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SARA PENS A  
SPECIAL NOTE  
FOR MOM  
10 VIVACITY

## Dance of death & destruction in Bengaluru

Irked at FB post by Cong MLA's relative, mob runs riots, torch police station, MLA's house; 3 killed, SDPI leader among 110 held

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in a locality Bengaluru irked over a Facebook post put out by a Congress MLA's relative, with the Government terming the violence as a "well-planned act".

Three people have been arrested (in police firing), Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told PTI.

Further, 110 people have been arrested in connection with the rioting at Pulakeshi Nagar here. Scores, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently triggered by the online post.

SDPI leader Muzamil Pasha has been arrested by Bengaluru Police for his role in the mob violence.

Curfew has been imposed in the affected areas in and around the affected areas, DJ Halli and KG Halli.

Pulakeshi Nagar MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy



Police and residents walk past charred remains of vehicles vandalised by a mob over a FB post by a relative of a Congress MLA in Bengaluru on Wednesday

### ACTIONS-REACTIONS

■ About 50 cop injured in attack

■ The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors, said Revenue Minister Ashoka

■ The Government has decided to recover losses caused to public property from the rioters

■ Naveen, a nephew of the MLA, who allegedly put out the social media post, has been arrested

residence and a police station at DJ Halli were among those targeted by the angry mob. The house of the MLA, who was not at home at the time, was set on fire by the rioters.

The manner in which the riots were perpetrated shows that it was a well planned act and was intended to spread to other parts of the city. These are traitors, Revenue Minister Ashoka told reporters after meeting Congress MLA in his office at Vidhana Soudha. The Minister said the

MLA's house was completely damaged, belongings, including sarees and jewels, were looted and the rest, including vehicles, were set on fire

"It is clear from the intensity of vandalism that the intention was to attack and finish off Srinivasa Murthy. It has to be investigated whether any corporator or anti-social elements from within the state and outside were involved," Ashoka said.

Tourism Minister CT Ravi said, "It is clear and evident that yesterday's violent attack was carried out by a Muslim mob in a pre-planned manner."

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said six companies of the Central Reserve Police Force are being dispatched to the violence-hit areas of Bengaluru.

Three companies from Hyderabad and three from Chennai will be deployed in DG Halli and KG Halli police station limits, he told reporters at Udupi before leaving for Bengaluru.

He said the situation is now under control and additional police forces are deployed in

the area. Rapid action force and the "Garuda" force are also being deployed, the Minister added.

Meanwhile, the State Government on Wednesday announced that a district magistrate would conduct an enquiry into the violence.

The Government also decided to recover losses caused to public property during the violence from the rioters.

BJP MP Shobha Karandlaje who visited Pulakeshinagar, in a tweet said, "PHI-SDPI conspired this violence, they targeted only Hindu houses & burnt public properties. I strongly condemn this behaviour of a communal elements & urge @CMofKarnataka to take stringent actions against the culprits."

Pant said Naveen, said to be a nephew of the legislator, who allegedly put out the social media post has been arrested.

Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa said the "attack on the residence of the MLA, the police station and rioting are condemnable."

## India among 20 nations for Sputnik V

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India, Brazil, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are among the 20 countries from Asia, Latin America and West Asia which have shown interest in Russian vaccine "Sputnik V" the first registered vaccine for coronavirus disease in the world.

A Russian website dedicated to the "world's first registered Covid-19 vaccine" claimed that India along with 20 other countries have shown interest in getting the vaccine.

"At least 20 countries had expressed interest in obtaining the Sputnik V, including UAE, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Philippines, Brazil, Mexico and India," the statement said.

Dismissing experts concern over rapid approval of the coronavirus vaccine, Russia on Wednesday announced that the first batch of the Russian vaccine against coronavirus is expected to be released within two weeks. Russia also said it already received foreign requests for a billion doses.

Within two weeks, the first batch of the vaccine will be released," Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko announced on Wednesday. Murashko said that vaccination against coronavirus will be

**Covid-19 IN INDIA**  
**TOTAL**  
**CASES: 23,94,738**  
**DEATHS: 47,130**  
**RECOVERED: 16,92,157**  
**ACTIVE: 6,54,977**

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	5,48,313	18,650	3,81,843
Tamil Nadu	3,14,520	5,278	2,56,313
Andhra Pradesh	2,54,146	2,296	1,61,425
Karnataka	1,96,494	3,511	1,12,633
Delhi	1,48,504	4,153	1,33,405
Uttar Pradesh	1,36,238	2,230	84,661
West Bengal	1,04,326	2,203	76,120
Bihar	90,553	474	60,068
Telangana	84,544	654	61,294
Gujarat	74,390	2,713	57,493
Assam	69,000	161	45,074
Rajasthan	56,100	822	41,648
Odisha	50,672	358	36,479
Haryana	44,024	503	36,694
Madhya Pradesh	41,604	1,048	31,239
Kerala	38,144	127	24,922

voluntary for everybody, including healthcare workers. The vaccine that is being developed by Gamaleya Center enjoys the support of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).

RDIF plans to conduct Phase 3 clinical trials in different countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Brazil, India and the Philippines, and start mass production in other countries in partnership with local sovereign wealth funds, including India, South Korea and Brazil, Saudi Arabia.

## No improvement in Pranab's condition

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he remains on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Wednesday. He

was admitted to the hospital in Delhi cantonment on August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain.

The 84-year-old had also tested positive for Covid-19 prior to the surgery on Monday.

## IAF wants negative scene from Kargil Girl deleted

Writes to Central Board of Film Certification

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to its alleged "negative portrayal" in the film *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* made by Dharma Productions owned by Karan Johar, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has written to the Central Board of Film Certification in this regard.

The IAF in its letter has complained that as per initial understanding the production house had agreed to depict the IAF authentically and make all efforts to ensure that the film helps to inspire the next generation of IAF officers.

However, the trailer of the movie showed that certain scenes and dialogues were found to portray the IAF in an "undue negative light," the letter said.

It also said in the aim to glorify the screen character of 'Ex-Flt Lt Gunjan Saxena, M/s Dharma Productions presented some situations that are misleading and portray an inappropriate work culture espe-



cially against women in the IAF.

The story of the movie is based on the first Indian Air Force woman pilot who was part of the 1999 Kargil war. Gunjan was the first woman helicopter pilot to fly in a combat zone and was involved in the evacuation of injured soldiers. She was awarded the gallantry Shaurya Vir Award for displaying courage during the war.

The IAF in its letter said the Service has always ensured an equal opportunity to both male and female personnel and the organisation is gender neutral. The IAF has also annexed the summary of the script, which are considered objectionable due to the presentation of incorrect gender

bias with the letter.

It also said Dharma Productions was informed about the objectionable portion of the movie and was advised to delete/modify the same. However, the production house has not deleted the scenes but it proposed a media plan in the run-up to the release and inserted a disclaimer in the movie.

The IAF stated that it feels that a mere media plan and disclaimer would not be adequate to prevent the presentation of incorrect facts about the IAF.

"In view of the above, the issue of grant of NOC for the release of the movie will be considered after deleting or suitably modifying the scenes in order to cater to the observations mentioned," the IAF stated.

Incidentally, about a fortnight back, the Defence Ministry had written to the CBF, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to advise production houses to obtain No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Defence Ministry before the telecast of any film, documentary or web series on military.

## CAPSULE

1,113 COVID-19 CASES, 14 DEATHS IN DELHI ON WED

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 1,113 fresh coronavirus cases taking the total to over 1.48 lakh, while death toll has risen to 4,153, authorities said on Wednesday. According to a Delhi Government health bulletin, 18,894 samples were tested for COVID-19 in last 24 hours, of which 6,472 were RT-PCR tests and 12,422 rapid antigen.

UNION MINISTER NAIK TESTS COVID POSITIVE

New Delhi: Union Minister Shripad Naik on Wednesday has been tested positive for corona infection and opted for home isolation. The MoS for AYUSH and Defence said he opted for self-isolation as he is asymptomatic.

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## Forgive, forget, move on: Gehlot to MLAs on rebels going off hook

Rajasthan CM says resentment among loyalists is natural

PNS ■ JAISALMER/JAIPUR

"Forgive, forget and move on," this is how Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday tried to pacify MLAs, some of whom are upset over the return of rebel legislators to the party-fold without facing any action.

Talking to reporters in Jaisalmer, Gehlot said he had urged the MLAs to bear with the development, while acknowledging that it was "natural" for them to be upset.

"It is natural for them to be upset. The way this episode happened, they had to stay in hotels," he said on Wednesday, in an apparent reference to the previous evening's Congress Legislature Party meeting in Jaisalmer.

"I have exhorted them that in the interest of the country, State, people of the State and for saving democracy, sometimes

we have to bear this," he said. "Forget and forgive and move on in the interest of the country, the State, the people of the State and democracy. Democracy is under threat. This was a fight to save democracy, in which our MLAs gave their support," he said.

He said more than 100 MLAs stayed together for such a long time, which is a big thing in itself and had never happened in the history of the country.

The CM said all MLAs, including those who have "returned" now, will work together to fulfill the commitments made to the people of the State.

The MLAs in the Gehlot camp were on Wednesday flown back to Jaipur from Jaisalmer, where they were together at another hotel.

They were taken straight from the airport to the Fairmont hotel on the outskirts of the city, where they had stayed before being moved to Jaisalmer. The MLAs—most of from the Congress and some allies—are expected to remain

there till the Assembly meets on August 14.

The Congress crisis in Rajasthan ended with the intervention of the top leadership of Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who met rebel leader Pilot earlier this week.

Pilot had openly rebelled against Gehlot last month along with 18 other Congress MLAs. He was then sacked as Deputy Chief Minister and the party's Rajasthan chief.

At earlier Congress Legislature Party meetings, the loyalist MLAs had called for disciplinary action against the dissenters who defied party whips by demanding a change in the leadership in the State.

In Jaipur, as the loyalist MLAs headed to the Fairmont hotel, Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariya confirmed that they are not happy with the turn of events.

Yes, several MLAs said they are upset and saying this is their right," he said, while reminding that a decision has already been taken by the party high command.

## Pawar snubs grandnephew's demand for CBI probe into Sushant's alleged suicide

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a rare outburst, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday publicly debunked grandnephew Parth Pawar's demand to hand over the Sushant Singh Rajput case to the CBI by saying that the latter's demand "is not worth a nickel" and that he had 100 per cent confidence in the Maharashtra police.

Talking to mediapersons here, the NCP chief strongly disapproved of Parth's demand for a CBI probe into Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. "His statement is not worth even a nickel. He is immature. I have 100 per cent confidence in the investigation skills of the Maharashtra police,"

Parth is the son of Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar who incidentally is the nephew of the NCP chief.

Sr Pawar's disapproval of Parth's demand came in the

wake of the latter meeting State Home Minister Anu Deshmukh and handing him over a letter demanding a CBI inquiry into the Sushant Singh Rajput death case.

When asked to comment on the NCP chief's comment, Parth said: "I have nothing to say on Pawar saheb's comment."

The NCP chief's disapproval of Parth's demand for CBI probe into the Sushant Singh Rajput case should be seen in the context of the Opposition BJP's demand that the sensational case be handed over to the Central agency in view of the allegations linking the case to Maharashtra Minister Aaditya Thackeray, who is the son of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, in the case involving the actor's alleged suicide.

On its part, the Maharashtra Government has opposed the transfer of the Sushant Kumar Singh suicide case to the CBI on the jurisdiction issue.

## Joe Biden names Indian-origin Kamala Harris as running mate

Surprised that Biden picked 'disrespectful' Kamala: Trump

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a major breakthrough for Indian-Americans in US politics, Joe Biden has picked Senator Kamala Devi Harris as his running mate to woo the Black voters and the influential Indian diaspora who could play a key role in his bid to defeat Donald Trump in the presidential election.

Reacting to the nomination of Harris, President Trump said he was "a little surprised that he (Biden) picked her. She was very disrespectful to Joe Biden and it's hard to pick somebody that's that disrespectful."

By naming the 55-year-old law and moderate Democratic politician from California as his vice-presi-



dential candidate in the November 3 election, Biden made history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket.

Harris, whose father is from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the Senator from California.

The 77-year-old former vice-president, made the announcement in a text message to his supporters on Tuesday, ending days of suspense. It came about a week ahead of his "virtual National Convention" that would for-

mally nominate Biden as the party's candidate for the presidential election, challenging incumbent President Trump, a Republican.

"Joe Biden here. I've chosen Kamala Harris as my running mate. Together, with you, we're going to beat Trump. Add your name to welcome her to the team," Biden said in his message.

Biden said Harris will be the best partner for him to finally get the country back on track. He described her as a "fearless fighter" and "one of the country's finest public servants".





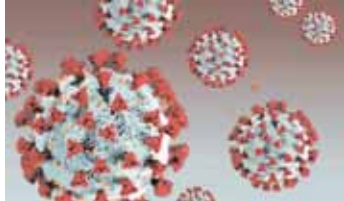
# 4 die, tally surges to 10,886

## 439 fresh Covid-19 patients found in U'khand

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The forward march of the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) in Uttarakhand is continuing unabated. On Wednesday the State health department reported 439 fresh cases of the disease which increased the patient count in the state to 10886. Four patients of the disease were reported dead on the day which took the death toll to 140.

The authorities discharged 217 patients from different hospitals after their recovery on Wednesday. The state now has a total of 6687 recovered patients which puts the recovery percentage at 61.43 per cent. The doubling rate of the disease in Uttarakhand is at 22.72 days. All the four deaths



reported on Wednesday were from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh. Here a 75 year old male, a 72 year old male, 60 year old male and a 35 year old female were reported dead. On the day 139 patients were reported in Haridwar, 119 in

Udhampur Singh Nagar, 82 in Dehradun, 28 in Nainital, 21 in Chamoli, 17 in Tehri, 12 in Champawat, seven in Pithoragarh, five in Pauri and three each in Almora, Rudrapur and Bageshwar districts. The authorities discharged 72 patients in Udhampur

Singh Nagar, 46 in Haridwar, 23 in Almora, 21 in Tehri, 20 in Nainital, 17 in Dehradun, 11 in Rudrapur, five in Pauri and one each in Uttarkashi and Chamoli districts on Wednesday.

The State now has 4020 active patients of the disease with Haridwar at top of the table of active cases with 1194 cases. Udhampur Singh Nagar is at second place with 1101 active cases of the disease.

Nainital is in third position with 603 active cases while Dehradun is in fourth position with 475 active patients of Covid-19. Uttarkashi has 145, Tehri 110, Pithoragarh 96, Champawat 77, Pauri 70, Chamoli 62, Almora 46, Bageshwar 21 and Rudrapur 20 active cases of Covid-19.

