

OPINION 6 RELIGION VS CULTURE

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RAIPUR, FRIDAY AUGUST 7, 2020; PAGES 12 3

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Chinese intrusion info taken off Govt portal

PN ■ NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry has pulled out a document from its website giving details about the Chinese 'transgressions' in Eastern Ladakh beginning early May. It was the first time that the Government officially admitted that the Chinese Army had intruded into India leading to the ongoing stand-offs at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The document was uploaded as part of the monthly report on news section of the Defence Ministry website and was there since Tuesday. However, it was missing on Thursday. There was no official word from the Ministry on this deletion.

Acknowledging for the first time that the Chinese had intruded into India, the report said the present situation arising from 'unilateral aggression' by China continues to be sensitive requiring close monitoring and prompt action based on evolving situation and the present standoff is likely to be prolonged.



- The document was uploaded as part of the monthly report on news section of the Defence Ministry website and was there since Tuesday
- It was missing on Thursday
- There was no official word from the Ministry on this deletion
- Chinese aggression has been increasing along the LAC and more particularly in Galwan valley since May 5. The Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kurang Nala, Gogra, and north bank of Pangang Tso on May 17-18, the Ministry said in its What's New section on the website

said, "Neither has anyone intruded into our territory nor taken over any post. Our forces are doing what they have to do to protect the country, whether it is deployment, action or counter-action. Our patrolling capacity has increased due to newly built infrastructure, especially along LAC.

Meanwhile, the deleted document said ground-level interactions were held between the Armed forces of both sides to defuse the situation. A Corps commanders flag meeting was held on June 6. However, a violent face-off incident took place between the two sides on June 15, resulting in casualties on both sides.

Subsequently, said the document, a second Corps commander level meeting took place on June 22 to discuss the modalities of de-escalation. "While engagement and dialogue at military and diplomatic level is continuing to arrive at mutually acceptable consensus, the present standoff is likely to be prolonged," the

Ministry said. "The situation in Eastern Ladakh arising from unilateral aggression by China continues to be sensitive and requiring close monitoring and prompt action based on the evolving situation," the document noted.

Incidentally, in an interview to some television channel in early June, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had acknowledged that China has moved troops in "significant numbers". Moreover, during his visit to Leh in July, Rajnath had said he cannot guarantee to what extent the issue with China would be resolved even as the talks are on at military and diplomatic levels.

In an effort to break the logjam, the two countries have held five rounds of Corps Commander level talks since June but there is no noticeable improvement in the situation. China continues to dilly-dally in withdrawing troops from the contentious Pangang Tso (Lake) leading to tension. This despite

Document was on Defence Ministry website about Chinese transgressions since Tuesday

C'garh secretariat, HOD offices to open from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Secretariat (Mahanadi Bhawan) along with all head of department offices based at Raipur and Nava Raipur will function normally from August 7.

Secretary to D.D. Singh, Secretary of the General Administration Department, the order has been issued as the

total lockdown order of the Raipur District Collector ends on Thursday. The order states that in the offices of Secretariat and all head of department offices based at Raipur and Nava Raipur, the attendance of Class III and Class IV employees will be one-third.

As per the Standard Operating Procedure, all the officers and employees have to use face masks inside the office along with social-physical dis-

tancing along with implementing all the guidelines issued over time. At the entry of Secretariat along with head of department offices, thermal screening, sanitisation of the offices and regular cleaning have to be maintained. As per the earlier order, the Secretariat level officers can work from home or at the Secretariat.

'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' actor Samir found hanging in Mumbai home

PN ■ MUMBAI

Television actor Samir Sharma, best known for his roles in 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' and 'Left Right Left', was found dead in his home in suburban Malad where he lived alone, police said on Thursday.

The 44-year-old was found hanging from the fan of the kitchen on Wednesday night, police officials said. He may have been dead for two days before he was found hanging, they said. "We have not found any suicide note at the spot. It seems to be suicide case. It is suspected that he hanged himself two days back.

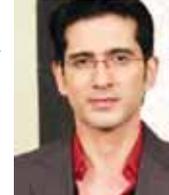
We have sent the body for an autopsy," Malad police station's senior inspector George Fernandes said. Sharma, who also worked in serials such as "Kahaani Ghar Ghar Ki", "Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyar Ke" and "Wo Rehne Wali Mehlon Ki", lived in a rented flat in Chincholi Bunder locality in Malad (West). His body was discovered by the

building's watchman, who peeped through the kitchen window and saw him hanging. He then alerted members of the society who informed the police.

Police rushed to the spot and took Sharma to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, another official said. Efforts were on to get in touch with the family of the actor, who had been living alone since February, he said.

Based on primary information, an Accidental Death Report (ADR) has been registered, Fernandes said, adding that further investigations are underway. On July 27, Sharma posted his last words on Instagram with a poem on death and dreams.

"I built my pyre and slept on it and with my fire it was lit. And all that was me I burned in it. I killed my dream to wake up from it. Now my dream is gone," he wrote on his page. After that, he posted some photographs but no written con-



SAMIR SHARMA MAY 3, 1976 - AUG 5, 2020

His bio on Instagram reads "Actor. Writer. Poet" and mostly has shots of beaches and videos of him driving to scenic places. Sharma's death comes at a time the entertainment industry is reeling from the shock of the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, who was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.

Covid count soars to 2 million

PN ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when the government claimed the coronavirus spread has been contained, the number of cases on Thursday crossed over 20 lakh mark in the country. With 20.21 lakh cases, India is behind Brazil which is second spot with more than 28.62 lakh cases and the United States which continues to be the worst affected nation with close to 50 lakh cases.

India has added 10 lakh cases in just 20 days. Globally, over 18.82 million people have been reported to be infected by the novel coronavirus globally and 70,67,79 have died so far. Brazil on July 17 Brazil crossed 20 lakh coronavirus cases with 76,000 deaths.

India, the third-most affected country by total cases and fifth by death toll, has added 30,39,46 cases in the past six days alone. This is the ninth consecutive day that coronavirus cases have increased by more than 50,000.

Manoj Sinha new J&K L-G, Murmu appointed CAG

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After the surprise exit of Girish Chandra Murmu as Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, President Ram Nath Kovind Thursday appointed former Union minister Manoj Sinha in his place to handle the administration of the trouble-torn union territory.

A day after resigning from the L-G post, Murmu was appointed as CAG by President on Thursday evening. Murmu's tenure will be till November 21, 2024 as CAG, till age 65. The 1985 batch Gujarat Cadre IAS, hailing from Mayurbhanj in Odisha was Principal Secretary to Narendra Modi when he was Chief Minister of Gujarat. Before becoming the L-G, Murmu was Expenditure Secretary. He will take over CAG's post on August 9 after the retirement of current incumbent Rajiv Mehriishi.

The appointment of a grass root politician, who enjoys Prime Minister Modi's confidence, is expected to fill the 'political vacuum' in Jammu and Kashmir at this crucial juncture. Due to sustained anti-terrorist operations and elimination of top commanders of different terror outfits, the Centre is aiming to kick start



the stalled political process, especially in the Kashmir valley in the coming months.

A large number of mainstream Kashmiri politicians, already released from detention, are growing 'restless' in the absence of political activity. They have even accused the Central Government of running its political agenda without allowing the widening gap between the Government machinery and the common masses, said a political commentator.

CAPSULE

LANKA POLLS: RAJAPAKSA HEADING FOR GRAND WIN
Colombo: Sri Lanka's strongman Mahinda Rajapaksa was poised to stage a political comeback on Thursday as his party took an early lead and was set for a big victory in the twice-postponed general elections, according to results announced so far.

FIVE KILLED AS RAIN BATTERS KERALA
Thiruvananthapuram: 5 people were killed as intermittent heavy rains and strong winds battered parts of Kerala on Thursday.

Guj cadre DIG heads CBI SIT on Sushant

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday registered a case in connection with the death of film star Sushant Singh Rajput and entrusted the probe to a Special Investigation Team (SIT). Rajput's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty among others is accused in the case.

Deputy Inspector General and IPS officer of Gujarat cadre Gangaadeep Gambhir will supervise the probe into the sensational case that had led to a turf war between the Bihar Police and Mumbai Police over jurisdiction. Gambhir will report to Joint Director Manoj Sasidhar, officials said.

The move comes after the Bihar Government recommended a probe into the matter by the Central agency. "CBI has today registered a case related to the death of Rajput on the request of Bihar Government and further notification from the Centre and taken over the investigation of the case, earlier registered at police station Rajiv Nagar, Patna vide FIR

Bihar Police chief warns of legal action if IPS officer 'quarantine' not released in Mumbai

PT ■ PATNA

Bihar police chief D.Gupteshwar Pandey on Thursday warned of legal action if an IPS officer, who had gone to Mumbai to probe actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case, was not released from "forcible quarantine" by the end of the day.

Pandey expressed bewilderment over no positive response from the municipal authorities in Mumbai, whom he accused of keeping IPS officer Vinay Tiwari in virtual house arrest, despite being informed about the adverse remarks made by Supreme Court against their action.

no.241/2020 dated 25-7-2020," the CBI said in a statement. The CBI further said the case was registered against six accused and others and investigation is underway. "We are also in touch with Bihar Police," a CBI spokesperson said. Taking cognisance of the Bihar Police FIR in this connection, the Enforcement Directorate has already launched a probe to investigate the money laundering angle in the case. Besides Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty, her relatives Indrajit Chakraborty, Sandhya Chakraborty and Showik Chakraborty also her associate Samuel Miranda and Shruti Modi and others have been named as accused in the case.

The case has been registered under Indian Penal Code sections relating to criminal conspiracy, abetment of suicide, wrongful restraint, wrongful confinement, theft, criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal intimidation. The CBI said it is also in touch with Bihar Police. "A Regular Case (FIR) is, therefore, registered under Section 341, 342, 380, 406, 420, 306, 506, 120B IPC against (1) Rhea Chakraborty and her family members (2) Indrajit Chakraborty (3) Sandhya Chakraborty, (4) Showik Chakraborty, (5) Samuel Miranda, (6) Shruti Modi & others and entrusted to Anil Kumar Yadav, Additional SP, CBI, AC-VI, SIT, New Delhi for investigation," reads the CBI FIR.

The CBI FIR also includes a six-page complaint of Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh (74) on the basis of which the Patna police had filed the original case in the abatement to suicide case of the deceased actor. Apart from other things, Rajput's father alleged in the complaint that instead of unraveling the crime the Mumbai Police was busy questioning less relevant people instead of grilling the prime accused despite a lapse of 40 days.

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Shri O. P. Jindal
7th August 1930 - 31st March 2005
Founder and Visionary,
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POLITICS ON HOCH TRAGEDY

Punjab Ministers seek expulsion of MPs Bajwa, Dullo from Cong

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Two days after Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar sought strict action against party's Rajya Sabha members...

Government, including the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh.

"By bypassing all party and government forums to protest against the government handling of the hooch tragedy and to approach the Governor for CBI and ED inquiries into the case, the two MPs have not only attacked the very basis of democratic governance but have sought to undermine the Punjab Police force, which is effectively cracking down on the liquor mafia despite the COVID pandemic pressures it is currently handling," they said.

This is not the way democratic systems and institutions are meant to function, said the Ministers, pointing out that a CBI probe was needed only if the police failed to deliver, which was definitely not the case at present.

Moreover, the decision on recommending or not recommending a motion with the State Government, and not with two MPs, who are unable to even represent the interests of Punjab properly in the Parliament, the Ministers said.

"Instead of doing their job

as MPs, both Bajwa and Dullo seem intent on destabilising their own government, either out of their own greed for power or at the bidding of those who want to destabilize the Congress in Punjab," the Ministers pointed out.

What was even more unacceptable was the fact that instead of feeling even remotely apologetic, these MPs continue to be on the offensive, going so far as to launch a personal attack on Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar. "How can party MPs from a state go around openly criticizing the chief of their own state unit," they asked, adding that the Congress had a strong leadership in Punjab and did not need two indisruptive members denting the image.

Punjab Ministers lash out at SAD, AAP for playing with people's sentiment with eye on polls

Punjab Cabinet Ministers on Thursday lashed out at Akalis and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for "shamelessly" using the hooch tragedy to play with the people's sentiments with an eye on the assembly elections.

"The opposition is so busy playing to the gallery that even the sufferings of the victims and their families seemed not to have affected them," said the Ministers - Sukhbir Singh Sarkaria, Sadhu Singh Dharamot, Sunder Sham Arora, and Bharat Bhushan - in a joint statement.

Ridiculing SAD president Sukhbir Badal's announcement that the party would approach the Governor to seek the Congress Government's dismissal, the Ministers said that the Akalis' game-plan had been completely exposed. "It is clear that, following the pattern of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Akalis, acting on the directives of their political masters - BJP - are trying to destabilize Punjab's duly elected government," they said.

"But the cheap machinations of the Akalis will not succeed, and they would end up humiliating themselves even more in the eyes of the people of Punjab than they had been doing over the past three and a half years," they added.

"If governments could be dismissed for crimes committed by gangsters and criminal

mafias, the SAD-BJP government of the past would have been dismissed in the first year of their rule," they said, citing the mafia raj that prevailed across the State under their regime.

Pointing to various hooch tragedies that had taken place under SAD rule, and were taking place in many States even now under BJP-ruled governments, the Ministers dared Sukhbir to come out with details of the action taken in any of those. "In contrast, the Punjab Police, on strict directives of Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, has already taken 50 people in its net, including many of the kingpins of the mafia responsible for the deaths of more than 100 people in the latest tragedy," they pointed out. Jakhar meets CM, CMs exemplary action against conspirators, financiers, patrons, officers responsible.

Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar on Thursday urged the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh to ensure exemplary action against everyone, right from the conspirators, to financiers, patrons and even officers involved in the

unfortunate hooch tragedy.

Jakhar, who called on the Chief Minister, said that the biggest achievement of the Congress Government in Punjab was to establish the rule of law by uprooting the mafia raj prevailing from more than a decade. "However, the hooch tragedy has dented the image of the State Government," said Jakhar, while welcoming the Chief Minister's announcement to book perpetrators of this unfortunate tragedy for murder saying that it has restored people's faith in the government.

"To further win the people's confidence, the investigation into the case must be conducted in a prompt and time-bound manner. Exemplary action must be ensured against the conspirators, financiers, patrons and officers involved in this unfortunate man-made tragedy," demanded Jakhar adding that these conspirators, financiers, patrons and officers involved in this unfortunate man-made tragedy, should be punished severely.

He added that in case, involvement of any politician or officer for patronizing this

nexus was found, "severe or severe action must be taken against them also".

SAD-BJP urges Governor to dismiss Cong Govt; recommend HC or CBI inquiry

Shiromoni Akali Dal (SAD) - Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday urged Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore to dismiss the Chief Minister Sunil Jakhar and recommend an inquiry by a sitting judge of the High Court or the CBI into the hooch tragedy. Besides, the party demanded an Enforcement Directorate probe "to recover the ill-gotten wealth acquired by Congress leaders from illicit liquor trade".

The demands were put forth by the SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal and BJP leader and former Minister Manoranjan Kalra, who led a SAD-BJP delegation to the Governor accompanied by a victim family.

The SAD delegation urged the Governor to direct confiscation of properties of all those involved in the illicit liquor trade, however big they may be, besides stopping smuggling of denatured spirit and extra ne-

tral alcohol (ENA) from distilleries.

It also demanded that murder cases be registered against all those named by the victim families, particularly Congress' Khadoor Sahib MLA Ramanjit Singh Sikki. It also urged that all the victim families as well as those who were severely affected after imbibing spurious liquor be rehabilitated.

The joint delegation alleged that the hooch tragedy was the "direct result of state patronage" and that was why, the people across three districts of Amritsar, Tarn Taran, and Gurdaspur were affected by the same lot of contaminated liquor. "This level of distribution has happened due to nexus existing between Congress leaders and legislators, police and excise officials," it alleged.

Tragedy victim family member Kamajit Kaur told the Governor that she was being threatened even since she asked for the completion of Khadoor Sahib M.L.A. "I was even denied Rs two lakh compensation for the death of two family members which have been given to other victim families," she said.

Punjab Police makes 135 more arrests in 197 new cases in State-wide raids

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With 197 new cases and 135 more arrests in 24 hours, the Punjab Police has busted several modules as a part of its state-wide crackdown on illicit liquor mafia, while further tightening the noose around the suspects in the hooch tragedy case.

A total of 284 drums of methanol were seized from the Millar Ganj (Ludhiana) shop or godown of the key accused Rajiv Joshi, who had sold three drums that had triggered the chain of deaths in three districts in one of the state's worst such cases. The death toll in the case stands at 113.

"While investigations into the tragedy are continuing and the two SITs set up to fast-track

the FIRs, the police continued with coordinated raids across districts on the orders of Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh to "finish the illicit liquor business," said the state police chief, General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta.

The past 24 hours saw the recovery of 1528 litres of illicit liquor, 7450 kgs of Lahan and 962 litres of smuggled illicit liquor in raids at various locations, said the DGP, adding that 11 working stills were also recovered in 197 cases registered since Wednesday.

The DGP said that the Lahan was recovered by Amritsar Police in a special operation supervised by senior officers.

Since the raids started in the wake of the hooch tragedy,

a total of 1489 FIRs have been registered and 1,034 persons have been arrested, said Gupta.

