbai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rain lashed Mumbai on Monday as the monsoon system active over the Arabian Sea strengthened and the weather department sounded a red alert that it will get intense in the metropolis and its suburbs during the next two days.

Though Mumbai had been receiving intermittent rainfall, forecasting agencies said this would be the second spell of heavy rain for this monsoon after a gap of a fortnight.

Mumbaikars are advised to avoid going out on August 4 and 5, said private forecaster Skymet Weather, adding that the intensity will start decreasing from August 6. On the east coast, the India

Meteorological Department's Odisha centre said a low-pressure area was developing over north Bay of Bengal under the

### The flood situation in Assam improved on Monday as the water receded from many areas, though one more person lost his life in the deluge

influence of a cyclonic circulation over Gangetic West Bengal and another one over northeast Bay of Bengal. It will bring heavy rainfall to several parts of the State between Tuesday and Thursday.

The IMD advised fishermen to not venture deep into the Bay of Bengal till August 6 as surface winds with speeds up to 50 kmph will make the sea conditions very rough.

The low-pressure area is likely to trigger heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in parts of Madhya Pradesh, too, where the monsoon activity has remained subdued so far.

In north India, a sultry weather prevailed in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana as the axis of the monsoon trough, which was active over the region last week, shifted southwards.

The trough is now passing Ganganagar and Pilani in Rajasthan, through Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh and Banda in Uttar Pradesh, towards

Beharampur in West Bengal and Mizoram and Meghalaya.

Under its influence, several areas in Rajasthan were lashed by rain since Sunday. Jaipur, Tonk, Bhilwara and Pilani recorded 34.8, 7, 2 and 3.1 mm rainfall, respectively, in the past 24 hours till Monday evening, according to the local meteorological centre.

Several areas in the State reported waterlogging. In Jaipur, a car got stuck on a flooded road. Locals rescued the driver and the other occupants of the car.

More than 800 villages in 15 districts have been inundated in Uttar Pradesh due to swelling of Sarayu and Rapti rivers, state minister Anil Rajbhar said.

He said embankments had been breached in Gonda,

Azamgarh and efforts were on to seal them. As many as 188 medical teams and 16 disaster response and provincial constabulary teams have been deployed for rescue operations.

The flood situation in Assam improved on Monday as the water receded from many areas, though one more person lost his life in the deluge.

This year, floods and landslides have damaged roads and other infrastructure at several places and claimed 136 lives in Assam, according to official estimates.

The number of flood-hit people decreased by 4.65 lakh since Sunday but around 3.89 lakh people in 17 districts are still affected, the Assam government said in a bulletin.

# Nothing to worry, will be discharged soon: BSY

**Bengaluru:** Allaying fears about his health after testing Covid positive, an upbeat Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Monday assured people that there was "nothing to worry about" and he would be discharged from the hospital soon.

"There is nothing to worry about. I will be discharged soon and start work," said Yediyurappa in Kannada in a video message played in all the local news channels across the state.

Yediyurappa, 77, and his daughter B.Y. Padmavati who also tested positive, are under treatment at a private hospital here though they are asymptomatic with mild symptoms of the virus.

Assuring the people that he was doing fine, the Chief Minister said doctors had conducted required tests and observed no complications.

"I will recover soon. I am in touch with all officials since Sunday to ensure that the government works are not affected. I also spoke to senior officials earlier in

the day," he said. Yediyurappa also thanked BJP President J.P. Nadda, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, former Prime Minister and JD-S supremo H.D. Deve Gowda, his son and former Chief Minister H.D.

Kumaraswamy, opposition Congress leader Siddaramaiah and seers of mutts for praying for his speedy recovery.

He also urged people to wear masks and maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the disease.

In a related development, state Home Minister Basavar Bommai and new Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant have

decided to undergo self-quarantine, as they in contact with Yediyurappa on Friday and Saturday. IANS

## Karnataka Guv tests negative after recent meeting with CM

IANS ■ BENGALURU

**K**arnataka Governor Vajubhai Vala has tested negative for coronavirus, three days after meeting Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa who was diagnosed positive on Sunday, an official said on Monday. "The Governor has undergone a corona antigen test and tested negative," said a communique from the Raj Bhavan.

The Chief Minister, along with Home Minister Basavaraju Bommai, had called on the

Governor last week to discuss the Covid situation in the state and measures being taken to contain the pandemic spread.

"The Governor's ADC and Personal Secretary Tejas Bhatti have also undergone antigen tests, and were found to be negative," the communique said.

Yediyurappa, 77, and daughter B.Y. Padmavati who also tested positive, are under treatment at a private hospital though they are asymptomatic with mild symptoms.

## Yediyurappa's six staffers test positive for coronavirus

IANS ■ BENGALURU

**S**ix persons, including a woman working at the official residence of Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa here, also tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Monday.

"As Yediyurappa and his daughter Padmavati tested positive, all staffers and others at his official residence and home-office are being tested as primary and secondary contacts. Of them 6, including a gunman, cook, maid, driver, housekeeper and a policeman on security duty tested positive so far," an offi-

cial of the chief minister's office told IANS.

Yediyurappa's official residence 'Cauvery' and the adjacent home-office 'Krishna' are located on Kumara Krupa road in the high security area of the city centre.

The asymptomatic chief minister and daughter are under treatment at the privately-run Manipal Hospital in the city's eastern suburb.

"A team of doctors and nurses from the state-run hospital rushed to Yediyurappa's residence and home office to test the staff and those frequenting the places on duty.

# Kerala reports 962 infections on Mon

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

**A**s 962 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Monday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan gave a piece of his mind to all including Health Minister KK Shylaja over the ever increasing number of pandemic cases in the State.

Monday saw two persons succumbing to Covid-19 in Kerala. The Chief Minister was upset over the increase in the number of patients in the State which had declared that Covid curve has been flattened.

"Initially all of us were working with dedication and commitment. But that was lost midway and a sense of complacency has set in. All of us are equally responsible for the present situation as we threw caution to wind. We were carried away by the praise showered on us by other countries which were competing against each other to wax eloquence on us," said Vijayan as minister Shylaja and other officials sat grim faced.

Out of the 962 persons tested pos-

itive on Monday, 801 contracted the pandemic through local transmission, he said. "There were 55 expatriates and 85 persons from other States who tested positive today while 40 patients could not furnish details of the source from where they contracted the disease," said Vijayan.

The only positive news from the field was the number of persons who made recovery from the ailment. "815 persons got cured on Monday. Thiruvananthapuram continued to be the city with highest number of Covid-19 patients (205) followed by Ernakulam (106) and Alappuzha (101)," he said.

The number of hotspots shot up to 506 while the Chief Minister said he had entrusted the covid-19 management to the State Police who would take stringent measures to eliminate the pandemic.

The responsibility of marking the containment zones too have been handed over to the State Police. The Chief Minister said the police has been asked to mark and monitor the containment zones.

## Art 370 abrogation gives hope to deprived members: Valmiki community prez

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

**A**fter scoring 92 percent marks in his class 12th examinations, Inderjit Singh Gill, has now set his eyes on the prestigious UPSC examinations to realise his dream of becoming an IAS officer. Since childhood he had tutored his mind to crack the prestigious examination at all costs.

Inderjit is not the only one who is nurturing dreams of making it big in life.

Eklavya, currently working as office assistant in the Central University Jammu is also preparing to crack an entrance examination for the post of J&K Bank associate.

After discontinuing her studies in 2016, another bright student from the Valmiki community, Radhika Gill is planning to take an admission in the government degree college to pursue her graduation studies.

These youngsters represent the fourth generation of the Valmiki community living in Jammu since 1957.

After the Abrogation of



Inderjit Singh Gill (L), Eklavya (M) and Domicile certificate of Radhika Gill (R)

of them have been regularised by the government till date.

President of the Valmiki Community in Jammu, Garu Bhatti told The Pioneer, "the decision of the BJP government to Abrogate Article 370 and 35-A has infused new lease of life among the deprived members of the community".

He said, "an estimated number of 150-200 youth are studying in different graduate and post graduate courses in Jammu and Kashmir and now with the issuance of Domicile certificates they can all compete in the competitive examinations and secure their berth". Previously, despite acquiring degrees majority of youth could not apply for a government job or take admission in the professional degree courses.

In 1957, the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had decided to bring in Safai karamcharis (sweepers) from other States.

Article 370 and 35-A last year they claimed all the doors closed by the successive State Governments have been thrown open by the BJP led Narendra Modi Government in one go.

"We have seen difficult times in the past, my father was working as a sweeper when I was a kid. He worked hard and rose to the level of supervisor in Jammu Municipal Corporation. Now, I want to become an IAS officer and make my parents, my community proud", Inderjit Singh told The Pioneer.

Inderjit, is currently living with his parents and three other siblings in Valmiki colony in Gandhi Nagar area of Jammu.

Radhika told The Pioneer, "I

discontinued my studies after passing class 12 examination. There was no future for us when Article 370 was there. Now it has been abrogated and I have already received my Domicile certificate, she added. "I can apply for government jobs as per my qualification and also pursue higher studies".

Eklavya told The Pioneer, "after my graduation I started working as office Assistant in the Central University Jammu. Now I have applied for a J&K Bank post and also filing forms for other posts advertised by the J&K government to try my luck. I feel empowered now", he added.

There are around 13 colonies in Jammu district alone but none

## Now budget-friendly snacks available at Cochin airport

UNKUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

**D**ays of the coffee and tea shops in the country's airports charging exorbitant rates for the hot beverages are over thanks to an initiative by a lawyer based in Kerala's Thrissur city.

Shaji Kodankandathu, a lawyer by profession who is also a social activist had taken up the cudgels for the general public in this regard. Shaji asked the Cochin International Airport Authority of India Ltd (CIAL) Airport about the reason behind the unbelievable prices charged by the shops for tea and coffee. "A cup of coffee costs ₹200/- while a cup of tea costs ₹150/- and there is no justification for these prices. The airport authorities could not give any convincing reply to me questions," Shaji told The Pioneer.

He said he had to give up meals and even snacks while waiting to catch flights after the security check in. "I am not that rich to spend ₹500 for a cup of coffee and a banana fry. Its only because of time constraint that I travel by flight and the authorities should not squeeze me," he said.

When Shaji failed to get any response from the Airport Authority of India, he

wrote to Prime Minister's Office stating all the details. "I was surprised when I received a letter from the PMO saying that all my concerns have been taken into consideration and the AAI have been instructed to sell tea, coffee and snacks at affordable rates," said Shaji.

The lawyer said that there are thousands of passengers among the flyers who would not be able to afford the tea and coffee being sold at the shops on the airport. "What we need is a cup of black tea or coffee and a samosa or something like that at affordable rate. There is nothing which prevents these shops from selling these items at this rate," said Shaji who also disclosed that he has seen hundreds and hundreds of passengers starving at airport because they cannot afford such high rates.

"Its not exotic or exquisite tea or coffee that they sell at these airports. Most people do not react to such over pricing because it is a time consuming process. But Ill react because it is a matter of survival for me," said Shaji.

He said airports all over the country may have to sell the hot beverages and snacks at the rate specified by Coffee Board or Tea Board.

## TN sees highest 1-day fatalities with 109 deaths

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

**1**09 deaths and 5,609 new Covid-19 patients in the last 24 hours. This is what the medical bulletin issued by the Tamil Nadu Government said on Monday. The State saw the highest number of fatalities till date on a single day while 5,800 persons were discharged following recovery from hospitals across the State.

As on Monday, there were 56,698 Covid-19 patients in Tamil Nadu. The day also saw 56, 278 persons getting tested through 122 laboratories across Tamil Nadu. The death toll in Tamil Nadu till date reached 4,241.

While the situation in Chennai remained stable with the Metropolis testing 1,021 new patients, Chengalpet (331), Kancheepuram (322) and Thiruvallur (332) , the three neighboring districts remained problematic without showing any abatement.

# Didi Govt opposes new education policy, forms panel

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

**O**pposing the new education policy (NEP) introduced by the Central Government on grounds that the State was not consulted and the issue was not discussed in Parliament before giving clearance, Bengal Government has formed a six-member committee to ponder over the new scheme and table its own report.

Contradicting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion that the new education was discussed and debated over the last five years at various levels before being introduced, Bengal Education Minister Partho Chatterjee on Monday said "though the Prime Minister

claimed that the new education policy was discussed extensively at various levels neither the issue was discussed in Parliament nor the State Government was taken into confidence ...particularly when education is in concurrent list."

A number of serious questions have been raised in the aftermath of the central declaration he said, adding "questions are being raised as to why Madhyamik (Class X) board exam has been done away with in the new scheme of things, why Bengal was not represented in the central advisory team that proposed such a sea change in the national education system and why there is such a vehement trend towards centralization in the new system."

Informing that the State Government had formed its own committee which would discuss the worth of the new system and submit a report, Chatterjee who earlier called the NEP a "copy paste" of the western and American model said the report would then be sent to the Centre.

"We have formed a team of advisors which will review the NEP and submit a report to the State Government which will then consider sending it to the Centre," Chatterjee said. The report is to be submitted by August 15.

The team comprises Trinamool Congress MP Professor Sougato Roy, Jadavpur University Vice Chancellor Suranjan Das, Rabindrabharati University Vice

Chancellor Sabyasachi Basu Roychowdhury, educationist veteran educationists Pabitra Sarkar and Nrsinghaprasad Bhaduri and State syllabus committee chief Avik Majumdar.

Apart from this the Government will also consult various academic associations like Calcutta University Teachers Association (CUTA), Jadavpur University Teachers' Association (JUTA) etc. Besides "private individuals and other institutions may also send in their views by August 15," Chatterjee said.

According to inside reports though the State Government sees central encroachment in the NEP it is willing to gauge the general view as the "BJP Government has

very cleverly cloaked dirty fangs of the NEP by some velvety cover like credit banking system etc.

According to a JUTA member "what seems to get lost from the vision amid the hype is the element of dangerous centralization in terms of original research ... one wonders whether critical evaluation would be allowed by the National Research Foundation ever."

In fact the JUTA said "the NEP 2020 seeks to replace the inclusive, democratic, progressive, idea of India by a narrow, sectarian, and bigoted notion, driven by the compulsion to propagate the divisive ideology of a particular political party... It has set back education in India by at least a century."

## Jawan missing in J&K, his burnt car found

PNS ■ JAMMU

**T**he whereabouts of an Indian Army jawan, who went missing late Sunday evening from near Kulgam, could not be traced in the last 24 hours by the joint teams of security forces combing the area inch by inch across South Kashmir districts.

He was currently visiting home on account of Eid holidays.

The day-long searches conducted in the South Kashmir belt of Kulgam, Shopian and Anantnag could not yield desired results. Meanwhile, the family members had issued a passionate appeal to the suspected abductors to release their son without causing any harm to him.

According to a statement issued by the Indian Army, "Rifleman Shakir Manzoor of 162 Battalion (TA), is missing since 17:00hrs yesterday. His aban-

doned burnt car has been found near Kulgam. It is suspected that the soldier has been abducted by terrorists. Search op in progress".

The burnt car, which belonged to Manzoor, was found from Rambhama area of neighbouring Kulgam district. In May 2017, a young, unarmed army officer was kidnapped by terrorists when he was attending a family wedding in Shopian. The bullet-riddled body of Lieutenant Ummer Fayaz was recovered the next day 30 km from the wedding venue.

The 22-year-old had joined the Rajputana Rifles five months before. He was believed to be the first Kashmiri officer to be murdered while on leave in his home state since 1991.

In June 2018, another soldier Aurangzeb, who went home to Poonch for Eid, was abducted and killed.

## Curfew in Srinagar on August 4, 5

**Jammu:** Ahead of the first anniversary of Abrogation of Article 370, 35-A, the District Magistrate of Srinagar has decided to impose strict curfew restrictions on August 4th and 5th of August with immediate effect to prevent violent protests.

According to the order signed by the District Magistrate, Srinagar, "Superintendent of Police, Srinagar has reported that a series of inputs have been received suggesting that separatist and Pakistan sponsored groups are planning to observe August 5, 2020 as 'Black day', therein apprehensions of violation action or protests are not ruled out. There are specific inputs about violent protests endangering public life and property".

