

MONEY 6
'INDIAN ECONOMY SHOWING SIGNS OF RETURNING TO NORMALCY'

WORLD 7
UIGHURS' STERILISATION REPORT: CHINA MAY SUE RESEARCHER

SPORT 8
RAHANE WANTS TO MAKE ODI COMEBACK



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USUALSUSPECTS
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

Beijing's creeping control over world

Over the past 30 days or so, ever since the skirmish in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh that led to the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and a greater number of soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of China, there has been wide ranging public discussions on the threat posed by our big eastern neighbour across the Himalayas. Although some sort of disengagement has been negotiated, there is little expectation — in India at least — that "peace and tranquillity" along the Line of Actual Control will endure.

How Beijing views the situation and the larger relationship with India is still a subject of speculation because decision-making in China tends to be opaque and outside public gaze. However, read with China's larger global thrust and in view of the stated objectives of the Belt and Road programme, there is an expectation that the claims of Chinese sovereignty over areas that are perceived to be under the direct or indirect sway of the Middle Kingdom will endure. If there is an offer by China to meet India half-way, the apparent show of reasonableness will be entirely tactical. In its bid to reverse the "century of humiliation" and reclaim the Mandate of Heaven by 2049 — the centenary of the establishment of the People's Republic by Mao Zedong — China will never lose sight of its so-called lost territories.

One of the big errors that cloud public discussions in India on the challenge/threat posed by China is the disproportionate importance attached to the border question. This, in turn, focusses the debate entirely on the military dimension of the India-China equation. It inevitably also prompts the conclusion that China's acknowledged superiority in the military sphere — not to mention its indigenous capacities — means that India must proceed with an extra measure of circumspection. The history of the 1962 conflict that led to a humiliating defeat for India also hangs over the deliberations like a nightmare. In particular, the complete debacle of Jawaharlal Nehru's knee-jerk "forward policy" is held out as a reason why India should proceed with utmost caution against a superior enemy.

The assertion, frequently mouthed by those blinded by their anger against China's perfidious history, that 2020 isn't 1962 are not misplaced. India certainly is better prepared militarily to counter China. This state of readiness is also backed by political determination and an unwillingness to be deluded by China's double-speak. Nor does the present political dispensation of Narendra Modi entertain ideological hang-ups of the variety that clouded the vision of Nehru and his political circle.

Yet, one of the shortcomings of the public discussions of national security within India is that the India-China tensions are seen within a narrow South Asian perspective. An international view puts the whole subject in a slightly different perspective. What is becoming increasingly apparent is that there are growing misgivings over two issues: the extent of China's strategic control over key sectors of the developed world; and the political distortions resulting from China's bid to extend its influence.

Last week, for example, the US administration banned the use of the Tik Tok app for members of the armed forces and government employees. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that the Donald Trump administration is considering a national ban on the app that is seen as a major threat of national security because of the suspected transmission of data to China. This comes in the wake of the decision in the United Kingdom to exclude the Chinese-controlled Huawei from the 5-G services in the country. Earlier it had been decided that the Chinese firm would play a big role in the upgradation of a crucial sector of British infrastructure.

These developments over the past month are indicative. They suggest that Western powers have finally got over their preoccupation with short-term economic calculations and commitment to free trade and begun to look at the larger strategic consequences of allowing Chinese companies to acquire a big foothold in Europe and US. Although the restrictions have been justified on issues that centre on the immediate — the crackdown in Hongkong is cited as a factor in the UK — the misgivings go far deeper. I believe that in the days to come, China will find that its ability to do business smoothly in the West has been drastically curtailed, particularly in public utilities and nuclear power.

The fears over data security and reverse engineering have been complemented by wariness over China's creeping control over important public institutions. The extent to which higher education in the US and the UK is dependant on the huge numbers of Chinese students is causing grave discomfiture. Last week, the Royal United Services Institute in London produced an 86-page report entitled *China's Elite Capture*. According to *The Times* (London) which has accessed this confidential report: "The report alleges that Beijing uses various influence tactics in the UK, including 'useful idiots' as well as agents of the Chinese Communist Party to develop links with politicians, business people and academics to build a presence in critical infrastructure. It claims that 'British universities have been wide open to Chinese influence — partnering in research on gait recognition, cryptography and missile technology.' One of Beijing's key aims, it says, is to ensure that UK tech companies are open to acquisition."

It is unlikely that this approach has been confined to the UK. There have been similar revelations about the vulnerabilities of Australia. In this context, it is pertinent to peruse the minutely researched book, *Chinese Spies: From Chairman Mao to Xi Jinping* (2019) by Roger Faligot. The writer warns that "The word 'Guanbu' will probably become as familiar in the 21st century as the acronyms MI6, CIA and KGB were in the 20th." The full name of *Guanbu* is *Guojia Anquanbu* and it is the Ministry of State Security. It is the world's biggest intelligence network that spans the globe, including India.

China starts Pangong pullback

Major positive sign towards peace as stand-offs at 4 places started from Pangong lake on May 5

- The latest satellite images show a clear and marked reduction of the Chinese soldiers
- This pullback was noticed in the contested "Finger 4" area along the banks of Pangong lake
- The Chinese have also not removed their fast interceptor boats from a jetty in the



perceived Indian zone in the lake

A giant Chinese map is also put up at the jetty

The Corps Commanders of the two armies next week will discuss this issue

India will insist that the Chinese remove their boats as soon as possible to facilitate smooth disengagement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Chinese have finally started to withdraw troops from the Pangong Tso (lake), one of four face-off sites at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. While the other three "friction points" — the Galwan Valley, Hot Springs and Gogra — witnessed the pullback for the last five days, the thinning out of troops from Pangong on Saturday signalled a major positive sign towards peace.

Incidentally, the eight-week old stand-offs at the four places started from the Pangong lake on May 5 when the Chinese intruded into Indian territory and stopped a patrol. This led to fisticuffs between the personnel of both the armies.

Giving details of the latest pullback from the Pangong site which witnessed a brief brawl in 2017 also, sources said here the latest satellite images showed a clear and marked reduction of the Chinese soldiers. This pullback was

noticed in the contested "Finger 4" area along the banks of Pangong Lake.

They also said while the Chinese had also removed tents and makeshift bunkers from the Indian side, scores of tents and other infrastructure was still intact close to the LAC on their side. Similarly, the Chinese have also not removed their fast interceptor boats from a jetty in the perceived Indian zone in the lake. A giant Chinese map is also put up at the jetty.

Realising the sensitive

nature of this face-off site, the Corps Commanders of the two armies next week will discuss the issue, officials said, adding India will insist that the Chinese remove their boats as soon as possible to facilitate smooth disengagement.

As of now, the Chinese continue to dominate the spurs (referred to as 'Fingers') in this region with tents erected along the course of rivulets located along the contours of the spurs.

There are eight noticeable spurs, or 'Fingers' located along

the banks of the high-altitude Pangong Lake in Eastern Ladakh. India maintains that the LAC here lies at "Finger 8" while China believes it lies further to the West.

The de-facto boundary presently lies at Finger 4 beyond which Chinese forces have prevented Indian soldiers from patrolling.

Dozens of Indian soldiers were seriously injured in clashes here in May. India has repeatedly stated that it has right to patrol till Finger 8, a claim contested by China.

Five more die; State Covid toll rises to 61

- 570 new +ve cases; total surges to 12,526
- Day's highest 218 in Ganjam again
- 338 recover; total recoveries 8,360

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Five more Covid-19 positive persons died on Saturday, increasing the State's total death toll to 61. The dead included two from hotspot Ganjam district and one each from Puri, Cuttack and Khordha districts.

This was stated by the Health and Family Welfare Department.

The victims included a 70-year-old man of Puri district, who was also suffering from diabetes and hypertension; a 46-year-old man of Cuttack district, who was also suffering from dia-

betes, hypertension and hypothyroidism; a 56-year-old woman of Bhubaneswar, who was also suffering from diabetes and a 55-year old man and a 72-year-old man of Ganjam.

Another patient of Kendrapada district succumbed to other health complications in the State. "Regret to report the demise of a 62-year old Covid positive woman of Kendrapada district due to brain tumour. She was also suffering from diabetes, hypertension and asthma," the department tweeted. With this, the number of deaths due to other health complications increased to 18.

Meanwhile, 570 persons tested positive for the virus in the State on Friday, increasing the total cases to 12,526. While 384 cases were reported from different quarantine centres, 186 were local contacts. With this, the number of active cases in the

State rose to 4,475.

The day's highest 218 cases were reported from Ganjam district, followed by Cuttack 46, Sundargarh 44, Jajpur 40, Khordha 37, Nayagarh 37, Jharsuguda 31, Gajapati 25, Jagatsinghpur 16, Puri 15, Keonjhar 14, Angul and Koraput 11 each, Mayurbhanj 10, Kendrapada six, Baleswar and Boudh three each, Bhadrak two and Sambalpur one.

However, another 388 patients recovered in the State, taking the total recoveries to 8,360. The Highest number of 187 recovered in Ganjam district, followed by 37 in Khordha, 31 in Keonjhar, 27 in Jajpur, 26 in Cuttack, 18 in Nayagarh, 16 in Puri, 14 in Sambalpur, 11 in Baleswar, eight in Angul, six in Kendrapada, two each in Gajapati and Jharsuguda and one each in Bargarh, Bhadrak and Deogarh.

UP Govt forms SIT to probe police's 'connivance' with Vikas Dubey

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh Government constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Saturday to probe the local police's alleged connivance with slain gangster Vikas Dubey, a statement said.

Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Bhoosreddy will head the SIT, which will have Additional DG Hari Ram Sharma and DIG Ravinder Goud as its members. **PTI**

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 8,49,236
DEATHS: 22,678
RECOVERED: 5,35,914
ACTIVE: 2,90,264

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	2,46,600	10,116	1,36,985
Tamil Nadu	1,34,226	1,898	82,324
Delhi	1,10,921	3,334	87,692
Gujarat	41,027	2,033	28,685
Karnataka	36,216	615	14,718
Uttar Pradesh	35,092	915	22,689
Telangana	33,402	348	20,919
West Bengal	28,453	906	17,959
Andhra Pradesh	27,235	309	14,393
Rajasthan	23,344	499	17,634
Haryana	20,582	297	15,394
Madhya Pradesh	17,201	644	12,679
Assam	15,537	37	10,427
Bihar	15,039	118	10,991
Odisha	12,526	79	8,360
Jammu & Kashmir	10,156	169	5,895

2018 Tiger Census in Guinness Book of World Record

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's 2018 Tiger Census has entered the Guinness Book of World Record for being the largest camera-trap wildlife survey yet. The fourth edition of the tiger census, in 2018-19, was the "most comprehensive" to date, "in terms of both resource and data amassed", Guinness World Record



team has said on its website. Terming this achievement a great moment, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar tweeted, "The All India Tiger Estimation is now in the Guinness World Records for being the largest camera-trap wildlife survey, a great moment indeed and a shining example of Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

He also said that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, India fulfilled its resolve to double tigers' numbers four years before the tar-

get through "Sankalp se Sidhi". The Guinness World Records website said, "The fourth iteration of the survey — conducted in 2018-19 — was the most comprehensive to date in terms of both resources and data amassed. Camera traps (outdoor photographic devices fitted with motion sensors that start recording when an animal passes by) were placed in 26,838 locations across 141 different sites and surveyed an effective area of 121,337 square kilometres (46,848 square miles)."

"In total, the camera traps captured 3,48,58,623 photographs of wildlife (76,651 of which were tigers and 51,777 were leopards; the remainder were other native fauna). From these photographs, 2,461 individual tigers (excluding cubs) were identified using stripe-pattern-recognition software."

Apart from the unprecedented camera trap usage, the 2018 "Status of Tigers in India" assessment also conducted extensive foot surveys that covered 5,22,996 km of trails and

sampled 3,17,958 habitat plots for vegetation and prey dung. It is estimated that the total area of forest studied was 3,81,200 km² (147,181 sq mi) and cumulatively the collection and review of data equated to some 6,20,795 labour-days.

The assessment was carried out over three phases, with the various datasets then combined to be extrapolated via statistical computation, which informed the final results published in the survey report.

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday telephoned Nilagiri and Salepura MLAs, Sukanta

CM Patnaik speaks to Covid-hit MLAs, patients

Nayak (BJP) and Prasanta Behera (BJD), respectively, who are currently undergoing treatment after becoming Covid-19 positive, and enquired about their health conditions.

During the interactions, Patnaik wished their speedy recovery. The CM also spoke to the corona warriors under treatment at various Covid Care Centres and highly appreciated their noble work. He assured them of all support in their work. Besides, Patnaik talked to patients undergoing treatment at various Covid hospitals in the State. He enquired about their health and the facilities available there.

Notably, recently, the State Government included Covid management under its flagship Mo Sarkar programme and the CM has been directly speaking to corona warriors and patients. He has also asked senior officials to be in regular contacts with the patients and collect feedbacks from them as part of the programme.

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During the session, Rahul also criticised the Modi Government over external affairs matter and stated "things are in such a shambles that even our friends are turning against us", in a reference to a border dispute with Nepal.

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Rahul raps Govt over LAC row, Covid, says PM deceives nation

BJP MPs oppose PM Cares Fund scrutiny by PAC

New Delhi: The BJP MP are opposed to the examination of the PM Cares Fund by Public Accounts Committee, but PAC chairman Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury is expected to use his prerogative. On Friday's meeting attended by 17 MPs out of total current strength of 20 MPs, BJP MPs objected to any scrutiny of the PM Cares Fund by the PAC. The BJP MPs cited that the expenditure or revenue are not related to Parliament authorisation.

He referred to the PM CARES Fund, however, it stays outside the auditing purview of the CAG.

'BBSR Covid cases rising due to people from hotspot dists'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Covid-19 cases in Bhubaneswar are rising due to people visiting the city from hotspot districts for healthcare and other purposes, said Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary on Saturday. Overcrowded markets on Friday before weekend shutdown every week is another major concern for the BMC, he said.

"If we analyse, 317 Covid-19 cases have been reported in the city in last 10 days, of which 61 are linked to various hospitals. The cases, which had travel history and close contacts with infected persons, out of total cases in last 10 days are 212," Chaudhary said.

"For cases where links have been established, we are now shifting the patients to Covid Hospitals, doing contact tracing and identifying the quarantine of direct and secondary contacts and carrying out sanitisation in the areas. But for cases where links could not be established, we are carrying out 14-day active surveillance, taking around 50 to 100 households to a nearby quarantine centre, conducting 100% testing of direct contacts, testing symptomatic indirect contacts and declaring containment zone if required," he said.

The BMC has formed a slum committee that is carrying out house-to-house surveillance in slum areas, shifting symptomatic to institutional quarantine centres and conducting test to detect coronavirus. The Sachetak committee is supervising the awareness and enforcement of social distancing norms in slums. No home quarantine is allowed in slums, he said.

Page 3: 38 more Covid cases in BBSR; total 640

HOME THEATRE

A bit of heavy breathing

BREATHE: INTO THE SHADOWS

Amazon Prime Original
Episodes: 12
*ing: Abhishek Bachchan, Madhavan, Amit Sadh
Rated: 5/10

Abhishek Bachchan's debut in a second season of an established series *Breathe* was being awaited with, well, bated breath. He does not disappoint but one really never gets to go beyond the Jr Bachchan's persona much as he tries to get into the skin of a beleaguered psychiatrist. He is still his father's son, in the sense he carries some of senior Bachchan's mannerisms into the character, messing it all up, at times.

Breathe's Season 2 is better than Season 1 in the sense that the premise of the plot is better placed on believability but it suffers from all kinds of loopholes that stand tall throughout the drama unfolding around the kidnapping of a little girl from an outdoor birthday party.

Before proceeding on the ifs and buts of this season, a word first on the remarkability and presence of Amit Sadh who returns as Inspector Kabir as much more muscular, much more sensible and much less doused in alcoholic persona. Sadh is a delight to be with when he gets into waylaid characters like a guilt-prone father lubricating his liver with only *daru* and yet having the keenest eye for detail on a crime scene. In this one, he does well as a plain and simple Crime Branch spook handling the case of psychotic serial killings with acumen and incredible presence of mind.

The problem with *Breathe 2* is that it has a lot of jargon, a lot of mumbo jumbo and even Abhishek, as Avinash the shrink, seems to be analysing the crime with frivolous conclusions and many OTT liners on "ravan kay 10 sar, meaning *dus*

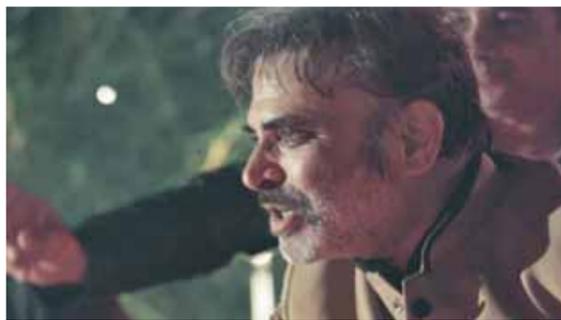


emotions to kill" type of analyses.

Flashbacks though meant to explain, often intrude on the story which itself is struggling with reason and logic most of the time. A kidnapper picks up a girl and does not make a move for nine months and then suddenly plans the killings of sundry people across Delhi. The moment it is revealed who the killer is, you lose interest in the proceedings. And that's revealed in the sixth-seventh episode and you

still have five more to go to the conclusion, which incidentally, is predictable but well mounted.

In short, *Breathe 2* is not too easy to inhale or exhale, but keeps going nevertheless with all kinds of sub-plots and side stories of people in extraordinary circumstances, be it a lesbian relationship, a dark incident in college and germophobia to name a few. A case of flailing limbs to stay afloat in a sea of crime dramas.



The one to watch

UNDEKHI
SonyLiv Original
Episodes: 10
*ing: Harsh Chhaya, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Ankur Rathee, Anchal Singh, Abhishek Chauhan and others
Rated: 9/10

The more the virus is forcing you to stay home, the more you are marvelling at some stunning content emerging from OTT platforms, *Undekhi* being the latest thriller in this altered entertainment environment.

Raw, aggressive, intense, intriguing and fleshed out with the minutest details of the story and its characters, this Original lives it up in style. Created by Siddharth Sengupta, *Undekhi* unplugs a stinging, action-packed story emanating from a resort wedding in Manali where a dancer is shot in cold blood with no regrets in any of the gun-toting, power drunk, alcohol doused gentry led by the ruthless adopted owner Rinku (brilliantly played by Surya Sharma) to kick scruples in the butt as hard as you would be taught to do the same to wrongdoing in a missionary school.

Harsh Chhaya, Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Ankur Rathee, Anchal Singh, Abhishek Chauhan, Ayn Zoya, Apeksha Porwal and Sayandeep Sen are not names you would remember in a hurry but after their measured performances in *Undekhi* you would like to do a quick roll call.

The 10 episodes keep you in the

grip without really playing to the gallery in an in-your-face way. Along the way, the faulty lifestyle, the blatant immorality, the extreme insensitivity or should we say the animalistic mindsets of an upper class Punjabi business family and its cohorts are laid bare with maximum impact and precision. Abuse, assault and sex, the oiling of the system, an innately corrupt police force, the fall of grace in many citadels of honesty — it is all there to leave you heaving in impact. Also, there is a story to reckon with and that's quite delightfully in-your-face, giving meat to the series.

Besides Surya Kumar, Debyendu Bhattacharya as the seasoned DSP and Apeksha Porwal as the tribal girl being hunted down lead the list of stellar performances, not to mention Harsh Chhaya who lives it up as a debauched, abusive motormouth patriarch of the family which dotes on its sleazy, hazy and totally anti-social existence.

The depiction of our society by Sengupta shows up the place of women in our society, be it the trophy wives of the rich and the powerful, or a daughter of the forgotten and the powerless. Injustice, and the acceptance of it by and large not just by the perpetrators and the victims but also by the media, churns up a scenario where you feel the need for purge.

Well, it is such raw depiction that thrills and kills in this gem of a series punctuating a space where a lot of intrigue has been fighting for a pedestal.

Slick teen thriller

ALEX RIDER
SonyLiv
Episodes: 8
*ing: Otto Farrant, Stephen Dillane, Ronke Adekoluejo and others
Rated: 6.5/10

Let's get to the issue *Point Blanc*. It's a teenage James Bond and Jason Bourne mix that helms the crime, cloning, syndicated world of fast paced action, murder, British Secret Service and a global ring of swish criminals that keeps Rider and its viewers on their toes. Flitting from London to a shadowy finishing school for errant teenagers in the snow-capped French Alps, this not exceptional and yet not run-of-the-mill spy thriller is both for young adults and, well, old adults in a season where home entertainment is the buzzword.

As a book, *Alex Rider*, written by Anthony Horowitz, sold a staggering 20 million copies in the teenage espionage segment and this series does not take too many artistic licences from the book. *Stormbreaker*, its original film version, however, took quite a beating at the box office, making this home entertainer a revelation.

The story gets going after Farrant, an otherwise normal school-going teenager, suffers a familial setback in the murder of his uncle and is consequently blackmailed by a shadowy unit head of the British Secret Service to penetrate into a crime ring and extract information.

Unknowningly trained into secret service mores by his uncle, Farrant plays the central role with precision and perfection turning into an errant teenager with issues that need a *Point Blanc* intervention.

What comes out of this so called high society correctional facility is a truth so dirty and alarming that the Secret Service is stunned too even as Farrant puts up the nonchalance of an irreverent teen with the right amount of gumption to pull a fast one on the syndicate run by a fascist doctor and his Woman Friday Stellanbauch.

Rider does well to remain in top gear all through and leave a window for a second one perhaps? Tune in with your teen and his friends for an eight-hour soiree built carefully to engage you in the proceedings without being entirely teeny or entirely adult.



'I have been acting since I was 10'

HARSH CHHAYA tells MUSBA HASHMI what made him take up the role of Papaji in Sony Liv's *Undekhi*, his fondest memory from the sets and his takeaway from the industry in his 30-year career

■ What is your role in Undekhi?