A total of 29,422 litres of illicit liquor, besides 12,509 litres of illicit liquor and 82,406 kgs of Lahan, along with 20,960 litres of alcohol or spirits, have been seized, and 73 working stills recovered in the state-wide raids.

The raiding teams are working closely with the Excise Department, as per the Chief Minister's directives, said the DGP, adding that the raids will continue in the coming days so that every single person involved in manufacturing or trading of spurious or illicit liquor or smuggling of liquor is arrested and action taken against them as per law.

DEATH TOLL REACHES 113

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

400 kilo lahan, five boats, other material used to distill illicit liquor seized in Hoshiarpur

Launching a major crackdown on illicit liquor trade, the Hoshiarpur District Police on Thursday recovered 400 kilograms Lahan from the Mand area in Dasuya.

Giving details, the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Navjot Singh Mahal revealed that under this special operation in Dasuya sub-division, the police seized 400 kgs Lahan and five boats, tarpaulins and other material, which was being used for distilling illicit liquor.

He said that the recovered Lahan was destroyed in the presence of police and excise teams.

Capt to meet hooch tragedy victims' families in Tarn Taran

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Hours after SAD president Sunil Jakhar castigated Punjab Chief Minister for failing to reach out to the families of hooch tragedy victims by refusing to share their grief by visiting them. In contrast, the Chief Minister Sunil Jakhar on Friday morning to meet the victims' families was announced on Twitter.

"Punjab CM @capt_amarinder will visit Tarn Taran to meet families of victims of #HoochTragedy tomorrow morning. He will be accompanied by @INCpunjab chief @suniljakhar, @DGPpunjab Police Dinkar Gupta & CPSCM Suresh Kumar. Member of 27 Minister's Media Advisor Raveen Thakral on Thursday evening.

Capt Amarinder, accompanied by Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar, state police chief Dinkar Gupta and Chief Principal Secretary to CM Suresh Kumar, will be visiting the most-affected district due to consumption of spurious liquor, Tarn Taran, on Friday morning to meet the victims' families.

This will be for the first time, since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic, that Capt Amarinder will move out of Chandigarh, the state capital. Ever since, he has been staying at his farmhouse in Siswan near Chandigarh, and functioning from there, holding videoconferencing meetings. The only time he has visited Tarn Taran was for an important Cabinet meeting on May 27.

Dubbing it as "draame-

bazai" (histrionics), SAD chief Sukhbir Badal asked Amarinder to go to Tarn Taran only after booking the Congress legislators and other leaders including owners of distilleries under section 302 for the mass murders in hooch tragedy.

"What is the point in this draamebazi when murderers of victims he is going to visit are dining and wining with him in his rest house. Amarinder is going to the tragic stricken to wipe their tears after they have wept their tears dry. Even then he is not willing to act against his right hand men, like legislator Ramanjit Singh Sikki whose association has been categorically named by the victims," said Sukhbir.

He added, "I really wonder with what brazen cheek will he be able to face the victims murdered by Congressmen closest to him."

"This is the height of insensitivity. I really don't know how his conscience will let him sleep when he returns at shamelessly facing those whose mothers he has presided over," said Sukhbir.

Earlier, SAD chief had lashed out at the Chief Minister for failing to reach out to the victim families by refusing to share their grief by visiting them.

Sukhbir has also taken on Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar and Congress' former national president Rahul Gandhi saying that both were wrong about the tragedy because "months from the illicit liquor trade were going right up to the Congress high command".

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57 fresh infections reported in Chandigarh, total tally crosses 1300-mark

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With 57 persons found infected of Covid-19 on Thursday, the total positive cases crossed 1300-mark in the union territory of Chandigarh. The total tally stood at 1327 which included 529 active cases till the evening.

50 fresh cases were detected through RT-PCR testing while seven cases were reported through rapid antigen test in the city. The cases were reported from Sectors 8, 19, 22, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34, 38, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 52, 63, Dhanas, Bapu Dham colony in Sector 26, Malaya, Burali, Ramdarbar, Dadumajra, Behlana and Manimajra. "With 57 fresh infections, the total cases in the city were 1327. 63 patients also recovered from COVID-19. The ASI had created quite a buzz online with his songs battling against the COVID-19 and Arogya Setu app. He has carried out an intensive awareness campaign to sensitize people about the virus and his videos of singing songs in parks and streets of Chandigarh had gone viral.



10 COVID-19 positive cases were reported from Sector 45, 16034 samples have been tested till date, the bulletin said. A day before, the city had recorded its biggest single-day spike with 64 positive cases. Meanwhile, Assistant Sub-Inspector Bhupinder Singh of Chandigarh Police, who has been sensitising people about the COVID-19 pandemic, has been awarded the COVID-19 award. The ASI had created quite a buzz online with his songs battling against the COVID-19 and Arogya Setu app. He has carried out an intensive awareness campaign to sensitize people about the virus and his videos of singing songs in parks and streets of Chandigarh had gone viral.

756 more Covid -19 cases in Haryana, total cases cross 39k mark

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana's Covid-19 infection tally on Thursday shot up to 39,303 with 756 more people testing positive for the virus, while the death toll rose to 453, with three more fatalities, according to an official bulletin.

Faridabad surpassed Gurugram in the cumulative number of Covid cases on Thursday. With 161 fresh cases, Faridabad's Covid tally now stood at 6,671, highest in the State, followed by Gurugram at 6,205. It said, "Out of three, two fatalities were reported from Faridabad while one from Ambala. The total COVID-19 deaths in the state rose to 458 while the number of active cases increased to 6205, it said.

The districts that reported fresh

cases included Gurgaon (83), Rewari (48), Sonapat (51), Ambala (78) and Panchkula (54) among others.

With recovery of 680 new patients, a total of 32,640 have been discharged from different hospitals of the State so far. The maximum number of 27 patients recovered from Faridabad district on Thursday. The state's recovery rate on Thursday was 83.05 per cent while the rate of doubling of infections was 27 days, it said.

587 COPS TESTED POSITIVE, SAYS DGP Haryana Director General of Police (Manoj) Yadava said that so far, 587 policemen have been found Covid-19 positive, which is 1.14 percent of the total force and the police recovery rate is 65 percent. So far three policemen have died from Corona infection.

Haryana CM appeals for plasma donations from Covid survivors

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

With rising number of cases, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday urged cured COVID-19 patients to motivate people to take precautions against catching infection rather than fearing the disease

and also appealed to the cured COVID-19 patients to donate their plasma for treatment of others.

"All COVID-19 survivors should encourage people to take proper precautions against the disease rather than fearing it," he said while chairing a meeting of the Crisis Management Group (CMG), comprising officers of various departments, to review the COVID-19 status in Haryana. The Chief Minister was apprised of the free COVID-19 test facility made available recently in all civil hospitals of the state and a person can call up toll-free numbers 108 or 1075 for collection of the test sample for the disease. In the CMG meet, the CM was also told that SMCs are being sent to COVID-19 survivors for plasma donation and so far 338 people have come forward for it.

A total of 32,000 out of nearly 39,000 infected people have been cured from the infection in the state. In the CMG meet, the



Chief Minister was also informed that as part of the Unlock 3 process, a special campaign is being run to motivate people to wear masks and adhere to social distancing norms. It is being done through advertisements on the vehicles of Urban Local Bodies Department and traffic over 900 hoardings on erecting intersections.

Director General of Police (Manoj) Yadava told the meeting that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the policemen have been dedicatedly performing their duties as "corona warriors", risking their lives. He said the rate of policemen contracting infection in Haryana is lower than those in other states. He said so far, 587 policemen, amounting to 1.14 per cent of the total force, have been infected,

and their recovery rate is 65 percent. So far three policemen have died of COVID-19, the DGP said. The Chief Minister asked officials to open at least one COVID-19 testing laboratory in each district, where testing should be conducted through RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) method instead of antigen testing.

On this, Additional Chief Secretary Alok Nigam of the Medical Education Research Department said at present there are 16 COVID-19 testing labs, out of which 11 are in government hospitals and five in private hospitals. Besides, this 10 more labs will be opened soon.

Khattar asked officials to ensure free pick-and-drop ambulance facility for people requiring tests. He was also apprised by officials that at present, under the inter-state transport services, about 150 buses of Haryana Roadways are being run for Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Mohali Admin puts 'Covid Spike Management Plan' into action

PNS ■ SAS NAGAR

With continuous surge in Covid-19 cases in the district, Mohali District Administration has put 'COVID Spike Management Plan' into action.

Mohali Deputy Commissioner Girish Dayalan, after reviewing the status of pandemic spread, with the Health Department officials, said: "Learning from the worldwide pandemic spread, we expected the surge to surge at any given point of time. We prepared our COVID spike management plan well in time and have now put it into action." Giving details, he informed that besides Gyan Sagar Hospital, the COVID Care Centre (CCC) at

Chandigarh University, has been established with 200 dedicated beds for asymptomatic patients and we have arrangement of another 800 beds which can be pressed into use, if need be.

"Another CCC would be set up in Gera Basti. Private hospitals have also been put on guard and told to reserve more beds for isolation cases. Special facility has been created in District Hospital to accommodate and handle deliveries of COVID positive expectant mothers," he said.

Besides infrastructure, testing capacity has been upgraded, said Dayalan adding that antigen testing has been commenced by virtue of which test results are available within half an hour.

"We target to do at least a hundred tests a day on the contacts of positive patients so that we can check the further exponential growth in cases from those contacts," said the Deputy Commissioner adding that the second TrueNat machine for testing has been installed at District Hospital.

To provide quick medical consultancy to patients opted for home isolation, a dedicated call centre is soon to be operationalized. The doctors from the Department being down with the patients daily and vice versa patients can call to consult if any inconvenience or deterioration in health is experienced. Video calling facility would also be extended to patients, if need be.

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Punjab to approve building plans through online portal only

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To bring more transparency and ease people's time, Punjab Local Government Minister Brahm Mohindra on Thursday issued instructions to all the Commissioners and Regional Directors of the Municipal Corporations to approve the building plans only through online portal from August 6. The instructions will be implemented with immediate effect.

The initiative, apart from putting an end to people running from pillar to post to get approvals, will also remove intermediaries from the system. Mohindra said that Punjab Government is committed to provide maximum e-facilities to the general public under e-service program and e-portal has been launched on August 5, 2018, to accomplish this target.

"Earlier, there were some

technical issues in the portal. Now this has been resolved and the portal has been restarted in a well-designed manner so that the general public has not faced any difficulty in getting online approval of building plans and other services. Now, the government has launched these hassle free online services to approve the building plans through Online Building Plan Approval System (OBPAS)," he added.

The Minister said that the people can get online building plan approval, online layout approval, online change of land use approval, online approval of telecommunication towers and online approval NOC of plots under regularization policy with OBPAS system.

With the introduction of OBPAS system, Local Bodies will ensure faster and hassle free service to the citizen of the state.

The Minister added that building plan and other ser-

VICES are easily available on portal in a hassle-free manner. "After August 5, 2020, all the works in the Department being done only through e-portal and any work will not be dealt manually," he said.

"Now, the people would be able to make online submission through online portal - e-mail and through SMS to applicants, computer generated certificate with digital signature and moving towards improved monitoring of projects for RERA compliance," he said. Mohindra said that all the officers have been instructed to ensure these orders and in case of non-compliance, strict action would be taken against erring officers.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY Tender Notice for Hiring of Vehicle... Tender No: RSO - BSP - 2020 - 07. Date: 31.07.2020. Name of Work: Hiring of 10 nos. Diesel driven coverd vans for use of diesel crew at Kotba & Raigarh for a period of 03 (three) months on open tender. Tender Value: ₹ 78,62,809.48/-.

Shops to open with riders from today

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

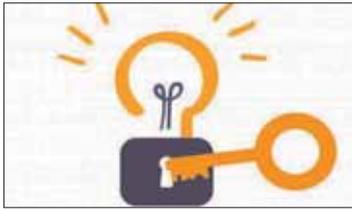
Raipur, Durg and Bilaspur districts will go for unlocking from August 7 but with some conditions including that shops will open for eight hours for six days a week. All shops will remain shut on Sunday.

The traders have accepted the latest official orders and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

Earlier, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel stated that District Collectors have been authorized to take decisions related to the lockdown.

They will consider the prevailing conditions of Covid-19 pandemic, its spread and number of patients. A decision will be taken after holding talks with local traders and business community.

"Prevention is the best to keep away the coronavirus. Every citizen has to ensure physical distancing, wear mask and wash hands at regular interval strictly. Unnecessary visits to



public places should be avoided," Baghel said in a statement.

Raipur, Durg and Bilaspur district administrations have issued the SOP and timings to open the shops.

Raipur District Collector Dr S Bharti Dasan along with Raipur Superintendent of Police Ajay Yadav and Durg Collector Dr Sarveshwar Narendra Bhanu and Superintendent of Police Prashant Thakur held talks with traders on unlocking.

The order speaks of five different shifts to operate shops. The provision and retail shops will remain open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm while fruit, vegetables and milk shops will be open from 6:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Hotels and restaurants have been permitted to open from 10:00 am to 9:00 pm and home delivery can take place till 10:00 pm.

All other shops mainly dealing with clothes, shoes, hardware and utensils will function between 11:00 am and 7:00 pm. Two shifts have been

permitted for street food vendors - from 6:00 am to 9:00 am and 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Shopkeepers have to keep 50 masks so that if any customer arrives without a mask, he has to be given one.

The shops will be sealed for a fortnight if the orders are violated. The timing will be reviewed after 15 days.

In Durg, vegetable, dairy, mutton, fish can be sold from 5:00 am to 12:00 noon. The general provision stores and all other shops can open from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. Restaurants and hotels can provide dinner from 10:00 am to 8:00 pm whereas home delivery can take place between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

Street vending is allowed from 6:00 am to 9:00 am and from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The order will be effective till August 31. The shops violating the order will be sealed.

Similar order has been issued by the Bilaspur District Collector.

Six Covid deaths, 395 fresh cases detected

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Six deaths of Covid positive patients were reported while 395 fresh cases were found in various districts of Chhattisgarh on Thursday, officials said.

Also 217 patients were discharged from hospitals. A 47-year-old man from Fafadih locality in Raipur was detected Covid positive and was admitted in Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial Hospital Raipur on July 31. He died on Thursday, the officials said.

A 60-year-old woman from Mathpura locality of Raipur was admitted in DKS Hospital, Raipur, in a serious condition on July 31. She had breathlessness and severe diabetes. She suffered brain hemorrhage

and pneumonia. Later, she was detected Covid positive and was shifted to Ambedkar hospital on August 4 where she died.

A 37-year-old man from Rajnandgaon was admitted in the government Medical College Rajnandgaon on August 4 with acute respiratory distress and diabetes. He was referred to AIIMS Raipur and he died on Wednesday, the officials said.

A 63-year-old man from Gudhyari in Raipur who had suffered brain hemorrhage, high blood pressure, breathlessness and fever was admitted in AIIMS Raipur on Wednesday. He was found Covid positive and died on Wednesday.

A 40-year-old man from Malkhorad in Janjgir-

Mahasamund district was suffering from fever and cough for the past seven days. He was admitted in AIIMS Raipur on August 2 and was detected Covid positive. He later suffered multiple cardiac arrest and was on life support. He died on Thursday, the officials said.

A 40-year-old man from Malkhorad in Janjgir-Champa was admitted in Janjgir Covid care on August 4. He committed suicide.

With these deaths, so far 77 persons have died due to Covid in Chhattisgarh.

So far, 10,932 persons have been detected Covid positive while 8,088 have been discharged. Currently there are 2,767 active cases in Chhattisgarh.

Fresh 'zone' classification, 116 blocks in Red zone

The Health Department also released a fresh classification of Red, Orange and Green zones in Chhattisgarh. This week, 116 blocks are in the Red zone while the rest are in Orange and Green zones, health officials said. The classification of an area as a Red, Orange or Green zone depends on the number of cases doubling in a certain time period and numbers of tests happening in every one lakh people.

Wild elephant kills 25-year-old woman

The woman's niece was injured while fleeing and is undergoing treatment

house and attacked the family while they were sleeping, she said.

While a villager, Jalkaran, managed to escape, the animal picked up his wife Chandrika Bai and slammed her on the ground, killing her instantly, the official said.

Only 3 radio collars functioning

The Chhattisgarh Forest Department had signed a MoU with the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) under which satellite radio collars were to be attached to 12 wild elephants so that their live location could be known. "We was to attach 12 radio collars. However, they could do it only on five elephants. Of these, only three radio collars are working. Of these three, one elephant was radio collared by the Forest Department," Arun Pandey, the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (APCCF), told The Pioneer over telephone.

The woman's niece was injured while fleeing and is undergoing treatment at a primary health centre.

An instant relief of ₹25,000 has been given to the kin of the deceased while the remaining compensation of ₹5.75 lakh will be released

after the completion of formalities, the official added.

A herd of 40 elephants has been roaming in the area for the last few months and villagers have been shifted to Anganwadi centres and school buildings from their mud houses, Faruque said.

The victim's family had also been evacuated but they returned to their home recently, she said.

The Forest Department personnel have been tracking the herd and taking measures to prevent human-elephant conflicts, she added.

BJP denounces suicide, molestation in Covid hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The BJP on Thursday termed the suicides and molestation cases in Covid-19 Specialized Hospitals as a tainted chapter in the tenure of the Congress government in Chhattisgarh.