"Complete restrictions on public movement under Section 144 to be in place", the order stated. Medical emergencies and movement of staff on Covid-19 duty with pass/valid cards shall be exempted from above restrictions, the District Magistrate order said. PNS

## J&K: Total crosses 22k mark with 590 new cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

**T**he total number of coronavirus positive cases Monday crossed 22,000 mark while 11 patients died taking the total death toll due to Covid-19 to 407 in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to the media bulletin, out of 590 new positive cases, 157 were reported from Jammu division and 433 from Kashmir division, taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir to 22,006. Also 11 Covid-19 deaths have been reported; 02 from

Jammu division and 9 from Kashmir Division. Moreover, 905 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 160 from Jammu Division and 745 from Kashmir Division.

According to the daily Media Bulletin, out of 22006 positive cases, 7567 are Active Positive, 14032 have recovered and 407 have died; 30 in Jammu division and 377 in Kashmir division.

The Bulletin further said that out of 662941 test results available, 640935 samples have been tested as negative till August 3, 2020.

## Covid patients shifted to hospital in garbage vehicle in Andhra

**Amaravati:** In a shocking incident, three Covid-19 patients were allegedly shifted to a hospital in a garbage vehicle in Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district.

A video, which shows three persons boarding the trolley in Nellimarla town, has gone viral on social media, prompting the authorities to order a probe.

The incident reportedly occurred on Saturday when an ambulance did not reach to shift three members of a family to the hospital.

They had undergone Covid-19 tests on Wednesday and it was on Friday that they were found positive. Locals alerted 108 ambulance and requested that they be shifted to hospital. However, the ambulance did not reach the location, forcing the residents to arrange a trolley from Nellimarla Nagar Panchayat.

Local officials ordered a probe into the incident. Primary Health Centre medical officer Gayatri Devi said the ambulance was sent immediately after learning about the patients from volunteers but before the vehicle could reach there the local residents mobilized a trolley from the municipal body. Nellimarla Nagar Naidu asked. IANS

**Local officials ordered a probe into the incident. Primary Health Centre medical officer Gayatri Devi said the ambulance was sent immediately after learning about the patients from volunteers but before the vehicle could reach there the local residents mobilized a trolley from the municipal body**

Panchayat Commissioner J. R. Appala Naidu said the vehicle was being used to carry Sodium Hypochlorite and other items for burying the Covid-19 victims.

Vizianagaram District Medical and Health Officer Dr Ramana Kumari said she had ordered a probe into the incident. Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said he was appalled over the treatment meted out to the patients. "Appalling! Three Covid-19 patients in BC Colony, Jarjapupeta in Vizianagaram Dist were taken to the hospital in a garbage vehicle," the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief tweeted.

"Don't know about coronavirus, but the helpless patients might contract other dangerous diseases. Why are they not being treated like humans?" Naidu asked. IANS

## K'taka sees slight drop in daily cases at 4,752

**Bengaluru:** After logging more than 5,000 Covid-19 cases a day for the past several days, Karnataka saw a drop in infections with 4,752 new cases in the last 24 hours, raising the state's tally to 1.39 lakh, said a health official on Monday.

Similarly, Bengaluru has also witnessed lesser number of cases with 1,497 infections as compared to 2,000 cases on a daily basis.

With the new infections, the city's tally breached 60,000 mark to settle at 60,998, out of which 36,290 are active.

Among other places, Mysuru accounted for 372 infections, followed by Ballari (305), Bagalkote (209), Dharwad (191), Kalaburagi (170), Koppal (157) and Shivamogga (155) among others.

98 more patients have succumbed to the virus, raising the state's toll to 2,594.

However, on a positive note, record 4,776 more patients have been discharged in the last 24 hours, 2,693 in Bengaluru Urban alone, raising the total number of recoveries to 62,500.

Of the 1.39 lakh cases in the southern state, 74,469 are active. IANS

## Another UP Min test +ve

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Jal Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh has tested positive for COVID-19, hours after the State BJP President Swatantra Dev Singh and two other legislators were confirmed to have contracted the virus.

Apart from Mahendra Singh, eight other state ministers -- Yogendra Upadhaya, Devendra Pratap Singh, Rajendra Pratap Singh, Dharam Singh Saini, Chetan Chauhan, Upendra Tiwari,

Raghuraj Singh and Jai Pratap Singh -- are tested positive and are undergoing treatment.

Cabinet Minister Kamal Rani Varun, who tested positive for coronavirus last month, died on Sunday at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) in Lucknow.

The families of two more Ministers, Satish Mahana and Brijesh Pathak, have also been infected with the virus. IANS

## Raksha Bandhan brings cheer back to markets in Agra

IANS ■ AGRA

**R**aksha Bandhan brought some cheer back to markets in Agra as people ventured out of their homes to buy sweets and gifts for relatives and sisters. Shopkeepers reported brisk sale of 'rakhis' early Monday and flower garlands for special pujas. "Tempo is high right now, more so because of the Ayudhya festivities beginning today," said priest of the Sri Mathuradheesh temple Pandit Nandan Shrotriya.

"Though the scare of Covid-19 is writ large everywhere, still people are now moving out and thronging the markets. More roadways buses are ferrying people to their homes in rural areas. Though

restrictions are in place, many people have chosen to visit Govardhan and Vrindavan, in groups, in their private vehicles," said Jugal Kishor Pandit.

However, with 29 fresh cases, Agra's Covid-19 tally has risen to 1,870, with 100 deaths. The principal of the SN Medical College Dr Sanjay Kala and half-a-dozen staff reported positive on Sunday evening. Kala has been home quarantined. The number of active cases is 292.

Mathura reported 32 fresh cases in the last 24 hours, with Mainpuri (20), Firozabad (26), Etah (18), Kasganj (5). The health department has started screening people in mohallas and crowded locations in the interior of the city. IANS

## Tripura BJP MLA defies quarantine orders

**Agartala:** Ruling BJP MLA in Tripura and former State Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman on Monday defied orders to go into quarantine after visiting a Covid Care Centre (CCC) and distributing fruits among the Covid patients here on Sunday.

Barman in reply to the West Tripura District Magistrate (DM) Sandeep Mahatme's letter, said: "Some vested interested persons are trying to put me intentionally in the quarantine centre so that I can easily come in contact with others who have tested positive for the coronavirus, which could be hazardous to my health."

He also wrote that he had neither clinically or otherwise tested positive for COVID-19, nor was he a symptomatic or asymptomatic patient.

The BJP MLA told the media that an FIR was registered against him on Monday. Barman became the Health and Family Welfare, Information Technology and Science and Technology Minister after the BJP-led alliance government came to power in Tripura in March 2018. IANS

## A long haul

As talks for pullback continue, they are just a diversion as it isn't easy for China to give up Pangong Tso



As the Chinese are reluctant to significantly pull back from Pangong Tso, fortifying their positions around it, and making concessional retreats at other sites just to keep talks going, India should be prepared for the long haul. And though a Siachenisation at the heights would mean a waste of man and resources on both sides, China seems to be preparing for a stakeout this winter at least. For all the diplomacy around eastern Ladakh, it is just a diversionary tactic as the Chinese will not forfeit what they have gained in Pangong Lake and Depsang areas. That's because this geographical wedge between

Gilgit-Baltistan in the west (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir), where China is heavily invested in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and Aksai Chin in the east, is an irritant to its regional supremacy, strategically and economically. And it wants an unhindered run of the highway from Xinjiang to Tibet, 179 km of which is under Indian shadow. So far, its contiguous hold on Central Asia, Pakistan and beyond was a low-cost, undemanding exercise, playing as it did on smartly interpreting its version of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the ground. As it is unmarked and fluidic, it has justified its salami slicing to perceptual differences and pre-empted counter-attacks by heaving down with military presence and developing border infrastructure, the scale of which has held India back from a robust counter-challenge for years. But now that we have ramped up our border infrastructure, China is extremely uncomfortable about the proximity of the Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) road to sensitive areas and strategic highways to the north of the Karakoram Pass. And as Galwan has shown, our troops are more than capable of bloodying noses in high altitude warfare. So China simply won't give up the spurs it has now because it doesn't want to compromise its edge in the Karakoram. Already, it has browbeaten India at the talks table by calling for a buffer zone, which means our forces cannot patrol up to the points they used to because of the Chinese insistence on a no man's land. This would allow it to build resources on its side unmonitored and reverse any disengagement move made so far at short notice. This clause also makes Indian vigilance difficult besides burdening soldiers with knife-edge preparedness at all times. China is hoping that it will be able to renegotiate the status quo at Pangong Tso by wearing out our troops and patience, particularly during a long, hard winter. If anything, the "push and extract" policy might continue even as nominal concessions are made to show that it is committed to the dialogue process. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) cannot be written off simply because it has had a history of winter offensives, be it the occupation of Tibet or the incursion of 1962.

For China, the loss of troops at Galwan is a loss of face. And the fact that it has maintained somewhat of a radio silence on casualties means that it will strike back. Right now, tainted by the Wuhan virus, China may have stretched itself too thin in using the pandemic to reshape its imperial dream of colonising the world. But it won't acknowledge India's neo-assertiveness by withdrawing. Instead, it will consolidate, given that it will be the only economy to register growth, even if it is as low as one per cent, and will bet big on fighting for Asian pride against a US-dominated West. Despite the US opposition, it has already got aggressive in the South China Sea, claiming islands, setting up bases and enveloping South and Southeast Asians with its transactional economic largesse and debt-trapping. Many have given in to the bullying but India hasn't. Besides, with the US using us as its proxy, we will increasingly become a pawn in the game of two big powers for world domination. If China loses its stakes in India, the second biggest Asian power, how would it be able to convince other Asian nations to go with its hegemonic vision? So there will be need-based engagement all right but coercion will be constant. India may not match up to its economic and military might as yet and while it develops self-sufficiencies of its own, it has to take on a partnering role with both Western and regional countries. It can challenge China in the Indian Ocean region, get more active in the Quad initiative with US and Japan and use its international goodwill as a nation that respects "rule-based order" to build a case against China's aggressive tactics. And it must now confront the boundary question, insist on marking the LAC. For years of denial and yielding to the Chinese template of working around the boundary dispute have only left us with trade dependencies and a deficit. Today, it is eastern Ladakh but if the territorial push in Bhutan is any indication, China may very well expand its claim lines in Arunachal Pradesh now, just to stretch us beyond our extremities. We should be wary of the fact that the PLA, which has been pitching tents, building roads and marking territories since 2013 and which directly takes orders from Chinese President Xi Jinping himself, may lie low but not go silent.

## All wasn't lost

Chennai techie finds Pragyana, the rover on-board Chandrayaan-2, intact while assessing NASA images



In some good news for India, which is grappling with the twin woes of an ailing economy and the deepening coronavirus crisis, a Chennai-based techie has claimed that the rover onboard Chandrayaan-2, the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) moon mission, is intact on the lunar surface and had even moved a few metres. India's second mission to the moon had ended in disaster as a last-minute software glitch led to the Vikram lander crash-landing on the lunar surface, just 500 metres short of touchdown. Yes, we were ambitious to land on the dark side of the moon, which bigger space-faring nations have not attempted, but the rover's presence is reassurance that while we need to refine our efforts, they have all not gone to waste. And ISRO needs to follow through the Chandrayaan series in mission mode.

Since the failure of the Chandrayaan-2 last year, things have not gone too well for ISRO, with its GISAT-1 launch being mysteriously called off on March 4, a day before take-off citing an ambiguous "technical reason." Plus, the space agency, which had a very busy schedule for this year — with around two dozen launches, including Aditya, India's first solar probe — is having trouble keeping its commitments. Due to the pandemic playing spoilsport, ISRO, too, had to go into a lockdown mode. India's ambitious human space flight programme Gaganyaan, is in trouble because the astronaut training of the four test pilots of the Indian Air Force has been stopped. Besides over 100 manufacturing units in the private sector, that are contracted to manufacture components for ISRO's missions, are shut and the work of producing rockets, satellites and scientific instrumentation is on hold right now. But what is most encouraging is that the rover was found by a Chennai techie, Shanmuga Subramanian, from NASA's images. He had earlier helped NASA find the debris of the Vikram lander, earning him plaudits from the space agency and the gratitude of an embarrassed ISRO. His persistence should be a reason for inducting him and others like him in our space-faring projects. Space nerds should be identified from school and encouraged. It was difficult to detect the rover because it was on the South Pole of the Moon, which is not always well-lit and was missed by the NASA flyby on November 11 possibly for this reason. Not just this, it seems that the rover uploaded commands to the lander, which could not relay them back. Is some data stored there? But with the Vikram lander going silent, we will never know. Whether this translates into any gains for ISRO, only time will tell. But for now, there is something to cheer about in the Indian space community.

# opinion

## Checkmating China

If Trump can be persuaded to see the Baloch quest and Iran as potential allies that could take the Makran coast away from China, it would put a powerful brake on the latter's ambitions



SANDHYA JAIN

Indian analysts seem indifferent to the threat of India losing the railway line from Iran's Chabahar port to Afghanistan and Central Asia and suggest that New Delhi should focus on ties with Arab countries that provide energy security and jobs to millions of Indians. The view that India must choose between the Sunni Arab world and Shia Iran is myopic and contrary to established Indian diplomacy. Certainly, lakhs of Indian Muslims annually visit Saudi Arabia for hajj/umra but the lockdown imposed in March revealed that thousands of citizens visit Karbala and Najaf that are sacred to the Shias. Many work in Iran. Indeed, Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav (ret'd) is believed to have been abducted from Chabahar and pushed across the border into Pakistan.

The stalemate in India-Iran ties is due to US sanctions that cover countries engaging with Tehran commercially. India secured an exemption for the Chabahar port, which may not cover the railway, and stopped buying the light Iranian crude suited to its refineries after the six-month grace period ended. The freeze on its oil revenues seriously hurt Iran's economy, forcing it to seek ways to end its economic and diplomatic trauma.

Tehran moved cautiously, leaking "news" about a \$400 billion deal with China, which seemed credible given Beijing's huge investments across the globe. An unverified 18-page document gave the details of a 25-year Iran-China agreement that Chinese President Xi Jinping had proposed during a visit to Iran in January 2016. It mentioned a \$280 billion investment in Iran's oil and gas industry and \$120 billion across various sectors. Beijing would receive crude oil and gas at discounted prices for 25 years.

New Delhi was alarmed at the possibility of China funding the railway and depriving India of its coveted alternate route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. Envoy Gaddam Dharmendra rushed to meet Iranian Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf and Vice Minister of Roads and President of the Railways, Mohsen Pourseyed Aghaei, to salvage the Chabahar-Zahedan (and possibly Zarang) line. Also at stake is a free trade zone to serve the landlocked Central Asian states. Further, the Farzad-B gas field was discovered by ONGC Videsh in 2012 but its development has been



stuck in wrangling over Iran's desire for two pipelines as opposed to India's insistence on a single pipeline. This is purely a commercial dispute and Tehran needs to be reasonable.

But for Chabahar and related projects, India will have to pioneer some deft diplomacy to break the deadlock between Washington and Tehran or sacrifice its regional ambitions forever. It is no secret that Islamabad is now firmly in Beijing's sphere of influence; its deafening silence on the treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and refusal to bring its citizens back from Wuhan after the pandemic in order to save China's face leave no scope for doubt on this score. India did not blame China but rushed to bring its students back from Wuhan; now, the Chinese aggression in Ladakh has dramatically altered the situation.

An independent Balochistan offers a way out. At the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, American scholar Selig Harrison had the prescience to realise that the turmoil in Kabul would bring Pakistan's Baloch problem to the forefront (*In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 1980). Till his death in 2016, Harrison urged

Washington to support Baloch independence in pursuit of its own interests in the region but successive administrations from Nixon-Kissinger remained invested in Islamabad.

Now, the China-Pakistan axis has eroded Washington's relationship with its non-NATO ally. Baloch resistance to Islamabad's unceasing atrocities and resentment against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that encroaches upon their land and resources give America an opening. For, Balochistan is the geostrategic region without which Pakistan is just a landlocked landmass, of no use even to the Army that controls it.

As Italian scholar Valeria F Piacentini observed in 1945, Balochistan is at the crossroads of two "axes", east-west and north-south, of three macro-regions: Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean basin. It forms the hinge between the Indian sub-continent, Central Asia and the Euro-Asiatic steppes and the Iranian plateau; as also the link between regions that gravitate towards the Indian Ocean and its western "sea routes", the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

This is why London want-

ed Balochistan to be part of Pakistan and nudged MA Jinnah after the Khan of Kalat proved obdurate. Balochistan was annexed in 1948. The CIA-MI6 operated from Balochistan to overthrow the then Iranian Prime Minister M Mossadegh after he nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Washington used Balochistan for its proxy war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan and opened war against the Taliban.