I play a rich, powerful and out of control kind of man, Papaji. He is a resort owner in Manali and couldn't care any less about anything on the planet. His only solution to everything is *goli mardangey*.

■ Were there any apprehensions before taking up the role?

Absolutely not. I was perfectly fine with the project and the role. I like to do different things but most of the times, I have played similar parts and this was something different. I just had to say yes to it as soon as I heard the narration.

■ Your fondest memory from the sets.

Everything went on without a mishap, that was the best part actually. We were shooting in Manali for 15 days and it was fun. I was working but at the same time I was also on a holiday. The whole unit was fun to work with. There were new actors and some of them were first timers so the whole energy was different and exciting.

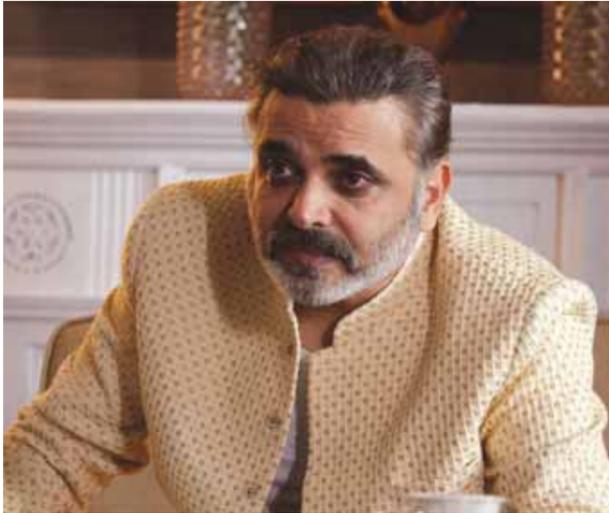
■ Was acting always on cards?

Yes, it was. I have been acting since I was 10. There's nothing else I would have chosen to do but acting.

■ In almost 30 years of career, what has been your takeaway from the industry?

To keep to yourself and deliver your best on time and in the way people want you to. Rest keep out of everything else.

■ Where do you find yourself most comfortable working in — TV, films or OTT platforms?



That is dependent on the part I am playing. As long as, I have a part of my interest I am fine with working in any medium. If I have a film and TV offer at the same time, and I like the part in TV then I would take that.

■ What is there in the pipeline?

Right now there is nothing to talk about because the things that we were in talks with has been postponed or cancelled. At this point of time, I really don't know.

AN INSPIRING MESSAGE

The rerun of *Jyoti* on Dangal TV is all about a woman's journey and the sacrifices she makes, her courage and how she stands proud despite the problems she faces, says SHALINI SAKSENA

It is not very often that one gets to see a show that talks about a woman's courage in the face of an adversary. Most of the serials are the usual *saas-bahu* drama and after some time, each show ends up along the same storyline. However, *Jyoti* that aired back in 2009-2010, stood out for a few reasons. First, it showed the lead protagonist as a very strong character. Second, it sent a message about women that despite roadblocks, it is possible to stand tall and proud.

Interestingly, the story of *Jyoti* is based on a real-life person — unfortunately, she died many years back. Writer Purnendu Shekhar tells you that when the makers approached him to write, the first thing he thought about was to write a story about this brave and strong woman who tied rakhi to him. "When the makers asked me to write a story, her story was waiting to be told. She was sister's friend and colleague. So, she was a sister to me as well," Shekhar says.

He tells you that it is sad that TV serials have become regressive. But there is a reason for this. Back in the 90s, the shows on DD were watched by a select few because owning a TV was a luxury. Hence, the content also matched the intellect of the niche. "Today, while it is good that every household can afford a TV, it has also meant that the content that is being shown caters to the taste of the masses hence, the usual *saas-bahu* dramas. Also, soon the makers and channels realised that people were looking for drama and twists and turns. The end result was that though the shows started on a good note, they all went the drama way. Take *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* and *Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki*. Both Tulsii and Parvati are such strong characters. Yes, they were housewives but had a mind of their own. It was the drama for the sake of it and the unbelievable drama made the show's look regressive and gave them the tag of *saas-bahu* shows. Regression became the core of drama," Shekhar explains.



There is a reason for this and he blames the viewers. "The educated viewers who used to watch TV earlier have switched to OTT platforms and the target viewership which television is catering today is of the viewers who still don't have much excess to OTT platforms. For them, television is still the cheapest and the most convenient source of entertainment. Most of these viewers belong to lower economic strata with low rates of education too. So, broadcasters and makers are targeting those mindsets. Hence, the stories are full of unreal, unbelievable drama. We can blame the viewers as well as the cut throat competition amongst the broadcasters," Shekhar says.

The advantage with *Jyoti* was that since the character was based on a true person, it was easier for the writers to be as true to her life as possible. Also, there were twists and turns in her life. It was easier to not dramatise and yet not give away everything. "Some of the dialogues in the show have actually taken place and were spoken by my mother and sister

to her," Shekhar says and tells you that one must watch the rerun of *Jyoti* for one simple reason.

She is such a strong character. The message that she gives is that even in the worst-case scenario one must stand tall, proud and strong," Shekhar says.

Sneha Wagh who plays the lead in the show says that it would be wrong to say that television doesn't do woman-centric shows. "All the shows that are shown for the women. TV is mostly for and about women because a large portion of viewership comes from women. TV is a woman-oriented platform," Wagh says. She tells you that to play *Jyoti* was not something that she had planned but it was a big opportunity. "Everything was happening around me and it was not something that I had a choice. I said yes to whatever good that came my way," she says.

"This show is off the normal track. Also, the character is relatable to today's scenario and not the usual *saas-bahu* drama.

Her character, since it is based on a real-life person, makes what happens in the show so much more than the drama that one gets to see," Wagh says.

The hitch that TV faces when it comes to air women-centric shows even though the majority of the audience is women is because TV is all about family viewing. "The entire family sits and watches TV and it would be wrong to compare the content that one gets to see on the OTT platforms and small screen," Wagh tells you.

However, it doesn't mean that one can't show more such shows that portray women in a strong light that are based on real-life women. "It is important to send a message to even the women sitting at home in small towns and villages. We don't always show women all decked up. There is a need to air shows where women are powerful. We have a patriarchal society and will continue to be so unless we change our mindset. Shows like *Jyoti* will go a long way to change this thinking," Wagh says.

TELLY TALE

SALUTE TO WOMEN POLICE FORCE

Earlier this year, Sony SAB launched *Maddam Sir*, a show which addresses social issues through the eyes of four dynamic women police officers taking every challenge as it comes and solving cases with *jazbaat* i.e. policing with a heart. The show features Gulki Joshi as SHO Haseena Malik and Yukti Kapoor known as Sub Inspector Karishma Singh along with Sonali Naik as Head Constable Pushpa and Bhavika Sharma as Constable Santosh.

Taking a cue from the challenges presented to them in their real-life as the *Maddam Sir* team, the actresses had an exclusive tête-à-tête with real life women police officers. The cast even discussed nuances of being able to successfully represent policewomen on-screen and took this opportunity to thank the real-life women police officers for their contribution towards our safety and well-being during this challenging phase.

Gulki Joshi recalls her audition days of the show and says: "When I wore the prestigious uniform during my audition for *Maddam Sir*, I didn't know if I will get the

role but getting the mere opportunity to wear a police officer's uniform filled me with such pride. I was ecstatic when I got the role of Haseena Malik, but with that came the responsibility to do justice to this role and represent our heroes with immense respect. These past few months have filled me with so much gratitude towards the police force and witnessing their relentless and courageous efforts towards keeping the society safe by putting themselves on the frontline. I am so proud to have the opportunity to represent such a force and I want to salute the police force for their unparalleled contribution. They have truly defined the words — *Kuch Baat Hain Kyunki Jazbaat Hain*."

EISHA ALL SET TO MAKE COMEBACK

With people across the country stepping out into the new normal, Zee TV has resumed shoots of its shows and is all set to reconnect its audiences with the journeys of their beloved characters that have become their favourite dinner-table companions. With an aim to reunite the audience with another such character that had struck a chord with the viewers, Zee TV's *Ishq Subhan Allah* will

see the return of the original Zara Siddiqui that was essayed by Eisha Singh till last year. Season one of *Ishq Subhan Allah* had ended with a heart wrenching twist when Zara (Eisha Singh) was assumed dead after her car having fallen off a cliff. Viewers hoped for a magical turn of events that would reunite Kabir (Adnan Khan) and Zara, however the second season of the show brought in a fresh and engaging plot full of twists and turns between the lovers, grieving Kabir and a new Zara. However, in a fresh twist post lockdown, Eisha Singh will return in a new *avatar* and leave everyone stunned!

Assumed to be dead all this while, the real Zara aka Eisha Singh will make an exciting comeback into the lives of Kabir and his family. She will be seen in an all new avatar, though — that of a music healer who believes in the extraordinary healing powers of music and its potential to revive even the most depressed. Questioning Kabir's prior mindset that music is haram as per his interpretation of religion, she challenges his traditional belief system, while denying that she is the Zara of his life.

38 more Covid cases in BBSR; total 640

Serological tests begin in capital city
10 including 3 Covid fighters test +ve in Cuttack

PNS ■ NBHUBANESWAR: Bhubaneswar on Saturday reported 38 new Covid-19 cases, with which the total tally in the capital city rose to 640 with 317 active ones.

Of the new cases, 26 cases were detected from quarantine centres and 12 were local contacts, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said. The quarantine cases included a 66-year-old man of Baramunda, a 50-year-old man of Shastri Nagar, a 40-year-old quarantined woman, three employees of a Government office at BJB Nagar, a 29-year-old woman of Shailashree Vihar, three women employees of a private hospital, a 33-year-old man of Shikarchandi Basti, a 70-year-old man of Mancheswar Adimata Colony, a 19-year-old male of Kedar Gouri and

a 48-year-old man and a 62-year-old man of Chandrasekharpur BDA Colony. A 27-year-old employee of a Central Government hospital, a 35-year-old man in a quarantine centre, a 23-year-old woman of Rasulgarh, a 23-year-old woman of Kalinga Vihar, an employee of a private hospital, a 17-year-old girl and a 36-year-old woman of same family of Kalinga Vihar, a 53-year-old man of Palasuni, a 27-year-old man of Nayapalli with travel history to Delhi also tested positive. The locals contact cases included a 58-year-old man of Kalinga Vihar Kolathi a 40-year-old man of Pokhaript Kargil Basti, a 57-year-old

Of the new cases, 26 cases were detected from quarantine centres and 12 were local contacts, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said

Meanwhile, in view of the surging virus cases in Bhubaneswar, the civic authorities on Saturday started a serological survey in the city to know the immunological status of the community and high risk groups with technical support provided by the Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC). In Cuttack city, 10 persons, including a local contact, tested positive. With this, the city's total tally rose to 239. The new positive cases included three corona warriors. With the new cases, the number active cases in Cuttack rose to 205. However, 32 persons have recovered from the disease and two have died.

Journalist dies of Covid-19

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

A journalist has died in the State reportedly due to Covid-19. As per reports, the scribe was undergoing treatment at the KIMS Covid Hospital in Bhubaneswar for past few days. Sources said the journalist was a resident of Hinjili in Ganjam district and was working with a regional Odia daily, which recently completed 100 years of its foundation. However, the Government is yet to make any confirmation about the journalist's death.

Bonai hospital OPD closed

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

The Bonai Sub-Divisional Hospital authorities on Saturday closed the Outpatient Department (OPD) for an indefinite period after a staff tested Covid-19 positive. However, patients requiring emergency care would be allowed for treatment at the hospital. All other services would remain suspended, informed the SDMO. Notably, Sundargarh district has been witnessing a sudden hike in positive cases in the last couple of days with Bonai sub-divi-

However, patients requiring emergency care would be allowed for treatment at the hospital. All other services would remain suspended, informed the SDMO

sion reporting over 15 cases so far. The district's total tally now stands at 616, including 405 active cases. While 209 patients have recovered from the disease, one has succumbed to the virus.

No entry of Ganjam, Jajpur people in Angul

PNS ■ ANGUL

As a preventive measure to contain further spread of coronavirus in Angul, the administration on Saturday banned entry of people from two Covid-19 hotspot districts, Ganjam and Jajpur, to Angul district. Exercising power conferred under Section 34(b) & (c) of the National Disaster Management Act-2005, Angul Collector Manoj

Kumar Mohanty imposed the ban. "If anyone from Ganjam and Jajpur districts comes to this district on some compelling ground, he/she shall be kept in institutional quarantine for a period of 14 days," an order issued by the Angul Collectorate said. The order came into force with immediate effect. The order stated, "It is noticed that people coming from Ganjam and Jajpur districts are mostly found Covid-19 positive and they

are spreading it to others. So, it is quite essential to take strict measures to curb the spread of the disease in this district." Any person violating the order shall be liable to be proceeded against as per the provisions of Sections 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act-2005. Besides, legal action shall be taken against the violator under Section 188 of IPC and other legal provisions as applicable, the order added.

Ganjam: 43 corona warriors among 218 +ve

PNS ■ BRAHMAMPUR

Ganjam on Saturday continued to report the State's highest number of new Covid-19 cases among all districts. The day's count on the day was 218, accounting for 38.2% of the State's total cases of 570. Now, Ganjam's total positive cases stand at 3,634. The district also reported two deaths out of the State's five on the day. The fresh 218 cases had

The fresh 218 cases had among them 43 corona warriors, including 19 police personnel, a person with travel history to another State and 174 in active contacts with previous positive cases. All new patients were shifted to a Covid Hospital

among them 43 corona warriors, including 19 police personnel, a person with travel history to another State and 174 in active contacts with previous positive cases. All new patients were shifted to a Covid Hospital. With the new cases, the number of active cases in the district rose to 1,708, including about 500 in Brahmampur. However, 1,892 persons have recovered from the disease while as many as 36 have succumbed to the virus so far.

2 more die; total toll 36

Highest 31 J'suguda coronavirus cases

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Jharsuguda registered single-day highest spike of 31 Covid positives during the last 24 hours. The infected included two municipal employees and a mentally-retarded woman of Mission Ashram. While 29 are from quarantine centres, two are municipality staff. With this, the number of Covid cases in the dis-

While 29 are from quarantine centres, two are municipality staff. With this, the number of Covid cases in the district rose to 165

trict rose to 165. Reports said officers directly in charge of Covid management like Magistrate, officers and police would get their swab samples tested soon.

Neighbours' travel to JSpur banned

DM also asks locals not to travel outside

PNS ■ JAGATSingHPUR:

To contain the spread of coronavirus, the Jagatsinghpur district administration has imposed a ban on entry of people from neighbouring districts. In a video message, district Collector SK Mohapatra also advised people of the district to curtail tours to districts where corona spreading is at peak. He appealed to citizens to adhere to instructions being issued to check

community spreading. "Any person visiting Jagatsinghpur from its adjacent districts Cuttack, Puri, Kendrapada and Khurda would be put on a 14-day quarantine period," he said, adding, "People wishing to go to workplaces in these districts need to obtain permission from the administration." He requested people not to visit Government offices frequently and lodge their grievances through social media. Out of 388 Covid positive cases detected in the district so far, 298 have recovered. The district has not reported any Covid death.

Bus service to Swabhiman area

PNS ■ MALKANGIRI

The Government on Saturday launched its maiden bus service to Jodamba in the Swabhiman area from Malkangiri town. Around 20,000 residents of the area, who were cut off from rest of the State until the Gurupriya bridge was constructed in 2018, would be connected with the Malkangiri district headquarters due the bus service. The bus every day departs from Malkangiri to Jodamba at 9 am and returns at 6 pm. Chittrakonda MLA Purna Chandra Baka inaugurated the bus service in presence of Malkangiri Collector Manish Agarwal. Worth mentioning, Maoists were active in the Swabhiman area prior to the construction of the Gurupriya bridge.

ECoR union to join nationwide stir from Jul 24

PNS ■ JAGATSingHPUR

The East Coast Railway Mazdoor Union (ECoRMazU) will observe "Sarkar Jagao Saptah" from July 24 to 30 as called by BMS for countrywide demonstrations. Sector-wise demonstrations will be held at State capitals, district headquarters, Tehsil / Block centers and also in all big industrial estates. The BMS has identified five major issues for the stir, including problems of unorganized sector workers particularly

migrant workers non-payment of wages, huge job losses, suspension of labour laws and increasing working hours in many States and unbundled privatisation by selling PSUs and also through corporatisation of Defence and Railway production units. As a part of "Sarkar Jagao Saptah", the ECoRMazU activists will contact grassroots level workers/employees of ECoR and educate them about the Central as well as State Governments' latest policies and their severe impact on labour.

'State has enough infra for new textile units'

"Textile and apparel manufacturing is one of the focus sectors of the Odisha Government and several firms have already set up their units in the State," Minister said

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In order to attract investment in the textile and apparel manufacturing sectors, the State Government has claimed that it has "world-class" infrastructure facilities, a strong logistics base and skilled manpower for such units to flourish. Addressing an 'Invest India Exclusive Investment Forum for Textiles and Apparel Sector' event here on Friday, Industries Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra highlighted the State's competitive advantages in the textiles and apparel sector.

"Textile and apparel manufacturing is one of the focus sectors of the Odisha Government and several firms have already set up their units in the State," he said. Exports and imports can be facilitated through the Paradip, Dhamra and Gopalpur Ports, he said. Industries Secretary Hemant Sharma said new infrastructure facilities are being developed in the State, including textiles parks in Bhadrak and Dhamra.

During the event, officials from Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Punjab and Tamil Nadu also highlighted the investment opportunities in their respective States.

KENDRAPADA Saudi returnee, murder accused, nabbed

KENDRAPADA : The Sadar police on Friday nabbed Sk Sarfaraj alias Jaan from the Bhubaneswar airport as he is the prime accused in a firing case of Babuli alias Bibekananda Moharana, president of Tinimuhani Bazar Committee and district coordinator of Dharma Jagarana Sena, on July 13 night last year. Notably, Jaan, who evaded

arrest and was hiding at Saudi Arab after committing the crime, on Thursday returned to Bhubaneswar by air. While he landed in Bhubaneswar, the airfield police informed the matter to the Kendrapada SP. As a result, the Sadar police with the help of special police squad rushed to Bhubaneswar and took him to the Sadar police station to conduct inquiry. **PNS**

Anti-CJI remarks: Dara Sena chief held

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Odisha Crime Branch police arrested Dara Sena chief Mukesh Jain for allegedly opposing a Supreme Court order over suspension of Rath Yatra in Puri recently. The 58-year-old Jain was arrested from his residence in Delhi. He was handed over to the Sahadevkhunta police in Baleswar district on Friday and then forwarded to a local court following interrogation. His bail application was rejected. Jain, founder-president of Dara Singh Bachao Samiti, a fringe outfit fighting for Dara's release, had made derogatory statement against the Chief Justice of India after the apex court ordered to cancel holding of Rath Yatra in Puri for Covid. Notably, Dara Singh was



allegedly involved in killing of Australian missionary Graham Stains and his two minor sons in 1999. Jain is also accused of extorting people on various social media platforms to raise voice against the CJI over the decision. In this regard, three FIRs were lodged at three police stations at Sahadevkhunta, Bhadrak and Crime Branch.

'Odisha to be made corruption-free' BJP prepares 6-month roadmap at 1st virtual meet

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR



The BJP prepared a political roadmap for Odisha for next six months at its first virtual meeting of its State functionaries held on Saturday. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan highlighted the Central schemes undertaken by the Modi Government to help people during the Covid pandemic. He called upon party workers to strengthen the organisation and serve people. State president Samir Mohanty stressed on the need of



ensuring Central schemes reach people at grassroots level. He said the BJP aims to make Odisha a corruption-free State and involve it in the country's development process. Various issues, including women security, Rath Yatra and Covid, were discussed at the meeting. Among other leaders, Prithviraj Harichandan, Dr Lekhasri Samantsinghar, Saudan Singh, Baijayant Panda, MP Suresh Pujari, MP Jual Oram, KV Singh Deo and Leader of Opposition in State Assembly Pradipta Naik were present.

Blood donation camps at Mahila PS

50 units collected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Red Cross Society, Police Commissionerate Branch organised a blood donation camp at the Mahila police station here on Friday. DCP Anup Sahoo inaugurated the camp. Mahila PS Banita Moharana registered her as lifetime member of the Red Cross and donated blood. Zone-1 ACP Manas Ranjan Gadanayak, Red Cross Branch joint-secretary ACP Lalitendu Mohanty and executive member Dillip Dashsharma coordinated the whole event. From this camp, a total of 30 units of blood collected. Besides, the Police Commissionerate Red Cross in association with the Samarpita



Social Foundation organised a camp at Palaspalli, where 20 units of blood collected. Thus, total 50 units of blood were collected by the Police Commissionerate Red Cross.

Abducted S'pur bizman rescued

But captors manage to escape

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

A day after being kidnapped, businessman Naresh Agrawal of Bareipali was rescued safely by police from the Sasan police station area in the wee hours of Saturday. However, the abductors managed give police the slip. Further investigation was underway in connection with the inci-

dent and a hunt was on to nab the culprits, said police. Agrawal had been kidnapped at gunpoint by three persons when he had gone to Sasan to inspect the boundary construction work on his land. The abductors came in a car and punctured the wheels of the businessman's car and forced him to accompany them in their car. But the reason for abducting him is yet to be ascertained.

INBRIEF

UFUNA CELEBRATES POPULATION DAY



Dhenkanal: The World Population Day was celebrated by the Utal Federation of United Nations Association (UFUNA) here under the chairmanship of lawyer Manoranjan Pattanaik. Former CBI Judge BC Rout and former Chief Engineer AK Satpathy spoke on the need of population control. UFUNA State secretary Bahadur Patsani welcomed the guests while Dr Dipayan Pattanaik gave a vote of thanks. Prof Khirrod Naik, Soumyaranjan Pattanaik, Priyabrata Bhanj and Upanna Ray participated in the programme.

