

**WORLD 7**  
BETWEEN 6,000-6,500 PAK  
TERRORISTS IN AFGHAN: UN REPORT

**MONEY 8**  
'GOVT INITIATIVES WILL PROVIDE  
GROWTH MOMENTUM NEXT YEAR'

**SPORT 10**  
XAVI TESTS POSITIVE  
FOR COVID-19

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## USUALSUSPECTS SWAPAN DASGUPTA

### Utilising Covid time for self-reliant India

Last week, I posted a message on Twitter expressing my satisfaction that veteran BJP leader and the man singularly responsible for putting the Ram Janmabhoomi movement on the political map of India, had been invited to attend the bhoomi puja of the temple in Ayodhya. The post got a great deal of traction — it had nearly seven lakh impressions and some 36,000 engagements. However, among the responses, many expressed dissatisfaction and irritation that at a time such as this I should be obsessing about the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The belief that in times such as this the nation should have a single-point agenda is quite widespread. The problem arises when elaboration is demanded on what the singular focus should be on. For some, the only issue at this point in time is China's aggression on the Ladakh sector of the Line of Actual Control and the ways to deal with the larger challenge of our eastern neighbour. They feel that every other issue should take a back seat.

There are still others who believe that these are extraordinary times and that there should be single-minded focus on everything that is linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. This preoccupation has led to both the Government and the Opposition arguing at different times that normal business should be suspended.

In Bihar, for example, the Opposition has pressed for the postponement of the Assembly elections on the ground that the pandemic and the social distancing norms make campaigning impossible. There is also the argument that the fear of crowds and infection will lead to a vastly reduced turnout. At the same time, there are misgivings over the extended facilities for postal voting as was proposed and subsequently discarded by the Election Commission.

In Jaipur, on the other hand, in the face of a rebel challenge to the Government of Ashok Gehlot, the Congress has demanded an immediate session of the State Assembly to allow the Chief Minister to secure a vote of confidence. The Governor, however, is maintaining — as of Saturday morning — that in view of the Covid-19 threat, it would be prudent to avoid a session of the State Assembly. This is not least because a vote of confidence isn't really necessary since, despite Sachin Pilot's rebellion, the Gehlot Government still commands a slim majority. Of course, Gehlot has his own reasons for wanting to secure a formal vote of confidence since that will obviate any further

confidence or no-confidence vote for a further six months. The tussle between single-mindedly tackling the challenges thrown up by Covid-19 and resuming normal politics has extended to other States. West Bengal, for example, is a State where the Government, the Opposition and society at large has been singularly casual about the Covid-19 threat. The infection has become pretty widespread in Greater Kolkata and there are fears it could be spreading into the villages. There is public concern, stretching to alarm, over the imperfections in the State health administration. Yet, what is quite curious and often inexplicable is that neither the Government nor the Opposition has chosen to make Covid management a primary issue. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee used her speech on July 21 — a landmark annual occasion for the Trinamool Congress — to launch a broadside against the BJP. The BJP on its part is using the extraordinary situation to react to the TMC's high-handedness in the districts, some hardships on account of cumulative electricity bills and tone up its organisational networks. Despite the social distancing norms, normal politics appears to have resumed in a qualified way. The political parties are certainly not setting an example to a citizenry that in case seems to feel that life must go on as usual.

Overall, all over India, there appears to be some confusion over how best to flatten the rising curve of infections. There is now a general consensus that a national strategy — marked by stringent all-India lockdowns — should give way to local, State and district-based strategies. This has worked best in Delhi where the Aam Aadmi Party-led State Government was wise enough to involve the Central Government too. Yet, lockdowns appear to have become inevitable in Assam and other North-eastern States and even in Karnataka. West Bengal, confronted by the spectre of an out-of-control pandemic, has responded with a somewhat eccentric pattern of lockdowns that may not yield results. Indeed, the fear that Covid-19 may prove to be an enduring problem there, even after the rest of India has brought the situation under control, is quite real.

Ideally, the ways of containing the pandemic should have featured on top of the political agenda, with other issues slipping down the hierarchy. This hasn't happened uniformly. However, the only redeeming feature is that these extraordinary times have been well utilised by the Government to secure the acceptance of the philosophy of a self-reliant India and to begin an overdue discussion on strategic global alliances to contain China. If these serious issues leave their mark on future politics, the prolonged disruption of normal life would have been worth the inconvenience. Maybe India will change, but with the speed of an elephant

## Will approach Prez if required: Gehlot

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/JAIPUR

The Congress on Saturday held a State-wide protest in Rajasthan even as Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot seemed determined to go to any extent to cajole or coerce Governor Kalraj Mishra to convene the Assembly session to allow Gehlot to prove his majority.

While the Rajasthan Governor has cited Covid-19 situation as one of the reasons to not hold an urgent session of the Assembly, Bihar, where the coronavirus situation is going out of control, will be holding the Assembly session from August 3.

Gehlot has been pressing for an early Assembly session to go for a trust vote and force the rebel MLAs to either vote for him or face disqualification, which would bring down the strength of the Assembly and provide stability to his Government.

"The BJP conspiracy will not be allowed to succeed. I will go to Rashtrapati Bhavan if needed. If we have to picket at Rashtrapati Bhavan or even Prime Minister's residence, we will do this," Gehlot told Congress MLAs while addressing the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting at Fairmont Hotel in Jaipur.

The Chief Minister told his flocks that they may have to stay put at the hotel for another



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot leaves a hotel in Jaipur on Saturday PTI

three weeks. It was obvious that Gehlot was ready to take no chance by allowing the MLAs to disperse and make the vulnerable to "poaching".

Gehlot has reportedly submitted a list of 102 MLAs to the Governor while submitting his Cabinet's recommendation for convening the Assembly. The Governor raised several objections and asked Gehlot to send a fresh request.

"The date on which the Assembly session is to be convened is not mentioned in the Cabinet note and no approval has been given by the Cabinet for the same," the Governor wrote back to Gehlot.

He also stated that the State Government should take note of the Covid-19 crisis and pointed out that no agenda was given for a session

called on such short notice.

The revised proposal, passed by the Cabinet meeting on Saturday morning is believed to list the coronavirus situation as the agenda. This will now be submitted to the Governor.

During the day, Congress workers staged demonstrations across Rajasthan against what it

Calling session not safe in Raj but OK in Bihar; BJP plot won't be allowed, says Rajasthan CM

- Gehlot has reportedly submitted a list of 102 MLAs to the Governor while submitting his Cabinet's recommendation for convening the Assembly
- During the day, Congress workers staged demonstrations across Rajasthan against what it called a BJP "conspiracy to topple" its Government
- Party workers gathered in large numbers in Jaipur and district headquarters and raised slogans against the BJP and demanded that the Governor convene a session of the Assembly

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## Movie halls to run from August with social distancing

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After the Information and Broadcasting Ministry's recommendations to the Union Home Ministry that cinema halls be allowed to reopen in August, cinema halls across the country are gearing up to resume functioning expecting relaxations in the coming months. Paperless tickets, seat distancing, staggered intervals and scrupulous sanitizing are part of the safety protocol multiplexes will introduce if the Government allows screenings in "Unlock 3" next month.

"We are ensuring basics like sanitisation and masks. Paper tickets will no longer in the use. Entry, exit & intermissions will be planned in a manner that avoids overcrowding," PVR CEO G Dutta said on Saturday. PVR operates a cinema circuit comprising 841 screens at 176 properties in 71 cities in India and Sri Lanka.

A set of SOPs drawn up by the Multiplex Association of India in collaboration with its members was submitted to various Central Ministries as well as Prime Minister's Office and Niti Aayog earlier this month, said industry leaders INOX, PVR Pictures and Cinepolis India. Cinemas account for the biggest chunk of earnings for movies and have taken a substantial hit during the pandemic and multiplexes

## I&B Min nod for paperless tickets, staggered exit



are pulling out the stops to ensure audiences return after theatres open.

As per the safety measures masks and temperature check at the entrances will be mandatory for everyone entering the cinema complexes. Customers will be screened and those found to have 100 degrees Centigrade or showing viral fever symptoms will be asked to leave with a full refund. Customers will also be required to show their health status on the Aarogya Setu App while entering the premises.

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## CRPF SI shoots senior before killing self in Delhi's Lodi Estate

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 55-year-old sub-inspector with Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) allegedly shot dead his senior before killing himself in the Lodi Estate area of the national Capital on Friday night.

The sub-inspector has been identified as Karnail Singh while his senior has been identified as Inspector Dashrath Singh (56), both from the 122nd battalion of the force. The SI hailed from Udhampur in Jammu & Kashmir, while the inspector was from Rohtak in Haryana.

According to a senior official, the incident took place around 10.30 pm on Friday at 61, Lodi Estate, a bungalow allotted to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

"An argument took place



between Karnail Singh and his senior, Dashrath, following which the SI allegedly killed the inspector with his service weapon and later shot himself dead," said the official.

"The incident at 61, Lodi Estate is an aberration which seems to have been committed at the spur of the moment. An enquiry has been ordered to establish the facts of the matter and will be taken to its logical end," CRPF spokesperson Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Moses Dhinakaran said.

Senior officials of the paramilitary force and local police reached the spot soon after the incident.

## Gold smuggling kingpin names consul general

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The gold smuggling case involving UAE Consulate Staff at Thiruvananthapuram turned murkier on Saturday with Swapna Suresh, the kingpin, and her associate KT Ramees, telling the investigating agencies that the higher ups in the Consulate were part of the smuggling operation.

"The UAE Consul General and the Attaché were part of the smuggling operations using diplomatic channel. For each consignment of gold smuggled into India, they were paid \$1,500/ each," Swapna and Ramees reportedly told the Customs officers during the interrogation.

This statement finds mention in the affidavit submitted by the Customs in the special court in Kochi, which is expected to hear the bail applications filed by the duo on Monday.

Detailed report on P6

## Will ensure China restores status quo ante: Lt Gen Joshi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With both sides engaged in defusing tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Northern Command chief Lt General YK Joshi said on Saturday the armed forces will ensure China withdraws and restore status quo ante as was the deployment in April. He also said the Indian troops will remain deployed there till total disengagement takes place.

This significant statement by Joshi, who is overall in-charge of guarding the LAC in Ladakh, came in the backdrop of the Chinese not pulling back more than 40,000 troops.

Making the Indian stand clear, Joshi said the Indian troops will continue to be

deployed till status quo ante is achieved. It means the Chinese need to go back to their pre-May positions. The first face-off in Ladakh took place on May 5 when the Chinese army obstructed an Indian patrol at the Pangong Tso (lake) leading to fisticuffs.

The Northern Command chief said in an interview to a private channel, "What I can tell you in simple words is that we shall continue all efforts to restore the status quo ante along the LAC. I believe the negotiations and process of this engagement and the commitment of both sides to adhere to the laid down methodology would dictate the timeline of the standoff."

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## 43 cows locked in room, die of suffocation in Chhattisgarh

Bilaspur: At least 43 cows died of suffocation in a small room of a panchayat building where they were locked in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur, a senior official said on Saturday.

The deaths came to light in the morning when villagers experienced a foul odour emanating from the room, and found that some of the cattle had died, said Bilaspur collector Saransh Mittal.

He said a total of 60 cows were locked in a room in the old panchayat building of Medpar village under Takhatpur development block.

An enquiry is underway to find out since when and why cows were locked in the room, he said. Autopsies revealed that 43 cows had died of suffocation, the official said. PTI

## CAPSULE

### US AGENTS FORCE OPEN CHINA'S VACATED MISSION

Houston: US federal agents and law enforcement officers have entered the Chinese consulate compound here along with locksmiths after the mission was shut down, amidst spiralling tensions between Washington and Beijing. The Trump Administration ramped up its confrontation with China, ordering Beijing's consulate in Houston to close over concerns about economic espionage.

### TEHELKA EXPOSE: JAYA JAITLEY CONVICTED

New Delhi: Former Samata Party president Jaya Jaitley and two others have been convicted by a court here in a nearly 20-year-old graft case related to a purported defence deal that stemmed from a sensational sting operation by Tehelka news portal.

### 3-DAY LOCKDOWN IN TRIPURA FROM JULY 27

Agartala: The Tripura Govt has decided to impose a three-day statewide total lockdown from Monday in view of the spurt in coronavirus cases.

## Shivraj first CM to test Covid positive

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan became the first CM to test Covid-19 positive on Saturday. Chouhan, 61, shared the news on Twitter. He was admitted to a Covid-19 designated private hospital in Bhopal, a BJP leader said.

"I had symptoms of Covid-19. In the test report I was found positive. I appeal to all my colleagues that whoever has come in my contact to get tested for coronavirus. My close

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contacts should move to quarantine," Chouhan said in a tweet.

In another tweet, the chief minister said that if detected and treated on time, Covid-19 infection can be cured.

"I have been reviewing the status of coronavirus infection in the State every evening since March 25. Now I will try to review the situation through video conferencing as much as possible," he said.

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## 53-yr-old Delhi Police constable dies of corona

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 53-year-old Delhi Police Head constable died due to Covid-19 at a city hospital. Police said that Head Constable Satya Narayan was posted at the Madhu Vihar police station.

According to a senior police official, on July 13, Narayan tested positive for

Covid-19 and was sent to the Covid Care Centre in Akshardham. Later in the day, he was shifted to LNJP Hospital.

"He had health issues like high blood pressure (BP), diabetes and had two stents in his heart. He was shifted to ICU due to his diabetes and BP issues and his condition improved," he said.

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## Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL  
CASES: 13,85,424  
DEATHS: 32,096  
RECOVERED: 8,84,826  
ACTIVE: 4,68,082



| STATES         | TOTAL CASES | DEATHS | RECOVERED |
|----------------|-------------|--------|-----------|
| Maharashtra    | 3,66,368    | 13,389 | 2,07,194  |
| Tamil Nadu     | 2,06,737    | 3,409  | 1,51,055  |
| Delhi          | 1,29,531    | 3,806  | 1,13,068  |
| Karnataka      | 90,942      | 1,798  | 33,750    |
| Andhra Pradesh | 88,671      | 985    | 43,255    |
| Uttar Pradesh  | 63,742      | 1,387  | 39,903    |
| West Bengal    | 56,377      | 1,332  | 35,654    |
| Gujarat        | 54,712      | 2,301  | 39,714    |
| Telangana      | 52,466      | 455    | 40,334    |
| Bihar          | 36,314      | 232    | 24,520    |
| Rajasthan      | 35,298      | 613    | 25,306    |
| Assam          | 31,087      | 77     | 21,762    |
| Haryana        | 30,538      | 389    | 23,654    |
| Madhya Pradesh | 26,926      | 799    | 18,488    |
| Odisha         | 24,013      | 163    | 15,929    |
| Kerala         | 18,099      | 60     | 8,611     |

## IIT Kharagpur develops portable rapid device to detect Covid-19

New Delhi: Researchers at IIT Kharagpur have developed a first of its kind portable rapid diagnostic device to detect coronavirus at less than ₹400 per test. According to officials, the test can be conducted in an ultra-low-cost portable enclosure as an alternative to specialised laboratory equipment.

The same portable unit can be used for a large number

of tests on mere replacement of the paper cartridge after each test. The testing technologies currently in use are expensive, despite the innovations in low-cost testing kits as the actual testing machinery cost remains high. Further testing mechanism has logistical issues due to the infrastructural requirement of the testing centres.

Detailed report on P5

**HOME THEATRE**

**Sushant we will miss you**



**DIL BECHARA**  
DISNEY+HOTSTAR  
\*ing: Sushant Singh Rajput, Sanjana Sanghi, Sahil Vaid

To see him on the screen as a posthumous actor gives you so much angst, the kind of angst that builds up even more when you see him as an engaging youthful character drawing you into his ultimate death through this movie.

*Dil Bechara* is a sweet love story between two cancer patients which may not have garnered so many eyeballs but Sushant been with us, but his tragic death will draw many more viewers to this last mount of the youngster, released on an OTT platform without much publicity, perhaps because his death itself is the most potent propeller for the movie.

As a tribute, Disney+ Hotstar, the platform on which the movie has been released, has opened it for free streaming. Seeing this movie brings to the fore the futility of the suicide by the actor. Such a waste of talent, such a waste of youth.

But this movie, based on a

simple yet moving love story of two cancer survivors and how they pack their moments in the face of fast approaching death comes to you in a gentle manner, moving you to the core without really hollering the prospect of death from the pulpit.

Really, it is some fault in our stars that we lost Rajput in a manner that he left us but in his last, he does everything right to climb into our hearts both with his acting skills and his presence. He is sweet, the story is sweet and the end moments, almost like a tribute to his soul before his death, are done with candid simplicity.

Sanjana Sanghi, as his love interest, is fresh and happening. Sushant, on the other hand, is special which again and again brings one to his shocking unexpected suicide.

In fact it leaves you angry about losing such a young life to whatever the reason may have been. *Dil Bechara*, in that context, is a film that needs to be seen both as a tribute and to freeze some frames of this very talented person who gave up.

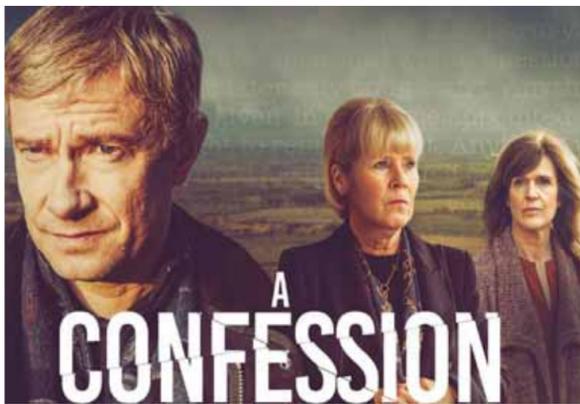
**NUANCED CRIME SERIES**

**A CONFESSION**

SonyLiv  
6 Episodes  
\*ing: Martin Freeman, Imelda Staunton and others  
Rated: 8/10

Old drama in new mould is what you can call this series based on a true story. As true stories go, they are more compelling than fiction, especially when they come wrapped in a crime series but this one is different for the simple reason that it emotes a narrative that takes into account so many other things, like the trauma, fear, uncertainty, helplessness and fight for justice of the victims' families, the efficacy of certain police protocols, the brazen indifference of a serial killer and then and only then the achievement of a police officer in bringing him to book.

In this context, the series has depth of what it conveys and the impact of this is enhanced by the aptly timed short six episodes that it takes to show how two mothers of the two victims, one who got justice and the other who did not (brilliantly played by Imelda Staunton as Karen), cope



with long trials and the castigation of the cop who risked his job and lost it in his attempt to bring the killer to admit to more killings.

That emotions play at all levels is a plus point for this crime story. The psychopath does his job well and makes you very uncomfortable every time he visits the screen. The police intrigues within the department are

shown with the subtlety that they warrant and the path to criminal justice has been charted with the ifs and buts that it steps into [pretty often.

A slow burner with not many twists and turns but that does not make this one a rippleless line on a monitor. Its heart beats for the victims, their families and the policeman. An engaging fare.

**Cute & sweet teen romance**

**THE KISSING BOOTH 2**

Netflix  
\*ing: Joey King, Joel Courtney, Jacob Elordi, Maisie Richardson-Sellers, Taylor Perez  
Rated: 6/10



In order to know who is who in films that have sequels it is important to see the original. However, there are always exceptions to the rule and this latest movie on the OTT platform comes under this category. There are a few reasons. First, in order for the people to follow the thread, it opens with the lead protagonist — Elle — telling us where part one left off and what all had happened. Second, all through there are references to the past. This makes it easy. Also, these movies are based on Beth Reekles' Young Adult books about teen romance. It really doesn't need too much introspection except to know whether the boy and the girl stay together or not.

While the first was all about kissing and falling in love, this one is

all about making long distance relationships work, trying to act mature even though the green monster raises its head that leads to a few tears. But what is teen romance if it doesn't come with its share of tears, angst and heartbreak.

But at the heart of it is the fundraiser and the kissing booth where kids find out who their true love is. The movie is named *The Kissing Booth* for a reason.

If you are in a mood to watch a romantic movie, this one fits perfectly — it is cute and sweet. — Shalini Saksena

**Quirky, funny and entertaining**

**FRENCH BIRYANI**

Amazon Prime  
\*ing: Danish Sait, Sal Yusuf, Disha Madan, Michael Madhu, Pitobash Tripathy, Rangayana Raghu  
Rated: 6/10

This Kannada comedy-drama movie (it has English subtitles) would have most probably bypassed the viewers in North India had it not been for the OTT platform. Directed by Pannaga Bharana, the film is set in the backdrop of Bengaluru city and talks about the trials and travails of a foreigner who comes to the city who then unfortunately gets caught in the melee of confusion and chaos that comes with living in a metro and the problems it throws up when you don't know the language.

References to France with prawns may not be funny but the expressions of Sal Yusuf who plays the Frenchman are definitely worth a laugh. And here lies the hero of the film — the language barrier and the problems it lands a French salesman who comes to the city to attend a conference to sell drug (read medicine) but instead it takes him on a journey into the streets of a city he would have never undertaken voluntarily with an auto driver, Asgar, played brilliantly by Danish Sait.

Sait slips beautifully into this role with a typical Hyderabadi accent to boot. His ability to speak different dialects and ability to interact with a French tourist is an absolute delight. But the film has its downs as well. There is nothing much to offer in terms of a



story given that there are two other parallel stories running that collide with the third. One a blundering son who becomes a don at the death of his father and the other about Asgar's sister and husband. References to Chris Gayle because he sports a certain hairstyle is in bad taste and a strict no-no.

Men ogling at the butt of a woman while she has an argument when her car hits an auto makes no sense as does the whole idea of a man staring down the blouse. Objectifying women in such a manner is demeaning and uncalled for in such a senseless manner.

Despite this drawback, such faux pas are far and between and the movie manages to keep you entertained for most part. — Shalini Saksena

**TELLY TALE**

**A TRIBUTE TO BOLLYWOOD LEGENDS**

Sony Entertainment Television's popular show, *India's Best Dancer* is back with new episodes and this weekend promises to be a magical one! The top 12 contestants along with the choreographers will be seen giving a tribute to the Bollywood legends with their unique styles of dancing. This weekend marks the comeback of the beautiful judge Malaika Arora who will assess the contestants on their entertainment quotient.

While HD popper Tiger Pop with choreographer Vartika will bring back the memories and charm of Rajesh Khanna, Subhranil Paul with choreographer Pankaj will pay a tribute to the iconic disco dancer of Hindi cinema, Mithun Da. Whereas Rutuja from Pune and guru Ashish will bring back the magic of Master ji Saroj Khan on stage. While Akib Saab and choreographer Paul, known for lyrical hip-hop pay homage to the legendary Raj Kapoor, Sonal Vichare and choreographer Tushar will dance to the tunes of Mr Bachchan. From Dharmendra to Sridevi and Mehmood, the contestants have picked their favourites from the Indian cinema and will bring the stage alive with their performances.

The energy and enthusiasm was so high on the set during the shoot of this episode, that Malaika Arora, couldn't hold back and joined contestant Shweta to shake a leg on Helen ji's beautiful number *Piya Tu Ab Toh Aaja...* much to everyone's delight!

Sharing her experience, Malaika added: "It feels great to be back on *India's Best Dancer*. The contestants are putting their best foot forward and the competition is getting tougher for us to judge. This week, we are celebrating Bollywood Legends on the show and every contestant is giving a tribute one legend, respectively, through their performance. When Shweta performed on *Piya Tu Ab Toh Aaja*, I couldn't hold back. It's such a peppy number in itself and it's a song which is evergreen. We've all heard this song at least once in our lifetime and one can't not dance, when this number plays. Overall I think there were some brilliant performances and it just got me thinking how much dance has evolved as a form of expression."

Speaking of paying tribute to the Bollywood legends, the dynamic hosts of the show, Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa will be seen in a new *avatar* keeping up with the theme this weekend.



**ZEE5 BRINGS BACK ZINDAGI**

Keeping the consumers' evolving entertainment needs at the fore, Media & Entertainment Powerhouses ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEE) announced the return of its much-loved content brand Zindagi, on its digital entertainment platform, ZEE5. Zindagi's shows have been highly appreciated by audiences for its realistic appeal, superlative character portrayals, captivating performances and its ability to satiate the evolving content preferences of the viewers. Catering to this strong level of global consumer demand, Zindagi is returning with a bigger promise to not only offer its rich original content library, but to also create fresh new shows which will be thought provoking, with a bold multicultural narrative. As a premium global content brand, Zindagi has always narrated handpicked real stories that are differentiated, yet universal in its storytelling and appeal, resonating strongly with the consumers globally.

Zindagi will offer a myriad mix of shows that are truly global in nature, ranging from family dramas to romance including *Shehr-E-Zaat*, *Aunn Zara*, *Badi Aapa*, *Mastana Mahi*, *Main Abdul Qadir Hun*, *Noorpur Ki Rani* and many other such realistic stories which are customized as per the tastes and preferences of the global audiences. This eclectic mix of curated shows, featuring 1000+ hours of meaningful content, will be available for the global audiences on ZEE5.

**NEHA ALL PRAISE FOR ADITYA**

All the aspiring singers who are keen on making a name for themselves in the music industry get ready for the auditions as India's favourite singing reality *Indian Idol*'s



coming back with its new season. The *ghar se manch tak ka safar* will be easily accessible on the SonyLIV app, all the participant needs to upload their singing video on the app. This time also the judging panel would have Neha Kakkar, Vishal Dadlani, and Himesh Reshammiya. The first promo of *Indian Idol* was released recently which featured Aditya Narayan who would be

hosting this season of the show as well. Not only that its the first time a host has presented the first look of *Indian Idol* and has sung for it.

Neha Kakkar found the first promo of *Indian Idol* extremely appealing and could not stop appreciating Aditya Narayan on how good he was in the promo. She found Aditya's energy in the promo vivacious and felt that anyone who would watch the promo will not be able to get the tune off their head.

Neha expressing her excitement towards the promo said: "I loved the first promo of *Indian Idol 12* and found it quite catchy. This promo will make everyone smile and the song is such that you cannot stop humming it. I am sure this promo would attract more and more aspiring singers to upload their best singing performance on Sony Liv app. The show has given many aspiring singers a platform to showcase their talent including me and will continue to do so. I am excited to see some extraordinary talent and wish all the participants good luck."

**TIMNASA'S QUEST TO FIND NAKABPOSH**

Vivaan and Nakabposh are yet again on the crossroads as Timnasa's (Pavitra Punia) evil plan to turn Earth into ice has put Vivaan's (Vansh Sayani) supernatural identity under the threat of being exposed. Sony SAB's *Baalveer Returns* is set to push the viewers on the edge of their seats as their favourite superhero's Baalveer and Nakabposh (Dev Joshi) fight another dangerous battle.

Timnasa in a bid to draw Nakabposh out, creates an atmosphere so cold that everything starts turning into ice. With Nakabposh on a mission to find the clues they do not present themselves in front of her, she will expose Vivaan's real identity as Baalveer in front of his family and entire Bharat Nagar. Time is running out as the earth is turning into ice. What will Vivaan choose? To save himself from being exposed or save the world from turning into ice?

A suspicious Timnasa starts getting restless when Nakabposh and Vivaan do not show up for the fight and later learns that it is Dooba Dooba who has taken Vivaan's form. She threatens Dooba Dooba saying if they do not present themselves in front of her, she will expose Vivaan's real identity as Baalveer in front of his family and entire Bharat Nagar. Time is running out as the earth is turning into ice. What will Vivaan choose? To save himself from being exposed or save the world from turning into ice?