# Opposition parties unite to corner Rawat govt

## To meet Governor on dual standards of State administration in dealing with ruling and Opposition on Covid regulation violation

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The opposition parties of Uttarakhand have decided to open a joint front against the State Government on its handling of Covid-19 and adoption of dual standards in dealing with members of ruling party and opposition during the pandemic period.

On the invitation of Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh the leaders of Samajwadi Party (SP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) and CPI-ML attended a meeting held at Rajiv Bhawan on Wednesday. In the hour-long meeting PCC

## COMING TOGETHER OF OPPOSITION PARTIES SIGN OF DESPERATION, SAYS BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has said that the Congress, Samajwadi Party and Left parties coming together on the subject of Covid-19 is a sign of the opposition's deep desperation.

The parties which contributed nothing in the fight against Covid are now alleging that they are being harassed.

Reacting to the meeting of opposition parties, the BJP state vice president and media in-charge Devendra Bhasin expressed surprise that the parties which contributed nothing in the fight against Covid are coming together to allege that cases are being booked wrongly against them.

The Samajwadi Party and Left parties have been missing from the scene whereas the Congress has made no contribution in the fight against Covid. The BJP state secretary of CPI, Samar Bhandari said that the administration takes no heed on open flouting of social distancing norms in the programmes of BJP. Senior leader of Samajwadi Party, S N Sacchan said that the state government is determined to muffle the voice of opposition. Indresh Malikhari

also accused the State Government for adopting a partisan attitude towards opposition leaders. The opposition leaders unanimously decided that the issue should be raised before the Governor of Uttarakhand. After the Governor gives the time for meeting, an all party delegation would meet her.

Despite opposing ideologies, these parties are now working to stand together. The public also understands this opportunistic exercise which has exposed the dire straits which the opposition in Uttarakhand is in.

also accused the State Government for adopting a partisan attitude towards opposition leaders. The opposition leaders unanimously decided that the issue should be raised before the Governor of Uttarakhand. After the Governor gives the time for meeting, an all party delegation would meet her.

# Heavy rainfall forecast in nine districts today

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State meteorological centre has issued a warning about the possibility of heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places with extremely heavy spells at isolated places in nine districts on Thursday.

Light to moderate rain/thunderstorm is likely to occur at most places in all districts of the state.

According to the weather forecast issued on Wednesday, heavy to very heavy rainfall with intense spells is likely to occur at a few places with extremely heavy spells at isolated places in Pithoragarh, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Nainital, Udhampur Singh Nagar, Pauri, Tehri, Dehradun and Haridwar districts on Thursday. Lighting is likely to occur at isolated places in the State.

In Dehradun the weather is forecast to be partly to generally with few spells of light to moderate rain/thunderstorms likely to occur - one or two may be heavy in some areas.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 32 degrees Celsius and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded at various places on Wednesday were 29.4 degrees Celsius and 24.9 degrees Celsius respectively in Dehradun, 32 degrees Celsius and 25.6 degrees Celsius in Pantnagar, 21.4 degrees Celsius and 15.9 degrees Celsius in Mukteshwar and 24.6 degrees Celsius and 18.6 degrees Celsius respectively in New Tehri.



The Shyam Sundar temple decorated with illuminations on the occasion of Janmashtami in Dehradun on Wednesday

Pioneer photo

# Major changes in academic calendar on anvil

## Education dept to reduce syllabus, cancel winter vacations and extend current academic session to compensate loss due to lockdown of schools

GAJENDRA SINGH NEGI ■ DEHRADUN

With the union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) emphatically denying any possibility of declaring the current academic session for the schools as zero session due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, the education department of Uttarakhand is working on a three pronged strategy for the ongoing academic session.

It is learnt that apart from reducing the syllabus by 30 per cent for classes IX to XII, the education department of the state is planning to obliterate the winter vacations and extend the academic session 2020-21 by at least two months. The

actual plan and its implementation would however depend on the date from which the union government gives its nod for opening the schools.

As of now the union Government has made no decision on opening of schools in the country. However it is expected that guidelines for opening of schools and colleges would be released later this month.

Though the education department is looking at the centre's guidelines for opening of schools it has kept its plan ready for the ongoing academic session. The department has already expressed its intention to reduce the syllabus of students including those who would be writing the board



examinations. Another step under the circumstances is abolition of the winter vacation year. A senior officer of the department confirmed that there would be no winter vacation this year. The winter vacations in the schools are for a period of 15 days in the state.

Apart from these measures the education department is planning to extend the academic session 2020-21 by at least two months. When the schools start the department would focus more on the students of Class X and XII so that they are prepared well for the board examinations. Meanwhile the State Council of Education Research (SCERT) would soon release the updated syllabus for classes IX to XII. It is also focussing on the online training of teachers during the period the schools are closed. The director SCERT, Seema Jaunsari told

The Pioneer that special five day training on English, mathematics and science has been imparted to about 2500 government school teachers. She claimed that under the Anandam module about 6000 teachers have undergone training.

When contacted the education secretary R M Jaunsari Sundaram told The Pioneer that the state would follow the guidelines of the central Government on opening of schools. He said that online teaching is being provided to the students but accepted that the problem of connectivity and affordability of devices like smartphones and laptops act as a dampener for online teaching in rural areas.

# Govt mulling toll free no. of air ambulance service, says Srivastava

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The aviation adviser to the Government, Captain Deep Srivastava has said that the State Government is considering issuing a toll free or WhatsApp number to connect the common man with the air ambulance service.

On Tuesday, the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat had inaugurated the service at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh.

Speaking at an event in AIIMS Rishikesh on Wednesday, Captain Srivastava disclosed that the government is working on a plan to connect serious patients of poor back-

ground living in the inaccessible areas with air ambulance service. "It is the effort of the Government that the financial burden of the air ambulance facility should not fall on the poor person."

For this, the State Government is also considering linking it to health schemes, he said.

Srivastava further informed that at present 12 companies are providing Heli service in Uttarakhand and talks are on with these companies for emergency heli ambulance services. The director AIIMS Rishikesh Ravi Kant said that AIIMS is committed to provide world class health services to the people of Uttarakhand.

# Guest column

BY

ASHISH KAUL



# Millions of Indian women held hostage to centuries of male dominion

Empowerment of women is among the most abused and misinterpreted words in the world. It seems to me that through last 700 years of Indian history the term "women empowerment" was consciously created, over a period of time by powerful social invaders who first brutally abused women as a tool for enslaving our socio-cultural landscape and then created a myth that women were weaker thus legitimising a thought that women were incapable and unworthy of a decision making leadership role in personal and professional lives. This was the time when myths like impurity of women were also crafted because of menstruation cycles.

During the British regime, the concept of weak Indian women was further strengthened as women were continuously pushed behind the veiled corridors of home that turned from being a civilisational cradle to a glorified prison for Indian women.

What should have stopped post 1947 in the promised free India, tragically continued unabated transforming into a

monstrosity of abuse in the form of eve teasing, horrific rapes, gender bias and dowry deaths. That was not all, the new free India also adopted and strengthened an environment that was resentful towards providing equal educational and commercial opportunities for women.

In a country that burst at the horizon of the new world as a beacon of hope, growth and freedom, did nothing significant to mend the travesties of past 700 years of persecution of women. While women struggled all through in the new India, crimes against women continued unabated and so did grotesque acts of foeticide along with lack of equal opportunities.

The story of India's liberalisation continued with hiccups in absence of its fair share in the ultimate seat of democracy - the parliament of India.

The very nation that swears by and kneels before the power of Shakti has been unwilling to share the power and opportunity with what comprises nearly half of the population of the country. We

continue to have the lowest women representation in the Parliament.

That is the very source of the greatest discrimination against nearly 63 crore women in India. Various recent economic surveys and reports are far from inspiring for Indian women. About 60 per cent of women in India in the productive age bracket of 15-59 years are still engaged in full-time housework.

In 2019, as per World Bank, India's female labour force participation rate is an abysmal 23.4 per cent. We are far below countries that we like to believe are poor in comparison to India. Bhutan is at 58%, Nepal is at 81 %, China is at 60%.

Even countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka are higher than India at 36%, 47% and 34% respectively. All this does not augur well for a nation chasing its \$5-trillion-economy goal.

All-encompassing growth and gender parity are paramount for any economy to realise its full potential. With India striving to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025, it

cannot afford to leave half of its productive workforce behind and therefore, it is time that 33% of the promised seats in Indian Parliament should be reserved to represent 63 crore wheels of Indian economy - the women of India.

This cannot happen in absence of a major policy shift needs multiple catalysts. Education is the source of all that is good and progressive. Small initiatives in education sector could galvanise this shift. Government already has made education in government institutions almost free for girls but what the government is unable to do is to mobilise families to usher girls on the path of ultimate enlightenment.

Can we not make it mandatory for all government servants, PSU and people with an income of over Rs 3 lakh a year to ensure college education to girls? Can we not make it mandatory for village Sarpanchs and MLAs to ensure 100% literacy and college education to girls within their designated geographies? In order for the system to work,

this initiative must become a part of their public performance appraisal. Strengthening of legal framework is also a necessity to create a progressive ecosystem for women. Digital India has begun to see a growth in women representation in economic activities.

Indian media and entertainment, hospitality, aviation and IT industry is a shining example of continued growth of women participation. Schools, colleges and professional education are also witnessing a growth in women participation.

Professional medical education is an example of this continued growth. Recently, the Government introduced reservation for admission to 'only girl child' in medical education including others, providing a sigh of relief.

However, this is more of an apology than opportunity to half of India. Even the latest education policy announced has no articulated mention of women, once again, reflecting the disappointing bias of our male dominion. While the policy makers dabble in their own

reservations to deny our fair share, let the women not forget that this is the same country what once was called Streedesh - the country of women. We ourselves also must be the change that we wish to see.

Let us not forget that it was an Indian woman who created the first co-operative bank, the first commando force, the first courier intelligence system, world's first paid army, the first para athlete, the waterways system, the parliamentary form of Government too was first created by the women of India, more specifically the women of Kashmir and I happen to be a scion of the same spirited legacy.

Let the world know that the finest military commanders in the world were women and dreaded warriors like Mahmood Ghazni the destroyer of iconic Somnath temple was also first defeated twice by a woman ruler.

Indian kings enjoyed their kingdoms first of prosperity during the peak of India's reign as the proverbial "Soney Ki Chidiya" solely because Didda, the brave queen of Kashmir

was guarding the northern frontiers of undivided India for 44 long years. Incidentally she was the longest serving queen in the medieval world.

It is a travesty that the male dominion argues in favour of repressive regime of over 700 years in the name of protection - to them I say we are sorry for them because women of India were persecuted for the inability of proclaimed male dominions inability to safeguard women and the country.

While the new Modi government appears to be adopting progressive policies towards welfare of women, I hope that it does remember that there are 63 crore women of this country who are hopeful for an opportunity to propel Indian economy into achieving the \$ 5 trillion dream.

Until that happens, I say to all the women in the world, don't wait, come forward and restore the Stree back into our dresh for India to be the greatest country in the world.

(The writer is a media veteran and bestselling author. Views expressed are personal)

## 2 desi LCH deployed in Leh to guard LAC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen operational readiness at the volatile Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, two indigenously designed and produced light combat helicopter (LCH) are now deployed in Leh. They will back up the IAF efforts to secure the border and plug gaps if any at high altitude.

The helicopters manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) are there to be pushed into service to support the IAF at any spot at the border at short notice, HAL officials said on Wednesday.

"It is the lightest attack helicopter in the world designed and developed by the HAL to meet the specific and unique requirements of Indian Armed Forces reflecting the crucial role of HAL in Arma Nirbhar Bharat," said R. Madhavan, Chief Managing Director, HAL. Last week, Vice Chief of IAF, Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in one such operation in Ladakh along with HAL test pilot, Wing Commander Subash P. Jhoni (Retired) by taking-off from high altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high-altitude target.

This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The LCH successfully demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to forward locations in extreme temperatures,



the HAL said.

The IAF and Army together need around 160 LCHs and the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved an initial batch of 15 LCHs. The IAF has since issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters (10 for IAF and five for Army) and the HAL has submitted its response.

Technical evaluation and the price negotiations have been concluded and the order is expected shortly, the HAL said adding as a proactive measure it has launched production of LSPs in anticipation of orders at its Bengaluru facility.

The indigenously manufactured helicopter is a potent weapon platform with state-of-the-art systems and highly accurate weapons capable of hitting any type of target by day or night.

Other features of the LCH include its ability to operate in the complete area of Responsibility (AOR) and altitudes and has the ability to carry adequate weapon load at high altitudes under varied conditions.

The latest deployment comes in the backdrop of the five newly arrived Rafale fighter jets now undertaking practice sorties in Himachal Pradesh's mountainous terrain. The state shares LAC with China.

After the familiarisation sorties in the rugged mountain terrain of Himachal Pradesh, the Rafales are likely to conduct practice flights in Ladakh in the coming weeks, sources said. The Rafales came to India from France on July 29 and are now undergoing pace in Indian conditions. The jets are stationed at the Ambala air base.

Given the ongoing tension at the LAC with more than three-month old stand-offs and the Chinese increasing its military strength there, the IAF is also taken measures like deploying most of its frontline fighter jets at the forward bases all along the 4,000 km long LAC. They include SU-30s, Jaguars and MIG-29s.

The newly inducted Apache attack helicopters along with Chinook heavy lift transport regular sorties near the LAC in Ladakh.

## Covid-19 infection cases in paramilitary forces touch 17K mark

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Two of the biggest paramilitary forces—CRPF and BSF have surpassed the 5,000 mark in terms of Covid-19 infection with both recording around 5,500 cases each. The two forces have recorded 42 deaths due to the pandemic.

Total Covid infection for the five paramilitary forces—CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB—have touched the 17,000 mark excluding the tally of infected personnel from the National Security Guards (NSG) and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), both of which are deputationalist forces drawing personnel from the paramilitary ranks. As per the last count earlier this month, the NSG had reported around 500 cases of Covid infection besides about 100 in the NSG.

The combined death toll of the five paramilitary forces is 64 and 7,287 patients in the five forces continue to be active. The five paramilitary forces have added over 4,000 new cases of infection in their ranks in the last 10 days.

The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has recorded a tally of 5,467 cases of which 2,846 are active, which is the highest number of infected personnel in a paramilitary force. As many as

2,597 patients had recovered and 24 personnel succumbed to the infection in the CRPF. The casualty figures of the CRPF are also highest among the paramilitary forces.

The Border Security Force (BSF) has reported 5,404 cases of Covid-19 in its ranks till date including 1,912 active patients and 3,474 personnel who have recovered from the viral infection besides 18 deaths.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has reported 2,763 cases of Covid-19 infection. Out of the 2,763 cases, as many as 774 continue to be active while 1,989 have recovered. The paramilitary has suffered casualties of 15 personnel due to the disease induced by novel coronavirus.