In a statement to the media, BJP state spokesperson and MLA Shivratan Sharma said that with so much negativity all around, the government has lost the moral right to remain in power.

He said that amid the spike in Covid-19 cases, there are differences of opinion within the government and the government seemed to be confused on how to tackle the pandemic in the state.

He demanded that the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) should be imposed against the hospital authorities also apart from the accused as the incident of an assault on a woman was released in the social media.



Man commits suicide in Covid centre

STAFF REPORTER ■ JANJIGR-CHAMPA

A 40-year-old male Acronavirus patient allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in a Covid care centre in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district on Thursday, police said.

The man was found hanging from the ventilation grill in the toilet of

the centre, set up at a school, in Janjgir town in the morning, said Lakhesh Kevat, Station House Officer of Kotwali police station.

Janjgir-Champa is located 250 km away from Raipur.

The deceased, a native of Jamghada village in Dabha development block, had recently returned from Gujarat to

his village, Kevat said.

After testing positive for Covid-19, he was admitted at the centre on August 4. When he did not come out of the toilet after a long time, the hospital staff broke the door open and found him hanging, he said.

The exact reason that prompted him to kill himself was not known, the police said.

Covid +ve minor girl molested in hospital, man held

RAIPUR: A hospital sweeper has been sent to jail on judicial remand after he allegedly molested a nine-year-old girl admitted in a Covid hospital in the Rawabhatta locality of Raipur city, police said on Thursday.

"The girl was to be discharged on Thursday. While she had gone to brush her teeth around 9 am, the accused, Kanhaiyalal Nishad (45), molested her in the bathroom," Raipur Superintendent of Police Ajay Yadav told The Pioneer over telephone.

The girl narrated her ordeal to her parents who informed the hospital authority and police, Yadav said. The police nabbed the accused and booked him under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and POCSO Act.

A local court sent him to jail on judicial remand, the police officer said.

Lord Ram to come alive, Ram Van Gaman Path work to start

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Work will start this month on Chhattisgarh's ambitious Ram Van Gaman Path to be built from Korea to Sukma, carrying the spirit of devotion to Lord Ram at each step and covering a total of about 2,260 km of the main route and sub-routes.

In the action plan prepared by the government, special attention has been given to the beautification of places, starting from the entrance to lampposts and benches, an official press release said on Wednesday.

Devotees and tourists will have darshan of Lord Ram at each step of the journey of Ram Van Gaman Path.

As people walk, they can see and hear stories related to the exile of Lord Ram. Plantation of different species of plants is being done on both sides of the Path so that the feeling of exile that Lord Ram underwent can be felt.

On Wednesday, in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, Tourism Secretary P. Anbalagan gave a detailed information about the scheme. Work on the project costing ₹137.75 crore will start from the last week of this month.

It will begin from Chandkhuri near Raipur where an ancient temple of Mata Kaushalya, belonging to the seventh century, is situated. A plan of ₹15.45 crore has been prepared for the beautification and development of the Mata Kaushalya temple complex.

Ambalagan said about 2,260 km of roads will be developed under this project. Plantation work will be done along 1,400 km of roads. Development of



civic amenities for tourists will be a top priority at all these places.

Grand gates will be erected at all places, the top of which will hold copies of the bow and arrow of Lord Ram. Lord Rama's flag will be waved. Slogans of Jai Shri Ram will follow.

Lampposts to be installed on the pilgrimage and the tourism sites will also remind one about the ancient times. These lampposts will have the shape of Lord Ram erected on their top. In another design, an arrow-bow will be put up on top of the lampposts.

Informative reception gates will be set up from Korea to Sukma. A special design sign board will welcome the visitors when they reach a destination. Direction posts showing the

distance and direction of various places along the road will be set up in the circuit.

Market stalls will be built in a modern way.

The route map of Ram Van Gaman Path has been prepared. A project report has been prepared for Chandkhuri, Rajim, Shivrinariyan, Turturiya and Rajim. A laser light show will be arranged above the Shivrinariyan Bridge.

Beautification and development of Saptarishi Ashram is to be done in Dhantari district. The city is planned to be developed as a tourism hub. Biodiversity parks will come up at various locations.

The tourism department has identified 75 sites of Ram Van Gaman Path in Chhattisgarh based on various research papers

and ancient beliefs after discussing with historians.

The nine sites being developed in the first phase include Sitamarhi Harchauka (Korea), Ramgarh (Sarguja), Shivrinariyan (Janjgir-Champa), Turturiya (Balodabazar), Chandkhuri (Raipur), Rajim (Gariaband), Sihawa Saptarishi Ashram (Dhantari), Jagdapur (Bastar) and Namaram (Sukma).

In one year, the construction agencies will complete their work as per the action plan. Regarding the beautification of Chandkhuri Mata Kaushalya temple complex and other religious and tourist places, Ministers Mohamad Akbar, T.S. Singh Deo, Tamradwah Sahu, Dr. Shiv Dahriya and Amarejot Bhagat gave many useful suggestions.

C'garh's Ram Marg will have aromatic flowers, sweet fruits

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Saplings of various species of fruits and flowers will be planted on both the sides of Ram Van Gaman Marg, which will revive the times Lord Ram spent his exile in present day Chhattisgarh.

The Forest Department has been entrusted with the responsibility to plant one-and-a-half lakh saplings on both sides of 528-km-long Marg. Already, 90 percent of the plantation work has been completed, even before the commencement of the main project.

In this way, tourists will get to see a variety of medicinal herbs. Execution of this ambitious project of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will start this month.

Under the project, 75 locations related to Lord Ram's exile period has been identified to be connected as a new tourism circuit.

In the first phase, nine places from Korea district in North Chhattisgarh to Sukma district in South Chhattisgarh will be beautified and developed at a cost of ₹137.75 crore. These places are already blessed with natural scenic beauty. Greenery under these places will be enhanced and beautiful gardens full of aromatic flowers and sweet fruits will be developed near the selected pilgrimage tourist destinations.

Saplings of peepal, banyan, mango, harra, jedam, arjun,



khamhar, amla, karanj and neem trees are being planted across the entire path.

Ram Van Gaman Path will represent the state's biodiversity to the world.

This new tourism circuit will also connect the Guru Ghasidas National Park in Korea, Tamor Pingla Sanctuary in Surapur, Semarsot Sanctuary in Balarampur, Badalkhol Sanctuary of Jashpur,

Gomarda Sanctuary of Raigarh, Achankmar Sanctuary in Mungeli, Bhorander Sanctuary of Kawardha, Barnavandana Sanctuary in Balodabazar, Sitanadi Sanctuary in Dhantari, Udanti Sanctuary in Gariaband, Kanger Valley National Park in Bastar and Indravati National Park in Bijapur.

Udanti and Sitanadi sanctuaries have been declared as Tiger Reserve from 2009.

Now GPS-embedded ventilators for Covid-19 patients



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Life-saving ventilators for Covid-19 patients are now being embedded with Global Positioning System (GPS) chips to ensure they are not misused or diverted and their movement is tracked on a real-time basis.

The Union Health Ministry has created a dashboard for tracking the real-time status of the indigenously-manufactured ventilators being dispatched, delivered and installed for monitoring and feedback, said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

"We can track the location of each of these devices as each ventilator is geo-tagged. We will get to know in real-time if a ventilator is changing location," he said.

On the issue of giving nod for export of ventilators, the official said that just about 0.27 per cent of total active Covid-19 cases are on a ventilator across the country. "At any given time, not more than 1 per cent of patients are sick enough to need ventilator support," said Bhushan.

The Government has set up a high-powered committee to address issues and encourage the domestic industry to manufacture ventilators and ramp up their production.

Based on expert projections in March, the Health Ministry decided to procure about 60,000 ventilators for Covid-19 patients. About 18,000 ventilators have been so far supplied to states, central government hospitals, and Defence Research Development Organisation facilities, said the senior official.

They have been installed in at least 700 hospitals across the country. Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) rolled out the first locally-made ventilator on May 30.

Bhushan said about 96 per cent of the 60,000 ventilators being produced are indigenous and most of them have been sponsored by the PM CARES Fund established to fight the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Make in India (indigenous) ventilators have a share of more than 96 per cent by volume and more than 90 per cent by value." The ministry's technical

Spread of Covid-19 contained in country, says Min Vardhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday asserted that the spread of Covid-19 has been contained in the country, pointing out how half the total cases are from three states only and another 30 per cent from seven others.

His comments come even as India is all set to breach the 20-lakh mark of Covid-19 cases with over 40,000 deaths and record number of cases at over 50,000 infections being reported daily in the past few days.

Dr Harsh Vardhan was speaking at a virtual meeting of WHO's Regional Director, South East Asia, Poonam Khetrpal Singh with Health Ministers from the region on maintaining essential health services and public health programmes in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The strategy of containment has been successful in that 50 per cent of the cases are from three states and 32 per cent of the rest are from seven states. The spread of the virus thus has been contained," he said.

The Minister said that the lockdown was effective in slowing down the rate of growth of cases and gave the government time to strengthen the health infrastructure and testing facilities.

"From one lab in January, India has 1,370 labs today. Indians anywhere can access a lab within three hours travel time. 33 of the 36 states and UTs (Union Territories) exceed WHO's recommendation of testing 140 people per million per day."

Harsh Vardhan also said that the country was "preparing for the pandemic as soon as China informed the World Health Organisation on January 7", over three weeks before the first case emerged.

India had reported its first coronavirus case on January 30 when a student from Kerala, who was studying in China's Wuhan University, came back to India and tested positive for the deadly virus.

Harsh Vardhan also stressed that earlier viral outbreaks like the Avian Influenza, H1N1, Zika and Nipah had provided institutional memory in designing containment and management strategies.

India's proactive and graded multi-level institutional response to Covid-19 made it possible to have very low cases per million and deaths per million in spite of having a high population density, and low fractional GDP spending, per capita doctor and hospital bed availability as compared to other developed countries," he contended.

Despite India's population and low fractional GDP, the proactive and graded multi-level institutional response to Covid-19 by government has made it possible for the country to maintain "very low cases and deaths per million" population, the Union Health Minister said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the Rs 15,000 crore package as part of the 'Whole of Government' approach wherein the Centre is leading the COVID-19 response and management, and supporting the states and UTs through technical and financial resources.

The second instalment of the aid will be used to strengthen public health infrastructure for testing, including procurement and installation of RT-PCR machines, RNA extraction kits, TrueNat and CB-NAAT machines, bolster infrastructure for treatment and development of ICU beds, installing oxygen generators and procurement of bedside oxygen concentrators among others.

It would also be used for engagement, training and capacity building of necessary health workers and incentives to healthcare workforce and volunteers, including ASHA workers on COVID-19 duties, the Ministry said, adding that wherever necessary, volunteers registered on

Centre releases ₹890.32 cr as second instalment of 'COVID-19 Emergency fund' to 22 States, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has released ₹890.32 crore as the second instalment of the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness package to 22 States and Union Territories, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday.

The amount of financial assistance to each state and Union Territories is based on their COVID-19 caseload.

Those who received financial assistance in the second instalment include Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim, the ministry said in a statement.

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It would also be used for engagement, training and capacity building of necessary health workers and incentives to healthcare workforce and volunteers, including ASHA workers on COVID-19 duties, the Ministry said, adding that wherever necessary, volunteers registered on

the COVID Warriors portal may also be engaged in coronavirus duties.

The first instalment of Rs 3,000 crore was released in April to all States and UTs to aid and enable them ramp up testing facilities, augment hospital infrastructure, conduct surveillance activities along with procurement of essential equipment, drugs and other supplies, the Ministry said.

As part of this package, states and Union Territories have been strengthened with 5,80,342 isolation beds, 16,068 oxygen-supported beds and 31,255 ICU beds.

Also, 86,88,357 testing kits and 79,88,366 Vital Transport Media (VTM) have been procured by them. As many as 96,557 human resource incentive has been given to 6,65,799 human resources.

The package has aided provision of mobility support to 11,821 staff, the Ministry said.

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Students move SC, seeks postponement of JEE (Main), NEET-UG exams



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Referring to the coronavirus pandemic and floods' havoc in several parts of the country, a group of students on Thursday filed a petition in the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking postponement of JEE (Main) April 2020 and NEET-UG undergraduate examinations, which are scheduled to be conducted in September.

The plea sought quashing of July 3 notices issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA), by which it was decided to conduct Joint Entrance Examination (Main) April 2020 and National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG undergraduate exams in September.

The plea, filed by 11 stu-

dents belonging to 11 States, said that the authorities be directed to conduct these exams only after the normalcy is restored. As per the public notices issued by the NTA, JEE (Main) April 2020 is scheduled from September 1-6, while NEET UG 2020 exam is scheduled from September 13.

The plea, filed through advocate Alakh Srivastava, has also sought direction to the authorities to increase the number of examination centres for these exams. "Conducting the aforesaid examination across India at such perilous time, is nothing else but putting lives of lakhs of young students (including petitioners herein) at utmost risk and danger of disease and death.

The best recourse at this

stage can be to wait for some more time, let COVID-19 crisis subside and cooperative conduct the exams, in order to save the lives of the students and their parents," the plea said.

It claimed that NTA, which conducts entrance exams for admission in higher educational institutions in India, had decided to conduct JEE (Main) April-2020 through online mode and NEET UG-2020 exams through offline mode at 161 centres across India.

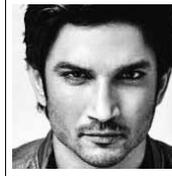
G. alleged that NTA has indefinitely postponed the National Council of Hotel Management Joint Entrance Examination-2020, which was scheduled to be conducted on June 22, in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday questioned actress Rhea Chakraborty's associate Samuel Miranda about the finances of Rajput, sources said.

ED had lodged a money laundering case against Rhea Chakraborty and her family members after Rajput's father filed a complaint with Patna police and accused the deceased actor's girlfriend of swindling his funds to the tune of Rs 15 crore.

Earlier, the agency had grilled Rajput's Chartered Accountant Sandeep Sridhar who had in his statement before the Mumbai police claimed that no major transactions were made to Rhea

Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide: ED grills Rhea's associate Samuel Miranda



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday questioned actress Rhea Chakraborty's associate Samuel Miranda about the finances of Rajput, sources said.

ED had lodged a money laundering case against Rhea Chakraborty and her family

PCI holds three-day health screening camp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Press Club of India (PCI) organised a three-day health screening camp for its 4,500 members and their families from August 4-6, 2020.

The screening campaign is one of the risk factors of COVID-19 through temperature and antibody test, blood pressure and blood glucose test.

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Bhushan seeks to present addl evidence to SC

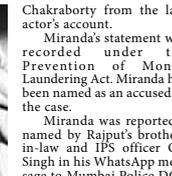


PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave defended Bhushan before the bench, which also comprised Justices J. Gavai and Krishna Murari, and had said on Wednesday that the tweets were against the judges regarding their conduct in their personal capacity and did not obstruct administration of justice.

Referring to judgments in support of the plea, Bhushan said he had earlier submitted a preliminary reply to explain his tweets and the law laid down on the issue to highlight that the content notice was not sustainable.

Goa: Part of tunnel wall collapses, Konkarn Rly trains diverted



PNS ■ PANAJI

A portion of a tunnel wall at Pernem in Goa collapsed in the early hours of Thursday due to heavy rains, following which number of trains on the Konkarn Railway route had to be diverted via Londa in neighbouring Karnataka, an official said.

There was no report of any casualty and work to restore the track was underway, Konkarn Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) spokesman Baban Ghatge said.

A five-metre portion of a wall inside a tunnel at Pernem in North Goa district collapsed around 2.50 am. The traffic in this section has been suspended till further advice, KRCL said in a press note.

Hence, trains running on the section have been diverted via Londa, Ghatge said, adding that no train has been cancelled.

Raj HC provides relief to Union Minister Shekhawat in scam case



PTI ■ JAIPUR

That there were specific allegations against the accused and they were required to be heard when the lower court passed the order.

The bench admitted the petition and granted an interim order.

A city additional district judge (ADJ) court last month had directed that a private complaint be investigated by the SOG with relation to the money trail that ended at Navprabha Buildtech Pvt Ltd.

Later, a magistrate's court also rejected an application to include him in the chargesheet.

The applicants then approached the ADJ court, which issued directions that their complaint should also be probed. The SOG has already sent a notice to the minister in connection with a probe into a separate case pertaining to audio clips which purportedly indicate efforts to lure MLAs away from the Congress.

Several high-level exchanges between India, Russia scheduled

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A number of high-level exchanges between India and Russia is set to take place, including the annual bilateral summit in October when President Vladimir Putin is expected to visit, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

MEA Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said that in the recent exchanges between the two nations, regional and international issues have also been discussed.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Putin had spoken on July 2 when the PM had congratulated him on the successful national vote on constitutional amendments in Russia.

Then in the last week of June, Raksha Mantri (Rajnath Singh) had visited Moscow. The Indian military contingent had participated in the 75th anniversary of the victory in the 2nd world war.

"Yesterday when foreign secretary (Harsh Vardhan Shringla) and the (Russian) deputy foreign minister spoke, they took stock of all these recent exchanges and the idea is to keep the momentum of these regular exchanges going on because due to the COVID situation, we have not been able to have visits," he said.