Pavitra Punia said: "Timnasa is the ultimate evil mastermind in the show. She has still not found out who is Nakabposh. In a quest to find and defeat Nakabposh, Timnasa has planned a scheme which neither Baalveer nor Nakabposh can defeat. It is like a double-edged sword where they are bound to lose in one way or the other. It has been exciting to shoot the upcoming episodes."

**'Kundali Bhagya has been a turning point'**

MUSBA HASHMI speaks with SANJAY GAGNANI, who plays Prithvi in Zee TV's *Kundali Bhagya*, about his excitement of getting back to work, how hard is it to adapt to the new normal and the twists that he is about to bring in the show

■ **How does it feel like to be back on sets?**

It feels great. I never thought that I will be away from sets for such a long time, it feels amazing to be working again. I feel alive when I am in front of the camera. My workplace is my temple and I feel fortunate to be allowed to visit the temple.

■ **Is it hard to adapt to the new normal, especially when you are working?**

Yes, it is extremely tough. But since we don't have any other option but to follow all the norms, in order to be safe, we have to adapt to it. But having said that, it is tough to take care of sanitisation and to maintain social distancing. Because when you are working, your focus is solely on work but now the energies are diverted and yet we have to be our best and be safe as well.

■ **Between action and cut, do you struggle to maintain social distancing? Does that bother you?**

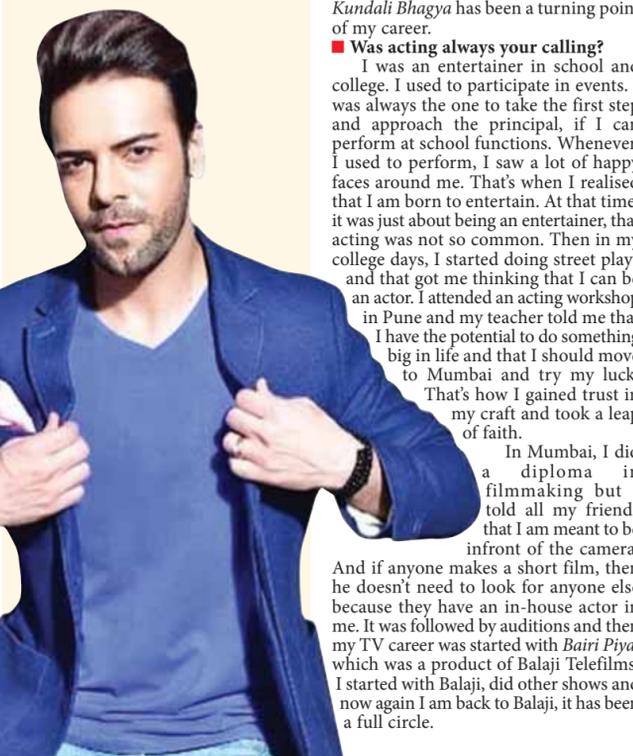
When I am in between the shot, I don't think about any other thing but to give the best shot. Between action and cut, I am transported to a different world. When I am enacting a scene, precautions and social distancing are mere words. Because it is not practically possible, you can't keep a six-feet distance from your co-actors and then perform. When I am Prithvi, I am living his world. Once the director calls it cut, I make sure that I am following all the norms. Before and after every scene, I get the floor and things that I touch, sanitised properly.

■ **Many shows are now making sanitiser, face shields and masks a part of the show. Can we expect the same with *Kundali Bhagya*?**

No, I don't think so we are using any of these things in the scenes. After the lockdown, it's been three weeks since we started shooting again. Since then we haven't used a mask or a face shield in the scenes, because the content doesn't require it. People don't want to see actors wearing masks onscreen. They are already so bugged up seeing all these things in their surroundings. All they want from us is entertainment, and they have been longing to see our faces. They will just change the channel if they will see similar things in daily soaps too.

■ **Prithvi is about to bring in a lot of twists in the show. What should the audience look forward to?**

**Between action and cut, I am transported to a different world. When I am enacting a scene, precautions and social distancing are mere words. When I am Prithvi, I am living his world. Once the director calls it cut, I make sure that I am following all the norms**



Ironically, Prithvi has been wearing a mask, not a precautionary one but a mixture of the one in *Joker* and *Money Heist*. The reason being the other characters don't recognise him. He has kidnapped Rishabh for obvious reasons, he wants to snatch all the wealth and property of the Luthras. He is trying his best to get the papers signed by Rishabh. Anyone or everyone who becomes an obstacle for him, will be in pain. Now whether he'll get caught red-handed by the Luthra family or he will succeed in his mission is what the audience has to find out in the coming episodes.

■ **Were there any apprehensions about the role, given that it is a negative lead?**

Absolutely not. I didn't have even one per cent of apprehension. Initially, it was supposed to be only two-three months cameo. I was told if the character is well-received by the audience, it might get an extension, however there was no confirmation. But then, the audience loved Prithvi so much that he became a part of the show. Also, not to mention *Kundali Bhagya* has been a turning point of my career.

■ **Was acting always your calling?**

I was an entertainer in school and college. I used to participate in events. I was always the one to take the first step and approach the principal, if I can perform at school functions. Whenever, I used to perform, I saw a lot of happy faces around me. That's when I realised that I am born to entertain. At that time, it was just about being an entertainer, that acting was not so common. Then in my college days, I started doing street plays and that got me thinking that I can be an actor. I attended an acting workshop in Pune and my teacher told me that I have the potential to do something big in life and that I should move to Mumbai and try my luck. That's how I gained trust in my craft and took a leap of faith.

In Mumbai, I did a diploma in filmmaking but I told all my friends that I am meant to be in front of the camera. And if anyone makes a short film, then he doesn't need to look for anyone else because they have an in-house actor in me. It was followed by auditions and then my TV career was started with *Bairi Piya*, which was a product of Balaji Telefilms. I started with Balaji, did other shows and now again I am back to Balaji, it has been a full circle.

# 450-bed hospital inaugurated in Burari

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday inaugurated 450-bedded hospital in Burari and said the number of beds now increased for coronavirus patients in the city.

Speaking virtually at the inauguration of 450-bed Delhi government hospital in Burari, he said Covid-related parameters have improved in Delhi in the last one month.

"The two crore people of the city, his Government and the Centre have together attained victory in controlling Covid-19 but the fight is not over yet. The new Burari hospital will serve the people of the area and will prove to be a huge support in the health infrastructure in Delhi," he said.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain inaugurated the hospital and was joined through video conferencing by the Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister pointed out that in the past one month, cases of Covid-19 have gone down, deaths have reduced, recovery rate has increased and positivity ratio has lowered.

"This is a result of the hard work of all the people. I want to congratulate all the doctors, nurses, paramedic staff, officials, and whoever has



worked hard to achieve this goal." Kejriwal said. "I am very happy after inaugurating Burari Hospital today. I could not be there due to Covid and various other arrangements. I visited the hospital a few days back to inspect all arrangements that were being made in the hospital. The opening of this hospital will add 450 more beds in the health infrastructure in Delhi."

The hospital will eventually have a total of 700 beds. Around 125 beds will have oxygen supply and the capacity will be enhanced in the coming days, the Delhi government said in a statement.

Kejriwal said that in the last one

month, the number of cases, positivity ratio, and death ratio have gone down, and the recovery rate has increased. "This is the result of the hard work of all the people. I want to congratulate all the doctors, nurses, paramedic staff, officials, and whoever has worked hard to achieve this goal," he said.

After cases of coronavirus keep increasing in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia visited the hospital to take stock of the arrangements a month back and instructed the officials to expedite the construction work of the hospital.



# DCP holds review meet on crime, Covid

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava on Saturday held a meeting about crime and Covid review, through video conferencing in national Capital.

The CP also rewarded personnel from West, Outer and Dwarka Districts in recognition of exemplary outstanding works performed by them during last few days.

"Inspectors Gursewak Singh and Arvind Tyagi and Constables Virender, Jaipal and Jagdish have been rewarded for

the operation they conducted in Delhi's Khyala area while Inspector Ashok Kumar, SI Dheeraj and Cts Ghanshyam, Sajjan, Ombir and Sonu have been rewarded solving armed robbery in Raj Park area," said Anil Mittal, Additional Public Relation Officer (APRO), Delhi Police.

"Inspector Naveen Kumar, SI Bijender, ASIs Hans, Mahesh, Surender and Mahesh, HCs Raj Kumar and Sumit and Cts Jitendra and Gaje Singh have been rewarded for solving armed carjacking and robbery in Dwarka area," Mittal said.



# Congress accuses AAP Govt of hiding actual data of infected people

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress accused the AAP Government of "hiding" actual data of people infected with coronavirus in Delhi saying that the number is far ahead of what the government is showing.

Congress Delhi unit president Anil Kumar said it is very strange that Delhi Government's data shows a lesser number of Corona positive cases despite the Capital jumping to the first position among cities in the country.

Kumar also questioned the reliability of 'Rapid Antigen Test' (RAT) saying that the Delhi Government is relying heavily on RAT but its results are dubious.

"From June 19 to July 15, 2020 the RAT accounted for 70 per cent (2,81,555 cases) in Delhi with a positive rate of 6.92 per cent while the 30 per cent RT-PCR tests (1,20,505 cases) gave a positivity rate of

36.34 per cent which clearly shows the upward swing of Corona cases in the Capital," he said.

Shockingly, 18 per cent of the RAT negative cases turned positive when tested at RT-PCR, he said.

Rapid Antigen Test being conducted in Delhi is not a fool-proof method to determine the positive cases compared to the RT-PCR tests, he said adding that the government should follow-up all negative Rapid Antigen Tests with RT-PCR tests to determine the exact number of Covid-affected in the Capital.

Congress vice-president Jai Kishan said that experts have also admitted that rapid antigen tests used to conduct tests at a large scale to get fast response.

"The negative cases should not null the AAP Government into a false sense of security, as the pandemic may surge suddenly," he said.

# Sharjeel Imam charged with sedition in chargesheet

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Saturday filed a chargesheet against former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) PhD scholar Sharjeel Imam with sedition before a court in national Capital for allegedly inciting people to indulge in activities detrimental to the sovereignty and integrity of the country.

Police made the allegations in its chargesheet filed before the court in a case related to anti-Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) riots earlier this year. Police filed the final report under various sections including 124-A (Sedition), 153(A) (Promoting enmity), 153-A (promoting enmity, Hatred between different communities), 153-B (Assertion prejudicial to national integration) and 505 (spreading rumors) of IPC and under the sections of stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

According to chargesheet, Sharjeel Imam is accused of delivering seditious speeches and inciting a particular section of community to indulge in unlawful activities, detrimental to sovereignty and integrity of the nation. "In the garb of protesting against the CAA, he exhorted people of a particular community to block the highways leading to the major cities and resort to 'Chakka Jam', thereby disrupting normal life," as per chargesheet.

Police in its chargesheet further alleged that Imam openly defied the Constitution and called it a "fascist" document. In the name of opposing 'CAA' he also openly propagated blocking the 'chicken neck' connecting the mainland India with the Northeast. He also showed utter contempt and disregard for the democratic means of protest," it said. SR

# 23-year-old arrested for impersonating as official of Army

NEW DELHI: A 23-year-old man has been arrested by the Delhi Police for allegedly impersonating an official of Indian Army in the national Capital. Police said that the accused was wanted in a case and when the police nabbed him, he showed an Indian Army identity card and claimed that he is a "Major". The accused has been identified as Suraj Tiwari, a resident of Prem Nagar-II in Delhi.

According to PK Mishra, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Rohini district, on July 23, a case under section 323/341/34 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) was registered at Prem Nagar police station after a complaint against Suraj was received by a woman. "During investigation Suraj was arrested and as the offence was bailable, thus, police asked accused Suraj to produce a surety for availing bail but accused rather produced a Identity Card of Major Rank in Indian Army stating that he is posted as Major in Indian Army and police cannot arrest him," said the DCP.

"Identity Card shown by the accused was of inferior quality and that raised suspicion in the mind of police official privy to investigation. Here upon, interrogation of the accused was carried out. He got visibly nervous while trying to defend cross-questions and eventually submitted that the ID card was fake," the DCP said. "Suraj told police that during his school days he joined NCC and once had an opportunity to visit IMA in Dehradun. He got immensely fascinated by Indian Army Officers there and developed a strong penchant for officer's uniform. However, his dreams got stifled as he did not have the requisite academic qualification to be an officer in Indian Army. Notwithstanding his academic qualification hiccups, he fabricated an ID of Indian Army reflecting himself as 'Major' in it," the DCP said. SR

#CourageInKargil

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**Today on Kargil Vijay Diwas, let us pay homage to the Courage, Valour and Sacrifice of our Bravehearts.**

On this solemn day, the Indian Army rededicates its commitment to protect the Territorial Integrity and Sovereignty of the Nation.

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Captain Vikram Batra  
PVC (Posthumous)  
13 JAK RIF

Grenadier  
Yogender Singh Yadav  
PVC  
18 GRENADIERS

Rifleman Sanjay Kumar  
PVC  
13 JAK RIF

Lieutenant Manoj Kumar  
Pandey  
PVC (Posthumous)  
1/11 GR

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DAVP 10127/13/0001/2021

# Yogi visits Ayodhya, reviews preparations for 'bhoomi puja'

**Lucknow/Ayodhya:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday visited Ayodhya and placed the idols of Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan on the new 'asans' at the Ram Janmabhoomi temple site.

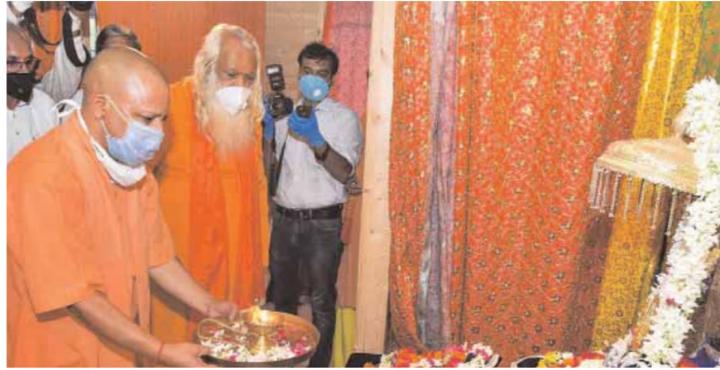
The Chief Minister reached Ayodhya in the afternoon and took part in a 'puja'. He also offered prayers at the Hanumangarhi Temple and inspected the stones carved for Ram Temple at Mandir Nirmaan Karyashala.

He then held a meeting with seers and members of the Ram Mandir Trust at the Vishwa Hindu Parishad headquarters at Karsewak

Puram.

Adityanath is on a short visit to Ayodhya to review the preparations for the foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of the Ram Temple. The visit comes ahead of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to lay the foundation stone of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on August 5. The construction of the temple will start with the ceremony to lay the foundation stone.

A trust member had said that in view of the coronavirus pandemic, only 200 people would attend the ceremony and all social distancing norms will be followed at the event. **PTI**



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers to Lord Ram in the Ram Janmabhoomi campus in Ayodhya on Saturday **PTI**

## Ayodhya temples asked to light lamps to celebrate beginning of temple construction

**PTI ■ AYODHYA**

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked all temples in Ayodhya to carry out special cleaning of their premises and light lamps on August 4 and 5 to celebrate the beginning of the construction of a grand temple of Lord Ram, sources said on Saturday.

The Chief Minister was on a short visit to Ayodhya to review the preparations for the foundation stone laying ceremony for the construction of the Ram temple.

According to Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

Teertha Kshetra Trust members, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Ayodhya on August 5 for the "bhoomi puja" ceremony to begin the construction of the Ram temple.

The trust has invited Modi to lay the foundation stone of the temple either on August 3 or 5, both auspicious dates, based on calculations of movements of stars and planets.

Triloki Nath Pandey, the decree-holder of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra, said, "CM Adityanath has asked all temples in Ayodhya to do special cleaning and purification, and light lamps on August 4 and 5 to celebrate the big day."

## 2 LeT ultras killed in J&K encounter

**PNS ■ JAMMU**

Two Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) terrorists were neutralised by the joint teams of security forces in the Ranbirgarh-Panzinara area of Srinagar on Saturday. During the operation, no collateral damage of life and property was suffered by the security forces and the civilians in the area.

Since July 1, the security forces have eliminated 19 terrorists in nine operations across Kashmir valley.

In another successful search operation launched in the forest area of Marpathri in upper reaches of Gulmarg, Baramulla security forces Saturday recovered one Dragunov Sniper rifle with magazines, 194 AK-47 rounds.

Defence PRO in Srinagar, Col Rajesh Kalia said, "along with the Dragunov sniper rifle, 10 Rifle grenades & two IED circuits were also recovered".

Meanwhile, till late evening the Jammu and Kashmir police had not

officially confirmed the identity of the slain terrorists, but official sources claimed both the terrorists were believed to be the cadres of LeT and were active in the area since 2018.

The slain terrorists were identified as LeT Commander Ishaq Rashid and Aijaz Ahmand. They were both local terrorists, official sources revealed.

In another incident, Jammu and Kashmir also claimed to have rescued one terrorist who had joined proscribed terror outfit Al Badr a few weeks ago.

According to a police spokesman, "a joint cordon and search operation was launched by JKP, 29RR and CRPF in the Ranbirgarh-Panzinara area of Srinagar after receiving a specific tip off about the presence of terrorists on Saturday".

"During the search operation as the presence of terrorists was ascertained they were given the opportunity to surrender, however they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search

party, which was retaliated leading to an encounter", the police spokesman said.

"In the ensuing encounter, 02 unidentified terrorists were killed and their bodies were retrieved from the site of encounter". Police spokesman said, the identity of the killed terrorists is being ascertained.

Meanwhile, in a separate operation a terrorist hideout was busted by the joint team of security forces in Tral.

According to a police spokesman, a cordon and search operation was launched by Awantipora Police, 42 RR and 180 BN CRPF in the forest area of Chinphadi Machama Tral on Saturday.

During the search in the area, the joint team busted a JeM terrorist's hideout. The joint team were able to recover incriminating materials from the hideout.

The incriminating material has been taken into police custody for the purpose of investigation.

## 2L patients discharged so far, recovery rate 56.55% in Maha

**257 die, 9,251 more test +ve; total deaths mount to 13,389, infected cases go up to 3,66,368**

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

In a positive development, the total number of cured Covid-19 patients discharged so far from various hospitals in the state crossed 2 lakh mark in Maharashtra on Saturday thus amounting to 56.55 per cent recovery rate, even as 257 people died of Coronavirus, while 9,251 others tested positive for the pandemic in the state.

As 7,227 patients were discharged from various hospitals in the state, the total number of people discharged from various hospitals -- ever since the breakout of the pandemic in the state in the second week of March -- rose 2,07,194 as on Saturday. As a consequence, the authorities pegged

the recovery rate at 56.55 per cent.

With 257 new deaths, the total number of deaths in various parts of the state went up to 13,389. Similarly with 9,251 fresh infections, the total number of infected cases jumped to 3,66,368.

Of the total 258 deaths, Pune accounted for the highest 72 deaths, overtaking Mumbai for the second consecutive day.

Mumbai recorded 52 deaths, taking the total number of deaths in the country's commercial capital from 5,984 to 6,036 and the infected cases increased by 1,080 to touch 108,060.

Apart from 72 deaths in Pune and 52 deaths in Mumbai, there were 49 deaths in Thane, 12 deaths each in Nashik and Solapur, 9 each in Palghar and Jalgaon, 7 in Kolhapur, 6 in Raigad, 5 in Ratnagiri, 4 in Aurangabad, 3 each in Sangli and Jalna, 2 each in

Dhule and Nanded and one death each in Nandurbar, Satara, Sindhudurg, Beed, Akola, Amravati, Buldhana, Wardha and Nagpur. In addition one more person from another state died in Maharashtra.

The mortality rate in the state is 3.68 per cent. The state health authorities said the number of "active cases" in the state at 1,43,714.

With 84,851 infected cases and 2,298 deaths, Thane continued 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 7,300 infections and 1,738 deaths till now.

Out of 17,87,306 samples sent to laboratories, 3,57,117 have tested positive (20 cent) for COVID-19 until Thursday. Currently, 8,88,976 people are in home quarantine while 45,838 people are in

institutional quarantine.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated a fully-equipped 50-bed Covid hospital in the Reliance Industries Ltd. educational complex at Nagthane in Raigad district.

Thackeray also inaugurated a new Covid-19 Testing Lab with a capacity of 3,000 tests in Kalyan and dedicated Corona Care Centres Kalyan and Dombivali towns - all in Thane district - in the presence of Guardian Minister Eknath Shinde, district Collector Vijay Suryawanshi and other dignitaries.

The Shree Kutchi Kadva Patidar Samaj, Dombivali, has helped set up a 210-bed hospital including 60 with oxygen and 10 in ICU, plus accommodation for over a 100 doctors, nurses and staff, while the Asra Foundation of Kalyan has also set up a 194-bed hospital with 100 oxygen beds and 10 semi-ICU beds.

## Centre issues GI certificate for Saffron grown in Kashmir Valley

**Jammu:** In a momentous decision, the Government of India (GoI) has issued a certificate of GI registration for the Saffron grown in the Kashmir Valley. Expressing happiness on the development, GC Murmu Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K said that this is the first major step to put Saffron produced in the Kashmir Valley on the world map with authentication.

With the GI tag, Kashmir Saffron will acquire more prominence in the export market and would help the farmers get the best remunerative price.

Lieutenant Governor while complimenting the Director Agriculture Kashmir for pur-

suading GI certification said that restoring the pristine glory of Kashmir saffron is top priority for both the Govt. of UT of J&K as well as GoI. He further said that with the completion and inauguration of State of Art Spice Park next month, these measures will prove to be the game changer for Kashmir Saffron.

Giving further details, Navin K. Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Government, Agricultural production Department said that GI certification establishes specific geographical origin and certifies certain unique qualities of the product. GI certification enables those who have the right

to use signs in order to prevent third party using the sign.

This GI certification would also stop the prevalent adulteration of Kashmir Saffron and thereby authenticated Saffron will fetch much better prices.

Choudhary further informed that Kashmir Saffron is the only one in the world grown at an altitude of 1600 meters, which adds to its uniqueness and differentiate it from other saffron varieties due to its unique characteristics like longer and thicker stigma, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavor, chemical free processing and high quality colour strength, flavor and bitterness. **PNS**



Fishermen try to catch fish at Kasimedu fishing harbour, during Unlock 2.0, in Chennai on Saturday **PTI**

## Karnataka reports 5,072 new corona cases, 72 more die

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka reported 5,072 new coronavirus cases in a 24-hour period, taking the state's total tally to 90,942, even as 72 more patients succumbed to the virus, an official said on Saturday.

The new cases were reported between 5 pm on Friday and 5 pm on Saturday. The state's death toll now is 1,796, including Bengaluru's 862.

Bengaluru continued to be a coronavirus hotspot, recording the highest number of cases daily in the southern state. On Saturday, the city witnessed 2,036 new cases, increasing Bengaluru Urban's total tally to 43,503, including 31,882 active cases. The city accounts for 58

per cent of all the active cases in the state.

Belagavi accounted for 341 new cases, followed by Ballari (222), Dakshina Kannada (218), Mysuru (187) and Kalaburagi (183).

On a positive note, 2,403 patients were cured and discharged in the past 24 hours, increasing the total such cases to 33,750. Of the total cases, 55,388 are still active. The number of patients in ICUs declined to 611.

Meanwhile, Bengaluru city will observe a lockdown on Sunday. "Please stay at home and stay safe for tomorrow's (Sunday) lockdown. It's in your own interest to break the chain. **IANS**

## In a first, Pondy Assembly holds proceedings under a tree after MLA tests +ve

**PTI ■ PUDUCHERRY**

In an unprecedented sitting prompted after a legislator tested positive for coronavirus, the Puducherry Assembly on Saturday held its Budget session under a tree and later adjourned sine die after approving budgetary allocations to the tune of ₹ 9,000 crore without discussion.

The House had its session under a neem tree as the main hall was shut for sanitisation following opposition AINRC MLA N S J Jayabal testing positive for the virus and being hospitalised on Friday night.

Hours after the Appropriation Bill was adopted, the Lt Governor Kiran Bedi in her capacity as Administrator gave her assent to the Bill, a Raj Nivas communication said. It was sent to the Lt Governor for her

assent as per statutory procedure.

With the assent being given, decks are cleared for government departments to go ahead with implementation of various schemes envisaged in the budget and also to disburse salaries and allowances and also pensions by the departments.

The session, which began on July 20, already had been an eventful one with Lt Governor Kiran Bedi staying away from delivering her customary address to the House to mark the session, in the backdrop of her running feud with Chief Minister V Narayanasamy.

She had said the budget did not have her approval, but the Chief Minister presented it the same day, after the House kept her address at abeyance.

## 14-yr-old boy held for raping toddler in UP

**Bulandshahr (UP):** A 14-year-old boy has been taken in police custody for allegedly raping a 2.5-year-old girl at a village in Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr district, officials said on Saturday. Around a dozen men from the village in Dibai area have been booked for threatening the girl's family against approaching the police over the incident on Friday, the officials said. **PTI**

## Monsoon ...

**From Page 1**

The Parliamentary Affairs Department issued a notification in this regard on Saturday after receiving consent of Governor Phagu Chauhan.

Assembly Speaker Vijay Kumar Choudhary told PTI that conducting a session in the Vidhan Sabha was not feasible because of limited space where maintaining social distancing was not possible and hence, it was decided to organise the session in the spacious State Government-owned Gyan Bhawan.

"The hall on the second floor in the Gyan Bhawan has a seating capacity of 800. All 243 members of the Assembly can be comfortably accommodated while maintaining Covid protocols," the Speaker said.

Choudhary said the entire premises will be regularly sanitised and there would be adequate arrangements of sanitisers for the members during the session. Like the Assembly, the Bihar Legislative Council will meet for its Monsoon Session at the Gyan Bhawan due to the pandemic. **PTI**

## Will ensure...

**From Page 1**

On the current situation on the volatile border in terms of de-escalation, Joshi said there is a method to every process. The ongoing military talks with the Chinese are no different, and certain commitments are required from the two sides for the process to move ahead positively.

"While we are investing sincerely in this ongoing endeavour to bring about peace along the border, we also remain prepared at all times for any eventuality," Joshi said.

His observations came after the first phase of disengagement got over some days ago with the Chinese troops pulling back from standoff areas at Galwan and Patrolling Point (PP) 15 but only partially from PP 17A. At Pangong Tso, where the Chinese

## troops intruded above about five to six kms from Finger 8 to Finger 4 area, they only moved back from the base of Finger 4 to Finger 5 but continue to remain on the ridgelines of Finger 4 overlooking Indian positions.

Meanwhile, the Indian security establishment was not taking any chances and the armed forces were preparing for a long haul. Apprehending a draw-out withdrawal by the Chinese over the coming weeks, the Indian side was also gearing up for harsh winter.

The winter stocking of essential like clothes, food, and ammunition besides other related items was stepped up and endless rows of trucks were ferrying these essentials. The target was to finish the stocking before snow blocks Zozilla pass lining Ladakh with the rest of the country.

## Movie halls to run from...

**From Page 1**

There will be floor markers, a metre apart, for people to stand, while hand sanitising stations are being placed all across cinema halls for disinfection and hygiene. There will also be a major change in the cinema viewing experience as there will be a one-seat gap between customers. However, if one is booking tickets with friends and family, they will be seated together but the seats at the sides will be left empty. The intermission will also be extended along with a row-wise exit to avoid crowding in the auditoriums.