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has reported 2,113 cases of Covid-19 infection, including 1,170 active cases and 941 recoveries besides three deaths.

The Sashstra Seema Bal (SSB) has recorded 1,214 cases of the deadly disease out of which 885 continue to be active and 625 patients have recovered. It incurred loss of lives of four personnel due to the viral disease.

The CISF has reported 2,763 cases including 14 deaths and the SSB has 1,214 cases and four deaths.

As on August 1, the paramilitary forces, including NDRF and NSG had reported around 13,000 cases of Covid-19 infection.

## 121 cops get HM Medal for Excellence in Investigation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation for the year 2020 has been awarded to 121 Police personnel. Among the personnel receiving these awards, 15 are from CBI, 10 each are from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Police, eight are from Uttar Pradesh Police, seven each are from Kerala and West Bengal Police. 21 women police officers are also included in the medal list announced by Ministry of Home Affairs.

This medal was constituted in 2018 with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and to recognise such outstanding service and commitment of our police personnel. India is proud of them!" tweeted Home



Minister Amit Shah. The recipients are from Constable to Deputy Commissioner of Police ranks. State Police, CBI, NIA personnel involved in the investigation duty are considered for this annual medal.

## Covid-19: SC seeks response from Centre on plea to ban disinfection tunnels

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has sought response from the Centre on a PIL seeking an immediate ban on use, installation, production and advertisement of disinfection tunnels set up to curb the spread of coronavirus.

A three-judge bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R. Subhash Reddy and M.R. Shah issued notices to the Ministry

**PIL by law student Gursimran Singh Narula**

of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology and Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare while seeking their replies.

"Issue notice to respondent Nos. 1 to 3... Counsel for the petitioner may serve a copy of the petition in the office of the

Solicitor General, who may issue instructions. List the matter after two weeks," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a PIL filed by law student Gursimran Singh Narula seeking ban on usage, installation, production, advertisement of disinfection tunnels involving spraying or fumigation of organic disinfectants for the purposes of disinfecting human beings.

## Rahul takes dig at 'Modi hai toh mumkin hai' over GDP prediction



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi citing BJP's election slogan "Modi hai toh mumkin hai" while attacking the Government over reported claims that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth may be lowest since Independence.

Taking to Twitter, Rahul shared Infosys co-founder N.R. Narayana Murthy's purported remark that "GDP growth may hit the lowest point since 1947". "Modi hai toh mumkin hai," he tweeted.

Last week, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said India's real GDP will contract in the first half of FY21 as well as full financial year.

The former Congress chief has been vociferously targeting the Prime Minister and BJP-led government over several issues including the standoff with China economic and "warren the government from its slumber".

Flagging fears that the country's GDP growth may even touch its lowest since Independence in the backdrop of coronavirus pandemic, Murthy on Monday said the economy should be brought back on track and people should be prepared to live with the pathogen. He also pitched for developing a new system that should allow every player in every sector of the country's economy to operate at full steam with suitable precautions.

"India's GDP is expected to shrink by at least five per cent. There is a fear that we may even reach the lowest GDP (growth) since independence, since 1947," Murthy said.

Couple of days ago, Rahul had hit out at the centre over the employment, accusing the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promises.

He accused the Narendra Modi government of failing to meet its promise of jobs for two crore people every year, and threatening policies that "destroyed India's economic structure" and left crores without jobs. He launched the "Rozgar Do" campaign and urged young people without jobs to raise their voices, speak out and "awaken the government from its slumber".

## Recovery rate crosses 70% for Covid-19 patients in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Covid-19 recovery rate has crossed the 70 per cent mark Wednesday with 16,39,599 people having recovered from the disease so far in the country, while active cases comprise 27.64 per cent of the total caseload, the Union Health Ministry said.

The case fatality rate has further declined to 1.98 per cent, it said.

The highest single-day recoveries at 56,110 are the result of the successful implementation of effective containment strategy, aggressive and comprehensive testing coupled with standardised clinical management of the critical patients based on holistic standard of care approach, said the Ministry.

The coordinated efforts of the central, state and UT governments have resulted in continuously increasing average daily recoveries, it said.

"In the first week of July, the daily average recovered cases were at 15,000 which jumped to more than 50,000 in the first week of August," it said. "With more patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation (in case of mild and moderate cases), the total recoveries have crossed the 16



lakh-mark and recovery rate has reached another high of 70.38 per cent," it added.

There are 6,43,948 active cases of coronavirus which is "actual caseload" of COVID-19 in the country and currently comprise 27.64 per cent of the total positive cases.

They are under active medical supervision. With a consistent and sustained increase in recoveries, the gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has reached nearly 10 lakh, the Ministry stated.

Focus on improved and effective clinical treatment in hospitals, use of non-invasive, improved and coordinated services of the ambulances for ferrying patients for prompt and timely treatment have resulted in seamless efficient patient management of Covid-19 patients.

India's 'test, track, treat' strategy has achieved another peak with 7,33,449 tests done in 24 hours on Tuesday. This has taken the cumulative tests to more than 2.6 crore. The tests per million has jumped to 18,852, it stated.

## States advised not to chart separate ways for procuring vaccine shots once ready

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national expert group on vaccine administration for Covid-19 which met for the first time on Wednesday, deliberated on various issues pertaining to the procurement mechanisms for the vaccine has advised all the States not to chart separate pathways of procurement of the shots whenever they are ready.

The suggestion came to ensure the central control on the distribution of the vaccine and the States do not start purchasing the vaccine at their whims and fancies as had happened in the case of the purchase of rapid antigen testing kits, some of which were later found to be faulty.

"Some States had purchased the RT-PCR and rapid antigen kits which created lots of confusion. In the matter of vaccine, we need the process to be smooth and distribution is as per requirements," said a senior official who attended the meeting chaired by Niti Aayog Member, Dr. V. K. Paul, with secretary Rajesh Bhushan as co-secretary.

Three vaccine candidates are in different stages of human clinical trials in India - the Covid-19 vaccine candidate developed by University of

Biotech and the DNA vaccine by Zydyus Cadila.

In the meeting the group deliberated on conceptualisation and implementation of the vaccine, the creation of a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechanism of the vaccine, including tracking of vaccination process with particular focus on last mile delivery. The group also deliberated on the procurement mechanisms for Covid-19 vaccine, including both indigenous and international manufacturing along with guiding principles for prioritisation of population groups for vaccination.

They discussed broad parameters guiding the selection of the Covid-19 vaccine candidates for the country and sought inputs from the Standing Technical Sub-Committee of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI).

Besides this, it also discussed the financial resources required for procurement of the Covid-19 vaccine and various options for financing the same. Available options in terms of delivery platforms, cold chain and associated infrastructure for roll out of Covid-19 vaccination were also taken up.

India's support to its key neighbours and development partner countries for Covid-19 vaccines was also taken up.

## Govt misrepresented implications of Draft EIA Notification 2020: Ramesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification is yet to be finalised, Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused the Government of "misrepresenting" the implications of the 2020 draft EIA Notification.

"The Congress leader asked how can a subordinate legislation override the parent Act from which it is derived like the Draft EIA Notification 2020 does vis-a-vis the Environmental Protection Act, 1986."

"Your claim that the clearance is not an ex post facto one as it is prospective in nature, and previous actions will be penalised is contrary to how it will actually play out in reality."

"If the clearance permits the illegally constructed portion of the project to remain or the illegal operating part of the project to continue, and there is no direction for demolition of the illegal portion or reduction of the illegally enhanced capacity -- then it is not a prospective clearance. It is being granted ex post facto, and it is contrary to the illegality committed by the project proponent," he said.

"It appears from the processes proposed in Clause 22 of the Draft Notification that the government's objective is to give all the violators an opportunity to regularise their illegal activities," he alleged.

# Covid-19 Impact: Patients with aplastic anemia at receiving end

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Poverty, Government apathy and Covid-19 lockdown restricting travel proved fatal for little Kishan, a 11-year-old boy suffering from Aplastic anemia, a life-threatening blood disorder condition in which the bone marrow and stem cells do not produce enough blood cells.

Facing severe financial constraints and waiting timely medical aid, first at Sadarjung Hospital and then AIIMS, both Government hospitals in Delhi, Kishan's life was cut short March this year amid Covid-19 pandemic.

However, Kishan's is not a lone case. Dr Nita Radhakrishnan, paediatric haemato-oncologist at Super Speciality Paediatric Hospital, Noida, Uttar Pradesh says that as the deadly Coronavirus captured the attention of the nation in the most unprece-

dent manner, the non-Covid patients particularly those with the Aplastic anemia have suffered the most in the lockdown.

She gave instances of her two teenage patients who succumbed to blood disorder in the Covid catastrophe. "Manish (name change), a 17-year-old was suffering with on-and-off fever, gum bleeding, and menorrhagia for three months, he came to us in December last year just when Coronavirus had started spreading its tentacles from China to other parts of the world."

The boy was diagnosed with severe Aplastic anemia and was recommended requisite treatment like regular hospital visit for red cell transfusion before he could be given bone marrow transplant (BMT), a life saving treatment.

"However, while the family was not able to visit our hospital in Noida due to the covid-lockdown, no blood products



were available at the hospital near to the patient's locality. In want of blood, Manish could not survive more days.

13-year-old Suresh (name change) too faced similar fate. While Government funds could not be sanctioned for his BMT in time the boy could not visit the Noida hospital for further follow-up due to travel restrictions. Two weeks later, Suresh died due to hemorrhage at his native place, lamented the doctor.

Radhakrishnan. The scenario is gloomy for the patients afflicted with the disease as they need blood transfusion almost every 20 days.

A significant proportion of patients of aplastic anemia (around 30 per cent) die before any definitive treatment is initiated. A study by AIIMS based on a recent series of patients follow-up showed that out of 1501 patients diagnosed over last seven years, only 303 ie 20 per cent received the definitive treatment modalities through either BMT or IST with ATG and cyclosporines, says Dr Radhakrishnan in her case report "Aplastic anemia: Non-COVID casualties in the Covid-19 era," published in the latest edition of Indian Journal of Palliative Care.

The doctors have sought urgent intervention. Dr Radhakrishnan says that "as we await the peak of Covid-19 in our country and possibly sec-

ondary and tertiary waves thereafter, patients with aplastic anemia who are the sickest among all hematological illnesses would benefit greatly from urgent intervention from the Government to ensure timely treatment."

Aplastic anemia, there is mostly delay in diagnosis, delay in initiation of treatment due to monetary constraints, non-inclusion of the disease under government schemes such as Ayushman Bharat and NHM and delay in sanction of money from other Government schemes such as Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi, Chief

**A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF PATIENTS OF APLASTIC ANEMIA (AROUND 30 PER CENT) DIE BEFORE ANY DEFINITIVE TREATMENT IS INITIATED**

Minister and Prime Minister's relief fund. He urged for proper documents, she added. Delay means, risk of contracting fungal infections and increase in drug-resistant bacterial infections increase which further hamper the treatment, point out Dr Ravi Shankar and Dr Savitri Singh in the study.

including cancer care, palliative care, dialysis, and care of disabled, unfortunately those with aplastic anemia got ignored.

This despite the fact that these patients are at the highest risk of death following a break in the treatment of few weeks," notes Dr Radhakrishnan.

Because of the closure of offices and absence of staff, during the lockdown period, there was delay in sanction of urgent grants due to the lockdown of offices and inability in generating documents such as income certificate from the teshils.

"For instance, Suresh and Manish, both our patients received the Government grant after around 3-4 months of applying for the same. But both had died before they could reach the hospital for treatment," lamented the hematologist.

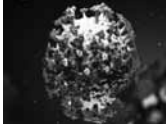
# TN: 5,871 +ve, 119 die on Wed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Tamil Nadu on Wednesday diagnosed 5,871 new persons with Covid-19 while 119 patients succumbed to the pandemic during the 24 hours that ended at 6 pm on Wednesday, said a medical bulletin issued by the Department of Health.

There were 52,929 active cases as on Wednesday evening and over the State, 11,119 patients subjected to testing on Wednesday saw an increase as 69,697 persons were tested across the State thanks to the 133 laboratories.

Till Wednesday, the State has tested 3.14 lakh patients, cases while 2.56 lakh has been cured of the pandemic.



Number of Covid-19 patients in the cluster involving Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Thiruvallur districts remained high compared to other districts.

Chennai had 993 patients as on Wednesday while Chengalpattu had 439 patients. Kanchipuram (371) and Thiruvallur (407) did not show any signs of abatement of the pandemic.

# Jawan hurt as terrorists target QRT convoy on Srinagar-Baramulla highway

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

In the run up to the Independence day celebrations in Kashmir valley, terrorists on Wednesday targeted a Quick Reaction Team (QRT) of the Indian Army along the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway injuring one soldier.

High alert has already been sounded along the vulnerable stretches of different highways and interior road links across Jammu & Kashmir to prevent any major strike by terrorists or IED attack on security convoys in the coming days.

Quick reaction teams and sniffer dogs have been pressed into service along with road opening parties to thoroughly sanitise the road network ahead of the movement of security convoys.

Meanwhile, in another anti-

terrorist operation, the joint teams of the security forces eliminated a local commander of pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen while one jawan of the Indian Army sacrificed his life during the operation in Kamrazpora area of Pulwama.

The terrorist killed in the operation has been identified as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander Azaad Lalhari.

Police said, "Azaad Lalhari was involved in the killing of police head constable Anoop Singh on 22 May 2020 at Pichla Pulwama where he fired at a naka party".

At least six FIRs were registered against him for different terrorist related incidents of violence in the area.

According to Srinagar based Defence Spokesman, Col Rajesh Kalra, "Terrorists fired at a Quick

Reaction Team (QRT) of Indian Army on Wednesday. The QRT was moving from Baramulla towards Gulmarg on the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway near Trumungd Hygam crossing. One Army soldier was injured. Search operation in progress."

Shedding details of Operation Kamrazpora, Pulwama, Col Kalra said, "One terrorist was killed. 01 AK along with grenades, pouches & other war like stores recovered. One soldier laid down his life in the line of duty".

He said the martyred army jawan has been identified as 25 year old Sowar Jilajet Yadav of Jaunpur district in Uttar Pradesh. Before dispatching his mortal remains to his native village, Lt Gen BS Raju, Chinair Corps Commander and all ranks personnel homaged to the braveheart. He is survived by his wife, Punam Devi.

# Covid positive to virus negative for a price?

Operators' salary withheld

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

The Health Department has transformed the corona era into an opportunity for corruption. The data operators posted here are wrongly entering the name-address, mobile number after taking bribe from the people. ACM-2 Ranjit Singh has revealed the data operators posted at Deendayal Hospital to have a breach in records at the time of sampling of a jeweller's son. One month salary of three operators has been withheld. They have also been given notices. This action has caused panic in the health department.