Gwadar Port, China's big prize and *raison d'être* for the CPEC, belongs to Balochistan. Chabahar is part of the same Makran coastline. If US President Donald Trump can be persuaded to see the Baloch quest and Iran as potential allies, that could take the entire Makran coast away from China (depriving it also of the military base it is building in Jiwani peninsula off Gwadar). It would put a powerful brake on China's relentless acquisition of ports and bases across the Indian Ocean littoral.

Iran is a catch for Beijing because like Pakistan, it can join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by land and sea, giving it access to staggering geostrategic space. Tehran could link Beijing with Ankara, which offers access to the

Mediterranean Sea and the nations of North Africa, Central Europe and Europe that comprise its littoral. The Mediterranean Sea opens into the Atlantic Ocean via the Strait of Gibraltar; this could bring Beijing closer to Washington than ever envisaged by the State Department or Pentagon. Beijing in Chabahar would also have access to the Arabian Sea, Strait of Hormuz and Sea of Oman, besides a shortcut to its military base in Djibouti. A US-friendly Balochistan and Iran would end this dream run.

Interestingly, in June 2020, Moscow arrested Valery Mitko, president, Arctic Academy of Sciences, for allegedly giving China information about submarine detection, a reflection of Moscow's anger at Chinese ambitions in the Arctic region. Washington has also arrested citizens in prestigious institutions working covertly for China. It should investigate whether the tales of Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections originated from "friends" in institutions that received lavish Chinese funding. Perhaps Russian President Vladimir Putin has signalled as much.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

Swami Swarupanand had warned that August 5 was inauspicious for the stone-laying of Ram temple. This date has been fixed in accordance with Modi's convenience.



Congress leader — Digvijaya Singh

It's (*Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*) my film, too. Everyone has a right to their opinion, but people are spitting fire against one another. The flak is unfair.



Actor — Angad Bedi

I believe that he (Trump) plans to install himself in some kind of emergency way to continue to hold onto office. And that's why the American people had better wake up.



Top Democrat leader — Whip James Clyburn

While people boycott Chinese products, cellphone makers in China will continue as title sponsors of the IPL. No wonder China is thumbing its nose at us.



NC leader — Omar Abdullah

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Liquor deaths

Sir — It is unfortunate that more than 85 people died and many others were taken ill due to the consumption of spurious liquor in Punjab. The sale of illicit liquor is a thriving business not only in Punjab but in many parts of the country. In fact, India remains one among the countries with the highest number of alcohol-related deaths. And whenever such a tragedy unfolds, Governments react by imposing a ban on the sale of liquor. They fail to either bring tighter regulations or crack down on dens, which operate without a licence as they fulfil a demand while making huge profits.

People take to illicit liquor as they cannot afford to buy licensed brands. Spurious liquor does not attract taxes or duties and, thus, comes cheap. The Punjab Government must set a precedent by constituting a Special Investigation Team which must track down all bootleggers in the State. The Union Government, too, must come up with a multi-pronged plan to curb the sale and consumption of toxic alcohol.

Ramesh G Jethwani  
 Bengaluru

### Plain truths about Rafale

Before the arrival of the Rafale jets, their acquisition process went through many twists and turns. It was in 2000, during the initial years of NDA-I, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) initiated a proposal for the acquisition of 126 Mirage 2000-1Is from Dassault Aviation (DA) for induction from 2004-05 onwards. According to the CAG, the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) discarded the proposal after protracted deliberations till 2004. When the UPA Government came to power, it issued a Request for Proposal for the acquisition of 126 advanced versions of MMRCA in 2007. As per the delivery terms, 18 aircraft were to be supplied in flyaway condition and the balance 108 were to be manufactured by HAL. The RFP was withdrawn based on a report by the Ministry of Defence, which reportedly carried out a statement saying that "the price bid of DA was non-compliant as it was incomplete and not in the prescribed format" yet again. And the NDA-II Government signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) in 2016 for 36 fighter jets at a price aligned to the earlier "incomplete" offer. Delivery of the first batch of 18 Rafale aircraft was to be completed within 53 months and the balance 18 within 67 months from the date of signing of the IGA. The agreement put a lid on the original proposal to manufacture 108 Rafale warplanes by HAL.

Exactly two decades into the process, the ruling Government has landed on the indigenous builder now



to meet the initially projected requirement. The Air Chief Marshal has now confirmed that an order for another 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas MK IA, from HAL was being fast-tracked. In a nutshell, IAF initiated a proposal for 126 Mirage 2000-II from DA in 2000 and the Ministry is still preparing to place an order for 83 Tejas MK IA with HAL in 2020. During the intervening 20 years, India has acquired just five Rafale fighter jets out of the 36 ordered and that, too, at a phenomenal cost. Yet, the irony is that confirmed jingoists hit the streets in jubilation on the arrival of the foreign-made Rafales but found no reason to applaud the Tejas, the indigenously designed and built Light Combat Aircraft.

Haridasan Rajan  
 Kozhikode

### Education revamp

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31).

The new National Education Policy (NEP) promises a transformational shift, infusing an element of joy and purpose in learning. The new guidelines, if

implemented, will offer students a flexible academic journey where they can pick and choose instead of remaining confined to set patterns. The

loftier goals are to mainstream about two crore out-of-school children. Before and after 1947, matriculation was the requirement for entrance to higher education in colleges. Then, 10+2 streams brought more changes but NEP, 2020, promises the much-needed reforms. Though challenges remain, the new NEP can be a game-changer as it promises to bestow flexibility, improve the skills of the students and grant more autonomy to educational institutions.

Abhijit Roy  
 Jamshedpur

### Exercise in futility

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). NEP, 2020, is an exercise in futility. It wasn't debated in Parliament. Increasing the tenure of undergraduate courses makes no sense as postgraduate programmes have been watered down. The only redeemable feature is that it does not disturb the three-language formula system.

Ratnapriya  
 Via email

Send your feedback to:  
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

## Of slavery and history

Judging people for the past is a distraction from the business at hand, which is to clear up the ghastly heritage of racism that slavery has left



GWYNNE DYER

Assessing the people of America's past by today's standards would compel us to cast the majority of our heroes as villains." That seemed to be the line taken by Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas in his opinion piece for *The New York Times*. It caused great outrage, the Opinion Editor had to resign and Cotton was roundly abused for "defending slavery." He probably deserved that. What he actually said was that the "Founding Fathers" of the US saw slavery as the "necessary evil upon which the Union was built." That would sound all right in a classroom, if you then explained that otherwise the slave-owning southern states would not have agreed to a federation of all 13 colonies.

It sounded less well coming out of the mouth of a senator who wants to ban federal funding for a project to improve the teaching of the history of slavery in American schools. Senator Cotton is one of President Donald Trump's loyal soldiers, trying to whip up a white racial panic and consolidate the boss's "base." But that's not the point. The point is that I changed one word in that quote, and that it wasn't Cotton who said it. It was Nigerian journalist and novelist Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, and what she actually said, in an opinion piece for the *BBC*, was this: "Assessing the people of Africa's past by today's standards would compel us to cast the majority of our heroes as villains."

She was talking specifically about her great-grandfather, Nwaubani Ogogo Oriaku, who was a widely respected trader in tobacco, palm oil, and slaves in south-eastern Nigeria in the early 20th century. The Atlantic slave trade had been banned by the European empires a century before but slavery was still a flourishing domestic business in Nigeria and many other African countries. Her great-grandfather became famous by defying the British colonial authorities, who were trying to stamp out slavery within Nigeria. They had confiscated some of his slaves and he marched right up and demanded them back, waving a trading licence that dated back to the previous century.

They were taken back, apologised and returned his slaves. Indeed, they were so impressed by his boldness and self-confidence that they subsequently appointed him "paramount chief" of his region. So he became a local hero in his own day and is still a hero to Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's family. Slavery was normal in most pre-modern societies, including almost all the kingdoms and ethnic groups of sub-Saharan Africa. Africans had sold slaves north to various Islamic empires in the Middle East for centuries before Europeans showed up on the coast in ships. They were just another set of customers buying in the same market.

Most enslaved Africans didn't travel more than a few hundred kilometres from home, of course. It is estimated that in the 18th century, one-third of the people in what is now Senegal were slaves who belonged to other Senegalese. But the ones who were sold to foreigners probably suffered even more.

Historians believe that around one-fifth of the ten million Africans transported to the Americas over more than three centuries died on board ships. The fatalities among the estimated 17 million African slaves sold to Arab traders and forced to walk across the Sahara or carried around the India Ocean in ships during ten centuries were probably just as high. What awaited the survivors when they arrived was pretty appalling too.

But Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani is right. The past is a different country and it's pointless to judge people by standards they would not even comprehend. Judging people for past history is a distraction from the business at hand, which is to clear up the ghastly heritage of racism that slavery has left in America.

It is noteworthy that there is no comparable heritage of guilt and racism in the African countries that sold the slaves. Everybody, slaves and masters, was from the same group, and everybody was involved one way or another. We used to do it, now we don't, end of story. Why is it so different in the European countries, and above all in the US? My guess is that it's because slavery, uniquely in the world, had completely died out in Europe by a thousand years ago. When 16th-century Europeans reached West Africa, it was quite new to them.

They took to slave-owning readily enough but they had no traditional framework in which to think about it. Nwaubani Ogogo Oriaku didn't need to justify owning slaves by telling himself they were inferior. He'd bought them fair and square. What's the problem? Whereas American plantation owners had to come up with bizarre racial fantasies to explain to themselves why it was right to own other people — and their great-great-grandchildren are still struggling with those fantasies today.

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

NONE OF THE ILLICIT LIQUOR (DEATH) CASES FROM THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN SOLVED BY THE PUNJAB POLICE. —DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL

POINT COUNTERPOINT



WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR PUNJAB UNIT FOR DATA AND FIGURES FIRST AND THEN COMMENT ON OUR WORKING. —PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER AMARINDER SINGH

# In the name of God

The BJP has already made the construction of the Ram temple a political issue that will hold good for 2024. Ayodhya city has been painted in saffron hues



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

The innocuous-sounding statement of the General Secretary of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, Champat Rai, that the construction of the Ram temple, whose foundation will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5, will be completed within three-and-a-half-years, has political overtones which no one can miss.

"We will try to complete the construction by three years but we have six months extra in case we fail to meet the deadline because of any eventuality. But, mark my words, the temple will be ready with its pristine grandeur by the end of 2023 or early 2024," Rai had said when announcing that Modi would be the chief guest of the ground-breaking ceremony for the Ram temple's construction.

For those who need it to be spelled out, the timing of the completion of the temple is crucial — end of 2023 or early 2024. The Lok Sabha elections are expected by March 2024. This means that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would again use the Ram temple to play the Hindutva card and propel the party towards victory. This time the BJP will go to the masses saying "jo kaha, woh kiya (we did what we said we would do)." The common refrain of BJP leaders and campaigners will be, "We promised the people that the Ram temple would be built in Ayodhya and we fulfilled that promise." I would not be surprised if the party takes a miniaturised model of the Ram temple across villages or puts up such models before the Model Code of Conduct comes into play in every gram Sabha. The process has already begun as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has asked for funds from the people for temple construction. The VHP has set a target of reaching over 10 crore families in five lakh villages across India with an appeal to donate at least ₹100 voluntarily for the temple's construction. It is set to start from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and will then spread out across the country.

The VHP's plan does not end here. The Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, the temple trust which is entrusted with the task of constructing a temple at the Ram Janmabhoomi Complex, in collaboration with the VHP, plans to kick-start the 'Akhand Bharat Week' after the *bhoomi puja* (ground-breaking ceremony). The week will be celebrated from August 16 to August 23 when the Parishad volunteers will go to the villages and tell the masses about the Ram Mandir construction and how this temple will ensure the "akhandata" (integrity) of the country.

The BJP has always used the temple issue to meet its political aims. It has always found a mention in its election manifesto, whose nomenclature has changed with the passage of time. The BJP election manifesto is now called 'Sankalp Patra'. After the famous Rath Yatra carried out by Lal Krishna Advani along with Pramod Mahajan in 1989 from Somnath to Ayodhya, with Narendra Modi accompanying the yatra from Somnath till the border of Gujarat, the BJP saw the potential of the issue to propel the party to great political power.

When the yatra was stopped in Samastipur in Bihar by the then Lalu Prasad Government and Advani was arrested, the whole of India was drenched in the spirit of Hindutva. The rath was stopped on October 23, 1990. This set off a string

“FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT TO BE SPELLED OUT, THE TIMING OF THE COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE IS CRUCIAL — END OF 2023 OR EARLY 2024. THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE EXPECTED BY MARCH 2024. THIS MEANS THAT THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY WOULD AGAIN USE THE RAM TEMPLE TO PLAY THE HINDUTVA CARD AND PROPEL THE PARTY TOWARDS VICTORY”



of events that shaped the country's politics in years to come. Advani's arrest triggered massive protests across the country, sparking communal riots across several towns, especially in north India. Hundreds of *Kar Sevaks* (voluntary workers) marched towards Ayodhya to liberate the Ram Janmabhoomi. Exactly a week after Advani's Rath Yatra was stopped — on October 30 — as many as 28 *Kar Sevaks* were killed in police firing while trying to storm the Babri Masjid. Even before the *Kar Sevaks* had entered Ayodhya, then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav had claimed that "parinda bhi par nahi maar sakti (not even a bird can enter there)." Mulayam Singh still justifies the police action.

The events that unfolded then only benefited the BJP as its political clout grew exponentially and it grabbed the opportunity with both hands. In the 1991 election, for the first time the party gave the slogan of "Mandir wahin banayenge (we will build the temple there only)" but it was only in 1996, that for the first time, the BJP mentioned the Ram Mandir in its manifesto.

The party reiterated its commitment to facilitate the construction of a magnificent Ram temple at the *Jammasthan* (birthplace) in Ayodhya after coming to power as "this is the dream of millions of people in our land. The concept of Ram lies at the core of their consciousness."

The words remained the same in manifesto after manifesto and in 2019 it said: "We reiterate our stand on the Ram Mandir. We will explore all possibilities within the framework of the Constitution and make all necessary efforts to facilitate the expeditious

construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya."

That commitment was fulfilled in November 2019 when the Supreme Court paved the way for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and allowed the construction of a mosque, which incidentally will come up 30 kilometres away from the complex where the original mosque stood.

With the completion of one aim, the BJP has already got ammunition for the elections — which is powerful and emotive. And the subsidiary props can come from more communal pitches like cow vigilantism and the anti-citizenship law protests. Emotion is a very important quotient for winning or losing elections in a democracy. Corruption, religion, nationalism, caste *et al* are some of the issues which have an emotive appeal and can unite people in no time. This is not limited to India only. Even in the US, the slogan "America First" did wonders for Donald Trump. Similarly, in 2019, Balakot supplied the required emotive quotient in the form of nationalism and the BJP and Modi swept the Lok Sabha polls. The BJP has already made the construction of the Ram temple a political issue. Ayodhya city has been painted in saffron hues. Students of the arts faculty of Saket Degree College have drawn pictures of Ram, Laxman and characters of the *Ramayana* on the walls around the city — not even leaving the walls of the Sulabh Shauchalaya toilet complex.

In the backdrop of the COVID-19 guidelines, people have been asked not to go to the Ram Janmabhoomi site where the main function will be held. But the BJP has plans to put up LED screens all across Ayodhya so that peo-

ple can witness the ground-breaking ceremony and watch the Prime Minister lay the foundation stone of the temple on August 5. They argue that it is natural for people to want to witness this historic moment at the Ram Janmabhoomi Complex but because of COVID-19 guidelines they cannot be allowed entry there, hence they can watch it on big screens near their *mohallas* (localities).

The VHP has done its part and has asked people across India to decorate their homes, *mohallas* and *mandirs* and watch the live telecast of the grand ceremony together while singing *bhajans* (hymns). Milind Parande, Secretary General of the VHP, had issued a statement saying that the live telecasts should be accessible to the community on big screens or at auditoria. "People should decorate their houses, neighbourhoods, villages, markets, monasteries, gurdwaras and *ashrams* and distribute *prasad* and also light lamps after sunset," the VHP leader had said in that statement. "Use all means of publicity to make this grand programme available to more and more people in society," he had further said. The paraphernalia is ready. The BJP and its right-wing organisations are all set to milk the situation for political gains. The Unlock 3.0 guidelines may have asked people to desist from organising religious functions but the BJP Government and the party are ready for such a big event. After all, it is all politics. And an investment made today will hold good later. One wonders if COVID-19 management could be pursued with such intent. Lord Ram would have wanted that.