Cinema theatre business earns about Rs 12,000 crore per year. About Rs 1,000 crore is lost every month as the theatres are shut. According to the IANS, Information and

## 53-yr-old Delhi Police constable dies of corona

**From Page 1**

A resident of northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura area, Narayan is survived by his wife and two sons, the police said.

More than 2,500 Delhi police personnel have been infected with COVID-19 so far. Of these, more than 2,100 have recovered and resumed their duties, while over a dozen succumbed to the virus.

## where other Covid-19 patients are being treated," Parashar said.

Meanwhile, State Congress chief Kamal Nath, in a tweet, wished Chouhan a speedy recovery.

Congress veteran Digvijaya Singh said, "It is sad that Shivraj ji was found corona positive. May God cure you soon. You should have maintained social distancing, which you did not. Take care in future," Singh said. "Bhopal police had registered an FIR against me, but how would (the police) have done that against you?" Singh said further.

The Congress leader was referring to a case filed against him last month for allegedly flouting social distancing norms during a protest held in Bhopal.

BJP leader and former union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia also wished him a speedy recovery. **PTI**

## Will approach Prez if required...

**From Page 1**

The Congress will hold a nationwide Online Campaign "Speak Up for Democracy" on Sunday. Congress general secretary KC Venugopal said that this is to raise voice "against BJP's constant attempts to topple elected Governments and misusing constitutional bodies for their dirty political games." This will be followed by protests in front of Raj Bhavans across the country on July 27.

Meanwhile, the BJP has demanded that the Chief Minister be booked under IPC Section 124 for the latter's 'Raj Bhawan gherao' comment. The party has submitted a referendum to the Governor, to this end.

A BJP delegation led by State party president Satish Poonia and Leader of

Opposition Gulab Chandra Kataria met the Governor.

Addressing reporters after the meeting, Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Poonia and other BJP leaders slammed Gehlot and the Congress leaders, accusing them of theatrics and preventing the Governor from carrying out his constitutional duty.

"There is a procedure to be followed for calling an Assembly session but the Raj Bhawan was made a theatre for a sit-in. Is that proper? They are violating the Epidemic Act," Poonia, who led the delegation, said, adding, "We have asked the Governor that focus should be on coronavirus. It is out of control in Rajasthan."

"This is no way to demand an Assembly session. You cannot gherao (picket) the Raj

Bhavan. You cannot give dharanas (protests) and demand an Assembly session," Gulab Chand Kataria, the Leader of the Opposition, said.

"The Cabinet has the right to ask for an Assembly session but you have to give reasons for it. The Congress is not giving any reasons for calling the Assembly," Kataria added, repeating his call for CRPF protection for the Governor.

Rajendra Singh Rathore, who is the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Rajasthan, said: "This Government is headed for a constitutional crisis."

Sources in Delhi said that the Centre may issue directive under Article 355 to ask the State Government to refrain from taking coercive step to arm-twist the State Governor.

## Shivraj first...

**From Page 1**

Chouhan also said that in his absence, the meeting to review the coronavirus situation will be held by Home Minister Narottam Mishra, Urban Development and Administration Minister Bhupendra Singh, Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang and Health Minister Prabhuram Choudhary.

Talking to PTI, State BJP's media in-charge Lokendra Parashar said that Chouhan was shifted to Covid-19 designated Chirayu Medical College and Hospital in the state capital.

"The CM has said that no special treatment should be given to him. He said that he should be treated like a common man. Therefore, he decided to get admitted to Chirayu Medical College Hospital,

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# Some States go for complete lockdown, some partial

**RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI**  
As the coronavirus cases continue to rise at an alarming rate in India, some States have resorted to a complete lockdown while several others opted for partial or weekend lockdown to prevent the transmission of virus infections. Of the total 739 districts, at least 64 districts are still under a complete lockdown while 119 have partial lockdown or weekend lockdown. West Bengal's Kalimpong district will go for a complete lockdown for seven days from Sunday even as Kerala is mulling re-imposition of a complete lockdown. Bihar, Sikkim, Manipur and Kashmir valley are under

complete lockdown while West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have opted for weekend lockdowns. If 'Janata Curfew' is in place in Nagpur city for July 25-26, Bhopal is under lockdown from July 24 till August 3. Interestingly, state governments have chosen lockdowns as per their convenience. Since the lifting of the lockdown, the number of coronavirus cases in the country has almost doubled from 604,993 on June 1 to over 13.80 lakh cases on July 25. India's total coronavirus case tally is set to hit the 1.5 million mark in seven days' time if it continues to rise at the same pace. As per data, complete lockdown has been reimposed in 64

districts that include 38 in Bihar, 10 in Sikkim, 10 in Kashmir, five in Odisha, one in Arunachal Pradesh, one in Madhya Pradesh. Under the complete lockdown, only essential services including medical facilities, goods movement and media are allowed. There are 119 districts across India that are under partial or weekend lockdown that include Punjab's 22 districts, Uttarakhnad (2), Maharashtra's (9), Goa (1), Karnataka (5), Chhattisgarh (5), Odisha (23), Tamil Nadu (37), Assam (2), Nagaland (11) and Arunachal Pradesh (1). In partial lockdown, restricted movement of people with e-passes is required.



The Nitish Kumar Government has imposed a complete lockdown in 38 districts in the state till July 31. Despite low testing, the number of Covid-19 cases rose to 33,511 cases in the State.

**Since the lifting of the lockdown, the number of coronavirus cases in the country has almost doubled from 604,993 on June 1 to over 13.80 lakh cases on July 25. India's total coronavirus case tally is set to hit the 1.5 million mark in seven days' time if it continues to rise at the same pace**

Sikkim has imposed a complete lockdown in its four districts from July 21 to July 27 and all 10 districts in Kashmir valley is also under the lockdown till July 27. A weekend lockdown has been imposed in

Jammu from July 24. Nagaland also extended the lockdown in its six districts till July 31. Odisha has announced a 14-day complete shutdown in Ganjam, Khurda, Cuttack, Jajpur district and Rourkela Municipal Corporation area till July 31 midnight as the number of cases rose to over 22,683. In Maharashtra, partial lockdown has been extended till July 31 and inter-district travel has been restricted. The Mamata Banerjee Government has announced complete lockdown across the State for two days every week. There will be a complete lockdown in West Bengal on July 23, 25 and 29. In Arunachal Pradesh, the

ongoing lockdown in the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) has been extended till August 3 while Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram will stay under a strict lockdown up to the midnight of July 28. The Uttar Pradesh government has imposed lockdown in four areas of capital Lucknow--Ghazipur, Sarojni Nagar, Indira Nagar, and Ashiyana. Lockdown has been imposed in Srikakulam district in Andhra Pradesh for 14 days and in Karnataka the lockdown in Kalaburgi district has been extended till the midnight of July 27. The national lockdown across India was lifted after 68 days from June 1. But the union home ministry has

allowed state governments to enforce lockdowns or any other restrictions to control the spread of Covid 19. As per government data, at least 20 districts worst affected by the novel coronavirus disease account for nearly 65-70 percent of the coronavirus infections cases in the country. Out of these, seven districts are in Maharashtra, three in Tamil Nadu, two each in Gujarat and Haryana. Delhi is taken as one whole district while the states of Telangana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan contain one district each. The data shows that so far, at least 512 out of over 700 districts in India have had at least one covid-related death.

## PM-CMs meeting on Covid tomorrow

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to hold a meeting with Chief Ministers of the States and representatives of the Union Territories on July 27 to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and unlock 3.0. The main agenda of the meeting is expected to be on the health scenario and the way forward and policies to be adopted from July 31, the current unlockdown guidelines end. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Health Minister Harsh Vardhan will also take part in the meeting along with the Prime Minister to address

## IIT Kharagpur develops portable rapid device to detect virus

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur researchers have developed a cost-effective portable diagnostic device that can detect Covid-19 infection within an hour and estimated to cost just ₹400. This entire test can be conducted in an ultra-low-cost portable enclosure as an alternative to specialised laboratory equipment. The same portable unit can be used for a large number of tests, on mere replacement of the paper cartridge after each test. The device has been proven to produce no false result with remarkable accuracy and sensitivity compatible to standard RT-PCR tests, said Prof. Suman Chakraborty from

the Mechanical Engineering Department, and Dr. Arindam Mondal from the School of Bio Science, both from IIT Kharagpur. The technology essentially deploys a disposable simple paper-strip for chemical analysis and visualization of results. "The new device has been designed to be usable at locations with extremely poor resources in an uncontrolled environment, catering the needs of the underserved population. Moreover, it can be operated by minimally trained personnel, precluding the needs for skilled technicians," said Dr Chakraborty. While the Institute can produce the testing kit up to a certain scale, patent licensing will facilitate commercialization opportunities for medical



technology companies. Dr Mondal added, "The unique portable device developed by the IIT Kharagpur researchers has not only been validated for the diagnostics of Covid-19, but also been designed to be capable of detecting any other kind of

RNA virus by following the same generic procedure. The impact of this, therefore, is long lasting, empowered by the capability of detecting unforeseen viral pandemics in the coming years that may potentially endanger human lives time and again." The project received financial support from the Institute in late April after Professor V K Tewari, Director, IIT Kharagpur, decided to set up a fund to support Covid-19 related research and product development. "We are ready for commercialization of the product. Any corporate or start-up can approach the Institute for technology licensing and commercial scale of production. The Institute is open to tie-ups," said Dr Tewari.

## ICMR to undertake study on antibody life to assess immunological response

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI**  
In the wake of various reports showing that antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 may not be long-lasting, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is mulling a study to assess the immunological response to the virulent virus that has swept the world. In India, the virus has infected over 13 lakh people while claiming over 30,000 lives. Sources in the ICMR said that scientists from the research institute will collaborate with researchers at AIIMS-Delhi where a cohort of recovered Covid-19 patients will be studied over a period of time to assess their antibody levels and its role in coming months. "We need to examine whether the population, at least, in high exposure areas, is any closer to herd immunity which will depend on the type of antibodies produced," said the sources at the ICMR. "For example, are they neutralising antibodies? And how long will they last or how quickly might they wane? We could do these studies on people at least in containment zones with high exposure levels," they added. There have been reports that levels of antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, dropped dramatically over the first 3 months of infection in 34 people recovered from mild illness. "Antibody levels against the novel coronavirus decreased by about half every 73 days and, if that rate were sustained, would be depleted within about a year," according to researchers from University of California at Los Angeles. Their research letter has been published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Yet another report published in Nature showed rapidly decreasing antibody levels after infection. The results also dim hopes for "immunity passports," which some governments have suggested would allow recovered Covid-19 patients to return to work or travel on the presumption that they were immune against reinfection, and well as for lasting herd immunity, in which at least 60 percent of people are immune after recovering from infection. "The results call for caution regarding antibody-based 'immunity passports,' herd immunity, and perhaps vaccine durability, especially in light of short-lived immunity against common human coronaviruses," the authors wrote. "Further studies will be needed to define a quantitative protection threshold and rate of decline of antiviral antibodies beyond 90 days."

## Only those who looted country can call subsidy profit, Goyal slams RaGa

**New Delhi:** Railway Minister Piyush Goyal hit back at the Congress on Saturday after Rahul Gandhi accused the Railways of making profit through Shramik trains, alleging that only those who "looted" the country can call subsidy a profit. "Only those who looted the country can describe subsidy as profit. The railways spent more money in running Shramik trains than it received from State Governments. People are now asking what happened to Sonia ji's promise of paying for people's tickets," Goyal tweeted. Congress president Sonia Gandhi had said during the migrant crisis that her party will pay for tickets of Shramik

train passengers after reports emerged that they, mostly poor migrants, were made to pay for their journey. On Saturday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the Government of benefitting by making profits during the coronavirus-induced lockdown when people were in trouble. "There are clouds of disease and people are in trouble, but one seeks to benefit -- this anti-people Government is converting a disaster into profits and its earning," he said in a tweet in Hindi, tagging a new report. The railways spent ₹2,142 crore on running Shramik Special trains but earned a revenue of just ₹429 crore, official data showed **PTI**

## Rapid diagnostic kit import licenses of 3 firms cancelled

**New Delhi:** The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has cancelled the rapid diagnostic kit import licenses of three firms —Cadila Healthcare, MDAAC International and N W Overseas —and suspended that of 16 others noting that the USFDA has removed the manufacturers from their list of Coronavirus serology test kits with directions that they should not be distributed. The companies were issued show cause notices on July 17 asking why their import licenses shall not be cancelled since the diagnostic kits of the manufacturers have been removed by USFDA with direction that it should not be distributed from the list of product of serology test kits for Covid-19

disease, according to a DCGI official. The firms were directed to submit their reply by July 20, failing which it would be presumed they have nothing to say in the matter and action deemed fit will be initiated under provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. "Your response to the show cause notice has not been found satisfactory with respect to removal of said kit, by USFDA from their list mentioning not to distribute," the DCGI order issued to the 16 companies on July 21 stated. "However, it has been mentioned by you to not to cancel your said import license for the above product. Therefore, in public interest, your import license for above prod-

uct becomes inoperative and stands suspended, till further orders," it said. As for the three companies whose licenses were cancelled, the orders said, "Your response to the show cause notice has not been found satisfactory with respect to the removal of said kit, by USFDA from their list mentioning not to distribute." "Further, it has been mentioned by you that you intend to surrender your license for the above product. Therefore, in public interest, your import license for above product becomes inoperative and stands cancelled with immediate effect," as per the order. **PNS**

# BSF holds field trial of hand-held ground penetrating radar along Indo-Pak border

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
The BSF is conducting a field trial of hand-held ground penetrating radar to detect tunnels, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and landmines along the Indo-Pak border. When deployed, the state-of-the-art equipment will help the BSF in curbing smuggling of arms and drugs besides infiltration of terrorists through the tunnels. The deployment of these portable radar sets will be done once the feedback from the ground is satisfactory, official sources said. The move to test the effi-

cacy of the hi-tech equipment of Israeli-origin on the ground comes days after the Union Home Ministry gave a go ahead for it. The Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) weighing only 5 kg is completely man-portable and can be operated in a hand-held manner. The GPR is fitted with an LCD screen and an integrated telescopic rod capable of automatically identifying the target and displaying the same on the screen. A high-level committee of the Union Home Ministry that included BSF representatives has approved the required specifications of the equipment being tested. The Border Security Force (BSF) is the world's largest border guarding force tasked to secure the frontiers along Pakistan and Bangladesh. The BSF is also the Lead Intelligence Agency along these two frontiers and smuggling arms and ammunition besides drugs as also infiltration is a major challenge for the Force that has to conduct patrols in terrains that include non-motorable areas covered with elephant grass. The IEDs and mines pose realtime danger to the personnel on patrol duties, an official said, adding the equipment



**The radar system also has an inbuilt data-storage facility, both external storage of 16 GB and integrated 4 GB internal memory. The real-time detection of IEDs and mines will help in swiftly defusing the hidden explosive devices, officials said**  
will help in keeping a better track of the movement of terrorists. The GPR, a technology first perfected by Israel, is capable of detecting different

categories of mines and IEDs in varied soil conditions, the official said. The technology is estimated to strengthen the proposed smart fencing and counter-infiltration grid besides curbing the menace of smuggling syndicates along the Western frontier with Pakistan that often use underground tunnels for movement of contraband. The radar system also has an inbuilt data-storage facility, both external storage of 16 GB and integrated 4 GB internal memory. The real-time detection of IEDs and mines will help in swiftly defusing the hidden explosive devices, officials said. The prevalent system deployed for detecting mines and IEDs is a time-consuming measure as the BSF and Army together could detect just six cross-border tunnels along the border in Jammu region since 2012. Manual detection methods have also delivered similar findings along the border with Pakistan adjoining Punjab and Rajasthan. The tunnel detecting equipment is being tested even as Pakistan-backed terrorist groups are now using drones to send shipments of weapons across this side of the border.




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8 Jodhpur

11 Kota

2 Abu Road

6 Balotra

58 Pali

33 Bhiwadi II

28 Bhiwadi I

19 Udaipur

2 Dausa

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4 Bharatpur

3 Bikaner

7 Churu

7 Jhunjhunu

3 Neemrana

8 Ghiloth

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# TN CROSSES 2 LAKH MARK

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KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Number of persons getting diagnosed with Covid-19 is rising by leaps and bounds in Tamil Nadu. The media bulletin issued by the Department of Health on Saturday evening says 6,988 persons (almost 7,000) tested positive for coronavirus across the State while 89 persons died during the last 24 hours. These are highest numbers to be registered by the Government on a single day since the pandemic broke out in March 2020.

The bulletin said there were 52,273 patients across Tamil Nadu as on Saturday evening. More than 2.06 lakh people have been tested positive till date. The Government is leaving no stones unturned to identify and isolate those affected with the pandemic. There are 115 laboratories across the State which

tested 61,729 persons on Saturday. Till date a total of 2.2 million persons have been tested by these laboratories making Tamil Nadu the State which has tested maximum number of persons. With 89 persons breathing their last on Saturday the total fatalities in the State have reached a whopping 3,409.

It is back to square one for Chennai as the Metropolis tested 1,329 positive cases out of the 6,988 new patients. The neighbouring Chengalpattu (449), Kancheepuram (442) and Thiruvallur (385) continued to lead the table with high number of patients. Health Minister Vijayabaskar agreed on Saturday that discrepancies in testing have come to the notice of the Government. "There were instances of persons testing negative ending up as positive cases in subsequent tests. We are installing advanced CT-Scan instruments in Government hospitals to ensure foolproof testing and diagnosis," said the minister on Saturday.

# Kerala scales new high as 1,103 diagnosed with coronavirus

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Thiruvananthapuram continued to have the highest number of coronavirus patients-240, followed by Kozhikode (110) and Kasaragod (105). The last 24 hours registered five deaths taking the tally to 60

Situation in Kerala turned from bad to worse as 1,103 persons were diagnosed on Saturday with Covid-19. The medical bulletin released by the Government of Kerala said that 838 persons out of the 1,103 positive cases were infected through contacts while 72 persons failed to identify the source from where they got infected.

The capital city of Thiruvananthapuram continued to have the highest number of coronavirus patients-240, followed by Kozhikode (110) and Kasaragod (105). The last 24 hours registered five deaths taking the tally to 60.

Transmission through contacts has reached an unprecedented level in Kerala, which had claimed to have flattened the corona curve as early as May 8. Out of the 240 persons tested positive in

Thiruvananthapuram, 218 were infected through social contact while Kozhikode's 104 out of the 110 were victims of contact spreading.

A total of 1,151 persons were hospitalised on Saturday. The number of samples tested during the last 24 hours was 22,013. Till date, the health department has sent 6.53 lakh samples for testing. There are 481 hotspots in the State. Interestingly, the Government of Kerala has not furnished the number of laboratories functioning in the State unlike Tamil Nadu where the health department updates about the number of laboratories on a daily basis.

# Maha Guv urges MPs, MLAs, MLCs conform to oath format

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking serious view of the departures being made by newly elected MPs, MLAs and MLCs from the prescribed practices while taking oaths, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari on Saturday urged Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to come up with an advisory to be adhered to in the context of the form and oath being read out by members.

Through separate letters written to the presiding officers of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, Koshiyari made a request to this effect, after observing some of the newly elected MPs, MLAs and MLCs were departing from the prescribed form of language for oath taking and adding the names of their party leaders or venerable personalities while reading oaths.

The Governor noted that such directions relating to the norms to be followed during the oath taking by the newly

elected MPs, MLAs and MLCs were needed to preserve the 'sanctity and dignity' of the oath taking process.

"Adding names of party leaders or any other person to whom members owe their faith or allegiance, to the format of the oath taking, violates the sanctity of the oath taking process," Koshiyari wrote, in separate letters addressed to the Vice President and LS Speaker.

The Governor recalled that he had to personally intervene and direct some of the mem-

Writes to Vice Prez, LS Speaker to come out oath taking procedures, norms

bers being sworn in as Ministers in Maharashtra to repeat their oath strictly as per the prescribed format without any addition or deletion.

In this context, Koshiyari urged the Vice President and Lok Sabha Speaker to examine and deliberate upon the issue of departure by members from the prescribed format for oath and to come up with suitable directions/ advisories to all concerned stakeholders so as to safeguard the sanctity and dignity of the oath taking process.

# Coronavirus cases cross 17K in J&K

PNS ■ JAMMU

The total number of coronavirus positive cases in Jammu & Kashmir has crossed 17,000 as 523 new positive cases, 156 from Jammu division and 367 from Kashmir division, were reported on Saturday.

Meanwhile, nine Covid-19 patients died taking the death toll to 305. Significantly, 300 patients were discharged from different hospitals after they recovered. 41 patients from Jammu Division and 259 from Kashmir Division were discharged on Saturday.

According to the Media Bulletin, out of 17,305 positive cases, 7,483 are Active Positive, 9,517 have recovered and 305 have died; 22 in Jammu division and 283 in Kashmir division.

The bulletin added out of 5,70,508 test results available, 55,3203 samples have been tested as negative till July 25, 2020.

According to the media bulletin, "The Per million testing in Jammu and Kashmir has reached 44,744 as against 12,742 in the country, even as the recovery rate in the Union territory has touched 53.01 per cent as on July 23, 2020."

The overall positivity rate in the union territory is 3 per cent as against 8.3 per cent in the country. It is 1.3 per cent in Jammu province and 4.7 per cent in Kashmir province.

Jammu and Reasi districts have recorded lowest, 0.8 positivity in the Union Territory while South Kashmir district Shopian has witnessed the highest positivity rate at 8.3 per cent followed by 5.3 in Baramulla.

Bandipura and Ganderbal districts in Kashmir Division recorded lowest 2.3 per cent positivity rate. In Jammu province, district Ramban is on top with 3.7 per cent positivity rate followed by Rajouri with 2.1 per cent.

The UT has also a considerably low mortality rate of 1.7 per cent as against 2.4 per cent in the whole country. The mortality rate in Jammu province is far low at 0.6 per cent as against 2.0 per cent in Kashmir.

As per official figures, the Covid recovery rate in Jammu & Kashmir has touched 53.01 per cent in 20 days, starting from July 3 till July 23, 2020. The average cases per million in the Union Territory stand at 1,339, though it is far low in Jammu division at 623 as against 1,899 in Kashmir division.

# Smuggling carried out with complicity of UAE diplomatic staff: Swapna

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Gold smuggling case involving UAE Consulate Staff at Thiruvananthapuram turned murky on Saturday with Swapna Suresh, the kingpin and K T Ramees, her associate, telling the investigating agencies that the higher ups in the Consulate were part of the smuggling operation.

"The UAE Consul General and the Attaché were part of the smuggling operations using diplomatic channel. For each consignment of gold smuggled into India, they were paid \$1,500/ each," Swapna and Ramees reportedly told the Customs officers during the interrogation.

This statement finds mention in the affidavit submitted by the Customs in the special court in Kochi which is expected to hear the bail applications filed by the duo on Monday.

The Consul General and the Attaché are not in India. While the Consul General left the country immediately after the covid-19 broke out, the attaché reportedly fled after the smuggling operation was busted by the Customs and the arrest of Swapna and her associates.

The Customs and NIA teams in their raids seized many incriminating documents linking Swapna to gold smuggling. A raid on her bank lockers yielded 1 kg gold and cash of Rs one crore. Though she had said that it was a marriage gift from a Sheikh in the UAE who was her father's employer, the investigating agencies

are not fully convinced with her explanation.

Besides the officials in the consulate, the smuggling cartel consisting of Swapna, Sarith and Sandeep Nair had links with many bigwigs in politics and bureaucracy, said sources in the investigating agencies privy to the interrogation.

Meanwhile, the NIA team in its raids and probes had seized digital records which prove the complicity of M Sivsankar, the suspended former principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The NIA has summoned Sivsankar for another round of questioning to their Kochi office on Monday.

K Ramkumar, senior lawyer, Kerala High Court, who has been commissioned by the Customs Department told The Pioneer that evidences collected till date have made it a water tight case and the role of the accused have been established beyond any doubt. "Please remember that three agencies are probing the case. There is no way out for the accused," said the septuagenarian lawyer.

The ruling Left Democratic Front which has scheduled its meeting for Tuesday cancelled the same on Saturday citing the Covid-19 pandemic. But political Kerala is agog with rumors that the meeting was postponed because the NIA's decision to interrogate Sivsankar on Monday. If Sivsankar is arrested by the NIA on Monday, it would be a major embarrassment to the CPI(M), according to political commentators.

# Aditya Thackeray's intervention helps save 400-yr-old tree, tiger corridor

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A relentless campaign by villagers and environmentalists and a timely intervention by Maharashtra's Tourism Minister Aditya Thackeray have helped save a 400-year-old banyan tree and a crucial tiger corridor in Maharashtra from various developmental projects.

After the people from Bhoze village in Sangli district of western Maharashtra came together to protest against the banyan tree being felled down as part of the Solapur-Sangli-Kolhapur-Ratnagiri Expressway project, the villagers and environmentalists organized a novel protest by hugging the banyan tree and seeking Aditya's intervention in their crusade.

Simultaneously, a protest broke out over the auctioning of auction the Bander coal mine in Tadoba Tiger Sanctuary, Chandrapur district, which would have destroyed more than 1,200 hectares of prime forest land, plus the tiger corri-



dor linking the reserve with sanctuaries in Wardha and Amravati districts.

On July 16, Aditya Thackeray wrote a letter to Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari making a strong case for saving the tree through changes in the alignment of the Ratnagiri-Solapur highway on state highway 166 which passes through the village.

"This is welcome news. Coal ministry has issued noti-

fication to withdraw Bander Coal Mine from auction list of 41 coal blocks. Happy to note that the eco sensitive region of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve was dropped from the list," Aditya had tweeted on Wednesday.

Simultaneously on Wednesday last, a team from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) visited the spot for a survey and to discuss the issue in detail with Bhoze villagers, the temple trustees and



environmentalists.

The visiting NHAI concluded that it would not be necessary to cut off the banyan tree but trim its branches a bit for the highway to run beside without causing any obstructions to the traffic and realign the service road to save the tree.

Subsequently on Friday, Aditya tweeted: "A 400 year old banyan tree in Sangli a District and a Tiger corridor saved yesterday. Feels good. 2 interventions where I had humbly requested 2 Union Ministers and received a positive response from both to assist saving the environment."

"I have to thank CM Uddhav Thackeray ji for personally writing to the Union Govt on the same. Along with him, Forest Minister Sanjay Rathod ji had written too. Bandu Dhotre ji led the movement on ground and @Jairam\_Ramesh," the Tourism Minister added.



An aerial view of the flood-affected areas of Assam on Saturday PTI



People waded through the floodwater as they move to a safer place, at Shekhpur Dhab in Muzaffarpur district, on Saturday PTI

# INDIAN ARMY — COMMITTED TO PROTECT TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE NATION

The Indian Army, as an instrument of national power, has been in service of the Nation in both peace and war. Operationally well seasoned and always ready for achievement of the National objectives, it is a professional army based on values, experience, regimentation, customs, traditions, ethos and culture. Legends and exploits of yore form a staple diet of motivation for the officers and soldiers of the Indian Army. Indian Army's saga of valour and fortitude has cut quite a wide swathe of history around the world. The Indian Army has shown its mettle and resolve to protect India's sovereignty in every operation that it has undertaken and will continue to place the nation first, always and everytime.