SHAKEBITE: ASHA WORKER DIES; BOY CRITICAL IN N'PADA Nuapada: Snakebite claimed the life of an ASHA Worker of Patelpada village under Sinapali block in Nuapada district on Friday night. Shantilata Majhi was sleeping in her house when a venomous snake bit her. In another incident at Salebhata village in the district, 19-year-old boy Dinesh Sahu was bitten by a snake in his house. He was rushed to local hospital. After his conditions deteriorated, his family took him to a sorcerer for cure. But police later took him to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). Fortunately, his condition was stated to be stable.

MAN KILLED BY SON IN GAJAPATI VILLAGE Paralakhemundi: In a barbaric incident, a man was beaten to death by his son over trifling family issues at Bapujipenta village under the Gurndi police station in Gajapati district this morning. The deceased was identified as Meenaketan Biswal and accused son as Manoranjan, who has been detained by police.

DRUNKEN MAN BEATS SON TO DEATH IN NABARANGPUR Nabarangpur: An inebriated man beat his son to death over a family matter at Uparagadi village under Tentulikhunti block in Nabarangpur district on Friday night. Police arrested the accused identified as Madhab Majhi (52) on Saturday.

GANJA WORTH RS 30L SEIZED; 3 HELD IN GAJAPATI Paralakhemundi: Police have seized huge quantities of ganja worth over Rs 30 lakh and arrested three persons for transporting the contraband from two different places during last two days. While the Mohana police seized 468 kg ganja from a maize-loaded van and arrested two persons at Luduru Chhak early on Saturday, the R Udayagiri police seized 75 kg of ganja from an auto-rickshaw and arrested its driver near Chhelagada on Friday.

102 KG GANJA SEIZED; 4 HELD IN KANDHAMAL Phulbani: The Phiringia police in Kandhamal district seized around 102 kg of ganja and arrested four persons for transporting the contraband at Pobingia Chhak on Friday. The police also seized a Uber taxi and a motorcycle. The arrestees were identified as Aman Diga (25) and Josaya Diga (20) of Rajagharu village under K Nuagan police station and Jetendra Diga (29) and Manoj Diga (30) of Kudurha village under the Phiringia PS. They were forwarded to court on Saturday.

Infiltration bid foiled in Kashmir, 2 ultras killed

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

'Around 200-300 terrorists waiting in launch pads to infiltrate into India'

Ahead of the first anniversary of abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir on August 5, the Pakistan Army has started pushing small groups of heavily armed terrorists inside the Indian territory to scale up violence in the region.

Foiling one such infiltration bid by a group of heavily armed terrorists, alert jawans of the Indian Army on Saturday neutralised at least two terrorists in the Nowgam sector of North Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Besides this, fresh alert has also been sounded all along the line of control in Bhimbergali and Nowshera sectors following intel reports of possible strikes by the Border Action Teams (BAT) of the Pakistan army.

Meanwhile, briefing the

media persons about infiltration bid foiled near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Nowgam Sector in Kupwara border district, General-officer-Commanding (GoC), 19 Infantry Division, (Baramulla), Major General Virender Vats Saturday said, "two terrorists were killed in the operation in Nowgam and a huge cache of arms and ammunition, including 1.5 lakh of Indian and Pakistani currency, was recovered from them".

He said the cache of arms recovered from the slain terrorists comprises 2xAK rifles and 1x Pistol with magazines, ammunition, and some grenades and medical supplies. Major General Virender Vats also warned that Pakistan is

trying hard to push more and more terrorists into the Kashmir Valley to disrupt the peace in Jammu & Kashmir.

Sharing his assessment about the possible number of terrorists camping across different launch pads across the line of control, the senior officer said, "Inputs indicate that their launch pads are fully occupied. If we have to guess, it could be anything between 250-300 terrorists presently occupying the launch pads."

Exposing the role of the Pakistan army, Major General Virender Vats said, "the terrorists, who were trying to infiltrate into the area by cutting the anti-infiltration fence, were dressed in combat fatigues. They had taken the route through Pakistani forward posts in the area, which clearly indicates that Pakistan is pushing terrorists to this side".

Kerala: 488 test +ve on Saturday, 2 die

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

There was no let up in the ever increasing number of coronavirus cases in Kerala as the State diagnosed nearly 500 persons with covid-19 on Saturday, making it the highest number of cases to be traced in a single day.

The day saw 488 persons testing positive against Friday's 416 cases, according to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

He disclosed in a virtual media meet on Saturday that 167 of those diagnosed with the pandemic were expatriates while 76 were those who returned to the State from other parts of the country. In yet another indication that community transmission has set in the State, 234 persons who tested were infected through social contacts. The State also saw two sexagenarians succumbing to the pandemic on the day.

The Chief Minister said that Kerala would enter the community transmission phase soon. "Right now we are undergoing the Super Spread stage which means that the pandemic from one person reaches hundreds in a region. Once more and more places come under the

Super Spread phase, it is a matter of time before the community transmission sets in," he said.

"The Opposition parties' attempt to derail the Covid prevention programme initiated by the Government is the reason behind the surge in the number of cases seen in Kerala. They are staging unreasonable demonstrations across the State for flimsy reasons violating the Covid Protocol. I warn them that their action is as good as a criminal offence and the Government would not hesitate to take action against those who violate the guidelines like wearing face masks and not observing social/physical distance," said Vijayan.

He was referring to the demonstrations and protest marches staged by the Congress and the BJP across the State demanding the resignation of the Chief Minister in connection with the gold smuggling activity that was busted by the Customs Department at Thiruvananthapuram last Sunday.

Vijayan disclosed that 570 persons were admitted to hospitals in the State on Saturday. There are 196 hotspots in the State while the day saw 143 persons getting cured of the disease, he said.

3,965 more infected, 69 succumb to virus in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Saturday turned out to be yet another day of anxiety and apprehension in Tamil Nadu as 3,965 persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on a single day. On Friday, the number of Covid-19 cases tested were 3,680. The day also saw 69 persons succumbing to the pandemic across the State taking the death toll to 1,898 till date. As on Saturday, there were 46,410 covid-19 patients in the State.

A medical bulletin released by the Tamil Nadu Government said aggressive testing was on in the State with 102 laboratories working round the clock to identify and isolate the persons afflicted with the pandemic. The day saw 36,628 persons getting tested and this took the number of persons tested till date to 1.5 million across Tamil Nadu.

Though the day showed small falls in the number of persons tested positive in Chennai and Chengalpet, it is not convincing that the situation in the State is under control. While 1,185 persons were tested positive in Chennai (which had tested 1,205 persons on Friday), 237 were tested in Chengalpet (against 242 on Friday).

The day saw 36,628 persons getting tested and this took the number of persons tested till date to 1.5 million across Tamil Nadu

But the number of persons diagnosed with the pandemic in Kancheepuram shot up to 119 (against 61 tested positive on Friday) and that in Thiruvallur to 346 (which had tested 219 on Friday).

Districts like Madurai (277), Salem (136), Kanyakumari (133) ended up on higher side which dampened the spirit of health experts in Tamil Nadu who were expecting some positive developments after the series of lock downs and stringent regulations.

Tamil Nadu will soon have a plasma bank, the second of its kind in the country, the first being in New Delhi. According to Dr C Vijaya Basakar, health minister, the facility is being set up at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital at Chennai. He has sought the cooperation of persons who were cured of Covid-19 to donate plasma without fear as this is a life saving initiative.

Rath barred from posting comments on social media

PNS ■ JAMMU

A court in Jammu has directed suspended senior police officer Basant Rath not to publish any post or material by any means of communication which is defamatory or derogatory against six persons who claimed to be "acquainted with the current Director General of Police, Dilbagh Singh".

The order was passed by the judicial officer Jeewan Kumar Sharma, 2nd Additional Munsiff Jammu, on a suit filed by six persons—Parveen Kumar Mittal (businessman dealing in Plywood Manufacturing), Virender Dubey (Medical practitioner), Saurabh Dang (businessman), Rahul Bansal (businessman), Davinder Verma (businessman) and Amit Kohli (busi-

nessman).

"They have sought a decree of permanent prohibitory injunction, restraining Rath from posting any defamatory, derogatory, libel or slanderous posts or material on social media such as twitter, Facebook, Instagram or any other available social media platform with regard to them. They have contended Rath has made expressions, representations and gestures against them which on the face of it are opposing the decency and morality, besides being defamatory in its nature.

The plaintiffs have stated that they are "acquainted with the current Director General of Police, Dilbagh Singh and have family relations with him. "It appears that (Rath) has some personal grouse against

They have contended Rath has made expressions, representations and gestures against them which on the face of it are opposing the decency and morality, besides being defamatory in its nature

Dilbagh Singh and in this regard, he is maligning the image of not only the Director General of Police, but also the plaintiffs," they said, adding, "(Rath) in his various posts refers to the Director General of Police as "DILLOO" and has alleged various allegations of land grabbing besides other

allegation of connivance and statements which are defamatory and derogatory to the plaintiffs."

After hearing their counsel, the court issued a notice to Rath for filing a written statement in the main suit as well as objections in the application for grant of temporary injunction.

"In the meanwhile defendant (Rath) is directed not to publish any post or material by any means of communication which is defamatory or derogatory against the plaintiffs which has an effect of injuring the reputation of the plaintiffs in the society till next date of hearing," the court said as per an order with Global News Service, adding, "This order is however, subject to objections from the other side." The case has been listed again on July 25.

After Vikas Dubey's encounter Maha ATS arrests two of his aides

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Saturday arrested Arvind alias Guddan Trivedi and his driver Sushilkumar alias Sonu Suresh Tiwari, both henchmen of slain gangster Vikas Dubey, who were wanted in connection with the killing of eight policemen from Kanpur.

A day after Dubey was shot dead by the UP police en route from Ujjain to Kanpur, an ATS team from Mumbai—led by yesteryear encounter specialist Daya Nayak—arrested Trivedi (46) and his driver Tiwari (30) after laying trap for him at Thane's Kolshet Road. The Mumbai ATS would hand over slain Dubey's two aides to the UP police.

Acting on tip-off received from one of the reliable sources that one of the accused in connection with the killing of the eight policemen that took place on the intervening night of July 2 and July 3 in Kanpur when a police team had gone to arrest Dubey.

As per initial investiga-

tions, Guddan—along with Vikas Dubey—was involved in several serious cases, including the 2001 murder of Uttar Pradesh Minister Santosh Shukla for which the UP government had announced a reward.

It may be recalled that in the attack on the policemen at Kanpur, in which eight police officers and personnel were killed, following which a case was registered against Dubey and his gang members.

Dubey and his gang members were absconding ever since the Kanpur incident.

The Uttar Pradesh police had launched a country-wide search for Dubey and others.

Dubey was shot dead Friday morning by the police, after—what the UP police have claimed—he was trying to flee after the car carrying him from Ujjain overturned on an isolated stretch of the highway on the outskirts of the city.

Vikas Dubey had earlier been traced to his hideout in Ujjain, in Madhya Pradesh where he surrendered and was being taken to Kanpur.

Fake branch of SBI busted in Panruti, 3 held

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Panruti in Tamil Nadu's Cuddalore district is famous for the jackfruits grown in its countryside. Those who travel through the national highway passing along the town have made it a habit to stop their vehicles and buy the Panruti Jackfruit which is sweeter than other jackfruits. But Panruti earned another distinction, though the population of the small-time town may not cherish it.

Panruti made its mark in the record book by being the first town in the country to open a duplicate branch of a nationalised Bank and operating it for three months. The local police arrested three persons including the brain behind the fake branch.

One of the customers of the State Bank of India's Panruti branch was surprised when he came across a new branch of the same Bank in the same town. He intimated about it to the Branch Manager where he has an account.

The Branch Manager took up the matter with the Zonal Office of the Bank which in turn informed him that SHI has two branches in Panruti

and there was no third branch.

The Manager, on his part, undertook a mission to the branch mentioned by his customer and he was taken aback by the newly opened third branch with all paraphernalia befitting the branch of the country's premier bank. The billboard in front of the new branch had the age-old catchword of the SBI displayed prominently: the Banker to every Indian.

The Branch Manager got back to the Zonal Office which deputed a team of officials to probe the matter. The Bank officials got in touch with the local police station. Inspector Ambedkar rushed to the duplicate branch and took into custody three persons including one Kamal Babu, the mastermind behind the plot.

Kamal Babu's parents were with the SBI for many decades. After the death of his father and the retirement of his mother from service, Babu thought of an innovative idea, to launch his own SBI in Panruti. According to police officials, the fake branch was operating for the last three months but the Covid-19 pandemic played 'spoilsport' to Babu's dream of roping in any customers.

'Lockdown to be re-imposed in J&K if guidelines not followed'

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Amid constant rise in the total number of cases of coronavirus especially in Kashmir valley, several senior doctors have now raised a 'red flag' warning the local residents to strictly follow the guidelines else Government would be forced to reimpose lockdown to prevent the situation from going out of hand.

"We are inviting disaster for ourselves. The number of coronavirus patients are increasing every day. The severity of the virus is increasing. Out of 90 patients admitted in the Chest disease hospital, at least 65 of them need high flow oxygen, around 10 patients are admitted in the ICU and two are on Ventilator support", Head of the Department, Chest Disease Hospital Srinagar, Dr Naveed Shah said sharing his assessment while participating in a discussion on a social media platform.

According to the media bulletin, the total number of coronavirus cases crossed 10,000 in Jammu & Kashmir while 10 more deaths due to Covid 19 were reported, nine from Kashmir division and one from Jammu on Saturday

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□Out of these 10,156, Jammu division has so far recorded 2,181 cases i.e 21.5 percent cases while 7,975 cases i.e 78.5 cases were detected across Kashmir valley

□"Out of 4,092 active cases, 2,131 cases are active across three districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Kulgam in Kashmir valley only", the media bulletin said

from Kashmir division and one from Jammu on Saturday. Out of these 10,156, Jammu division has so far recorded 2,181 cases i.e 21.5 percent cases while 7,975 cases i.e 78.5 cases were detected across Kashmir valley.

"Out of 4,092 active cases, 2,131 cases are active across three districts of Srinagar, Baramulla and Kulgam in Kashmir valley only", the media bulletin said.

So far, 169 patients have died due to covid 19 in Jammu and Kashmir and at present the

active positive cases are 4,092. Significantly, 58 percent of patients have recovered so far.

Reacting to the behaviour of common people especially in different parts of Srinagar, Dr Shah said, "majority of people are not taking adequate precautions. Other than CD hospital, the profile of patients admitted in other hospitals of Srinagar clearly suggest patients with symptoms of Pneumonia are admitted there. The situation is alarming and we have to adhere to the guidelines very strictly to contain the situation.

Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary also appealed to the local residents to strictly follow the guidelines He said at the time of taking the decision to open the market places and allowing normal business activity the stakeholders were consulted and taken in to confidence.

"Now if the need arises to reimpose the lockdown we will first consult them. Till then, if we want to prevent the reimposition, the least we can do is to follow the norms of social distancing and other guidelines strictly", he added.

Lockdown in Guwahati may be extend for another week

Guwahati/Agartala: In view of surge in Covid-19 cases, the Assam Government is likely to extend the lockdown in the Kamrup (Metro) district for one more week after the 14-day shutdown ends on Sunday.

"The Chief Secretary as the Chairman of the executive committee of the disaster management in consultation with the citizens' forum and MLAs of the Kamrup (Metro) district would take the decision on the extension. "Though the health department has said one-week extension will be enough, others are advocating two more weeks in view of the rising infection," Health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Saturday.

With a population of 11.20 lakh, northeast's main commercial hub Guwahati is the headquarters of the Kamrup (Metro) district.

With some strict restrictions, Guwahati was likely to reopen in the fourth week of the month, he said and added, around 10 per cent population of the city had been tested for Covid-19. IANS

1,813 new cases in Andhra, 1,168 cured patients

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh reported yet another all-time high of 1,813 new coronavirus cases in a 24-hour cycle ending 9 am on Saturday, the fourth time this week that a record high has been breached. On the positive side, the day also witnessed a high of 1,168 patients cured of Covid-19 and discharged.

On Friday, the state had recorded 1,608 positive cases, 1,555 on Thursday and 1,322 on Monday.

The new cases include 38 returnees from outside Andhra Pradesh, health officials said.

Andhra Pradesh's total corona cases crossed the 27K-mark to touch 27,235 cases on Saturday.

The new cases were reported from all 13 districts in the

A total of 17 deaths were reported from the State—Kurnool four, Guntur and Vizianagaram three each, Krishna and Nellore two each, and Kadapa, Anantapur and Visakhapatnam one death each. The total death toll in Andhra Pradesh was 309 on Saturday morning

state. Anantapur district topped with 311 cases, followed by Chittoor with 300, Kurnool with 229, Srikakulam with 204, East Godavari with 143, and Krishna with 123 cases.

Andhra Pradesh conducted 20,590 more tests, as against 21,020 samples tested in the 24-hour cycle ending Friday morning.

As many as 1,168 more persons were discharged from hospitals and Covid treatment centres in the state. The cured patients now total 14,393.

As of Saturday, 12,533 coronavirus patients are admitted in hospitals and designated Covid treatment centres in the state.

A total of 17 deaths were reported from the State -- Kurnool four, Guntur and Vizianagaram three each, Krishna and Nellore two each, and Kadapa, Anantapur and Visakhapatnam one death each. The total corona death toll in Andhra Pradesh was 309 on Saturday morning.

The number of coronavirus cases among returnees from other states rose by two.

Returnees from Telangana continue to dominate this category, with 22 of the 34 cases returnees from the neighbouring Telugu state. There were also four positive cases from

among Odisha returnees. Similarly, three returnees each from Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, and one each from Delhi and Karnataka are among corona positive patients.

As of Saturday, 2,385 state returnees have so far tested positive while there are 690 active cases in this category. As many as 1,695 persons have recovered till date.

On Saturday morning, four new cases were reported from among foreign returnees -- two returnees from Kuwait, one from Saudi Arabia and one from the USA.

The total tally in this category is 428, with 299 patients cured and discharged. As of Saturday, 129 patients in this category are under treatment in hospitals. IANS



People buy vegetables in a market, after authorities announced a 10-day total lockdown from July 14, in Pune on Saturday. PTI

8,139 test positive, 223 die in Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The coronavirus situation worsened in Maharashtra on Saturday, as the State recorded an all-time high of 8,139 infected cases and with 223 more deaths, the total number of deaths crossed 10,000-mark to touch 10,116.

A day after the state recorded the highest-ever daily tally of 7,862 Covid-19 infested cases, the number of positive cases went further to 8,139, taking the total number of infections in the state to 2,46,600.

With the fresh 223 deaths, the total number of deaths jumped to 10,116.

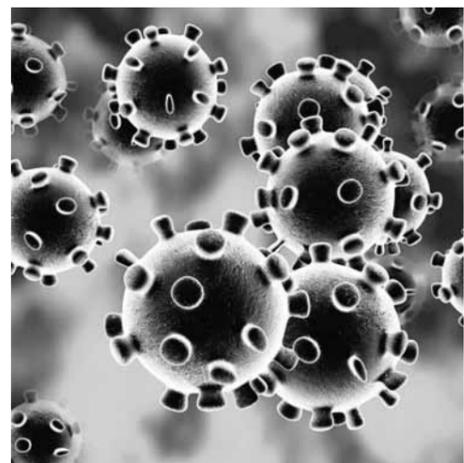
Of the total deaths, Mumbai accounted for 39 deaths which took the total number of deaths in the metropolis to 5,244 now, while the total number of positive patients climbed up by 1,284

cases to touch 91,745.

Apart from 39 deaths in Mumbai, there were 62 deaths in Thane, 34 deaths in Pune, 17 in Jalgaon, 13 in Nashik, 9 each in Palghar and Aurangabad, 8 in Jalna, 7 in Solapur, 6 in Raigad, 4 in Satara, 3 in Latur, 2 each in Kolhapur, Nanded, Nagpur and Amravati and one each in Dhule, Sangli, and 2 from other states. In addition, one person from another state died of Covid-19 in the state.

Meanwhile, Dharavi has come in for praise from the World Health Organisation (WHO) for the manner in which it tackled the Covid in Asia's largest slum.

In Mumbai, a BMC Assistant Municipal Commissioner Ashok Khairna, 57, lost to Covid-19, making him the 102nd civic official to have been killed by the virus so far.



With 59487 infected cases and 1,598 deaths, Thane con-

tinued to be the second worst hit district in Maharashtra.

Pune, which has emerged as the third worst affected district in terms of spread of the pandemic, has recorded 35,356 infections and 1060 deaths till now.

In a related development, the total number of patients discharged from various hospitals after full recovery since the second week of March this year touched 1,36,985. The recovery rate in the state stood at 55.55 per cent. The mortality rate in the state is 4.1 per cent. The state health authorities pegged the number of "active cases" in the state at 99,202.

Out of 12,85,991 samples sent to laboratories, 2,46,600 have tested positive (19.17) for Covid-19 until Monday. Currently, 6,80,017 people are in home quarantine while 47,376 people are in institutional quarantine.

BJP MPs, PAC chief spar over PM CARES scrutiny

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The lines are drawn in the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) over the scrutiny of the PM CARES Fund. While the BJP MPs in the panel have strongly opposed its examination by the PAC, panel chairman Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who is also the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, has favoured a proper scrutiny of the Fund and is expected to use his prerogative as the panel head to give it a go ahead. The Congress and its president Sonia Gandhi have been raising questions over the setting up and utilisation of the PM CARES Fund and seeking an audit of it.

In the PAC meeting on Friday, the BJP, which has 12 MPs on the panel, objected to any examination of the controversial PM Cares Fund by the parliamentary panel citing that the expenditure or the revenue is not related to Parliament authorisation.

Chowdhury invoked the interest of the nation to appeal

to the MPs against objecting to the examination of the PM CARES Fund as it is a fund of the Government and the country needs to know how the money collected funds from the public is utilized.