The case related to a jeweller, Ravi, running a jewellery shop near Meenakshi Bridge. The family hails from Prayag Mill Compound. Saraf and his wife and one son underwent antigen test at Deendayal Hospital on August 4. In this test, husband and wife were found to be infected, while the son was found to be negative. On this, the couple was sent on home isolation and the son's sample was sent for RTPCR investigation. On

August 7, he was found positive with corona virus. It is said on this, the administration tried to find him based on the records, but the mobile number written in the record started going off. A person with that name was also not found at the address. On DM's order, ACM-2 Ranjit Singh started investigation. This made the data operators nervous and corrected the young man's name on the record. The young man, Ravi, was caught. During interrogation of the youth, it was revealed that the father had misnamed his son's name with the help of the data operators. He was sent to grand mother's house when the report came positive.

According to ACM-2, one month's salary of accused data operators Shivam, Ravi and Tarun has been withheld. The matter is very serious. They have been given notices. All three are on contract. Along with this, two lab technicians Pushpendra and Omar have also been found to be doing negligent work in registering name, address and mobile number. The previous measure is for our safety against the pandemic. Testing should be done in a massive way and more rapid antigen kits will be purchased, Zoramthanga was quoted as saying by the official.

# Gold bars imported as Qarans, alleges Kerala BJP chief

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Two serious allegations have been made by two prominent Opposition leaders in the State in Kerala against the CPI(M)-led Government. K Surendran, BJP State Chief alleged that the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was the handiwork of gold sharks and not small fish.

"Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan knows who are the persons behind the massive gold smuggling syndicate as many people in his office were associated with it," said Surendran while addressing a virtual rally at Palakkad.

Ramesh, Chennithala, leader of opposition, while addressing reporters at the State capital said that the situation in Kerala due to Covid-19 was pathetic because the Chief Minister and his council of Ministers failed to tackle the spread of the pandemic.

under the Higher Education Department had found that the consignment was brought to this office before it was sent to the places in the State in Department Vehicles.

Surendra said that the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel was the handiwork of gold sharks and not small fish.

"Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan knows who are the persons behind the massive gold smuggling syndicate as many people in his office were associated with it," said Surendran while addressing a virtual rally at Palakkad.

# 1,212 new cases in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Kerala Government has managed to bring down the number of new coronavirus patients on Wednesday to 1,212 according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Being the media on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said that 880 persons were cured of the pandemic and discharged from hospitals. But out of the 1,212 persons tested positive on Wednesday, 1,068 contracted Covid-19 through local contact. 45 persons who tested positive failed to give the details of the source from where they contracted the pandemic," he said.

The Chief Minister said that though some regions showed abatement of the pandemic, situation in most districts remained critical.

"The superintendents of police in the districts are devising strategies to counter the pandemic and it will definitely bring down the Covid-19 in the State," said Vijayan.

He said 28,664 samples were tested during the last 24 hours while five persons succumbed to the pandemic. Thiruvananthapuram which tested 266 positive cases remained the district with the highest number of covid-19 patients.

According to Vijayan, Kerala continued to be the State with the best Covid-19 management and administration.

# People coming out to support three-language formula in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Close on the heels of Prof E Balagurusamy, former Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, who lambasted the Tamil Nadu Government and the Dravidian parties for their opposition towards the three-language formula proposed by the Centre in its National Education Policy, more social activists, educationists and parents have come out questioning the propriety behind the resistance to introduce other languages in Tamil Nadu. An educationist has called for a referendum on the issue of introducing a three-language formula.

Vanathi Srinivasan, vice-president, Tamil Nadu BJP who has been fighting to get the impeded irrigation projects

in the State's fertile Kongu region going, charged the Dravidian politicians who play politics on the basis of the language. "None of them send their children to Government Schools but to public schools which charge exorbitant fees where Hindi, Sanskrit are all compulsory. But these politicians make sure that Hindi is not taught in Government schools because they want to keep students from poor and rural families in perpetual ignorance," said Srinivasan.

An apolitical person like Vijayashree Ramesh, law activist, pointed out that Chennai is the headquarters of Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha because the founder, Mahatma Gandhi, wanted students in Tamil Nadu as well as other South Indian States to learn Hindi. "Interestingly, the

owners and proprietors of private schools which teach Hindi as a compulsory subject are the beneficiaries of the introduction of Hindi or three-language formula in the State. It is sad and shocking that students in Tamil Nadu do not get the opportunity to learn in Jawahar Nandiyala Vidyalaya, the apex institution for the Dravidian political parties, causing havoc in the lives of poor students in Tamil Nadu," said Ramesh.

Srinivasan said the opposition of Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami was only because of DMK president Stalin's opposition to Hindi. "Palaniswami fears that if he supports Hindi, he may lose out to Stalin in the race for Chief Minister's chair in the next assembly election," she said.

# Mizoram to boost Covid testing capacity

**Aizawl:** The Mizoram Government will purchase 10,000 more rapid antigen kits to boost the State's Covid-19 testing capacity. Chief Minister Zoramthanga said on Wednesday.

The Chief Minister made the announcement at a meeting with officials of the state government, NGOs, churches and doctors, according to an official.

Every citizen should take precautionary measures as community transmission can take place at any time.

The previous measure is for our safety against the pandemic. Testing should be done in a massive way and more rapid antigen kits will be purchased, Zoramthanga was quoted as saying by the official.

It was agreed at the meeting that the existing safety protocol will be enforced more strictly in the wake of the spurt in cases, the official said.

Funerals with maximum 50 people will henceforth be held either at church halls or community halls but not in private residences to ensure that social distancing is strictly followed, he said.

# 87 infected in Nagaland, tally rises to 3,118

**Kohima:** Nagaland on Wednesday reported 87 new Covid-19 cases while 129 people recovered from the virus in the state, an official with the Health department said.

With the 87 fresh cases, the state's Covid-19 tally has increased to 3,118 of which 1,991 are active cases as 1,113 people have recovered from the disease, eight have died and six have migrated to other states, the official said.

"87 new +ve cases of Covid-19 have been detected out of 614 samples tested. 48 in Dimapur, 35 in Kohima, 3 in Zunheboto & 1 in Wokha. Necessary contact tracing have been activated. Wear Mask, Keep Distance, Stay Safe," Nagaland Health Minister S Pangnyu Phom tweeted.

Additional Director, Health and Family Welfare, Dr Denis Hangsing said 129 Covid-19 patients tested negative for the virus on Wednesday, taking the total number of recovered people to 1,113.

This has improved the recovery rate of the state to 35.69 per cent from 32.49 per cent, he said.

On August 6 the state had reported the highest number of 134 recoveries. Nagaland reported the first three Covid-19 cases on May 25 while the highest single day spike was recorded on August 4 with 276 cases.

# Assam flood: 3 districts remain submerged

**Guwahati:** Dhemajai, Baksa and Morigaon Districts of Assam continued to remain submerged on Wednesday, an official with the Disaster Management Authority (DMDA) said.

At present, 14,205 people are suffering due to the deluge in these three districts while 7,009 hectares cropland is affected, according to the official. Flooded State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).

Dhemajai is the worst-hit district with 12,908 people affected, followed by Baksa where 1,000 people are suffering and Morigaon with 297 people hit by the calamity. On Wednesday, 13,800 persons were reported to be affected across the three districts.

The total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood and landslide stand at 136 across the state. Of them, 110 persons were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 died in landslides.

# Maha records spike with 344 deaths, 12,712 +ve cases

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Reaching the 300-fatality mark on the third occasion during the current month, Covid-19 claimed 344 more lives and left 12,712 others infected in various parts of Maharashtra on Wednesday.

Maharashtra, which had witnessed 334 pandemic deaths on August 5 and 390 deaths on August 9, recorded 344 deaths on Wednesday, thus taking the total number of deaths to 18,650.

With 12,712 fresh infections, the total number of infections in the state jumped to 5,48,313. Of the 344 deaths reported on Wednesday, Mumbai accounted for 50 deaths, followed by 41 deaths in Pune and 33 in Thane district.

Apart from deaths reported in Mumbai, Pune and Thane, there were 29 deaths in Nagpur, 28 deaths in Nashik, 19 in Kolhapur, 16 each in Jalgaon and Latur, 14 in Sangli, 13 in Palghar, 11 in Solapur, and 10 in Nanded, 8 deaths in Satara, 7 each in Parbhani and Osmanabad, 6 in Ahmednagar, 4 each in Nandurbar and Amravati, 3 each in Raigad, Dhule, Aurangabad and Jalna, 2 each in Ratnagiri, Beed, Akola and Gondiya and death each in Hingoli, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Washim,

Bhandara and Chandrapur. In addition, two persons from other states died in Maharashtra. With 50 fresh deaths, Mumbai's Covid-19 toll rose from 6,893 to 6,943, while the total number of infected cases rose by 1,132 to touch 126,356.

In a related development, as many as 13,089 new infections, as many as 13,408 patients were discharged from hospitals in the state after full recovery, taking the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year to 3,81,843. The recovery rate went up to 69.64 per cent.

The mortality rate in the state is 3.4 per cent. The state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,47,513.

Pune, which has emerged as the second worst-affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 19,628 infections and 2,865 deaths till now.

With 10,839 new infections and 3125 deaths, Thane continued to be the third-worst hit district in Maharashtra.

Out of 29,08,887 samples sent to laboratories, 5,48,313 have tested positive (18.84 per cent) for COVID-19 until Wednesday.

Currently, 10,15,115 people are in home quarantine while 35,880 people are in institutional quarantine.

# Bengal reschedules lockdown days, Opposition sees politics

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government on Wednesday rescheduled the bi-weekly lockdown dates for one day in the next two weeks, triggering strong criticism from the Opposition parties some of which called it a "Tughlaqi system at work" while others like the BJP attacked Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for "planning community-based political lockdown".

Under the new scheme there will be no lockdown on August 28. Earlier in order to break the corona chain the State Government had ordered lockdowns on August 20, 21, 27, 28 and 31 which was in addition to the two lockdowns in the first week of this month.

A Government circular said, "Several communications have been received citing dif-

ficulty to conduct of businesses and banking operations because of 2-days lockdown during Thursday and Friday in the last week of August 2020 followed by one-day lockdown on the following Monday."

This would lead to lockdowns for five consecutive days which would hamper banking services, officials said.

Hence "State Government has considered the requests for relaxation of lockdown as would be necessary and essential. Lockdown on Friday 28 August 2020...is hereby withdrawn and statewide complete lockdown shall now be observed on Thursday 20 August; Friday 21 August; Thursday 27 August and Monday 31 August," the order said.

Meanwhile, coming down heavily on the Government for running a "Tughlaqi sys-

tem," Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Chowdhury said "it is difficult to understand how an elected government can work like this...". The Chief Minister has been on several occasions with her officers to plan out things in the presence of the media...in spite of so many qualified people including the Chief Minister working on the days they could not decide on the exact dates and had to change the days five times."

"It is ridiculous. More so because while the Government is struggling with scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days the corona virus is attacking more and more people. The doctors are dying, nurses are doing, policemen are dying, the private hospitals have been left to loot the people at will and they are scheduling and rescheduling the lockdown days."

Institute of Horticulture Technology Guwahati, Mandira, Kamrup - 781127

Expression of Interest

The administrative officer of Institute of Horticulture Technology invites Expression of Interest from Institutes, public sector undertakings, private enterprise agencies, Project from Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India New Delhi. "Establishment of Biotech-KISAN Hub at IIT Mandira Assam". Banana micro propagation unit invite EOI companies interested to quote on Turnkey basis for handling all activities as per our work plan details available on our website. Total duration of completion of project is 20 days from date of order, the sealed Expression of interest should be submitted to this institute on or before 10.21 days from the date of publishing of this EOI. The technical bid will be open at the office of Institute of Horticulture Technology Mandira, Kamrup 781127. The sealed envelopes technical and financial bids separately and 2% EMD of the project cost, in technical bid envelope should be mentioned the project name and

5-year-old girl raped, admitted in critical condition to Raj hospital

Kota: A five-year-old girl was admitted to hospital in a critical condition after she was raped allegedly by a 19-year-old man in Rajasthan's Baran district, police said on Wednesday.

The incident took place in Shahabad area on Tuesday evening, they said. According to Shahabad Circle Officer Kajomdal, the girl was profusely bleeding after the incident and was rushed to Baran district hospital on Tuesday night.

Later, she was referred to Jay

officer said.

The girl underwent one surgery on Wednesday afternoon and there would be two more surgeries, he said. The accused in the case has been detained, said Shahabad SHO Harprasad Rana.

The girl, who belongs to a tribal community, had gone outside to attend nature's call at around 5 pm on Tuesday when the suspect, who was in an inebriated condition, allegedly attacked her, the station house officer said.