## Ethos of Indian Army

The infusion of high technology based precision weaponry has enhanced the lethality of future warfare manifold. The spectrum of threat ranges from the nuclear to the conventional and the asymmetric, with terrorism emerging like a hydra-headed monster. Add to this the rigours of climate i.e. the glacial heights and extreme cold, dense mountainous jungles and the heat and simoom of the deserts. Such are the trying environs in which a soldier operates. However, to a soldier facing such challenges and going beyond the call of duty is but second nature. Life's turbulences and turmoils have a special flavour for him. For those not exposed to a war or war like environment, this flavour is beyond the realms of imagination. The Indian Army soldier is infused by a set of values that make the soldier willingly face a plethora of challenges and difficulties, and when the call may come, to give the ultimate sacrifice in the service of the Nation. The ethos of the Army is ingrained in all soldiers with an unwavering will to succeed, accepting their grave responsibility and an unbridled ability to give their lives for others; confident that in return the nation will look after them and their families. The values of the Army infused in the soldier through the years of training are enumerated below

**Comradeship and brotherhood of the brave, regardless of caste, creed or religion.** The motto is, "One for all and all for one!"

**Spirit of Selfless Sacrifice.** The tradition is never to question, but to do or die for the three "Ns"; Naam, i.e. name-honour of the unit/Army/Nation, 'Namak' (salt) i.e. loyalty to the Nation, and 'Nishan', i.e. the insignia or flag of his unit/regiment/Army/Nation which the soldiers hold aloft willingly.

**Valour.** Fearlessness in combat and in the face of the enemy even when fighting against great odds or even when facing sure death.

**Non-discrimination.** The Indian Army does not discriminate on account of caste, creed or religion. A soldier is a soldier first and anything else later. He prays under a common roof. It is this unique character, which makes him bind in a team despite such diversity.

**Fairness and Honesty.** The spirit of honesty and fair play. He fights for a just cause that extends even to the enemy (prisoner or wounded).

**Discipline and Integrity.** Discipline and integrity impart the feeling of patriotism, honesty and courage under all circumstances, however strong be the provocation otherwise.

**Fidelity, Honour and Courage.** He is a man on whose shoulders lies the honour and integrity of his nation. He knows that he is the last line of defence and he cannot fail the Nation.

**Death to Dishonour.** A close bond amongst soldiers forces them to choose death to dishonour. The concept of 'IZZAT' (HONOUR) in the clan / unit enables them to shun the fear of death; to be called a coward in the peer group is worse than death.

**Fortrightness.** A soldier has to be forthright, for on his word the men he leads are going to lay down their lives without questioning why.

of camaraderie. The greatest binding force in the Indian Army remains unit cohesion and tradition. Truly heady is this mixture of Unit identification and traditions of sacrificial valour, handed down through centuries. At one point, victory or defeat becomes irrelevant. What matters is - Has the unit measured up? The Indian Army has time and again lived up to its tradition of valour, heroism, sacrifice and fortitude. It stands vigil along the border, watchful, prepared for any sacrifice so that the people of the country may live in peace and with honour. The Indian Army is that and much more.

## India-Pak War 1947-48

Pakistan having failed to obtain accession from the rulers of Jammu & Kashmir, resorted to use of force and violence under the garb of an uprising. The Pakistani misadventure codenamed 'Operation Gulmarg' was launched in the beginning by tribal militias and ex-armymen, with regulars. Immediately thereafter, the Pakistan Army got fully involved. Pakistan's plan emerged on 22 October 1947, when intruders entered Jammu & Kashmir, armed with modern weapons and unlimited supply of ammunition. On signing of the Instrument of Accession by ruler of Jammu & Kashmir on 26 October 1947, the Indian Army airlifted troops into Srinagar on 27 October 1947. Fought in rugged, high altitude and snow bound areas; operations were launched with vigour and were sustained through self-reliance. Indian Army reclaimed most of what was infiltrated till UN ceasefire on 31 December 1948.

## Liberation of Goa and Diu : Operation Vijay 1961

Goa and Diu continued as Portuguese colonies even after the British left India in 1947. When the Portuguese refused to give up their colonies despite a popular uprising by the people and India's diplomatic efforts, the Indian

Armed Forces launched a tri-services offensive on 18 December 1961 and liberated Goa and Diu from the Portuguese.

## 1971: Liberation of Bangladesh

The 1971 war for the liberation of Bangladesh (Operation Cactus Lily) is a landmark conflict in the annals of military history. It was a 'just war' that transformed the map of the subcontinent and saw the birth of a new Nation State. Role of Indian Army Force and Indian Navy was commendable. It was a classical blitzkrieg. In just 14 days, Indian Army cut through to Dhaka, the capital of erstwhile East Pakistan.

## Operation Meghdoot — April 1984 Onwards

Trouble started in the vast glaciated expanse known as the Siachen Glacier, due North of NJ 9842 beyond which the Line of Control is not demarcated. In this sector, Pakistan had illegally ceded Indian territory to China and had started allowing foreign expeditions into these areas. In early 1984, it was learnt that Pakistan was planning Operation Ababil to occupy the serrated Saltoro Range that forms the Western wall of the Siachen glaciated. In April 1984, a platoon of 4 Kumaon and Ladakh Scouts were helilifted to the two icy and perilous passes, Sia La and Bilafond La.

An offensive operation by own troops to capture Pakistan post 'Quaid Post'. The peak was later renamed as 'Bana Top' in honour of Naib Subedar Bana Singh. For his act of bravery and ultimate courage, he was awarded the Param Vir Chakra.

## Operation Pawan

In 1987, while the battle raged on the Siachen Glacier, there came a second challenge, a mission in Sri Lanka. In 1987, negotiations between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Sri Lankan Government had failed. Therefore, it was decided to send Indian Peace Keeping Force

(IPKF) it was decided to send Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to ensure peaceful and voluntary disarmament of LTTE cadres. Soon our troops had to resort to the use of force to execute their mission. Armed with sophisticated weapons and communication equipment, the LTTE cadres were a force to reckon with. Soon formations and units of Indian Army in Sri Lanka got involved in intense counter insurgency operations; peacekeeping turned into peace enforcement.

## Operation Rakshak

Since Independence, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed turmoil initiated by Pakistan. Since the year 1990, Indian Army is operationally committed to safeguard the people and the state from anti-national activities.

## Kargil War (1999) — Operation Vijay

The Indo-Pakistan Kargil War was fought between May and July 1999 in Kargil district, along the Line of Control extending from Zoji La in the West to Turtuk (Siachen Glacier) in the East. The conflict is referred as Operation Vijay. The cause of war was the infiltration of Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry into positions on the Indian side of the Line of Control overlooking and threatening National Highway 1D. This was one of the toughest and longest campaigns of modern times, as battles took place in high altitude areas at heights above 12,000 feet. Our soldiers supported by artillery and Indian Air Force fought legendary battles in Dras, Kaksar, Batalik and Turtuk Sectors.

## Conclusion

The Indian Army's operations since 1947, in the defence of the nation, have had a glorious prelude in the yesteryears of the first and second world wars. The bravehearts of yore have inspired generations within the organisation to sacrifice their lives for the future of their fellow Indians. An institution which delivers every time and on whose able shoulders rests the security of 1.3 billion citizens, the Indian Army has proven time and again that come what may, this land of the Ganges and Himalayas will always keep its head high.

**OFFICE OF SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, MEERUT CIRCLE MEERUT**  
APAR AYUKT UDHYOG CAMPUS, SURAJ KUND ROAD MEERUT

**E-Procurement Notice-4**

Letter No.: 369/RED/V V Pat/Tender-Work/File No---/2020-21/ dated : 17-07-2020

1. THE SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, MEERUT CIRCLE MEERUT on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids through e-tendering system from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP RED, in appropriate class A, and B (Building) as the case may be. **The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works.**

2. Name of work as per table.

| S. No. | Name of District | Name of Block/Constituency | Name of Work  | Total estimated cost (in Lakh) Rs. | Bid security (EMD) in Rs. | Cost of Bid document (in Rupees) | Period of completion including rainy season |
|--------|------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1      | Ghazia bad       | Ghazia bad                 | Construction of Gowdown/Warehouse for Storage of V V Pat Machine at (Colletrate Compound) Ghaziaabad. | 172.00                             | 3.44                      | 2714.00                          | 9 Month                                     |

(3) Date of availability of Bid documents on website : **30-07-2020.** (4) Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement : **06-08-2020 up to 12.00 Noon.** (5) Date of opening of bids through e-procurement : **06.08.2020 at 12.30 pm.** (6) The Employer has right to issue addendum/ corrigendum as per ITB clause-10 on-line which will not be published in any news paper. All prospective bidders are advised to keep regular watch and visit e-tender portal regularly.

For further details please log on to <https://etender.up.nic.in> and download the bid document

(Er. Ajay Singhal)  
SUPRINTENDING ENGINEER  
RURAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT,  
MEERUT CIRCLE MEERUT  
For and on behalf of Governor of UP

U.P.: 153751, Date : 24.07.2020  
बिडानुसार वेबसाइट [www.up.gov.nic.in](http://www.up.gov.nic.in) पर उपलब्ध है।

# US agents enter Chinese consulate compound in Houston

**Houston:** US federal agents and law enforcement officers have entered the Chinese consulate compound here along with locksmiths after the mission was shut down, amidst spiralling tensions between Washington and Beijing.

The Trump Administration ramped up its confrontation with China this week, ordering Beijing's consulate in Houston to close over concerns about economic espionage.

The Chinese consulate located in Houston's busy Montrose Boulevard for 40 years closed on Friday evening as the deadline set by the Trump administration to shut down the mission expired.

On Friday, the flag and the seal of the People's Republic of China were taken down from outside the Houston consulate. Early in the morning, the consulate staff was seen removing their belongings from the building.

After the Chinese diplomatic staff vacated the building, a number of black SUVs, trucks, two white vans and a locksmith's van entered the compound, CNN reported.

Around 30 protesters with banners were seen celebrating outside the consulate. On Friday morning, dozens of protesters from the Falun Gong religious group despised by Beijing protested outside the consulate, declaring a victory of sorts over the closure of the



Federal officials and a locksmith pull on a door to make entry into the vacated Consulate General of China building in Houston on Friday

mission.

Forty minutes after the 4 pm eviction deadline passed, a man believed to be a State Department official entered the consulate, along with others, after a small back door was pried open, local media reported.

About an hour later, the fire department crew entered the building.

Trump administration officials provided further details on Friday regarding their decision on the Houston mission, claiming the diplomatic outpost was one of several across the country facilitating influence efforts

on behalf of Beijing that the US government said veered into "the coercive or covert".

"The sum total of the Houston consulate's activities went well over the line of what we're willing to accept, and unless we disrupted it, it threatened to become even more aggressive in Houston and other Chinese consulates nationwide," a senior Justice Department official told reporters on a briefing call organised by the State Department.

The Chinese consulate in Houston, Texas, was opened in

1979.

Apart from now closed the Houston consulate, an embassy in Washington and an office at the United Nations, China maintained consulates in four US cities — Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

Tensions between both nations have escalated in recent months over the Beijing's handling of the coronavirus pandemic, China's crackdown on its Uygur Muslims in Xinjiang and Beijing imposing a controversial national security law in Hong Kong.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has alleged that the Houston consulate of China was "a hub of spying and intellectual property theft".

Top American officials had also accused the consulate in Houston of being part of Beijing's "espionage operations" in the US.

The US said in a statement that the consulate was ordered to close "to protect American intellectual property and Americans' private information." The idea to close the Houston consulate emerged this spring after China interfered when US officials returned to the consulate in Wuhan to retrieve diplomatic materials, according to a senior State Department official.

Chinese authorities refused to let the US officials leave Wuhan with the pouches, saying they had to search them before leaving, an aggressive move that violates the Vienna Convention which governs diplomatic relations, CNN reported.

The encounter left Secretary of State Pompeo irate, the report quoted a State Department official as saying.

In a tit-for-tat move, China too on Friday ordered the US to close down its consulate in Chengdu. While ordering the closure, China had accused the US of interfering in its

"internal affairs and harming national security interests." **PTI**

## China protests forced entry of US officials

PTI ■ BEIJING

China on Saturday lodged a diplomatic protest with the US over the "forced entry" of American officials into the premises of the closed Chinese consulate in Houston and vowed to make a "necessary response" to Washington's action.

US federal agents and law enforcement officers entered the Chinese consulate compound in Houston along with locksmiths after the mission was shut down on Friday.

The Chinese foreign ministry said it has expressed strong dissatisfaction and opposition to the US law enforcement officers' "forced entry" into the consulate and lodged a diplomatic protest.

"China will make a proper and necessary response in this regard," it said.

In a retaliatory move, China has already ordered the closure of the US consulate in Chengdu in southwest China's Sichuan province.

The Consulate in Houston is the building of the diplomatic consulate and is also China's

national property, the ministry said.

According to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and the Sino-US Consular Treaty, the US must not infringe on the premises of the Chinese Consulate in Houston in any way, it said.

Chinese officials reportedly vacated the consulate on Friday afternoon after the US ordered its closure amid accusations of espionage, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

The Trump administration accused Beijing of stealing intellectual property and claimed that the consulate in Houston was the "epicentre" of China's research theft.

Vans bearing diplomatic plates departed the consulate as the 4 pm Friday deadline arrived.

At that point, federal agents checked the locked doors of the consulate and a locksmith was seen working to crack the lock on one door, the Post report said.

A CNN report also said that after the Chinese diplomatic staff vacated the building,

a number of black SUVs, trucks, two white vans and a locksmith's van entered the compound.

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The US State Department said in a statement that the consulate was ordered to close "to protect American intellectual property and Americans' private information."

## Bolsonaro says he tested negative for coronavirus

**Brasilia:** Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro said on Saturday that he has tested negative for the new coronavirus, based on a fourth test since he said July 7 that he had the virus.

"Good morning everyone," Bolsonaro wrote on Facebook after reporting that the test was "negative".

The 65-year-old leader didn't say when he did the new test. On Wednesday, he had tested positive for the third time.

Bolsonaro also posted a photo of himself with a box of the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, although it has not been proven effective against the virus.

Now that Bolsonaro is clear of the virus, he is expected to

return to mingling in crowds as he used to do before his diagnosis. He had spent many weekends since the beginning of the pandemic in close proximity to supporters, sometimes without wearing a mask.

On Thursday, he was photographed without a mask while talking to some sweepers in the garden of the presidential residence.

Brazil, Latin America's largest nation, is one of the outbreak's epicentres.

According to the Brazilian government, on Friday there were 85,238 confirmed deaths due to the new coronavirus. The country has 2,343,366 confirmed cases. The real numbers are believed to be higher. **AP**

## Between 6,000-6,500 Pak terrorists in Afghan: UN report

**United Nations:** An estimated 6,000-6,500 Pakistani terrorists are in neighbouring Afghanistan, most of them with the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, posing a threat to both the countries, a UN report has said.

The 26th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIS, al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities said that the terror group al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) operates under the Taliban umbrella from Nimruz, Helmand and Kandahar provinces of Afghanistan.

"The group reportedly has between 150 and 200 members from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan. The current leader of AQIS is Osama Mahmood... who succeeded the late Asim Umar.

"AQIS is reportedly planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader," it said.

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a "large terrorist group present in Afghanistan", has claimed responsibility for various high-profile attacks in Pakistan and has facilitated others by Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Lahshkar-e-Islam, the report said. It said that many former TTP militants have joined Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant - Khorasan (ISIL-K) and member states expect that the group and its various splinter groups will align themselves with ISIL-K.

"The total number of Pakistani foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan, posing a threat to both countries, is estimated at between 6,000 and 6,500, most of them with TTP"

it said, adding that a number of other terrorist groups are active in Afghanistan, most operating under the umbrella of the Taliban but some aligned with ISIL-K. The report comes over a fortnight after India at the UN asked Pakistan to introspect as to why it is universally acknowledged as the "international epicentre" of terrorism and the "best safe haven for terrorists", while urging the global community to call upon Islamabad to take sustained, verifiable and irreversible actions against terror outfits operating from its soil.

In June this year, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan publicly acknowledged the presence of up to 40,000 terrorists in Pakistan and that terrorists from there have attacked the neighbouring countries.

According to the member states, al-Qaida is covertly active

in 12 Afghan provinces and its leader Aiman al-Zawahiri remains based in the country, the report said.

The monitoring team estimates the total number of al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan at between 400 and 600.

"The leadership maintains close contact with the Haqqani Network. In February 2020, al-Zawahiri met with Yahya Haqqani, the primary Haqqani Network contact with al-Qaida since mid-2009, to discuss the ongoing cooperation," it said.

The monitoring team also estimates the current ISIL-K membership in Afghanistan at 2,200. The leader is sheikh Matuallah Kamahwal, previously the head of ISIL-K in Kunar. The leadership also includes Syrian national Abu Said Mohammad al-Khorasani and sheikh Abdul Tahir. **AP**

## Massive protest against Governor's arrest challenges Kremlin

**Khabarovsk (Russia):** Tens of thousands of people marched Saturday across the Russian city of Khabarovsk on the border with China to protest the arrest of the regional governor on murder charges, continuing a wave of protests that has lasted for two weeks in a challenge to the Kremlin.

Sergei Furgal has been in a Moscow jail since his arrest on July 9, and Russian President Vladimir Putin has named an acting successor. Protesters in Khabarovsk see the charges against Furgal as unsubstantiated and demand that he stand trial at home. Unlike Moscow, where police usually move

quickly to disperse unsanctioned opposition protests, authorities haven't interfered with unauthorized demonstrations in Khabarovsk, apparently expecting them to fizzle out over time. But daily protests, peaking at weekends, have gone on for two weeks, reflecting anger against what local residents see as Moscow's disrespect of their choice and simmering discontent with Putin's rule.

Authorities suspect Furgal's involvement in murders of businessmen in 2004 and 2005. He has denied the charges, which date back to his time as a businessman with interests focusing on timber and metals. **AP**

### BLACK LIVES MATTER

## Federal agents use tear gas to clear Portland protest

**Portland:** Thousands of protesters gathered outside the federal courthouse in Portland, Oregon, into the early hours of Saturday shooting fireworks at the building as plumes of tear gas, dispensed by US Agents, lingered above.

The demonstration went on for hours until federal agents entered the crowd around 2:30 am. And marched in a line down the street, clearing remaining protesters with tear gas at close range. They also extinguished a large fire in the street outside the courthouse.

The Federal Protective Service had declared the gathering as "an unlawful assembly" and said that officers had been injured. As the crowd dispersed, someone was found stabbed nearby, Portland police said. The person was taken to a hospital and a suspect was taken into custody.



Demonstrators shield themselves with umbrellas as federal officers launch tear gas outside the Mark O. Hatfield United States Courthouse during a Black Lives Matter protest in Portland, Ore on Friday

By 3 am, most demonstrators had left with only some small groups roaming the streets.

Earlier Friday night, the protest had drawn various organized groups, including

Healthcare Workers Protest, Teachers against Tyrants, Lawyers for Black Lives and "Wall of Moms."

As the crowd grew — authorities estimate there were 3,000 present at the peak of the

protest — people were heard chanting "Black Lives Matter" and "Feds go home" to the sound of drums.

Later, protesters vigorously shook the fence surrounding the courthouse, shot fireworks towards the building and threw glass bottles. Many times these actions were met by federal agents using tear gas and flash bangs. The flow of tear gas caused protesters to disperse at times, some becoming sick as others remained toward the front of the courthouse with leaf blowers directing the gas back to the courthouse. Federal agents had leaf blowers of their own to counteract.

Daniel Pereyo was one protester who was tear-gassed. Pereyo said he had been at the nearby park watching drummers and fireworks being shot, when his face and eyes began to burn. **AP**

"It's extremely painful," he said. "It's not the worst pain ever, but it is discomforting and it's distracting." As the clouds of gas floated down the street, protesters would swiftly regroup and return to chant and shake the fence that separates the people on the street from federal agents and the courthouse.

It was unclear whether anyone was arrested during the protest. The federal agents, deployed by President Donald Trump to tamp down the unrest, have arrested dozens during nightly demonstrations against racial injustice that often turn violent.

Democratic leaders in Oregon say federal intervention has worsened the two-month crisis, and the state attorney general sued to allege that some people had been whisked off the streets in unmarked vehicles. **AP**

## Sri Lanka has completely curbed community spread: Head of virus task force

**Colombo:** The Sri Lankan government's efforts have been successful in completely curbing the social spread of the coronavirus and the country has not witnessed a single community case for nearly three months, head of the COVID-19 task force said.

Lt General Shavendra Silva, who is also the Army Commander, said that all the positive cases since April 30, including over 500 at the Kandakadu drug rehabilitation centre, were those who contracted the virus from Sri Lankan expatriates whose return was facilitated by the government.

"We haven't found a single case within the community since April 30," Silva told reporters.

"We have been able to

completely curb its social spread," he said. Silva said that various rumours were being floated of a second wave of infections since the detection of positive cases from the drug rehabilitation centre two weeks back, when over 500 people were put under quarantine.

The government halted the repatriation of its citizens from various countries from July 14 in view of the increasing number of cases.

"We decided to delay the process of returnees in order to make the quarantine facilities available to tackle any possible spike from the drug rehabilitation centre contacts," he said.

Silva said that around 20,000 people, who were repatriated, have been quarantined and another 5,000 returnees are currently under quarantine. **PTI**

## Vietnam reports 1st Covid case in 3 months

**Hanoi:** Vietnam has reported the first local case of COVID-19 in over three months.

The 57-year-old man from central Da Nang city was hospitalised on Thursday with a fever and respiratory distress. The Health Ministry says his condition worsened and he was put on a ventilator.

Health workers have not been able to trace the source for his infection. For over a month, he did not travel outside his hometown, where no case of COVID-19 has been reported since April.

Da Nang city authorities have isolated the hospital he had visited and those who had been in contact with the man in the past weeks. His family members and over 100 others have initially tested negative for the coronavirus. **AP**

## Scientists identify 21 existing drugs that block coronavirus in lab studies

**Los Angeles:** Scientists, including those of Indian-origin, have identified 21 existing drugs that stop the replication of the novel coronavirus which causes COVID-19 in lab studies, an advance that may lead to the development of new therapeutic combinations against the disease.

The researchers, including those from the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute in the US, analysed one of the world's largest collections of known drugs for their ability to block the replication of the novel coronavirus, and found 100 molecules with confirmed antiviral activity in laboratory tests.

According to the study, published in the journal Nature,

21 of these drugs are effective in blocking the reproduction of the virus at concentrations that could be safely achieved in patients.

It said four of these compounds could work in combination with remdesivir, a current standard-of-care treatment for COVID-19.

"Remdesivir has proven successful at shortening the recovery time for patients in the hospital, but the drug doesn't work for everyone who receives it. That's not good enough," said Sumit Chanda, director of the Immunity and Pathogenesis Program at Sanford Burnham Prebys and senior author of the study.

"The urgency remains to find affordable, effective, and readily available drugs that can

complement the use of remdesivir, as well as drugs that could be given prophylactically or at the first sign of infection on an outpatient basis," Chanda said.

In the study, the scientists performed extensive testing and validation studies, including evaluating the drugs on human lung biopsies that were infected with the virus, evaluating the drugs for synergies with remdesivir, and establishing dose-response relationships between the drugs and antiviral activity.

Of the 21 drugs that were effective at blocking viral replication, the scientists found that 13 have previously entered clinical trials for other indications and are effective at concentrations, or doses, that could potentially be safely achieved in COVID-19 patients. **PTI**

## Hanna becomes first hurricane of 2020 Atlantic season

**Miami (US):** Tropical Storm Hanna was upgraded to become the first hurricane of the 2020 Atlantic season on Saturday, moving toward the Texas coast and threatening to bring heavy rain, storm surge and possible tornadoes to a state already struggling with the coronavirus.

The US National Hurricane Centre said Saturday that Hanna's maximum sustained winds had increased to 75 mph (120 kph). The storm was centred about 100 miles (160 km) east-southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas, and was moving west at 9 mph (15 kph).

The centre of Hanna was expected to make landfall along the Texas coast within the hur-

ricane warning area Saturday afternoon or evening, the Hurricane Centre said. Additional strengthening is expected before Hanna makes landfall. Rapid weakening is expected after Hanna moves inland. "The combination of a dangerous storm surge and the tide will cause normally dry areas near the coast to be flooded by rising waters moving inland from the shoreline," the Miami-based agency said.

Maximum sustained winds stood at 75 mph (120 kph) at 7 am EDT. The storm was centred about 100 miles (160 km) east-southeast of Corpus Christi, Texas, and was moving west at 9 mph (15 kph). **AP**

## US now says no new foreign students for all-online classes

AFF ■ WASHINGTON

The United States announced Friday it will not take in any new foreign students seeking online-only study, after rescinding a hotly contested order to expel those already here and preparing for that because of the pandemic.

The policy change was announced in a statement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

President Donald Trump has made a tough line on immigration a cornerstone of his message and has suspended several kinds of visas for foreigners during the coronavirus crisis.

The original policy change of revoking the visas of foreign

students whose classes will move online in the autumn was taken to court by top universities including Harvard and MIT, teachers unions and at least 18 states.

And on July 14 the administration reversed course and rescinded the decision.

That measure had been seen as a move by Trump to put pressure on educational institutions that are adopting a cautious approach to reopening amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Trump is eager for schools at all levels to reopen with in-person classes as a sign of a return to normality as he fights an uphill battle for re-election in November.

He is pushing for this even though the virus is out of con-

trol in some states, with the US death figures a world-high of more than 144,000.

His administration is leaving it largely up to states themselves to figure out how to open schools safely.

There were more than one million international students in the US for the 2018-19 academic year, according to the Institute of International Education.

Many schools depend heavily on the tuition paid by those students.

Most US colleges and universities have not yet announced their plans for the fall semester but Harvard has said all its classes for the 2020-21 academic year will be conducted online, "with rare exceptions."

# Govt initiatives will provide growth momentum next year: Economists

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the measures taken by the Government in this financial year will definitely show results and drive the country to have at least a 6 per cent growth rate in the FY22, economists and industry leaders stated on Saturday.

Speaking at the Webinar organized by ASSOCHAM titled- "Economic Outlook: Post Pandemic", Ajit Ranade, president and chief economist at Aditya Birla Group explained that the last three months have been quite unprecedented.

"In the April-June quarter, there has been a minus 15 per cent contraction. The foreign investors have pulled out almost \$16 billion from the Indian markets, however, the domestic investors have been

continuously investing money to the tune of almost Rs 90,000 crore back in the stock markets. There is a lot of enthusiasm and optimism which is leading the markets to boom and this is really amazing," he said.

According to Ranade, there would be a sharper recovery to the tune of at least 6 per cent in the financial year 2022 due to several factors.

"The agriculture sector is doing very well and is expected to grow at least to the tune of 3 to 4 per cent. The minimum support price (MSP) program by the government was a huge hit not only in good states like Punjab and Haryana but also in other smaller states. This will give some momentum in the next year," he said.

He also added that the rural employment guarantee

program was a huge success and saw the numbers almost doubling. "Also the MGNREGA program was a huge achievement. The Fiscal stimulus package 2.0 as it known will play a big role in shaping up the things to come and help in reviving the growth momentum," he pointed out.

Rathin Roy, Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, and a former member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council explained that the industry would need to collectively chalk out a plan and present it to the government.

"The industry leaders would need to take the lead and chalk out a three-year plan and present it to the government. The role of the government would be limited and it's the

industry that would need to take the lead. Let it work on the reverse," he added.

Tirthankar Patnaik, chief economist at the National Stock Exchange (NSE) explained that despite the negativity seen earlier on the stock exchanges, it took very little time for it to bounce back.

"From March 20, the stock markets started going up, that is because the global and the Indian stock markets look at the short term nature of the coronavirus," he said.

Patnaik added that though the growth is largely out of the base effect and the impact may not be likely to go away.