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Goa: Part of tunnel wall collapses, Konkarn Rly trains diverted

PTI ■ PANAJI

A portion of a tunnel wall at Pernem in Goa collapsed in the early hours of Thursday due to heavy rains, following which number of trains on the Konkarn Railway route had to be diverted via Londa in neighbouring Karnataka, an official said.

There was no report of any casualty and work to restore the track was underway, Konkarn Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) spokesman Baban Ghatge said.

A five-metre portion of a wall inside a tunnel at Pernem in North Goa district collapsed around 2.50 am. The traffic in this section has been suspended till further advice, KRCL said in a press note.

Goa has been witnessing incessant rains since the last five days

The trains which have been diverted include Ernakulam-H.Nizamuddin Superfast Special Express train, Thiruvananthapuram-Central Rajdhani Special Express, Thiruvananthapuram-Central Rajdhani Special Express, H.Nizamuddin-Ernakulam Superfast Special Express and Lokmanya Tilak Thiruvananthapuram Central.

Goa has been witnessing incessant rains since the last five days and some low lying areas have been facing a flood-like situation.

Raj HC provides relief to Union Minister Shekhawat in scam case

PTI ■ JAIPUR

That there were specific allegations against the accused and they were required to be heard when the lower court passed the order.

The bench admitted the petition and granted an interim order.

A city additional district judge (ADJ) court last month had directed that a private complaint be investigated by the SOG with relation to the money trail that ended at Navprabha Buildtech Pvt Ltd.

Later, a magistrate's court also rejected an application to include him in the chargesheet.

India being briefed on all relevant matters: MEA on Afghan peace process

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As the Afghan peace process gains momentum, India on Thursday said it is being apprised of all relevant matters and that the Indian envoy in Afghanistan is in touch with the leadership of that country.

On Friday, Afghanistan's capital Kabul is set to hold a grand gathering called 'Loya Jirga' to decide the fate of hundreds of prisoners, mostly members of the Taliban, as it was a key demand of the terror outfit to join peace talks.

Loya Jirga is a highly respected traditional consultative body of Afghanistan and their meet is an issue internal to Afghanistan," external affairs ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said at an online media briefing.

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New L-G for Kashmir

Will Manoj Sinha be able to fill the political vacuum and get things moving or will he just be another conformist appointee?



That Kashmir is drifting away with a current of people's angst — what with the widening chasm of trust deficit and clampdowns even one year after the abrogation of Article 370 — is evident from persistent militant activity and targeted killings. With no signs on the ground of the promised development, economic revival or civil engagement, its integration with the mainstream is increasingly looking like an exercise in political egoism, a tool that is disempowering than engaging, a punishment for history than an incentive for moving on. The spate of hitback killings of BJP leaders and sarpanches is worrisome as the office-bearers are seen

as extensions of Central authority. BJP sarpanch Sajad Ahmad Khanday was shot dead in south Kashmir's Kulgam district yesterday. It comes close on the heels of similar attacks over the past couple of months. A BJP-affiliated panchayat member, Arif Ahmad Khan, was also shot in Kulgam early this week, while last month, former BJP district president, Waseem Bari, his father and brother were killed as militants fired on them from close range. In June, Congress sarpanch Ajay Kumar Pandita was killed in Anantnag district. Only 7,528 of the 19,582 panch and sarpanch seats in Kashmir went to polls in 2018. Yet most of those elected are hiding out in hotels in Srinagar for fear of being attacked for participating in an electoral process initiated by the Centre. The BJP had hoped to build an alternative political pyramid with friendly leaders at the local level and devolving power to them. But that was not to be. Over 12,000 posts are still empty, affecting local administration and despite the former State's changed status, nobody is ready to engage till all known elected representatives are freed from detention. With credible leaders redefined as public enemies, as bad as militants, and basic rights and connectivity denied to locals, there is confusion, disenchantment and fatigue everywhere, one that can congeal to become a violent force if left to fester. Perhaps, that's the reason why the Government is sending a seasoned politician like Manoj Sinha to be the new Lt Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. A low-key, subtle performer, he is probably being sent to test the waters and work out ways of connecting with people without disturbing the BJP's overall schematics in the Valley. That's a delicate exercise requiring fine negotiation skills. Most importantly, he could use his administrative depth and experience to fill up the political vacuum in the Valley. Although his predecessor GC Murmu was an establishment man, he was essentially a bureaucrat with a focus on policy, not politics. And he could not build a rapport with local bureaucrats. Besides, he did shoot his mouth off on two sensitive issues that the Government should rightly consider but would not talk about much at this stage. First was his comment on the restoration of 4G internet in the Valley, saying he was not afraid of how people of Kashmir would use it. This went against the Government's rationale that the services were shut because they could be misused by militants. He also advocated early elections in the Valley, running ahead of both the Government and the Election Commission, which would have liked to take a call on this in a measured manner and at a time of their choosing. This speaking out of turn almost amounted to embarrassing the Government and showed it as a reluctant decision-maker.

Sinha undoubtedly has a political acumen that could be banked upon for handling the sensitivities in Kashmir. Especially if implementation of the uniform civil code is on the agenda. And he happens to be in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's good books. His appointment is crucial at a time when political activity is picking up with the release of local leaders, some of whom are voicing strong opinions. National Conference leader Omar Abdullah has already claimed the moral high ground and with Saifuddin Soz scaling the walls of his home to call out the Government's "no detention" claim, the Government needs a politician to articulate its position. Known to be an amicable person, who is equally skillful in interacting with the media, which has been muzzled ruthlessly, Sinha fits the bill. At least he can be accommodative without appearing to be too conformist. But the Government has to realise that it cannot make any claim of transformative intent till it gets some kind of mediatory presence of local parties. The failed panchayat polls are proof enough. Demolishing leaders has been costly as some of them have been lionised among locals. The BJP did raise the Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP), drawing rejects from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and NC, but it looks more sorry than credible. Sinha might be the interlocutor who could connect to people's representatives and get them to meet the Government half way constructively provided they didn't play a dual strategy with Pakistan. He could still use Omar to work a middle ground. But first, the Centre should restore normalcy and mainstream internet connectivity. The youth are already feeling punished for being left out of the digital education revolution and we cannot let them be radicalised. The economy is in shambles with disruptive clampdowns affecting the supply chain and the services sector. Even the traditional performing sectors like the apple trade, tourism and handicrafts have wilted and there is nothing that seems worthy of big ticket investment. There must be an enabling climate or Kashmir could go into a perennial freeze.

Monumental apathy

Unpardonable callousness in storing ammonium nitrate causes Beirut's worst blast and the scars may take a long time to heal



It may not have been a terrorist attack, most expected in a conflict zone as flagrant as Lebanon, but is a man-made disaster no doubt. One that could have been avoided. Even as the people of Beirut pick up the pieces of their lives that have been shattered by the massive blast on August 4, anger is rising against official negligence, apathy and callousness. This simmering anger comes on the back of an official admission of carelessness by Lebanese authorities that led to the Hiroshima-type explosion in the port, flattened more than half of Beirut, killed at least 135 people, injured thousands and left many more homeless. Nearly 3,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate were stored without safety measures in a warehouse since 2014. Just six months ago, inspectors had warned the authorities against piling up the consignment and predicted a massive explosion. Yet, the port officials sat on the stockpile till it blew up and devastated whatever was left of an already comatose city that has been through the rigours and ravages of civil war, repeated bombings, a corrupt Government and the pandemic.

Now, as a firefighting measure, the Government of Prime Minister Hassan Diab has put a few Beirut port officials under house arrest. There is also a probe going on to find out how such highly explosive materials were stored less than 100 metres from residential areas. But this is not enough to assuage the anger of the people who are writhing under a bankrupt economy. They need answers, someone to be held accountable for this unnecessary suffering. They need the Diab Government to step up rescue and relief work, provide more hospital beds, restore regular power supply, mend the infrastructure to import and store essential goods at the earliest before a scarcity of food and other goods hits them. The world needs to come to Lebanon's aid as it has suffered enough. Its institutions of governance may be democratic but the Parliament does not represent the interests of the Lebanese people. Power has been divided between militarised factions, a fetid legacy of the 1975-90 civil war and the result is a barely functional statehood. The Diab Government has failed to halt the nation's slide towards bankruptcy and Lebanon is on the brink of failure. The International Monetary Fund and other lenders don't want to sink money into a corrupt machinery where a small group of power brokers put their personal and financial interests above the nation's stability. The blast has not just exacerbated Lebanon's plight, it has ripped it out.

Religion vs culture

Never mind the differences between the deductive and inductive approaches. For domestic peace to prevail, we need to co-exist, respect each other's limits than be confrontationalist



PRAFULL GORADIA

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan hit the nail on his head last week when he said that some people make the mistake of equating culture with religion. The former is about a consciousness and identity that set us apart as a people and wholly unrelated to the individual faiths we might practise. Yet some commentators look at things from a Western or Semitic frame of reference. The subject of logic has two broad sections, namely deductive and inductive. The former section begins reasoning with a clear-cut premise without any explanation. For example, Judaism asserts that Jehovah is god, Moses the Prophet and Torah the scripture. What follow are logical corollaries of this premise, all of which the believer must expectantly accept during his/her journey to heaven, which ends on Doomsday.

Allah, the merciful, is the god of Muslims, Muhammad is the last Prophet and the *Quran* the final message for all those who consider Abraham as the first Prophet of all. The *Quran* is supplemented by the *Hadith* or traditions and the *Sunnah*, which records the lessons of the Prophet's life. Between these scriptures, the *mosim* or the faithful Muslim would get a complete prescription for how to live life individually as well as collectively. There is, as it were, no need to look left or right. The Islamic scriptures lay out all possible dos and don'ts, the *halals* and *harams* about which the believer does not need to ponder or hesitate. The logic of the religion flows like a river.

Christianity preceded Islam, and among the Abrahamic religions, has more followers than either Islam or Judaism on paper. Islam acknowledges Jesus but as a Prophet and not as a son of God. Moreover, governance is covered by justice. Despite having a politics to Caesar, as the emperor was called in those days. As a result, separating the Church from the State was possible when the "Reformation" came in the 16th century. However, the religion of Christ has grown into many denominations, each having a somewhat different theological view. By contrast, Islam stopped *litihad* or reinterpretation of theology, which was reflected in the *Sunni* (about 90 per cent Muslims) attitude to the temple issue.

So what lies at the core of the Hindu-Muslim equation in India? There are differing views on the subject. MA Jinnah had said that Pakistan was born the day the first Hindu was converted to Islam. In contrast, MK Gandhi had told the then British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald in London in 1931 that Hindu-Muslim riots are coeval with British rule. The rule ended 73 years ago but riots still continue; remember the Partition was meant to be a solution to the problem. In that context, Jinnah's separatism did take the Islamic pressure off the other community. He, however, had in mind a complete exchange of population, as designed by the League of Nations and implemented in 1923 between Greece and Turkey and between Bulgaria and Turkey. BR Ambedkar endorsed this proposal but Congress leaders paid no attention to the idea.

Coming back to logic, the deductive section is clearly up and down, given the premise followed by its corollaries and reasoning. Abrahamic faiths follow this approach. Inductive logic is the reverse; there is no given premise. The facts, data and sentiments are gathered from the ground, the people and the reasoning move upwards until a conclusion is arrived at. This is free reasoning; nothing is given. Hinduism, Indic faith or what is often referred to as the *Sanatan Dharma*, or eternal faith or virtue, follows the inductive path. Which would explain the multiplicity of Hindu denominations. One of the few common factors that runs through all of them is *karma*, leading to *bhogyas* or fate; deed causes destiny. This equation is as near as faith can get close to science or physics; for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. To illustrate the liberality of the inductive approach, let us take a hypothetical example. Let us assume four Hindus from four directions of India discussing the subject of "roses". The person from the east could claim that "roses" are always white. One from the west could contend that "roses" are always red and no other colour. The northerner would insist that he and his friends have only seen pink "roses". The south Indian would probably laugh and contradict all the three, saying "roses" are yellow and he has seen none other. The argument could go on for a while but would not lead to a quarrel. There would not be any agreement on the colour of the roses but the four would most likely agree to disagree. If a person worshipping an Abrahamic religion were present at the debate, he could insist that roses are red; the other colours are probably weeds or perhaps flowers other than roses. This fundamental difference between the deductive and inductive approaches is clear and sharp. The former insists on its viewpoint and does not concede the opposite contention; hence fights and wars have been frequent. For the deductive to be at peace with the inductive is more difficult. This is the Hindu-Muslim syndrome.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DEDUCTIVE AND INDUCTIVE APPROACHES IS CLEAR AND SHARP. THE FORMER INSISTS ON ITS VIEWPOINT AND DOES NOT CONCEDE THE OPPOSITE CONTENTION; HENCE FIGHTS AND WARS HAVE BEEN FREQUENT. FOR THE DEDUCTIVE TO BE AT PEACE WITH THE INDUCTIVE IS MORE DIFFICULT. THIS IS THE HINDU-MUSLIM SYNDROME

For the deductive to be at peace with the inductive is more difficult. This is the Hindu-Muslim syndrome. While the Sultans and Nawabs ruled, there was no way the Hindus could riot. This violent civil phenomenon began after these rulers were brought down and an equalisation set in. Remember that the dethroning work was performed by the British East India Company; Robert Clive in the east vanquished Nawab Sirajuddaula in 1757. Lord Wellesley saw the conclusive end of Tipu Sultan in 1799 while Lord Dalhousie pushed out Nawab Wajid Ali Shah for the company to take over Awadh in 1856. These were the three corners of India. The western or fourth corner, comprising Rajasthan and Gujarat, remained mostly with the local principalities. Gwalior, Indore, Kolhapur and others survived as princely States until independence in 1947. Uncannily, there have not been Hindu-Christian riots although there have been incidents of Muslims killing Christians, especially in Pakistan. What the circumstance is that this country we do not know. We do know though that we need domestic peace and there is no alternative but to co-exist respecting each other's limits than being confrontationalist. And to do so is not too difficult. As we are bound by Indic culture. (The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. Views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

<p>If this lad was Virat Kohli, anyone would be talking about him but because he is Babar Azam, no one is talking about him.</p> <p>Former England captain —Nasser Hussain</p>	<p>I've skipped many steps that many people have had to fight for. I've gotten chances that many people wouldn't have gotten easily. I've fast-tracked into this system already.</p> <p>Actor —Janhvi Kapoor</p>	<p>The world has seen China become more aggressive during the pandemic. It has deployed troops along the LAC with India and is acting out in a way that is inconsistent with international norms.</p> <p>US Defense Secretary —Mark Esper</p>	<p>If the Congress had a clear stand on secularism, the country would not have faced the present fate. I don't find anything new in the approach of Rahul or Priyanka.</p> <p>Kerala Chief Minister —Pinarayi Vijayan</p>
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Justice should prevail
 Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Closure for Sushant" (August 6). The Centre's decision to order a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into Sushant Singh Rajput's death has emboldened hopes for justice. Despite having a good professional reputation and high integrity, the Mumbai police so far has not been up to the mark in probing this case. It was surprising that the Mumbai police and the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) could possibly quarantined Vinay Tiwari, the officer from Bihar who came to Mumbai for a detailed investigation of the case. People lost trust because of these feeble approaches, necessitating a CBI probe. One hopes that justice shall prevail.
Tushar Anand
 Patna

Trolls and their impact on social media
 Of late, it has become an unpleasant fad for some social media users to target celebrities and post unsavory comments about them. Most often such utterances are found to be irritable and repugnant. This is why sometimes celebrities lose their cool and are forced to stoop to the level of these people whose only aim is to get publicity and pose as a "hero" in the social media domain. In recent times, we have seen Indian superstar and Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan being targeted by some who have been commenting on his actions unsparingly and that, too, using immodest and indelicate words. A rude twitter troll even asked Abhishek Bachchan how he would fend for himself when his father was hospitalised after he tested positive for Coronavirus. Abhishek took his usual, graceful but impactful stance and said that he hoped for their good health. What these "commentators" forget is that by using derogatory remarks just for momentary fame, they themselves are degrading themselves on a public forum.
 Our leaders must follow Swami Vivekananda's thought: "It is a privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of god. God is here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man." The Government must reassess its priorities, particularly when the enemy is our door.
Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
 Faridabad

Pakistan at it again
 Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Now Pak in map war" (August 6). That Pakistan has released a territorially misleading map, which includes much of Kashmir and Jangladesh into its territory, shows its desperation. Brazen actions like these smack

of Chinese connivance in the backdrop of the standoff along the LoC. This move drew a sharp reaction from New Delhi as it dubbed it an "exercise in political absurdity". But this time, we need to firmly refute its claims and reassert our territorial sovereignty.
Devendra Khurana
 Bhopal

Corona spiral
 Sir — It seems only a matter of time for India to attain the dubious distinction of topping the global charts of daily COVID deaths. Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, which reported the highest number of cases until now, have managed to bend the virus curve. Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal are the new hotspots. Sadly, many of these States are less equipped to tackle the virus load. Central coordination and support will be needed to fight the virus in the hinterland.
Shambhavi
 Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Race to space is hotting up

Investments in long-term space programmes require change in strategic, far-reaching thinking, which unfortunately is clouded by politics



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Why go to the stars? Because we are the descendants of those primates who chose to look over the next hill, because we won't survive here indefinitely," wrote science fiction authors James and Gregory Benford.