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY**  
KANKE, RANCHI-834008 (JHARKHAND)

**NOTICE**  
Director, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi invites the applications for the posts of Senior Residents. Details of vacant posts are as under:

1. Senior Resident -15 posts  
Psychiatry -10 (Un-reserved-04) (Reserved (Vertical) ST-01, SC-02 & OBC-03, (Horizontal) PH-1)  
Neurology -04 (Un-reserved-02, SC-01 & ST-01)  
Radio-diagnosis-01 (Un-reserved)

Desirous candidates fulfilling the qualification may appear for the walk-in-interview with their application in the prescribed format giving full details of academic records and experience alongwith original and attested photocopy of the relevant documents with recent photograph on 04.09.2020 at 9.30 A.M. at this Institute. Details can be seen on the institute's website [www.cipranchi.in](http://www.cipranchi.in)

Sd/- Director

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE						
SR. NO.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	PWD BAR, HSAR	CONSTRUCTION OF GOVT. INDUSTRIAL TRAINING INSTITUTE AT BHAKANA IN DISTT. HSAR (POG. CCTV CAMERA SYSTEM ONLY) + 9 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 21.08.2020	36.70 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01662-225551 / pwd-eoed-hsara@hry.nic.in
2	PWD BAR, BHADURGIRH	RENOVATION OF GOVT. BUILDING OF DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTRE AT BHADURGIRH IN PHALM DISTT.	08.08.2020 27.08.2020	21.91 LAKHS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	6903133300 / pweoedbarbhadrugirh@hry.nic.in
3	PWD BAR, HSAR	POG. MGP & ALLIED WORK IN CHC AT SEWAL DISTT. HSAR + 4 OTHER WORKS	13.08.2020 28.08.2020	77.72 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01662-225551 / pwd-eoed-hsara@hry.nic.in
4	PWD BHACHINAGARH.	PROVIDING SECURITY GUARDING FOR DESKHOUSE KEEPING SERVICES OF NIRMAL SANDED BUILDING IN SECTOR-34, CHANDIGARH WITH 10400 SQ. METER COVERED AREA FOR THE YEAR 2020-21 (1.E. FROM 01.07.2020 TO 31.03.2021) + 1 OTHER WORKS	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	42.38 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0172-2618279 / pweoed-chandigarh@hry.nic.in
5	PWD BAR, SONPAT	IMPROVEMENT BY PROVIDING WIDENING & STRENGTHENING & 30MM THICK B.C. ON VARIOUS ROADS OF BAKODA CONSTITUENCY IN PROVINCIAL DIVISION NO.1, SONPAT (ROAD-12 6172, 6173, 6174, 6181, 2042, KILTOE PUGTHALA ROAD (VILLAGE BHADWAL) & MCH HODDA TO KHANPUR KALAN (VILLAGE SHANDARPUR) ROAD (ROAD-12 6174) IN SONPAT DISTT. (GROUP-1) + 3 OTHER WORKS	CLOSING DATE 21.08.2020	106.95 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0130-244690 / pweoed-sonapat@hry.nic.in
6	IRRIGATION & WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT HARYANA GOHANA	REPLACING THE EXISTING PIPE CULVERTS WITH 1200MM HUME PIPE ON VARIOUS DRAINS OF BAKODA CONSTITUENCY. + 4 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 20.08.2020	265 LACS	<a href="http://www.hid.gov.in">www.hid.gov.in</a>	Sarjendra Kumar Executive Engineer.
7	FOREST DEPARTMENT DIVISION, PINORE, DISTT. PANICULLA	ESTABLISHMENT OF TEN HOST CHAMBERS (1000 SQM) IN TWO BLOCKS WITH TWO HANGING CHAMBER (1000 SQM) AT SEKHRI (KUK)	07.08.2020 18.08.2020	2.15 CRORE	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01233-230726
(TENDER NO. 2020/HRY/129038) OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF 1 NO. STP/ MPS 3.00 MLD STP AT NAGARPARA ROAD, BAWAL TOWN DISTT. REWARI BASED ON HRRR TECHNOLOGY (FOR CIVIL WORKS, ELECT. & MECH. INSTALLATION, HORTICULTURE, WATCH & WARD CT) AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERE TO) + 1 OTHER WORK						
8	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT BAWAL	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF UV-VISIBLE SPECTROPHOTOMETER, PH.COD.NO. TDS, TURBIDITY METER AND ION METER. COMPLETE IN ALL RESPECT AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO	11.08.2020 19.08.2020	16.79 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01282-260592 / eeabawal@gmail.com
9	PANCHAYATI RAJ PANPAT	CONST. OF COMMUNITY CENTRE AT VILLAGE GARGI BHADUR, BLOCK PANPAT + 1 OTHER WORKS	14.08.2020 21.08.2020	35.65 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	860792660
10	PANCHAYATI RAJ JHAJRA	CONST. OF ONE CENTRE, ONE GENERAL CHAUPAL, ONE PIPE LINE AND 3 NOS. RASTA. (RE-TENDER)	10.08.2020 24.08.2020	120.74 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	01251-254118 / preenraj@hry.nic.in
11	PANCHAYATI RAJ KULUSHKETRA	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE KNOWLEDGE CENTERS.	11.08.2020 31.08.2020	383.20 LACS	<a href="https://tender.hry.nic.in">https://tender.hry.nic.in</a>	01744-250100 / 9461619639 / preenraj.kul@hry.nic.in
12	PANCHAYATI RAJ, HSAR.	TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 11 NOS MULTI GYM WORKS 1 NO MULTI GYM IN STATION 1 NO MULTI GYM IN STATION 2 NO MULTI GYM IN STATION 3 NO MULTI GYM IN STATION 4 NO MULTI GYM IN STATION 5	11.08.2020 24.08.2020	19.60 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	94672-51500 / preenraj.kul@hry.nic.in
13	PANCHAYATI RAJ, ANBALA	CONST. OF BRICK PAVED RASTA AT VILLAGE KHATOLI, BLOCK ANBALA-12 (RE-CALL)	06.08.2020 13.08.2020	18.70 LACS	<a href="https://tenders.hry.nic.in">https://tenders.hry.nic.in</a>	0173-2551346 / preenraj.anb@hry.nic.in
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : <a href="http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in">www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in">www.etenders.hry.nic.in</a>						RO NO. 82209

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in) RO NO. 82209



## Women legal heirs

SC allows daughters to claim their rights on parental property with retrospective effect in a landmark ruling



Giving hope to millions of women, who have traditionally been denied a share in their parental property owing to the cultural preference for a son and the idea of "keeping the wealth within the family", the Supreme Court has said that daughters now have a birthright to parental property with retrospective effect. In essence, this allows women to challenge past injustices, coercion and denials and claim restoration of their economic rights. A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that a Hindu woman's right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property does not depend on whether

her father was alive or not when an old segregatory law was amended in 2005. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs with men but did not clarify whether it could apply retrospectively. Not only does the ruling take away the gender bias from inheritance, one that has disempowered girls socially and led to their differential upbringing and value systems, the court also lauded daughters as more suitable and responsible heirs who deserve a share of parental legacy. "A son is a son till he takes him a wife... a daughter is a daughter all of her life," Justice Arun Mishra said while reading out the order. "A daughter remains a loving daughter throughout life," he added, emphasising the compassionate nature of women as care-givers. This also clears the decks for settling countless appeals on the issue that have been pending before different High Courts and subordinate courts on whether the amendment would be time-bound or not. Now that its applicability is crystal clear, this will not only open the floodgates for thousands of ancestral property-related disputes that had been put to rest but will also give women and their children, especially those who are not too well-heeled or financially independent, a fallback cushion. Traditionally, women have been denied a share in their fathers' property in the belief that a girl's share is given to her in the form of dowry and that one day she would inherit the property of her in-laws. Some enlightened families may have been reformist of their own accord but this has largely been the accepted social code. Yet it has been erroneous, for most women have been denied a share in the in-laws' ancestral property after the husband's death. Another drawback among women so far has been their poor or no legal awareness of their status as rightful stakeholders in family affairs. Even if they were aware of their rights, most women have been hesitant to claim their share in family estates as that would have meant going against their own flesh and blood for a piece of land or house. Plus, with most women in India brought up in a patriarchal society, they were made to believe that in case of a marriage going south or their single status, they would be supported by their father and in his absence, by the brother. Hence, most of them, over the years, have meekly given up their rights on property in exchange for this familial anchor. While mindset changes will only come with time, the ruling of the apex court unfetters those who are willing to stand up for their coparcenary rights.

It is no secret that access to property empowers women economically, provides them with a sense of security and self-worth and strengthens their decision-making powers. Research shows that ownership of property by women has reset the asymmetry in gender relations, resulting in reduced domestic violence, both physical and psychological. Owning assets also gives women caught in abusive relationships an exit route, which they might not have had otherwise, particularly if they are not financially independent. All in all, this judgment is a reassertion of the constitutional value of equality to women in personal law without any pre-conditions. However, one aspect that is being largely ignored in the media over the jubilation on this ruling is that there is a flip side, too. Coparcenary right is an undefined liability and any liability of the father, including the family debt and other dues, will be extended to daughters as well. So, it is not just about the right, it is about inheriting responsibility as well. Besides, what of women in other religious communities, who are governed by separate personal laws in several matters, including inheritance rights? While Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are governed by laws on property rights codified in the amended Hindu Succession Act of 2005, Christians and Parsis are governed by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. Property rights of Muslims — both Shias and Sunnis — are yet to be codified. Till we uniformly address gender inequalities in the area of inheritance and have a representative civil rights framework for women across the spectrum, they would be subjected to abuse.

## Kamala blooms

Kamala Harris is the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the US. Can she do better than the earlier two?



Kamala Harris' selection as the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is a momentous one. She is just the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the United States after Geraldine Ferrero in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008 but the first woman of colour to do so. This, four years after Donald Trump unexpectedly defeated Hillary Clinton, the first female US presidential candidate for the White House. In India, too, Harris' nomination is being celebrated since her mother was a Tamilian. Yet, it's not her origin but what she represents that might tilt the scales.

Biden has been less than charismatic and Harris' activism and focussed campaigns on the Afro-American cause give the Democrats a sales pitch to fall back upon, that of upholding civil rights. Not new really, but tested enough. And likely to find some resonance when race relations have taken centrestage following the killing of George Floyd by a White officer. Besides, the Black community has been the worst affected by Trump's selective pandemic management. In all issues, be it of race, gender, healthcare and law enforcement, Harris has maintained a centrist record. But her drive has helped her push walls so far. Which is why Trump made his discomfort very much visible by calling her "extraordinarily nasty." He also accused her of being "the meanest, most horrible" of all US Senators.

With the US extremely fractured today, Harris possibly stands the best chance ever of having a woman occupy one of the top offices. That said, everyone expected Hillary Clinton to win in a landslide in 2016 and we all saw what happened. With Biden's mental acuity being questioned by many and Trump mobilising the Republican base, it would be fatal for the Democrats to take things for granted, particularly in some crucial battleground states which Trump snatched unexpectedly. While Harris was brought up single-handedly by her mother, after her parents divorced when she was five, and her father, the Jamaican-born economist Donald Harris, did extensive work in India, she identifies herself as a "Black" woman to build her political capital. Despite several in the Indian community urging her to recognise her heritage, she has consistently sought to downplay it. Incidentally, she is distantly related to India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. So while many in the Indian diaspora will celebrate her nomination, her politics is more often than not at variance with Indian interests. Indeed, she is as guilty as several other politicians of making some major policy flip-flops over the years. But with global geopolitics undergoing a sea change over the past few years and with China increasingly asserting itself, her views on India might change as well.

## Politics of defection

MLAs jumping ship and resort politics are condemnable. There's a lot that our elected representatives need to learn from what Gandhi had expected of them



J S RAJPUT

One can easily recall umpteen instances of MLAs changing their ideological and political loyalties for reasons best known to them. Leaders who defect justify it as "the wish of the people." When the floor-crossing happened for the first time in Haryana, when an MLA switched party thrice in a day, the term, *Aaya Ram Gaya Ram* (party-switching) gained prominence. The political discourse — right from the chaupals to the Central Hall of Parliament — but was brushed aside as an "aberration." Slowly but steadily, the practice gained ground. Who can forget Bhajan Lal, the former Chief Minister of Haryana, who migrated from the then newly-elected ruling party at the Centre, lock, stock and barrel and retained his position?

The practice was subsequently polished and upgraded by leaders of all hues. One could go on counting the number of luxury hotels that have been used by parties to house their MLAs on numerous occasions. What happened in Rajasthan says it all. The MLAs, who enjoyed a comfortable stay in hotels at different locations in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat, were convinced that if they went to their home State and their constituencies, they would not be able to resist the temptation of lucrative offers that would be waiting outside to change hands.

What normally should be considered as a humiliating slur by any dignified individual is now taking shape as an "unwritten" but "acceptable" code across the board. It has become a parliamentary practice in Indian democracy. Every major political party has tried this on several occasions. One wonders how these MLAs would react if Mahatma Gandhi walked into their room and asked them, "*Kaise hain aap?*" (How are you?) The Rajasthan episode is almost over and nobody condemned the happenings, not even those who have risen on several occasions to express their concern regarding the attack on constitutional values. I find their silence amazing.

What is surprising is that those, who usually come up with joint statements expressing concerns about what they consider "Constitutional impropriety, an attack on secular values and ethical lapses," never come up to denigrate this unethical and immoral practice that makes fun of democracy and lowers the esteem of the elected representatives themselves. It is a shameless strategy that should not find a place in a vibrant, functional democracy.

Why isn't there all-round condemnation of the Rajasthan drama of



MLAs being herded from one hotel to the other — under strict State security — as an unconstitutional, unethical and immoral? Even known groups of retired bureaucrats — who suddenly appear on the scene to showcase their concerns about the erosion of social cohesion, religious amity and constitutional propriety — never thought it fit to condemn this derogatory practice of herding of elected representatives. Do they find this practice to be in sync with the Constitutional framework and in consonance with moral and ethical considerations?

In 1922, Gandhi had written in a letter that Swaraj would not bring happiness to his people. He had said that four things would weigh heavily against it. Three of them were injustice, burden of administration and treachery of the rich. The fourth, that surprised me the most when I came to know about it, related to "defects of elections." He wrote that about defections in 1922? I was told the Mahatma had studied the British election system very thoroughly. Gifted with a prophetic futuristic vision, he could anticipate the shape of things so accurately.

I often wonder whether the MLAs in Rajasthan, who enjoyed a comfortable all-expenses-paid stay in luxury hotels, even remember that they are the inheritors of the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Lal

Bahadur Shastri, Rajendra Prasad and other stalwarts of the freedom struggle. These worthy elected representatives are, in fact, *panch parmeshwar* of democracy. They are occupying a seat, the incumbent of which is bound to the Constitution by an oath of affirmation. One wonders how many of them are aware of that eternal eye-opener sentence by Mahatma Gandhi: "If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind." Are such herded stays part of the duty of the elected representatives? Do they not realise that they are being presented in public as weaklings, who would not be able to resist monetary temptations if allowed to move out of the hotel?

If these worthies could sit together with their family members, including their children, and seek their opinion on being made a part of the "pliable group," one is confident they would get the right advice. No child would like his parent to be treated as a saleable commodity. Many of them may have read or attended speeches where references were made to a query put before Mahatma Gandhi: What is your message to the people? He replied, "My life is my message." Would our MLAs be in a position to tell their children that they could derive strength from their experi-

ences? It appears that everyone is right from the Chief Minister to the Speaker; the party in power to those in the Opposition; and all others who matter — have their interpretations of the Constitution and Constitutional propriety. It is worthwhile to recall that under the Government of India Act of 1935, elections were held in 1936-37 in various provinces and provincial Governments were formed. All Ministers of the then Congress Government had resigned in November 1939. Gandhi was ever vigilant, he consistently expressed his opinion on how legislators and Ministers should be performing their new duties and they should always think about the welfare of the people. He was, in a way, educating the legislators and Ministers in those days when his overarching presence on the scene itself was a deterrent against anyone breaking the norms: "The holding of any office in the Congress Government must be in the spirit of service, without the slightest expectation of personal gains."

Our distinguished legislators can ponder over Gandhi's thoughts: "There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity." It is indeed a pity that our young ones are

witnessing a political world in which the exceptions apart — elected representatives, Ministers and legislators have forsaken the Gandhian philosophy, ideas and dreams. They are doing all this knowing it fully well that it would hurt the Mahatma's memory.

When reports emerge of legislators' assets multiplying by a factor of say 500, the common man's reaction is obvious — it would definitely be devoid of respect, confidence or a connect. In 1937-39, those who became legislators and Ministers were men and women who had entered the freedom struggle — not a political party but a national movement that offered only sacrifice, toil, sufferings and jail terms. Elections and legislative positions came just by chance. But allurements were still there and senior leaders were alert to guide and to "examine the utility value of the legislators."