"The NPAs are likely to be in the tune of 12 per cent to 15 per cent; however the markets do not see this continuing in the long run. Also for the

FY22, the earnings have not yet been downgraded and expect the earnings to catch up," he added.

Shekhar Shah, Director General of the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) stated that there is a lot of transformation going on in the country at the moment.

"Digitalisation is going to be the key factor. In the last four months, most employees while working from homes have managed to get around 80-90 per cent of productivity, think about the saving it would have on the external factors. This would propel a huge leap in certain critical areas," he said.

He also informed that it is time to reset our thinking on health policies. "Due to the pandemic, the fault lines in the

society have been revealed. While we have been concentrating too much on the rural areas, it is also time to think as much for the urban safety nets as well. While we think about the cure, we need to think much more about the prevention," he informed.

Suman Bery, Global Fellow Asia Program of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC stated that there is a need to prioritize the relief, recovery and reform structure and deal with the issues in a sequence.

"The Atmanirbhar Bharat, global linkages and search for a new growth model are the need of the hour. The medical, humanitarian, economic, and political differences need to be resolved. The framework of government's focus should

include supply side, demand side, and terms of trade," he said.

Upasna Bhardwaj, Senior Economist & Head Economic Research Kotak Mahindra Bank explained that there is a risk-aversion in the willingness to lend at present. "The big corporates still have enough funds but it is the smaller corporates that are suffering the most. Banks are reluctant to lend them. The pandemic has increased a lot of risk in the financial market," she said.

Chairman of ASSOCHAM's National Council for Banking & Non-Executive Chairman of Punjab & Sindh Bank, Charan Singh, stated that opening up of agriculture to the private investment will significantly contribute to growth, in the near future.

Niranjan Hiranandani, National President, ASSOCHAM and Co-founder of the Hiranandani Group informed that the government due to its various financial announcements has adequately taken care of the supply side of the economics and owing to its various policy announcements set the path for long term reforms. "What we also need at this hour is land and labour reforms. The power costs in certain states are very high. Companies are moving out of Maharashtra to Gujarat to get the advantage of lower power bills. Out of the textile units which moved out of China, almost 23 went to Vietnam and only 2 came to India. We need to have a comprehensive policy to address these issues," he said.

## ITAT rules in favour of Tata Education and Development Trust in ₹220-crore tax case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) has ruled in favour of Tata Education and Development Trust in a case wherein the tax department had raised a demand of more than ₹220 crore, an official statement said on Saturday.

The case pertains to assessment years 2011-12 and 2012-13 on money spent by the Trust for creating an endowment fund at Cornell University, US, to provide scholarships to Indian students and granting financial assistance to the Harvard Business School for constructing an executive building to be named Tata Hall. It donated ₹197.79 crore in 2011-12 and ₹25.37 crore in 2012-13.

The controversy erupted after the Public Account Committee (PAC) of the Lok Sabha in 2018 sought an enquiry in the matter as it believed that exemption granted by the direct tax body was in violation of the I-T Act.

An official statement issued on Saturday said, "In a major relief for Tata Education and Development Trust, the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) bench consisting of Justice PP Bhatt, President, ITAT, on July 24, ruled in favour of the trust in their appeal against commissioner income tax appeal order wherein a demand of more than ₹220 crore was levied by the tax department." The ITAT in its order on July 24 said that all other grounds of appeals will be "rendered, academic and infructuous." "We have decided this issue in favour of the assessee and thus allowed this ground of appeal. We, therefore, uphold the plea of the assessee and delete the resultant disallowance of claim of exemption," it said.

## 2.6 lakh applications received under PM SVANidhi, 64K sanctioned

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 2.6 lakh applications have been received so far under the Centre's PM SVANidhi scheme, of which 64,000 have been sanctioned and money disbursed in over 5,500 cases, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was apprised in a review meeting on Saturday.

The Centre had launched the PM SVANidhi scheme to facilitate collateral-free working capital loans of up to ₹10,000 for one-year tenure to approximately 50 lakh street vendors to resume their businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme is run under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. While reviewing the implementation of PM SVANidhi, the Prime Minister expressed satisfaction on the use of end-to-end IT solutions through a web portal and mobile app for the administration of the scheme to ensure

transparency, accountability, and speed.

Noting that the Ministry is working on a complete IT solution, including the mobile application, for seamless implementation of the scheme, Modi said that the scheme should incentivise use of end-to-end digital transactions by the street vendors. This should cover the entire gamut of their businesses - from procurement of raw material to collection of sale proceeds, Modi said.

"Appropriate incentives and training should be conducted for this purpose. Use of digital payments will also help build a credit profile for the street vendors, helping them in future financial needs."

The Prime Minister said that the scheme should not be seen just from the perspective of extending loans to street vendors but also as a part of an outreach initiative for the street vendors' holistic development and economic upliftment.

## Diesel costlier as oil firms push pump prices

### PETROL REMAINS STEADY

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies on Saturday raised diesel prices by 15 paise/litre as OMCs revised pump prices. This rise in price came after the prices were held steady for sometime.

While the price of diesel was at ₹81.79 per litre in the capital, petrol was steady at ₹80.43 a litre. Petrol prices have remain unchanged since June 29.

Oil companies had raised diesel prices marginally by 12 paise on Monday but thereafter the prices of the two petroleum products remained unchanged for next four days till Friday.

Unexpected rise in diesel prices despite slower demand has put the transport sector at a big disadvantage as rising fuel



cost has further shrunk its margins. The price of diesel in capital has also put automobile companies concerned about the prospect of the sale of diesel-run cars in the country's largest car market.

With the hike in diesel prices, the gap between the two auto fuels has further widened in the national capital. Last month, diesel prices overtook that of petrol in Delhi in an unprecedented development.

In Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, petrol was sold at an unchanged price of ₹87.19, ₹83.63, ₹82.10 per litre, respectively, while diesel prices increased marginally. Oil companies began daily revision of the two auto fuels from June 7 after keeping the price unchanged for around 82 days during the lockdown. Since then petrol and diesel prices have increased by ₹9.5 and ₹12 per litre, respectively.

## I-T dept responsive to the needs of taxpayers during pandemic : Sitharaman

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has reserved words of praise for the Income Tax department, complementing officers for being responsive to the needs of the taxpayers during the pandemic times by relaxing various compliance requirements and addressing the liquidity concerns of the taxpayers.

In her message at a function organised to observe 160th anniversary of Income Tax Day, Sitharaman on Friday said the efforts of the I-T department towards making the tax administration as taxpayer-friendly and transparent has facilitated voluntary compliance. Therefore, she said, the department will continue to play a critical role in the growth of the nation by keeping to improve and set new standards of professionalism.

She recognised the para-



digim shift in its role in recent years, from being just a revenue collecting organization to becoming a more citizen-centric organization.

She cited various reform measures undertaken, including, inter alia, the introduction of a new, simpler tax regime, reduced corporate tax rates as also payment of tax at concessional rates for domestic manufacturing companies, which will pave the way for an "Atma Nirbhar Bharat".

## India, UK affirm commitment towards free trade agreement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the UK have affirmed their commitment to negotiate a free trade agreement (FTA) with a view to further strengthen economic ties, the commerce ministry said on Saturday.

The issue was discussed in the 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting between the two countries on Friday. It was co-chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for International Trade Elizabeth

Truss. They were assisted by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Hardeep Singh Puri and his UK counterpart Rani Jayawardena.

Goyal and Truss "affirmed their shared commitment to an FTA and towards that, Early Harvest deals in a staged manner," the Ministry said in a statement. It added that Puri and Jayawardena will have monthly meetings to intensify the dialogue.

It was also decided that a meeting led by Goyal and Truss will be held in Autumn 2020 here to carry forward the dia-

logue.

In an FTA, two trading partners eliminate or significantly reduce import duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them. The statement also said that the co-chairs of business led Joint Working Groups on life science and health, ICT and food and drink set up during the last JETCO made their recommendations to the ministers.

"Both sides resolved to cooperate in the health sector especially in view of the present pandemic of COVID-19," it said.

## Covid to shrink power sector growth

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 pandemic will have a wider impact on the country's power sector in the current financial year with the acute slowdown witnessed in the first quarter period continuing well into the year affecting both demand and supply.

The nationwide lockdown to contain the Covid-19 outbreak has already significantly impacted economic activity, leading to a 17% yoy fall in the Q1FY20 power demand. As per analysts, though demand may pick up after some degree of normalcy in economic activity gets restored, still power demand will decline 8.0% yoy

- ◆ Take discoms back to pre-UDAY era
- ◆ Though demand may pick up after some degree of normalcy in economic activity gets restored, still power demand will decline 8.0% yoy in FY21 on a steep fall in revenue generating commercial and industrial demand

in FY21 on a steep fall in revenue generating commercial and industrial demand.

According to an analysis done by Emkay Global Financial Services, the situation in the power sector demand would further increase the gap between the average cost of supply (ACS) and average revenue realised (ARR) to Rs

0.95/unit in FY21E from Rs0.50/unit in FY20 due to lower offtake from commercial and industrial segments, decline in payment collection and lower cross-subsidisation. This would lead to an under-recovery of Rs 1,12,700 crore in FY21E for discoms.

"Discoms' overdue has reached Rs 1.17 lakh crore,

which is close to the peak level witnessed pre-UDAY. The overdue level is likely to remain high in FY21 due to the expected rise in under-recovery and slow progress in the 'Atmanirbhar' scheme toward loan disbursement," the brokerage said in its analysis report.

What is worse, the poor conditions in the power sector would bring new generation projects to a standstill affecting key infrastructure development. The report said that Gencos' capacity addition should witness postponement in FY21 with net capacity addition of just 61GW in the FY20-FY24 period.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE**

The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/Coaching, Northern Railway, Delhi division, New Delhi invites e-tender for the following work:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Name of work with its location  | Commercial Advertisement Rights through static media/display boards of specific sizes at the sites/locations at platform/waiting halls/concourse of D, E & F category railway stations of Delhi area over Delhi Division for a period of five years. |
| 2. Details of railway stations/ Zones  | E-tender Notice Number: Stations: Publicity Station 69-2020 (Separate Bids are to be submitted for each Zone)  |
| 3. Date of Tender Opening  | 14.08.2020 up to 1500 hrs.   |
| 4. Approximate cost of work  | As per NIT on <a href="https://ireps.gov.in">ireps.gov.in</a>  |
| 5. Cost of Tender document including 18% GST                                 | As per NIT on <a href="https://ireps.gov.in">ireps.gov.in</a>  |
| 6. Earnest Money Deposit   | <a href="https://ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>  |
| 7. Website particulars where complete details of tender document can be seen | <a href="https://ireps.gov.in/">https://ireps.gov.in/</a>  |

No.: 7PUB/OOH/Delhi Area/D\_E\_F Station/2019 Dated : 21.07.2020. 1638/20

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

## ICICI Bank's Q1FY21 net profit rises 36% to ₹2,599 crore



IAN S ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lending major ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a 36 per cent growth in standalone net profit of ₹2,599 crore for the first quarter of 2020-21.

The bank had earned a net profit of ₹1,908 crore on a prudent basis in Q1-2021 with the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

Similarly, net interest income (NII) increased by 20 per cent year-on-year to ₹9,280 crore in Q1FY21 from ₹7,737 crore in Q1-2020.

The bank made provisions (excluding COVID-19 related provisions and provision for tax) declined by 42 per cent year-on-year to ₹2,044 crore in Q1FY21 from ₹3,496 crore in Q1-2020.

"The bank has made additional COVID-19 related provisions of ₹ 5,550 crore on a prudent basis in Q1-2021 with the objective of completely cushioning the balance sheet from the impact of Covid-19."

Besides, the bank held COVID-19 related provisions amounting to ₹8,275 crore as of June 30, 2020. "This additional provision held by the bank is more than the requirement as per the RBI guideline dated April 17, 2020."

"Net non-performing assets (NPA) decreased by 51 per cent from ₹21,170 crore at June 30, 2018 to ₹11,857 crore at June 30, 2019," the statement said.

## RBI signs doc to extend \$400 mn currency swap facility to Sri Lanka: Indian mission

PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Reserve Bank of India has signed necessary documents for extending a USD 400 million currency swap facility to Sri Lanka to boost the island nation's draining foreign exchange reserves due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Indian High Commission here said on Saturday.

The currency swap arrangement will remain available till November 2022, the Indian mission said in a press release.

Sri Lanka in April said it was set to enter into an agreement with the RBI for a currency swap worth USD 400 million under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) framework to boost the foreign reserves and ensure financial stability of the country which is badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In May, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa made an additional request to India for a special USD 1.1 billion currency swap facility. "Breaking Good News! Reserve Bank of India signs document for USD 400 million currency swap facility to Sri Lanka till Nov 2022," the Indian mission tweeted on

The currency swap arrangement will remain available till November 2022

## Govt sure BPCL strategic sale to sail through without further extensions

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Government is confident that the strategic sale of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) may go through without any further need to extend the bidding deadlines.

The deadline for submitting the Expressions of Interest (EoI) for 52.98 per cent stake in the BPCL will end on July 31. BPCL disinvestment has received interest from several large global oil and gas companies and a few Indian entities as well. In fact, the process so far has generated close to 100 enquiries in a clear signal that investors remain interested in the maharatna oil PSU despite the disruptions caused by Covid-19 pandemic, official source privy to the development said.

According to them, Saudi Aramco, Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (Adnoc), Rosneft of Russia and Exxon Mobil intend to participate in the bidding process for the PSU. Indian oil majors are not behind their global counterparts and are also actively pursuing the prospects of bidding for BPCL. Oil-to-telecom major Reliance Industries is understood to have shown interest for the bid.

The deadline for submitting EoIs has been postponed twice and the current deadline ends on July 31. We are confident that EoI will sail through within time with several interested bidders coming into the fray, the sources quoted above said.

While the queries about the sale is a reflection of interest that BPCL disinvestment has interest, it does always amount to investment.

But the queries relating to timing to complete the bids, net worth requirement, what kind of controls investors may have to face, will they have to operate in regulated regime or how the money would have to be brought for the purchase had given confidence that investors remain serious about BPCL.

The disinvestment in BPCL involves the government selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in the company to a strategic investor with transfer of management control. The Govt has barred PSUs from bidding for BPCL and expects private sector Indian players and global MNCs to bid for its stake. The Centre has allowed prospective bidders with a minimum net worth of \$10 billion to present their bids.

**DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE WORKS, VARANASI - 221004**

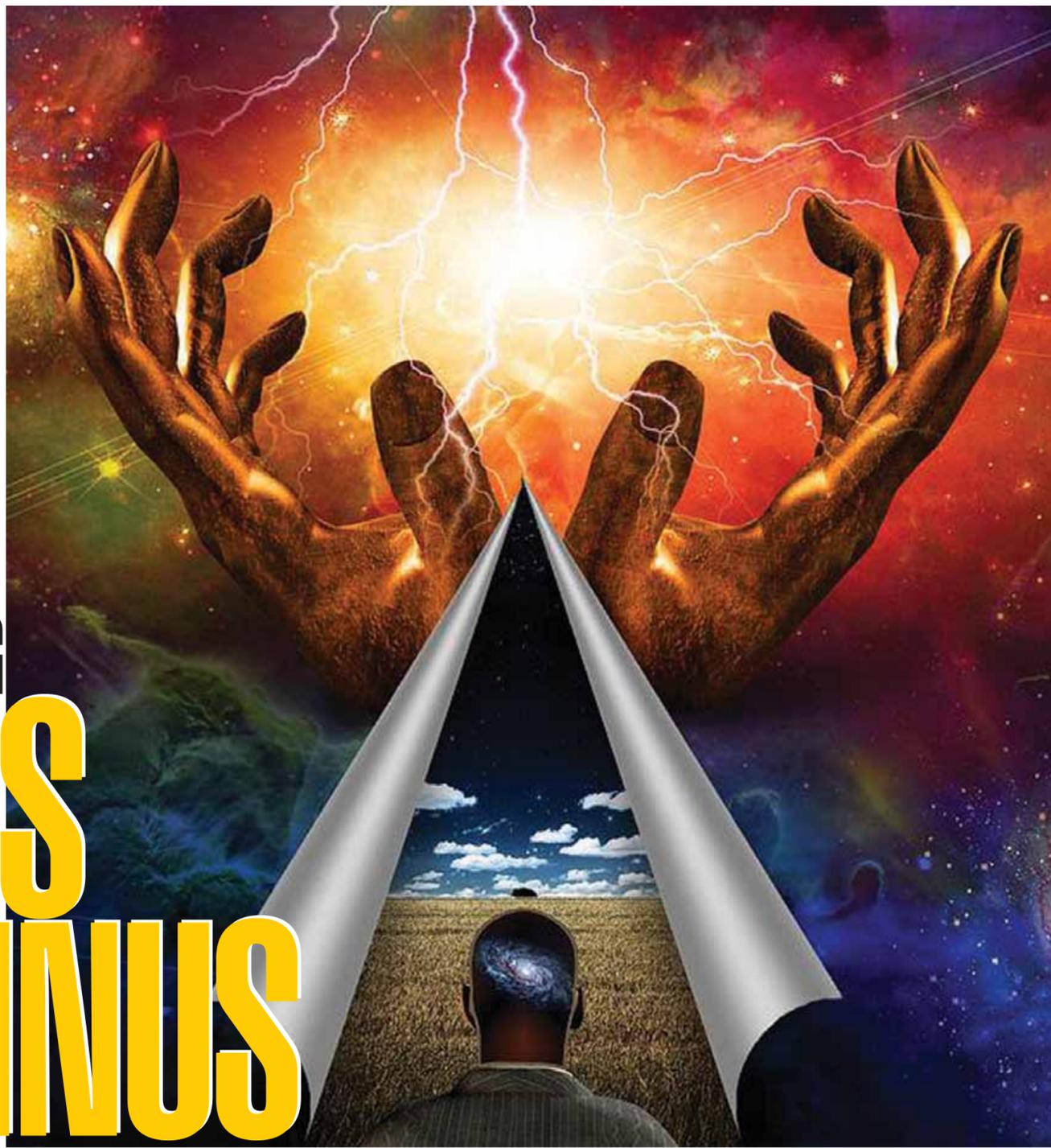
**Bid No. E-25/2020-2021 E-TENDERS Dated: 21.07.2020**

E-Tenders are invited for & on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. Only e-bid will be accepted for which vendors must have class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence :- S. No. - Tender No. (Due Date), Description and Quantity as under: (1) 04205023 (11.08.2020), Bogie frame arrangement, 02 Nos. (2) 04201262 (21.08.2020), Fuel Tank assy, PL No.11530790, 13 Nos. (3) 04201063 (14.08.2020) Radiator compartment, PL No.11545641, 20 Nos. (4) 04201095 (19.08.2020) Long Hood Assly, PL No.11700154, 16 Nos. (5) 04201072 (17.08.2020) Brake Rigging Kit PL No.11520334, 32 Set. (6) 06201025A (19.08.2020) Fixing cable Part No.29100239, 254 Set. (7) 06201288 (11.08.2020) Dynamic braking Part No.18011378, 1 Set. (8) 06201184 (17.08.2020) Flex Conduct pipe Part No.12515012, 14 MTR (9) 06201209, (17.08.2020), MUSD Switch Part No.12319351, 24 Nos. (10) 03201314, (28.08.2020), Ball Valve, PL No.29162038, 1172 Nos. (11) 03201469, (04.09.2020), Set of Gasket, PL No.29250018, 298 Set. (12) 03201511, (18.09.2020), Copper Pipe fittings, PL No.29230081, 303 Set. (13) 01201313, (25.08.2020), SS Tube PL No.29120068, 12394.6 Meter (14) 01201221, (14.08.2020), Lube Oil cooler Assly PL No.10061307, 29 Nos. (15) 07205202 (19.08.2020) PL No. Non Stock, 33 HP submersible pump sets, 3 Sets. Note: For Complete details of EMD and downloading of tender documents and Hindi Version also available at website [www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in) and [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Corrigendum Notice Date: 21.07.2020 S.No. 1 Tender No.: 05205193 Bid No.: E-14 Rev.: 01 Existing Due Date: 17.07.2020 Revised Due Date: 03.08.2020 All other terms & condition shall remain unchanged. Corrigendum Notice Date: 22.07.2020 S.No. 1 Bid No.: E-18 Tender No.: 03201440 Details of Corrigendum: 1. Tender (due to open on 29.07.2020) has been postponed and due to open on 31.07.2020 2. Tender quantity has been revised from 294 set to 536 set. Corrigendum Notice Date: 22.07.2020 S.No. 1 Bid No.: E-13 Tender No.: 04201212 Revision: 1 Details of Correction: The tender will be open from 04.08.2020 instead of 23.07.2020 Note: All other terms and conditions of the tender on remain unchanged. P.R.O/DLWS-29 On the behalf of PCMM

<https://dlwlocoworks> "Website :- [www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.dlw.indianrailways.gov.in)"

Call the pandemic rigours golden hours of isolation that can strengthen your inner self, detox the mind, give perspective to the real purpose of life. SUNDAY PIONEER brings you a spiritual take on dealing with this devastating virus through an IIT, IIM alumnus-turned-spiritual guru

# FINDING PLUS IN MINUS



It's been a 36-year journey from IIT and IIM to his ashram in rural Odisha where Swami Mukundananda plans to set up a university as a part of his 100-acre spiritual zone.

But his claim to fame is not about spending seven months a year in the US imparting spiritual knowledge to the Western world on his guru Jagadguru Kripaluj Maharaj's instruction, but the fact that he believes in and propagates what he calls the true journey to self-realisation, of supreme knowledge and what Vedic scriptures term as Brahman.

Yoga in its wholesome tripartite structure enriching the body, mind and soul and not just as a weight loss and fitness fad, faith not as a miracle healer but an instrument of life, and health as a tool to be fit enough to render your duties as a karma yogi, not to mention keeping the encaser of the soul in fine fettle, that's what this swami propagates.

Ask him what he is doing in this glut of gurus and he strikes a balance in perspective. "I am in the race only against myself. I want to be true to what I am here to do and be good at it. And, that's to show the path to self-realisation," he tells you.

After countless lectures at Harvard, Princeton and Yale, to name a few of his usual pitstops, books on yogic health, spirituality and yoga, not to mention connections with youth and spreading the word across the world the Vedic way, he has a strange aura of peace and contentment around him, even though his engagements give you a sense of a whirlwind, whistle stop journey.

"For many students, the talks are an eye-opener, bringing them in touch with a science they were unaware of. For some, the talks provide a way to blend the values they imbibed in traditional households with the reality of the competitive world they live in. The most energised Q&A session took place in my alma mater, IIT Delhi, a few years ago, where the fertile intellects of the students were stimulated by the spiritual perspective they had just heard, and they began fervently

competing with each other to get their questions answered," he says.

People call him a happiness guru, but that kind of limits his karma bhoomi. Like Sir Francis Bacon, and even Pope John Paul II who found Bible to be a book of ancient science, he unhesitatingly marries Science with Religion for what he calls complete development. "Science finds, innovates and invents to give your body ways to live a healthy, comfortable life. Spirituality, on the other hand, controls the mind for you to give this comfortable bodily existence a purpose and a journey," he says, conflating the two diametrically opposite concepts with seamless clarity, and practicality if one may say so.

Born to an Air Force engineer with nationwide postings, and hailing from UP, sanyas, he tells you, forbids him from revealing his real name but the need to be a sanyasi came to him when he was graduating from Indian Ivy League institutions and was introduced to the Bhagwad Gita by a fellow student. His mind kept asking him profound questions of existence and even though he picked up his first meditation workbook for a lark at the callow age of eight, he saw a way in renunciation to get all the answers he sought, during his 20s.

Only he knows best if he got all his answers right, but his educational background has, indeed, helped Mukundananda to become a multi-faceted modern preacher who can be as effective as a motivational speaker for corporates as his mind management skills are for his more run-of-the-mill disciples from rural Odisha and other parts of India, to Dallas where he spends time "at a beautiful temple," giving sermons, organising spiritual retreats and enriching his soul along with that of his growing followers.

He pitches for a course on Religion and Spirituality in school, college and university curricula as an essential tool to equip students to fight the modern epidemic of depression and other existential issues. "Faith gives the mind clarity, purpose, peace and positivity and our young

need these values more than ever before," he asserts.

"Youngsters want knowledge to help them in their social, professional and family life. What is, therefore, necessary is for us to take the wisdom of our ancient scriptures and make it relevant in current times," he adds.

Talking on the pandemic and the opportunity it has given mankind to clean up their rusted window to the inner self through running inside instead of outside, he terms the Universe a university of hard knocks. "It teaches us to become our best version of ourselves. It is the hardships that bring out the best in us. Ramayana would not have been relevant, written or read but for those 14 years of rigour that Lord Ram undertook on his banishment. "It is those years that give us lessons in Bharat's loyalty, Laxman's brotherly passion, Sita's chastity and Lord Ram's godly existence," he says.

In other words, faith and spirituality have become even more relevant in today's time when the pandemic has nibbled into global lives like silverfish, giving rise to a never-before fear factor of imminent death and suffering.

"Spirituality keeps your mind in hold and gives you the mores to step out of your fears. If you know how not to fear death, your life is sorted. If you can stare down suffering with positivity, you will not view death as a life altering dead-end," Mukundananda says.

This is not the first time that the pandemic has swept the globe. He attributes survival of humanity to the strong human spirit to face hardships unitedly, as a global citizen.

"So there is this story of the corn farmer. He had wonderful corn growing in his fields that would win him the national corn growing competition year after year. However, would share his prized corn seed with neighbouring farmers. When journalists asked him why on earth would he share something so precious and unique, he explained: 'It is the pollen from the neighbouring fields that flies into my



UP YOUR IMMUNITY. IT WILL NOT CURE THE VIRUS BUT IT WILL DEFINITELY GIVE YOU A WORKABLE SHIELD AGAINST INFECTION. REGULARLY TAKE CITRUS FRUIT. AMLA HAS VITAMIN A OF 10 ORANGES. DAILY DOSE OF ANTIOXIDANTS IS IMPORTANT TOO AND AMLA IS A RICH ONE FOR THAT TOO — SWAMI MUKUNDANANDA

field to fertilise by corn. If they are growing unhealthy crop, it will affect mine too," he added. Similarly, as citizens of the world we have a global duty to unitedly fight this pandemic. Our national duty is to follow the regulations laid down by our respective Governments. Then there is our duty to ourselves, that is to be strong in these tough times," he says.

Indeed, Mukundananda is quite a storyteller, perhaps learning the trade of constructive engagement from his IIM instructors at Kolkata. "Once Narad Muni was passing by a village that had been hit by cholera. He met a personalised cholera and asked him how many people did you kill Mr Cholera? He said 35. Narad said, but news has put the toll at 119. Cholera said, I caused only 35 deaths, rest died due to panic. So, we need to have strength and shed our fears if we have to survive in these difficult times," Mukundananda explains.

Besides being a celebrated mind manager sanyasi, this 59-year-old gentleman clad in saffron robes with glowing hair and an omnipresent smile on his face, is also a health food and yoga expert, both of which come in handy in times like these. "Up your immunity. It will not cure the virus but it will definitely give you a workable shield against infection. Regularly take citrus fruit. Amla has Vitamin A of 10 oranges. Daily dose of antioxidants is important too and amla is a rich one for that too, as also dark coloured fruits, like blueberries. Ginger and turmeric are beneficial in building and maintaining immunity. Pranayama is a natural way of receiving antioxidants from the atmosphere. Be stress free to build immunity. Continue with your devotion and meditation and soon sunny times will be back again," he insists.