Many BJP MPs protested the move of the PAC Chairman to include the examining of the PM CARES Fund in this year's subjects selected by the panel. According to them, this move was just a politically-motivated one to summon the officers of PMO and Home Ministry to settle political scores.

It is learned that even though a majority of the MPs reject a subject to be included, as PAC Chairman, Chowdhury has the right to use his prerogative to include the subject.

BJP MPs are expected to complain to the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla if Adhir uses such prerogative.

But Opposition MPs pointed out that the PAC Chairman, who is always from the main Opposition party, has the prerogative to include subjects like on earlier occasions during the UPA regime when BJP

leader and panel chief Muri Manohar Joshi used his power to include many subjects opposed by the then majority Congress MPs in PAC.

Opposition MPs also pointed out that the PAC Chairman needed the Speaker's clearance only for summoning Ministers. He requires no clearance for summoning officials. In Friday's meeting, Opposition MPs countered the BJP MPs saying that the Parliament has the right to know who are the donors in the PM CARES Fund as well as how it was utilised.

Though the PAC Chairman is from the Opposition party, the majority is always with the ruling party as the members are selected on the basis of representation.

While 15 MPs are selected from Lok Sabha including the Chairman, seven MPs are selected from Rajya Sabha.

The total strength of the PAC is 22 MPs including the Chairman. At present, two seats from Rajya Sabha quota are vacant.

Migration from cities to villages to spike corona cases: Study



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Migration of labour post-lockdown from cities to vulnerable forest-fringe villages particularly in Central India will flare up the infected cases as well as fatalities given the crumbling and negligible infrastructure in these regions, according to a study published in the Current Science.

To curb the cases, researchers from John Hopkins and Azim Premji University among a few others have suggested lenient restrictions for people within a village as well as between villages to reduce the exposure of the locals.

“Such a ‘village bubble’ strategy could reduce the risk of spread among vulnerable

populations and requires that essential goods reach villages,” they said. Interestingly, New Zealand has successfully implemented a bubble strategy, with initial bubbles restricted to the household level and broadened to larger social groups as restrictions ease.

The researchers from the institutes such as School of International and Public Affairs from New York, Ashoka University from Sonapat, International Institute of Health Management Research, Azim Premji University also participated in the study.

Based on a previously collected household survey of 5,000 villages across 500 forest-fringe villages in 32 districts of central India, the researchers

○ The researchers from the institutes such as School of International and Public Affairs from New York, Ashoka University from Sonapat, International Institute of Health Management Research, Azim Premji University also participated in the study

○ Based on a previously collected household survey of 5,000 villages across 500 forest-fringe villages in 32 districts of central India, the researchers identified migration patterns over the last 5 years

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Villages with seasonal workers are widely dispersed (75 percent of surveyed villages) and 81 per cent of destination cities had reported Covid-19 cases at the beginning of the lockdown.

There have already been reports how the cases are gradually moving from urban to semi-urban and now to rural areas in the hitherto untouched regions.

India has already reported over 8 lakh cases and 22,000 deaths till date.

Using a disease spread model to assess distancing strategies if returning migrants carry the virus to villages, the researchers said that they found that lenient restrictions for people within a village combined with maximal restrictions between villages could

reduce the number of people exposed compared with moderate restrictions both within and between villages.

“Such a ‘village bubble’ strategy could reduce the risk of spread among vulnerable populations and requires that essential goods reach villages,” they added.

With the outbreak of Covid-19, the potential for seasonal migrants to carry the virus from cities to their home villages generates grave concern both for local people and authorities managing the crisis. The poorest households in these villages use seasonal migration to supplement their incomes, raising the potential for exposure to Covid-19 as migrants return.

As restrictions eased, chances of exposure and spread to adjacent villages from migrants who have

already returned persist. Alternatives to severe physical distancing are needed to reduce the chances of exposure while allowing people to obtain essential supplies, plant crops and carry out other necessities of daily life, said the study.

The populations include many tribal communities living in and around forests, with Gonds and Baigas as the main tribes. Moreover, “availability of health facilities is more than five times less than the national average. Eighty-seven per cent of rural households rely on wood as a primary cooking fuel, although recently, the availability of LPG has penetrated into remote areas.”

A primary concern is to contain the spread of the virus across villages in the case of exposure in one village.

To reduce chances of exposure in the population in a rural setting such as Central India, the model results suggest that a prudent post-lockdown strategy might focus on easing physical distancing restrictions within villages but maintaining movement restrictions between villages, while quickly imposing strict lockdown both within and between villages if a case emerges.

DCGI approves restricted use of Itolizumab in Covid-19 treatment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Itolizumab, a drug used to cure skin ailment psoriasis for the last many years, has been approved for “restricted emergency use” to treat Covid-19 patients with moderate to severe acute respiratory distress.

Written informed consent of each patient is required before the use of this drug, said the drug regulator Drug Controller General of India while approving the drug for the treatment of the viral infection.

A senior official from the DCGI said that Drug Controller, Dr V G Somani, approved monoclonal antibody injection Itolizumab, an already approved drug of Biocin for several years, for restricted emergency use. It is for the treatment of ‘cytokine’ release syndrome in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome patients due to COVID-19, he added.

“The approval was given after its clinical trials on COVID-19 patients in India was found satisfactory by the expert committee comprising pulmonologists, pharmacologists and medical experts from AIIMS, among others, for treatment of cytokine release syndrome,” said the official.

“It is already an approved drug of Biocin for treating psoriasis for the last many years,” the official said.

The company has received the DCGI approval to market Itolizumab injection 25mg/5mL solution for emergency use in India for the treatment of cytokine release syndrome in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) patients due to COVID-19, Biocin said in a BSE filing.

The company, however, did not disclose the price at which it will be selling the drug.

The firm has repurposed the drug, an anti-CD6 IgG1 monoclonal antibody

launched in India in 2013 as Alzumb for treating chronic plaque psoriasis, Biocin said.

The drug will be manufactured and formulated as an intravenous injection at the company's bio-manufacturing facility at Biocin Park, Bengaluru.

“As an innovation-led biopharmaceuticals company, I am proud of the successful outcome of the pivotal study we conducted with our novel immuno-modulating anti-CD6 monoclonal antibody, Itolizumab, which has proven to be an efficacious intervention in treating the serious hyper immune response seen with COVID-19,” Biocin Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said.

“This positions India among the leading global innovators in their effort to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, she added.

“We plan to take this therapy to other parts of the world impacted by the pandemic,” Mazumdar-Shaw said.

Hardik Patel made Gujarat Congress working president

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hardik Patel was appointed Gujarat Congress—a position currently being held by Amit Chavda—on Saturday.

Congress President Sonia Gandhi approved the appointment of 26-year-old Patel, who had joined the Congress in March last year ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

A press release from AICC All general secretary KC Venugopal said: “Congress President has approved the proposal of the appointment of Hardik Patel as the Working President of Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect.”

The founder of the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS), Patel rose to prominence as the face of the Patidar agitation in 2015 that eventually turned violent. He still faces sedition cases in connection with the protests.

Before he joined the Congress, he had claimed neither he nor any member of his Samiti would ever join politics or form a party and had argued for citizen activism.

BJP had accused him of being the Congress party's B-team during the 2017 assembly polls.

Patel's appointment is being seen as Congress party's attempt at wooing the resourceful Patidar community in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home State. The party also changed the district unit presidents of Anand, Surat and Dwarka.

India made right choices on Covid: Jaishankar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India made the right choices in its response to the Covid-19 pandemic and is as realistically well placed as any country could be under the prevailing circumstances, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday.

Jaishankar, who is part of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on Covid-19, said that when the pandemic started assuming global proportions, choice that every country faced was how to respond while playing to their own strengths.

Some countries had better testing capabilities like South Korea, while others like Germany had a strong ICU system, he said while speaking at the India Global Week 2020 via a video link.

What is interesting is that while India is at number three in the world in terms of case-load, in terms of fatalities, it is at number eight, Jaishankar said.

“We still have our challenges ahead, we are very conscious of it,” he said.

Modi to States: Emulate Delhi's Covid-19 fight

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Appreciating the efforts of the Centre, State and local authorities in containing the COVID-19 situation in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called for the replication of a similar approach in the entire NCR area to check the contagion.

Reviewing a meeting to take stock of the COVID-19 situation in various parts of the country and the preparedness of various states, the Prime Minister also directed that real-time national level monitoring and guidance should be provided to all affected states and places with high test positivity rate.

The Prime Minister reiterated the need to observe personal hygiene and social discipline in public places, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said.

Modi said the awareness about the pandemic should be disseminated widely and a continuous emphasis on preventing the spread of the infection should be laid.

He said there is no room for any complacency in this



regard, according to the statement.

“The Prime Minister appreciated the concerted efforts of the Centre, state and local authorities in containing the pandemic situation in Delhi,” the statement said.

“He further directed that a similar approach should be adopted with other State Governments in containing the COVID-19 pandemic in the entire NCR area,” it said.

The review meeting was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and the cabinet secretary among others.

The Union Home Minister had stepped in last month to

handle the coronavirus situation in the national capital amid rising cases and criticism in different quarters of the Delhi Government's handling of the COVID-19 situation, with complaints of non-availability of beds in hospitals for patients and difficulty in getting the tests done in laboratories.

Shah had discussed ways to check the spread of the virus in the NCR with chief ministers of Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The NCR comprises districts belonging to Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The prominent ones being Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida), Ghaziabad, Gurgaon

and Faridabad. During Saturday's meet, the “successful example” of surveillance and home-based care through ‘Dhanvantri Rath’ in Ahmedabad was highlighted and it was directed that it may be emulated in other places, the statement said.

India's COVID-19 tally zoomed past the eight-lakh mark with the death toll climbed standing at 22,123 even as 519 people died the disease in 24 hours.

Of the 519 new deaths reported, 226 are from Maharashtra, 64 from Tamil Nadu, 57 from Karnataka, 42 from Delhi, 27 from Uttar Pradesh and 26 from West Bengal.

Andhra Pradesh reported 15 fatalities, Gujarat 14, Telangana eight and Rajasthan six. Assam, and Jammu and Kashmir reported five deaths, followed by Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Punjab with four deaths each from Haryana and Puducherry.

Three fatalities each while two persons have succumbed to the infection in Chhattisgarh.

CPM calls UGC's proposal for online exams discriminatory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) politburo on Saturday objected to the UGC's proposal to conduct online exams citing that internet connectivity is accessible to only 36 per cent of the population and thus, it is unfair to the students from rural areas and marginalised sections of the society.

The CPI(M) said that under the pandemic situation, it is best to give the degrees based on previous perfor-

mances. The party also blamed the CBSE for excluding crucial chapters from classes X-XII courses on citizenship, nationalism, secularism and federalism.

“The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) rejects the unilateral proposal made by the University Grants Commission through a circular issued on July 6. This imposes a homogeneous national pattern of online/open book examinations where physical mode of examinations may not be possible under the conditions of the pandemic and lockdown.”

“Internet connectivity in the country is still around 36% only. Access to online classes or examinations does not exist for a vast majority of our students, particularly the marginalised and those living in remote digitally unconnected parts in our country. This UGC direction is highly discriminatory and hence cannot be accepted,” said the CPI(M) polit bureau in a statement.

The party said that educa-

tion is in the concurrent list of our Constitution and the UGC cannot issue such a uniform diktat without consultations with the State Governments and state universities.

Criticising the CBSE's move to exclude crucial chapters from classes X-XII courses, the CPI (M) said: “Using the pretext of the current pandemic and lockdown restrictions, in the name of reducing the syllabus for students, the CBSE has unilaterally take recourse to this measure.”

Covid-19 patients with high blood sugar level are more prone to death: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 patients who are not diabetic but have abnormally high blood sugar level are on the higher side of the risk of death as well as severe complications due to the infection, according to a study.

The study conducted by Dr Yang Jin and his team from the Union Hospital and Tongji Medical College, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, Hubei, China, has been published in the recent edition of Diabetologia (the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes [EASD]).

A number of studies have shown links between diabetes and poor outcomes in COVID-19 patients.

However, Dr Jin and his team showed direct correlation between fasting blood glucose (FBG) level at admission to hospital and clinical outcomes

of Covid-19 patients without diagnosed diabetes.

The retrospective study assessed all consecutive Covid-19 patients with a known outcome at 28-days and FBG measurement at admission from 24 January 2020 to 10 February 2020 in two hospitals based in Wuhan, China.

Demographic and clinical data, 28-day outcomes, in-hospital complications and CRB-65 scores of COVID-19 patients in the two hospitals were analysed. The CRB-65 score is an effective measure for assessing the severity of pneumonia and is based on four indicators: level of confusion, respiratory rate (over 30 breaths per min), systolic blood pressure (90 mmHg or less) or diastolic blood pressure (60 mmHg or less), and age (65 years or over), as per the study.

A total of 605 Covid-19 patients were enrolled, including 114 who died in hospital.

Of which 208 (34 per cent) had one or more underlying conditions (but not diagnosed diabetes), of which high blood pressure was the most common. Almost one third (29 per cent) of patients fell into the highest category of FBG on admission which if found consistently would result in a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

The results showed that patients in the highest FBG group were 2.3 times more likely to die than those in the lowest, a statistically significant result.

The data also showed that men were 75 per cent more likely to die than women.

The authors suggested that during a pandemic of Covid-19, measuring fasting blood glucose can facilitate the assessment of prognosis and early intervention of hyperglycaemia to help improve the overall outcomes in treatment of the infection.

AJKPC demands security audit of panchayat members

PTI ■ JAMMU

The All Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Conference (AJKPC) Friday requested the Centre to order a comprehensive security audit of Panchayat members in all vulnerable areas.

“The killing of political workers and elected Panchayat members is a matter of concern for all. Family members of our Sarpanches and Panches are living under constant fear in such

a hostile atmosphere. We appeal to the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister to direct the UT administration for early conduct of a security audit so that all Panchayat members in vulnerable areas are provided adequate security,” Anil Sharma, UT president of AJKPC told a press conference.

The AJKPC leader, who was on a week-long visit to different Panchayats and Blocks in Kashmir Valley, said every

Panchayat member wants to contribute more for the development of his village and Panchayat, but their movement and activities are confined due to security reasons.

Blasting the Pakistani Army, the ISI and their nurtured terrorists' organisation, Sharma said they are unable to face the brave armed forces of India, so they target innocent civilians and PRI members.

ED raids tour and travel operators' offices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has conducted searches under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) at eight different locations in the national Capital and neighbouring Ghaziabad on the premises of a number of tour and travel operators and associated chartered accountants and seized unaccounted cash amounting to ₹3.57 crore.

The searches at the residences and offices of Directors of the tour and travel companies besides the Chartered Accountants were conducted on Thursday that continued till next day. The searches yielded several incriminating documents and digital records besides the unaccounted cash, the agency said here on Saturday.

Investigations under FEMA, 1999 were initiated against various entities including tour and travel companies on the basis of specific inputs that these entities were involved in unauthorized receipt of foreign remittances through payment gateways in the name of providing e-visa services to the foreigners, the ED said.

“Investigations conducted in the matter so far have revealed that two such entities received foreign remittance of more than ₹ 200 crores for processing Indian e-visa applications of foreigners without any authorisation from the Government of India,” agency said in a statement.

These entities were also involved in high value suspicious transactions. Investigations also revealed that certain Chartered Accountants played a key role in managing the affairs of these entities and were behind the suspicious transactions carried out by them.

The seizure of unaccounted cash of ₹3.57 Crores during the search operations has raised further suspicion about the operations of such entities and their blatant violation of the statutory requirements, it said.

Further investigation in the case is under progress to unravel the larger nexus of the syndicate and the intended purpose behind the suspicious transactions, officials added.

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Investigations in unauthorized receipt of foreign remittances through payment gateways in the name of providing e-visa services to the foreigners, the ED said.

Indian economy showing signs of returning to normalcy: RBI Guv

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Indian economy has started showing signs of returning to normalcy in response to the staggered easing of lockdown restrictions, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Saturday.

He further said the need of the hour is to restore confidence, preserve financial stability, revive growth and recover stronger. "The Indian economy has started showing signs of getting back to normalcy in response to the staggered easing of restrictions," Das said at the 7th SBI Banking and Economics Conclave.

Indian companies and industries respond better in a crisis, he noted. Das, however, said it is still uncertain when supply chains will be restored fully, how long it will take for demand conditions to normalise, and what kind of durable effects the pandemic will leave behind on potential growth.

According to him, targeted and comprehensive reform

measures already announced by the government should help in supporting growth. Possibly in a vastly different post-COVID global environment, reallocation of factors of production within the economy and innovative ways of expanding economic activity could lead to some rebalancing and emergence of new growth drivers, Das added.

The central bank, he said, strives to maintain the balance between preserving financial stability, maintaining banking system soundness and sustaining economic activity.

"Post containment of COVID-19, a very careful trajectory has to be followed in orderly unwinding of counter-cyclical regulatory measures," he said.

The financial sector should return to normal functioning without relying on the regulatory relaxations as the new norm, he added.

He said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has reduced policy rates by 250 basis points since February

2019 to support growth.

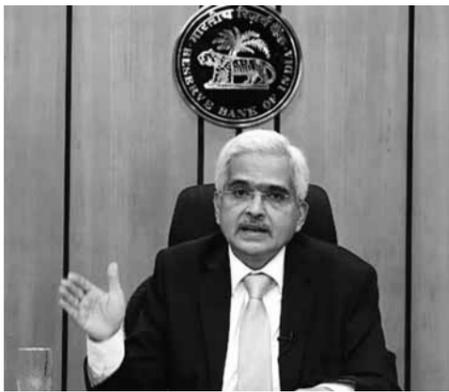
The conventional and unconventional monetary policy and liquidity measures by RBI have been aimed at restoring market confidence, alleviating liquidity stress, easing financial conditions, unfreezing credit markets and augmenting the flow of financial resources to those in need for productive purposes, he said.

"The broader objective was to mitigate risks to the growth outlook while preserving financial stability," he added.

Das said despite the substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the country's financial system, including all the payment systems and financial markets, are functioning without any hindrance.

"RBI is making continuous assessment of the changing trajectory of financial stability risks and upgrading its own supervisory framework to ensure that financial stability is preserved," he said.

Banks and financial intermediaries have to be ever vig-



ilant and substantially upgrade their capabilities with respect to governance, assurance functions and risk culture, Das noted.

The Governor also said banks will have to improve their governance, sharpen their risk management and raise capital in an anticipatory basis instead of waiting for a situa-

tion to arise.

He said as the lockdown has obstructed RBI's on-site supervision to an extent, the central bank is further enhancing its off-site surveillance mechanism. The objective of the off-site surveillance system would be to 'smell the distress', if any, and be able to initiate pre-emptive actions, he added.

'Need legally-backed 'resolution corporation' to deal with stressed financial firms'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das on Saturday advocated the creation of a 'resolution corporation' with legislative backing for resolution and revival of stressed financial firms.

The Government in August 2017 had introduced the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill in Parliament which, among other things, proposed setting up of a resolution corporation.

However, after a year, the government decided to withdraw the bill as there were concerns raised about the protection of depositors' money if it was passed with the controversial 'bail-in' clause, under which a bank's liabilities could be cancelled/modified to shore up its finances. "Going for-

ward, we need the legislative backing to have some kind of a resolution corporation, which has to deal with resolution and revival of stressed financial firms," Governor Das said at the 7th SBI Banking and Economics Conclave. He said the regulator can issue early warning signals and flag the emerging risks.

"The regulator will continue to take necessary measures, continue to engage with the management of the bank or NBFCs to identify the vulnerabilities, but there has to be a legally-backed arrangement," he noted.

The governor said setting up a resolution corporation was earlier part of the FRDI Bill which the government withdrew because there were certain issues which needed closer examination.

He further said the notification issued under Section 227 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has given additional powers to the RBI to deal with non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs).

By using those powers, the RBI had appointed an administrator for Dewan Housing Finance (DHFL) and that has been referred to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), he said.

DHFL, the third-largest pure-play mortgage player, is the first NBFC/HFC to face the corporate insolvency resolution process. Das said the resolution of DHFL is on stream now. "That is going on fairly well. We review it, we do monitor it from time to time," he added.

Rate cut helping deliver growth is not working in simplistic way: Rathin Roy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Senior economist Rathin Roy on Saturday said the assumption that rate cut helping deliver growth is not working in simplistic way as transmission is not happening.

Rathin Roy, director of National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) - a think tank backed by the Finance Ministry, said the assumptions on linear relationships between rate cuts resulting in growth by lowering the cost of capital is not working for some time now.

"I am not persuaded by the RBI's monetary policy state-

ments, including that of the governor, regarding the rush down for these rate cuts. I heard him (Governor) just before this session and I continue to not being convinced," Roy said at Annual Economics Conference organised by State Bank of India. Roy was also a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, who had addressed the gathering before the economists' panel, reduced rates by a cumulative 1.15 per cent in two moves since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the top of over one percentage point cuts before

that with an eye on the sagging growth, which slipped to 4.2 per cent in FY20. "It is very clear that this assumption (of rate cuts delivering growth) is not working in a simplistic way for some time now. Transmission is not happening," Roy said. He also said there is an "additional danger" posed by the lack of any known analysis done by the RBI on whether we are getting into what he termed as a J-part of the interest rate curve. Roy also expressed concerns on the collateral free lending scheme as not making the cut from a regulations perspective.

"That's actually breaking

Expressed concerns on the collateral free lending scheme as not making the cut from a regulations perspective

your own regulations, hopefully for a noble purpose. I would like to know what that noble purpose is." The noble purpose I can discern can only come from one place: the lack of action in terms of direct income support by the government," he said.

It can be noted that as part of the Centre's stimulus package, a ₹3 lakh crore collateral-free lending scheme has been announced for a limited period for helping small businesses come out of the crisis. Only existing borrowers will be given money under the scheme, which has government guar-

'Banks need to raise capital on anticipatory basis'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Banks need to raise capital on anticipatory basis to build up adequate capital buffers to mitigate risks arising out of coronavirus outbreak, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Saturday.