Take a moment off from the ongoing COVID-19 crisis to look up and wonder what lies beyond that beautiful cloud-filled August sky. And that is where the Indian space programme or "space diplomacy" should come in. While we were busy looking at the pandemic's impact, not many noticed the three intra-planetary objects launched across the globe. The first was the Hope orbiter from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), followed by Tianwen 1 by China and finally the Perseverance by the US. All three are expected to reach destination Mars by February 2021, thereby opening up a whole new chapter of Star Wars. No matter who reaches there first, or what their stated objectives are, the world is again welcoming a "highly-contested and thereby, surveillance-hungry and of course trillions of dollars worth of yet-to-be-explored space" right above our heads. The battle for global dominance has just gone into space.

Leading the race for interstellar supremacy is China, which has openly stated its objective of joining the elite space club with self-reliant rockets, satellites and telescopes by 2049. The Mars Mission is part of a larger plan which aims to set up a space station orbiting Earth in the next two years. China has already shot most rockets into space with "shrouded ambitions" in 2018 and its BeiDou-2 navigation system has an impressive array of satellites, mapping every corner of the globe, providing an alternative to the European and US navigation systems. Meanwhile, China has taken the Moon seriously and wants to establish a lunar research centre within the next decade.

So why does an edge in the cosmic sphere suddenly become so important, especially if it is led by terrestrial players, hungry perhaps, for new territories? First, it is about a strategy to occupy as much of the outer space as one can for global dominance. Remember the Cold War-era Moon rush between the two superpowers? Today a host of citizen services beginning with the internet, electricity, common city navigation via the GPS, high-tech military surveillance and missile and torpedo navigation can all be beamed from a satellite, with needle-eye precision, onto any tech-enabled receiver.

We are all aware of China's lust for territorial colonialism — barely hidden under a veil of loans and infrastructure development projects — targeted towards those willing to barter away their sovereignty. In fact, the BeiDou-2 navigation system is an excellent example of how China aims to keep an eye on its strategically-chosen warfare partner countries and the globe. China knows that future wars will not be fought on terra firma. The second reason for China's space rush is to lay claim to trillions of dollars worth of unmined minerals, precious metals and rare earths that can be found just a few kilometres above the Earth, floating around in space and in our galactic neighbourhood. The Moon, a mineral-rich asteroid or comet, if somehow pushed back to Earth can cover and provide for billions of dollars worth of space missions.

Clearly it is a heads combination of new horizons with dominance in existing spheres and India has just begun to look at opening its space programme to private players. The desire is to have indigenous companies like Blue Origin, Virgin Galactic and Space X — all of which are funded by billionaires who made their fortunes elsewhere — be a part of the race to space.

Investments in long-term space programmes require change in strategic, deep, far-reaching thinking, which unfortunately is mostly clouded by politics on the ground. In the land of great physicists and mathematicians like Bhaskaracharya, Aryabhata and CV Raman, there is a black hole of lost opportunities and scientific temper. Independent India was left plundered and poor by the colonisers. It has taken more than 50 years for India to be able to truly start telescoping between ancient knowledge with modern-day quantum theories to start rebuilding its starships.

It is here that the true human and monetary resources of the country need to be pooled together for an "Indian Century." A deeper focus on marketing and glamourising space studies with ample doses of creative imagination, mixed with scientific knowledge, would be a good start for young minds at school. After all, the Indian interstellar traveller of the future is perhaps still at school. Similarly, billions of worth of long-term bets without any visible returns in the near future can only be achieved by a clever mix of private enterprise and the taxpayer's money. Remember NASA can easily be dubbed as the most criticised and perhaps expensive space organisation in the world, yet it made communicating with anyone around the globe at the touch of a button possible. Mark Twain said, "There is something fascinating about science. One gets such wholesome returns of conjecture out of such a trifling investment of fact."

(The writer is a policy analyst)

BHOOMI PUJAN CEREMONY FOR THE RAM TEMPLE IN AYODHYA SHOULD BE SEEN AS A CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL UNITY, FRATERNITY AND CULTURAL AFFINITY.
 —CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY
PRITYANKA GANDHI VADRA



WE DISAGREE WITH THE STATEMENT ISSUED BY PRIYANKA GANDHI ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RAM TEMPLE. HER STATEMENT IS OUT OF PLACE.
 —IJML MP
PK KUNHALIKUTTY

A rural Indian spring

The harbinger of this change is a unique policy experiment in village-level governance, the Panchayati Raj Act, which has brought transformative results for village women



MOIN QAZI

In the last two decades, the gender landscape in rural India has been greening and women are now on the cusp of a powerful social and political revolution. The harbinger of this change is a unique policy experiment in village-level governance, the Panchayati Raj Act, which has brought transformative results for the weakest of the weak: the village women. In a country that has a bad record in matters of gender equality, India has set a stellar example by becoming a crucible for one of social democracy's most innovative experiments in gender justice. Women now steer local governance in thousands of villages.

This revolution led to the discovery of several hidden gems and one of them is Shalini Shelke, an intrepid and passionate woman with a unique brand of earnestness and determination. She has galvanised the poor, unlettered women in Sanganner, a remote corner of India's deep hinterland. Sanganner is the site of the confluence of three rivers: Pravara, Mhalinga and Adhala in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra.

Now a 49-year-old firebrand, Shalini was one of those emerging backyard leaders, who realised early on that powerful things could happen if marginalised communities were themselves involved in finding solutions to issues plaguing them. She is now a crusader for a number of social causes. By giving marginalised women a stake in the outcome of their communities, Shalini and her band of workers are trying to unlock human potential, both for themselves and for thousands of women in villages around Sanganner.

Shalini was 20, barely out of college, when she became a social activist and entrepreneur. Although she had mentors and friends to support her, the journey was hard. She taught herself advocacy and business skills in a male-dominated culture. "Being a woman in this space is challenging," says Shalini. She recalls how "scary" it was when her initial efforts landed her in trouble with relatives and friends rallied around and chipped in.

She had seen women of her mother's generation bearing multiple burdens. The drudge work that goes into cultivation is mostly done by women. They till the land, sow the seeds, de-hull the grains, attend to livestock and do all the primary caregivers to their families, that include children and elders. We all are aware of this but do little to change some of the harsh realities of our country. But Shalini was made of sterner stuff and instead of being resigned to *status quo*, she decided to upend it.

Shalini's voice is one among many pushing for women's rights. In recent years, women have felt more empowered to call out men's wrongdoings, leading to conversations about the power dynamics that women are subjected to in the home and beyond. In many ways, it is still a man's world, yet women are working to change that in their communities. Change is seldom easy. The *status quo* is deeply entrenched, especially in traditional societies where challenging the system comes at a hefty cost.

Shalini's journey began with the founding of Nirmiti Mahila Udyogiki Sahakari Sanstha (called Nirmiti for short) in 2001 in Sanganner. It supports local communities to transition from a supply-led to a demand-driven approach and harnesses resources from the departments of agri-

“ IN RECENT YEARS, WOMEN HAVE FELT MORE EMPOWERED TO CALL OUT MEN'S WRONGDOINGS, LEADING TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE POWER DYNAMICS THAT WOMEN ARE SUBJECTED TO IN THE HOME AND BEYOND. IN MANY WAYS, IT IS STILL A MAN'S WORLD. YET WOMEN ARE WORKING TO CHANGE THAT IN THEIR COMMUNITIES. CHANGE IS SELDOM EASY. THE PATRIARCHAL STATUS QUO IS DEEPLY ENTRENCHED, ESPECIALLY IN TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES WHERE CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM COMES AT A HEFTY COST ”



culture, tribal welfare and other Government agencies. Through their multiple roles and responsibilities, women are learning, adapting and reinventing themselves along the way. The society now has about 900 members with a yearly turnover of about ₹90 lakh.

A chance encounter in 2003 helped Shalini make her mark as a business leader and also put me on a wonderful journey. I was posted in Mumbai to head my bank's State operations in micro-finance. Shalini was heading a federation of self-help groups (SHGs) of women in Sanganner. She was also a prominent face on various platforms in Mumbai and Pune for rural women. I was amazed at her understanding of global economics, particularly her ability to analyse local issues in the international context. I continue to marvel at the logical precision with which she presents the economic and social case of marginalised women.

It was around this time that Shalini and her colleagues decided to set up their own production facilities to enhance employability for locals. The loan processing was fast-tracked and the money released in time, thanks to Shalini's perseverance. However, due to her lack of experience and the technical inadequacy of the team to whom the job of assembling the plant was outsourced, the unit couldn't take off.

It was a major setback but Shalini fought back. She and her partners didn't let the bank down either. They paid off the entire loan from their own savings. Shalini has grown wiser in the process and has preferred to spread her risks evenly by opting for joint ventures.

While pursuing her entrepreneurship journey, Shalini didn't lose sight of her primary mission: Advocacy for broader social issues of poor and discriminated women. In 2006, she started a magazine to channel the voices of these women. It is named *Bahini*, after a local poetess Bahinabai Chaudhari, who was herself unlettered but composed inspiring verses. The coverage of rural issues in the mainstream media is very spotty and *Bahini* filled an important space. It has a distinct activist flavour and serves as a hyper-local platform. The region's arid expanse overflows with social and economic strife. This has been channelled into the magazine's writings where issues are reported and analysed from a woman's perspective.

The magazine brought about immense change in the lives of the readers. It has been able to capture the groundswell of discontent and package the subtle nuances of the discourse in a highly palatable form. It has been able to build the perspectives of women so that they are equipped in their effort to upend the feudal system that kept their women ancestors trapped in servitude.

Shalini has also tapped business opportunities for women to have a reliable and consistent source of income. In 2011, the co-operative set up a canteen at the girls' hostel in the local university campus. The canteen caters to 500 girls, providing nutritious, hygienic meals made from locally-grown crops and vegetables. Three years later, the Nirmiti started canteen services for the students of the Lok Panchayat Rural Technology College in Sanganner. In 2016, Nirmiti set up its own Co-operative Credit Society. It has 1,237 members with a share capital of ₹20 lakh and fixed deposits of ₹1.25 crore.

Shalini's entrepreneurial dreams found sturdy wings when she collabo-

rated with an acclaimed food company to set up a bakery. Reema Sathe, a well-known entrepreneur, has mentored this project which provides employment to farmers, workers at the baking unit and retailers. Nirmiti has also been able to use the time-honoured native knowledge of seeds to build a cadre of "seed mothers" who are now the stewards of biodiversity, protecting the genetic wealth of the country through "seed vaults." They are conserving the indigenous seed heritage and preserving heirloom races of crops.

Now, more than ever, these women, many of whom escaped poverty through the SHG route and know what it is like to be destitute and poor, are living up to their motto of self-help and solidarity. For these women and communities, crisis is not new. They have lived through failed crops, unpaid debts and recurring droughts which they have faced almost every single year. Nirmiti's approach of self-reliance and self-empowerment has helped strengthen the innate resilience of these women that is steering them through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shalini has come a long way since she started out. She shepherds a federation of almost 350 SHGs, all of which are actively engaged in a variety of socio-economic activities. Her success story underscores the importance of giving poor people access to loans, savings accounts and other financial services that can help them create businesses and reach their full potential. It is worth understanding that sheer grit and a helping hand can sometimes blaze trails where none seems possible. "It feels so good," beams Shalini. "I really feel like a seasoned business leader." Women leaders like Shalini present us with shiny, silver glimmers as they steer their communities through these tenuous times.

(The writer is a well-known development professional)

India is choking its rivers with sewage

The country must establish new STPs to increase the current 37 per cent treatment capability to at least 80 per cent of the waste generated



KOTA SRIRAJ

While crossing the Kalindi Kunj bridge over the Yamuna in Delhi, have you ever wondered about the reason for the white, frothy foam floating on the river's surface? This toxic foam, that is usually seen in abundance in July, prompted the National Green Tribunal (NGT)-appointed special committee to instruct the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to submit a report to it on the issue. The report concluded that sewage flowing into the Yamuna contained an abnormally high amount of detergent. This, coupled with the churning of the waters at the barrage, led to the formation of the toxic foam on the river's surface. The problem was compounded by the

presence of traditional laundries along the banks of the river and 23 drains from Delhi directly discharging sewage effluents from industries, riverside laundries and tanneries, ashes of the dead and even bodies of those who are not cremated. The Yamuna is no exception and has dumped pollution of all kinds, for centuries. The most visible form of a river catching a silent protest against pollution is the appearance of the toxic foam.

The Bellandur Lake in Bengaluru is another such water body that has



been in the news for spewing excessive white, toxic foam. The pollution level in Bengaluru's largest lake is an example of the apathy and inefficiency of the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board in managing sewage disposal. To make matters worse, the dumped chemicals and oil in the lake tend to float to the surface and also catch fire intermittently, thus adding to air pollution. This level of pollution in our water bodies raises pertinent questions about the role and efficiency of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)

that are primarily installed to treat the water and ensure that the pollution remains in a controllable range in our water bodies and under construction. Ministry of Environment and Forests stated that 70 per cent of India's STPs were dysfunctional and the main reason for this was the high cost of maintenance and the ever-growing gap between the sewage to be treated and the capacity of the STP to handle it. Six years down the line, the situation is not any different. The facts present a grim picture and a break for India's long-suffering rivers seems far off as nearly 70 per cent of the sewage treated in India does not meet the acceptable standards and there is a 78.7 per cent gap between sewage generation and the STPs installed capacity to treat it. Even if the additional 1,742.6 million litres a day (MLD) of sewage treatment capacity is factored in, that is either in the planning stages or under construction, there will still be a gap of 72.7 per cent in the sewage treatment capacity in the country.

The situation is expected to get

worse, as according to a report by the CPCB, sewage generation in India is 61,000 MLD or enough to fill 24,800 Olympic-sized swimming pools daily. Against this, we have a paltry sewage treatment capacity of 23,277 MLD. Adding to the problem is the absence of a centralised sewerage system that allows for correct channelling of sewage output. The 12th Five-Year Plan Report on Urban Development highlighted that a shocking 4,861 cities and towns in India do not have a basic central sewerage system. Large cities such as Bengaluru find themselves in this list as nearly 50 per cent of the city's households do not have a proper sewerage system that is connected to a central system. This naturally means that these households channel their sewage to the nearest water body.

The impact of all this pollution on water bodies is devastating to say the least. Aquatic life and biodiversity suffer irreparable damage and so do humans who are dependent on the water bodies for their livelihoods.

There is an urgent need for the Government to set up special action

committees that can look at the underlying causes for the inoperable STPs and those that require repairs to be functional again.

To save our rivers, there is a need to attach top priority to the establishment of new STPs that can increase the current 37 per cent treatment capability to at least 80 per cent of the sewage generated. This can be done by opening up the STP sector to entrepreneurship platforms and providing the necessary technical expertise, funding and subsidies on encouraging terms. This will serve the twin purpose of creating employment-generating enterprises, besides also narrowing the gap between sewage generated and sewage treated. India needs an action-oriented initiative to turn around the urban rivers and water bodies that are plagued by pollution such as the toxic white foam seen on the Yamuna's surface. Till such action is taken the white foam on our rivers will be a reminder that we have failed our rivers.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

FOREIGN EYE



MAPPING OPTIONS

Repression, custodial killings, internet blackout, whichever way one looks at it, India has truly lost the people of Kashmir. Does Pakistan have policy options to address this situation? Marches and highway remainings are all fine but insufficient to be dressed up as strategic policy. The challenge for the foreign policy establishment is clear — and it is not situated inside the comfort zone. (Dawn editorial)

FOR 2020 PRESIDENTIAL POLL

Republican, Trump campaign raise \$1 bn

Washington: The Republican Party and the Trump campaign have collectively raised over \$165 million in July, surpassing the billion-dollar threshold with a total haul of \$1.1 billion.

The joint re-election effort continues their cash in hand advantage, with an over \$300 million war chest, the Republican National Committee (RNC) announced on Wednesday.

"With 90 days until victory, our teams and supporters are in overdrive working to re-elect President (Donald) Trump and Republicans up and down the ballot," said RNC chairwoman Ronna McDaniel.

According to the RNC, July's massive haul is not only a record for the month, but also exceeds the total raised in any single month of 2016.

July was also the largest online fundraising month ever for the re-election effort, it said.

"The enthusiasm behind President Trump's re-election continues to grow as July's



massive fundraising totals prove," said Bill Stepien, Trump 2020 campaign manager.

"Voters express their support for President Trump in many different ways and donating to his campaign is one of the most personal, because they feel invested in his success and the future success of the country. The President's support continues to increase while Joe Biden just posted a down fundraising month from his basement," he said.

The RNC recently announced the hiring of an additional 300 field staffers, bringing the total Trump

Victory operation to over 1,500 — double that of Biden's field operation.

With a grassroots army of 1.8 million Americans, the Trump Victory field effort is on pace to surpass the 2.2 million volunteers that helped re-elect President Barack Obama in 2012, the media release said.

Seeking re-election for his second consecutive term, Trump, 74, is pitted against Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, 77, in the November 3 presidential elections.

Most of the opinion polls show that Biden is several points ahead of Trump. PTI

'See you in court': ACLU files nearly 400 cases versus Trump

New York: The day after Donald Trump's election in November 2016, the American Civil Liberties Union posted a message to him on its website: "See you in court."

As president, Trump hasn't personally squared off against the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) from the witness stand, but the broader warning has been borne out.