He explains the fury of this corona pandemic by calling it more repercussive than the two World Wars. "Let us look at the positive side of the situation and how we can grow from facing this. We have prioritised 'doing' all our life. Spent the best part of our life in 'doing'. But how much

did we prioritise 'being'? How much did we focus in being better people? How good we were able to become as human beings. This adversity has forced us to stop running outside and given us a window to look within ourselves and focus on the most important need to grow from within," he says.

Yes, we have put behind us many pandemics and survived. And that's because the basis of external success is our inner character, integrity, wellbeing and divinity.

"Look at the Tower of Calgary. It weighs 11,000 tonnes. Sixty per cent of the weight of that tower is under the ground. The foundation is so huge. Our foundation is our inner quality, let us utilise the present time to make it our priority to equip ourselves with our inner strength. Like a bow and the arrow, bow the arrow as far back as possible for it to shoot as forward as possible. You need to do this with your inner strength and look for the divinity in yourself," Mukundananda prescribes.

He believes what Vivekanand about life is eternally true. The great philosopher of spirituality said life is a continual unfolding in a wheel under circumstances tending to press it downwards. However, we rise to face it and we find the true purpose of life which is our inner growth.

"So be patient, go within. Take advantage of the situation. Detox yourself mentally. Cut down the toxins of unnecessary exposure to video games, social media etc in this digital age. Shut off, don't Netflix, withdraw yourself from the world and absorb it in God. Do self-study, go within. That is what I am doing. You can connect with your family. Call the pandemic the golden hours of isolation and use them for self-strengthening."

Even sceptics may deign to agree with him grudgingly as difficult times do teach us the most powerful lessons, one of them being the need to know our limitations. "The tiniest of viruses is evading a cure despite science calling itself God. The takeaway is to be humble. Remember Titanic? It was a huge dream ship, like a mini city. Engineers said nothing in the world can destroy it. It hit an iceberg on inaugural voyage and sank forever, killing 1000 people. So, the thinking should be, so what if there is bankruptcy of material things. Inner wealth, which is the love of God, is permanent," he says.

Mukundananda is an unabashed votary of vegetarianism and gives rather scientific reasons for his view. "We need to respect the laws of Nature. Swine flu came from pigs. SARS and most other viruses came from the animal kingdom. The Mad Cow disease is the horrific outcome of feeding a herbivorous being with animal products for better production and the result of meddling with Nature has had its repercussions. Global warming is because of acute animal consumption. For just one kg of meat, as many as 3,000 gallons of water is used up. Forests have been cleared for make grazing grounds for animals that humans eat. The human body is not meant for eating meat. Carnivores have very tiny intestines where the meat disintegrates fast. Human intestines are too big where meat sits for long. The result? Diseases, like cancer, come because of this. We have molar, carnivores have canines to chew the meat. Our bodily structure is meant for vegetarianism," Mukundananda insists.

The young yogi is a cool package that sells and gels well with this post-modern age where the fast and furious, the young and the restless millennials are looking for quick fixes to life issues, which are many and complex to their utter chagrin. Hence, his diligently put together lesson plans which appeal to all ages, like the worldwide Happiness Challenge he launched on finding meaningful secrets of happiness with fun activities which hid a deeper yogic way of life in them. More recently, he has been involved in evolving spiritual retreats for recharging the inner self.

Just about to turn 60, his journey is so far has been young, and perhaps relatable in that sense. But he and humanity have a long way to go. For, the soul, according to the Vedic scriptures he dotes on, has been transmigrating in 8.4 million species since endless lifetimes.

Food is for the mind, mind is for the soul and vaasana (lust) should be for only God. One-liners like these suit his countenance. As do his slender artistic fingertips on which global philosophical greats sit as pretty as Indian seers — from Ravidas to bhakti propellers in Kabir, to Tukaram to Eknath, to Gods like Krishna and Ram, whom he quotes effortlessly at the drop of, well, a sermon.

So, here is one guru who has done his homework well. His idea of spirituality is well programmed and easy on the mind. He has his knowledge in a pertinent mould and sports the relevant communication skills to draw in the crowds, and somewhere down the line, manages to insert in them a sense of self — humble, well-meaning, pious, selfless.

## TECHNOLOGY COMES IN HANDY

Anxiety, depression and panic attacks are a part and parcel of this turbulent time. However, empathy and compassion can be an answer and can provide healing and solace to our beautiful mind.

If the data of suicides, due to depression, is taken into consideration during the lockdown and Unlock 1.0, the mental isolation is proving more dangerous than Coronavirus these days.

Then increasing cases of suicides was sidelined because of the

ongoing discussions about the ban on TikTok and other 59 chinese apps. While it was a welcoming step for many, others especially teenagers were very upset and even committed suicide.

For those who still don't know what depression actually is, depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. Also called major depressive disorder or clinical depression, it affects how you feel, think and behave and can lead to several emotional and physical

problems. One may face trouble doing normal day-to-day activities, and sometimes even feel as if life isn't worth living.

When the Government banned the Chinese apps, many questioned what would happen to those who used TikTok as a platform to share their content and made some money from it? But fret not. There is an Indian version of the app, Rgyan. Unlike the existing social media platforms which produces minimal thoughtful content, it is a social spiritual network-

ing platform which helps in creating a community of intellectuals and motivated individuals seeking truths about life.

The socio-spiritual technology startup is founded on the belief of empowerment of participation by creating a spiritual social network. It can also be compared to spiritual instagram with a touch of Quora. The app promotes thoughtful content on several non-trivial topics necessary to find important truths about life. It expects to do so by facilitating sharing of

thoughts on various subjective matters. Amidst social media sites that promote banality and silliness, Rgyan stands out as a platform where meaningful content is shared and discussions are heard. It is available on both web as well as a mobile application on android play store in English and Hindi.

To use the application, users can log in by creating an account using a registered phone number or explore its services as an anonymous user. The app allows users to express and share their thoughts

through pictures, videos, text, GIFs, or as real-time discussions. The app also offers the flexibility of a User Generated Content Model (UGC) with that of curated content available on Divinity, Daily Horoscope, and aggregated news on spiritual and social matters.

Celebrating the success of the Made In India app, Debjit Patra, Founder and Chairman, Rgyan, says that such a platform was much needed, more so because of the current situation.

"There was a need for such a meaningful social platform where people can get knowledge as well as share their thoughts on various meaningful matters. The app was started back in 2016 with a vision and now have successfully reached the milestone of one million monthly views. We have come a long way, but this is not the limit as we know that in the time to come, more and more people will start to use the app and will love it. It will definitely help them to beat all the blues," Patra says.

# ENGLAND IN CONTROL OF TEST



England's James Anderson, third left, celebrates with teammates the dismissal of West Indies' Shamarh Brooks, second left, during the second day of the third Test

AP ■ MANCHESTER

England vs Windies  
Live from 3:30pm IST  
SONY SIX NETWORK

With Ben Stokes retreating to a back-seat role, Stuart Broad filled in as England's all-action allrounder to move the team within sight of a Test series victory over the West Indies on Saturday.

Broad smashed a counterattacking 62 in a return to form with the bat then played a lead role as part of England's destructive pace quartet to leave the West Indies on the ropes after day two of the deciding third Test.

In reply to the tourists' first innings of 369, the tourists were 137-6 when bad light forced stumps at Old Trafford on a day the forecast rain never came. They trail by 232 runs, with the follow-on still very much in

he has looked with the bat since breaking his nose while batting against India at Old Trafford a year later, an incident which he acknowledged drained him of confidence against pace bowling and led to him using a sports psychologist.

Broad smashed nine fours and a six in a potentially game-defining ninth-wicket partnership with Dom Bess worth 76 runs. His 33-ball half-century tied him for third place on the all-time list of England's fastest Test fifties.

The West Indies came out to bat after lunch under gray, threatening skies at Old Trafford, horrible conditions to face one of the strongest and deepest pace attacks England has put out.

By stumps, Broad, James Anderson, Jofra Archer and

Chris Woakes all had wickets and the West Indies was looking battered and beaten. Stokes, struggling for full fitness after his starring role in the second test, is unlikely to bowl in Manchester

and wasn't looking needed.

Broad took the wicket of Kraigg Brathwaite (1) in his first over — England's second — and also trapped Roston Chase lbw in the final session to finish with figures of 2-17. Anderson also

had 2-17 on his home ground.

The West Indies closed with Jason Holder on 24 and Shane Dowrich on 10, their bid to capture a test series in England for the first time since 1988 looking in ruins.

## Buttler admits feeling pressure over Test place

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

England wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler on Saturday said he was "feeling the pressure" over his place in the team after failing to score runs in the last few Tests.

Buttler has been struggling for form, having failed to score a fifty in his last seven Tests, which put his place in the Test team in doubt.

The 29-year-old, however, played a crucial 67-run knock on the opening day of the deciding Test against West Indies to help England recover after they were reduced to 122-4.

Asked whether he was fretting about his place in the team, Buttler said: "Yes, naturally, but I think time in the middle gives you confidence and obviously I hadn't been doing that."

"But I think it's more about doing a job for your team which I'm very aware of and if you are not quite performing as well as you want, you realise you're not doing your job as well as you should be for your team."

"I was definitely feeling pres-



sure. I've played long enough now to understand when you're under pressure and it's on your shoulders and how to deal with it," he told Sky Sports.

Buttler, who has scored 2211 runs in 43 Tests and 3843 runs in 142 ODIs so far, said trusting his defence was the key.

"The only time I've had success at Test level is when I've trusted my defence," he said.

"Lots of people expect me to play a certain way because of the way I play in one-day cricket but I've never seen Test cricket in that way."

## Pope can succeed in all formats: Strauss

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Former skipper Andrew Strauss feels Ollie Pope has been a "real find" for England and he has the capability of succeeding in all formats of the game.

After failing to breach the 15-run mark in the first two Tests against Windies, Pope alongside Jos Buttler rescued England from a precarious 122-4 at tea to close the opening day of the series decider on 258-4.

The 22-year-old is coming off a superb series in South Africa earlier this year, where he notched up two half-centuries and a career-best 135 not out at Port Elizabeth.

On Friday, he stitched a 136-run unbeaten partnership with Buttler (56 not out on Friday) by scoring a splendid 91.

"If you look at his first-class record, he's averaging 57 and he's proved that he can do it in Test cricket with that great innings he played in South Africa," Strauss told Sky Sports.

"Today was more of the same. He's a guy who can score quickly without you really noticing it. He played some really eye-catching shots as well and he looks equally comfortable against seam and spin, so no obvious weaknesses there. He's a real find for England, I think," Strauss added.

Pope, who made his Test debut against India in 2018, is yet to play white-ball cricket for England and Strauss feels although the youngster will fare well in the limited overs format, he should focus on Test cricket for the time being.

"He's got the game to play in ODIs, in various different positions. We know he can play all those funky ramp shots and whatever. But for the time being I'd quite like him just doing his time in the Test team, not getting funky with his technique which is perfect," Strauss said.

"He can really establish himself in that England environment. It's a different thing when you feel comfortable, when you know you are good enough to be in that environment and you get to know the players well."

"When you get to that stage, that's when you start getting some really consistent, high-quality performances," he added.



## Dhoni should keep playing as long as he is fit and in form: Gambhir

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir on Saturday said Mahendra Singh Dhoni must continue playing international cricket as long he feels he is fit, in form and enjoying the game.

The World Cup-winning swashbuckler, on a sabbatical from cricket for the past one year, turned 39 on July 7. He has not played any cricket since India's semifinal exit from the ODI World Cup last year.

Gambhir, who played a lot of cricket with Dhoni, said, "Age is just a number, I think if you are in a very good form, if you are hitting the ball really well."

"MS Dhoni, if he is hitting the ball really well, if he is very good form, if he is enjoying the game and if he thinks that he can still win the game for the country at that number — especially at six and seven."

Dhoni led the country in limited-overs formats from 2007 to 2016 and in Test cricket from 2008 to 2014.

He is the only captain to win all ICC trophies.

"If he is in great fitness and form, he should continue playing because no one can actually force anyone to retire," Gambhir said on Star Sports show Cricket Connected.

"A lot of experts can put a lot of pressure on people like MS



Dhoni because of their age and stuff but again it's an individual decision, when you started playing cricket it was your individual decision."

Speaking about the IPL taking place in the UAE due to rising Covid-19 cases in India, Gambhir said, "It does not matter where it goes but if it goes to UAE, it's a great venue to play cricket in any format and plus most importantly I think it's going to change the mood of the nation as well."

"It's not about which franchise wins or which player scores runs or which guy takes wicket, it's simply changing the mood of the nation. So this IPL probably will be bigger than the rest of the IPLs because I think this is for the nation."

## Windies mull hosting part of SA series before IPL

PORT OF SPAIN: Cricket West Indies (CWI) wants to host at least part of their proposed series against South Africa in early September.

The Windies' players are expected to take part in the Indian Premier League which will be played around September 19 to November 8 window and the same has been communicated to the franchises, as per IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel.

West Indies were originally slated to host the Proteas for two Tests and five T20Is in July-August before that tournament was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We hope that South Africa will be able to come here in September for either a T20-only tour or a Test-only tour at the very least," CWI Chief Executive Johnny Grave told the *Mason and Guests* cricket show.

"It will be dependent on the IPL. South Africa have a number of their Test players who have IPL contracts, whereas in this current Test team we don't have any IPL players."

"We won't be able to play Test cricket against South Africa during the IPL, Cricket South Africa have made that very clear to us. They've got a commitment to their players to allow them to go and play in the IPL," Grave said.

"The plan as we are working on now is that the players would come home, they will have the weekend at home. Those that are in the Caribbean Premier League will head down to Trinidad on probably August 3 so it's a quick turnaround."

"CPL finishes on September 10. We hope very much that South Africa will follow immediately after that. Whether we can get the full tour in or we're going to have to look at a split tour between the Tests and the T20s, we don't know." IANS

## Will be difficult to perform instantly after long break: Poonam

NEW DELHI: Deprived of some much-needed game time with the cancellation of England tour, senior India spinner Poonam Yadav reckons it could be extremely difficult for the World Cup-bound players to turn up and "instantly" deliver after the long coronavirus-forced break.

The Indian women's cricket team's proposed tour, the only major assignment before next year's World Cup, was called off earlier this week due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"If you turn up at the ground after four-five months, it will be very difficult to perform instantly for all players," Poonam said.

"But we are keeping ourselves fit and when we are allowed to resume group training, we should be back to full fitness in 20-25 days," she added.

Poonam has not seen a proper cricketing facility since turning up at the iconic MCG for the T20 World Cup final in March and with the only



scheduled series before next year's ODI World Cup cancelled, she may not get to play an international game for the rest of the year.

The fate of the 2021 World Cup, scheduled in New Zealand in February-March, could be decided within the next two weeks.

## Xavi tests positive for Covid-19

AFP ■ DOHA

Former Barcelona star Xavi Hernandez has tested positive for coronavirus, his Qatari club Al-Sadd said on Saturday, adding he would miss their league restart fixture against Al-Khor.

"A few days ago, following the Qatar Stars League protocol, I tested positive in the last Covid-19 test," Xavi said in a post on Al-Sadd's Twitter account.

"Fortunately, I'm feeling ok, but I will be isolated until I am given the all clear. When the health services allow it, I will be very eager to return to my daily routine and to work."

Al-Sadd announced on its website that Xavi would not be joining the rest of the team for its league game against Al-Khor later Saturday.

## East Bengal set to miss ISL bus

FSDL announce decision to stick with 10 teams for 2020-21 edition

PTI ■ KOLKATA

East Bengal's hopes of entering the ISL this season are dashed with the league organisers deciding against adding new teams for the upcoming edition of the franchise-based event.

Organisers of Indian Super League, Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL), made it clear during a meeting with club representatives on Friday that they will stick to 10 teams for now instead of floating tenders for new outfits.

The 2020-21 ISL is scheduled to be held from November to March in a single venue in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Goa and Kerala have emerged as frontrunners to host the lucrative event with the former more likely to get the nod.

"East Bengal didn't have a chance after April because it takes time with



so much of legalities and other important things involved," a source close to FSDL, told PTI on Saturday.

"From April till November they had more than six months but once they have crossed that, there was no chance for East Bengal."

When contacted, a top East Bengal official though maintained that the ISL doors were still "open" for them.

I plan to start working on a few variations, like working on a flipper and top-spin. Flipper is much tougher and it will take me at least three-four months to perfect the ball."

Poonam has been part of both the World Cup finals India played in the last three years and lost.

Asked about India's inability to win the knock-out games after doing well in league stages, Poonam added: "I feel we are right up there. The variety that we have most teams don't, including Australia."

"After doing so well in knock-outs, we start thinking about the result and what we will do after (we win) rather than staying in the present and following the process like we do in the earlier stages of the tournament."

"It is all about handling pressure in the big games and whoever does it better wins. Australia handled it much better than us (in T20 WC final)," she added. PTI

## Player's mentality has to match Oly toughness: Reid

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An unshakable attitude is needed to win an Olympic medal and that is what head coach Graham Reid will try to inculcate in the Indian men's hockey team ahead of the next Summer Games.

Exactly a year from now, the Indian men and women teams will have begun their campaign in Tokyo. Reid, a part of the Silver-winning Australian team at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, put things into perspective.

"The Olympic Games is the toughest competition in the sporting world and therefore a player's mentality has to match it. "The biggest challenge as a player is to remain focussed on the job at hand. The first game brings with it a number of emotions. The player who can control those emotions and stick to the game plan will be ahead," he said.



While there is room to improve in all aspects of the game, Reid emphasised on building a mentally tough team to face the "uncertain times". "The biggest challenge for us during these next 12 months will be uncertainty. There are a lot of things that are going to happen that we can't control. We must only worry about the things we can control," he said. "We can control how hard we

work, how well we train and our fitness levels. Mental toughness will definitely be a factor during this next period and the Indian players have an innate ability to deal with difficult circumstances."

"It is my intention to develop the players understanding of their mental strength and build their ability to access and trust it when required," Reid added.

## India will be in top-10 in LA Olympics: Rijiju

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said India will be competing for a top-10 finish by the time the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics comes calling, riding the Government's ambitious 'Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme'.

"We will leave no stone unturned," Rijiju said.

He said the 'Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme' is scouting talent as young as 10-year-old and 12-year-old with an aim to prepare them for the Los Angeles Games.



"We look forward and realise the dreams of every Indian to make India a great sporting powerhouse," he said.

Rijiju said the talented youngsters will be guided by a world-class coaching facility during their journey to become world champions.

"Objectives are very clear, we have created the 'Target Olympic Podium Junior Scheme' that means those who are 10-13 years of age will be ready to become world champions by 2028 Los Angeles Olympics."

"By starting the scheme we are identifying the young talents, it's a process of talent scouting at a young age and taking full responsibility of their training by bringing in world-class coaches."

Rijiju added that steps like enhancing the skill sets of Indian coaches, removal of ₹2-lakh salary cap for coaches and extension of coaching tenures will bring positive changes in the system.

"I have recently decided to extend the tenure of coaches, Indian coaches are being enhanced and the ₹2-lakh salary cap of coaches has also been removed."

"By 2028, the target of getting India in the top-10 of Olympics medal ranking will be realised. I am very clear. We started planning and executing those plans," Rijiju said.

# European football & survival up for grabs in PL finale

Chelsea, Man Utd & Leicester are fighting for the last two Champions League places while three teams are hoping to secure survival

AFP ■ LONDON

The Premier League will finally reach the end of its longest season on Sunday with plenty still on the line at both ends of the table.

Manchester United and Leicester face each other in a shootout for a place in the Champions League next season with Chelsea also hoping to secure their place in the top four.

Wolves and Tottenham are vying for one place in the Europa League.

And at the bottom it could not be closer with one goal separating Aston Villa just outside the relegation zone from Watford in the bottom three, while Bournemouth also have a chance of beating the drop.

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE DREAMS

Leicester fell out of the top four for the first time since September in midweek after a run of three wins in 13 games either side of the coronavirus shutdown.

However, United's and Chelsea's failures to win on Wednesday means the door is still open for Brendan Rodgers' men to salvage all the good work they did early in the season with victory on home soil on Sunday.

Leicester are hampered by injuries to James Maddison, Ben Chilwell and Ricardo Pereira, but have had a full week to prepare in stark contrast to United's packed schedule.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men have looked jaded in the past week in losing 3-1 to Chelsea in the FA Cup semi-finals and being held 1-1 at home by West Ham.

United have overturned an eight-point deficit to Leicester since the restart, but Rodgers is hoping it is the Red Devils who fold under the pressure.

"We would love to be able to do that but when you are a club like Manchester United, or one of those super clubs, there is a need to be in the Champions League for many reasons," said Rodgers.

Chelsea just need a point at home to Wolves to seal Champions League football next season, but should Frank Lampard's men lose, then a draw between Leicester and United would see the latter two finish in the top four.

**SPURS SURGE TOWARD EUROPA**  
Whoever misses out on the Champions League between United, Chelsea and



Manchester United's Marcus Rashford, Paul Pogba and Bruno Fernandes during team's warm-up session ahead of Premier League game against West Ham United

Man Utd/Twitter

Leicester will be guaranteed fifth and a place in the Europa League next season.

Wolves are looking to go one better than their fine first campaign back in the top-

flight last season by finishing in the top six and have the potential to upset Chelsea's push for the Champions League at Stamford Bridge.

However, any slip from

Nuno Espirito Santo's men would give Spurs the chance to move into sixth.

Jose Mourinho's side have won their last three and will be confident ahead of a trip to

Crystal Palace, who have lost their last seven games.

Seventh could still be good enough for European football next season, but that depends on Chelsea beating Arsenal in

the FA Cup final on August 1.

## RELEGATION DOGFIGHT

At the bottom, two of Bournemouth, Watford and Villa will join already relegat-



ed Norwich in the Championship next season. Villa have the upper hand with a three-point lead on Bournemouth and a marginally better goal difference than Watford.

Dean Smith's men also have momentum after a 1-0 win over Arsenal on Tuesday and travel to a West Ham side now sure of their place in the Premier League next season.

"Results went our way in the week and we're above the dotted line at the moment," said Smith. "The most important thing is to be above that dotted line

on Sunday and we know we have to win to guarantee that."

Watford's sacking of Nigel Pearson with just two games of the season remaining did the Hornets little good in a 4-0 thrashing at the hands of Manchester City on Wednesday and they travel to Arsenal needing to better Villa's result.

Should both lose then Bournemouth could extend their five-season stay in the top-

flight by beating Everton at Goodison Park.

"The next game is the biggest game of all our careers," said Bournemouth boss Eddie Howe.

PL Match Day 38  
Live from 8:30pm IST  
STAR SPORTS SELECT

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RACE

### TABLE AFTER 37 MATCHES

| Pos | Teams          | Points | GD  |
|-----|----------------|--------|-----|
| 3   | Man United     | 63     | +28 |
| 4   | Chelsea        | 63     | +13 |
| 5   | Leicester City | 62     | +28 |

### How Leicester can qualify?

**Fixture:** Man United (H)  
For the Foxes to be assured of a place in the Champions League next season, they need to beat Manchester United at the King Power stadium.

A defeat would end their chances but if they draw the game, they will need Wolves to beat Chelsea at Stamford Bridge to ensure qualification for the Champions League.

### How Manchester United can qualify?

**Fixture:** Leicester City (A)  
Manchester United need just a draw to ensure qualifi-

cation for next season's Champions League, while a win over Leicester in the final game will secure a third-place finish for the Red Devils.

A draw will mean United would need to hope Chelsea don't win their game against Wolves to finish third.

A loss would mean Europa League football at Old Trafford next season unless Chelsea lose to Wolves, a result that will see United qualify despite coming unstuck at Leicester.

Even if United finish outside the top four, they can gain entry into next season's Champions League by winning the Europa League this season.

### How can Chelsea qualify?

**Fixture:** Wolves (H)

Chelsea just need a point at home to Wolves to seal Champions League football, but should Frank Lampard's men lose, then a draw between Leicester and United would see the latter two finish in the top four.

However, the Blues could still qualify for the Champions League if they lose and Manchester United beat Leicester at the King Power stadium. But, a Leicester City win and a Chelsea loss would spell the end of the London side's Champions League hopes as United would then remain ahead on goal difference.



## EUROPA LEAGUE RACE

### TABLE AFTER 37 MATCHES

| Pos | Teams     | Points | GD  |
|-----|-----------|--------|-----|
| 6   | Wolves    | 59     | +13 |
| 7   | Tottenham | 58     | +14 |

### How can Wolves qualify?

**Fixture:** Chelsea (A)  
Nuno Espirito Santo's men must win to ensure qualification for the Europa League. Any slip up — a draw or a loss — would give Spurs the chance to move into sixth if they beat Crystal Palace at Selhurst Park.

Tottenham would also qualify with a draw if Wolves lose to Chelsea. But a draw against the Blues would mean Spurs would need to beat Palace to sneak into the sixth place. If both Wolves and Spurs lose, Santo's side would make the Europa League. Wolves can make it to

Europa League even if they finish seventh if Chelsea beat Arsenal in the FA Cup final on August 1.

### How can Tottenham qualify?

**Fixture:** Crystal Palace (A)  
A win could still be good enough for European football next season, if Wolves fail to win at Stamford Bridge.

If Wolves lose, Mourinho's side would need just a point to finish sixth. A defeat for Spurs would mean they finish seventh.

However, Spurs could still enter the Europa League if they finish seventh if Chelsea beat Arsenal in the FA Cup final and deny the Gunners a continental spot that will then go to the team in the seventh position in the league.



## SURVIVAL RACE

### TABLE AFTER 37 MATCHES

| Pos | Teams       | Points | GD  | Goals scored |
|-----|-------------|--------|-----|--------------|
| 17  | Aston Villa | 34     | -26 | 40           |
| 18  | Watford     | 34     | -27 | 34           |
| 19  | Bournemouth | 31     | -27 | 37           |

### How can Aston Villa survive?

**Fixture:** West Ham (A)  
A win will guarantee safety for Villa if Watford fail to win at Arsenal.

If Watford win at the Emirates, Villa would have to either match or better Watford's winning margin against West Ham. Draw for both teams would see Villa remain in the Premier League next season.

A defeat for Villa would leave them in danger of going down but they could be bailed out by results elsewhere if Bournemouth fail to beat Everton or Watford lose by a margin that's not better than that Villa's by two clear goals. A one-goal goal difference swing in favour of Watford would put the two teams level on goal difference but Villa would survive on virtue

of more goals scored.

### How Watford can survive?

**Fixture:** Arsenal (A)  
The Hornets will survive if they better Villa's result but in case both teams win or lose, Watford will have to make sure there is a two-goal swing in their favour as far as the goal difference is concerned to stay in the top flight.

### How can Bournemouth survive?

**Fixture:** Everton (A)  
For Bournemouth the situation is clear. They must win to harbour any hopes of survival and hope both Villa and Watford lose their respective games. A point for either side would end Bournemouth's Premier League stint even if they beat Everton at Goodison Park.

# Neymar wins French Cup for PSG Ings hopes goal rush leads to England recall



PSG's captain Thiago Silva, center, and his teammates lift French Cup winners trophy

AFP ■ PARIS

Neymar scored the winning goal as Paris Saint-Germain defeated 10-man Saint-Etienne 1-0 in the French Cup final on Friday, the first competitive fixture in the country since March 11 following coronavirus pandemic.

However, coach Thomas Tuchel faces an anxious wait over the fitness of Kylian Mbappe ahead of next month's Champions League quarter-final against Atalanta after the France star limped off in tears during the first half with an ankle injury.

The World Cup winner was later seen emerging from the tunnel on crutches following a dreadful challenge that resulted in the dismissal of Saint-Etienne captain Loic Perrin.

"Everyone is worried. Everyone who saw the foul is worried. Of course I'm worried," said Tuchel.