And for the Ministers, the guiding verse was "The Ministers are (the people's) servants. They can do nothing against the express wishes of the people. They will not stay in office a day longer than the people wish." There is much more for the legislators, Ministers and the legislators to ponder over. Are the Gandhian ideas totally out of bounds for those who still swear to be the inheritors of his legacy? If not, how could they ignore Gandhi's words and deeds? "This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the Ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above all parties in everything. They may not make private gains for themselves or their relatives or friends."

The least people expect from their legislators is that they do not surrender courage of conviction that a citizen can be proud of, particularly those who are in public life and are expected to enjoy the trust and confidence of their electors. They must ultimately be true to the people. They must not subordinate themselves to the whims and fancies of those who wish to retain power or gain power at any cost.

There is a lot for the elected representatives to whom Gandhi advised not to "arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy the ministerial chairs." Obviously, this applies equally to every elected person.

(The writer works in education and social cohesion)

## SOUNDBITE

I have known Harris for a long time. She is more than prepared for the job. She's spent her career defending our Constitution and fighting for folks who need a fair stake.

**Former US President**  
—Barack Obama

This whole insider vs outsider debate was not supposed to be an ugly witch-hunting battle. It was supposed to be debate, a conversation

**Actor**  
—Sandhya Mridul

With Harris as his political living will, he (Biden) is surrendering control of our nation to the radical mob with promises to raise taxes, cut police funding and appease socialist dictators.

**American consultant**  
—Katrina Pierson

Every cricketer goes through a rough patch. I am sure this break would have helped us both unwind and chat out a plan. It's a matter of time before we click.

**Indian cricketer**  
—Mithali Raj

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Clear old accounts

Sir — There are huge amounts in unclaimed deposits, post-offices and many of these account holders may have even died. There are chances of fraud happening, with unscrupulous persons staking claim to such deposits. The Department of Posts should send notices to account holders who have not operated their accounts in, say, the last three years and give them reasonable time to either renew or close them. If no response is received, all such unclaimed money may be frozen in some dead account which may be allowed to be withdrawn by legal heirs after careful verification.

**Madhus Agrawal**  
New Delhi

### Long road ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Atmanirbhar raksha" (August 11). With a view to boost defence manufacturing in India, Defence Minister Rajendra Singh announced a ban on a range of defence imports. Defence manufacturing under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* scheme

### Language discrimination

In the repeated invocation of culture in the National Education Policy (NEP) — the distaste of its frequent repetitions apart — one finds a long-term strategy to resurrect a particular culture in India. The civilisation that flourished between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE in South Asia, popularly called the Harappan or the Indus Valley civilisation, is an important era in our recorded history. And 6000-7000 years after the Harappan civilisation waned, a new culture evolved with the arrival of the Eurasian Steppe pastoralist groups. A new language and lifestyle emerged. The Vedic culture and the ancient Harappan civilisation were unlike each other in every aspect. Researchers have converged on the view that the present-day gods, religion, literature and traditions in most of India are adaptations from the Brahminical Vedic culture, which was rooted in caste system and rituals, and not from the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. There are, therefore, reasons to doubt the loud advocacy of culture, heritage and traditions in the NEP.

The NEP professes, "the three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions and the Union and the need to promote multi-lingualism as well as promote national unity." The catch here is, "the three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions and, of course, the students themselves



so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India." This eliminates English as the second language automatically as it is not treated as a language native to the country. Incidentally, both English and Hindustani (Hindi and Urdu) belong to the Indo-European language family. This prescription puts South India at a great disadvantage. English has been the link language for this region for over a century, though Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam are of the Dravidian language family. The phenomenal growth of the knowledge-based industry in the South is credited mostly to its proficiency in English. The three-language formula, with a prescription tagged to it, would be detrimental to economic growth.

**Haridasan Rajan**  
Kozhikode

the list of major arms exporters for 2015-2019 and 19th for 2019. Another grey area is the quality of products. The ammunition supplied by the Ordnance Factory had damaged tanks,

field guns and caused fatalities. The French company that manufactures Rafale fighter planes had expressed doubt about the manufacturing quality of Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) during the defence deal. HAL-made Jaguar and Mirage-2000s have caused many fatalities. While defence manufacturing under *Atmanirbhar Bharat* looks ambitious to make India self-reliant in defence manufacturing, there's a long way to go. The Government must overcome existing challenges.

**Venu GS**  
Kollam

### Wake-up call

Sir — Back-to-back fire cases at COVID-19 facility centres are a wake-up call for the Government. All such tragic events have proved that those bearing the responsibility of safety regulations have paid lip service. Exemplary action is the need of the hour, or else such cases will continue to occur.

**Aman**  
Via email

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## FIRST COLUMN

## Staff health is company's asset

We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, all firms must take care of their employees



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The pandemic has changed the way we perceive every aspect of our daily lives as we struggle to adapt to a new normal. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) statistics on the magnitude and scale of the outbreak have a mind-numbing impact. There are currently 1.97 crore active cases around the world, in 216 countries. The most disturbing aspect is that global casualties have crossed the seven lakh mark. India has 2.2 million active cases and there have been 44,000 deaths. Needless to say, some aspects of the Indian economy and the corporate landscape have changed forever, and that includes the way businesses are conducted.

The economy is in turmoil and the corporate sector is having to bend over backwards to ensure that businesses stay viable. As companies struggle to find balance in these critical times, lay-offs have become common, instilling fear and insecurity among the remaining employees who, in addition to their own work, are being piled up with the duties of their erstwhile colleagues. These conditions are stressful and a drain on the psyche of the employee as s/he fights fears of unemployment, financial insecurity and rising expenses. In these conditions, the mind and body are being stretched to their limits with major collateral damage to human health.

This staff distress is unfortunately paving the way for what is being increasingly termed as "non-Coronavirus casualties." According to data compiled by a group of researchers led by public interest technologist GN Thejesh and Kanika Sharma, 338 deaths have been recorded on account of the lockdown-spurred unemployment, financial distress and isolation. The work from home (WFH) conditions are also making it an uphill task for the Human Resource departments of firms to gauge the physical and psychological health of their staff. Sometimes problems like depression are identified too late in the day.

The Bengaluru-based Suicide Prevention India Foundation (SPIF) conducted a study on the rising spate of suicides in the country and the results are not reassuring. The study based its findings on the responses received from 300 therapists, who found that suicide ideation and self-harm intentions have risen sharply during the pandemic. Out of this, 76 per cent of the people feared job loss. Additionally, 30 per cent of the patients of the therapists have already inflicted some sort of self-harm. This data is alarming to say the least and does not bode well for the future of the corporate sector.

Recently, people have been experiencing a slew of emotions due to social isolation, change of lifestyle and loss of personal income. In a recent study of 673 workers in China, their mental health showed disturbing signs with a significant proportion recording conditions of post-traumatic stress disorder, moderate or severe anxiety, depression, stress and insomnia. Other psychiatric symptoms that are prevalent are worries about physical health, anger, discrimination during the outbreak, paranoid ideations, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, alcohol usage and intent to hurt others. In the COVID-19 scenario, the corporate sector is already learning the ropes quickly and is trying to maintain employee health. But hemorrhaging profits and layoffs tell a different story. There needs to be a turnaround in the manner employee mental and physical health is being managed, not only in the best interests of the company but for the larger good of the economy as well. There are a slew of measures being taken across the global corporate landscape which can have a direct relevance for India. Many businesses around the world are taking the current stressful times as an opportunity to connect with their employees and are comforting them. Health and fitness are being accorded priority over productivity. This, among other things, showcases the humane side of the management.

In order to secure the health of the employees, the Indian corporate sector must encourage its staff to share their daily exercise routines with Human Resources managers and instead of over-burdening the employees with work-related Zoom and Skype calls, they must focus on some rest and recreation interactions, too.

The critical aspects impacting the health of any employee are broadly three: Fear of job loss, financial insecurity and a rising workload. The corporate sector must design rehabilitating measures that seek to address these three issues, but in this, financial well-being of the companies is a must and this is where timely Government assistance comes into the picture.

There is no saying when this mayhem will get over. But once things start becoming clearer, would businesses return to their normal self or will the "new normal" become permanent? Although we may not like the answer, the "new normal" is likely to stay. However, humans are known to adapt. That is the underlying strength that ensures the survival of our species. We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, it is the responsibility of all firms to take care of the mental and physical health of their staff.

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

OUR FRIENDS WHO HAD GONE AWAY HAVE COME BACK. I HOPE THAT WE WILL DO AWAY WITH OUR DIFFERENCES AND FULFIL OUR RESOLVE TO SERVE THE STATE.

—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

ASHOK GEHLOT

## POINT COUNTERPOINT



I AM PAINED BY THE KIND OF WORDS THAT WERE USED. BUT I HAVE NOT MADE ANY DEMANDS. I AM AN MLA AND I WILL DO WHATEVER THE PARTY ASKS ME TO DO.

—CONGRESS LEADER

SACHIN PILOT

## EVs not the best choice

The FAME policy is pumping ₹10,000 crore of taxpayer money into an industry which is strategically counter-productive. It needs a broader definition of e-mobility and innovations in sustainable storage



ARJIT DAS

The Delhi Government recently announced its electric vehicle (EV) policy aimed at faster adoption of cleaner vehicles in the national Capital. This policy is on the same lines as the Centre's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles or FAME-II scheme, 2019. Under Delhi's EV policy, purchase incentives will be given worth ₹30,000 for e-autos, e-rickshaws, goods carriers and up to ₹30,000 and ₹1.5 lakh for e-two-wheelers and e-cars respectively, depending on their battery capacity. This will be in addition to the existing incentives provided by the Centre.

The good thing about Delhi's EV policy is its detailing but it falls apart when it comes to fund allocation. FAME-II offers an incentive of ₹1.5 lakh to electric four-wheelers with an ex-factory price cap of ₹15 lakh and it also has a provision for an incentive of ₹50,000 for three-wheelers, including e-rickshaws and ₹20,000 for e-two-wheelers. E-buses can claim subsidy up to ₹50 lakh at a rate of ₹20,000 KWh battery capacity.

Given the incentives being offered, two questions should be considered. First, are EVs environmentally sustainable? Second, are they viable options for the Indian economy in the long-run? The answers to both these questions are debatable. To produce an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle, 10 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are released in the atmosphere and it is the same for an EV without the battery. Manufacturing of a 30 KWh battery releases 5.3 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> while manufacturing a 100 KWh battery releases 17.5 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. A petrol/diesel car emits an average of 5.2 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in a year whereas the average usage emission from EV is 2.02 metric tonnes per year. EVs are non-polluting (at the level of the vehicle), and by design, if and only if, renewables are used as the power source. This is an unlikely phenomenon in the near future as a wide spectrum of allied infrastructure needs to be built around EVs to ensure renewable use for charging.

More than 90 per cent incentives (especially for two-wheelers and three-wheelers) are available by lead-acid type batteries and they are environmentally hazardous. These batteries were already in high demand and competitive against the fossil fuel at least for slow vehicles. Even e-rickshaws were a hit much before the FAME scheme was announced. Over-incentivising lead acid batteries can significantly harm the entire clean energy sector.

Coming back to the economics of EVs, FAME correctly identified that the cost of batteries is a major price differential but failed to investigate intricate details behind such a difference. It is a common mistake often while evaluating eco-friendly solutions. EVs should not be compared with ICEVs or regular car engines. EVs are a combination of an engine and life-time fuel where as ICEVs are valued only for the engine. Anyone buying an EV is essentially pre-owning fuel for a lifetime. Both EV and ICEV engines are comparable and cost the same. Providing an incentive to EVs is against fair competition norms and gives an undue advantage to the EV producers. The ultimate aim is going to hurt the technological advancement of the automobile industry as a whole.

Plus, about 40-50 per cent of the cost of manufacturing an EV accounts for reliable fuel storage i.e. the Li-ion batteries. These are the best storage options available but highly unsustainable. The raw material required for manufacturing is limited and concentrated in a very few countries. Not only that,

“FOR A TYPICAL MIDDLE CLASS AND UPPER MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, A CAR IS AN ASPIRATION AND AN INVESTMENT WITH REASONABLE RESALE VALUE. AT PRESENT EVS HAVE NO RESALE VALUE. HENCE, IT IS UNJUSTIFIED TO EXPECT A CUSTOMER TO INVEST HARD-EARNED MONEY IN AN UNTESTED, RISKY TECHNOLOGY IN THE NAME OF POLLUTION CONTROL WHILE THERE IS NO DEFINITE PROOF THAT IT IS A CLEANER ENERGY OPTION.”



a significant tendency is observed to capture such reserves through mergers and acquisitions. The raw material comprises approximately 60 per cent of the total cost of manufacturing Li-ion batteries. So, the price is not likely to decline if we use more of these batteries, unlike what we had observed for other electronic items like computers, solar panels and LEDs. The price of these batteries will increase in future if demand exceeds a certain limit as the price of raw materials will rise. For instance, the price of lithium increased from \$8,500 per tonne in 2015 to \$17,000 per tonne in 2018. Similarly, the price of cobalt rose from \$30,000 per tonne to \$95,000 per tonne between 2015 and 2018. These increases were in anticipation of a growing EV market but later their price dropped on its dismal performance. India does not have any lithium reserves, supply chain or an ecosystem to manufacture Li-ion batteries in order to ensure a steady supply. So EVs are not an economically-viable option for the country.

Both FAME and the Delhi EV policy talk about setting up public EV charging stations around Delhi's congested roads. This would require vast swathes of public land to serve a handful of wealthy owners and violates the basic principles of public good. Plus, parking is a major issue in Delhi, so allowing public charging is only going to legitimise capture of sidewalks. Also, charging an EV in the blazing summer sun in Delhi is neither advisable nor safe.

The China factor: Li-ion batteries account for almost 50 per cent of the cost of an EV. While China has a thriving lithium chemical, battery cathode, battery cell and EV supply chain, India has none. China dominates the battery supply chain and around three-quarters of the global battery cell manufacturing capacity is in our neighbouring country. On top of that,

Chinese companies have unparalleled control over battery raw materials and processing facilities. At present, almost all Li-ion batteries used for EVs are imported from China. This means incentives aimed at Indian manufacturers are directly going to Chinese battery producers. For example, buying a ₹15 lakh EV (with Li-ion batteries) in India means a transfer of ₹7.5 lakh to China, including ₹3 lakh of the taxpayer's money. The amount could go up to ₹1 crore for an e-bus. Strategically, too, over-dependence on China is dangerous and given the current geo-political scenario, it is not advisable to take such risky steps.