He said building buffers and raising capital will be crucial not only to ensure credit flow but also to build resilience in the financial system. "In such a situation, it has become a lot more important that the banks have to improve their governance, sharpen their risk management skills and banks have to raise capital on an anticipatory basis instead of waiting for a situation to arise.

"Proactively, it is necessary for both public and private sector banks to build up adequate capital buffers," Das said at SBI's banking and economic conclave.

The economic impact of the pandemic - due to lockdown and anticipated post lockdown compression in economic growth - may result in higher non-performing assets and capital erosion of banks, he said. A recapitalisation plan for public sector and private banks has, therefore, become necessary, he added. For the five years - between 2015-16 and 2019-20 - the Government had infused a total of ₹3.08 lakh crore in public sector banks.

However, the Government

refrained from committing any capital in the Budget 2020-21 for the PSBs, hoping that the lenders will raise funds from the market depending on the requirement.

Many private and public sectors such as State Bank of India, PNB, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, and Canara Bank are looking to raise capital through various means this fiscal.

The governor also asked banks and non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) to conduct stress test to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on their balance sheets and prepare a plan for any possible risk.

The RBI has recently (June 19 and July 1, 2020) advised all

banks, non-deposit taking NBFCs (with an asset size of ₹5,000 crore) and all deposit-taking NBFCs to assess the impact of COVID-19 on their balance sheet, asset quality, liquidity, profitability and capital adequacy for the financial year 2020-21, Das said.

"Based on the outcome of such stress testing, banks and non-banking financial companies have been advised to work out possible mitigating measures, including capital planning, capital raising, and contingency liquidity planning, among others," he added. The idea is to ensure continued credit supply to different sectors of the economy and maintain financial stability, the governor noted.

Healthcare spends, making India slum-free should be Govt's priority: Experts

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Government can turn COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity by investing in healthcare, and it should also pursue making all the cities slum-free by 2023, according to economists.

At the seventh economic conclave - organised by State Bank of India on Saturday, there was an unanimity among the economists on laying greater thrust on decentralisation in policy-making in the future, as a one size fits all approach may not work always.

India at present has the third highest number of COVID-19 cases after the US and Brazil, and has already lost over 22,000 people.

"It's very concerning that a lot of this discussion of the Aatmanirbhar (Bharat) package or other packages are not talking at all about what investments are taking place in the health sector. How much are we spending on testing, basic information campaigns.

"This is a health induced crisis, you got to respond to that in order to respond to the economy," Rohini Pande, who is associated with Yale University, said. India has historically under-invested in health and the increase is not very much right now as well, she said, stressing that we need to recognise that for economic recovery, humanitarian and

health crisis are all interlinked. "To change this crisis to an opportunity, let us invest in the health sector," SBI's chief economist SK Ghosh said, suggesting a plan to build a 500-bed hospital in 250 districts at a cost of ₹60,000 crore over the next two years. Pande said frontline health workers are not paid, and we can immediately start paying them and expand their base, which will lead to better case spotting and also contact tracing.

Arjun Jayadev with Azim Premji University said concerns on the health infrastructure affect the broader economy as well and pointed out that the animal spirits can only be rekindled once the fear of health shock goes away.

"Many migrant labourers may not want to return to the cities not just because they are not getting a good conducive environment to live, but they are bothered about their health condition as well," he said.

The Indian economy runs on two gears - one which have access to expensive private healthcare and the others who don't, Jayadev said, adding that universalisation of services should be a key theme while investing the money.

"You've this horrific situation where 5 lakh die of TB, 1.5 lakh children die and we don't bat an eyelid, except when the situation comes to us as COVID," he added.

Reliance closes deal with 4 investors, gets ₹30,062 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After Facebook Inc, Reliance Industries has closed deals to sell a minority stake in its digital arm to four other investors, receiving a total of over ₹30,062 crore.

In a regulatory filing, Reliance said it has closed sale of 6.13 per cent stake in Jio Platforms with L Catterton, The Public Investment Fund, Silver Lake and General Atlantic.

Reliance had sold a total of 25.09 per cent stake in the subsidiary which houses India's youngest but largest telecom firm, Jio, to 11 investors for ₹1,17,588.45 crore.

It had earlier this week closed the deal with the biggest investor Facebook when it received ₹43,574 crore from Jaadhu Holdings, LLC (a wholly owned subsidiary of Facebook Inc).

"Jio Platforms Ltd has allotted equity shares to Jaadhu Holdings following which Jaadhu Holdings holds 9.99 per cent of the fully diluted equity share capital of Jio Platforms Ltd," the company had said on July 7.

Now, Interstellar Platform Holdings Pte Ltd of L Catterton has paid ₹1,894.50 crore for a 0.39 per cent stake in Jio Platforms.

Petrol, diesel futures trading to start soon on exchanges

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) may soon allow futures trading in auto fuels petrol and diesel giving an opportunity to bulk consumers of these petroleum products to hedge their risks from a volatile market where there is a sudden spurt in prices.

Sources said that petroleum ministry has approved the plan to allow trading of petroleum products in the derivative market and the commodity exchanges would be able to launch petrol and diesel futures soon after SEBI releases its final regulations in this regard.

Futures are financial contracts which help the buyer to purchase a commodity, or the seller to sell the commodity, at a predetermined future date

and at a predetermined price. In the case of petrol and diesel, the derivative product would involve buying a specified quantity of the set at a specified price with delivery set at a specified time in the future. In a rising market where prices of fuel is going up, the futures product would protect the participant from losing out as the financial product would hedge the risk and ensure uniform pricing of the commodity.

"It is a good development as it will allow industrial and bulk consumers of the two petroleum products to hedge their risks. But in current market conditions, in the absence of a big pick up in demand oil prices are either stable or falling, hedging would work against the interest of participant as it would add up to the cost of hedging," said an oil sec-

tor analyst asking not to be named. Currently futures trading is allowed in crude oil giving opportunity to refiners to hedge their risks against frequent price fluctuations. The addition of petrol and diesel will give them another instrument to hedge their refining margins.

Sources said that as current market conditions may not be conducive for a futures market in petroleum products, it may wait before intruding the new product in the market.

Petrol and diesel futures in any case will not benefit retail customers as the quantum of fuel used by them would be low. SEBI may allow derivative products with a floor of say 100 litre of petrol and diesel. This will be too high a level for retail customers to participate in the futures market.

Apple deploys new Nokia data centre products in Denmark

IANS ■ HELSINKI

Apple is deploying a new Aline of Nokia data centre switching products at its Denmark facility to improve its efficiency, the Finnish equipment maker has said. According to Nokia, it has redefined data centre fabrics with the launch of a new and modern Network Operating System and a declarative, intent-based automation and operations toolkit. This will allow Cloud and data centre builders to scale and adapt operations in the face of exponential traffic growth and constant change brought on from technology shifts like 5G and Industry 4.0.

The new Nokia Service

Router Linux (SR Linux) NOS and Nokia Fabric Service Platform were co-developed with leading global companies, including Apple. "We regularly upgrade our data center equipment with technology to increase efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Using Nokia's new system will enable better networking and routing capabilities in our Viborg, Denmark facility," Adam Bechtel, Vice President and Networking lead at Apple, said in a statement.

Facing massive growth in demand for cloud-based applications and use of new technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Augmented Reality.

Range-bound: Rupee caught between higher inflows, swelling reserves

IANS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee has been caught in a flux of higher FDI inflows and swelling foreign exchange reserves, thereby restricting its future movement around the ₹75 per US dollar mark. Analysts opined that the rupee is caught between higher foreign inflows and the Reserve Bank of India's efforts to shore up reserves.

Even a lower import bill and stable exports do not seem

enough for the rupee to break free from its current range.

"With the RBI continually increasing its forex reserves and investment in dollar via forward contracts, a floor seems to be placed below ₹75 levels on spot," Anindya Banerjee, DVP, Currency and Rates, Kotak Securities, told IANS.

"The upside is also capped due to improving sentiments in the equity and bond markets. All in all, we are looking at a range of Rs 74.80 to Rs 75.80

over the next few weeks, with volatility remaining at a low."

According to Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities: "The rupee appreciated swiftly to ₹ 74.52 per dollar due to large FDI flows and rising equity markets and then weakened to ₹75.20 on the back of the RBI's efforts to mop up dollars to shore up reserves which stand at a record high of \$513 billion dollars."

"India is expected to see a

Balance of Payment surplus of \$60 billion this year due to lower crude price and falling imports. It is a big surprise that amid such strong FDI inflows, the rupee is still not strengthening as the RBI is mopping up all dollars to the reserves."

Besides, he pointed out that imports have slowed down at a faster pace as domestic economy looks weaker compared with global markets.

Presently, India's foreign exchange reserves increased

by \$6.416 billion during the week ended July 3.

The reserves grew to \$513.254 billion from \$506.838 billion reported for the week ended June 26. Last month, official data showed India posted a marginal current account surplus in Q4FY20 on the back of a lower trade deficit, along with higher remittances, and an increase in investment flows.

The current account is the net difference between inflows and outflows of foreign currencies.

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY



General public is hereby informed that one boy **Name:** Mohammad Muntazir, **S/o:** Nasim Akhtar, **R/o:** T-3376, Near Balmiki Mandir, Prem Nagar Road, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi-110008. **Age:** 13years, **Height:** 4'1", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Blue colour lower, T-shirt, Hawai chappal in feet has been missing since 27.06.2020 from the area of P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 310/20, U/s 363 IPC dated 29.06.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> P.S. Patel Nagar, New Delhi
Fax: 011-24368639 Ph: 011-25872637, 8750870434
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/188/CD/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one lady namely **Bharti @ Aarti W/o Indira Lal R/o H.No. L-298, Laxman Puri, Nabi Karim, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from the area of PS Nabi Karim, Delhi since 17.06.2020. In this regard, a DD entry vide **DD No. 64-A dt. 23.06.2020** has been lodged at **P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi**. The description of the missing/kidnapped lady is as under.



Age: 28 Years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 4' 6", **Face:** Long, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Black Colour Gown and Khaki colour sandal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing lady then please inform P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Sd/- S.H.O
Fax No. 011-24368638 P.S. Nabi Karim, Delhi
Ph: 011-23521081, 8750870428
DP/176/CD/2020 E-mail: sho-nabikarim-dl@nic.in

Preparations to connect Noida-Ghaziabad directly to metro

Principal Secretary will see DMRC's presentation on Monday

GDA VC SAID THAT FUNDING PATTERN WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED IN ONLINE MEETING

PNS ■ GHAZIABAD

After the lockdown, the business has slowed down, there is a slowdown all around, but then the Ghaziabad Development Authority (GDA) is trying to speed up the development work. GDA VC

Mrs Kanchan Verma said that the Government is also serious with the GDA to directly connect Noida and Ghaziabad to the metro. Proposals to bring the metro up to Sector-62 in Noida to Mohan Nagar via Indirapuram and also connect Vaishali Metro to this route, the Government has given time to the DMRC once again.

GDA VC said that through video conferencing on Monday, Principal Secretary of Housing and Urban Planning Deepak Kumar will see the presentation of DMRC. GDA VC said that funding pattern will also be discussed in this online meeting.

GDA VC Kanchan Verma said that the DPR has already been prepared for extending both the corridors from Noida Sector 62 to Mohan Nagar via Indirapuram and Sahibabad and from Vaishali to Sahibabad.

According to the DPR, the project will cost ₹3325.22 crore. In the funding pattern proposed by GDA for this project, a contribution of ₹1662.62 crore has been demanded from the State Government. The project requires a contribution of ₹462.93 crore from the central government and ₹387.71 crore from DMRC for rolling

stock. GDA has proposed a contribution of ₹381.63 crore, Municipal Corporation's 138.03 crore, Housing Development Council's 243.60 crore and UPSIDC's 48.72 crore. However, DMRC is not willing to contribute for rolling stock. On his behalf, citing a change in policy to the GDA, said that in a new project, he cannot fund rolling stock outside Delhi.

At the same time, the GDA argues that it is an extension of the old lines, not a new project. So there should be funding for rolling stock.

REPORT ON FORCED STERILISATION OF UIGHURS

China may sue researcher

Beijing: After several reports of the Chinese government torturing its ethnic minority community surfaced, the authorities are now considering to sue the researcher and think tank who are behind these revelations.

The Global Times has reported that German researcher Adrian Zenz and a think tank — Australian Strategic Policy Institute — will be sued for spreading “disinformation about China.”

Recently, Mr Zenz had revealed in his research that the sudden decline in the birth rate among the ethnic minority communities in Xinjiang might be an indication of the fact that the targeted birth prevention strategy is being conducted.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo condemned the coercive family planning against Uighurs and said that continuous repression of minorities in Xinjiang reflects that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has no respect for



human life and basic human rights.

“The United States condemns the use of forced population controls against Uighur and other minority women and calls on the CCP to cease its campaign of repression.

History will judge how we act today,” he tweeted.

German researcher Adrian Zenz’s shocking revelations are sadly consistent with decades of the CCP practices that demonstrate an utter disregard for the sanctity of

human life and basic human dignity,” he said while adding

“We call on the CCP to immediately end these horrific practices and ask all nations to join the United States in demanding an end to these dehumanising abuses.” AGENCY

Trump says China relationship severely damaged, rules out phase 2 of trade deal

Washington: US President Donald Trump has for the time being ruled out a second phase trade deal with China, saying the relationship between the two countries has been severely damaged with Beijing’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak.

“The relationship with China has been severely damaged. I don’t think about it now,” Trump told reporters on Friday from Air Force One when asked about the trade deal.

Earlier in the year, the Trump administration had signed a mega phase one deal with China, after intense negotiations between the two countries.

Relations between Washington and Beijing have spiralled downward since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. US President Donald Trump has questioned the

Asian powerhouse’s handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two countries have also sparred over China imposing a new national security law in Hong Kong, restrictions on American journalists, treatment of Uyghurs Muslims, and security measures in Tibet.

“Relationship with China has been severely damaged. They could have stopped the plague, they could have stopped it, (but) they didn’t stop it. They stopped it from going into the remaining portions of China from Wuhan province. They could have stopped the plague, they didn’t,” Trump said.

The coronavirus, which first emerged in China’s Wuhan city, has claimed over 1,30,000 lives in the US with 3.1 million confirmed cases. The virus toll in China stands at 4,641 with nearly 85,000 confirmed infections. PTI

Trump threatens to pull tax exemption for schools, colleges

Washington: In his push to get schools and colleges to reopen this fall, President Donald Trump is again taking aim at their finances, this time threatening their tax-exempt status.

Trump said on Twitter on Friday he was ordering the Treasury Department to re-examine the tax-exempt status of schools that he says provide “radical indoctrination” instead of education.

“Too many Universities and School Systems are about Radical Left Indoctrination, not Education,” he tweeted. “Therefore, I am telling the Treasury Department to re-examine their Tax-Exempt Status and/or Funding, which will be taken away if this Propaganda or Act Against Public Policy continues.

Our children must be Educated, not Indoctrinated!” The Republican president did not explain what prompted the remark or which schools would be reviewed.

But the threat is just one more that Trump has issued against schools as he ratchets up pressure to get them to open this fall. Twice this week Trump threatened to cut federal funding for schools that don’t reopen, including in an earlier tweet on Friday.

It’s unclear, however, on what grounds Trump could have a school’s tax-exempt status terminated. It was also not

clear what Trump meant by “radical indoctrination” or who would decide what type of activity that includes.

The White House and Treasury Department did not immediately comment on the president’s message.

Previous guidance from the Internal Revenue Service lays out six types of activities that can jeopardize a nonprofit organisation’s tax-exempt status, including political activity, lobbying and straying from the organization’s stated purpose.

But ideology is not on the IRS’s list, said Terry Hartle, senior vice president of the American Council on Education, which represents university presidents. Any review of a school’s status would have to follow previously established guidelines, he said.

“It’s always deeply troubling to have the president single out schools, colleges or universities in a tweet,” Hartle said. “Having said that, I don’t think anything will come of this quickly.”

In his latest threat, Trump revived his oft-repeated claim that universities are bastions of liberalism that stifle conservative ideas. He used the same argument last year when he issued an executive order telling colleges to ensure free speech on campuses or lose federal research funding. AP

15 people killed in Nepal landslides

Kathmandu: Fifteen people were killed in a landslide caused by incessant rains in western Nepal on Saturday, taking the total number of fatalities due to the landslides in the last 48 hours in the country to 37, the home ministry said.

All the 15 deaths were reported from Myagdi district, it said. Fifteen people, who were buried in the landslide in the district, are still missing, it said. On Friday, 22 people were killed in different incidents of landslides across Nepal.

The total number of deaths due to landslides in the country in the past 48 hours has reached 37.

Meanwhile, the government has mobilised the Army and police personnel to carry out rescue operations.

Narayani and other major rivers in the country have swollen due to the continuous downpour. Meteorological Department on Friday had forecast that the monsoon rains will last for another three days. PTI

Singapore PM Lee returns to power with clear mandate

Singapore: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong’s People’s Action Party has retained power with a “clear mandate” in the general election held amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, but the opposition staged its best performance ever by securing a record 10 seats in Parliament.

The People’s Action Party (PAP), in power since 1965, won 83 of 93 parliamentary seats or 61.2 per cent of the vote — down from nearly 70 per cent it had in the 2015 general election. In 2015, the PAP secured 83 seats out of 89 seats in 29 constituencies.

The surprise this time was that the opposition Workers’ Party secured 10 seats — its best result.

Friday’s election was widely seen as a referendum on the Prime Minister Lee’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak. Singapore is currently facing the city state’s worst recession with economy projected to shrink between 7 and 4 per cent.

Singapore is only a handful of countries to have held an election during the pandemic. This was not a “feel-good”



election, said Lee. But he noted that the ruling PAP received a “clear mandate” from the people.

“We have a clear mandate, but the percentage of the popular vote is not as high as I had hoped for,” 68-year old Lee told a PAP’s post-results press conference on Saturday morning.

“Nevertheless, the results reflect broad-based support for the PAP,” Lee said at a press conference marking the end of the election. “Singaporeans understand what is at stake and why we must come together to uphold our national interests.”

“I will use this mandate responsibly to deal with

Workers’ Party for their strong performance,” Lee, who leads the PAP as secretary-general, wrote in a Facebook post. “I look forward to them participating in and contributing to the debate in Parliament, and to the national debate, as we deal with the urgent issues before us.”

Lee assured it is “only right” that Workers’ Party’s Indian-origin secretary-general Pritam Singh be “formally designated” as the Leader of the Opposition, and that he will be provided with “appropriate staff support and resources to perform his duties.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated his Singaporean counterpart for winning the general elections.

“Congratulations to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong for success in the General Elections. Best wishes to the people of Singapore for a peaceful and prosperous future,” Modi wrote on Twitter. The son of country’s founding father and long-time ruler Lee Kuan Yew, Lee has been in office since 2004. For the second time in

Singapore’s history, all seats were contested, with two constituencies seeing three-cornered fights. Altogether, there were 10 opposition parties and one independent candidate who vied for a spot in Parliament.

A total of 2,535,565 votes, including rejected votes, were cast in what was the country’s 13th election since independence. This made up 95.63 per cent of the 2,651,435 registered electors, the largest turnout since 1997.

Prime Minister Lee said, “Singaporeans understand what’s at stake and why we must come together to uphold our national interests.”

He pledged to use this mandate “responsibly” to deal with the COVID-19 situation and economic downturn, to take Singapore “safely through the crisis and beyond”.

“The results reflect the pain and uncertainty that Singaporeans feel in this crisis, the loss of income, the anxiety about jobs, the disruption caused by the circuit breaker and the safe distancing restrictions,” he said. PTI

Oli says intra-party disputes can be resolved through dialogue as NCP again postpones its meeting

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Under mounting pressure to resign, Nepal’s beleaguered Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has downplayed the intra-party rift and said such disputes are “regular phenomena” that can be resolved through dialogue, as a crucial meeting of the ruling party was postponed by a week to give more time to the warring factions to reach a power-sharing deal.

Prime Minister Oli also vowed to protect Nepal’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, amidst a border row with India.

In a previously unannounced address to the nation on Friday night, hours after the crucial Standing Committee meeting of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) was

postponed for the fourth time, Oli said that it is the duty of a political party and its leaders to resolve the internal matters and disputes.

The meeting of the NCP’s 45-member powerful Standing Committee was scheduled to be held on Friday. But it was postponed for a week at the last moment, citing floods and landslides that killed at least 22 people.

Top NCP leaders, including former prime minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’, have demanded Prime Minister Oli’s resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were “neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate.” But in his prime-time address, Oli tried to downplay the intra-party rift and growing demand for his resignation. PTI

Dozens of US Marines in Japan’s Okinawa get virus

Tokyo: Dozens of US Marines at two bases on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa have been infected with the coronavirus in what is feared to be a massive outbreak, Okinawa’s governor said on Saturday, demanding an adequate explanation from the US military.

Gov. Denny Tamaki said he could say only that a “few dozen” cases had been found recently because the US military asked that the exact figure not be released. The outbreaks occurred at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which is at the center of a relocation dispute, and Camp Hansen, Tamaki said.

Local media, citing unnamed sources, said about 60 people had been infected. “Okinawans are shocked by what we were told (by the U.S. Military),” Tamaki told a

news conference. “We now have strong doubts that the US military has taken adequate disease prevention measures.”

Tamaki demanded transparency in the latest development and said he planned to request talks between the US military and Okinawan officials. He said Okinawan officials also asked the Japanese government to demand that the US provide details including the number of cases, seal off Futenma and Camp Hansen, and step up preventive measures on base.

Okinawa officials made similar requests to the US military on Friday in order to address local residents’ concerns, Tamaki said.

The Marines said in a statement on Friday that the troops were taking additional protective measures to limit the spread of the coronavirus and

were restricting off-base activities. The statement said measures are “to protect our forces, our families, and the local community,” without providing details on the infections.

The Marines did not immediately respond on Saturday to an Associated Press inquiry about the latest outbreak.