(The writer is Executive Director, News, Lucknow edition)

# No more a matter of public interest

We must act against those misusing PIL, which is considered the most important tool in delivering speedy justice to the underprivileged and the poor



J. GOPIKRISHNAN

The seeds of the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) germinated in India during the time of Justice Krishna Iyer in 1976 and subsequently in 1979, when the inhuman conditions of 50,000 undertrial prisoners led to their release. The idea that emerged in a movement that was steered by Justice PN Bhagwati was to ensure speedy justice as a fundamental right, which was never within the reach of the poor and the underprivileged.

From being a potent weapon meant to check the failures of the legislature and the executive, the PIL slowly and steadily became a domain

to nurture and pursue private interests. It offered a political theatre for guerrilla warfare in a layered style. It soon became the Frankenstein's monster that could make the legislature and the executive shiver. And this year, the PIL industry wants to achieve its final goal and that is to dictate terms to the Supreme Court (SC) of India.

There has been so much degeneration that Justice Arijit Pasayat underscored that the 'P' in PIL stands for politics, *paiza*, publicity or private interest. This position has been adequately reiterated by the SC in the Ashok Kumar Pandey case. However, the litany of frivolous petitions over a period of time has become so big that PIL activists have started issuing integrity certificates to serving and retired judges and bureaucrats.

"Why is your shirt not buttoned and why are your collars open?" the Chief Justice of India (CJI) asked a PIL lawyer in the ongoing proceedings in Court No 1, following the murder of eight policemen on duty and the subsequent encounter of

Uttar Pradesh's (UP) notorious gangster Vikas Dubey and his associates by the police.

The single-member commission of enquiry appointed by the Government of UP was undone following certain PILs filed before the apex court. This was done even after the SC has ruled in the *Bharati Tamang and State of West Bengal Vs CPDR* cases that a PIL for seeking a commission of enquiry is maintainable only in exceptional circumstances.

It was further qualified in the *Zahira Habibulla Sheikh and Common Cause Vs Union of India* case that such "exceptional circumstances", justifying a relief-seeking court-appointed enquiry, arise only where deficiency in a probe is visible or there is *prima facie* evidence of abuse of power, which casts any doubt on the independence of the commission. The SC further held that even in such cases, a third party can seek remedy through a PIL only when the allegations of such abuse of power or deficiency in enquiry are

borne out of records, as laid down in the *Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lalan* case.

However, the PIL action continued. The first round was followed by objections to the appointment of a particular retired judge of the Supreme Court even after the CJI cleared the name. The "bias" of the retired bureaucrat in the commission was mocked. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the State under the Additional Chief Secretary was challenged. Value and virtue certificates from an invisible, point-based human rights curriculum were exchanged and exhibited before the Bench.

How far should the court go to satisfy the petitioners — especially when they have no track record of representing the public at large in any matters of grave concern — and those who attack the reputation of retired judges, whose contribution to the legal system for decades is in the public domain?

How did the apex court deal with such frivolous petitions in the past? In the *Mathews Nedumpara* case, the

SC in 2019 initiated *suo motu* contempt proceedings and, after taking into consideration the objectionable conduct of the petitioner, including his acts of filing frivolous petitions, sentenced him to three months' jail and a suspension of the sentence if he undertook that he would never browbeat a judge. He was additionally barred from practising before the SC for one year.

Further in the case of *Suraz India Trust v Union of India*, the court ruled that the petitioner be precluded from filing any case in public interest before any court in this country and imposed a penalty of ₹25 lakh.

When one thought that the SC-appointed commission would finally get to work on why the mockery of rule of law in the gory death of policemen should not be repeated, another bunch of petitions was filed, this time based on a media article. The PILs again questioned the integrity of a commission that collectively brings to the table 150 plus years of service to the nation.

Should these petitions and their

consequent dismissal, as bland as it may appear, soaked in the semantics of apology, not be considered one more assault on the mutilated bodies of the policemen who died on duty?

Keeping aside differences on political or ideological leanings, misgivings or otherwise concerning the judiciary, the police force and the graver grouse we have developed towards the criminal justice system, we need to pause and introspect.

The commission is expected, as per the terms of reference, to enquire into the nexus between the criminals and the police/establishment and make suggestions to ensure such events do not recur in the future.

How long do we wait for the commission to function and make appropriate recommendations to fix a broken system? A system in which a history-sheeter with more than 60 heinous offences was out on bail.

A system in which "insiders" appeared to have tipped off the criminals. A system in which there is no speedy trial or regular hearings. A system in which the criminals run a

racket from within the jails. A system in which the families of policemen murdered are looking at a long and hard road to justice. A system in which endless aspirations for the idea of justice are only soaked in the body of hope. Just because hope is the only feeling stronger than fear and it is with that hope that we look up to Court No 1 to dispense justice now.

It is time to move beyond simple dismissals and imposition of costs. In spite of settled laws, the tyranny of frivolous petitions is not just obstructing the functioning of the apex court by eating up precious time and resources but is mocking at the very idea of justice. It is time to ensure that just because the highest court has opened its doors to justice, it cannot be converted into a platform for enabling the agenda of one particular section of activist lawyers. It is time to act against those misusing the PIL, which is considered the most important tool in delivering speedy justice to the underprivileged.

(The writer is a Special Correspondent of The Pioneer)

# ISIS storm prison in Af, 29 killed

AP ■ JALALABAD

Afghan forces retook a prison in the country's east on Monday afternoon, following an hours-long gunbattle a day after the facility was targeted by ISIS in an attack that killed 29 people. The prison is believed to hold hundreds of ISIS members. The attack highlighted the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, even as US and NATO forces begin to withdraw following a US-Taliban peace deal struck earlier this year.



An Afghan security person stands guard near a prison after an attack in the city of Jalalabad, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Monday. AP

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said the prison in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, located some 115 kilometers (70 miles) east of Kabul, was taken back in the afternoon — 24 hours after it came under attack. The fighting had also left at least 50 wounded, he said. Even as Afghan troops retook the prison, IS militants continued to fire on Afghan security forces from a nearby neighborhood. Sporadic gunfire rang out from nearby residential buildings in central Jalalabad, an area of high security near the provincial governor's office. As security forces swept

through the prison, they found the bodies of two Taliban prisoners apparently killed by the Islamic State group, showing the tensions between the two militant factions battling each other in eastern Afghanistan. The 29 dead included civilians, prisoners, guards and Afghan security forces, said Attaullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman. After the fighting was over, Afghan forces held up a black IS banner captured during the battle. From behind windows with bars, several Taliban prisoners peeked out at reporters and media crews at the scene. The attack began Sunday, when an Islamic State suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives up to the prison's main gate, detonating the bomb. Islamic State militants opened fire on the prison's guards and poured in through the breach. The IS affiliate in Afghanistan, known as IS in Khorasan province and headquartered in Nangarhar

province, later claimed responsibility for the attack. However, some of the 1,500 prisoners there escaped during the fighting. Khogyani said about 1,000 prisoners who earlier escaped had been found by security forces across the city. It wasn't immediately clear if any prisoners were still at large. The attack came a day after authorities said Afghan special forces killed a senior Islamic State commander near Jalalabad. Several hundred prisoners in Jalalabad are believed to be Islamic State members. The fighting ended after the final attackers, holed up in the nearby residential complex, were killed, said Aman, the defense ministry's spokesman. He said 10 IS attackers were also killed in the operation and that the assailants killed five prisoners, including two members of the rival Taliban, before the raid ended. While the Islamic State group has seen its so-called caliphate stretching across Iraq and Syria eliminated after a yearlong campaign, the group has continued fighting in Afghanistan. The extremists also have battled the Taliban in the country, whom the U.S.

overthrew following the 2001 American-led invasion after the Sept. 11 attacks. The Taliban's political spokesman, Suhail Shaheen, told The Associated Press that his group was not involved in the Jalalabad attack. The U.S. struck a peace deal with the Taliban in February. A second, crucial round of negotiations between the Taliban and the political leadership in Kabul has yet to start. The Taliban had declared a three-day cease-fire starting last Friday for the major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. The cease-fire expired at 12 a.m. Monday, though it wasn't immediately clear if it would be extended as the U.S. pushes for an early start to intra-Afghan negotiations that have repeatedly been delayed since Washington signed the peace deal with the Taliban. "We have a cease-fire and are not involved in any of these attacks anywhere in the country," Shaheen said. The Taliban also had denied being involved in a suicide bombing in eastern Logar province late Thursday that killed at least nine people and wounded 40.

# WHO: There may never be Covid-19 'silver bullet'

Virus has killed nearly 6,90,000 people, at least 18.1 mn infected

AFP ■ GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Monday that there might never be a "silver bullet" for the new coronavirus, despite the rush to discover effective vaccines.

The WHO urged governments and citizens to focus on doing the known basics, such as testing, contact tracing, maintaining physical distance and wearing a mask in order to suppress the pandemic, which has upended normal life around the globe and triggered a devastating economic crisis. "We all hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference. "However, there's no silver bullet at the moment — and

there might never be." "For now, stopping outbreaks comes down to the basics of public health and disease control. "Do it all," he urged. The novel coronavirus has killed nearly 6,90,000 people and infected at least 18.1 million since the outbreak emerged in Wuhan in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

joint efforts to identify the virus origins," he said. "WHO and Chinese experts have drafted the terms of reference for the studies and programme of work for an international team, led by WHO. "The international team will include leading scientists and researchers from China and around the world. "Epidemiological studies will begin in Wuhan to identify the potential source of infection of the early cases. "Evidence and hypotheses generated through this work will lay the ground for further, longer-term studies. The pair have not yet returned to the WHO's Geneva headquarters for a debriefing. Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, possibly from a market in the city of Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat. Chinese officials said early in the outbreak that the virus may have spread from a market in the city, which sold live and wild animals, but no further confirmation of that has been revealed.

**CHINA MISSION**  
The WHO began pressing China in early May to invite in its experts to help investigate the animal origins of Covid-19. The UN health agency sent an epidemiologist and an animal health specialist to Beijing on July 10 to lay the groundwork for a probe aimed at identifying how the virus entered the human species. Their scoping mission is now complete, said Tedros. "The WHO advance team that travelled to China has now concluded their mission to lay the groundwork for further

# Trump criticises Birx over virus remarks

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said White House coronavirus task force leader Dr Deborah Birx hurt the Trump administration when she said widespread virus infections in urban and rural America mark a "new phase" for the pandemic. It was a rare rebuke of Birx. Trump accused her of taking "the bait" by responding to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

who told ABC's "This Week" that she had lost confidence in Birx because Trump appointed her and the president has been spreading disinformation about the virus. Trump, in a tweet on Monday, described Birx's response to Pelosi as "pathetic". On CNN's "State of the Union", Birx said her comments are driven by data and that she would stake her 40-year career on using data to implement programmes to save lives.

# US virus 'extraordinarily widespread': WH Experts

AGENCIES ■ WASHINGTON

The United States is in a new phase of the novel coronavirus outbreak with infections "extraordinarily widespread" in rural areas as well as cities, White House coronavirus experts said on Sunday. Coronavirus cases continue to surge in some parts of the country and the public health officials are trying to work with governors to tailor responses for each state. "We are in a new phase," said Dr. Deborah Birx. "What

we are seeing today is different from March and April. It is extraordinarily widespread" in rural as well as urban areas. "To everybody who lives in a rural area: You are not immune or protected from this virus," Birx said on CNN's "State of the Union". Birx, the White House task force coordinator, said people living in multigenerational households in an area that is experiencing an outbreak should wear masks inside the home to protect the elderly or those with underlying condi-

tions. Admiral Brett Giroir, an assistant Health and Human Services secretary, continued to stress the importance of wearing masks. "If we don't do that, and if we don't limit the indoor crowded spaces, the virus will continue to run," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press". "We are very concerned and this is a very serious point." The coronavirus, which first appeared in China, has infected 4.6 million people in the United States and killed more than 155,000 Americans,

according to a Reuters tally. Birx said federal officials have been working on individual reports for each state examining community trends and hospital records. "Each of these responses have to be dramatically tailored," she said. She said what she witnessed as she visited 14 states over the last three weeks gave her cause for concern. "As I traveled around the country, I saw all of America moving," Birx said. "If you have chosen to go on vacation into a hot spot, you really need

to come back and protect those with comorbidities and assume you're infected." If people wear masks and avoid crowds, Giroir said, it gives the same outcome as a complete shutdown. "That's why we're going to all the states, we're on local radio, we give specific instructions to every governor by county, what they need to do when we start - when those counties start tipping yellow, because that's the time when you have to stamp it down," he said.

**Public Works Department Government Resolution Number CAT-2017/C.R.8/Building-2, Dated 12th April, 2017 FORM-1**

**Government of Maharashtra**  
**Public Works Department**  
**North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri**  
**Telephone No. 02226231964**  
**E- Tender Notice No. 3 (2020-2021.)**

E-mail address:- **northmumbai.ee@mahapwd.com** Telephone/Fax Number **26231964/26205788**

E-Tender for the following work in B-1 Form is invited via online e-tendering system from Registered / Non Registered Contractor of Eligible Class by the Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58 in behalf of Government of Maharashtra. Tender Documents are downloaded from Government of Maharashtra portal <https://mahatenders.gov.in> & [www.mahapwd.com](http://www.mahapwd.com). Right to select or reject is reserved by The Superintending Engineer, Mumbai (P.W.) Circle, Mumbai & Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58. Tender with condition is never accepted.

Sr.No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost
1.	Construction, repairs and modification of the Police firing range at Horseshoe valley, Bhatwadi, Ghatkopar (W) Mumbai. (Phase-I- Ch. 100 m to 225 m, Phase II- Ch. 0 m to 100 m) Completion of Balance work, including Electrical Work.	Rs. 9,37,50,740/-

The Superintending Engineer, Mumbai (P.W.) Circle, Mumbai & Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58. Reserves right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason. The Conditional tender will not be acceptable. Note: - Any changes in the scope / conditions and any other information in the Tender document will be intimated on the same web site.

**E- Tender Submission Date - 07/08/2020 to 31/08/2020**  
**Pre-Bid Date -19/08/2020** at 12.00 pm in the office of the Chief Engineer, Mumbai (P.W.) Region, Mumbai, 4th floor, Bandhakam Bhavan, 25, Marzban Road, Fort, Mumbai-400 001  
**E-Tender Opening Date- 01/09/2020.** at 15.00 Hrs.

sd/  
**Executive Engineer,**  
**North Mumbai (P.W.) Division,**  
**Andheri (West), Mumbai**

**DGIPR/2020/2021/458**

# Outbreak hits Norway cruise ship, could spread along coast

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

A Norwegian cruise ship line halted all trips and apologised on Monday for procedural errors after an outbreak of coronavirus on one ship infected at least 5 passengers and 36 crew. Health authorities fear the ship also could have spread the virus to dozens of towns and villages along Norway's western coast. The infections on the MS Roald Amundsen raise new questions about safety on all cruise ships during a pandemic even as the devastated cruise ship industry is pressing to resume sailings after chaotically shutting down in March. The Hurtigruten cruise line was one of the first companies to resume sailing after the pandemic hit, starting cruises to Norway out of northern Germany in June with a single ship, then adding cruises in July to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard. The 41 people on the MS Roald Amundsen who tested positive have been admitted to the University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø, north of



Norwegian cruise ship MS Roald Amundsen moored in Tromsø, Norway, on Monday. AP

the Arctic Circle, where the ship currently is docked. "A preliminary evaluation shows that there has been a failure in several of our internal procedures," Hurtigruten CEO Daniel Skjeldem said in a statement. He added the company that sails along Norway's picturesque coast between Bergen in the south and Kirkenes in the north is "now in the process of a full review of all procedures." It has contacted passengers who had been on the MS Roald Amundsen for its July 17-24 and July 25-31 trips from Bergen to of Svalbard, which is known for its polar bears. The ship had 209 guests on the first voyage and 178 guests on the second. All other crew tested negative. But since the cruise line often acts like a local ferry, traveling from port to port along Norway's western coast, the virus may not have been contained onboard. Some passengers disembarked along the route and may have spread the virus to their local communities.

# GLOBAL TROTTERING

**BABY ELEPHANT DIES AT ST LOUIS ZOO**  
**St Louis (US):** A baby elephant has died several weeks after it was born at the St Louis Zoo. Zoo officials said the Asian elephant calf named Avi was euthanised on Sunday because he had developmental problems that limited his ability to feed. The zoo said Avi's condition had deteriorated quickly in recent days despite feeding assistance and intravenous treatments.

**NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER JOHN HUME DIES**  
**London:** John Hume, the Northern Irish politician who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998 for his role in the British province's peace process, has died aged 83, his family announced on Monday. Hume, the former leader of the mainly Catholic Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), shared the Nobel with David Trimble of the pro-British Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) after the pair helped forge the 1998 Good Friday peace agreement.

**PROBE: DOGS ATTACK ON COLIN KAEPERNICK FILL-IN**  
**Fort Lauderdale (US):** The US Navy is investigating an incident in which dogs attacked a "Colin Kaepernick stand-in" during a K-9 demonstration during a 2019 fundraiser at the Navy Seals Museum in Florida. The Navy said in a statement posted on Twitter that officials became aware of the video on Sunday. Kaepernick is a former San Francisco 49ers quarterback who began kneeling during the playing of "The Star Spangled Banner" before games to protest social injustice and police brutality. He played his final NFL game in January 2017.

**ITALY'S NEW VIRUS CASES DROPS BELOW 200**  
**Rome:** The number of new confirmed cases of the coronavirus in Italy fell below 200 for the first time in a week, with 159 cases registered on Monday, according to Health Ministry figures. That brings the total number of cases in Italy to 248,229 and deaths to 35,166.

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REGIONAL OFFICE: Jawahar Market, Model Town, Rohtak - 124 001(HR)  
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

**PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE / MOVABLE PROPERTIES**  
**LAST DATE & TIME OF SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS Online on or before 03.09.2020 upto 5:00 PM**

E-auction Sale Notice for sale of Movable/Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) & (6)(2) of the security Interest ( Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable/Movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Central Bank of India, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "What ever there is basis".

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE/ MOVABLE PROPERTY/IES					
Branch/ Type of Account	Name of Account/ Owner of Property	Details of Property	Reserve price Rs.	EMD Rs.	Bid Increase Amount
Bahadurgarh/ Cent Trade	M/s. Ram Electric Co. (Prop. Mrs. Shanti Singhal W/o Mr. Jai Bhagwan Singhal) Mr. Jai Bhagwan Singhal (Guarantor) Kothi No. 20, Road No. 23 East Punjabi Bagh New Delhi 110076.	Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Property bearing shop No. 2151/2 measuring 45 Sq. Yards situated at Chah Indara, Dr. H C Sen Road, Kauria Pul, bhagirath Place, New Delhi - 110 006, vide registered Sale Deed No. 5133, Book No. 1 Volume 7609 Page 72-78 dated 15.09.1997 registered with Sub Registrar I, New Delhi in the name of Smt. Shanti Singhal W/o Sh. Jai Bhagwan Singhal resident of Kothi No. 20, Road No. 23, East Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi - 110 076. Bounded as: East :Gali, West :Property No. 2152, North :Property No. 2165, South :Gali	58.82 lacs	5.89 lac	0.20 Lac

**E-AUCTION DATE: 04.09.2020**  
**E-AUCTION TIME: 2:00 PM TO 4:00 PM**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:** The e-Auction is being held on "As is where is & As is what is Basis." 1. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on the property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property put on auction and claims/ rights/ dues/ effecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/ rights/ dues. 2. It shall be the responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the asset and specification before submitting the bid. 3. The interested bidders shall submit their EMD through Web Portal: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com> (the user ID & Password can be obtained free of cost by registering name with <https://www.mstcecommerce.com>) through Login ID & Password. The EMD shall be payable through RTGS / NEFT in the account through portal or Account No. 1268172955, Name of the A/C.: REGIONAL OFFICE ACCOUNT, Name of the Beneficiary: AUTHORISED OFFICER, IFSC Code: CBIN0280394. Please note that the Banker Cheque / Demand draft shall be submitted to Branch Office through RTGS/NEFT (Online) on or before 03.09.2020 on or before 5:00 PM. For further information please contact at Branch Office Bahadurgarh (9813526993) & Authorised Officer (8930501766), Regional Office, Rohtak (8901508220 Recovery). For more details visit the bank website [www.centralbankofindia.co.in](http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in).

**STATUTORY NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT, 2002 READ WITH RULE 6.7.8 & 9 OF THE SECURITIES INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002**  
Borrower/s Guarantor/s are requested to participate & Co-operate for processing of proposed sale auction so that we may receive maximum sale proceeds. If you have any interested buyer for the above mentioned property/ies your buyer is entitled to put the bid for purchase of the property/ies as per the terms of auctions.  
**Date: 03.08.2020**  
**Place : Rohtak**  
**Authorised Officer**  
**CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA**

# Oli, Prachanda talks remain inconclusive; both agree to meet again today for parleys

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the ruling party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Monday held informal consultations for two hours to sort out their differences, but the talks remained inconclusive, party sources said. The two leaders held a marathon three-hour long meeting on Sunday but failed to agree on a power-sharing deal. "Sunday's talks were positive and on Monday also the talks were held in the same direction," a party leader close to the Prime Minister said. During Monday's meeting, Prime Minister Oli was accompanied by his close confidante Subash Nembang, who has been working as a mediator to resolve the differences between the two warring factions. Prachanda was accompanied by senior leader and former Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal. As the Standing Committee meeting has been postponed indefinitely, the two leaders were making efforts to decide a fresh date for the meeting of the party's 45-member powerful body, sources said. Prime Minister Oli postponed the crucial

Standing Committee meeting on July 28 for the ninth time. While Oli stood for calling the Secretariat meeting to resolve the differences, Prachanda said that it would be inappropriate to call the Secretariat meeting as the Standing Committee meeting that was put off on July 28 is yet to be over, My Republica newspaper reported. "The meeting between the two top leaders of the NCP ended inconclusive as both the sides stood adamant in their demands," the paper said. Citing party insiders, the paper said that Prime Minister Oli wants the Secretariat meeting to resolve the key issues of intra-party dispute as he now commands a majority in the nine-member body after Vice Chairman Gautam stood in his favour. Prachanda, who is backed by Madhav Nepal, believes that the Standing Committee could take decisions favourable to him as their faction commands a comfortable majority, the paper said. Gautam had proposed that Oli be allowed to stay as prime minister for the remaining term of the House of Representatives (HoR), that is, two-and-a-half years, and chairman of the party until the unity general convention that Oli has proposed to hold by mid-December.

# SpaceX capsule and NASA crew make 1st splashdown in 45 yrs

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla:** Two NASA astronauts returned to Earth on Sunday in a dramatic, retro-style splashdown, their capsule parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico to close out an unprecedented test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company. It was the first splashdown by U.S. astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit. The return clears the way for another SpaceX crew launch as early as next month and possible tourist flights next year. Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken arrived back on Earth in their SpaceX Dragon capsule named Endeavour, less than a day after departing the International Space Station and two months after blasting off from Florida.

# Manufacturing contracts for 4th month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued amid prolonged closures, following which firms reduced both staff numbers as well as purchasing activity, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June. This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector. In April, the index had slipped into contraction mode, after remaining in the growth territory for 32 consecutive months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.



Sources: Nikkei, IHS Markit. KBK Infographics

Indian manufacturers shed more light on the state of economic conditions in one of the countries worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Eliot Kerr, Economist at IHS Markit.

The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months, Kerr said. He further noted that "anecdotal evidence indicated that firms were struggling to obtain work, with some of their clients remaining in lockdown, suggesting that we won't see a pick-up in activity until infection rates are quelled and restrictions can be further removed."

As per the survey, output contracted at a slightly faster pace than in June as demand conditions remained subdued with some businesses still closed amid lockdown exten-

sions. Moreover, export orders also witnessed a decline. Survey participants commented that international clients were hesitant to place orders while the duration of the pandemic remained uncertain.

Deteriorating demand conditions led Indian manufacturers to continue cutting staff numbers during July. On the cost front, manufacturers reported another decrease in input prices during July, the survey said adding that subdued demand for most goods more than offset the inflationary effects of shortages in some raw materials, the survey said.

However, despite the ongoing negative impact of COVID-19, sentiment towards future activity improved for the second month running, the survey said.

# Markets extend losses to 4th day as risk-off mood prevails

## RIL, BANK STOCKS BLEED

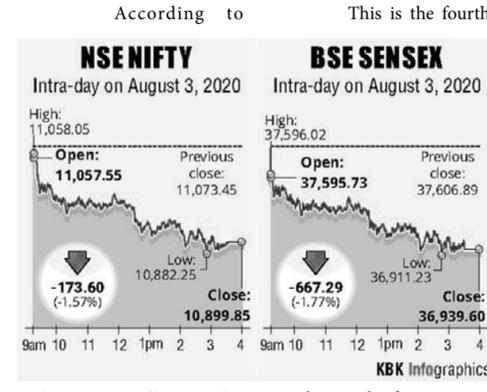
PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex crashed 667 points while the Nifty closed below the 10,900-mark on Monday as investors remained in selling mode for the fourth straight session amid frothy valuations and mounting Covid-19 cases.

A depreciating rupee and grim macroeconomic data further sapped risk appetite, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex, which opened in the red, stayed in the negative zone throughout the session to close at 36,939.60, down 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty tumbled 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to end at 10,891.60.

The Sensex has now lost 1,553.35 points in four days, while the Nifty has shed 408.95 points. Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack in Monday's session, slumping 4.41 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Auto and Reliance Industries (RIL).

Only six index constituents closed with gains -- Titan, Tata Steel, SBI, L&T, HCL Tech and PowerGrid, surging up to 3.15 per cent.



traders, massive selling in index majors RIL and HDFC duo dragged the key indices lower. Further, foreign fund outflows and concerns over the unabated rise in Covid-19 cases across the world kept investors on edge, they added.

The rupee too sank 20 paise and settled below the 75 per US dollar mark.

On the macro front, India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued, PMI data showed.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June.

## ₹ skids 20 paise to settle at 75.01 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee on Monday slid 20 paise to close at 75.01 to the US dollar, weighed down by lacklustre equities and concerns over continuous surge in Covid-19 cases in the country.

Starting off the session on a weak note, the domestic unit swung between a high of 74.88 and a low of 75.03. It finally ended at 75.01, registering a loss of 20 paise against the greenback. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.11 per cent to 93.45. Forex traders attributed the rupee fall to a host of reasons like stronger dollar, muted domestic equities and rising Covid-19 cases dragged the local unit down.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex plunged 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent to end at 36,939.60; while the NSE Nifty slumped 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to settle at 10,891.60.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.64 per cent to USD 43.24 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors bought shares worth ₹7,818.49 crore on Monday, exchange data showed.

Meanwhile, the number of cases around the world linked to Covid-19 has crossed 1.80 crore and in India, the number of infections has topped 18-lakh mark.

# COVID-19 FALLOUT

## Fiscal deficit may rise 6.8% of GDP

New Delhi: With economic disruptions set for a long haul due to Covid-19 pandemic, India could see its fiscal deficit this year to balloon to over 6.8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, brokerages analysing the first quarter deficit numbers have said.

The current expansion (in deficit), the brokerage said, is primarily due to low economic activity in the last two months (e-way bill 7 per cent lower than last year in June-end) and an extension of the tax filing deadline to Aug'20.

"Capital spending has surged 40% due to ways and means advances for FCI (high procurement) and road spending (base effect due to low spending in Q1FY19 due to elections); excluding these two, spending has declined by 4%," Emkay has said in its report.

The fiscal deficit is the total amount by which the government's expenses for a year exceeds its revenues.

The concern on the deficit comes from the trend witnessed in the first quarter of current fiscal. Lower net revenue receipts and elevated expenditure has pushed the fiscal deficit to 83 per cent of budget estimate in the three month period of April-May.

# Govt needs to have control over sale of margarine, Gadkari writes to PM

New Delhi: Concerned over the rise in use of margarine in hotels and restaurants, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has raised the issue with PM Narendra Modi and suggested that the Govt needs to have control over the sale of margarine as it is adversely affecting health of the people and causing financial loss to dairy farmers. "Gadkari had recently written to PM Narendra Modi regarding the matter." "Taking immediate cognisance of the demand, the Prime Minister's Office directed the FSSAI which immediately issued clarification, directives and future course of action to control the use of the margarine in edible items," according to an official release.

Margarine has a negative impact on human health due to the presence of large amounts of trans fat in it. Its use has increased significantly in hotels and restaurants. This is affecting adversely the health of the people and the sale of the butter made from the cow milk, fetching financial loss to the farmers. The Govt needs to have control over the sale of margarine," the Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) said.

## Gold rises by ₹185, silver jumps ₹1,672

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by ₹185 to ₹54,678 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at ₹54,493 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped ₹1,672 to ₹66,742 per kg from ₹65,070 per kg in the previous trade.

## Microsoft: Will continue discussions to buy TikTok in US after Nadela-Trump talks

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Technology giant Microsoft has said it will continue talks to purchase the popular Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok's American business after its India-born CEO Satya Nadella and President Donald Trump had a conversation.

The statement from Microsoft came days after Trump said that he could use the emergency economic pow-

## Stocks up on signs of industrial recovery, eyes on US talks

AP ■ TOKYO

Global shares edged up on Monday as investors weighed risks from rising coronavirus cases against evidence of a recovery in industrial activity in China and Europe.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's weekend comments that President Donald Trump plans to take action on a what he sees as a broad array of national security risks presented by software connected to the Chinese Communist Party caused market jitters in Asia.

Pompeo's remarks followed reports that Microsoft is in advanced talks to buy the U.S. Operations of TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance and is seen as a source of national security and censorship concerns by the Trump administration.

Market sentiment improved in European trading after so-called PMI surveys of industry showed activity in the sector picked up markedly in July as lockdowns continued to ease.

# Sumit Deb assumes charge as CMD, NMDC

Hyderabad: Sumit Deb has assumed charge as Chairman-Managing Director of NMDC Limited on 01 August, 2020. Prior to assuming the role of CMD, NMDC, Sumit Deb was Director (Personnel) and succeeds N Bajjendra Kumar, IAS, who has superannuated from the services of the Corporation yesterday. He brings with him vast knowledge gathered through his extensive experience at RINL & NMDC. He aspires to help NMDC reach new heights and levels of success.

Sumit Deb is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar. Prior to NMDC, he was with Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL). He joined as a Management Trainee and worked with RINL for about 25



(Commercial) in 2015, later he was then promoted as Executive Director (Personnel & Administration) at NMDC. In

2019 he assumed charge as Director (Personnel) and was heading various functions of Personnel & Admin, Human Resource Development, Law, Corporate Communications, CSR, Rajbhasha and has given a new dimension to company's vision & objectives.

Sumit Deb has diverse experience in man power & succession planning, training & development and other HR functions. He also has experience in the marketing and distribution of steel & iron ore, sponge iron, pellets and diamonds.

# Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition on Aug 19-20

New Delhi: Informa Markets in India, formerly UBM India, in association with Jewellery NET, will hold its debut "Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition" on August 19-20. The virtual show will see participation from Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, UP, J&K, Karnataka, West Bengal. Yogesh Mudras, MD of Informa Markets, said, "The show will be a leading-edge web-based platform that will ensure a grand display of luxury, variety of jewellery, insights, markets trends and networking opportunities all configured through the touch of a fingertip."

## SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo), **Name:** Md. Sakeel, **S/o:** Md. Wasil, **R/o:** VPO Madarganj, Dist. Arhariya, Bihar, **Aged:** 15 years, has been missing/ kidnapped from main bazar, Pahar Ganj, Delhi since 04.02.2013. A case vide FIR No. 31/13 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 04.02.2013, has been registered at P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi. His physical description is as under:



Md. Sakeel

**Height:** 4'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Physique/Build:** Thin, **Clothing:** Yellow Colour Sweater and Jeans Pant. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Pahar Ganj, Delhi at **E-mail:** [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or **website :** <http://cbi.nic.in> **Fax No.:** 011-23011334, **Tele No.:** 011-24368638 or 24368641

**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi**  
**Ph.:** 011-23524746, 23520787

DP/231/CD/2020.

# Chandan Kumar Mondol takes charge as Director (Commercial) at NTPC

New Delhi: Mondol has been with NTPC for over 35 years and has held several key leadership positions across multiple business units.

Mondol joined NTPC as 9th Batch Executive Trainee (ET) in 1984. He has vast experience and comprehensive knowledge of the power sector and has worked in both power plant and corporate functions. He started off his journey with the project execution and commissioning of 3X500 MW units at Ramagundam and 4X210 MW units at Kahalgand.