The way forward: FAME or other State Government clean vehicle schemes are an excellent platform to promote indigenous production of EVs. They should stick to the principles of Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat to promote localised production at global standards and stop incentivising unsustainable means of storage technologies.

Unbundling of EVs: Separating the vehicle from its fuel, i.e. batteries, is a necessary condition for the development of the EV market in India. At present, EVs have a low-capacity engine with super-expensive fuel options. This is an absurd arrangement and makes a mockery of fair competition. It is like British Petroleum selling cars for their oil or Ford digging oil wells for their car, leading to inefficiency in both the segments.

Make it consumer-centric: At present, EVs are policy-centric. They hardly consider consumers end-users and rather aim to cater to the needs of development activists. Consumers need flexibility in choosing a fuel source, mileage, durability and so on. Their mobility requirement also varies from a few kilometres to hundreds of kilometres in a run. They possess varied tastes, concerns

and limitations. Unless consumers are given such flexibility and choices, EV sales in India won't pick up. For a typical middle class/upper middle class family, a car is an aspiration and an investment with reasonable resale value. At present EVs have no resale value, hence, it is unjustified to expect a customer to invest hard-earned money in an untested, risky technology in the name of pollution control while there is no definite proof that it is a cleaner energy option.

Competing alternatives: The FAME policy is biased towards EVs, which might be discriminatory against other environment-friendly mobility options like hydrogen fuel cell buses. We already have experience in running CNG buses and we can run hydrogen cell variants, too. These buses can be manufactured in India without any fuel constraint as hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe and multiple renewable sources can easily be used to generate it. Apart from being zero-emission, it does not have to face logistical challenges like EVs. In a nutshell, FAME is pumping ₹10,000 crore of the taxpayer's money into an industry which is strategically counterproductive and is not even environment-friendly. This policy should immediately be replaced with a guideline which uses a broader definition of e-mobility, encourages innovations in sustainable storage that rely on the Atmanirbhar Bharat ethos.

The worst is the increasing tendency to use public money for the elite. If pollution is a concern, then why not give induction cookers to the poor or ban diesel generators? Automobiles do not require State backing, consumers will automatically adapt to EVs if they fit in with their requirements.

(The writer is Fellow, India Development Foundation. Views expressed are personal)

## Collective effort will make India atmanirbhar

Self-reliance is not a short race, it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing together in the desired direction



PRIYA GUPTA

If the Centre's biggest agenda is the revival of the economy, then it can only be achieved by implementing the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan. We may get some idea if we analyse the progress of our neighbouring nation, China. In 1987, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was almost equal to India's GDP at \$279 billion. Then, in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced the "Open Door Policy" and it was a major turning point for the Chinese economy. Beijing experienced 15 per cent growth year on year at a time the global economy was not even growing, dipping to a rate of three per cent.

This brought China from the

32nd position in global exports to first position in 2013. The Chinese Government checked all the right boxes, whether it was a lower tax regime, industry-friendly rules, cheap capital, free land or even allowing the misuse of patent and knowledge laws.

When multinational corporations (MNCs) realised that manufacturing costs in the US and Europe were skyrocketing due to the high cost of manpower, land and their stringent pollution norms, they began looking for alternative locations and evaluated a few South Asian countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Indonesia and many more. They ignored India due to the Licence Raj, stiff labour laws, unclear policy on land acquisition, poor power supply, lack of skilled manpower, a closed foreign trade policy and many more such hurdles. We were one of the lowest-ranked nations in the Ease of Doing Business index.

Upon the evaluation of all South Asian countries, it was found that China was best suited for moving manufacturing business from the

US and Europe, as it had a huge population which could be skilled and brought into the workforce. It had huge tracts of land, too, for setting up manufacturing bases.

Now, given the global anger against Beijing due to the spread of the Coronavirus contagion, nations are looking to shift their manufacturing businesses and supply chains out of China. This is another opportunity for India to attract global business. But we need to check all the right boxes like Beijing did.

It might take time, maybe five-six years minimum to savour the fruits of an atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat instead of the very next quarter like many people are hoping. If we want to act on self-reliance, we need to focus on all segments of manufacturing, starting from big manufacturing companies to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), which can feed the former.

However, unless we invest in Research and Development (R&D), unless we create products that are better and more economical than products made around the world and in

China, we can't sell them in internal or global markets. If we want to make Atmanirbhar Bharat more than a slogan, then we need to provide capital, invest in an industrial sector for their investment and have an open and consistent trade policy; an easy land acquisition policy; cheap and skilled labour and a consistent power supply.

According to the Government, the five pillars of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan focus on the economy, infrastructure, the system, a vibrant demography and the creation of internal demand. An economy is the sum total of many small components of business, starting from the consumer, markets, traders, banks, utility companies, manufacturers, Government policies and institutions. Hence, any leakage of resources will not bring about effective use of the same.

Infrastructure always remains a talking point in our country but no gains have ever worked seriously towards developing it. As a result of this, many infrastructure projects have been delayed by as much as 20-

25 years. It is difficult to believe that projects conceptualised at a cost of ₹20 crore in 1968 cost ₹200 crore in 2010 and is still pending. If we are not interested in an Atmanirbhar Bharat, then fiscal self-discipline is mandatory and it must start from Government departments. Plus, we need to fix responsibility for time and cost overruns in order to get work done on time. India still lacks good infrastructure, even Atmanirbhar Bharat will not be possible if we don't connect all the dots.

Consistent Government policies on trade and taxation are key to creating any manufacturing base as it takes time to reap the benefits of the same. The Government must announce policies for 15-20 years which can't be changed by any new Government of the future. Projects of national importance must not be scrapped or altered by a new set of Ministers.

Another key component that must be aligned is demography. Though India is a democratic country and everyone has the right to follow their own free will, if we want

to make India atmanirbhar, then we need to have a "India First" policy.

Self-reliance is not a short race, rather it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing in the desired direction and in synchronisation with each other. Start-ups can act as a catalyst and be stakeholders in manufacturing, service delivery and a support element in creating a consensus among the masses for this mega project. The Government will act as the agent to expedite and bind the entire process by easing policies and rules. Involve all stakeholders and give adequate compensation to them. If this is implemented, then it can be the biggest employment generator, foreign earner and a huge support to the Indian economy.

To achieve a \$5 trillion economy from a \$2.8 trillion one in about five years, we need to achieve a growth rate of more than 15 per cent per annum. It can be done only by firing all engines of growth, including MSME and big industries.

(The writer is Associate Professor, JNU)



## MANY WAYS TO RESIST CHINA

Freedom of speech and of the Press, both vital to the rule of law and the city's vibrancy, are under attack. China is extending to Hong Kong the regime of media regulation and repression that it applies on the mainland. Today, it's the media. Tomorrow, it's the news who will be China's next targets. But Hong Kongers will respond then, too, by demonstrating solidarity creatively. (The NYT editorial)









## Trend Slazer

### Sara pens special note for mom

On turning 25, actor **SARA ALI KHAN** penned a special message for her mother **Amrita Singh**.

She shared a couple of throw-back pictures of Amrita on Instagram, which reflects her love for dogs.

"Quarter Century Ho Gayi!! From being a Pup Mommy to a Human Mommy... Love you Maa," Sara captioned the pictures.

Sara turned a year older on Wednesday, and she had a low-key celebration with her brother Ibrahim Ali Khan in Goa. Taking to Instagram, Sara posted a couple of pictures and videos from her birthday celebrations.

**'Have you ever noticed that it is the ones who haven't been loved who grow up to hate so**

**much? I believe in the emancipation of women but not at the cost of one's home. For in their emancipation, women are losing what has always made them emotionally superior to men — their tenderness and essential warmth of heart.'**

—Amitabh Bachchan

Actor-comedian **VIR DAS** all set to debut an unscripted home-grown comedy special, *Inside Out*, created from his 30 virtual shows during the lockdown.

Das said, "Week on week, the encouraging response kept pouring in and we knew there was enough material to make a special. We recorded all the virtual shows in advance. I decided to talk about our collective fears and give it a light touch. In such times when we don't know when is our next physical gig or shoot, we thought it'd be a way to work with the changing times. This isn't the new normal but this is a novel alternative, for now."

### Priyanka lauds Kamala Harris

Actor **PRIYANKA CHOPRA JONAS** has congratulated the US Democratic vice-presidential candidate **Kamala Harris** on becoming the first person of Indian descent to achieve that honour.

Priyanka took to Instagram and posted a picture of Harris.

"This is a historical, transformational, and proud moment for all women. All women of colour, all Black women, and all South Asian women. Congratulations on becoming the first Black woman and First Person of Indian descent to compete on a major US party's presidential ticket. #representationmatters. Ps. To my younger self: look how far we have come!" she wrote.

In the list of major events and people of 2020, a new name has been added — **Binod** — which has become the buzzword for netizens and social media users. The trend began after a video by the YouTube channel, **Slayy Point**, in which its creators **Abhyudaya Mohan** and **Gautami Kawale** are seen roasting the comments section of popular videos, went viral. Titled, *Why Indian Comments Section is Garbage*, it highlighted how even asinine and silly entries get hits and "likes". In this case, a user called **Binod** had simply typed in his name in the commentary chat and had still elicited seven likes. And then **Binod** trolled several notable social media handles with what can best be described as mumbo jumbo but still got noticed. So much so that it generated memes.

The **#Binod** memes so hogged the limelight that even brands like **Airtel**, **Paytm**, **Netflix** and **Tinder** didn't leave any stone unturned in making it their new marketing word. While the dating app tweeted, "Yes, **Binod** is on **Tinder**", the digital payment app changed its **Twitter** username from **Paytm** to **Binod** for a short period. Food-ordering app **Swiggy** tweeted, "We think **Binod** will be the first person to call and wish us at 12 tonight," celebrating its birthday. Reality show **Bigg Boss**' **Twitter** handle also posted, "Now who's saying **Binod** is a contestant this year?" Other handles such as **Mumbai Police**, **Nagpur Police** and **Jaipur Police** used the word for awareness of traffic rules and safety.

Well, it isn't the first time a bizarre trend has got unprecedented attention from netizens. Who wouldn't remember the viral *'Selfie Maine Le Li Aa'* by **Chhuchak Pooja** or *'Hello friends, chut peelo'* or even trends like *#IHaveAJoke* and *#MyQuarantineInSixWords!* But why does such content grab attention? "Yes, there have been bizarre trends in the past. However, I think that things that strike a chord among the audience grabs their attention. For instance, **Binod** has just a 30-second presence in our video. Even then, not the rest of the video but 'Binod' grabbed eyeballs. It completely depends on the viewers. We present a platter but it could be just one thing that grabs their attention or it could be the entire video as well," says **Abhyudaya**, who never thought that after this video, rappers like **DJ Snake** and **Honey Singh** would be using the term for comments.

With **Coronavirus** being the permanent trending hashtag on social media over the past few months, hashtag **Binod** certainly came as a clutter breaker and social disruptor. For **Gautami**, **Binod** became an "emotion" for people in lockdown, a byword for an alternate universe, or a flighty fun exercise to de-stress themselves. Says she, "If one is sad, s/he is using **Binod**. One is typing **Binod** to wish someone good morning! There's absolutely no head or toe to this. This has really been a clutter breaker as brands and celebrities too accepted 'Binod' to communicate. Personally, we really liked **Airtel India**'s tweet,



# AGENT BINOD

The term perhaps became more viral than the **Coronavirus**. Trend creators **ABHYUDAYA MOHAN** and **GAUTAMI KAWALE** of the YouTube channel, **Slayy Point**, explain how. By **TEAM VIVA**



"Receive every call with 'Haan #Binod bol'."

The YouTube video also took a dig at the outlandish comments to show how trashy they are, with the creative team pressing all the keys of the keyboard at once so that it typed random alphabets. The 100-word paragraph of alphabets was then posted in comments



of a video, which, in turn, surprisingly grabbed even more bizarre comments. Is this, then, the new theatre of the absurd? Says **Gautami**, "There's no formula or tutorial about how to go viral or how to start a trend. It depends on the audience, their preferences and likes and when we see the audience talking about it constantly, that's when the

content trends. I think platforms like **Twitter** and **YouTube** play a huge role in spurring the growth of such trends among the masses."

So why is it important to note what comments are being posted? Is it any kind of marketing strategy? **Abhyudaya** refuses. He says, "Well, no! It's not any kind of marketing strategy. **Binod**'s

comments were solely for entertainment because there is no such thing as trend marketing."

**Binod** even raided the Prime Minister's **Twitter** handle. What did the disruption mean? He adds, "We heard about it and checked PM's Live. People were commenting 'Binod' everywhere. We could then say that's the power of **Binod** (laughs). I think **Binod** for them came as a voice of licentiousness in these times of lockdown. We are overwhelmed that it's a trend and people are communicating through **Binod** rightfully, meaning that it's in the 'Janta's hands' (in hands of the citizens). We are just the medium."

Well, the **#Binod** raids have even reached the comments section of some international artists and **Nasa Live** sessions! But beyond grabbing eyeballs, a few laughs and generating some revenue for creators, is there any point to this dumbed down pursuit of time-kills?

## POWER OF THE YOUNG

Choreographer **ASHLEY LOBO** says that the **International Youth Day** this year has helped young people find balance without their peers and props at home.

By **TEAM VIVA**



the country have been expressing themselves in unique ways and it is believed that the performing arts are only helping to liberate them even more. For **Ashley**, in the art form of dance, there is, after all, no perfection, only being one with the self and realising one's true emotions and passion by dancing from the heart. "I have seen students over the years feel relaxed and happy after a dance session. This is because during the class, stress levels drop and the endorphins take over. This, in turn, makes the mind calm. It can be an extremely therapeutic and spiritual experience. When one dances, one connects to the music and to the self. In that one moment, you become one with yourself and the universe and that strain is the best mantra to get over the pandemic blues," adds he.

**Ashley**, who has choreographed for Bollywood films such as *Dhoom*, *Jab We Met*, *Cocktail*, and many others, feels it is important for the youngsters to be guided properly and the importance of discipline should be instilled early. "And then, be it a crisis, pandemic, or any other trouble, you will always see the young rise above and show the discipline in every facet of life," he says.

The current imbroglia which has stopped dancers worldwide from running riot on the dance floor and forced to channelise their energy online is seeing quite a bit of heft in the youth. Despite being confined to their homes and missing their friends, the youngsters are doing wonders with dance and the arts. "They will become stronger once this is all behind us because even now the youth in my online classes can find balance in dance through the turbulence of the global pandemic. That is the power of the young and restless," says **Ashley**.



For choreographer, **Ashley Lobo**, there is no energy as that of youth on his dance floor. He loves their moves, their hope, and the vibrancy they bring to any class. On **International Youth Day**, **Ashley** stressed that it is the youth which is embracing the 'new normal' and helping the not-so-savvy world adjust to the digital age, which has swamped all of us.