As of this week, the ACLU has filed nearly 400 lawsuits and other legal actions against the Trump administration, some meeting with setbacks but many resulting in important victories.

Among other successes for the ACLU include the U.S. Supreme Court case blocking the administration from placing a citizenship question on the 2020 census. It also spearheaded legal efforts that curtailed the policy of separating many migrant children from their parents.

"The assault on civil liberties and civil rights is greater under this administration than any other in modern history," said the ACLU's president, Anthony Romero.

"It's meant we've been living with a three-alarm fire in every part of our house." Since the day Trump took office, the ACLU — according to a breakdown it provided to The Associated Press — has filed 237 lawsuits against the administration and about 160 other legal actions, including Freedom of Information Act requests, ethics complaints and administrative complaints.

Of the lawsuits, 174 have dealt with immigrant rights, targeting the family separation policy, detention and deportation practices and the administration's repeated attempts to make it harder to seek asylum at the U.S. border.

The other lawsuits address an array of issues: voting rights, LGBT rights, racial justice and others. In one long-running case, the ACLU succeeded in blocking the administration's policy of barring young immigrant women in government custody from getting abortions.

"Donald Trump has provided a full employment program for ACLU lawyers on all of our cases," Romero said. AP

FB, Twitter pull Trump posts over virus misinformation

Washington: Facebook Inc has taken down a post by US President Donald Trump, which the company said violated its rules against sharing misinformation about the novel coronavirus.

The post contained a video clip from an interview with Fox & Friends earlier on Wednesday, in which Trump claimed that children are "almost immune" to COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

This video includes false claims that a group of people is immune from COVID-19, which is a violation of our policies around harmful COVID misinformation, a Facebook spokesman said.

A tweet containing the video that was posted by the Trump campaign's @TeamTrump account and shared by the president was also identified as a violation of our policies for breaking its COVID-19 misinformation rules.

A Twitter spokesman said the @TeamTrump account owner would be required to remove the tweet before they could tweet again. AP

Joe Biden launches new national ad aimed at Black Americans

Detroit (US): Joe Biden's Democratic presidential campaign has launched a new national ad focused on Black Americans, urging them to stand up to President Donald Trump the way their ancestors stood up to "violent racists of a generation ago."

The one-minute ad, which was shared exclusively with The Associated Press before its debut on television last Thursday, is meant to drum up support among Black Americans, a key constituency for Biden, ahead of November's general election.

The ad, titled "Better America," also features a close-up of Biden, without mentioning the Republican president by name.

"We must choose to fight for that better America," the narrator states. "And just like our ancestors, we must choose to stand up to violent racists of a generation ago, we will stand up to this president and say, 'No more, because America is better than him. So we choose to be bigger. We choose to be bolder. We choose to bring back justice."

respect and dignity to this country. We choose Joe Biden to lead us all towards that American promise together." African Americans have largely supported Biden's presidential bid and have been credited with single-handedly transforming the Democratic presidential race and cementing his status as front-runner after his decisive primary win in South Carolina. But Black Americans, who form one of the party's most loyal voting blocs, have been hit doubly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic — they have died from the virus at disproportionate rates across the country. AP

Sri Lanka election: Early results show Rajapaksa clan heading for landslide win

Colombo: Sri Lanka's powerful Rajapaksa family-run Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) appeared to be heading for a landslide win in the country's twice-postponed parliamentary election, according to early results announced on Thursday.

The SLPP has polled more votes than its rivals, scoring over 60 per cent of the total votes in the 16 seats declared so far from the South, dominated by the Sinhala majority community. The party won 13 seats out of 16.

In Galle district, the SLPP won seven out of nine seats on offer while in the neighbouring Matara district they did even better by winning six out of seven seats on offer.

The nearest rival is the new party formed by former presidential candidate Sajith Premadasa who has released his mother party, the United National Party (UNP), of former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe to the fourth place even below the Marxist

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The SJB has won only three seats with both districts. In the polling division results from other districts where counting is in progress, the SLPP has taken unassailable leads, sources said.

In the Tamil minority dominated north, the main Tamil party — Tamil National Alliance (TNA) — despite bagging a few polling divisions had also suffered unexpected reversals at the hands of SLPP's Tamil allies — the Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP).

The counting began in the morning after the polls were closed on Wednesday.

As the counting of votes began, SLPP founder and its National Organiser Basil Rajapaksa — who is the younger brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa with the eldest being Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa — said that the party is all set to form a new government. PTI

Survivors mark 75th anniversary of world's 1st atomic attack

Hiroshima: The dwindling witness to the world's first atomic bombing marked its 75th anniversary Thursday, with Hiroshima's mayor and others noting as hypocritical the Japanese government's refusal to sign a nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged world leaders to more seriously commit to nuclear disarmament, pointing out Japan's failures.

"I ask the Japanese gov-

ernment to heed the appeal of the (bombing survivors) to sign, ratify and become a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons," Matsui said in his personal declaration.

"As the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack, Japan must persuade the global public to unite with the spirit of Hiroshima." His speech highlights what survivors feel is the hypocrisy of Japan's government, which hosts 50,000

American troops and is protected by the US nuclear umbrella.

Tokyo has not signed the nuclear weapons ban treaty adopted in 1978, despite its long-standing pledge to act to act that atomic bombing survivors and pacifist groups call insincere.

The US dropped its first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. AP

No hoopla: Virus upends Trump, Biden convention plans

Washington: At the last minute, President Donald Trump and his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, are searching for places to impressively yet safely accept their parties' presidential nominations as the spread of the coronavirus adds fresh uncertainty to the campaign for the White House.

Trump said Wednesday he's considering giving his Aug. 27 acceptance speech in front of a live audience in the House, a move that could violate ethics law.

Biden, meanwhile, scrapped plans to accept the Democratic nomination on August 20 in Milwaukee, where the party has spent more than a year planning a massive convention.

Presidential conventions are a staple of American politics and have played out against national traumas as significant as the Civil War and World War II. AP

Obama's Medicaid expansion keeps gaining ground under Trump

Washington: President Donald Trump is still trying to overturn "Obamacare," but his predecessor's health care law keeps gaining ground in places where it was once unwelcome.

Missouri voters this week approved Medicaid expansion by a 53 per cent to 47 per cent margin, making the conservative the seventh to do so under Trump.

The president readily carried Missouri in 2016, but the Medicaid vote comes as more people have been losing workplace health insurance in a recession-ravaged economy.

"That leaves only a dozen states opposed to using the federal-state health program for low-income people as a vehicle for covering more adults, mainly people in jobs that don't provide health care. AP

Indian-American doc wins Democratic Congressional primary in Arizona

Washington: Dr Hiral Tipirneni, an Indian-American emergency room physician, has won the Democratic party primary for the US House of Representatives in the US state of Arizona. New polling showed that Tipirneni is just three points down to the Republican incumbent David Schweikert. The seat is said to be a Republican stronghold.

"I am honoured to be the nominee in Arizona's 6th Congressional District. For nearly a decade, our district has been represented by a DC politician who puts the profits of his special interest corporate donors over positive change that will make life better for working families here in Arizona," Tipirneni said. Tipirneni was three years old when her family immigrated from India to this country to pursue the American dream. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE / TENDER NOTICE						
SR NO.	NAME OF OFFICE / DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK / NOTICE / TENDER	OPENING DATE / CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / ESTD (APPROX) IN Rupees	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	MOBIL OFFICER / CONTACT DETAILS / EMAIL
1	Chief Technology Officer	Appointment of an agency for Meter Reading, Supply and Bill Distribution for Consumer under LNHVN jurisdiction	Opening date: 19-09-2020 Closing date: 19-09-2020 Opening date: 20-08-2020 Closing date: 20-08-2020 (at 16:00 hrs)	10,00,000/-	atenders.hy.in	031754607 meters@nshbvn.org.in

SUPRA INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES LTD.
Regd. Off: 1212, Nehru Chamber B2, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019
CIN: L55990DL1955PLC019568
Website: www.supraindustrialresources.in
E-mail: sra@1955@gmail.com / sra@supraindustrialresources.com

NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 23 read with Regulation 47 of Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015, that the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Friday, 14th August, 2020, at 11:00 A.M. at Registered office of the Company, at 1212, Nehru Chamber B2, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019 to inter alia, consider and approve the financial results of the Company for the quarter ended 30th June, 2020 along with the Limited Review Report of the Auditors for the corresponding period.

Afghan council to decide whether Kabul releases 400 Taliban

Kabul: Afghanistan officials say a traditional consultative council will convene on Friday to decide whether the last 400 Taliban prisoners will be released as part of a peace agreement, even as its Health Ministry says half of Kabul's residents are infected with the coronavirus.

The Taliban have rejected any changes to the deal they signed in February with the US. That deal calls for 5,000 Taliban prisoners to be freed by Kabul and the Taliban to free 1,000 government personnel, including security officials, ahead of the start of negotiations.

The Taliban have freed the 1,000 prisoners they were holding in a Taliban camp, but they have already begun withdrawing troops in line with the agreement. AP

No idea how I'm not dead: Journalist recounts horror of Beirut twin blasts

Beirut: All I could think about was finding the cat.

It was an irrational sentiment but I kept thinking: If I could find Sunday, then everything would suddenly be OK.

I don't even normally like pets, and have no idea how during lockdown, I fell in love with this ginger cat who's constantly swishing her bushy tail. I kept imagining that dramatic tail wagging, her eyes glazed over, dead under a beam.

But if Sunday was alive, I decided, then maybe my close friend, a fellow journalist, was

too. Normally I would have been with him, speeding to the scene on his motorcycle like we often do when news breaks in Beirut. So when I saw him on Tuesday at the city's port was on fire, I grabbed my helmet and changed into a pair of jeans.

My boyfriend asked why I was going. He said the fire didn't seem like big news. "Why are you rushing your time?" he asked as I walked into the living room. Then everything blew up.

Every door inside my apartment, hinges and all, was ripped out of the walls. So was my air conditioner. My big fan split right in half. My massive living room window cracked in two. The glass didn't just shatter; the windows themselves flew clean off. I genuinely, even now, have no idea how I am not dead.

I stood in a whirlwind of nails and glass and splintered wood on Sunday for a split second. Then we heard loud humming that sounded like planes and within moments, the second blast hit. AGENCY

Premium Merchants Limited					
Regd. Office:- Omase square, Plot No. 14, 5th Floor, Jasola District Centre					
Jasola, New Delhi-110025					
CIN:- L51909DL1985PLC021077, Tel:- +91 11 61119658					
Email Id:- premiummerchants123@gmail.com, website:- www.pmltd.in					
Extract of Unaudited Financial Results for the quarter ended on 30th June, 2020					
(Rs. in lakhs)					
Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended on		Year Ended on	
		30.06.2020	31.03.2020	30.06.2019	31.03.2020
		(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)
1	Total Income from operations	15.06	(3.95)	2.40	50.71
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extra-ordinary items)	13.43	(25.03)	(2.81)	23.95
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	13.43	(25.03)	(2.81)	23.95
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	10.04	(17.99)	(0.36)	27.30
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	14.12	(818.64)	6.77	(773.35)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value Rs. 10 each)	99.80	99.80	99.80	99.80
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) as shown in the audited Balance Sheet of accounting years 2019-20 and 2018-19	-	-	-	5,828.99
8	Earning Per Share (EPS) (Face Value Rs. 10)				
1 Basic	1.01	(1.80)	(0.04)	2.74	
2 Diluted	1.01	(1.80)	(0.04)	2.74	

Notes:-
1) The above is an extract of the detailed form of unaudited results filed with the stock exchange under regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing obligation and Disclosure Requirement) Regulation, 2015. The full form of the Unaudited results are available on company's website www.pmltd.in (under the process of renewal) and on the website of the Stock Exchange www.mse.in.
2) The detailed audited results and this extract were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of directors in their meeting held on 06.08.2020

By order of the Board
For Premium Merchants Limited
sdl-
Balbir Singh
Director
Date:- 06.08.2020
Place:- New Delhi

By order of the Board
For Premium Merchants Limited
sdl-
Balbir Singh
Director
DIN:- 00027438

GULSHAN POLYOLS LIMITED					
CIN:L24231UP2000PLC034918					
Regd. Off: 9th K.M., Jansath Road, Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh					
Ph.-0131-3201231, Fax: 0131- 2661378, website: www.gulshanindia.com					
Extract of Un-Audited Financial Results for the Quarter ended 30th June 2020					
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS Q1 FY 2020-21					
Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter ended		Year ended	
		30.06.2020	31.03.2020	30.06.2019	31.03.2020
		(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1	Total Income from Operations	12103.56	13,553.90	16906.33	62174.49
2	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period (Before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	718.78	336.15	978.16	2742.22
3	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period before tax (After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	718.78	336.15	978.16	2742.22
4	Net Profit/ (Loss) for the period After Tax (After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items)	518.17	278.25	728.94	2058.40
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the period (After Tax) and other Comprehensive Income (After Tax))	518.17	259.19	728.94	2039.39
6	Paid-up equity share capital (Face Value of Rs. 1/- each)	469.17	469.17	469.17	469.17
7	Reserves Excluding Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	30059.90
8	Earnings Per Share for Continuing and Discontinued Operations (Basic & After Extraordinary Items) (Face Value of Rs. 1/- each)	1.10	0.59	1.55	4.39
	Diluted	1.10	0.59	1.55	4.39

NOTES :-
1 The Auditor has conducted Limited Review of these Financial Results. The results were reviewed by the Audit Committee. The Board of Directors has taken on record the financial results at its meeting held on August 06, 2020.
2 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 (IND - AS) prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 and other recognised accounting practices and policies to the extent applicable.
3 The Company's operations and financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 have been adversely impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown announced by the Government of India due to which the operations were suspended for part of the quarter and gradually resumed with requisite precautions. The results for the quarter are, therefore, not comparable with those for the previous quarters.
4 Figures for the previous period have been regrouped/ rearranged wherever necessary to make them comparable with current figure.

For and on behalf of the Board
Sd/-
Dr. C. K. Jain
Chairman and Managing Director

Date : 06th August, 2020
Place : New Delhi

Trend
Slazer

I'm not here for fame: Radhika

Actor **RADHIKA APTE** says she does not want to get stuck in something convenient or be satisfied, and she is not chasing fame.

"I'm not here for fame. I do like the perks sometimes, but I don't take success and failure seriously because these are temporary and all very relative," Radhika said.

"You can't take either seriously, but you can't just ignore them. They are very important aspects in your journey — you need appreciation, you need to pat your back many a time, you have to love the appreciation as well and you have to also learn from your failure and not get dejected. So I have a balanced approach," she added.



From the scratch

Actor **TAHIR RAJ BHASIN** says that every project has taught him to focus on being true to the process

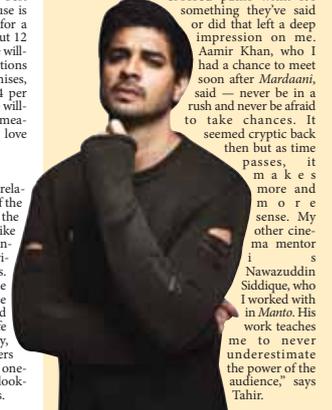
Actor Tahir Raj Bhasin is an outsider with no connections in the industry. He debuted with *Mardaani* to show his acting prowess as a villain and since then, Tahir is delighted about how his career has been shaping up. After making a mark in *Mardaani*, which earned him the Best Supporting Actor and Best Villain awards, Tahir decided not to look back. His powerful performances in the subsequent films like *Manto*, *Chhichhore* and many more made him grab projects like *83* and *Loop Lapeta*. He is thrilled about the fact that he has shaped his own destiny in the Bollywood.

"I'm very proud of the journey I've had in Bollywood. When you start from the scratch, you value the recognition that your work gets and the opportunities you've earned because they are built solely on the basis of your talent. I consider the parts I've done so far to be a personal collage of experiences," he says.

The actor credits the directors he has collaborated with for having faith in him. "I've been fortunate enough to work with some amazing filmmakers. This has led to my growth as an actor and as a person. Every project has taught me to focus on being true to the process. What matters is making a part fun to watch and authentic. The next exciting turn of my career is going to be equally challenging. *Loop Lapeta* is a thriller comedy and pairing up with a talent like Taapsee (Pannu) is something I really look forward to."

Tahir discloses his journey in cinema makes him proud. "The part in YRF's *Mardaani* challenged me to stretch my abilities as I was a starting opposite an icon like Rani Mukerji. The uniqueness of the part made it a great one for me. From doing that to shifting gears in a light hearted college drama *Chhichhore* and now to a romantic lead in *Loop Lapeta* is incredibly fulfilling and gives me a sense of pride in the journey so far," he says.

Tahir also reveals who his biggest inspirations are. "People who I count as mentors in cinema aren't always the ones with me on a day to day but are magnetic people who I've briefly crossed paths with. It's something they've said or did that left a deep impression on me. Aamir Khan, who I had a chance to meet soon after *Mardaani*, said — never be in a rush and never be afraid to take chances. It seemed cryptic back then but as time passes, it makes more and more sense. My other cinema mentor is Nawazuddin Siddiqui, who I worked with in *Manto*. His work teaches me to never underestimate the power of the audience," says Tahir.