Mondol as a strategic planner has led several initiatives at NTPC. In 1998, Shri Mondol joined Corporate Commercial where he worked towards developing commercial & marketing strategies, execution of domestic and international Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), formulation of Tariff Regulations with CERC, participation in Ultra Mega Power Plant (UMPP) bidding, etc.

Mondol was also associated with the Government of India where he represented NTPC for the formulation of various policies and statutes including the Electricity Act 2003, the National Electricity Policy, the Tariff Policy and the Competitive Bidding Guidelines.

He joined Corporate Planning in 2012 as head of Strategic Planning Division and was also responsible for periodic review of Business Plan,



Organisational Restructuring, identifying risks of the company and its mitigation through comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management Policies etc. Shri Mondol took charge as Business Unit Head (BUH) of Khargone in March 2015 and was responsible for execution of 1320 MW Green Field Power Project involving land acquisition, Right of Use, Right of Way, R&R plan, Project Planning & Construction, Boundary Management with the local administration, State Government and other statutory authorities.

Before his appointment as Director (Commercial), he has worked as RED-WR1, RED (DBF & Hydro), ED (PP&M) and ED (Commercial).

## बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम, लि० पटना (बिहार सरकार का उपक्रम) राष्ट्रीय स्पर्द्धा ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं०-23/2020-21

- विद्युतनिगम का पटना एवं पत्ता
- निविदा आमंत्रण की तिथि
- निविदा कागजात प्राप्त (अवलोकन) करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय
- निविदा जमा (अपलॉड) करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय
- निविदा बिडों का स्थान
- बी-बीड मीटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान
- निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (टेकनीकल बीड)
- निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (वित्तीय बीड)
- निविदा दस्तावेज की तिथि कार्य का विवरण

क्र	जिला का नाम	कार्य का नाम	प्रस्तावित राशि (अनुमानित एवं गैर अनुपूर्वित) (₹00 में)	अवधन की राशि (₹00 में)	परिमाण विषय का मूल्य (अप्रत्यक्षीय) (₹00 में)	Bid Processing Fee	कार्य सम्पत्ति की अवधि (माह में)	रूप महाप्रबंधक का नाम
1	पटना	पटना जिला के पालीगंज, मिर्जा, बेलछी, वनियांवां, एवं घोषवरी प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विद्युतन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में स्थित संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (5 प्रखंडों में)	22100000.00	442000.00	10,000/-	5,700/-	6 (छ)	पटना
2	नालन्दा	नालन्दा जिला के राजगीर, नमस्तीया, वेन, कयायपुरसराम, एवं हिलसा प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विद्युतन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में स्थित संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (5 प्रखंडों में)	22100000.00	442000.00	10,000/-	5,700/-	6 (छ)	पटना
3	पूर्वी चम्पारण	पूर्वी चम्पारण जिला के केवरीया, सुगीरी, फाड़पुर, महरी, हरिहरी, घोड़सहन, अरेराज एवं संगमपुर प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विद्युतन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में स्थित संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (8 प्रखंडों में)	35400000.00	708000.00	10,000/-	17,700/-	6 (छ)	मुजफ्फरपुर

- कोई भी संवेदक को केन्द्रीय/राज्य सरकार/सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों में निश्चित हो अथवा अन्तर्पूर्व/राष्ट्रीय स्तर के हैं, निविदा में मांग ले सकते हैं परन्तु कार्य का लेट अफ एक्सेप्टेंस प्राप्त होने के बाद भवन निर्माण निगम में सुविधित श्रेणी में निबन्धन कराना अनिवार्य होगा।
- निविदा केवल ई-निविदा पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट ([www.eproc.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)) पर निष्पादित किया जाएगा। ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया से संबंधित जानकारी सहयोगी सहायता कक्ष, धरम तल्ला प्लॉट नं०-एन/22, रोड नं०-25 श्री कृष्णा नगर, बैंग ऑफ इंडिया कम्प्लेक्स, पटना-800001 पटना दूरभाष संख्या 9939035666, 0612-2523006 से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) पर देखा जा सकता है।

PR. No. 004488 (NI NI) 2020-21

मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लि०, पटना

नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

खाद्य सामग्री-संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर संपर्क किया जा सकता है।

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**

Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001  
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Mobile No. 096461-22955, 096461-11033,  
e-mail: [po.pspcl@gmail.com](mailto:po.pspcl@gmail.com)  
e-tendering page: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in.nicgep/app>.

**Tender Notice :- QQ-2311/PO-P**

**Tender Specification No.** QQ-2311/PO-Poles  
**Short Description** Design, Manufacturer, Testing before dispatch & Delivery of 10,000 nos. 11KV, 400 Amp Air Break (AB) switches against PSPCL Tender Enquiry QQ-2311/PO-P

**Start date for down loading of Specification / tender documents from** <https://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
**Last date for downloading of Specification/ tender documents from** <https://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in>  
**Last date for Bid submission** 31-08-2020 (upto 11:30 AM)  
**Bid Opening date** 03-09-2020 (11:30 AM)  
**Tender Document Cost.** NIL  
**EMD** As specified in the specification  
**Payment Mode.** Online (via e-payment gateway of GEPNIC)

For detailed NIT & Tender specification please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in.nicgep/app>.  
Note: It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspaper. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on official PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

Chief Purchase Officer/MM,  
For CE/MM, PSPCL, Patiala.

C 248/2020 RO 58767/2020 Dt. 03-08-2020

Trend Glazer

'Always addressed Irrfan Khan as papa'

It has been over three months that Irrfan Khan passed away. RADHIKA MADAN, who co-starred with the late actor in his last release, has an interesting anecdote as she recalls working with him.

She opened up on the bond she shared with Irrfan on the sets of their film, *Angrezi Medium*, and shared how she used to call him "papa" or "dad". In the film, Irrfan played Radhika's father.

"I never addressed him as sir, I always addressed him as papa or dad. He would just smile. I remember when I first met him and I called him dad, instead of feeling weird about it, he gave me a big hug. I will always remember him as dad," Radhika said.



'More than often I am told that now I am focusing on my career in South and have left Mumbai. But I

have not gone anywhere. Scripts and opportunities took me everywhere. Why should I say no to a film if the story is exciting? I think we are a generation of actor for whom the length of the role does not matter but substance does.'

—Aditi Rao Hydari

Bollywood actor ESHA GUPTA has shared some words of wisdom on social media and said that it's cool to be kind.

Esha took to Instagram, where she shared a monochrome picture of herself. In the photograph, Esha is seen sporting a sweatshirt with "cool" written on it. She completed her look with winged eyeliner and kept her hair open.

As the caption, she wrote, "It's cool to be kind."

Last month, Esha opened up about how the COVID-19 induced lockdown has been an "emotional roller coaster" for her.



Brandy unveils new music album

Singer BRANDY has unveiled her seventh album *B7* after an eight-year break.

The 15-track album is co-written and co-produced by Brandy. It also has collaborations with Chance the Rapper, Daniel Caesar and her daughter, Sy'rai.

After a five-year legal battle with her former label, Chameleon Entertainment, Brandy told *Rolling Stone* that she has finally found freedom with this record's release.

"I put everything I could into this project. It was so freeing for me because I did get a chance to really dig in and write from my heart of hearts. I was able to really get a lot of things off of my chest, really use music as a way to escape and heal," Brandy said.

# What's so regressive, netizens?

While looking at host SIMA TAPARIA's approach to arranging marriages in *Indian Matchmaking*, it's difficult not to feel a sense of camaraderie as she rightly addresses the desires of the participants about their future partner, says GARIMA RAGHUVANSHY

The recent Netflix series, *Indian Matchmaking*, has taken netizens in India by storm. Perhaps, a good measure of the show's success is the large number of memes that it has spawned. Not all of that attention has been approving, however. The show has been heavily criticised. There's been a lot of talk online about how the series captures the worst of Indian culture — colourism, casteism, and patriarchy. There are some who "can't believe" that a "horrible" institution like arranged marriage is being celebrated through a Netflix original instead of being definitely laid to rest, as it surely should be.

Since I couldn't connect to most of the arguments online and the condemnations therein to the show itself, I was compelled to ask — did we watch the same show? Sure, the show isn't perfect. It's not even brilliant. But neither in the show nor in its contestants could I see any malice or immorality. But then why did some viewers find it deplorable?

For the sake of contrast, and to put my surprise in context, let me share with you my own responses to the show.

Quite simply, I found *Indian Matchmaking* to be mostly hilarious and sometimes, heartwarming. The stand-out feature of the series was its cast. More than the spicy editing and high-budget production, it's the people featured in the show that creates the magic. They're all delightfully strange, and convincingly and compellingly real. This is not the carefully-curated cast of an average reality show. It is a bunch of human beings out and about in all their glorious variety. They are not at all self-conscious or apologetic about their conversations and in stating about what they desire in their future partner or *damaad/bahu*. Everyone in *Indian Matchmaking* gave me a plenty of laugh-out-loud moments, some raised eyebrows, and even some collective gapes and gasps. Well, not to forget some silent smiles.

All of the show's participants are navigating the deep and sometimes not-very-still waters of an arranged marriage. On camera, no less. They're figuring out what they're looking for in a partner, what kind of a person would fit beautifully with them, and what they value not just today, but likely, for many years to come. And in the process, they're figuring out the most about themselves. We even see some of the participants grow as people through the course of eight episodes, losing some of their hardness, loosening some of their knots. It's difficult not to feel a sense of camaraderie.



My guess is Sima Taparia, the matchmaker in the show, feels it too. She seems to be looking out for her clients and really wants them to be happy. Throughout the eight episodes of the series, Mumbai-based Sima more than a few cartwheels in her attempts to get her clients the happiness that they desire. Impressively, she doesn't seem to be worried about what her clients will think once the show is aired and they see her plain-spoken descriptions of them. As the show progresses, Sima emerges as a character herself and a supremely relatable one. In several scenes, she reminds me of the older women in my life, many of whom are those no-nonsense, straight-forward aunts, who apparently have joined the many groups that have a 'gaze' (I am completely stumped by this term 'aunty gaze', which is supposed to be right up there alongside 'the male gaze' and 'the Western gaze', but that's a conversation for another time).

In other words, Sima seems to be a part of the real, current world. A big part of that comes from how matter-of-fact she is about her profession. She doesn't have any judgements about what her clients want in their partners or sons and daughters-in-law. "You want a girl from

an industrialist family?' 'Sure.' 'You want someone good looking?' 'No problem.' 'You want a guy who has his career plan firmly in place?' 'Got it.' 'You're looking for someone with a progressive mindset?' 'I might not be able to find you that person, but I know someone who can.'

Much like how Sima doesn't quit in the face of her clients' demands, viewers haven't been able to stop watching (or even 'hate-watching') her and her clients in action, if *Indian Matchmaking's* ranking on Netflix and all the buzz it has created online are an indication. But as we saw, not all of that buzz was the happy kind. So, to return to the questions that set off this article, why did some viewers find the show deplorable? Did we even watch the same show?

I believe a part of the answer really is that we didn't. A recent tweet against the show was in reference to Sima aunty's alleged penchant for telling young women that they have to adjust, be flexible and compromise, in order to find a groom. The allegation itself is strange. Because in the show Sima tells almost every one of her clients, including the rich guys, that she is setting them up for someone in India and hence, they will have to adjust accordingly. The netizens bashing the

show for celebrating patriarchal mindsets were either unable to see this fact or simply considered what it actually meant as irrelevant. Both of which indicate that most people expressing disgust or dismay aren't really responding to the show at all. Logically, then, what actually happens doesn't matter to their responses.

On another note, I am also bewildered at the bad rep that things like 'adjusting', 'flexibility' and 'compromise' seem to have. They are like 'dirty words'. It only takes a moment of looking at our own relationships to acknowledge that adjusting, being flexible and compromising could actually be sometimes pretty valuable in any relationship, be it with friends, family, colleagues, and even in those fleeting bonds with co-passengers in a cramped public transport from the pre-COVID days. In the delectable *khichdi* of human relationships, being adjusting is actually an essential ingredient. Without that, we'd all be individual grains of *dal* and rice that do not fit into each other's daily lives. To hammer the point home, are there any mythical creatures, who, even after being in a dream relationship, have not adjusted, been flexible or made space for some compromise? Did the authors of such arguments not look at their own experiences or relationships before giving away such grave denouncement? Or worse still, have they never understood the sweet nothings in a relationship? My mind is boggled.

The idea of mythical creatures in perfect, adjustment, flexibility, and compromise-free relationships, actually brings us to the next part of the answer. A lot of people who found *Indian Matchmaking* immoral, also have a deep discomfort with the idea of arranged marriages. It is strange when you think about it. As Sima aunty rightly pointed out, in India, we say marriage and love marriage. In other words, arranged marriages are much more common in India than love marriages and this has been the case for the last several decades at least (going by what our grandparents and parents remember and report on the issue). So surely, most of the marriages we see around us are arranged ones. Some of them are unhappy from the beginning, some start off happy and then sour over time, for reasons perhaps unknown even to those couples. Many arranged marriages around us, however, are actually doing quite alright. Some of them are even resounding successes, healthy and happy and deserving of being the #goals. What then explains this strong discomfort with arranged marriages?

For the most part, I think it's an actual inability to see these marriages for what they actually have been, much like the inability to actually see how *Indian Matchmaking* transpires in its eight episodes. Most of us are woefully blind to the marriages of our parents, grandparents, friend's parents, or even our friends, siblings, and cousins. We don't know what makes these marriages tick, and what works and what doesn't. We don't know what makes for a happy marriage nor what breaks one. And perhaps, most regrettable of all, we don't want to find out. We have either accepted the ridiculous, outlandish ideas of romance and marriage fed to us through films or, conversely, we are passionate defendants of the equally non-existent 50-50 marriages, mythically-free of adjustment and flexibility.

In other words, we are satisfied defending ideological notions of how one ought to find a partner when they "don't know" them or "love" them. "Why are you going for an arranged marriage, you're good looking and progressive, you can find someone on your own!" is how it goes. They have no interest in looking at what marriages ought to be like and in observing what happens and often succeeds in practice. This may be our state. Notably, it isn't where most of the participants of *Indian Matchmaking* are coming from. Many of them explicitly state, they've tried dating and it didn't work for them. So now they're looking to try something different. In several responses to the show, this choice, and the process of looking for a partner through matchmakers or arranged marriages, has been labelled everything from un-empowered and regressive to straight-out bigoted. This is astounding. It is also true of most 'progressive' responses to the show.

But consider this — if those who have the choice not to (and here I'm not talking only about the participants of the show) choose arranged marriages as the way to find their partner, they must be doing so after having learnt something about the process of dating, and about themselves in it. They must also have observed successful marriages around them, many of which might be arranged. Surely then, when they choose arranged marriages, they are acting from experience and from some kind of knowledge. To explain their choice as bigoted, or worse still, ignorant, betrays a deliberate blindness. Most notably, it demonstrates the expectation for people to root their choices not in knowledge or experience, but in slogans — "How is this progressive?"

## THE TAKEAWAYS

The Michelle Obama Podcast features the former First Lady diving deep into conversations with loved ones — family, friends and colleagues — on the relationships in our lives that make us who we are



As they pull the curtain back and invite listeners into their home, the former US President Barack Obama joins First Lady Michelle Obama in *The Michelle Obama Podcast* for an intimate conversation about the challenges we all face, the legacy (and the world) they hope to leave behind for Sasha and Malia, the relationship between young people and politics, and the President's eternal optimism.

Excerpts from the show's first episode:

On why Michelle fell in love with Barack

Michelle Obama: You know that at the core of everything you have done politically, what I know about you as a person and one of the reasons why I feel in love with you is...

Barack Obama: It wasn't just my looks... but that's okay...

Michelle: You're cute you know... But no, one of the reasons I fell in love with you is because you are guided by the principle that we are each other's brother's and sister's keepers. And that's how I was raised!

On quarantining together

Michelle: Like most Americans we've been spending a lot of time together in quarantine.

Barack: You don't seem too happy about that the way she said it, right?

Michelle: It's just a fact.

Barack: [Laughs]

Michelle: There wasn't a judgment. We've been together...

Barack: I've been loving it.

Michelle: Yeah, I've been having a great time. But we've had some interesting conversations because these are some crazy times.

On why Obama became a community organiser

Barack: I think I figured out once I got to school that if I am chasing after my own success, that somehow, I am going to end up alone and unhappy.

Michelle: Yeah.