Okinawa is home to more than half of about 50,000 American troops based in Japan under a bilateral security pact, and the residents are sensitive to US base-related problems. Many Okinawans have long complained about pollution, noise and crime related to US bases. Okinawans also oppose a planned relocation of the Futenma air base from the current site in a densely populated area in the south to a less populated area on the east coast. AP

Thousands protest arrest of Russian regional Governor

Moscow: Thousands of demonstrators in the Russian Far East city of Khabarovsk have held a protest against the arrest of the region’s governor on charges of involvement in multiple murders.

The Saturday demonstration in the city 6100 kilometers (3800 miles) east of Moscow was unsanctioned but no arrests were reported. Local news media gave estimates of the crowd ranging from 5,000 to 35,000.

Sergei Furgal, the Khabarovsk region governor, was arrested Thursday and flown to Moscow where he was interrogated and ordered held in jail for two months.

Russia’s main criminal investigation body says he is suspected of involvement in several murders of businessmen in 2004 and 2005, before his political career began. AP

UNESCO regrets Turkish move to convert Hagia Sophia into mosque

United Nations: The UN’s cultural agency has voiced deep regret over Turkey’s decision, “made without prior discussion”, to convert Istanbul’s iconic sixth-century Hagia Sophia into a mosque, saying its status as a museum reflects the universal nature of its heritage and makes it a powerful symbol for dialogue.

The ancient Hagia Sophia was founded around 1,500 years ago as a cathedral and is widely regarded as the foremost example of Byzantine Christian architecture in the world.

Following the rise of the Ottoman Empire, it became a mosque, but in 1934, was designated a secular museum,

shared by Christians, Muslims and those of all faiths or none, alike.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed a decree following years of campaigning by a cultural association, and the decision earlier in the day by a Turkish court, handing control of the building over to the nation’s religious directorate, allowing it to reopen for worship as a mosque, the UN said in a statement.

“Hagia Sophia is an architectural masterpiece and a unique testimony to interactions between Europe and Asia over the centuries. Its status as a museum reflects the universal nature of its heritage, and

makes it a powerful symbol for dialogue,” UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay said in a statement on Friday.

Azoulay said that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) “deeply regrets” the decision of the Turkish authorities, “made without prior discussion, to change the status of Hagia Sophia” and shared her serious concern with the Ambassador of Turkey to the UN cultural agency.

Responding to questions on the issue, UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said at his daily press briefing that the UN Secretary-General fully backs UNESCO. PTI

5 killed as gunmen storm church in S Africa over leadership battle between two factions

Johannesburg: Five people were shot dead and over 40 suspects arrested after a heavily-armed group stormed a prominent South African church near here and held several people hostage reportedly following a battle between two factions over its leadership.

Police reportedly freed about 200 people who had taken refuge inside International Pentecostal Holiness Church in Zuurbekom, west of here after attackers arrived in several vehicles in the early hours of Saturday and began shooting randomly inside and outside the church.

National police spokesperson Brigadier Vish Naidoo said that four men were shot and

burnt in a vehicle just outside the church and a fifth man, believed to be a security guard who had responded to a call, was shot in another car.

Six other people were injured. He said swift reaction by the police had averted what could have become “a blood-bath.”

“We have arrested over 41 suspects, including six who were injured and were taken to hospital. We also seized over 40 firearms, including rifles, shotguns and handguns,” Naidoo said.

The attack by a group of armed people “may have been motivated by a feud” between church members, the police statement said. PTI

Over half of Covid-19 infected adults in S Africa are asymptomatic: Official

Johannesburg: A top health official in South Africa has said that about 50 to 66 per cent of all the adults infected with the COVID-19 disease in the country are asymptomatic, with many infections going undetected.

The deadly contagion, which first emerged in China’s Wuhan city in December last year, has claimed 3,860 lives and infected over 2,50,000 people in South Africa.

“The majority of COVID-19 infections are going unnoticed,” according to Dr Shabir Madhi, the leader of the South African leg of an international vaccine trial headed by the University of Oxford.

In an interview with CNBC on Friday, Madhi said that the



high number of asymptomatic cases was causing difficulties in vaccine trials.

The enrolment process has shown that far more people are asymptomatic than what was previously believed, he said.

He estimated that only about 10 per cent of all COVID-19 cases are being officially reported.

Madhi said around 80 per cent of all children who are infected are asymptomatic.

The clinical trials require people who have not been infected by the virus. Part of the

enrolment process for the COVID-19 vaccine trial involves the screening of individuals.

Qualifying participants are randomly allocated into one of two groups — vaccine group or placebo group.

Madhi said the results on whether the vaccine works as protection against COVID-19 would be available by the end of November this year, but the trials may be extended into the second quarter of next year.

He warned against the undue optimism, reminding that only 10 per cent of vaccines that go into clinical trials are eventually licensed for use. Right now there are approximately 200 vaccines that are being developed (around the world) for the COVID-19. PTI

Crawley pushes Eng lead past 100

Rahane wants to make ODI comeback



Dom Sibley raises his bat to celebrate his fifty runs during fourth day

1st Test, Day 5
Live from 3:30pm IST
SONY SIX NETWORK

AFP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Roston Chase proved a thorn in England's side once again as West Indies strengthened their grip on the first Test at Southampton on Saturday.

England were 168-3 in their second innings at tea on the fourth day, just 54 runs ahead of West Indies' first innings 318.

Chase had taken 2-45 in 19 overs, although both Rory Burns and Joe Denly donated their wickets to the off-spinner.

And in between their exits, Dom Sibley — bowled off a no-ball immediately after completing his half century — fell for exactly fifty when he was caught down the legside off Shannon Gabriel.

Zak Crawley was 38 not out, with England stand-in captain Ben Stokes yet to get off the mark.

All-rounder Stokes, leading the side in the absence of Joe Root, had top-scored with 43 in England's lowly first-innings 204.

The paceman, second to West Indies captain Jason Holder in the ICC's Test all-rounder rankings, then led from the front with the ball as well by taking 4-49.

England resumed Saturday on 15-0 in ideal sunny batting conditions on a placid pitch.

BROAD SHOULD BE PLAYING EVERY TEST MATCH: CORK

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England pacer Dominic Cork has backed Stuart Broad, saying the ace pacer has every reason to be angry as he should be playing every Test match.

Veteran pacer James Anderson was given the nod alongside Mark Wood and Jofra Archer as Broad had to be content with following the action from the bench.

"Absolutely I agree with him," Cork was quoted as saying by *Sky Sports*. "It's a big decision to leave someone out of his quality."

"Look at what he's done, not just over the last two years, and how well he has bowled, but throughout his career."

"He always seems to have to prove himself to people what a superb bowler he's been. He and Jimmy Anderson are up there with the best pairings in world cricket."

"Of course he should be frustrated, of course he should be angry."

"He should be playing every Test match so, fair enough, come out and put the people who've made this decision under pressure and say 'I want to be in this side, I deserve to be in this side, this

West Indies were without a frontline spinner after omitting Rakeem Cornwall."

But they could call upon Chase, who although a batting



is my shirt'

"Let's see what happens, whether he plays in the next Test match," he added.

Earlier, former England captain Nasser Hussain said the hosts missed a trick by leaving Broad out.

"I agreed with every word Broad said, and his right to say it, which he has built up over 138 Tests for his country. And, if I'd been captain, I'd have enjoyed the fact that the decision annoyed him. I'd have liked how he sought out the national selector Ed Smith and asked for an explanation."

Hussain wrote in his column for *Daily Mail*. IANS

all-rounder took a Test-best 8-60 when West Indies beat England at his Barbados home ground last year en route to a 2-1 series win.

And having already made 47 in this match, he removed well-set opener Burns for 42 when the left-hander saw a careless cut caught at backward point to end a first-wicket stand of 72.

Sibley pressed on to a painstaking fifty off 161 balls.

The very next delivery saw Sibley play on to Gabriel only for third umpire Michael Gough to rule the fast bowler had over-stepped.

It was a desperately close no-ball call but, two balls later, Sibley glanced fast bowler Gabriel to diving wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich and was out for exactly 50.

This was not the first time in his seven Tests Sibley had been caught down the legside, with England fast bowler Jofra Archer also dismissing him in similar fashion during an intra-squad warm-up match.

Denly, averaging under 30 in Test cricket and needing a big score to cement his place in the side, then undid all his hard work by tamely chipping Chase to Holder at short midwicket.

West Indies had dominated the first three days of a match that marks international cricket's return from lockdown.

Holder took a Test-best 6-42 after losing the toss in the opening match of a behind closed doors series.

Kraigg Brathwaite then made 65, the opener's first Test fifty in 22 innings, and Dowrich a valuable 61 as the tourists built a sizeable first-innings lead of 114.



NEW DELHI: India Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane is trusting his instincts to make an ODI comeback, a format he last played in February 2018.

The 32-year-old said he is mentally preparing himself to play all three formats.

"I am ready to bat at any position in ODI cricket, whether opening or No 4 or whatever, I am ready. My instinct answers yes, I want to make a comeback in ODI cricket," Rahane told *ESPNCricinfo Cricketbaazi*.

"But when the opportunity will come, we don't know. Mentally I am preparing to play all the formats. It is all about being positive yourself and about your abilities."

To make an ODI comeback will be tougher than ever considering the stiff competition. He will be comfortable batting at four but fellow *Mumbaikar* Shreyas Iyer has secured that spot for now. The team also has a settled opening pair in Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan.

"I have enjoyed opening the innings, but I don't mind batting at number 4 if I am asked to. I have enjoyed both roles," he said when asked which position he would prefer in ODI cricket.

"It is very hard to suddenly open the innings and adjust to it after you have been batting at No 4 for a while, which I had done. It is hard to say which position I prefer. I can do well in both," said Rahane who has played 90 ODIs.

Rahane has also played in 65 Tests, the last being in February this year. He has also not been a part of the Indian T20 team for nearly four years.

Asked about his approach in T20s, he said, "I don't try and copy anyone in T20 cricket. My cricketing shots are inside out, behind the bowler, and other shots I have developed."

"I think if you are sure of your shots, you should back them. If I am playing 18 overs, I aim to see how I can get my strike rate to 150-160."

Rahane said it's important to break down innings in T20 cricket. "For example, if I have to bat for six over, I have to plan accordingly."

He said he got advice from the great Rahul Dravid that it does not matter whether a shot looks good or not as long as the runs are coming.

"Sometimes the shots you play in T20s don't look good. But Rahul bhai told me not to bother about what the shots look like, whether it's bad or looks bad from outside. He said it does not matter. He said in T20 cricket, one needs to watch the ball and hit it," he added.

PTI

Azam has skills to reach Kohli's level: Aakash

NEW DELHI: Former India cricketer Aakash Chopra feels Pakistan's white-ball skipper Babar Azam has the ability to reach the level of India captain Virat Kohli.

The two modern-day greats are time and again pitted against each other, by fans and critics alike, for their impeccable playing styles and incredible consistency.

Chopra stated that Azam is an incredible talent but it will take time for him to reach that level where Kohli has been operating for a long time now.

"Babar Azam is an exciting talent. There is no doubt about that. It is also true that Virat Kohli is very far ahead in this race. He is older and started cricket before Azam. Virat's name is already included in the conversation of all-time greats," Chopra told former Pakistan cricketer Tanvir Ahmed on the latter's *YouTube* channel.

"Azam has the necessary skills to reach that level. But the real question is whether he will be able to reach those



heights as it depends on many things such as discipline, injuries, form and several other factors which will come along as time moves on.

"Talent can only take you to a place but you ought to have incredible passion that drives you forward. Virat didn't have that from the start but gained it along the way," he added.

IANS

Eden Gardens to be used as quarantine centre for police

KOLKATA: Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens stadium is to be used as a quarantine centre for police who have the coronavirus, officials said on Saturday. With the city's hospitals under growing pressure, hundreds of beds are to be set up in the 80,000 capacity stadium.

Nearly 550 Kolkata police have tested positive for the coronavirus and two have died. "It is our duty to help and support the administration in this hour of crisis. The quarantine facility will be used for police personnel who are Covid-19 warriors," said Cricket Association of Bengal president Avishek Dalmiya.

The beds will be put in galleries around the seating and not on the pitch that was last used by India for their first-ever day-night Test, which was against Bangladesh last November. "Such areas would be thoroughly segregated as a safety measure," added Dalmiya.

Agencies

Dhoni won so many trophies because of Ganguly's hardwork: Gambhir



IANS ■ NEW DELHI

Former India captain MS Dhoni was lucky in the way that he inherited teams consisting of great players when he took over the Indian captaincy in all formats of the game, according to former batsman Gautam Gambhir.

As Test captain, Dhoni is credited with being the first to lead India to the top of the Test rankings and Gambhir said that it is because of fast bowler Zaheer Khan that the team managed to be so successful.

"The reason Dhoni became such a successful captain in Test cricket is because of Zaheer Khan. He was a big blessing that Dhoni got, for which credit goes to Sourav

Ganguly. According to me, Zaheer has been India's best world-class bowler," Gambhir said on the *Star Sports* show *Cricknet Connected*.

The 38-year-old was involved in two of India's greatest achievements during Dhoni's captaincy — the 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 World Cup wins.

"Dhoni has been a very lucky captain because he got an amazing team in every format. Captaining 2011 World Cup team was very easy for Dhoni because we had players like Sachin, Sehwag, Mysief, Yuvraj, Yusuf, Virat, so he had got the best teams, while Ganguly had to work very hard for it, and as a result, Dhoni won so many trophies," said Gambhir.

Trinidad and Tobago to host entire CPL

PORT OF SPAIN: The entire Caribbean Premier League 2020 will be played in Trinidad and Tobago from August 18 to September 10 as the organisers got the approval from the local Government.

Though international cricket has already begun, CPL will be the first T20 league to take place after the Covid-19 forced break.

Strict safety procedures will be in place for the tournament to minimise the risk of virus transmission to the local population and among those who will be travelling to Trinidad and Tobago from overseas.

All teams and officials will be housed in one hotel and everyone will be subject to strict quarantine protocols for the first two weeks they are in the country.

Teams and officials will be put into "households" where social distancing will need to be in place.

There will be smaller clusters with in each household where these measures can be relaxed.

"However, if any member of this cluster display signs of Covid-19 at any time during the tournament all members of that cluster will be expected to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the time that a member of that cohort first shows symptoms," the statement read.

"All members of the CPL party will be subject to regular temperature checks and will be re-tested for the virus throughout their stay in Trinidad and again before departure," it added.

The CPL will feature overseas and Caribbean players including Rashid Khan, Chris Lynn, Carlos Brathwaite, Dwayne Bravo, Alex Hales and Kieron Pollard.

PTI

SINGLES

ASIAN BEACH GAMES IN CHINA POSTPONED

KUWAIT CITY: The Olympic Council of Asia on Saturday postponed the sixth Asian Beach Games, scheduled from November 28 to December 6 in the Chinese city of Sanya, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "The Olympic Council of Asia and the Chinese Olympic Committee are in discussion to reschedule the dates of the Sanya Asian Beach Games due to the Covid-19 pandemic," the OCA said in a statement. "The three parties have been in constant contact all year regarding the Asian Beach Games in Sanya and are closely monitoring the situation on a daily basis and working together closely to adjust the dates, if required."

TT WORLD TEAM C'SHIPS DELAYED TO 2021

SEOUL: The Table tennis world team championships have been delayed to early next year amid lingering concern about the Covid-19 outbreak across the world, the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) announced on Saturday. The ITTF executive committee met on Friday and reached the outcome that the Hana Bank 2020 World Team Table Tennis Championships in Busan will be staged between Feb 28 and March 7, 2021. It was originally scheduled to be held in Busan from March 22-29, but it was postponed to June 21-28 and once again to Sept 27-Oct 4 due to the virus outbreak.

CONMEBOL WC QUALIFIERS TO START IN OCT

RIO: The start of the South American zone qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar has been postponed to October, world football governing body FIFA. The 18-round qualifying tournament was suspended just days before its scheduled start in March. CONMEBOL subsequently earmarked FIFA's September 2-10 international window for the start of the competition. However ongoing coronavirus lockdown measures and travel restrictions across South America have prompted CONMEBOL to change its plans again.

CITY TO LEARN CAS DECISION ON MONDAY

LONDON: English Premier League club Manchester City will learn on Monday the decision of Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) over their appeal against the two-year UEFA ban, announced CAS late on Friday. In February, UEFA confirmed that Manchester City has been banned from European competitions for the next two seasons and fined 30 million euros (32.5 million US dollars) after being found guilty of "serious breaches" of UEFA's financial fair play rules. The club denied any wrongdoing and appealed to CAS.

Bolt open to comeback if his coach insists

AFP ■ JAMAICA

Jamaican sprint king Usain Bolt has hinted he could be tempted out of retirement if former coach Glen Mills asked him. The world 100m and 200m record holder and eight-time Olympic champion told *Variety* magazine he had no plans to resurrect his sprinting career.

However the 33-year-old told *Variety* magazine in a video interview he would at least consider a comeback if veteran coach Mills asked him.

"If my coach came back and told me, let's do this, I will, because I believe so much in my coach," Bolt said. "So I know if he says we're going to do this, I know it's possible. Give Glen Mills a call, and I'll be back."

Bolt, who last competed internationally at the World Championships in London in 2017 where he won Bronze in the 100m, said he does not visit the track any more. "My coach gets too excited when I come to the track, so I stay away," he said.

'Serena will have fresh perspective when tennis returns'

IANS ■ NEW YORK

Tennis great Chris Evert feels Serena Williams can make the most of this Covid-19 induced lockdown and aim to clinch a 24th Grand Slam title. "Maybe she will be calmer out there," she was quoted as saying by *BBC*.

"I think she will have a fresh perspective and approach."

At 38, Serena lost her last four major finals.

"She looks really fit and in great shape and she seems to be really eager to get back," the 18-



time Grand Slam singles champion told *BBC Two's Wimbledon: The Best of the Championships*.

"So that's the danger zone for a lot of the other players because if anyone can get through these difficult times and these challenges it's Serena Williams, with what she's had to go through in her life. This will be a like piece of cake for her, so watch out for her."

Twenty three-time Grand Slam champion Serena recently committed herself for the 2020 US Open which will be played at the Flushing Meadows from August 31 to September 13 behind closed doors in New York.

'Pro League will help team gain momentum for Olympics'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh is delighted with the revised schedule for FIH Pro League, saying back-to-back matches next year will help them gain the "right kind of momentum" ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

The Indian team will resume its Pro League campaign in April with an away tie against Argentina, according to a revised fixtures announced by the International Hockey Federation on Thursday.

"I feel after the four-week gap between our matches against Argentina and Great Britain, we will play back-to-back matches almost every weekend right until the end of May and that's the kind of momentum we are looking for ahead of the Olympic Games," Manpreet said.

"We will test our body and mind during this time to see how we can cope up with the pressure of playing back-to-back high-



intensity games and manage the load. This will be an ideal test for us before the Olympics," he said.

To start with, India will play Argentina on April 10 and 11.

India will then face Great Britain away from home on May 8 and 9 before travelling to Spain to play matches on May 12 and 13. The team will take on Germany in

away matches on May 18 and 19 before finally playing a home tie on May 29 and 30 against New Zealand.

Chief coach Graham Reid too said tough competition against top nations will help his team prepare well for the Olympics.

"It's very encouraging to have international competition restart-

ing and the Hockey Pro League will give us that tough top level competition in the lead-up to the Olympic Games next year," he said.

"We are also working at the moment to ensure that we have enough competition throughout the latter part of 2020 and the early part of 2021."

"We have the Asian Champions Trophy still planned for November 2020 and a trip to Malaysia to play the Netherlands and a 4 Nations Tournament in New Zealand in February 2021 which are all in the planning stage at the moment as part of our ACTC."

The Indian team had made an emphatic start to its maiden Hockey Pro League campaign earlier this year with a 5-2 and 3-3 (3-1) win against the Netherlands followed by a 2-1 victory and 3-4 loss against world champions Belgium and a 3-4 loss and 2-2 (3-1) win against Australia before the Covid-19 pandemic halted all sporting events.

BWF seeking 'more clarity' before deciding on events in China

NEW DELHI:

The Badminton World Federation on Saturday said it was waiting for "more clarity" from China before it takes a call on the World Tour Finals scheduled in December.

China's General Administration of Sport on Friday said the country will not host any of its planned international events this year except the trials for the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing to stop the spread of coronavirus.

The decision has put in doubt events including the World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, which was pushed back by a week to December 16 to 20 in the revamped 2020 calendar.

"The BWF is aware of the directive announced by the General Administration of Sport of China regarding the restriction of international sports for the rest of 2020," the badminton governing body said in a statement.

"BWF is in close contact with its relevant partners including the Chinese Badminton Association (CBA) to get more



clarity on the situation and how this affects the BWF Tournament Calendar 2020."

Among other events to be held in the country, China Masters which was scheduled in August has already been called off, while the China Open World Tour Super 1000 event (September 15-20, Changzhou) and the Fuzhou China Open World Tour Super 750 (November 3-8) are still scheduled later in the year in the revised calendar.

PTI

the pioneer agenda

To not have any hope is where things start to get really bleak. Things are possible. The impossible can be possible
— Sarah Paulson



FROM THE INSIDE

Hope in the times of pandemic

Leaders have emerged because of their genuine interest in helping people out, their intellect, and by being proactive



Unlock the mind to heal

If we negotiate the challenges coming our way with fortitude and intelligence, we may be able to contain the damage



Automation will become the key driver of “Vocal for Local” narrative for the manufacturing industry in India, writes PRADEEP DAVID, as he explains how Collaborative Robots will be significant in proliferating businesses in the post Covid-19 era

A CASE FOR COBOTS

The world has come to a standstill and the global economy has taken the worst hit in history. Right from the negative pricing of crude oils to the worldwide lockdown, it has brought the global economy to its knees, looking for the road to recovery. With the global cases mounting up to 8 million, the impact of the grave pandemic can be witnessed across geographies. This has resulted in a major shift of leading lives and the whole world is coming to terms with the new normal. As the famous saying goes, ‘Every crisis brings an opportunity’ and this pandemic has provided an opportunity for businesses to be creative and adapt an innovative approach to sustaining the tide. Most of the countries — whether developed or developing — are actively pursuing opportunities to become completely self-reliant to battle the situation and also prepare for any future disruptions.