PSG secured the first of a potential three trophies this summer, claiming a record-extending 13th French Cup with the League Cup final against Lyon to come next Friday before the resumption of their European campaign in Portugal.

The final at the Stade de France was the first official match in one of Europe's top football nations to allow fans to attend since March, albeit in severely restricted numbers with just 2,805 spec-

tators — including French President Emmanuel Macron — inside the 80,000-seater venue.

PSG had racked up 20 goals without reply in three friendlies building up to the final, but Yvann Macon's crunching tackle on Neymar in the first minute suggested no such goodwill would be afforded by Saint-Etienne in their first Cup final appearance since 1982.

Bouanga twice forced Navas to turn away while Moulin produced a sensational one-handed stop to tip over from Di Maria, earning plaudits from the Argentine himself.

Saint-Etienne's hopes of fighting back were hampered midway through the first half though when the veteran Perrin, on likely his final appearance for the club, was sent off for a dreadful challenge on Mbappe. He required lengthy treatment

The challenge set the tone for a fractious opening period and Denis Bouanga was inches from firing Saint-Etienne ahead when his strike rebounded back off Keylor Navas's left-hand post.

### NEYMAR SLAMS HOME

Unfazed by that scare, PSG led on 14 minutes as Mbappe burst into the area after an exchange with Di Maria and Neymar crashed home the rebound via the underside of the crossbar after a fine save from Moulin.

Bouanga twice forced Navas to turn away while Moulin produced a sensational one-handed stop to tip over from Di Maria, earning plaudits from the Argentine himself.

Saint-Etienne's hopes of fighting back were hampered midway through the first half though when the veteran Perrin, on likely his final appearance for the club, was sent off for a dreadful challenge on Mbappe. He required lengthy treatment

but was forced off after his right ankle was trapped between the legs of Perrin, whose yellow card was upgraded to red following a VAR review. Emotions boiled over with five players booked in the aftermath following an ugly melee, but the greater concern for PSG will be the severity of Mbappe's injury.

The France star reappeared from the tunnel on crutches in the second half, with less than three weeks before PSG's Champions League tie against Atalanta on August 12. Moulin kept Saint-Etienne in with a remote shot of ending their 43-year wait for a seventh French Cup title, repelling Mauro Icardi and Di Maria before spreading himself superbly to deny Pablo Sarabia.

The goalkeeper even raced forward for a late corner but PSG held firm to atone for last year's defeat in the final by Rennes on penalties, clinching the trophy for the fifth time in the past six seasons.

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defender clearly looked worried when Mbappe writhed on the ground. He accompanied Mbappe as he walked off the field.

Saint-Etienne sent Mbappe's best wishes for a speedy recovery in a Tweet on Saturday, to which the France star responded positively.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini also wished Mbappe well.

# Ings hopes goal rush leads to England recall

**SOUTHAMPTON:** Saints striker Danny Ings is confident that his goal-scoring exploits this season will be rewarded with an England recall as he looks to add to the one cap he received back in 2015.

Ings, who joined Southampton on a permanent deal from Liverpool at the start of the season after spending the previous campaign on loan at the club, has scored 24 goals in all competitions this season.

The 28-year-old's sole international appearance came in 2015 against Lithuania but his form this season means he is in contention to be called up to Gareth Southgate's England squad

for UEFA Nations League games against Iceland and Denmark in September.

"I don't think I'd ever want to be that one-cap man," Ings, who was handed his England Under-21 debut by Southgate in 2013, told the Times.

"Once you've dipped your toe in, you want more and more. To be in the position now with good form, it gives me great confidence that hopefully one day I can be among that group again."

Ings' Liverpool career was derailed by a series of serious injuries, which limited him to 14 league appearances in three seasons, but he has blossomed under Saints boss Ralph Hasenhuetl this season. AP

## Mbappé has less than 3 weeks to recover for Atalanta game

**Paris:** Paris Saint-Germain star Kylian Mbappé has less than three weeks to recover from a heavily sprained ankle in order to face Atalanta in the Champions League quarterfinals.

PSG said in a short statement on Saturday that Mbappé's "serious right ankle sprain" will be reevaluated in three days after further tests.

"It just cracked a bit," Mbappé told French President Emmanuel Macron after the final, as PSG players were about to collect their medals.



PSG's Kylian Mbappe walks using crutches after being injured after the French Cup final match

Perrin's foul was badly timed rather than malicious, and the veteran

defender clearly looked worried when Mbappe writhed on the ground. He accompanied Mbappe as he walked off the field.

Saint-Etienne sent Mbappe's best wishes for a speedy recovery in a Tweet on Saturday, to which the France star responded positively.

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini also wished Mbappe well.

## Milan hurt Atalanta's title hopes

However, they were a goal down after just 14 minutes on Friday thanks to a well-judged free-kick from Hakan Calhanoglu.

Milan, who were on a run of three successive wins in the league, were indebted to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma for saving a weak 24th-minute penalty from Ruslan Malinovskyi.

However, Duvan Zapata brought the visitors level 10 minutes later.

Matteo Gabbia failed to clear and Colombian forward Zapata pounced to equalise.

Milan stay sixth in the table, one point behind Roma and on course for a Europa League spot next season.

Meanwhile, Crotona became the second club to be promoted to Serie A after Benevento thanks to a 5-1 win over Livorno.

Promotion was guaranteed after rivals Spezia could only draw 0-0 at Cremonese. AP

## Fuenlabrada report 12 new cases

**Madrid:** The Spanish second-division club at the center of a coronavirus outbreak said on Saturday it had 12 new cases, taking the total to 28 infections among players and staff.

Madrid-based Fuenlabrada also said that two more people who had been in close contact with the team have also tested positive.

Four of the new infections are in Madrid, while the other eight are among the squad and staff that have been isolated this week in a hotel in La Coruña. The team had traveled to play a final-round match at Deportivo when the outbreak was detected.

The Spanish league canceled the match between Fuenlabrada and Deportivo when the outbreak was detected only hours before kickoff on Monday. The results of the final round meant Deportivo was relegated to the third division. AP

# 'I am busier than ever'

## What is Kanyadaan about?

The play was written in 1979-80 by Vijay Tendulkar. The inspiration and idea came on the basis of an incident that took place at a close family friend's home. Though a lot of people misunderstand it and treat it as a play about Dalit politics, the play is a slightly pessimistic view of an overtly idealistic behaviour in the world. The main protagonist of the play is not the *kanya* but her father with Gandhian views with a reformist at heart. He believes in eradicating caste system via Gandhian principle of sacrificing oneself. His daughter has imbibed her father's views as well and comes across a Dalit boy and falls in love with her father's ideas and in turn him.

## Talktime

JOY SENGUPTA

The actor, who shot to fame with Hazaar Chaurasi Ki Maa and went on to do films like Hate Story and Shakal Pe Mat Ja, will now be seen in Zee Theatre's Kanyadaan to air on ZEE5. The actor speaks with Shalini Saksena about his journey and how showing stage plays on

## What is your role?

I play the Dalit boy from the lowest caste in Maharashtra — Mahar — who in the post-Independence India manages to get educated.

He is a political Dalit activist and rising up in power — equal to other lower caste. Despite his ambition to rise up, when he comes to the girl's house all his complexes — of class and caste — rise up.

## How did you come onboard for the project?

This play has existed for sometime now. It came into prominence when Sadashiv Amrapurkar directed it and had played the Dalit boy and Shiram Lagoo had played the father. In fact, Amrapurkar got Govind Nihalani's *Ardh Satya* due to this role. When the play was about to go on the floor, a lot of people said that it was violent and others said it was too dark as the audience, largely made up of higher class, when they watch the caste conflict, it disturbs them because it shows them in a disturbing light. However, the play has been much appreciated for many reasons. First, the audience is gripped in conflict. Second due to the drama in it. Three due to extreme emotions. Finally, the family concept that comes into play here.

## You are part of Dance Like A Man. What is it about?

It is an Indian play in English about an artist finding his way in the society in the 60s. A society that was more into nation building needing engineers and doctors rather than an artist — a Bharatnatyam dancer who fights

gender bias and tries to find space for himself and that political freedom is not enough there is a question of personal freedom as well.

## Theatre is all about live shows that people can watch. Is showing them on OTT platforms a good option?

It is a necessary option. When you are live, you end up playing at one theatre with say maybe 500 people as an audience. But there may be a lot more people who are interested in theatre but will never get to watch this play. The OTT platform is a great way to reach out to all those people who are keen to see good plays but don't have access to them. Second, there are so many people who are not exposed to theatre but due to OTT, they are getting to watch newer content when they come across a play being shown and may end up enjoying it.

## Do you think that OTT platforms are the future of entertainment?

It has already become one. People are so mobile today, before the lockdown. Unlike earlier, where people would wait for the next episode to air. Now, a person travelling, he has the option to watch a show or a movie at a time convenient to them. For the OTT platform, they have a diverse audience, diverse generation, diverse classes and diverse content where one can have an

*Aarya, Made in Heaven and Mirzapur*. Now, they are supporting Originals as well even though going to the theatre is an experience in itself but our daily lives are getting fractured, our watching has also become fractured.

## From Bollywood to theatre to Bengali cinema, how has the journey been thus far?

It has been fantastic. I never realised that in my 25th year I would be this busy. I followed the simple idiom of not going with the plan but going honestly, with instinct and lending my time in creating a stage with my kind of acting which is not the big Bollywood aspirational. Yet to do projects that are content and character driven and slightly artistic. This particular genre has been kind to me. I have done Bollywood, did TV, moved to Bengali cinema and did international projects as well that were in English but with Indian content. I worked in European TV as well. I also teach and take classes on theatre appreciation.

## Are you at a stage in your career where you can say you call the shots?

It has been like this from the beginning. I have never had a manager. My work has given me more work. My first film happened because Govind Nihalani had seen me in a play.



Rakshabandhan is just round the corner. However, the excitement is not the same. With people avoiding all kinds of travel due to the pandemic, the festival this time will definitely give different feel to many, says MUSBA HASHMI



## FEELING OF FESTIVITY

Friendly banter, that can sometimes turn into ugly fights, putting each other into the most embarrassing situations and the unending argument about who is the adopted one, are the foundation stones of a brother-sister relationship. No matter how ugly things can turn between the two, but the moment someone tries to hurt them, siblings are there for each other acting as a shield.

A song that was specially made to cherish the bitter-sweet relationship, *bhaiyya morey rakhi ke bandhan ko nibhaana*, sounds as fresh till date. However, with Coronavirus' raging fury which has disrupted every aspect of life world over, let alone the festival, getting back normalcy seems a difficult milestone for the human race.

It goes without saying that the essence of festivals has faded away, with friends and family hesitating to pay a visit to their loved ones, a festival is now just like any other day for many. Such is the case with Rakshabandhan, this year. Sending *rakhis* to your brother via courier is not something new, but was never considered the new normal.

"My elder brother, Himanshu, lives in Australia. Celebrating rakshabandhan together was a ritual. In fact, his week-long stay at home was in itself a festival for us. But this time, he couldn't fly back to India for obvious reasons. Though, I will be sending him a *rakhi*, but that will not fill the void. This is the first time when I would not be tying *rakhi* on his wrist myself. Not to mention, there will be no fight for my gift too. The festival this time will definitely feel incomplete," a 21-year-old, disheartened sister, Riya Middha, says.

Middha is not an exception. Many people are now preferring to stay back and instead courier *rakhis* to their

## SAY IT WITH STYLE

### FOOD TRAILS RAKHI BY FERNSNPETALS



These cute little mouthwatering delicacies in the form of *rakhis* are exclusively handcrafted, bringing to your loved ones the flavors of food. Made with Thai clay, each piece takes three days to be ready. Offering in menu everything — from soft-melting *gulab jamun* and ever favourite *kaju katli* to *paneer tikka* to North-Indian *parantha* with *lassi* to classic South Indian *sambar dosa* to Punjabi *dal-makhni nan* to yummy burgers, sandwiches and crispy Lays. These *rakhis* have embedded magnets in the pieces so that every time your brother opens the fridge door, the pieces would recall your everlasting sibling love.

### GOLDEN RAKHI BY DHANVI DIAMONDS



A gorgeous *rakhi* that displays the special traditions, embellished with silver, golden & red stone will make the festival more special and eye-catching. If your brother loves gold and you are searching for a pretty rakhi, then you can surely go with this option.

### EDIBLE RAKHI

#### INGREDIENTS QUANTITY

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| Fondant        | 150gms  |
| White Compound |         |
| Chocolate      | 160gms  |
| Dark Compound  |         |
| Chocolate      | 160 gms |
| Oil            | 1 tbs   |

Food Grade colours (blue,yellow, green) Few drops For Decoration  
Sugar sprinkle Gems  
Silver balls Oreo cookies



**Method:** ■ Divide the fondant into equal portions and add food colors to have respective colourful fondants and keep them aside.  
■ In the mean time, melt both white and dark compound chocolate separately, by adding little oil to them. After that we spread them on parchment paper and allow to set.  
■ Now take the colour fondants and with the help of different cutters make stars, flower, straps and disc out the fondants.  
■ Now once both the chocolate spreads are set, with the help of cutter make disc

out of them.  
■ Now assemble the edible *rakhi* by taking one colour chocolate disc as a base, and placing the other color disc over it and finally putting the third disc over it made up of fondant.  
■ Decorate *rakhis* with fondant flowers, stars, gems, sugar sprinkle and silver balls as per your choice.  
■ Finally place the assembled *rakhis* over the colorful straps made from fondant. Your edible *rakhis* are ready to serve.

Courtesy: Chef Rubal Punjeja, The Samrat, New Delhi

brothers. Pawan Gadia, CEO, online and retail, Ferns N Petals, India, UAE & Singapore, tells you that as compared to last year, the site has seen a 50 per cent surge in customers. "We didn't anticipate such a surge in our customers, given the situation this year. However, due to the pandemic a lot of people are now buying *rakhis* online and getting it delivered to their brother's place. There's

still a week to go for the festival and we are now anticipating more delivery requests and accordingly we are restocking our warehouses," he tells you. He tells you that the brand doesn't only deliver *rakhis* in India but abroad too and the demand this year has grown manifold. "This time there is a huge surge in customers who want the *rakhis* to be delivered in other countries too, mostly in the US, followed by UK,

launched personalised *rakhi* app, for which we have got around 1000 orders and expecting to get 3000 orders for the same by end of the *rakhi* season," he tells you. He adds that the brand doesn't only deliver *rakhis* in India but abroad too and the demand this year has grown manifold. "This time there is a huge surge in customers who want the *rakhis* to be delivered in other countries too, mostly in the US, followed by UK,

Singapore, UAE and a couple of others," he tells you. The reason being no international flights in place, and even if they will many people will hesitate to fly given the situation.

Given the cost conscious customers of the brand, the cost of the *rakhis* start at ₹300, delivered to your brother's place across any country and in less than ₹700, one can have the *rakhis* delivered in couple of countries in the world.

Not only *rakhis*, but people are opting to send a range of other products along with *rakhis* just to give a special feel to the festival, even if they are not together.

"Personalised gifts are in trend. It is something that many people are buying along with *rakhis*," Gadia tells you.

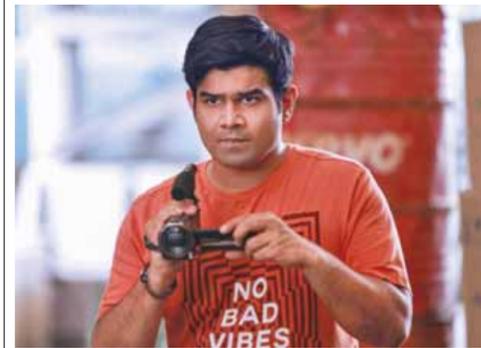
The high statistics of people buying and getting the *rakhis* delivered online are enough evidence to prove how different the festival will be this year. More so, when a simple *kalawa rakhi* which once costed just ₹20 is now selling at not less than ₹50.

Another saddened sister, Jyoti Pandey, who too can't visit his brother in Baroda, says that though the festival is not the same this year, she is trying to make it as special as possible.

"In the wake of the pandemic, I don't find it a good idea to travel all the way to Baroda from Mumbai. Therefore, I have sent a personalised *rakhi* to my brother and to make him feel more special and that he is not alone, I will be sending some customised gifts as well.

Also, we are planning to get on a video call on rakshabandhan and then follow our customs. Though it will not suffice, still through technology we can feel that we are together," Pandey asserts.

## 'Sushant has set an example for me'



MUSBA HASHMI chats up SAHIL VAID about his role in Dil Bechara, memories that he has of Sushant and what does acting mean to him, among other things

### What is your role in Dil Bechara?

I play Jagdeep Pandey aka JP. He is Manny's (played by Sushant Singh Rajput) best friend. The role is actually very different from Isaac from *The Fault In Our Stars*, but the fact that he too suffers from the same disease — optical lymphoma. JP hails from Patna and is an aspiring Bhojpuri filmmaker, but the fact that his eye is damaged and he is on the verge of losing the other eye too, makes him start working on his film without opting for a professional course in filmmaking. More so, because he didn't have any time for the same. He casts Manny as the hero and were then looking for a heroine, which he finds in Kizlie (played by Sanjana Sanghi).

### The best part about playing JP.

I was extremely excited when I heard about the part. JP somewhere defies what I am as a professional. I am a trained filmmaker, I went to a film school and I am someone who has watched world cinema. Developing the love for Bhojpuri cinema with a lot of conviction, was something that I had to imbibe in me because I have never watched Bhojpuri films that much. When I was preparing for this, I used to listen to *Rinkiya Ke Papa* and *Lipstick* a lot. And the best part was that I fell in love with the songs. Even when I did *Badrinath Ki Dulhania*, I didn't get to explore the Bhojpuri cinema. We were trying to make it a pan India film, so I just had to get the accent and the attitude right. Here too we have tried that, but I got to explore more depths.

### The memories of Sushant that you have from the sets of the film.

There are so many. If I cite one memory, the other would feel offended. Every memory that I have of *Dil Bechara* is just beautiful. This was my first time working with Sushant and unfortunately it became the last. The one thing that I always will remember is that he tried to include everyone on the sets, so that no one should ever feel left out. Be it the production assistant or the spot boys, and everyone with whom usually the actors don't even interact with. I have been a second lead in many films, I have seen it takes a lot of heart for someone to be very less actor and include and engage with everyone on the sets and Sushant did it. He even invited the light and the spot boys to a party. It is something that I have taken away from him. Not that I didn't see the contribution these people make in a film's success, but sometimes we just look for validation since I am also very new in the industry. I probably needed an example and Sushant set that for me.

### You have talked about how Humpty Sharma Ki Dulhania will always be close to your heart. What makes it so?

If you would ask me how I got that film, I would have said I have no clue. But then there are many reasons that makes it special. Shashank (Khaitan) and I have done a play together and then he went on becoming an assistant director for *Ishaqzaade*. I had left acting and I fell back on my media education and became a program producer. I was shooting a brain surgery for Nat Geo when I got a call from the team asking: *Ek badi si picture mein, ek chota sa role hai. Karega?* I said, by all means. Then I had to take few days leave and go to Mumbai for the auditions. The first audition was so bad that Shashank called me and said: *Yeh kya ganda audition diya hai tune*. Then I gave the audition again. Shashank called me again to his office. Until then, I was thinking that he must be the assistant director of the film and for old time's sake he is auditioning me. When I reached there, he told me that Sahil it is not working out at all and that you should go back to Delhi and I nodded. It was then when he stood up and told me that I have got the film. I thought that: *Iskey paas authority bhi hai ya nahi mujhe finalise karne ki*, then I saw the script and it said directed by Shashank Khaitan. That's how it happened.

### How do you define acting?

If you would have asked this question six years ago, I would have told you all fancy things about it. But now, I would say if you pick up the dictionary, infact I tell this to my students too, that there is a word 'act', which means to do. It is as simple as that. Acting is to do. When you ask me what, then it is there in the script and how, then however the director says. And in the process you have to make it as realistic as possible and all of that comes with practise and research. An actor's job is limited to that. Acting is not about having good looks. Whatever your character demands, you just have to work hard and look like that. *Super 30* is an answer to this. There is nothing called a method in acting, but at the same time you need to apply lots of methods too.

## STRIKES THE RIGHT NOTE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

If you enjoyed watching *Uri: The Surgical Strike* and want more of the same then *Avrodh: The Siege Within* is right up your alley. The trailer of the web series that goes live on SonyLiv on July 31, 2020 is based on Rahul Singh and Shiv Aroor's book, *India's Most Fearless* and is directed by Raj Acharya. From the trailer, the series promises to be just as intriguing and thrilling. While almost all of India knows what happened during the Uri surgical strikes, *Avrodh*... goes a step forward — it is a detailed authentic account of a covert mission that was tasked to the Indian Army following the Uri

attack and the planning behind it.

The series opens with Shailesh Malviya played by Neeraj Kabi, who plays the role of National Security Advisor. He is known to be a trigger-happy politician, having served R&AW and been a journalist, Malviya understands the world of security and its image from within. His dialogue: "Let us show the world that India is not just the land of Mahatma Gandhi but also Shubhash Chandra Bose," is worth a million. More so, given the rising international pressure, the Indian Army showed extraordinary courage, heroism, and fearlessness under hostile conditions.



Who are the men of courage on the frontline? Major Videep, played by Amit Sadh, is a special force commander, who is leading the mission. Coming from an army background he always craved to join the force and is furious yet balanced in his reaction. In the

series, he uses his knowledge, patience and resourceful planning will be worth watching. When Sadh had shared the trailer, he had tweeted: "I dedicate this to u, Dad. For u & all Indians, I bring to u #Avrodh. We heard about it, read about it, & saw things, but do we

know everything? Was it as simple as it seemed? Or did this require strategic planning, precise execution, & daring decision-making? I was truly amazed!" He had also gone on to say that the web series is a different narrative than the movie because the format is different and in *Avrodh*... they had more hours and hence were able to go into the details and complexities.

Darshan Kumaar plays Major Raunak Gautam. He is from the Bihar Regiment and is a sentimental yet determined soldier. A family man, who is unable to meet his daughter, loses his best friend to the attack. How he comes on board the final mission and takes the

revenge of his friend's murder will definitely be interesting.

The other characters that will keep one interested in the series are Madhurima Tuli who plays Namrata Joshi, a senior reporter with a news channel. She is feisty and has a quest for truth. Does she succeed in knowing it and how does she bring it in public is something that her character will keep one hooked.

And then there is Vikram Gokhale who plays Prime Minister. He makes an unprecedented decision and stands behind it till the very last moment. The other stellar cast includes names like Anant Mahadevan, Arif Zakaria, Pavail Gulati and Abu Hafeez.

I've never played someone where I felt it was beneficial to build from the outside in  
— Emma Stone



FROM THE INSIDE

**Life and times of Suralakshmi**  
Aruna Chakravarti's latest novel contains messages of significance for discerning readers of contemporary India

2



4

**Existence is God**  
There is system in place engaged in uninterrupted creativity, which has been driving the world in an autopilot mode



**SLEEP & SCHEDULE**

**SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO STAYING HEALTHY**

Set realistic expectations of yourself and your schedule. Do what is possible over trying to do it all, writes **SIMRUN CHOPRA**, as she suggests ways to reclaim good health and joy in these stressful times

**E**ver realised it's nearly dinner time and you haven't had your shower? With lockdowns ahead of many of us in the country, pressure of working from home and schools starting with the online classes, everyone is doubling up as parent, teacher, entertainer, cleaner, chef and not to forget employee. Juggling so many roles can be daunting and leave you feeling frustrated and out of control.

The mind is a powerful thing and when it feels out of control, disoriented, everything around you seems to fall apart. You feel like you are drowning in responsibilities somehow grabbing at straws to stay afloat. What you need instead is a life jacket. Let me throw you one.

What if you are unable to check your frustration and that feeling of having lost all control? What if, at the end of the day, you truly feel productive, like you achieved something? How do you tackle such extreme swings?

**TIME MANAGEMENT**

Let's begin with something that we largely remain unaware of or take for granted — our time. In particular, let's look at our priorities and how we should manage our time.

Start with a SIMple exercise to improve awareness — Time Diary. Grab a paper, spreadsheet or whatever you like and a clock. The stopwatch on your phone will work fine. Now, write down how you spend your day from waking to sleeping. Note down every action including time spent on the phone, throne or social media. Time that you spend drinking tea, chopping, cooking or cleaning up.

We are looking for time "suckers" or energy wasters — Where is my time going? Where do I waste time? Woah, do I really scroll through my phone for 40 minutes on the pot? Find your time suckers and remove them.

Ask yourself — what can I do less of, so that I can do more of the things that matter to my physical and mental well being?

With an active social media presence myself, I ensure I have a time slot for each activity because without it, I will get sucked down the rabbit hole.

We are not in a contest; we are not trying to come out of this with a doctorate in UI design. If you are safe and healthy you are doing a great job.

Ideally aim for three big to-do items a day. Three must dos and if you finish them, then do some more. Setting realistic expectations of yourself and others is imperative to your mental well-being at the moment.

**HANDLING PARENTHOOD**

In these times, parents, especially mothers, have found themselves overwhelmed and inundated with work. The pressures of raising a child coupled with managing home and work from home office can be a daunting task. Here are a few things that have truly helped me as a full time working mother.

- Batch Cooking. Cooking for multiple meals simultaneously saves times and energy.
- One pot meals make cooking simple and quick. You don't need a buffet spread at each meal.
- Listing out your three top to-do items right at the beginning of the day. Setting a goal helps one stay focussed.
- 10 minutes of quiet me-time. Use this time to relax and do nothing. Works as a great recharge.
- Delegate. Get your spouse, children, family, partner, roommate or any human you can find, to share the workload. If you cook, someone else can clean. If you iron, someone else can fold.
- Don't compare. If someone says they are acing this time, that's great. But that is not your life and not your circumstances. So, don't compare what's happening in your life with that of the others or for that matter, anything. You do you.
- Be kind to yourself. Speak to yourself as you would to your best friend. We often judge ourselves harshly. Know this is the best way that you can handle.
- See if you can add 15 minutes of something important while removing 15 minutes of something unimportant. You'd be surprised to know how wasteful our mind/certain habits can be.

**SLEEP MANAGEMENT**

My top tip to staying fresh, sorted and in control of the game is a good night's sleep!

One of the biggest reason for people struggling with weight issues, feeling low and slow in general, is lack of adequate sleep.

Here are some of the signs that indicate you are not getting enough rest:

- Your mind feels unclear maybe even a bit



**DON'T COMPARE. IF SOMEONE SAYS THEY ARE ACEING THIS TIME, THAT'S GREAT. BUT THAT IS NOT YOUR LIFE AND NOT YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES. SO, DON'T COMPARE WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE WITH THAT OF THE OTHERS OR FOR THAT MATTER, ANYTHING. YOU DO YOU**

foggy. Think reduced alertness, confusion, forgetfulness.

- You feel low or not happy. Maybe you are feeling more stressed, low in terms of mood. When we sleep we repair and regenerate and not getting enough of sleep starts to show up quickly.
- You are more susceptible to illnesses, viruses, bacteria. Something you do not want right now.
- Low energy, lower reaction time, lethargy...

Some of these can also be indicators of vitamin deficiencies, but before you run out to get tested, try getting in more sleep. Aim to get in at least seven hours of sleep. I know you're possibly thinking: "You have no clue how much work I have". But, let's be honest is working out an assessment. Time dairy is your friend here. All research shows a delayed bedtime is from a voluntary delay — that extended TV time or watching videos online. Unless you are a new parent!