The unlock diaries

A survey, conducted by a dating app, finds out the reasons behind infidelity during the lockdown

A lot of love stories have blossomed in last few months of the lockdown and the new couples are eagerly waiting to meet their loved ones. From the outset, it's hard to judge when this global health crisis is going to leave the world but one thing is for sure, love is unhindered from the outside surrounding and blooming like never before.

A dating app, Gleeden, conducted a survey after the beginning of 'Unlock 1.0' and found out that about 75 per cent of its users are willing to meet their love interests if provided an opportunity. The survey was rolled out among 1,000 of its newly joined users and was conducted across metropolitan cities like Mumbai, Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune. The findings from the survey are pretty exciting and it also addresses the encounter side of the reasons behind infidelity. Here is a glimpse of the same.

The heart is always dicey
Can you cheat on your spouse and still love them at



the same time? Well, the answer to this question is as tricky as the question itself and the users are no exception. About 45.6 per cent of them think that their shared intimacy won't affect their current relationship, while 47 per cent of them believe that they cannot share the same level of emotions with two different people. A minute 7.4 per cent are indecisive about their stand on shared intimacy with their spouses.

Why partners cheat
Infidelity is considered as a taboo worldwide and there are a lot of factors leading up to the same. Lack of intimacy and compatibility in a relationship are just the kick-starters to the ultimate fate. Interestingly, it has been found out that 37 per cent of people cheat their partners because they want to try out something new or spice up their existing relationship. About 36 per cent of people commit infidelity because they are in

love with someone else other than their spouses, while for the remaining 27 per cent, the decision of committing infidelity was taken when they realised that their current partner is not the right match for them both emotionally as well as physically.

Blame it on the night
It has been found that people usually try to make new connections while attending a social gathering or at a club party; it can range

from an office function to a reunion. About 23 per cent of the people admitted that they look for new relationships or flings in a party gathering, while 22 per cent of the people would prefer it on a vacation or while travelling. For 19 per cent of them, the best time is when their spouse is not at home or is out for a business trip. Also, about 12 per cent of the people are willing to find new connections within their office premises, while the remaining 24 per cent of the total users are willing to try out multiple measures to find out their love interest.

Keep it casual
It seems that casual relationships are the need of the hour for 38 per cent of the app users, who would like to get into a new relationship without making serious future commitments. About 23 per cent of the users still believe in the old school romance and are looking for future life partners. Interestingly, about 39 per cent of users are only interested in one-time affairs and are not looking for anything serious.

'Music has been my sanity. It is an integral part of my life and I feel blessed to be able to share it. Edge is an attempt at portraying and owning your inner chaos and loving parts of yourself that are imperfect. When you stop looking at perfection in others, the journey of understanding and accepting yourself begins.'

—**Shruti Haasan**

Looking ahead in time, actor **URVASHI RAUTELA** feels history books in the future will need to dedicate an entire chapter to the year 2020.



From forest fires to the COVID-19 pandemic and now a blast in Beirut, the year has seen one disaster after the other.

"My prayers are with Beirut, Lebanon. I am heartbroken by the loss of life in this tragic event. Solidarity to all those affected and those working tirelessly to help. I can't even imagine the predicament of the people witnessing this out there," she said.

Katy on her split with Orlando

KATY PERRY and actor **Orlando Bloom** are now a happy couple, but they have gotten through a lot of hell, says the singer.

"It's really about an individual journey that makes the whole thing better. We both had to decide to go on that journey separately because it's not my half and your half that makes a whole. It's my wholeness and your wholeness that makes this whole thing happen," Perry said.

In the track *Champagne Problems*, Perry sings about overcoming their toughest times. "It's a song that really talks about how intense it's gotten and how many things we have had to go through. Yes, we have problems. Everybody has challenges in a relationship," she said.



A DANGEROUS MASTER

Partially automated driving systems don't always work, so the auto club recommends that car companies should limit their use

Two tests by AAA during the past two years show that partially automated driving systems don't always function properly, so the auto club is recommending that car companies limit their use. Researchers with AAA recently tested systems from five manufacturers over a distance of 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometres), and said they encountered problems every eight miles (13 kilometres).

Most of the issues involved systems designed to keep vehicles in their lane, but the tests discovered that many had trouble spotting simulated broken-down vehicles in their path. About two-thirds of the time the test vehicles hit the broken-down car, at an average speed of 25 mph (40 kph), according to the study.

It was AAA's second round of tests on the systems. Researchers said little had changed from a test of four other vehicles in 2018, prompting the recommendation that automakers stop including the technology on more models. "AAA has repeatedly found that active driving assistance systems do not perform consistently, especially in real-world scenarios," said Greg Brannon, AAA's director of automotive engineering.



"Automakers need to work toward more dependable technology including improving lane keeping assistance."

Also the systems, which combine control of acceleration, braking and steering, often quit working with little notice to drivers, AAA found. That could cause a dangerous situation if the driver isn't fully engaged and has to make an emergency decision.

AAA tested five vehicles at several research centres with drivers and instruments monitoring their performance. Included this year were a 2019 BMW X7 SUV, a 2019 Cadillac CT6 sedan, a 2019 Ford Edge SUV, a 2020 Kia Telluride SUV and a 2020 Subaru Outback SUV. Their systems have names like Kia's "Highway Driving Assist," Subaru's "EyeSight," Ford's "Co-Pilot 360," Cadillac's "Super Cruise," and BMW's "Active Driving Assistant Professional."



The results were similar to those found in 2018 testing by AAA of four other vehicles including a 2017 Tesla Model S with the company's "Autopilot" system.

BMW, General Motors and Subaru issued statements saying their systems aid drivers and are not meant to be fully autonomous. Messages were left seeking comment from Ford and

Kia. Subaru said its system "is designed to assist the driver, not replace the driver, when confronting hazards," while GM said it designed the Super Cruise system so it makes sure the driver stays engaged.

"Super Cruise undergoes rigorous testing and validation, and we continue to remain confident in the system," GM's statement said.

BMW said it appears the X7's system performed as designed in AAA's testing. "BMW requires that the driver remain fully at attention in order to intervene in the case of an emergency situation (such as a car stopped in the lane as simulated in the AAA study)," BMW said.

AAA said most owners manual designers explain that the systems have trouble spotting stationary objects. The most recent tests show that the systems aren't improving much, even as

automakers move them into more mainstream models. Brannon said that can be a problem.

"People who bought systems when they first came out generally were early adopters who know more about technology, Brannon said. But as the systems make their way into more mainstream models, people who are less tech-savvy will be driving them, he said.

"People are really less familiar and less likely to really engage in understanding how the systems work," he said. "That just assume they do work. That could be a really dangerous assumption."

Also, research has shown that people become overly reliant on the technology, which could be dangerous when the systems don't work, he said. Also, there's no standard way for the vehicles to notify drivers that the systems are disengaging. Some just have a green light on the dash, while the Cadillac's steering wheel vibrates and a green light goes to flashing red, he said.

In real-road tests, all of the systems had trouble keeping the vehicles in their lanes, and they came too close to other vehicles and guardrails, AAA said. Test track examinations of three vehicles, the Kia Telluride, BMW X7 and Subaru Outback, found that all had trouble spotting a simulated broken-down vehicle in their lane most of the time, Brannon said.

The Cadillac system couldn't be tested on the track because General Motors limits use to divided highways, while the Ford system also wouldn't work on the track. But both systems had problems on real roads, Brannon said.

He said that problems with the system could slow the adoption of fully autonomous vehicles because owners who experience the driver-assist technology may not trust it.

RAISE THE BAR AT HOME

Here are some must-follow tips to set up your personal bar and enjoy your favourite cocktails at home. By ASMANI SUBRAMANIAN

A well-set bar is one thing every grown-up home should have. It is not just about honing skills to hosting some family and friends over for drinks, but also about taking some time out for yourself and enjoying a drink at home. Well, this applies the most to the times we are living in now. By setting up a bar at home, you wouldn't be missing your favourite cocktail at your most-visited outlet. The bar is an asset and an expected element of design to your home. But it will definitely be a space that will inspire you to try new things and upgrade your mixology skills.

WHERE TO BEGIN FROM

Creating a home bar isn't as intimidating as it may seem. An important step is deciding what you want to stock your bar with. However, there are a few more things to consider before making the jump from a few bottles of spirits and a chilled beer in your refrigerator, to several variety of liquor, mixers and tools on display in your home bar.

If space is a constraint to create a full built-in wet bar, you could always have a portable bar designed that will help you to move the essentials to the area of your gathering. A well-made cocktail trolley is the best fix. Be it a make-shift bar or a cocktail trolley, both are readily available in leading e-commerce portals to add to your cart. If nothing else, transform your already available wooden console table into a bar top table by just adding a simple yet aesthetic serving tray.

Once you have narrowed down on some space for your bar, the next step is to set a budget aside to arrange for all the must-haves including your choice of spirits, bar tools, biters, glassware, mixers and garnishes — that is where the visual appeal kicks in!

WHICH SPIRITS TO GO FOR

The budget that you decide on will help you set a base for the spirits that will bring your home bar to

life. I suggest adding different types of spirits to enjoy on various occasions and settings. It'll also help you master your skills at cocktail making as you will have a multitude of liquor categories to experiment with. Expert tip: Stock up on distinct flavours that will meet the wider spectrum of your audience.

THE ABSOLUTE MUST-HAVES

Scotch Whisky — A variety of some of the best spirits to have a distinct maturation element to them such as the Black Dog Triple Gold Reserve, a classic single malt such as the Singleton of Glendullan and a limited-edition collectible collection such as the Johnnie Walker Black and Origin Series, are the cocktails that add an extraordinary essence to the bar.

Trust me, there is no single way to enjoy whisky. It can be consumed in the manner you want and recent trends suggest that scotch cocktails are a great way for the new generation to venture into knowing whisky. Try to explore whisky cocktails and experiment with flavour notes available. If it's a social occasion like a brunch with a close group of friends or even a cozy movie night indoors, a Highball will accompany the mood perfectly. Expert tip: One such highball is also Johnnie Walker — Simple, understated and easy to create at home.

Take a tall glass (highball) and fill it with ice. Add 45 ml of Johnnie Walker Red Label, top with ginger ale and drop in a slice of fresh ginger, orange or cherry to garnish.

Vodka — Another spirit perfect for cocktails. I would recommend having your choice of vodkas in your freezer. Frozen Smirnoff is great to try with any mixer but if you are looking for more complex flavours and wish to try your hand at a *Bloody Mary* cocktail, Ketel One Vodka will make it a well-rounded drink.

Gin — It is a great accompaniment when it comes to brunching. No one can go wrong with a classic gin cocktail. Tanqueray London



Dry Gin will be a best choice to fix up a refreshing gin and tonic. Take 30 ml Tanqueray, 60 ml tonic, lots of ice in a wine glass with your choice of citrus fruit sliced up to garnish.

Other additional spirits which you can stock up your bar with are Rum and Tequila to serve at your indoor gatherings.

Vermouth — An element added to your bar for you to make a great martini with your choice of vodka.

Bitters — For enjoying your very own Negroni. Important tip: Once you have set up your home bar, do try your hand at experimenting with mixology but remember to drink responsibly.

ESSENTIAL BAR TOOLS

Few things that you would need to enhance your mixology skills and serve some great cocktails for your friends and family are essential bar tools, glassware, shrubs and syrups.

Cocktail shaker: A cocktail shaker is essential to make sure you blend in all the ingredients of your cocktail. I would recommend that you invest in a three-piece shaker, which has an in-built strainer and helps in serving a drink, especially when you're short of time. If you are just starting out and don't have one, a 500 ml recycled bottle with a wide mouth works just as well and can result in preparing three serves at a time.

Jigger or peg measure: As a responsible host, it is always wise to measure every drink. This is especially useful in portioning out your cocktail when you are trying out a



new recipe.

Pourers: Use a pourer while pouring your drinks into a glass to avoid spillage.

Cocktail strainers: A Hawthorne or Julep Strainer, that is simple in design, is handy to use for stirred cocktails. For those that are shaken, use a fine strainer (tea strainer) to filter the ice that breaks into ice chips while shaking or to separate fresh fruit and herb seedlings that may float in your drink.

Muddler: While using local/seasonal fresh fruits and herbs in your drink, use a muddler to bring out the utmost freshness and juice of the ingredients.

Chopping board and knife: A wooden chopping board and sharp knife is useful while slicing fruit. A small knife and peeler helps to peel citrus fruits for garnishing. A *Cosmopolitan* is never the same without a fresh orange twist.

while making a sweet lime soda. A measuring gin makes it a Tom Collins or Gin Fizz.

Juice containers or punch bowl: This helps when you are hosting an intimate gathering for friends and family where you can pre-mix the cocktails and store them in the fridge.

Spill mat and kitchen towels: Very useful in keeping the surface clean as bar tops tend to get wet with spill liquids pretty often. A mat keeps the moisture in check.

Ice cube tray: Ice is the most important element in a cocktail and big ice cubes help the drink stay chilled for a longer duration. Small paper cups or 100 ml steel tumblers make good alternatives. Expert tip: Don't add your ice until you're ready to shake or stir, melted ice makes the drink too weak and unenjoyable.

Glassware: The right glassware gives the best first impression of a great drink. Research reveals that beautiful glassware not only enhances the perception but also has a lasting impact. Here are some recommendations.

□ A highball glass is great for tall drinks like whisky highballs, mojitos and vodka with OJ.

□ For cocktails like *Old Fashioned* and straight drinks, a rocks or whisky glass is preferable.

□ Some wine glasses help red/white wine or a gin and tonic.

□ A martini or a cocktail glass, which brings in the bond moment is a must-have.

□ A beer glass serves as an excellent utility glass through the evening.

Mixers: Stock up on mixers that you enjoy to create simple and easy

cocktails. This also works well for your guests who may look for something other than an alcoholic drink. Here are some mixers that one must have.

□ Aerated drinks like soda water, tonic, ginger ale, lemonade

□ Fresh and chilled fruit juices like orange, cranberry, pineapple, tomato

□ Sweet and sour mix like margaritas, whiskey sour

□ Equal parts of fresh lime or apple cider vinegar and sugar syrup work well too

□ Having a selection of honey, preserves, shrubs and flavoured syrups in your pantry brings in complexity to your drink and never fails to wow your guests

□ Spices and herbs help you add some of the unique flavours to your drink

□ Through local seasonal fruits, you can make a whisky sour right at home, throw in a bit of ginger to add plenty of complexity to the drink

□ Using citrus fruits for garnishing are brings a sense of freshness to your drink. It's always great to have a bundle of kaffir lime leaves or mint leaves as a brilliant garnish, uplifting the entire cocktail experience.

Essential bitters: What salt does to food, bitters do to your cocktails. Try stocking up on an Angostura bitter in your bar. If you can't find one, use your favourite spices, steeped tea or spent coffee in vodka gives your drink its own homemade tincture.

Well, one last tip: Drink and enjoy responsibly!

The writer is the Brand Ambassador, Diageo India.

R E C I P E S



STRAWBERRY, WALNUT & DATE SMOOTHIE

- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Strawberries (halved): 200 gm
 - California Walnuts: 50 gm
 - Pitted dates (roughly chopped): 3
 - Natural yogurt: 100 gm
 - Milk: 100 ml
- METHOD**
- Place all the ingredients in a smoothie maker or blender and blitz until smooth.
 - Pour into two glasses.
 - Serve sprinkled with extra chopped walnuts.
- Courtesy: Chef Sabyasachi Gorai.

- ALMOND PUMPKIN KEBAB**
- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Pumpkin: 500 gm
 - Green chillies (chopped): 1 1/2 tsp
 - Garlic and ginger (chopped): 2 tsp
 - Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
 - Cracked coriander: 1 tsp
 - Red chilli powder: 1 tsp
 - Nutmeg powder: 1/8 tsp
 - Chat masala: 1 tsp
 - Dry mango powder: 1 tsp



- *Desi ghee*: 40 gm
 - Almonds (slivered): 20 gm
 - Almonds (chopped): 40 gm
- METHOD**
- Peel, de-seed and grate the pumpkin.
 - Heat *desi ghee* in a thick bottom casserole pan and sauté ginger and garlic, green chillies, cumin seeds and all the spices.
 - Add the pumpkin. Cook for 15-20 minutes till the water has

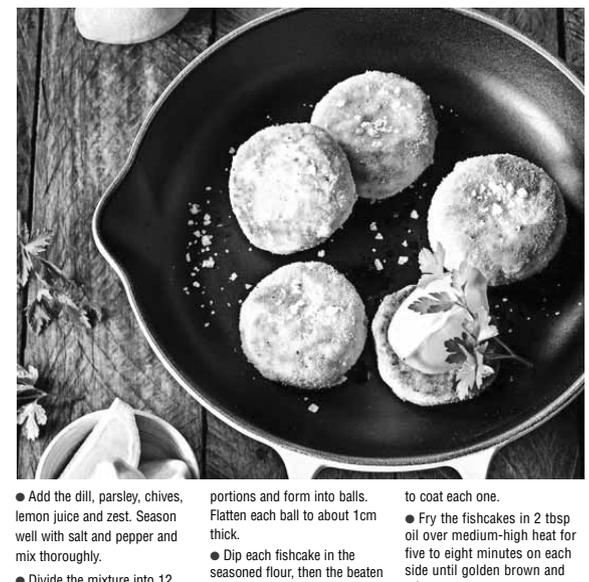
- dried out.
 - Add the chopped almonds and cook for another five minutes. Let the mixture cool down. Cut them into rough, thin patties of 30 gm each. Coat them with slivered almonds.
 - Heat *desi ghee* in a pan and place the patties in medium hot oil. Cook till the bottom is caramelised and then carefully turn the patties. Cook them till they are crisp from outside.
- Courtesy: Chef Manish Mehrotra.