THE INDIAN SCENARIO

The labour-intensive manufacturing sector has been one of the hardest-hit due to the coronavirus. According to a business publication, the seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI), a reflection of the health of the manufacturing economy, fell to 27.4 in April, from 51.8 in March this year.

Like the rest of the world, India, too, is experiencing a major outbreak of the Covid-19 virus and has slowly reached the second phase of the pandemic. According to the World Bank, India was the world’s sixth-largest manufacturer at the end of 2018. However, having a labour-intensive manufacturing sector has resulted in the sharpest deterioration in business conditions in the last 15 years, with the seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) — a reflection of the health of the manufacturing economy — falling from 51.8 in March 2020 to just 27.4 in April.

As the current unlocking phase across the nation takes place, social distancing, stringent hygiene measures, and remote working have all become a part of the new normal. The manufacturing sector, however, is one of the few places where online meetings can only do so much. After all, the majority of the nature of the work is on-site, physical, and time-sensitive, so work-from-home is not always an option.

OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIA

The ground reality is that Covid-19 is not expected to abate anytime soon, so our daily lives must instead incorporate the right measures to prevent the risk of contagion. According to Forrester analytics, we are stepping in the second stage of the pandemic, which steers us to ‘Adapt and Overcome’ the situation. To stay afloat, the industry needs to adjust to the new normal and strategise how to



accelerate recovery from the losses incurred so far, optimising efficiency and encouraging self-dependency.

THE NEW APPROACH: COLLABORATIVE ROBOTS, OR “COBOTS”

While the government’s Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan initiative is a significant step towards restart the operations and encouraging various sectors to stabilise themselves, it is vital that manufacturers recognise the need to join hands with technology and embrace automation. In fact, a study by EY found that 41% of employers across the world are fast-tracking automation plans in an endeavour to make up for lost productivity and also prepare for the post-crisis world. Normalising the allegiance of employees and technology will pave a path that will lead the sector to growth, stabilising Indian business and enabling self-sufficiency.

Rewiring an industry and making it tech-friendly comes with its own challenges. Some of the obstacles faced by the manufacturing industry include an abundance of unskilled labour, a lack of space on the shop floor, and the lack of technical expertise to operate complex new technology. Collaborative robots, or “cobots,” are a niche robot technology that present the perfect solution by addressing all these challenges, offering an easy automation solution for Indian manufacturers.

EMPOWERING MANUFACTURING THROUGH HUMAN ROBOT COLLABORATION

While industrial robots have been around for years, collaborative robots are a much newer technology. Cobots are an advanced robotic arm that — unlike their industrial robot predecessors — were created to share the same workspace as humans, without the need for any cumbersome caging or fencing

“COBOTS ALLOW MANUFACTURERS OF ALL SIZES TO AUTOMATE AREAS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED TOO SMALL OR TOO EXPENSIVE TO AUTOMATE, LOWERING THE BARRIERS TO AUTOMATION THROUGH USPS THAT TRADITIONAL ROBOTS AND AUTOMATION SOLUTIONS SIMPLY CANNOT PROVIDE”



(subject to application risk assessment). This is thanks to their advanced safety features, backed up by 65 patents, including a protective stop that is enabled when an obstacle blocks a cobot’s path of motion, ensuring that a person that may come in contact with a cobot is not harmed. By simply changing the end-of-arm-tooling on a cobot, it can be used for a variety of tasks, ranging from the tending of CNC and other machines, dispensing, quality inspection, pick and place, screwdriving, and much more. This makes them versatile to use in a multitude of applications across virtually every industry.

Cobots can handle tasks that require high repeatability, precision, and quality, as well as jobs that pose ergonomic risks. Humans are then free to cater to tasks that require mental efforts and human ingenuity, often leading to the upskilling of labor. In a crucial time like this, it has become a priority for industry leaders to not just utilise their workforce wisely to handle tasks that need human intervention, while cobot can handle work that could cause physical and mental stress to people.

Human Robot Collaboration is one of the key drivers of Industry 4.0 and, in fact, a study on a BMW assembly plant, conducted and published in MIT Technology Review found that there is a whopping 85% reduction in the idle time of workers when they collaborate with robots. Cobots, thus, can empower domestic production and facilitating the Make in India mission. In the Covid-19 era, when manufacturers are facing issues of labor uncertainty and recognising the need to automate but unsure how to start, cobots are one of the quickest solutions on the market, addressing many common barriers to automation faced by Indian manufacturers.

HOW COBOTS BOOST MANUFACTURING

Social Distancing: By allowing humans and cobots to work side-by-side, cobots reduce the need for contact between human workers, ensuring that they maintain safe social distancing standards. This is especially vital in crowded assembly lines and worker-dense factory floors, which will have to take measures to ensure that distance is maintained between individuals but no efficiency is lost. In essence, this enables businesses to optimise productivity while also helping flatten the curve of Covid-19 contagion.

Partial Automation: Complex automation with heavy machinery is expensive, space-consuming, and difficult for most manufacturers to carry out. Cobots, however, enable the automation of specific applications instead of an entire plant, thereby reducing capital expenditure significantly. This partial automation means that manufacturers can start small and identify applications that involve high precision, monotony, or potential ergonomic risk

for humans, and use cobots to handle these instead. For example, at Baxter Lab, one can see that the cobots are placing bottles in boxes, while the man is manually holding the boxes open for the cobot to do so. Both are thus, working together and the process is only partially automated to optimise efficiency.

Quick Deployment and Flexible Redeployment: Their ease of use and setup means that cobots are one of the fastest automation solutions currently in the market. While traditional automation solutions can take months to deploy, a cobot can be set up for a simple application within a single day, even by first-time robot users. Plus, a cobot can be programmed time and again for different tasks, functioning like a lightweight “tool” with many uses. In this uncertain environment, many manufacturers need to repurpose their assembly lines to focus on different products based on the urgency of requirements and changing consumer demands. Cobots are flexible and easy to re-station as needed, enabling high mix/low volume production.

DEMOCRATISED AUTOMATION

As you can see from the USPs highlighted above, collaborative robots are easy and quick to set up, have a low footprint, and enable flexible redeployment. This, combined with the Human Robot Collaboration facilitated by cobot, make it possible for manufacturers of all sizes to deploy this Industry 4.0 technology with ease. Cobots lower the barriers for automation faced by Indian manufacturers, allowing them to use robotic technology without having to make drastic changes to their existing shop floors. As SMEs are the building blocks of the Indian economy, it is vital that they are able to automate to meet global standards of quality to achieve their Make in India dreams.

To sum it up, the Covid-19 virus has caught the world unprepared, taking businesses by storm and showing no sign of abating anytime soon. If anything, the pandemic has shown us all the unpredictability of life and the need to invest in smart decisions to prepare for the possibility of any future disruptions.

With the spotlight on India as the new destination for global manufacturing, industries need to prepare for a prolonged recovery period where it has become of paramount importance to learn how to manage human capital and production capabilities. Cobots allow manufacturers of all sizes to automate areas previously considered too small or too expensive to automate, lowering the barriers to automation through USPs that traditional robots and automation solutions simply cannot provide. They enable manufacturers to increase agility to cater to rapidly changing demands.

The writer General Manager, South Asia, Universal Robots



I OFTEN THINK THAT THE NIGHT IS MORE ALIVE AND MORE RICHLY COLORED THAN THE DAY
— VINCENT VAN GOGH

HOPE IN THE TIMES OF PANDEMIC

We have role models who have led the fight against the pandemic in India. These leaders have emerged because of their genuine interest in helping people out, their intellect, and by being proactive.

STILETTOS



MINIYA
CHATTERJI

You step out in Mumbai and humanity is at your feet, almost all revealed. There is much squalour with some glitz. There is chaos and also the calm of the sea. You either move or get pushed down by the crowds. People and constructed spaces in this city flow like opium, filling up your senses. I have found maximum city Mumbai to be as overwhelming as life can get. It is these crowds and deeply socialised nature of the city that eventually played a strong role in augmenting the reproductive ratio of Covid-19 here leading to winning the race in India that no one wants to win — of having the most number of active Covid-19 cases until recently.

Mumbai could have been more prepared. In a note authored by Professor Dhaval Monani and myself, that we submitted to the Prime Minister's Office on April 2, 2020, we had proposed the setting up of temporary hospitals within vacant community halls, marriage halls, office spaces. But it was not until end of April that BMC decided to take over vacant spaces to create temporary hospitals for Covid-19 patients and for quarantining those at risk. BMC's search also included the wrong spaces — *maidans*, warehouses — which are not only expensive to convert in to Covid-19 recovery facilities, but also dusty and therefore detrimental to the condition of the patients. For setting up facilities at scale, we needed to keep the per-bed cost as low as possible. Instead, most of the facilities used expensive steel beds and equipment that was not needed.

Never waste a good crisis — I was dismayed to see this as the motto of several government officials to make a quick buck in procurement, of politicians who would be more interested in press coverage rather than getting any work done, and people in the private sector who overnight became dealers of testing kits at huge margins. I also watched (furi-ously) how CSR was at times used as a garb for profiteering off the crisis. My team's efforts came free of cost. However, for-profit ventures for social good are also excellent as this builds in incentives to do good so that it is sustainable — but when doing so the model needs to be transparent. Mumbai, a city where dreams are realised as fast as they are crushed, was even during a pandemic using its elbows to get ahead in the crowd.

Large private sector companies have not stepped up. While elsewhere in cities like Pune, companies like Wipro set up temporary hospitals within their



MUMBAI COULD HAVE ADOPTED DIFFERENT POLICIES IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS DEPENDING ON THE LOCAL CONDITIONS. THE EPIDEMIC COULD HAVE BEEN CONTAINED IN SOME AREAS WHERE IT WAS RAMPANT, AND CERTAIN UNAFFECTED DISTRICTS COULD HAVE BEEN OPENED UP

office buildings or the Serum Institute of India who is collaborating with universities to create a vaccine, where are the corporate giants of Mumbai? CSR is not enough, but even that has been inadequately spent to help Mumbai cope with the virus.

The city has woken up to randomised testing far too late. This week the BMC has removed the earlier order for the need of prescription to get a Covid-19 test and has introduced a new rule that does not require a prescription. People can now get a test done at any hospital. Right from the start of the spread of the pandemic, there should have been no need to make it so darned difficult to get tested! After the initial hic-

ups, Covid-19 tests were available in abundance. Numerous experts cried hoarse advising the government to make testing easier, but it was to no avail. Panic early, Mumbai.

Communications from the government has been confusing and damaging. At first, there was fear induced amongst people against Covid-19 which led to severe stigmatisation against patients. And then economic interests took over the concern for health, which suddenly made it alright for certain sectors to open up. Ironically, now as numbers of active cases of the Coronavirus soar, it has never been easier during this pandemic to be out and about in the city. There has been extreme short-sightedness on the part of

the government, in at first believing that social distancing would work in a country where 1 of 6 urban dwellers live in slum zones. In most cases — and more so in a health disaster — we can not copy-paste solutions that have worked for other countries on to the unique context in India. Economy and health needs to be balanced, but it should have been balanced very differently than done. Mumbai could have adopted different policies in different districts depending on the local conditions. The epidemic could have been contained in some areas where it was rampant, and certain unaffected districts could have been opened up.

There is hope. We have role models who have led the fight against the pan-

dem in India. These leaders have emerged because of their genuine interest in helping people out, their intellect, and by being proactive.

For example, I was introduced to Amin Patel when we were making our first Covid-19 quarantine centre in Mumbai in early May 2020. Those were the days when my team at my company Sustain Labs and at the Anant Centre for Sustainability a think-teach-do tank that I established two years ago, was manufacturing equipment and moving trucks across India amidst a complete nation wide lockdown. Amin is a three term MLA from the Mumbadevi constituency in Mumbai, but his concern was for all of Mumbai. He set up a 200 oxygen cylinder bank for everyone to use in Mumbai — this is refreshing as often the challenge for democracy is populism, and that too combined with a narrow vision of pleasing the constituency for votes.

When Covid struck, Amin's first reaction was to send ration to the Kamthipura area where overnight sex workers saw their incomes disappear due to social distancing rules in place. He once told me, "Even if one family anywhere in Mumbai needs ration I send a tempo with food." His sleep routine is highly unrecommended — he sleeps at 1 am; is awake from 3.30 am to 6 am answering distress calls that he would have received while asleep and taking action on them; then he goes back to sleep from 6 am until 8 am.

While setting up the Covid-19 recovery facility with the help of Amin, one of the partners in the project had a demand for 10% of project cost as management fee to which Amin's reaction is one that I will never forget. He was appalled at the demand and said, "10% of project cost can make 20 beds and save 20 lives every fortnight! We will refuse to pay that!" It is only too common for government officials and politicians to be in a hurry to get things done just to look good to the higher ups and the voters.

Why is it so difficult to help the government in India? This could well be the title of my next book as there is so much to reflect upon and write about this. In the meantime, all power to those government representatives on the frontline who are genuinely and effectively fighting for the rest of us.

The writer is CEO of Sustain Labs and Adjunct Professor at SciencesPo Paris. She is also a columnist and author of the 2019 bestseller Indian Instincts — essays on freedom and equality in India

Covid tales: The joy of homecoming

From keeping the various documents ready prior to the journey, to all the procedures and possible mishaps that could occur at the airport, travelling feels like a daunting mission nowadays. VANDANA SRIVASTAVA shares her first person account

Atense mood had surrounded our household, as our family braced up for a monumental change in their lives. My husband had just got his transfer order, which would entail us to move back to Delhi from Dubai in one of the repatriation flights, since we were diplomats. Undertaking such a massive transfer process along with the four hour journey in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic got me anxious for quite a few days. However I maintained my calm, and felt stronger by reassuring myself that this time would soon pass.

Finally, when all the boxes were packed and the rooms rendered empty, it was time for us to leave. As I started packing my final bags, I realised that it was time to say goodbye to Dubai, the place where I had spent 5 and a half golden years of my life. We were finally done with our final shopping in the region, and were getting braced up to travel during these trying times. Obviously, our main travel essentials were going to be Sanitisers, PPE, Masks, Face Shields, Disinfectant Sprays, and the like: as opposed to the usual earphones and a good book to read.

As advised by various acquaintances, we wrapped our entire check-in luggage in cellophane wraps. This would allow us to just open and discard them as soon as we reached our destination, allowing the main baggage to not be contaminated, and eliminating the need to disinfect the same. We reached the DXB airport at 10.00 hours (UAE time), and saw quite a meticulous arrangement of people waiting for their health checkup before moving on to the usual airport protocol. A vivid depiction of responsibility and unity was portrayed before our eyes as we saw every single person wear masks, gloves, maintain social distance, and follow all the new rules and regulations during the pandemic throughout the airport.

We passed our Covid health screening at the airport, and moved on to the usual airport procedure. We got our boarding passes, gave our check-in baggage, took care of some over-sized baggage since we were moving on a transfer basis, and moved on through the X-Ray area to the gates, where we would wait until boarding started. Air India also gave us Face Shields, Sanitisers, and extra Face Masks for use during the journey. They were also giving out PPE kits to everyone sitting in the middle seat. However, upon seeing two kids



traveling with me, they decided to give PPE kits to all of us. Even the security at the airport allowed all kinds of sanitisers and sprays to be taken on flights during this pandemic, which was strictly forbidden in the past.

Finally, our flight's announcement was called out and it was time for us to suit up in our PPE kits, Face Shields, Masks, and Gloves. We all resembled astronauts on a field mission in our face masks and shield combo. We boarded a bus and entered our airplane as usual, but were informed soon that there would be no food or drinks served in this flight. Contrasted with the old times, air hostesses were giving out hand sanitisers instead of refreshments. On top of all the security measures taken by the airport and the airline, we also made it a rule of thumb to spray disinfectant everywhere we went and everything we came in contact with.

A small box of food and a water bottle were already kept on everyone's seats, but we chose to keep it on the ground and ignore it. Owing to our fear and alertness, we did not eat or drink anything throughout the journey, and realised later on that it was everybody on the flight who did the same. It was pretty uncomfortable for all of us to wear masks and shields, and to add on to the inconveniences, the flight was already running an hour late. Living such a surreal moment, I was reminded of John Milton's poem, "On His Blindness", where he thought that god was testing him during every single moment of his life.

The 3 hour journey seemed much longer than it actually was, but we soon made it to the Indira Gandhi Airport in New Delhi. However, as opposed to what everyone believed, this was nowhere close to the end. We were told to remain

seated inside the plane until further notice, and to also download the Aarogya Setu app on our smartphones, which was a contact tracing app created by the Government of India in order for citizens to protect themselves from the Coronavirus. The plane was being sanitised from the outside, and soon the air hostess started calling out seat numbers on the PA system, upon which the respective passengers stood up and left the plane.

Upon entering the New Delhi airport, we were informed that a flight from Melbourne had just landed and the airport authorities were conducting their due procedures with passengers of the Melbourne flight first. Once all the passengers from that flight were cleared out, we proceeded to our checkups, and kept all our documents ready. Firstly, our temperatures were taken and our self-declaration health forms were checked, and

stamped. This allowed us to carry on to the next process, which was the standard immigration process, upon which our health forms were checked once again. Notably, they also kept a copy of the same for their own records. We followed the standard airport process since and moved to the conveyer belts, where the luggage was kept by the side of the belts instead of on the belt, owing to the very few amount of flights operating. We looked for our luggage and gathered it, all while maintaining social distancing and using disinfectant spray throughout.

After all standard procedures were over; we met yet another medical official at the airport who checked our Blood Pressure, temperature, and oxygen levels. Then, we went outside of the main airport building to a small makeshift office made by the airport authorities. The purpose of this office was to rule out if we had the Coronavirus or not, and would suggest the necessary means of precaution tailored to each person's health situation. We cleared all formalities, and were declared Covid negative. There was an SDM to check our quarantine documents, and we availed due permission to use our personal vehicle to get to our hotel, which was our designated quarantine center. It was now 21.30 hours (IST); almost 12 hours since we had started our journey from Dubai.

As soon as we reached, the hotel staff disinfected our luggage. We were taken to our room quickly, where we removed our masks, took a bath, and felt like we were in paradise. It was almost after 13 hours now, when we had the second meal of our day. It truly was pure bliss to finally see this journey come to an end successfully, and we were grateful that we made it safe.

To conclude, I would like to preface by saying that travelling anywhere during this pandemic is obviously not an easy thing to do. Ranging from the various documents needed to be kept in order prior to the journey, to all the procedures and possible mishaps that could occur at the airport, travelling feels like a daunting mission nowadays. However, throughout this experience, I would like to mention that the airports were well equipped and very cooperative, and all essential measures were taken to ensure that all passengers travel safely with the least amount of hassle possible.

The writer is a lawyer by profession and philanthropist by heart

Online education: Dispel fear of surveillance

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, online education has become a buzzword as some are eulogising its endless potential and others are casting aspersions, and predicting doom for the education sector in India. Of course, online education is not a substitute for face-to-face classroom interaction between students and teachers. However, we need to understand the apprehension of people about the "online education", which is fast emerging as the "new mode of education".

There is a widespread recognition that online education can become an additional tool, technique, opportunity, and avenue for further exploration of and experimentation with new ideas by both teachers and students. Online education should not be equated with the supply of more and more information, rather it is a process of retrieving relevant information, synthesising and critically analysing, and presenting them to students coherently and effectively. Online delivery of education requires re-learning not only on part of students but also on the part of teachers. In the "new mode of education", the role of teachers is going to become more important because they have to decide what is relevant information and how to critically analyse and deliver them; and it is challenging also because the students will have the opportunity to evaluate and scrutinise the teachers as all the sources of information are available at the click of the mouse.

Effective communication is one of the most essential characteristics of a teacher; how a teacher was teaching inside a classroom was very little known beyond the circle of the students who attended his or her classes. Online teaching, which may be recorded and put on a website, could be seen and compared with other teachers' methods. Online education is not passive broadcasting of news reports or entertainment channels, they also adopt different strategies and styles to connect with their audiences. This is the reason some channels and movies become very effective in communicating their messages and transforming people's ideas and thinking.

Teaching is an art, and teachers have to become an actor and performer; teachers need to learn new ways of performing on a digital platform, to connect with their students, to create curiosity among them, to



understand their requirements and help overcome anxiety and ambiguities perplexing their minds.

Resistance to technology is coming from two factors: Fear of mediating reality and psychological fear of surveillance. Opposition to online education emanates from people's apprehension about the safety of their data and the fear of being watched. The moment we enter online education, we leave behind digital footprints captured by smart digital devices and the Internet of Things. In a study, it was found that most of the people have limited knowledge about what types of personal data are collected and how they are used. Some scholars are apprehensive that "authoritarian administrators are attracted by online education as it offers centralised control and scaling at will". Contrary to their belief, internet-based online education is not centralised control and administered by an authoritarian regime, rather it provides an opportunity for the democratisation of education, both for teachers as well as for learners.

Another fear is that contrary "to face-to-face interaction where a teacher creates a communion with students and critically shapes their thinking and learning experience",

technology-mediated interaction distorts the form of communication. The fear of distorted reality emanates from the assumption that technology-mediated reality may not present the intended meanings or may even distort the meanings of reality. However, we know that we grasp reality only through the mediation of either our sensory perceptions or through technology. Even our sensory perceptions are shaped by the mental frame of our mind that we acquire through our upbringing and social experience. We do not have access to naked reality. All reality is mediated through technology and theoretical framework. Take the example of coronavirus, we cannot see it with naked eyes, we have to use an electron microscope to visualise it; technology-mediated image (reality) is presented to people through media and people construct their imagination about coronavirus. People who are sufficiently exposed to news, talks, discussion, and presentations on the coronavirus do acquire the level of understanding that scientists and doctors want them to acquire. Similar is the concept of online teaching; how effectively we are presenting our ideas.