Barack: That's why I ended up going into community organising. When I thought about how I was going to spend my life, what I looked at was what those civil rights workers had done and the freedom writers had done. I thought, you

know, that looks like hard work but it never looks like lonely work.

On political apathy in young people

Michelle: The only thing that worries me, and I agree in terms of the hope that I feel when I look at young people — just how they were raised, the values, their exposure, the questions that they have, the change in the economy that's forcing them to ask a certain set of questions — that give me hope. But the thing that I worry is that I hear, I think, too many young people who question whether voting, whether politics is worth it.

Barack: Well, partly because they have been told. The message is sent every day that government doesn't work. They take for granted all the things that a working government has done in the past...

Michelle: Yeah.

Barack: In some ways, we're still living on the investment that was made by that greatest generation.

Michelle: I always joke, and I've always said one of the challenges of being President... Like you don't have a marketing budget, you know?

Barack: Yeah.

Michelle: There's really no structure to market government, right?

Barack: Right.

Michelle: The average young person knows far more about the cereal they're eating, and the car they are driving than they do about what government actually does for them because they don't have marketing budgets. There isn't a jingle...

Barack: [Laughs] The only time they know about what government doing is when...

Michelle: Is when it doesn't work, right?

Barack: So we're getting a good lesson in that right now.

On raising daughters and idealistic young people

Michelle: When it comes to fathers raising their girls, I do think that the average father today does believe that their girl can be anything she wants to be and they are delivering those messages around the dinner table.

Barack: Right.

Michelle: There is a different way of parenting. But what we didn't do... We delivered those messages at the dinner table but we didn't take them to the board room. We didn't change our workplaces; we didn't change things outside the home.

Barack: We didn't institutionalise...

Michelle: We didn't institutionalise the values that we'd been teaching this generation of kids. So now, they are growing up. They are leaving the dinner table and they are going out into the world and going, "The world doesn't look like what I was taught back home." You know, this isn't right.

Barack: Young people are idealistic as they have ever been. I think they are more idealistic now than they were when I was growing up. The difference though is that idealism that they feel as if they can channel it outside of governmental structures and outside of politics. The problem is, again we're getting a pretty good lesson in this right now, there's some things we just can't do by ourselves or even groups of us can do by ourselves. As general proposition: We can't build infrastructure by ourselves, we can't deal with a pandemic by ourselves.

(The podcast can be streamed on Spotify.)



## Back on track

R MADHAVAN leads an all-star cast in new web series, *7th Sense*. The team lands in Dubai

The first set of crew members comprising the technical team, directors, cinematographers, production designers, music director and assistants of Gaurang Doshi Productions' web series *7th Sense* went to Dubai recently.

The Bollywood producer is all set to shoot two web series in the UAE, with this one being the first. With some of the finest actors such as R Madhavan, Ronit Roy, Chunky Pandey, Ameesha Patel, Prateik Babbar and Tanuj Virwani, among others, the big ensemble murder mystery promises to be captivating, keeping viewers on the edge while bringing out their inner detective. "The series will not only intrigue and excite but will also create history," said Gaurang.

The next web series *Line of Fire* comprises two seasons and boasts of stars such as Prakash Raj, Jimmy Shergill, Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, Tanuj Virwani, Vijay Raaz, Tannishtha Chatterjee, Kabir Singh, Sana Saeed, Manu Rishi and Tanvi Azmi.

"I am thrilled and excited as the action has begun. I am also thankful to the UAE Government for making the process so seamless. It has done a good job in controlling the spread of the virus and has become an inspiration for the world. Our team would be taking all the precautionary measures," commented Gaurang.

He added, "This would indeed be the first web series from Bollywood to be entirely shot in UAE. Bringing together a stellar star cast after five months of lockdown seems like a milestone. The team is excited to start shooting again and be back at work," added Gaurang.

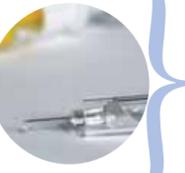
The entire cast and crew for both the web series consists of over 100 members. The crew of *7th Sense* also features actors like Elli AvrRam, Aashas Gulati, Sana Saeed, Ahsaas Channa, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Sajjad DelaFrooz and Manuj Sharma. It is being directed by Karan Darra.



# HEALTH

## Early Hopes

Adding to the growing evidence that early BCG vaccination may be helpful in taming the COVID-19 spread, scientists now claim that countries with mandatory BCG vaccination until at least the year 2000 tended to exhibit slower infection and death rates during the first 30 days of the outbreak



**DOCYARD**  
DR ROHAN SEQUERIA

Consultant General  
Medicine

JASLOK HOSPITAL AND  
RESEARCH CENTRE



## Let's get checked

The human body is a complex machine. It is a network of different organs, bones, muscles, and systems. Owing to the fact that the functioning of the human body is multi-faceted, one needs to ensure regular health check-ups.

In case there is any disorder, it can be detected at an early stage and eliminated as soon as possible before it reaches a dangerous and incurable stage or starts to affect the other parts of the body.

Most people are more concerned about their outward appearance. If they look good and are robust from outside, they consider themselves to be healthy. However, you never know what's happening inside. You won't even get to know about some grave underlying disease till it turns into someone serious and leaves a great impact on your health.

### Basic health check-ups need to be regular

As we start growing old, our body becomes home to numerous diseases. Health issues and problems start as early as when you are in your 20s and 30s. Some of the most common check-ups that need to be conducted are checking blood pressure levels, twice a year dental check-ups and cleaning, cholesterol and level of glucose, and regular blood tests. It is important that you consult a doctor to get regular check-ups and screenings and if you're a woman to get a yearly pap smear.

### The older you are the more you need to be checked regularly

Once you step into your 40s, in addition to all the tests which are required at the age of 20, you need to check for some age related and genetic diseases like diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol tests. Women especially need once a year gynaecological tests like mammograms and pap smears. In addition, they also get menopause which also might need a doctor's visit. And as you get into your 50's and 60's you need to check at least once a year Bone Density Scan, stool occult blood test and tests for visual and hearing impairment.

**By going for regular check-ups, your doctor will be able to catch early signs of potential illnesses and take corrective measures. It can also allow your doctor to catch any changes to your body which may be indicative of a medical condition**

able to catch early signs of potential illnesses and take corrective measures. It can also allow your doctor to catch any changes to your body which may be indicative of a medical condition. This way, you will be able to treat the condition before it escalates.

**Encourages healthy habits:** You will be encouraged to maintain healthy practices. Such practices include a good diet, regular exercise, and stress management. Without regular health appointments, there is less motivation to maintain your general health, so healthy habits that maintain your cholesterol, BMI, and stress levels will be neglected.

**Keeps your body in good shape:** In addition to encouraging you to maintain healthy lifestyle habits, regular check-ups will also help keep your body at its best. This is because your doctor will provide suggestions to keep your body in its best shape. As a result, you will feel fit, healthy, and energised.

**Maintains a strong immune system:** Individuals who go for regular health check-ups are less likely to get sick. This is because they maintain healthy habits that facilitates a strong immune system.

**Cost saving:** Some people avoid going for check-ups because they believe that it is too expensive. In reality, it can be significantly cost-saving in the long-run. This is because check-ups reduce the risk of developing more severe illnesses that are more costly to treat. It can also prevent the need for expensive and risky surgeries.

## SUMMER COOLERS

**FENNEL SEEDS:** Fennel seeds are pale green or brown in colour. They are highly aromatic and flavourful herbs used in cookery. They are used to treat some common digestive ailments including heartburn, intestinal gas and bloating.

Fennel seeds also reduce inflammation. This may help soothe swelling or irritation in the intestines and improve digestion.

Some people eat fennel seeds as mouth fresheners. Chewing fennel seeds can also help in getting rid of bad

breath as they increase the production of saliva thereby washing out the bacteria. They also help to relieve morning sickness.

The antioxidants and other antimicrobial properties of fennel seeds help treat a host of hair ailments. Some of these include dandruff, scalp itchiness, hair breakage and hair fall. They also contain nitrites, compounds known to lower blood pressure levels. The fiber content in them also help in lowering the cholesterol levels.



Lung cancer is the biggest cause of cancer related deaths in the world. DR SHUBHAM GARG tells you symptoms to look out for and tips that can help keep the disease at bay

## TAKE A DEEP BREATH



Lung cancer is usually a neglected entity in the universe of Cancer management in India. It is not one of the first diagnosis in the mind of the primary doctors, neither is it a top priority in the cancer treatment centers. Even when we talk about awareness, we restrict ourselves to breast and gynecological cancers in women and to head and neck cancers in men but conveniently forget lung cancers

One of the main reasons for this step-motherly treatment towards lung cancer is usually the dismal prognosis associated with it. Once the diagnosis of lung cancer is confirmed, everybody, including the treating doctors, condemn the patient to a life span of under a year and feel that there is not much point treating such patients.

It is a fact that lung cancer is the biggest cause of cancer related deaths in the world. In fact, in 2018, 1.8 million deaths across the globe were attributable to lung cancer alone. In India alone, 60,000 patients died due to lung cancer in that year.

But sometimes we have to read between the lines to understand the statistics.

It is important to understand that the large number of deaths that are associated with lung cancer are because they are usually detected in advanced stages. This can make a huge difference to survival rates in patients of lung cancer. Early stage lung cancer, if treated diligently and for its complete duration, has a survival rate of more than five years in most cases. However, a stage four lung cancer patient will not be able

to survive more than an average of six-eight months.

So, it is important for us to understand the causative factors and early signs and symptoms of lung cancer to detect it early and also realise what is the best possible treatment for it.

### Causes:

■ Cigarette smoking is the biggest cause of lung cancer. Its smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, most of which have been identified as causing cancer agents. A person who smokes more than one pack of cigarettes every day has a 20-25 times greater risk of developing lung cancer than a non-smoker.

■ Passive smoking, or second-hand smoke, can be another big cause of lung cancer.

■ Air pollution from motor vehicles, factories, and other sources also contribute to incidences of lung cancer, and many experts believe that prolonged exposure to polluted air is similar to prolonged exposure to passive smoking possess risk of developing lung cancer.

■ Chemical exposure: Accidental or Occupational exposure to asbestos or radon also increases the risk of lung cancer. Asbestos is a commonly associated with cement industry.

■ Lung diseases, such as tuberculosis (TB) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), also create a risk for lung cancer. A person with COPD is at four to six times greater risk of lung cancer and this is when there no exposure to cigarette smoking.

**It is important to understand that the large number of deaths that are associated with lung cancer are because they are usually detected in advanced stages. Early stage lung cancer, if treated diligently and for its complete duration, has a survival rate of more than five years in most cases**

### Symptoms to look out for:

- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing
- Spitting or coughing blood
- Chest pain
- Hoarseness or problems of swallowing.

### Prevention & screening for

### early detection

Prevention is primarily focused on smoking cessation. Smokers who wish to quit obtain benefit from many different strategies, including nicotine replacement therapy with patch or gum, counseling, and support groups. Smokers who do not wish to quit, but are told that they must, often will relapse if they can ever quit at all.

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recently recommended and amplified the following recommendations regarding screening:

Adults between 55 and 77 years of age with a history of at least 30 pack years of cigarette smoking, either currently smoking, or who have quit in the past 15 years, and who have discussed the risks and benefits of CT screening with the ordering physician and have undergone documented smoking cessation counseling should undergo annual low-dose CT scan screening.

Such testing has shown that the risk of fatality from lung cancer is reduced by 15 per cent -20 vis-a-vis those receiving only an annual chest X-ray.

Remember, it is in our hands to prevent and detect lung cancer. The later the lung cancer is detected, the worse is the prognosis, shorter the survival and less effective the treatment. Hence, be alert and if you feel that your body could be showing any signs of a lung discomfort, consult your doctor today to preempt any chances of developing a fatal disease.

The writer is Senior Consultant, Surgical Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj/Vaishali

## CUT THE OIL



Monsoon and skin problems go hand-in-hand. The most common of them is oily skin. DR MONICA KAPOOR shares tips that can help beat the woes

Monsoons are here and oily skin is a part and parcel of the rains. More so, because of the changing weather. There are many reasons for oily skin. Sebaceous glands produce sebum to keep your skin soft and moisturised. When too much sebum is produced, skin appears oily and this can also lead to acne and other skin problems.

Hormones and genetics are the main factors for oily skin. As sebaceous glands mature with age, sebum production increases on the skin layer, and the higher the androgens present in the body, the more sebum is funnelled through the pores. This sebum sits on the surface of the skin layer and makes it oily. When excess of these oils get trapped in the pores and combine with dead skin cells and bacteria, it gives rise to pimples and blackheads.

There are many skin care tips you should follow for oily skin during this monsoon:

■ To control excess oil from the skin is to cleanse it and keep it clean at all times. Cleanse your face twice or thrice daily to rid it of all the accumulated dirt and oil build-up which leads to clogged pores, acne and other problems.

■ Use serums only when you want to tackle different skin problems. If your skin feels dehydrated, then use a hydrating serum in your skincare routine; for brightening and anti-ageing effect, use a serum with brightening and anti-ageing properties.

■ Exfoliate oily skin once or twice a week.

■ Oily skin needs regular moisturising and hydration. Exposure of skin of moisture will only further encourage the sebaceous glands to produce more oil to compensate. Hence apply an oil-free, non-comedogenic, water-based moisturiser regularly on your skin.

■ While doing makeup, always use a primer, it aids in keeping sebum under control. It also keeps your makeup on for a longer time.

■ Use an alcohol-free toner almost every day. Using a toner daily will help in eliminating excess oil and banishing dirt from your skin.

■ Use a basic mask or a peel once a week on your skin. Best face mask for oily skin is one that contains charcoal or moroccan clay that keeps skin calm and clear.

■ Layering on sunscreen is an essential part of the day time oily skin care routine in this season. Always use a mineral-based product which contains Zinc or Titanium Dioxide that absorbs oil from the skin.

■ Never sleep with your makeup on. This will clog pores and increase other skin problems.

■ Use a face mask regularly. Apply it at least two or three times in a week. Use a mask that contains kaolin and bentonite clay as it helps absorb excess oil.

The writer is a celebrity cosmetologist & director, The Cosmetic Club

## DadiKaKehna

*If you are spending most of your time studying or working on computer, then dry, itchy eyes and headaches are common. ROSHNI DEVI shares home remedies that can help relieve the pain*



With online classes and work from home becoming the new normal, the screen time has increased manifold for both adults and children. This often result in increased eye strain thereby resulting in headaches.

Not only this, dry and itchy eyes are also no exception, more so because of the changing weather. Here are a few home remedies that will help relax your eyes and headaches.

First, while working on laptop/computer, one should take breaks every 20 minutes. This will give your eyes the much needed relax and will eliminate the risk of

headache.

Second, blink often. While working/studying on the the devices, we often forget to blink, this increases the pressure on the eyes and can lead to dry and itchy eyes.

Also the changing weather acts as a catalyst to increase dryness in eyes.

Third, splash your eyes with cold water atleast two-three times a day.

Fourth, use ice packs. Ice will help reduce the discomfort and eliminate headaches. Take two ice cubes, wrap them in a towel and place them on your eyes for around 10 to 15 mins. Repeat it daily.



## Homoeopathy can help

Boosting immunity is the preliminary shield in the battle against COVID-19. DR PRATIP BANERJI tells you how homoeopathy can help prevent the contagion

The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 has left most of us panic-stricken. And the pandemic has wrecked havoc across the world. COVID-19 is a viral infection and humans have no natural immunity to viruses. The research community is perplexed because of its ever-evolving mutations.

Currently, the conventional treatment of Covid 19 infection is being done with some anti-viral medicines and antibiotics. While these anti-viral medicines were found to have had some effect on SARS and MERS infections earlier, which were caused by similar viruses, so far there is no definite information that they are having an effect on COVID-19 cases.

Boosting immunity is exactly what is required in the battle against this disease- to prevent, as well as help sick patients recover from this contagion.

This is where homoeopathy has a distinct advantage, and can be deployed to effectively combat the pandemic. Historically, homoeopathy has an excellent track record in the treatment of epidemics/pandemics.



Homoeopathic medicines are safe to use, and we can expect very little, if any, side-effects as can be experienced by using other systems of medicine.