He says, "Being at home and not with their peer group is not how the youth would have ever imagined their lives but given their proximity to gadgets and the online world, they are doing a pretty good job. I miss their vibrancy in my studio since offline classes are stopped. But when youngsters dance, it is obvious that they like to be free and that spirit is visible in whatever they do."

The pandemic has affected youngsters profoundly, for better or for worse. Through videos and virtual means, youth across



## Shawn and The Boys

Gearing up for a more diabolical season two of the series, *The Boys*, it is all set to introduce an intriguing character — **Lampighter**, into the *Supes* universe. A former superstar and one of the original members of *The Seven*, **Lampighter** will be played by **X-Men** fame Canadian television and film actor, **Shawn Ashmore**.

Speaking on roping in **Shawn**, showrunner and executive producer, **Eric Kripke** said, "We were thrilled that **Shawn**, who is, let's be honest, an OG superhero, wanted to play the crucial part of **Lampighter**. He brings so much depth, menace, and world-weary humanity to this former member of *The Seven*. **Shawn** is a really good guy. We're grateful to have him join our bloody little family."

Having mysteriously been replaced by our very own **Starlight** (played by **Erin Moriarty**) in season one, the new season will unravel what truly happened with the fire inducing *Supes* and *The Boys* previously. Their tragic history will be in shambles as **Lampighter** enters again and dredges up painful memories, poke at their raw nerves and change everything.

*The Boys 2* will premiere on Amazon Prime Video with the first three episodes on September 4. New episodes will be available



each Friday, culminating in an epic season finale on October 9. This season, the series will also have an after-show titled, *Prime Rewind: Inside The Boys* hosted by **Aisha Tyler**, which will debut on August 28.







Indian captain Sunil Chhetri with his Bangladeshi counterpart PTI

## No action for Blue Tigers this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home on October

8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November.

A third-place finish in the group will help India get a direct berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The games will be rescheduled in 2021.

India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the group with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

## LATE WINNER

Ocampos' 88th minute header break Wolves hearts; Shakhtar thump Basel to reach semis

AFP ■ DUISBURG

Sevilla qualified for the semi-finals of the Europa League on Tuesday after Lucas Ocampos' late header broke Wolverhampton Wanderers' hearts, while Shakhtar Donetsk thumped Basel 4-1 to join the Spaniards in the last four.

Five-time competition winners Sevilla face Manchester United in Cologne on Sunday thanks to a brilliant header from Argentine Ocampos with less than two minutes left on the clock which gave them a deserved 1-0 win, while Shakhtar take on Inter Milan on Monday in another intriguing tie.

Sevilla dominated their English opponents over the course of the match, as a tired-looking Wolves



Sevilla players celebrate after Lucas Ocampos scores Spanish club's first goal against Wolves Europa League/Twitter

dreams of European glory ended with a whimper.

"I am very proud of my players. We needed to have lots of patience against a very good team," said Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui, whose team are now unbeaten in 19 matches in all competitions, to BT Sport.

"We have ambition we work very hard, but we are going to play against Manchester United," the biggest team in world football.

Premier League outfit Wolves thought they were set to make the perfect start in the 11th minute when

Adam Traore set off on a sensational surge towards goal from his own half and was chopped down in the area by Diego Carlos.

However, Raul Jimenez, who had scored all of his previous eight penalties for Wolves, sent a weak spot-kick towards the goal.

Bounou, who could hardly believe his luck as he battled the Mexican's tame shot aside.

There were claims that Bounou had left his line while Sevilla players seemed to enter the area before the

penalty was taken, but in any case, that was to be Wolves' last shot on target of the match as chances became hard to come by.

In Gelsenkirchen, Shakhtar booked their spot in the last four with a commanding win over Basel that will give Inter Milan something to think about ahead of their semi-final clash on Monday.

"I'm feeling amazing because we have worked hard and we trust we can reach the final," said goalscorer Junior Moraes.

## Serena sets Venus clash in Top Seed Open

AFP ■ LEXINGTON

Serena Williams had to fight for a winning return from her six-month coronavirus lay-off on Tuesday, defeating lowly ranked Bernard Pera in three sets at the WTA Top Seed Open tournament in Kentucky.

Serena, who before Tuesday had not played a competitive game since a Fed Cup appearance in February, came from behind to defeat American world number 60 Pera 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in two hours and 15 minutes at the Top Seed Tennis Club in Lexington.

Venus Williams started her campaign with a straight set win over Victoria Azarenka in a battle of former World No 1 players. The 40-year-old American won 6-3, 6-2 and set up an exciting encounter between the Williams sisters in the second round.

Rising American star Coco Gauff had to work hard for her straight-set win over qualifier Caroline Dolehide, winning 7-5, 7-5 while Canadian qualifier Leylah Fernandez knocked out seventh seed

Sloane Stephens in their opener.

This week's tournament — the first WTA event in the US since the Covid-19 pandemic — is taking place without spectators.

Williams, 38, later revealed that the sedate surroundings had suited her game.

"It was a really calm atmosphere. It was really chill," Williams said. "I can't say I disliked it. I didn't mind it at all. I've been through so many things in my career and this was totally different. I think I won today because I was calm for once in my career. Kind of reminds me of junior days. Something nostalgic about that. I kind of enjoyed it."

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion looked to be flirting with an early exit in the second set, but recovered from 0-40 down at 4-4 before holding and eventually winning the set.

"I just knew I could do better," Williams said. "It was an interesting game. I just had to get used to her game a little bit. She played really well."



## CSK expect Dhoni to play until 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings CEO K. Sridharan said that K. Sridharan expects captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has not played any competitive cricket since last year's World Cup semi-final, to be part of the franchise in 2021 and 2022 IPLs.

The 39-year-old Dhoni is set for a return to competitive cricket in the upcoming IPL, to be played from September 19 to November 10.

"We can expect MS Dhoni to be part of both (IPL 2020 and 2021) and probably for the next even year," he said.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all. He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and his team."

N. Srivastava, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for



— 2022," Viswanathan was quoted as saying by *indiatoday.in*.

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## RR fielding coach tests virus +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishaan Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19, the IPL team announced on Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE.

Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has

been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine.

"Post 14 days, Dishaan will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI. On the return of two negative reports, he will be allowed to join the team after self isolating for 6 days and receiving 3 further negative tests upon his arrival in the UAE," said Royals in a statement.

The 2021 IPL mega-auction. CSK has planned a short training camp at their base from August 16 to 20.

While CSK are hoping to leave for the UAE on August 21, Viswanathan confirmed that all the players will assemble in Chennai on August 14.

"It will be a skill-based plus training camp. It can't immediately start off with skills because they are coming back after a long off," he said.

## Unacademy to fight for IPL title sponsorship rights

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Education technology company Unacademy, which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eyeing the league's title sponsorship rights. The firm set to submit its bid to replace Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season.

A BCCI official confirmed that Unacademy has picked up the bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that.

"I can confirm that Unacademy has shown interest and picked the bid papers. The all-rounders will be submitting a bid and are pretty serious. So Patanjali if they

bid, will have competition," the senior official told PTI.

Vivo, which annually paid ₹440 crore, dropped out as title sponsor this year due to the Sino-India border stand-off.

The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value — between ₹300 to 350 crore — for a period of four months and 13 days.

The official said Unacademy is a part of IPL's central sponsorship pool with other companies like Dream11 and Paytm.

Yes, Unacademy is already an IPL's central sponsor's pool 2020 to 2023," the BCCI official said.

## National hockey camps to resume on Aug 19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The training camps for India's national hockey teams will go ahead as scheduled from August 19 in Bengaluru despite half a dozen men's team players, including skipper Manpreet Singh, being hospitalised after testing positive for Covid-19.

Both the men's and women's teams will resume training at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) South Centre in Bengaluru.

"The Indian men's and Indian women's hockey teams are scheduled to resume sports activities from, Wednesday 19th August 2020, following the completion of their 14-day quarantine period," the SAI said in a statement on Wednesday.

The decision was taken after a discussion with the game's stakeholders, including Hockey India officials and chief coaches of both the teams.

"After giving the utmost priority to the safety and well-being of all the athletes, it has been decided that the sporting activities will be resumed at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, as scheduled earlier."

The camp for male hockey players was uncertain after six of them tested positive for Covid-19. The women's camp, however, was never in doubt



after all of them tested negative for the dreaded virus.

Currently, 33 male and 24 female players are in Bengaluru for the camp.

The light intensity national camp is expected to continue till September 30.

Men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid said the health and wellbeing of the players and support staff will be the top priority during the camp.

The six Covid positive players will be integrated into the

## All 6 players shifted to hospital

BENGALURU: Five Covid-19 positive hockey players have been shifted to a hospital in Bengaluru as a precautionary measure after striker Mandeep Singh was transferred to the facility following a dip in his blood oxygen level, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said on Wednesday.

"The Sports Authority of India decided to shift the other five players, to SS Spars Multi-specialty hospital in Bengaluru on Tuesday afternoon, as a precautionary measure," the SAI said.

"The decision to hospitalise them was taken so as to ensure that the players were attended to at all times and could be given the best possible treatment. All six athletes are in good health and recovering well."

PTI

group once they recover from the virus.

"They are in good spirits, and are looking forward to a quick recovery. Once recovered and after following protocol of quarantine, we look forward to have them back with us," Reid said.

## Robinson replaces Stokes for 2nd Test

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Fast bowler Ollie Robinson replaced Ben Stokes as England on Wednesday named a 14-member squad for the second Test against Pakistan, starting Thursday at The Ageas Bowl.

The 26-year-old trained with the squad during the West Indies series and took

on extra significance in this time because of the nature of the pandemic.

"India is currently the third-worst hit country in the world in terms of cases, according to most data studies, with over 2 million cases so far and over 45,000 deaths."

"The current situation has forced the BCCI to relocate the IPL to the UAE, and only tentative plans are in place for the domestic season," the website further stated.

eight Hampshire wickets during his subsequent appearance in the Bob Willis Trophy.

But whether he makes a Test debut at Ageas Bowl on Thursday could depend on how the England attack that played in a three-wicket win in the first of a three-match series recovers from their exertions at Old Trafford last week.

## Hafeez breaks bio-bubble



PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board is furious at former captain Mohammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the biosecurity protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the ongoing away series.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg.

On Wednesday, Hafeez

## Eng will sweep Pak series: Vaughan

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan predicted the hosts will sweep the three-test series against Pakistan despite the absence of batsman Eoin Morgan and Ben Stokes for the last two matches.

Stokes was part of the England team which pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory in the first Test at Old Trafford.

"(Stokes) plays a big, big role in that dressing room. Vaughan wrote in a blog, although he had no doubts about the depth in the England squad."

"Even though Ben Stokes is out I think England will be no strong. England will be the series 3-0, that's my prediction."

He also felt England might rest veteran quick James Anderson in the second Test beginning on Thursday.

"I was surprised if he plays back-to-back games, so I think he will be rested. Maybe Sam Curran will come in for him or Mark Wood," he added. "Zak Crawley will probably come in for Ben Stokes."

tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the country has been open to the public in Southampton. Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself and the lady, whom he called his inspirational.

The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two negative Covid-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

The ECB is taking any breach of the biosecurity protocol very seriously and fast bowler Jofra Archer was reprimanded and was dropped for the second Test against West Indies after he also breached the biosecurity bubble by going to his apartment in Brighton.

## Shakib could return from ban during SL tour

PTI ■ DHAKA

Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold for a tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending on October 29.

The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged bookie during the IPL.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka is more or less confirmed and given the schedule, Shakib could feature in the proposed three-match T20 series.

"I think Shakib being out for a year is not that much different to the rest of our squad who have been out for six or seven months as well," Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was quoted as



saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"We are hoping all the players are fit. Obviously, there are standards that they need to attain in terms of fitness level. We

have to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players."

The all-rounders' fitness will be taken into consideration before picking him. "It is very difficult to get into international cricket without any sort of cricket. I think we need to try to find some opportunities for him to play some games. He is a world-class player so I am sure he will get back into the team soon, but fitness is an important thing," the coach said.

According to the report, Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Mohan de Silva said the two boards have reached an agreement on Bangladesh's departure date, which has been set as September 24.

But there are still discussions over whether it will be a two or three-match Test series after the BCB requested a three-match T20I series in addition to the

official schedule.

Shakib is set to start training at the BCB facility ahead of his return to competitive cricket.

Domingo, however, added that Shakib would have to play unofficial cricket matches as a suspended cricketer before he is drafted into the national team.

It is something that we have to discuss with the selectors. I don't think he can play any official game before October 29, so all games that he plays have to be unofficial games. It might be inter-squad games but we need to have clarity if he is allowed to play that."

He has to make sure he is fit and that he starts hitting balls and bowling some balls. Once we assemble before heading off to Sri Lanka — when that tour is confirmed — we will get closer to making a decision," he said.

## SINGLES

3 INDIANS IN LGCA EVENT FOR FIRST TIME

NORTH BERWICK: In a first for Indian women's golf, three leading players — Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar and Tvesha Malik — will tie up at an LGCA event together, the Ladies Scottish Open, starting on Thursday. Diksha plays with Stephanie Kyriacou and Yu Lu at 7.15 am while Aditi plays with Scottish star Carly Booth and South African Lee-Ann Pace at 9.58 am. Tvesha has been drawn with Yeimilim Noh and Emily Pedersen, and they tee off at 12.22 pm.

BARÇA PLAYER TESTS CORONA POSITIVE

BARCELONA: Barcelona player was tested positive for the novel coronavirus after reporting back for pre-season training, the La Liga side said in a statement on Wednesday. Barca said the player was isolating in his home and was asymptomatic, adding that he had not been in contact with any of the players who are to travel to Lisbon for the Champions League Final Eight tournament.

LIVERPOOL SET FOR RECORD PAYDAY

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool will receive a record 175 million pounds payout for winning the Premier League after all 20 clubs in England's top-flight agreed to postpone any reductions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Times reported on Wednesday that teams will receive their entire payout for last season and rebates to broadcasters, which could amount to 330 million pounds.

DELHI'S SUDEVA FC TO PLAY IN I-LEAGUE

NEW DELHI: Sudeva FC will become the first ever football club from Delhi to play in the I-League as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Wednesday approved the city side's participation in the second-tier domestic competition from the upcoming season. The AIFF also announced Visakhapatnam side Sreenidhi FC's entry into the I-League from 2021-2022 season.

SPURS SIGN SOUTHAMPTON'S HOTSPUR

LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur have signed Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg from Southampton on a five-year deal with full back Kyle Walker-Peters moving in the opposite direction on a similar contract. Financial details of the transfer were not disclosed but British media reported that Spurs have paid Southampton an initial fee of around 15 million pounds to sign the 25-year-old Hojbjerg who had a year left on his contract.

Agencies