Many studies have shown that it is little or no difference in students'

performance between television education and face-to-face education or between video instruction and face-to-face instruction. In a study conducted by Allen & Seaman in collaboration with Pearson and the Sloan Consortium, it was found that most of the academic managers (75 per cent) recognise that learning outcomes in online courses are equal to or better than classroom courses. Although the findings of these studies could be contested, they indicate the heralding of "new mode of education".

It will not replace the traditional mode of education rather it will reinforce the "traditional mode" and exist in tandem with it. The educational institutions which are not going to get the reinforcement by adopting the online learning management system will face their existential crises. The new mode of education is not infringing upon the traditional mode of education, it is rather entirely a new way of making the education available to people anywhere, any time, at their own pace and convenience. Technology is not going to replace the need for a teacher but they do require to embrace the new paradigm of education.

It is the teaching style of the teacher and his ability to engage the students that makes a physical class

an interactive learning class. The same is true with the online delivery of education. The effectiveness of technology-mediated learning depends on three factors: easy and convenient access to technology, the willingness of the teachers, and the motivation of the students. The internet services are fast expanding in the country and the digital platform for delivery of education is becoming user-friendly day by day as they provide both synchronous and asynchronous communication and support the exchange of a variety of didactical elements such as texts, graphics, audio and video materials in real-time. Attitudes of a teacher, his/her teaching style, and his/her dexterity in dealing with information communication technology are important to make online education effective. It has been found that students attending a class of a teacher who has a positive attitude towards online teaching and learning and who encourages the use of technology are more likely to experience more positive learning outcomes. It is true that in online teaching students feel isolated as there is no classroom environment for interaction. This could be overcome, to a large extent, by adopting an interactive teaching style and encouraging students for more interaction among the class by engaging them in individual as well as group activities. Technology mediated interaction may pose, sometimes, technical problem, an effective teacher must be able to do some basic troubleshooting task, or be backed up by a technical team to support online delivery of education. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of students do influence their learning outcomes. But this is true in both cases, online as well as in the traditional mode of education. The online mode rather provides better opportunities to design different levels of learning materials and allowing them to proceed with their own pace of learning.

Online education has been adopted globally to expand access to higher education and training needs of people as a supplement to the brick and mortar capabilities of their higher educational institutions. As the internet facility is expanding in India and the technology for online delivery of education is becoming user-friendly, it is the right time for Indian universities to embrace online education as an additional pro-

gramme lest they lose the opportunity to Western universities.

Many renowned universities have already started the online programme and many more are in the process of launching their graduate and postgraduate degree programmes to cater to the growing need of the students across the world. India is getting ready for the digital revolution. There are more than 600 million internet users, more than half of them are in rural areas and 90 per cent of users have 4G connection. The majority of internet users (70 per cent) are in the age group of 12-29 years, the main cohort engaged in education and learning programmes. Globally, India has the cheapest average 4G tariff at \$0.26 per GB. The Government of India has launched the National Broadband Mission intending to provide broadband access to all villages by 2022.

Online higher education is not only intended for the traditional cohort of (18-24 years of age group) people, rather it is open to any age group of people in the society. As the value of lifelong learning is greatly recognised, the need for online education will increase tremendously in the society. Many studies have shown that online availability of educational and training programmes have helped the working class in Ghana in improving their skills and career advancement and prospects of changing their career. There is indeed a digital inequality in terms of access to digital technology and the ability to use them.

There is also a substantive digital divide along with gender as there are only 35 per cent of women internet users in the country. However, the solution to these problems is not to reject the technology but to work for bridging both types of digital inequality and to capitalise on the opportunities thrown up by a new wave of the technological revolution. The recent step of the Government to allow 100 universities to start online education and separate TV channels for delivering education from Class I to XII is in the right direction. TV is accessible to more than 90 per cent of the population in the country and it will certainly help delivering the education to most deprived and marginal section of the society.

(The writer is a Professor and Chairperson of the Centre for Studies in Science Policy, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

As the internet facility is expanding in India and the technology for online delivery of education is becoming user-friendly, it is the right time for Indian universities to embrace online education as an additional programme lest they lose the opportunity to Western universities



MADHAV GOVIND

PERSPECTIVE

From an elected Prez to permanent leader!

Putin, who has been in power for 20 years, can remain in office until 2036 after parliament reset presidential term-limits. For Russians, the constitutional amendment makes no difference as they knew that Putin intends to stay in power as long as he stays alive



MAKHAN SANKAR

The unbridled power of Russian President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin has grown over the last two decades. He enjoys enormous popularity. At its highest, his poll rating was close to 90 per cent.

Sensing the global public pandemic and home quarantining of millions in Russia, Putin affected amendments to the Russian Constitution. And the parliament of the country, Russian State Duma, has approved a slew of amendments, including the extension of his presidential terms (if he wants) up till 2036. This allows him to enjoy another two six-year terms starting from 2024, when his current term comes to an end. Without any iota of doubt, the Russian Legislature voted 383 to 0 to amend the Constitution. And Putin now holds the office of the President till he turns 83 years and that would be his 36th year in that office. This unusual parliamentary move was made by 83-year old former cosmonaut and now member of Duma Valentina Tereshkova, who said, "Putin knows much more than all of us. Why do we need to create some artificial constitutions? We should be honest, open, consider publicly and cancel all limitations on the number of presidential terms in the Constitution. Or, if the situation demands and people want that, let the current President run again for this position." This was more than sufficient to launch Putin to the orbit of power again by Tereshkova and thereby she has become a part of a deal that is gradually pushing Russia deep into the hands of Putin. In fact, the abolition of presidential term limits will make him the country's longest serving ruler since Joseph Stalin.

Meanwhile, the helpless Russian Opposition is furious. A former MP and Opposition leader Dmitry Gudkov aired his anger: "That was a Brezhnev era, poorly directed performance. Putin must be feeling almighty, and hopes to live forever." But how does it make any difference to Putin. His rule is passing on to a new era, wherein he is aging and his former KGB aides are fast proliferating to each sphere of administration around Russia.

When Duma has already approved the amendments, why Putin wanted the same to



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting with members of working group to prepare proposals on amending the Russian Constitution via teleconference in Moscow, Russia, Friday, July 3, 2020. AP/File photo

be passed in a public referendum at Covid-19 times? As it is too dangerous to gather in public, he should not have demanded an approval from the people of Russia. Precisely, it is a traditional tactic used by the authoritarian rulers to marshal a stamp of legitimacy from the commoners. The aim is to be in the "Democracy Club". And Putin and his administration are successful in performing this act so far since he has come to power in 1999.

What disturbs the international community is that Putin is a fighter and he is a survivalist. Therefore, he needs to be considered seriously. If he says he will do something, then it is understood that he is prepared to do it. Further, he has the practice of finding a way to sort out difficult things by using every means available to him. Interestingly, he and his core team at Kremlin wanted the world to view him as a

street fighter, a low profile and possibly an underdog. But he is not. The way he has meddled with the US politics, he has made his mark. Over the decades, he has carefully crafted a system, wherein he has to deal only with a selected number of people, he has literally abstained himself from dealing with ordinary actors in politics and administration. This indeed allows him to strategise for every possible hurdle that might come on his way.

With Putin, Russia will be definitely heading for a stable political system. But the regime is only favouring a few, some allege. The desire for freedom and political mobility is completely bleak under Putin, they claim. If he stays till 2036, the answer to the question "who comes after Putin" is elusive. The reason is too simple: neither Putin has allowed an Opposition to thrive or even a successor to be groomed for a distant

future. This and a total control on all aspects of the Russian State have enabled him to virtually keep all probable political rivals at bay till date.

The big mystery is how he has risen to this stature? Looking at his roots, one can easily observe that he comes from a very humble family. His father worked in the Soviet Navy and mother was a factory worker. The family lived together in a lower income group community housing project. But somehow, he was sent to the college and finally to the law school. After graduating from the law school, he served as a KGB agent for about 16 years. In fact, KGB was the primary security agency for the USSR from 1954 until the historic collapse of the union in 1991. Basically, the KGB worked as a multi-faceted organ of the state, both within and outside the USSR. Clearly, the organisation was known for delivering its extra-

ordinary service for intelligence and as a wing of the "secret police". In 1988, the official White House photographer inadvertently spotted Putin spying on then US President Ronald Reagan in the guise of an ordinary Russian tourist in Moscow. After retiring from the KGB in 1991, Putin managed to get a job in the office of the mayor of St Petersburg and by 1994, he became the deputy head of city administration. In 1997, Putin was running a political party called "Our Home-Russia i.e. Nash dom-Russiya", originally founded on May 12, 1995 by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of then President Boris Yeltsin. Initially a liberal and centrist political movement, the main objective of this party was to rally behind more technocratic and reformist supporters for the Government. Though the party was disbanded on 2006, Putin, the ever clever KGB guy had climbed the echelons of power from this unknown political platform. From here when he moved to Moscow, he was soon made the chief of the presidential staff of Yeltsin in 1997. Breaking all the political norms, an ailing and ageing Yeltsin, suddenly appointed Putin as the Prime Minister and named him as his successor. When he resigned unexpectedly on December 31, 1999, Putin became the acting President of the Russian Federation. Today, he has amassed more than \$70 billion worth of property. Probably his assets would also represent one of the largest personal fortunes ever accumulated by a sitting head of a state. This makes him much more powerful and helps him to sideline his rivals to make his way forward.

Russia has no longer the normal tools of democracy i.e. a free media, free election and an independent judiciary. A few independent magazines and papers that reach the outside world surely can't match what the state-owned Russian TV sends out to the world. A pure "manufacturing of consent" is practised. Another malaise of Russia today is that its people are hardly capable of electing the local governors and their parliamentarians.

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



REALISE DEEPLY THAT THE PRESENT MOMENT IS ALL YOU HAVE. MAKE THE NOW THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF YOUR LIFE —ECKHART TOLLE



YOUR WEEK AHEAD



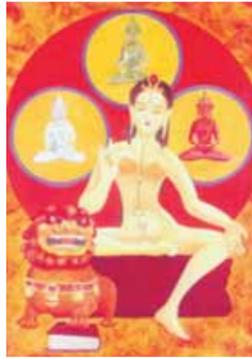
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

This week you are likely to neglect your physical and emotional health. It is high time you change your lifestyle and choose a more healthy way of living. You need some time to rebuild your physical, mental and spiritual energies. Ensure a positive outlook in life to deal with health issues. On the career front, you will experience some negative energies that may cause mental pressure upon you. Be sincere towards your work and no harm will come to you. Financially, this is not a good time for a lot of you. Stay away from gambling as major loss is indicated. In love, a committed relationship may bring a new height of intimacy and joy. Singles, may soon find deep and true love in someone.

Lucky number 3
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

Something big awaits you this week. You are full of enthusiasm and are adventurous to face the challenges life chooses to throw at you. Your health is at its best and you will experience high energy and vitality. Positive attitude and jolly nature will enhance your personality. In career, stay focussed and keep a positive outlook. Be careful about the rivals at your workplace and do not disclose your strategies and plans to anyone. The week is favourable for spiritual healers and medical practitioners. Utilise this time to enhance your knowledge. Listen to your inner voice to follow the right track. In terms of the relationship, committed couples will enjoy strong bonding this week. Your reputation and goodwill will fetch you rich dividends and this will help you lead a charmed life.

Lucky number 8
Lucky colour Camel Brown
Lucky day Friday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 12

Your health is likely to get affected due to stress and anxiety. A disappointing situation will leave you emotionally exhausted. Make sure you take some time out for meditation and proper rest. Be optimistic. On the work front, you are likely to face difficult circumstances due to your thoughts and perspective. Try to look at things with a different viewpoint and you may find many options available to sort out the difficulty. Those looking for employment may get a call for an interview. This week you may feel that your relationship is becoming boring. Therefore, you need to sit and openly discuss your feelings with your partner. Things will change for the better. Singles, analyse what you want from the relationship and then consider to enter into it.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Rose Gold
Lucky day Tuesday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

Your health will be good this week and you will be confident about your future. Explore new ideas to maintain good health. Stay away from circumstances that will make you lazy. Those suffering from some illness may expect a speedy recovery. It is important to be grateful to those who stood by you in the journey of your progress. Professional life looks good. Those who are employed are like to get the next position in line. Negotiating your value is worth your effort. A partnership proposal from an old friend or colleague is on the cards. Go for it as this will prove lucky for you. On the relationship front, express your feelings with passion. Singles may find love this week. A positive start will give you confidence.

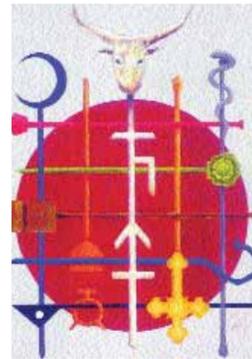
Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Off-White
Lucky day Monday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you will possess the inner strength to take up any physical and mental challenge. You should make some efforts to uplift your fitness level by following a workout regime. Follow a diet chart to ensure balanced intake. A legal issue is likely to cause worry and keep you a little tensed. You should work towards avoiding negative vibes, this will help you be a confident person. On the career front, you will not have any pending work. Those who have started a new venture may have a reason to worry, but this will be temporary. It is advised to stay calm this week. Relationship wise, love will bloom and so will you. Happiness and contentment in all relations are indicated. Your dream for a perfect relation may come true.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

This week your health will be good. Look out for new ways to maintain this — this could be by following a new fitness routine or a diet plan. Follow whatever suits you, as it will increase your vitality. Emotionally, you are content and will spend some good time with your family. On the work front, you will be successful in achieving your goals. Your efforts and hard work will be acknowledged. This week you will shine, but make sure that success doesn't get into your head as this will bring disappointment. Those seeking jobs may find one. In the love life, if things are not going well, then talk to your partner openly. Singles, before starting a relationship you need to be aware of your emotional issues and try to correct it.

Lucky number 16
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Sunday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

Be very careful about your health and at the same time, be observant as there are fine solutions for many health issues. Do not avoid situations where you have to decide on your health, as this can help you recover from your health issues. Maintain balanced behaviour and a positive outlook. On the career front, you will be overburdened and likely to be weighed down by responsibilities and commitments. You need to impose time management techniques to ensure that the work burden doesn't exhaust you. Ensure you take rest. Relationship wise, this week foresees happy family time, both for committed and single people. You and your partner will enjoy a peaceful time as you both are on the same page.

Lucky number 7
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Thursday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you will be full of energy and vitality and this will further help maintain a perfect harmony with respect to your body, mind and soul. You know what you want from life and will maintain a balance between personal and professional life. You need to take some time out to relax. On the professional front, the week is satisfactory. Those in the field of finance will perform better. Trust your communication skills and listen to your inner voice. This will bring you desired results. You are likely to connect with important people who will play a role in your professional growth. On the relationship front, a fresh start is foreseen. This is a good time for love birds. Couples will experience a truly deep love in the coming days. Love is in the air.

Lucky number 9
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Tuesday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

This week you will witness a sound mind and body connection. Consider your thoughts and behaviour while dealing with a health issue. Genetics and environment play an important role in creating such conditions, but negative thinking makes the situation worse. Seek help from a counsellor to deal with this negativity. At work, you need to think before acting on any situation, else it will lead to an unfavourable consequence. If required, re-evaluate your goals and change your priorities. There may be some turbulence in your love life. A relationship might end or have already ended. It will be an unpleasant situation as you will dwell in the memories of the past. You may heal by forgiving and learning from the mistakes.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pastel Blue
Lucky day Thursday



CANCER June 21-July 22

You will work towards correcting the issues for the betterment of your health. If the issues become problematic, then it is advised to make some changes for a healthy lifestyle. Pay attention to your diet, exercise, and relaxation. If required, consult a health professional. On the career front, those looking for a new position will attain it. This week is a crucial time for you. You are likely to gain a new project. Work towards maximising your potential for a longer period. With hard work and persistence, you will leave a positive impact on senior management. Love life is not so rosy. A relationship has either ended or is on the verge of getting over. Don't let this situation dishearten you. You will overcome this situation.

Lucky number 1
Lucky colour Indigo
Lucky day Friday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

You will enjoy good health this week. Therefore, invest your energy into something productive. This is the right time to start a new health regime like a fitness plan, a diet plan or an exercise routine. Those who are facing health challenges, are likely to recover soon with the help of their loved ones and people around them. Being optimistic will help you big time. On the professional front, things look favourable. You will be happy to help others and will make the working experience a pleasant one. The money will be in abundance. In the love life, you are likely to face conflicts. Therefore, try to have open communication with your partner to avoid any misunderstandings. Singles, this is not a good time to get into a relationship.

Lucky number 17
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Saturday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

For a healthy life, you need to have patience and mental strength. Stay optimistic and spread good vibes around you. Share your motivation and inspiration with others. That might just as well heal them. Those who are dealing with bad habits, this is the right time to correct it. On the career front, uncertainties and confusions will dominate your mind and decisions and make your goals unclear. Colleagues and peers might try to limit your capabilities. Be confident and you will be able to overcome all opposition. In the matters of heart, you and your partner are likely to feel inspired and motivated. Spend time with each other and try to express your feelings. A new beginning is on the cards for singles. Use your creative energy productively.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Golden
Lucky day Sunday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

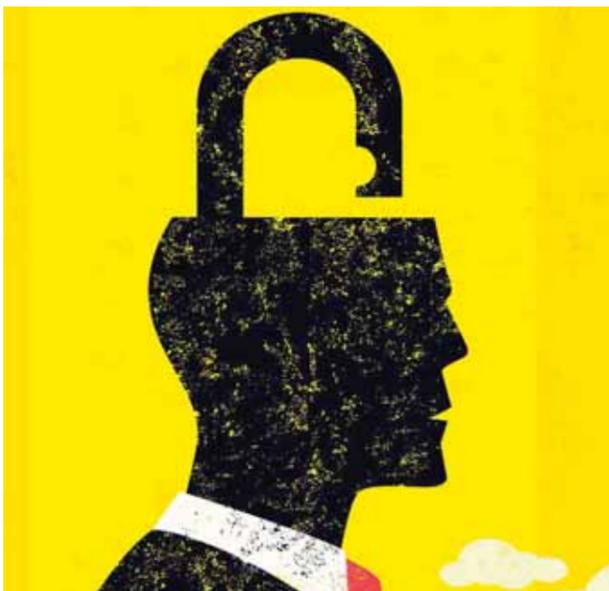
Unlock the mind to heal

Lockdown is being gradually eased out. People are trying to resume normal activities, but the problems confronting us are not yet over. It will take some time before things settle down. As nature goes through unforeseen twists and turns, we are faced with unprecedented situations. We can't change nature's course. But how we respond is definitely in our hands. If we negotiate with the challenges coming our way with fortitude and intelligence, we may be able to contain the damage. We faced similar pandemic during 1918-1920 in which more than 50 million people lost their lives, which included 2.25 million Indians. This time, however, the recovery rate is higher and death toll so far has been much lesser. It is not that world's destiny has taken a different turn. It needs to be appreciated that it is the result of human endeavour that medical science has grown substantially and we are better equipped today.

In life too, we are often confronted with challenging situations, many of them beyond our control. Many of us become a victim of our own making also because of our flawed perceptions. But here again, what matters the most is how

we respond to the situation. Some amongst us are able to face the situation bravely, intelligently negotiate the challenges and keep marching ahead in strength. But many, particularly the weak, come under great pressure, that is difficult to withstand, often at times calling for medical intervention. The question now is: Why given a similar situation, different people respond varied ways?

The answer lies in the unique character of each being, coming as it may as one's karmic carryover from the past. In one's life time, we would have learnt and unlearned many a things, acquired skill sets, developed habits and attitudes, acquired virtues and attributes, and also have unfulfilled desires left. Their imprints get carried over in the form of thought seeds to our successive incarnate body-mind organism. As and when the thought-seeds get a congenial ground, they come into play involuntarily. That may be to our advantage or detriment, depending on the character and content of the thought-seeds. To sum up, we are all invariably born with a preconditioned mind, which sets the premise of one's thought process — the basic fabric of individual mind-frame — on which our



future life takes off. Accordingly, each mind involuntarily develops its individual specific defining principles that guide all actions on our part — the desires nursed and pursued, the initiatives we take, or how we respond or react to a particular situation. That, of course, is subject to further modification as we go through learning lessons during ongoing life. With such a preconditioned mind, our scope of vision comes under restriction. That doesn't let us look at the issues in hand with an open mind, and so often fail to perceive things in the right perspective due, and evidently to our detriment.

The beauty of human mind, however, is that it can self-reflect upon its own trends and could respond to fresh educative inputs also. That empowers us to watch our thought-trends and make necessary amends through conscious efforts. The paradox, however, is that seldom do we remain conscious about using the above exclusive privilege. Often, our ego also plays spoil sport, as it doesn't let us identify and acknowledge our fault lines. Here comes the role of Astrology, which can dispassionately read your personality trends. For, it reads your individual energy signature with a fair amount of precision. And energy knows no bias.

Here is the case of a person who came seeking guidance on how to come out of acute stress he is undergoing. Look at his astrological pointers. The Sun conjunct Saturn in the *lagna*, a fixed sign, both opposed to Jupiter conjunct mischievous Neptune. That speaks of a hardened negative mindset. Second, he is stuck to his self-defined delusory beliefs and perceptions. Third, has a swaggering ego, who wishes to live exclusively on his own terms. All the more because mind signifying Moon occupies a dual sign Gemini and afflicted by both the sign lord Mercury and *lagna* lord Venus. That clouds his vision and interpersonal relationship skill. If all that would not be enough, fiery Mars conjunct erratic Rahu, lock horns with both Mercury and Venus. He, thus, has a restive and a cynic mind, who habitually finds fault with others for all the wrong happening. I wish, he unlocks his preconditioned mind, and things will definitely turn better.

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