- TRICOLOUR LADDOO**
- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Desiccated coconut: 1.5 cup (additional 1/4 cup for garnishing)
 - Sweetened condensed milk: 1/2 cup
 - Clarified butter: 1 tsp
 - Cardamom powder: 1 tsp
 - Milk: 1 tsp
 - Saffron (for orange colour): 2 tsp
 - Pistachio powder (for green colour): 2 tsp
- METHOD**
- In a non-stick pan, heat *ghee* and add coconut. Stir it on medium heat until it turns golden brown.
 - Take it out and add condensed milk in same pan, mix it well for a minute.
 - Now add coconut in it and mix well until it observes the moisture. Keep stirring



- SMOKED SALMON FISH CAKES**
- WHAT YOU NEED**
- Smoked salmon: 400 gm
 - Mashed potatoes: 300 gm
 - Melted butter: 2 tsp
 - Wholegrain mustard: 2 tsp
 - Fresh dill (chopped): 1 tsp
 - Fresh parsley (chopped): 1 tsp
 - Fresh chives (chopped): 1 tsp
 - Lemon juice
 - Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - Flour (seasoned): 1/2 cup
 - Eggs, beaten: 2
 - Breadcrumbs: 1 1/2 cups
 - Oil: 100ml
- METHOD**
- Preheat the oven to 190 degree Celsius.
 - Place the salmon in a roasting dish, cover with foil and place in the oven for 15 minutes to heat through.
 - Flake the salmon with a fork and place in a large bowl together with the mashed potatoes, butter, and mustard. Mix well.



- Add the dill, parsley, chives, lemon juice and zest. Season well with salt and pepper and mix thoroughly.
- Divide the mixture into 12

- portions and form into balls. Flatten each ball to about 1cm thick.
- Dip each fishcake in the seasoned flour, then the beaten egg and finally the breadcrumbs

- to coat each one.
 - Fry the fishcakes in 2 tsp oil over medium-high heat for five to eight minutes on each side until golden brown and crispy.
- Courtesy: Le Creuset.

SINGLES

HERODES RETAIN BOTTAS FOR NEXT SEASON
LONDON: Valtteri Bottas has signed a new deal with Mercedes, keeping him at the Formula One team until the end of the 2021 season.

TOKYO MAY TEMPORARILY REMOVE OLY RINGS
TOKYO: The Olympic rings monument installed in Tokyo Bay for the 2020 Summer Games was temporarily removed for maintenance on Thursday and will return in December when Japan heads into the final stretch of preparations for the rescheduled event.

MAN CITY SIGN AKE FROM BOURNEMOUTH
MANCHESTER: Manchester City have signed Dutch defender Nathan Ake from Bournemouth.

FRIEDKIN GROUP COMPLETE ROMA TAKEOVER
ROME: US-based Friedkin group has reached an agreement with the current owners of Serie A club Roma to buy the former league champions for \$91 million euros.

GARCIA JOINS ATK MOHUN BAGAN FC
KOLKATA: Spanish mid-fielder Edu Garcia has signed a two-year deal with newly merged ATK Mohun Bagan FC, the franchise of the ISL announced on Thursday.

MCA WRITES TO CM SEEKING NOD FOR PRACTICE
MUMBAI: The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has written to Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, seeking his approval for its players' practice at the indoor facility of the Bandra Kuria Complex.

LEDLEY KING HIRED AS MOURINHO'S ASSISTANT
LONDON: Tottenham has appointed former captain Ledley King to become an assistant manager under Jose Mourinho.

KYRGIOS LIKELY TO PULL OUT OF FRENCH OPEN
MELBOURNE: Nick Kyrgios dropped a huge hint on Thursday that he will skip the French Open, saying the chances of him travelling to Europe this year were "slim to none".

'Babar belongs in league of Kohli, Smith, and Williamson'

MANCHESTER: Former England captain Nasser Hussain feels it's time the cricket world changes the moniker 'Fab Four' to 'Fab Five' by including Pakistan's Babar Azam in the same league as Virat Kohli and Kane Williamson.

Australian run-machine Steve Smith and England captain Joe Root complete the quartet of modern day greats.

"They keep going on about the 'Fab Four' (Kohli, Steve Smith, Kane Williamson and Joe Root) — it's the 'Fab Five' and Babar Azam is in that," Hussain said on Sky Sports.

Babar, who has been Pakistan's best batsman in the past few years, started the first Test against England at Old Trafford on a bright night, scoring an unbeaten 69 off 100 balls by the time bad weather stopped play on Wednesday.

"I think it is a real shame and it is in part a consequence of Pakistan playing away from home, playing in the UAE all the time in front of no one. Pakistan hiding in the shadow of Indian cricket, not going over and playing IPL cricket, not playing India."

Babar's cover drives have some similarities with Kohli's and some consider him even better in his execution.

"If this had been the Kohli, everyone would be talking about it but because it is Babar Azam, no one is talking about it," Hussain said during commentary. "He is young and he is elegant. He has got all the swagger," he added.

TAI TZU: World No 2 shuttler Tai Tzu-ying has said she didn't have any problems with Tokyo Olympics getting postponed as according to her, she has more time to prepare and end her drought at the showpiece event.

BCCI, Vivo suspend IPL partnership for 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI on Thursday suspended the IPL title sponsorship deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for the event's upcoming edition amid the Sino-India border face-off.

The BCCI sent out a one-line statement, without giving any details, to say that Vivo will not be associated with the IPL this year.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have decided to suspend their partnership for Indian Premier League in 2020," the press release stated.

The company, on its part, stated that the association is being paused.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and vivo Mobile India Pvt Ltd have mutually decided to pause their partnership for the 2020 season of Indian Premier League," it stated.

Vivo won the IPL title sponsorship rights for five years from 2018 to 2022 for a reported sum of ₹2190 crore, approximately ₹440 crore per annum.

It is learnt that the two parties are now working out a plan in which Vivo might come back for a fresh three-year period starting 2021 on revised terms. However, a top BCCI official offered a divergent view.

"Here we are talking about diplomatic tensions and you expect that after November, when IPL ends and before the next IPL starts in April 2021, there would be no anti-China sentiment? Are we serious?" the veteran official said.

The anti-China sentiment in the country peaked after the violent face-off between the Indian and Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh, India lost 20 soldiers in the clash, while China also acknowledged unspecified casualties.

The stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) caused outrage across India with several calls for boycott of Chinese companies and products.

The BCCI is now likely to float a tender for new IPL title sponsors as mandated by its constitution. However, the end of this (sponsorship) deal could spell losses for the franchisees as they get a substantial share from the sponsorship pool.

Inter, Man Utd reach Europa quarters

AFP ■ GELSENKIRCHEN

Manchester United edged MLSK 2-1 and Inter Milan beat Getafe 2-0 on Wednesday in rescheduled ties to clinch places in the quarter-finals of the Europa League.

United's Edson Alvarez led from their first leg played in March and will face Copenhagen who enjoyed a 3-0 victory on the night over Istanbul Basaksehir.

Antonio Conte's Inter Milan will face either Steven Gerrard's Rangers or Bayer Leverkusen with the Germans holding a 3-1 lead going into Thursday's match.

Despite United's comfortable lead from March 12's first leg, the visitors caused problems early on.

Antoine Andrejevic hit the crossbar with a powerful header after 10 minutes at an almost empty Old Trafford before Peter Michorl fired wide just after the quarter of an hour mark.

The Linz-based outfit had to wait until the second half to break the deadlock as defender Philipp Wiesinger rifled into the top corner from outside the box after 55 minutes.

Man Utd's Jesse Lingard reacts during Europa League match against LASK.

Their celebrations were short-lived as Jesse Lingard equalised on the counter-attack for United three minutes later.

Anthony Martial claimed the match-winner with two minutes to go despite LASK goalkeeper Alexander Schlager guarding a foot to the France striker's shot.

Inter's meeting with the La Liga side was played over just one leg in Gelsenkirchen to save time ahead of next week's last eight to be held in Germany.

They advanced to the next round as Romelu Lukaku became the club's first player to score in five straight European appearances since Brazilian striker Adriano in 2004.

Sanchez joins Nerazzurri for free

AFP ■ MILAN

Manchester United's Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez has signed a three-year contract with Inter Milan, the Italian club announced on Thursday.

No transfer fee was involved in the deal as United seemed to be in a hurry to offload the forward who could not reach the heights of his previous years at Old Trafford.

He was also reportedly earning in excess of 500,000 pounds per week at Manchester United.

The 31-year-old, who had been at Inter since last season, signed a contract until June 30, 2023, the club added.

Sanchez scored four goals for Antonio Conte's Serie A runners-up behind Juventus.

Manchester United wishes Alexis Sanchez all the best in his future career as he joins Inter Milan on a permanent transfer, the Premier League club said.

Man City has unfinished business in CL: Laporte

Man City vs Real Madrid

Manchester City's growing silverware collection, defender Aymeric Laporte said ahead of his sides last-16 second leg against Real Madrid on Friday.

City have dominated English football in recent years under Pep Guardiola, although they finished second to Liverpool in the Premier League this season.

"We have unfinished business in the Champions League, we have been talking about it for a long time, it's the thing we are missing," Laporte told Spanish newspaper AS on Thursday.

"Last year we won four trophies in the same season but couldn't win the Champions League, so if it's our turn this year, perfect."

They were knocked out in the quarter-finals last year on away goals by Tottenham after having a last-gasp effort ruled out by a VAR review.

"We have all the ingredients to do great things. The team is really up for it, we don't have to change much, we just need a little more luck. We have lacked that final spark which I'm sure we'll find soon."

City hold a 2-1 lead over Real going into Friday's second leg at an empty Etihad Stadium and will be without all-time top scorer Sergio Aguero through injury.

Real were missing captain Sergio Ramos, who was sent off in the first leg.

"Everyone knows Aguero, he's an important player to be missing just like theirs. He has scored and the career he's had since he was young speak for themselves," added Laporte.

"He's one of the best strikers I've ever seen but we believe in our other team mates. Sergio Ramos is also a very important player but we want to show that we can play better than them."

Shan's 156 drives Pak to 326

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Century-maker Shan Masood snatched the initiative for Pakistan from England with a 105-run partnership on day two of the first Test at Old Trafford on Thursday.

Pakistan lost three cheap wickets and scored only 48 runs in the morning session, but Masood and Khan were transformed after the lunch break.

They scored 27 runs in the first five overs after lunch, then England took the second new ball. But the Pakistan pair, especially Khan, was too confident to be confined again.

They were positive and rotated the strike, and the runs flowed as Pakistan added 125 runs in the middle session and reached 312 at tea.

Masood was career-best unbeaten 151 and Khan was out for 45, one of three wickets to fall in the session.

England pacer Jofra Archer had a hat-trick ball but Shaheen Afridi took the 192nd wicket.

Masood, on 77 at lunch, was comparatively zippy as he scored 23 runs in 26 balls to achieve his third century in three innings.

The first century by a Pakistan opener in England came in the 2017-18 season, with 134 runs.

It followed his previous career-best 135 against Sri Lanka in December in Karachi and 100 in Bangladesh in February in Rawalpindi.

1st Test, Day 3 Live from 3:30pm IST SONY SIX NETWORK

Afridi was with him at tea on 1 not out.

NO PROBLEM IN TOURING PAK

England head coach Chris Silverwood has "no problem" in touring Pakistan for a short T20 series if it can be managed ahead of the side's scheduled visit to the sub-continental nation in 2022.

England have avoided touring Pakistan since 2005-06 citing security concerns but of late the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has expressed hope of visiting the country in two years' time.

"For me it's great that it's a topic of conversation again. We are looking to get there," Silverwood told Sky Sports on the opening day of the first Test.

"Personally, I'd have no problem going," Silverwood hinted that things are on course for a next-practical tour, saying England batsmen are raring to have a go at the placed wickets in Pakistan.

"I've never been so it would be nice to go and have a look. And I know our batsmen are looking forward to batting on their wickets. We are getting there (in terms of planning)," he said.

Silverwood's statement came after Pakistan Cricket Board CEO Wasim Khan requested the ECB to consider sending a T20 team to the troubled nation ahead of their next scheduled visit in 2022.

PL revert to 3 substitutions

LONDON: The Premier League will revert to a maximum of three substitutions in the next season with England's top division clubs deciding to no longer allow two additional changes.

Football Association Board allowing the temporary use of five substitutions next season, the league won't be adopting it. The rule had been seen to favor bigger clubs with more depth in their squads.

A maximum of seven substitutes will be allowed on the bench but only three can be brought on when the new season begins around Sept 12.

Despite the International Football Association Board allowing the temporary use of five substitutions next season, the league won't be adopting it. The rule had been seen to favor bigger clubs with more depth in their squads.

Mithali defends BCCI's stand, says foreign stars misjudged situation

NEW DELHI: India ODI captain Mithali Rai totally understands the frustration of foreign internationals on overlapping of T20 Challenge and WBBL dates but firmly believes that BCCI "did its best" to fit in the four-match tournament in these unusual 190 days.

While the foreign players, led by Australian star player Alyssa Healy, questioned the timing of the exhibition games as it is clashing with the WBBL, the BCCI was also criticised for not going ahead with the women's tour of England in September.

Asked about her thoughts on the two subjects, Mithali said, "I don't tend to judge quickly."

The BCCI president (Souvag Ganguly), secretary (Jay Shah) and IPL GC chief (Brijesh Patel) have been very encouraging towards women's cricket.

"I personally thought we may not even get to play the Challenger trophy (domestic event) because even the men's IPL was in doubt but these games are most welcome," Mithali said.

On comments of top international players like Healy, Suzie Bates, Rachel Haynes expressing their displeasure, the Indian legend tried putting things into perspective.

"I know all of people (foreign players) have questioned the timing of it but these are not normal circumstances. As far as the other side of the coin, the IPL has a p -

CA mull moving Boxing Day Test from MCG

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia is contemplating moving the traditional Boxing Day Test against India from Melbourne to Adelaide due to rising COVID-19 cases in the state of Victoria.

According to a report in the Sydney Morning Herald, Adelaide has emerged as a frontrunner to host the December 26-30 marquee fixture.

In this regard, CA chairman Earl Eddings has called for an urgent convening of the national cricket cabinet next week to discuss ways for smooth conduct of the series and avoid losing a staggering 300 million Australian dollars.

The situation in Victoria is not good and a senior cricket official told the country's leading daily that there is no way the current schedule can go ahead as planned with the state border restrictions in place amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Victoria has so far reported over 13000 positive cases for the coronavirus besides 170 deaths. As far as the other Australian states are concerned, New South Wales comes a distant second with close to 4000 positive cases. South Australia, whose capital is Adelaide, has so far reported 457 confirmed cases with 445 of them recovered.

CA had earlier said that the existing schedule is subject to change.

Tai has no problem with Oly postponement

from July 23 till August 8 in 2021. Despite her constant successes on the BWF circuit, Tai Tzu is yet to win a medal at senior international level which includes Olympics and World Cups. At London 2012 and Rio 2016, she crashed out in the last-16 round itself.

"I didn't have a problem with (postponement). I can use this time as a period of rest because it's been a long and tight schedule of high-level competition," Tai Tzu said on the BWF's Badminton Ultimate Feature.

"It's a good time to rest and have even more time to prepare (for the Olympics)."

Tai Tzu had earlier hinted that she might call time on her career after the end of 2020 season. But with the badminton calendar destroyed due to coronavirus pandemic, all such retirement talks have been put to rest for the time being.

"I will play until the end of next season before I revisit the decision. As of now I want to finish next season's schedule," the former World No 1 said.

BCCI, CA to discuss on swapping of T20 WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The heads of BCCI and Cricket Australia will be connecting virtually to discuss the hosting of two T20 World Cups in the next two years when the ICC's all-powerful board meets on Friday.

The decision will also be impacted by the stand of the two boards on the next ICC chairman, the nomination process of which is yet to be announced formally.

It is expected that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah, along with CA's Earl Eddings and Nick Hockley will reach a consensus on the hosting of 2021 and 2022 editions.

"The main agenda of the meeting is scheduling of ICC tournaments including the women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand early next year. It is expected that some decisions will be taken," an ICC Board member said.

The ICC World T20 which was scheduled to be held in Australia from October 18 this year was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making way for the cash rich Indian Premier League, to be held from September 19 in the United Arab Emirates.

It is expected that Cricket Australia will like to host the T20 World Cup in October 2021 as it had already started preparations and wouldn't like to wait for two years

but BCCI also doesn't want to forego its right to host the tournament in 2021.

"The BCCI was originally scheduled to host the T20 World Cup in 2021, and they would like to go ahead. Another reason being, hosting a T20 World Cup in 2022 and then a 50 over global event within a gap of just one year. It would be an overkill," another ICC board member said.

However for Cricket Australia, it also has a few points in its favour. "The ICC website states that those who have booked match tickets for Australia World T20 event should wait till further announcement. The reason being CA wants to host the event next year," he said.

It is also learnt that there is a good chance that the eight-team Women's ODI World Cup in New Zealand in February-March 2021 will go ahead as per schedule.

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