In homoeopathy, an agent is used to treat the same symptoms in a diseased human being that it can produce in a healthy one. Thus, the homoeopathic arsenal against any disease already exists, and it is only a question of matching the symptoms of the contagion to the known symptoms of a medicine which is the most similar. Thus, the reaction time between diagnosis and treatment is reduced

### dramatically.

COVID-19 is basically a respiratory infection which initially affects the upper respiratory tract; if allowed to progress, it settles in the lungs (lower respiratory tract), causing pneumonia and fibrosis with a poor prognosis. Due to this, any and all treatment should be targeted as such. In the treatment of COVID-19 positive cases, so far whatever information is available, does not provide anything new in this virus, except for the fact that it is more aggressive in its progression, and prognosis is fatal in immune compromised and elderly patients.

Historically, the practice had tremendous success in treating viral diseases, such as the common cold and different types of flu, dengue, measles, mumps, rubella, chicken pox and even the odd case of rabies, using homoeopathy — it is important that this treatment option is tried for building the immunity of the population to effectively combat the virus.

The writer is a homeopath and Co-founder of Dr Prasanta Banerji Homoeopathic Research Foundation

## SLIMLINE

A 58-year-old woman was successfully treated and cured with a Benign lesion of the pancreas at SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCHRC) in Kattankulathur.

Radha (name changed) came to SRM MCHRC with complaints of abdominal pain for two weeks. She had no other symptoms. However, she was Diabetic and was on treatment for the same for the last two years.

Evaluations such as MRCP, CT Abdomen and Endoscopic Ultrasound were performed on her and she was diagnosed having a cystic lesion of the pancreas. She underwent surgery recently, and a large cyst of 10x11x7 cm was noted over the distal aspect of the pancreas.

Histopathological examination of the excised mass revealed a mucinous cystadenoma of the pancreas. This patient had a benign tumour which was diagnosed promptly early and removed successfully. Her quality of life post-procedure remains good, and she continues treatment for her diabetes alone.

# GENOA RETAIN SERIE A PLACE

## Talent is not the problem in our country, says Chhetri

**AP ■ ROME**  
Genoa secured safety on the final day of the longest-ever Serie A season, while Lecce dropped down to the second division.

Genoa beat Hellas Verona 3-0 to finish four points ahead of Lecce and ensure a 14th consecutive season in the top Italian league on Sunday.

Lecce lost 4-3 to Parma, Brescia and Spal had already been mathematically relegated.

### LONGEST SEASON

The coronavirus-delayed season ended almost 12 months after it started on Aug. 24, 2019.

"The longest season in history ends today, in our country's most difficult year in recent memory," said Vincenzo Spadafora, Italy's sports minister. At the start of the lockdown in March, Italy was the epicenter of the pandemic in Europe and has now registered more than 35,000 deaths from COVID-19.

"During those weeks we really thought that the season should be stopped," Spadafora said.

"But thanks to the series of precautions we took and the seriousness of the protocols put in place by the Italian soccer federation, the season was not only able to restart but also be completed."

Due to the virus, the season was suspended for more than three months between March and June.

Juventus sealed a record-extending ninth straight title last weekend.



Genoa players celebrate at the end of the match with coach Davide Nicola after a serie A football match between Lecce and Parma

### GENOA SAFE

Antonio Sanabria scored twice for Genoa, which also got a goal from Cristian Romero. Still, it was a nervous finish with Genoa losing

two players to red cards and ending with nine men to Verona's 10.

Lecce, which needed to win and hope that Genoa didn't, fought back from two goals down to equalize by

halftime. But then Andreas Cornelius and Roberto Inglese restored Parma's two-goal lead before Gianluca Lapadula pulled one back for Lecce.

### OTHER RESULTS

Udinese beat eighth-place Sassuolo 1-0, Fiorentina defeated last-place Spal 3-1 to finish 10th, and Bologna drew 1-1 with Torino.

### FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Birthdays boy and iconic Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri on Monday said talent is not the problem in the country and all stakeholders need to ensure that the next crop of players are well looked after.

"Talent is not the problem here. We could have plenty of Olympic gold medals. I know how hard the AIFF works to get a bigger pool of players. It is very important to give the young talented players the right food, training and so on. When all this is done, it can be a monumental growth," Chhetri, who turned 36 on Monday, said during the E-Delhi summit organised by Football Delhi to celebrate the occasion of his birthday.

All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel lauded the Government of Odisha for setting an example of how a state government can help sports thrive in a particular region.

"I think states like Odisha need to be commended. They have actively supported every sport. That is something that other state governments should follow too," Patel said.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, AFC General Secretary Dato Windsor John, Jagdish Mitra, Chief Strategic Officer, Tech Mahindra, Football Delhi President Shaji Prabhakaran were also present in the virtual meet, as was talismanic captain Chhetri.

Patel, during the discussion highlighted the progress that the All India Football Federation has made forward together over the last decade.



"We have come a long way. Globally FIFA now acknowledges that Indian football has to be supported and strengthened for the sport to grow in the region. FIFA and AFC have made it clear that football has to be commercially viable and it has to support the overall ecosystem around it," he opined.

"That is why it is important to professionalise the sport. The I-League was the first step towards that. Now, the ISL has taken it further and made more additions to Indian football."

Sports Minister Rijiju lauded the AIFF for bringing FIFA events to India (2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup and the 2021 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup).

"I complement AIFF for engaging with FIFA to bring this tournament. With such tournaments being hosted in India we will have a brilliant situation where the sport will further mature," he said. "We will ensure that the U-17 Women's World Cup is one of the most successful FIFA events in India."

## India get easy draw in Thomas & Uber Cup final

### PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India have been handed relatively easy draws in the twice rescheduled Thomas and Uber Cup Finals slated to be held from October 3 to 11 in Aarhus, Denmark.

The Indian men's team has been placed in Group C alongside 2016 champions Denmark, Germany and Algeria, while the women's side has been clubbed with 14-time winners China, France and Germany in group D in the draw which was staged at BWF headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

Both the men's and women's team are seeded fifth in the tournament, according to the BWF release.

Indonesia, 13-time former champions, and six-time former winner Japan will headline as the top seeds for the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup respectively.

The prestigious event was originally scheduled to be held from May 16-24 but was postponed to August 15-23 before finally rescheduling it in October due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

No tournament has

been possible since BWF had shut down their World Tour and other sanctioned tournaments following the completion of the All-England in March due to the global health crisis.

BWF Chief Operating Officer Stuart Borrie said: "We acknowledge the many disruptions to our calendar but we would like to assure you that the BWF continues to monitor the ongoing developments surrounding COVID-19 and to plan for a safe return to international badminton."

"We trust everyone within the badminton community is keeping safe and well and preparing for the return to international competition."

In Thomas and Uber Cup Final, the top two teams in each group at the end of the group stage will make it to the knock-out round.

The Indian men's and women's teams had failed to reach the knockout stage in the last edition in 2018.

The Indian women's team had lost to champion China in the semifinal stage in the 2016 edition of Uber Cup. They also reached the semifinal in the 2014 New Delhi edition.

## Ramandeep inspiration for young players: Arshdeep



### PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian junior men's hockey team core probable Arshdeep Singh wants to take a leaf out of senior player Ramandeep Singh's book on how to manage injuries in his bid to seal a place in the national side.

The 19-year-old Singh missed out on the Six-Nation Championship in Spain last year due to a knee injury. He is inspired by the way Indian men's hockey team forward Ramandeep has dealt with injuries in his international career.

"It was really disappointing to miss out on the Six-Nation Championship

in Spain last year. However, I have realized that injuries will be a part and parcel of any sportsperson's career. I look up to the way Ramandeep Singh has dealt with injuries in his career," Singh said.

"He (Ramandeep) is an inspiration for all young hockey players in India. One needs a lot of determination to come back from injuries and now I know how important it is to ensure that I keep checking on how my body is reacting in every situation," said the young forward in a Hockey India release.

Singh, who has attended several junior men's

national coaching camps, said he has been focussing on his fitness in the last few months.

"The last few months have been a huge challenge for all of us. However, I have taken the time to focus on my fitness. I know I am close to receiving an opportunity to play for Indian junior men's team in the near future and I don't want to miss the chance due to an injury."

"I have been practicing yoga to become mentally stronger as well. I have to be absolutely ready to grab my opportunities whenever they are presented to me," said Singh.

Talking about his future goals, Singh said there is nothing bigger than playing for the country.

"Playing for senior team is always going to be my biggest goal. However, I have to first perform at the junior level and get recognized as a skilful player. I will keep working towards my goal in whichever way I can."

"I am sure one day I will walk out on the pitch with the senior Indian team. I will work very hard to ensure that I get a chance to contribute to India's famous victories in the future."

## Swann criticises selectors for dropping Broad



### PTI ■ LONDON

Former off-spinner Graeme Swann has slammed selectors for splitting England's most successful new-ball pairing of Stuart Broad and James Anderson during the recently-concluded Test series against the West Indies, saying "you don't discard blokes with 500 Test wickets lightly".

England paid the price for dumping Broad in the first Test as they lost by four wickets at Southampton. With Jofra Archer missing the second Test due to a bio-secure breach, Broad returned to take six wickets as England bounced back with a 113-run win.

In the third Test, Broad was awarded the man of the match after he took 10 wickets to cross the 500-wicket mark and also scored a crucial

62 with the bat as England sealed the series with a 269-run win.

The experienced Anderson, on the other hand, was included in the second Test but rested in the second match before finally joining his long-time partner Broad in the third Test.

"How stupid did it look to break up England's most successful bowling partnership of all-time when we lost that first Test match?" Swann, who has taken 255 wickets in 60 Tests, was quoted as saying by *Mirror.Co.UK*.

"Jimmy and Broady have formed one of the most successful bowling double acts Test cricket has known. Why would you want to chuck it out before its sell-by date? I can understand the attraction of 90mph pace, and both Jofra and Woody are huge assets."

"But I'm sorry, you don't discard blokes with 500 Test wickets lightly," Swann said.

Broad and Anderson have captured 1,090 wickets between them, with 895 of those scalps coming in the 117 Tests they have played together.

"Jimmy and Broady go together like Morecambe and Wise or Bonnie and Clyde," Swann said.

Swann, a three-time Ashes winner, added that England should not mess with the two experienced bowlers and give them an equal opportunity to try and make it to the 2021 Ashes in Australia.

"You can't put a price on a bowler who runs in with the same passion and ability to make things happen in the 80th or 90th over of the day as the first," the 41-year-old said.

## Trott appointed Poms batting coach



### PTI ■ LONDON

Former batsman Jonathan Trott has been appointed England's batting coach for the upcoming three-Test series against Pakistan, starting Wednesday.

The 39-year-old, who scored 3835 runs in 52 Tests between 2009-2015 for England, will be joined by former New Zealand spinner Jeetan Patel and Warwickshire seamer Graeme Welch, the 'BBC' reported.

Trott, who played 68 ODIs and seven T20 matches, has scored 18,662 runs in first class cricket.

England and Pakistan will lock horns in a three-match Test series starting Wednesday at the Old Trafford in Manchester, followed by the next two games in the Aegae Bowl in Southampton. England won the recently-concluded three-Test series, that mark the resumption of international cricket, against West Indies 2-1.



## Pak may play two spinners in 1st Test

### PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has not ruled out the possibility of playing two spinners in the first Test against England which begins from Wednesday at Old Trafford.

"We have looked at the West Indies series and we have seen that at Manchester and Southampton conditions are different and we are seeing some dry conditions and help for spinners and reverse swing," Misbah said during a media interaction on Monday.

Misbah also felt that the top order of both teams would play a decisive role in the series as bowling of both teams was top class. "England's batting has struggled in these conditions. It will be a match between how the top order of both teams perform. If you can cross 300 in the first

innings your chances of winning are around 75 percent."

Misbah said that not playing at Lord's and Oval, the two happy hunting grounds for Pakistan on previous tours, would not really matter as the pitches and conditions in Manchester and Southampton could help the visitors.

He conceded that playing the right combination in the Test would be a decisive and important factor in the first match.

"I think I am pretty much satisfied with the preparations, we assembled after three months and started from zero. It has been a wonderful experience, we require such camps before a major series."

"This period was important for team bonding and preparations, creating match scenarios and good thing is the team is in good shape and looking forward to the series."

## Azhar, Babar aim to make progress in rankings

### PTI ■ DUBAI

Skipper Azhar Ali and his Deputy Babar Azam will be aiming to move up the ladder in the ICC Test rankings when Pakistan take on England in the three-match series starting on Wednesday.

According to latest rankings, Azhar, presently 27th among batsmen, will be hoping to regain the form that lifted him to a career-best sixth in December 2016, while Babar will be hoping to progress from a career-best aggregate of 800 rating points.

Babar is currently sixth after having occupied a career-high fifth place in February. Asad



Shafiq (18th) and Shan Masood (33rd) are other Pakistan batsmen to have enjoyed higher rankings in the past but will have to contend with a sharp bowling attack in order to move up again.

In the bowling department, pacer Mohammad Abbas (13th) and experienced leg-spinner Yasir Shah (24th), who have in the past, been ranked third and first, respectively, and left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi (32nd) are other Pakistan players to watch.

For England, Stokes displaced West Indies captain Jason Holder from the top of the all-rounders' list during their last series and formerly top-ranked Broad rose to third position in the bowlers' list, currently led by Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins. Stokes is also England's top-ranked batsman in fourth position, with cap-

tain Joe Root (ninth) and opener Rory Burns (17th) their next batsmen on the list. Dom Sibley (35th), Jos Buttler (44th) and Ollie Pope (46th) get a chance to build on recent progress in home conditions, as do fast bowlers Mark Wood, Sam Curran and Jofra Archer, ranked close to each other from 36th to 39th positions.

In the WTC points table, England moved up to third position after the series against the West Indies and could potentially leapfrog Australia to second place, while Pakistan have the chance of overtaking New Zealand to fourth position.

Apart from the 2-1 win over the West Indies, England drew a five-match series against Australia 2-2 and won a four-match series against South Africa 3-1.

## Woakes happy being away from the spotlight

### PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Pacer Chris Woakes on Monday is happy staying away from the spotlight and says he just wants to churn out match-winning performances for England.

Woakes' performances often go unnoticed as the likes of Stuart Broad, James Anderson and Jofra Archer steal the spotlight.

"I honestly really don't mind. I'm not one for being centre of attention," Woakes was quoted as saying by *Sky Sports*.

"Don't get me wrong, I want to go out on the field and perform

and I want to make match-winning performances for England but it really doesn't bother me if I'm first choice to write about or not, to be brutally honest," he added.

The 31-year-old, who has 106 wickets from 35 Tests, feels while he can't join compatriots James Anderson and Broad in the 500 wickets elite club, he still has a lot to offer.

"My stats have been mentioned and they're very good in England, I want to keep working on those, keep improving on

them and making them as good as they can be," Woakes said.

"At my age and where I am now at 31, it's unlikely that I'm going to go on and get 500 Test wickets like Jimmy and Broady but I still want to go on and get as many as I can individually."

"I still feel like I can provide really good services to England for many more years to come so I'm happy with how it works and as long as I continue to be able to represent England then I'll be

happy," Woakes added.

England are in a unique situation with all their pacers fit to play resulting in an intense competition between the speedsters to start the match.

"It's not an easy team to just be cemented in. My record in England is brilliant, I'm obviously pleased with that."

"I want to keep getting better and improving myself and every time I get the opportunity to play for England, whether it is home or away, I'm giving 110 per cent and trying to do my best for the team," Woakes said.

## Ind not to take part in women's world squash C'ship

### PTI ■ CHENNAI

India on Monday pulled out of the Women's World Team Squash Championship scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 15 to 20 due to "lack of preparation time" and "uncertainties" about travelling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

SRFI secretary general and former national coach Cyrus Poncha said the decision was taken after consulting with the top players.

"Due to uncertainties regarding guidelines for the safe travel of our athletes and staff for national & international tournaments (yet to be obtained from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) & Sports Authority of India (SAI)) coupled with lack of preparation time and match readiness of athletes, and after consulting our top players, the SRFI has decided to withdraw from the championship," he said in a press release.

The WSF and Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) have been constantly monitoring the scenario arising out of

the global health crisis.

Considering the August 15 deadline, the SRFI had requested the WSF for an extension for registration which was not given, the release said.

"The SRFI is also waiting for guidelines from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) & Sports Authority of India (SAI) for international participation with top priority being safety and security of the players and staff for any international event," it said.

The coronavirus case count continues to rise in the country with Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai — all major squash centres — badly hit by the virus, making resumption of training difficult.

"As the situation develops and improves, SRFI in consultation with the Sports Ministry and SAI will take necessary steps for resuming sport in the country in compliance with the SOPs that would be brought out along with any further development required for squash," the governing body said.