Ideally, aim for the same sleep and waking time. Seven to eight hours is ideal. If you don't think this is priority, think again.

Sleep loss increases your risk of weight gain, insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. Time you paid attention to proper sleep.

**HOLD ON, THERE'S MORE**

A study was conducted on 11 healthy men in their 20s. They were allowed to sleep only four hours per night for six nights continuously. At the end of it, it was found that they had the insulin sensitivity of a 70 year old pre-diabetic! This when only one parameter was changed. While it's a small sample, it is suggestive. The solution is cheap and easy to do.

If you have some trouble falling asleep try some of the measures listed in the chart. See if those help.

Life throws many curve balls at us and 2020 is just one of the many. You just need to learn to hit that ball. It does not have to be a perfect shot and you don't need to hit a six each time. You just need to learn to hit the ball. It's as simple as that.

Set realistic expectations of yourself and your schedule. Do what is possible over trying to do it all. SIMplify where you can, that's all you need right now.

**NOURISH WITH SIM**

- CONSISTENCY**  
Keep a relatively consistent bedtime and wake time. Staying up late and sleeping in on weekends can disrupt your routine during the week.
- LIGHT**  
Keep the bedroom extremely dark, to tell the body's lightsensitive clock that it's time to sleep.
- NOISE**  
Keep the bedroom extremely quiet or use a white noise generator (such as a fan).
- RELAXATION/ROUTINE**  
Develop a pre-bed routine that is relaxing and familiar. Television, work, computer use, movies and deep/stressful discussions late at night can disrupt sleep.
- TEMPERATURE**  
Keep a slightly cool temperature in the room, between 18-22°C.
- STIMULANTS**  
Eliminate stimulants like caffeine/nicotine, especially later in the day.
- EXERCISE**  
It's not only good for a healthier life and big guns, it can help improve sleep.
- FULNESS**  
Eating a dinner that makes you overly full can disturb sleep.

The writer is a Lifestyle and Transformation Coach



OUTSIDE OF A DOG, A BOOK IS MAN'S BEST FRIEND. INSIDE OF A DOG IT'S TOO DARK TO READ — GROUCHO MARX

Aruna Chakravarti's latest novel contains messages for discerning readers. It would make great sense to understand these and their significance for contemporary India, writes RUMKI BASU

# The life and times of Suralakshmi

**S**uralakshmi Villa is Aruna Chakravarti's fourth novel, though the last two, *Jorasanko* and *Daughters of Jorasanko*, were strictly in the genre of bio-fiction. Interestingly, this novel, has evolved from one of the short stories of the collection *Secret Spaces*, published by her in 2010. For the reviewer, reading this novel, as an e-book was quite an interesting experience. Not used to reading e-books, I thought my patience would run out and I would probably finish the novel in a month. But the book sustained my interest throughout, enabling me to complete the reading in three days with some necessary pauses.

The story takes you across back and forth in time to Bengal and Delhi of the British and post independent eras. The referral point is the cultural history of Bengalis (Hindus and Muslims) of that period. Aruna Chakravarti has an abiding interest in historical research which helps her authenticate every detail of the period and times she writes about. Her painstakingly written prose could be read effortlessly by readers because she is a good storyteller and that is what matters in fiction.

The novel has a central narrative, the life and times of Suralakshmi, a lady doctor who is a woman of intellect and substance, a woman empowered. Yet as it often happens, she loses all discretion when she falls in love and drifts towards an unworthy lover, agreeing to be the "second" wife in his large household. How she gets cheated by her husband and ultimately leaves home with Eidun, her protégée, to set up medical practice in a remote corner of North Bengal and what happens thereafter, has been written with insight and empathy. With the central story, there are other characters, whose lives get entangled with the chief protagonist and these sub-plots also find a place through "personal revelations" in the novel.

What is interesting is the space given in the book to rituals, folklore and culinary practices of both Hindus and Muslims woven together in a tapestry that reveals the essentially syncretic nature of Bengal and her people. Aruna's characters are as real as the people we see around us, with their strengths, their failings and their vulnerabilities. There are immensely inspiring stories of those who could cross the threshold from tradition to modernity. Despite its regional ethos, the novel is a microcosm of the India we have lived and known in the last five



Bengal village showing villagers outside thatch houses, bullock cart near roadside by Samuel Bourne (1863). Picture used for representational purposes only

decades. Even overseas readers will be able to relate to this "Indian" story so easily.

Women will like the story, perhaps they will find a feminist message. Some may feel the novel is a bit harsh on its men, like Moinak Sen and Moinuddin. Yet, if you read the novel carefully, the Hindu elite of the period appear to be as flawed as the Muslim men of a lower class, both would take their sense of "social entitlement" with perfect impunity. The younger Hindu men in the novel may be more relatable to younger readers today since generational change is seamlessly woven into the narrative.

Nowhere is the writer judgmental about societal or community values, that was perhaps never the intention. The

characters are not black and white, the complexity of each character is reflected upon and handled deftly, no character is sketched out as entirely predictable. There is a strength and flow in the story that one wants to meander with and like all good novels, the message quietly comes through at the end.

Aruna is a master in recreating and evoking historical periods, her prose is always rich in detail about the atmosphere periodised. The characters are rarely atypical, they live their lives, often trying to escape their destinies. The complex emotional relationships are thrashed out with clarity at times and sometimes leaving tangled webs to the reader's imagination. The writer reaches out to your mind in a lucid, easy, non-preachy

style. *Suralakshmi Villa* is the story of a house and its characters. The book has a huge cast. It tells the story of Rai Bahadur Indranath Choudhury, Suralakshmi's father, Lakshmi Devi her mother, and her four sisters. It also narrates the story of a growing city (Delhi) and the lifestyle of its elite immediately after independence. She engages with Lutyens' Delhi through vivid imagery, her descriptive lens meandering through the calm of this languorous city with its beautiful monuments and gardens. The descriptions of this elegant city and the lifestyles of its "genteel" folk, will remind everyone of how "British" Delhi has always been. The passing of the seasons is described unobtrusively as she moves on with the central

characters and their lives. The complexities of the "Bhadralok" class, trying to fit in with the demands of tradition and modernity, amply reflects "India in transition" in the last fifty years even when the story crosses over from the 20th Century to the next.

This is a novel spanning four decades. Many of us can completely identify with its central values, the dilemmas of its characters and the cultural ethos of its age. Those who have not been a part of the Bengali cultural heritage, its folklore, music and legends may feel a trifle alienated. Though Aruna Chakravarti has always written about Bengal and Bengalis, it didn't restrict her readership to a region. Her earlier novels about the Tagores may have generated a



pan Indian appeal because of the magic of the family name. This story of an upper middle class Bengali household in Delhi (over a span of time) should be no less relatable.

Her portrayal of rural Muslims of Bengal may seem stereotypical at times, but has to be read in context. Moinuddin, Eidun's father maybe a caricature of his class, but Moinak Sen is also representative of the feudal patriarchal Hindu male, a caricature no less. "Tradition" among Hindus and Muslims are sometimes represented by such characters, which highlights their "negative shades. Whether the novel seems to be making statements through them or not, only the author knows best.

Read this latest novel by Aruna Chakravarti as it should be, for a good story and a climactic ending Start reading, and flow with the momentum. It is an engrossing story with a huge cast that will keep you going. For discerning readers, there are messages perhaps. Understand them and their significance for contemporary India.

The reviewer is a Professor at Department of Political Science, Jamia Millia Islamia

## NEW ARRIVALS

**SUHELDEV: THE KING WHO SAVED INDIA**

Amish Westland, ₹399  
A Forgotten Hero. An Unforgettable Battle. India, 1025 AD.

Repeated attacks by Mahmud of Ghazni and his barbaric Turkic hordes have weakened India's northern regions. The invaders lay waste to vast swathes of the subcontinent—plundering, killing, raping, pillaging. Many of the old Indian kingdoms, tired and divided, fall to them. Those who do fight, battle with old codes of chivalry, and are unable to stop the savage Turkic army which repeatedly breaks all rules to win. Then the Turks raid and destroy one of the holiest temples in the land: the magnificent Lord Shiva temple at Somnath. At this most desperate of times, a warrior rises to defend the nation.

**ESTUARY**  
Perumal Murugan Eka, ₹499

Late at night, Kumarasur's phone rings shrilly. His teenage son is calling. What could he want? A seemingly simple demand torments Kumarasur, who fears it might put his finances — and perhaps his son's life—in jeopardy. As a father's anxieties unravel, his memories undermine his self-worth and imaginary scenes of damnation taunt him. *Estuary* brings alive the different ways — absurd and endearing by turns — in which a man and his young son navigate the contemporary world. In the process, it peels back the layers of Kumarasur's loneliness: the hurt of a married man whose wife cares only for the happiness of their child, the endless monotony of an office job, and the struggle of the salaried middle-class to give their children the best chance of success. Perumal Murugan's latest novel, his first in an urban setting, is also a razor-sharp parody of everything from e-commerce to the fitness industry, art appreciation to political manipulation, cram schools to social networks.

# White Crows: a poignant short story

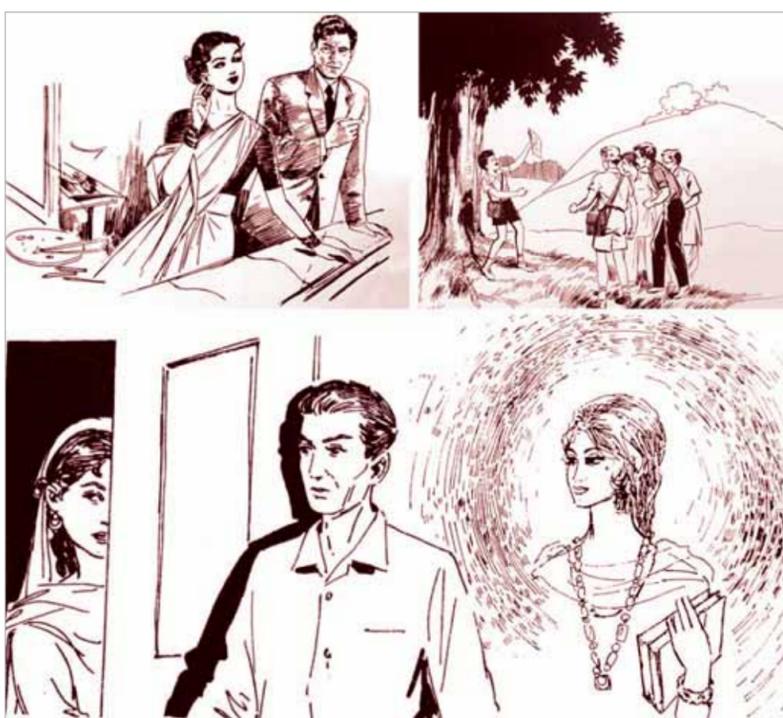
MADAN LALL MANCHANDA's short stories were written mostly for the readers of an earlier generation, have the idiom of the period of the magazines that published them

**I**t is about that year when it rained so heavy that streams flowed turned rivers and rivers into lakes. The water rose up to the edges of houses and trees trunks were totally submerged in water. In the pounding rain storm leaves of the twigs had fallen and the strong shower of rain water had completely rid washed the black colour of the crows that they looked like lovely white pigeons.

All the inhabitants of the valley were focused to leave their homes and take refuge in the nearby hills. Fortunately in those days an old friend of dad had invited us to his daughter's wedding and so we reached Simla. Rain was also wreaking havoc here and leaping down the mountain slopes like water spring.

In wedding buzz we had forgotten everything that what a storm raged in the outside world. I was somewhat wonder struck to see golden bright spangled dresses, and glittering ornaments. Among the countless gifts given in the dowry, I had a great liking for a time piece which was of a lemon size an extremely shining watch, which our host had purchased and brought from Switzerland for her darling daughter.

Among the viewers of the dowry, it attracted first attention of one and all. And Aunty Tabassum, time and again repeatedly and by twisting the key Alarm of this 'Jalrang' sound like sounding time piece, described the defining characteristic of the unique watch. I



was exceedingly captivated by this watch. I turned around many a times and came to see this lovely piece, again and again.

How would this watch look like placed near my head pillow. And how will it help to awaken me every morning with its heart captivating melodious voice. It

created a beautiful painting picture on canvas of my colourful imagination. No sooner Aunty Tabassum was led away hither or Thither, that I at once gave my thought out plot a practical shape and by seizing it kept it protected in the stitched upper flop of my Salwar. And, after sometime, when Aunty

Tabassum came back in the room, and finding the watch missing started looking around in great discomfort. She called little Hazra

"Where is the watch?" "Watch?" Hazara was taken aback with surprise

Aunty 'Tabassum' called 'Chunnu', 'Munnu', 'Shammi' and

'Aslam' turn by turn but all expressed their ignorance.

Slowly and slowly, all the guests gathered in the room. Aunty Tabassum wanted to avert, but on the guest's emphasis, she had to tell about the disappearance of the watch.

All began to look at doubting each other. And were with troubled hearts that how Aunty Tabassum and other members of the host family would think about them. Every guest was worried at heart and on the other hand hosts too were ashamed.

I looked around, whether the people were not looking at me. On being completely assured, I began to walk slowly and to satisfy myself personally, once coughed also for self satisfaction. At once it occurred to me as if the stitched bottom flaps of my Salwar were a bit raised up from my feet. I sat down nervously.

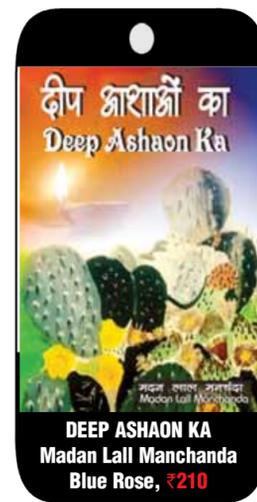
"Bi Razia, do you know something?" Emerged an unfamiliar voice.

"Not so." I answered back somewhat worried "Aji, why do you ask Razia 'poor' Aunty Tabassum expressed her full confidence in my person in keeping with the delicate relationship between guest and host.

"Razia Beta! Who was the other child in the room besides you and Hazra?"

Then the same voice followed me once again. I got nervous and looked around. I could find no answer to make.

"Our Razia is a good daughter." My mother announced my



innocence in the assembled lot. I felt somewhat revived up. But the very next moment the same alarm screamed up from the flaps of my Salwar in choked up voice. I trembled.

All eyes rose up towards me. My Mummy's eyes were aflame issuing sparks. Outside, there was heavy down pour. But I was craving for a drop of water to drown and sink myself deep down and was peeping right and left. Crows sitting on the terrace in front of the window appeared 'White' before my eyes. More than their black coloured feathers was my darker deed.

Deep Ashaon Ka written by Madan Lall Manchanda is published by Blue Rose

# Erdogan's dreams: Ataturk will turn in his grave

The strange goings-on in Turkey have baffled secularists around the world as the nation's judiciary capitulated to the specious argument of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to turn the clock back to 1934 and convert the Hagia Sophia museum into a mosque. The conversion of Hagia Sophia museum, which is not only an architectural masterpiece but also an epitome of Muslims-Christians' shared traditions and unity, is a milestone in Erdogan's purported narrative of reviving the Ottoman-era "superiority" of the Islamic culture and the resultant consolidation of his power.

The conversion of then church-turned-mosque into a museum by a 1934 decree was a modernist idea of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who aimed to erase the sign of religious conversion of an Orthodox Christian cathedral into a mosque by the Islamic Ottomans. Before that Hagia Sophia was the cynosure of Christians as only during and after the Renaissance, bigger churches were constructed. It's this historical baggage, the repurposing of Hagia Sophia is a matter of grave concern for Muslims, Christians.

The secular world, besides religious and political leaders, has voiced their indignation at the conversion of Istanbul's multi-religious heritage into a mosque, with churches in Greece and the USA observing a "day of mourning". While the turn of events in the modern Muslim majority nation, which is geographically and culturally a bridge between the East and the West, has dismayed the world, the move is not an utter surprise if one has kept track of the decisions of President Erdogan.

Starting from his taking up the reins in 2003, Erdogan has taken recourse in various methods to consolidate his power. He started with the



In this photo provided by the Turkish Presidency, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Centre, takes part in Friday prayers in Hagia Sophia, at the historic Sultanahmet district of Istanbul on July 24, 2020 AP

promise of building the nation an economic power. Once hailed for steering Turkey towards rapid economic development, Erdogan is now struggling to deal with shaky finances. His compulsive urge to pursue the Islamist agenda is to sweep those problems under the carpet. In public, Erdogan envisions reviving Turkey's power and influence enjoyed during the Ottoman era. Therefore, he is helping build mosques, financing religious education in foreign countries around the world from Latin America to sub-Saharan Africa. But his real aim remains the same: to stick to

power with public support. It has caused secular voters to lose their ardour for him. According to an opinion poll this month, 43 per cent Turks consider the conversion move a political manoeuvre to gag any discussion on the nation's economic woes. In an unprecedented result, Erdogan bit the dust in last year's municipal elections in two biggest cities, national Capital Ankara and his home turf Istanbul, at the hands of the main Opposition Republican People's Party. This shameful electoral drubbing, along with financial woes, has forced him to look for ways to divert attention of

the general public and lure back conservative Muslim voters. And, the Hagia Sophia decision is his implicit declaration that Islam is the unofficial religion of Turkey. The unspoken declaration spurred a significant section of Turkish society to lambast the Erdogan Government, but the undercurrent among the middle class was elation at the Hagia Sophia conversion. Turkey being the only modern powerful secular country in the Muslim world, the radicalisation process has paid Erdogan the much sought-after dividends. To widen his reach and

influence of Islamist politics and to install himself as a champion of the Ummah, Erdogan takes keen interest in denouncing the world community for its fixated attention on the "Islamic terror" while ignoring terrorism by non-Muslims. His new-found interest in Kashmiri Muslims and Rohingya Muslims can be contrasted with his strong rejection of the historical fact of the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Empire. In fact, for an elected conservative Muslim leader whose popularity is on the wane, it is impossible to resist the morass of popular antipathy towards

non-Islamic symbols. Hagia Sophia was a festering wound for the Islamists who had been pushing for its conversion back to a mosque for decades as they consider the Kemalist secularism only hurt the Islamic culture and Turkish nationalism. Erdogan's decision to convert this ancient church-turned-mosque into a mosque is consequence of that desire to give a death blow to the symbol of that humiliation. And it also serves the political purpose of Erdogan. However, as Turkey is not well linked to the Islamic civilisation and history, nor has it

living evidence of religious relics as seen in the Arab world, Erdogan lacks the natural ability, like that of Saudi Arabian leaders, to claim the leadership of the Muslim world. Therefore, the Hagia Sophia decision aims to weave a new narrative of Islamic traditions, which, in fact, is in contravention of the Islamic values.

Learned Muslims may be aware of the historical truth that medieval Muslim invaders didn't encroach on the places of worship of the People of the book, Christians and Jews. However, Ottomans blatantly flouted the norms. And Erdogan is hell-bent on resurrecting that Ottoman era.

As the world is distraught at the regressive approach of Erdogan, the common refrain is what's next from the Turkish President. However, at this stage, it is difficult to read the tea leaves about what Turkey will become as multiple factors, including domestic political developments, Islamist crisis in the neighbourhood, and geopolitics, play role in shaping up the future events. On the extreme end of that spectrum, the move may trigger competitive narratives of Islamism in Turkey and neighbouring nations who look upon the modern secular Muslim country; it may also convince many Muslim nations that secular-democratic politics is alien to Islamic culture and traditions.

However, considering the resilience of deeply embittered secular Turks, Erdogan's gimmick doesn't guarantee unbridled reign for the neo-Ottoman. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: The results of the next general election will determine whether the Kemalist doctrine of top-down secularism still appeals to the masses.

(The writer is Associate Editor & News Editor, The Pioneer)

Hagia Sophia museum, the epitome of Islamic-Christianity unity in Turkey, has been erased from history by neo-Ottomanism of Erdogan, whose immediate goal is to score points with conservative Islamist voters to consolidate his power. However, in the long run, the recalcitrant Islamists will prove a liability for him



SWARN KUMAR ANAND

## PERSPECTIVE

# Gehlot vs Pilot: Grand Rajasthan game plan

All decisions for State leadership precisely come from Sonia's durbar only. In case of Rajasthan, both Gehlot and Pilot had their own proximity to the High Command, but finally the old guard prevailed over the younger

Rajasthan is facing unprecedented political crisis. From an intra-party feud between the Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, the battle has now travelled from the Rajasthan High Court to the Supreme Court. The two-year-old Congress Government, one of India's largest States, is on the verge of collapse.

Since the formation of the Government, the two leaders, one an old loyalist and other a very ambitious young man, have never been on the same page. Gehlot, an old Gandhi-family loyalist and Pilot, a very close associate of Rahul Gandhi, had always their own game plan to consolidate power and go up the ladder.

Pilot, who helped wrest power from the BJP in the State, expected a bigger role in the governance when the party came to power, being the son of late senior and popular Congress leader Rajesh Pilot.

**Old guard Vs young blood**  
Rajasthan saw a clash between youth leader Pilot and old guard Gehlot. When the Congress came to power in 2018, it was Gehlot, a former CM, who claimed right to the throne as he also worked hard to bring party back to power. Gehlot succeeded in sidelining Pilot, usurping the throne. But dissent was brewing in the party since beginning, with Pilot being made Deputy Chief Minister. The recent crisis which came in the open showed the party in bad light after rebel MLAs raised the banner of revolt.

And as things have gone out of hand, political observers feel that what matters in the Congress is not just work, efficiency and vision, but the link with the High Command: Sonia and her old coterie.



All decisions for State leadership precisely come from Sonia's durbar only. In case of Rajasthan, both Gehlot and Pilot had their own proximity to the Raj, but finally the older one prevailed over the younger. At a time, when the whole world is fighting with a dreaded pandemic called Covid-19, the two-party stalwarts are battling for their supremacy. It's nothing but their ego clash. It is a struggle for the top post in the State. While wrangling for their chairs, both the CM and the ex-Deputy CM have just missed the point that they belong to the same Congress party. And ironically, the person who has just served Gehlot as his Deputy till the other day has been made out to be worthless and a back stabber. Besides, Pilot has invited the ire of all his top party office bearers as he is colluding with the Opposition BJP to topple the Gehlot Government. Interestingly, Pilot is accused of staying in an Opposition-ruled Haryana wherein he may be

conspiring to stage a political comeback with a new "avatar". Who knows what is in his mind? It is certain that after such public humiliation, he will return to the party unless he is assured of the post of the Chief Minister and probably, the safe future for all the rebels who have sided with him for now. The way Sonia has taken the final decision to remove him from the post of the Deputy Chief Minister despite Pilot having close ties with both Rahul and Priyanka, it seems the underlying game plan is much bigger than it seems. Being a young and promising political leader, after the exit of Jyotiraditya Scindia and fall of the Congress Government in Madhya Pradesh, Sonia must have thought it is the right time to axe another competitor to her son in the long race to the Lok Kalyan Marg, formerly known as 7 Race Course Road. First, the Speaker of the Assembly had given show cause notice to Pilot and 18

other MLAs. Then the team Pilot approached the Rajasthan High Court to quash the disqualification notice given to them by the Speaker. The Speaker argued that the court had no jurisdiction to intervene in the proceedings of the House as the former has yet to take a decision. When the High Court asked the Speaker to defer the decision on disqualification on Pilot and the other 18 members, he challenged it in the Supreme Court. But the Supreme Court rejected his plea to stay HC proceedings. And Justice Arun Mishra stated that there is nothing wrong in raising the voice of dissent in a democracy. But then he underlined the fact that the decision of the High Court will be subject to the top court's decision. Now, the High Court has finally said the status quo should be maintained till Monday. Now the Gehlot is bracing for an Assembly session to prove his majority. As of today

he claims to have the support of 101 MLAs, a water thin majority in a House of 200 members. The Opposition BJP has 72 members, but with the Pilot's 19 members, the party will need another 10 MLAs to form the next Government. **Numbers game**  
Now it's a question of numbers game: Who wins or loses will all be determined by the respective number of MLAs only. Most of the leaders in this country in particular and around the globe in general, have hardly bothered about their electorate. Many of them have completely lost their sense of being in power and have also forgotten the fundamental purpose of an elected representative. The Pilot controversy has once again brought the Anti-Defection Law of 1985 to the fore. It is also known as the 52nd Amendment Act passed by adding a new Tenth Schedule to our Constitution during the tenure of then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

This Act came into operation on March 1, 1985. Its main objective was to prevent the scourge of emerging defection across the country that almost paralysed the political parties and existing governments. As per this Act, the seat of an MP or an MLA can fall vacant in case; a) he voluntarily gives up his membership of such political party; b) if he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by the political party he belongs; c) if an independent member joins any political party after his election; d) if a nominated member joins a political party after the expiry of six months from the date he took oath as a member of the House.

But the Act does not apply to: a) party splits: When there is a split in the party and the concerned member belongs to a faction that consists of not less than 1/3rd members of the party; b) when two or more political parties decide to merge by a two-thirds majority of the total strength of the party in the legislature and lastly, c) when a member resigns from a party to take over as the Speaker/Deputy Speaker and Chairman/Deputy Chairman of a House. Most importantly, any decision regarding the defection is to be taken only by the Speaker or Chairperson of the concerned House as the case may be.

His/her decision on disqualification in connection to defection is final and no court has any jurisdiction on such matters.

**Hide and seek by Pilot**  
Now fully knowing well the consequences of the Anti-Defection Law, why the hide and seek is played by Pilot. Either there must be an ulterior motive behind his decision to stay away from now three

crucial meetings called by the Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly or Gehlot must have a concrete plan to dislodge Pilot to remove all his obstacles to continue in power. And a third possibility may be Pilot must be thinking of offering outside support to a BJP-led Government in the State on the event of falling the Gehlot regime.

Whatever it may be, the saddening part of such episodes is simple: the voters' trust on the elected representatives fade away. Also in the absence of a clear cut definition on defection, the malaise continues as of today and will remain at the heart of Indian democracy.

Unfortunately, a few years after passing the Act, we had witnessed the first case of defection in the Nagaland Assembly. But when the Supreme Court delivered its judgment in the Kihota Holothon vs Zachilhn & Others Case 1992, it has underlined that the Speaker's decision on disqualification in such matters is subject to judicial review. The reason behind is that the Speaker while acting under the 10th Schedule is a tribunal and hence his/her decision can come under the court's power of judicial review.

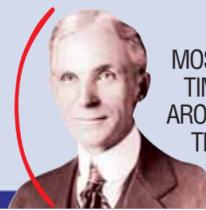
Now the ball is between the SC and the Governor's court. Both can play a critical role. However it all depends how the MLAs switch sides without inviting penalties i.e. disqualification under the 10th Schedule.

At the end, it must be said that it is a dirty game. MLAs are hiding in hotels and resorts. And the populace is just waiting them to deliver services at this pandemic hit situation. Very sad situation!

(The writer is an expert on international affairs)



MAKHAN SAINIA



MOST PEOPLE SPEND MORE TIME AND ENERGY GOING AROUND PROBLEMS THAN IN TRYING TO SOLVE THEM — HENRY FORD



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

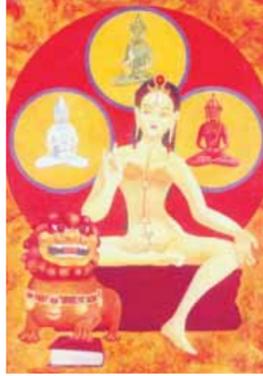
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week anxiety and stress could upset you and cause slight problems in your health. You may experience sleeplessness and over analysing the situation. It is advised to adopt a healthy lifestyle, which would give you enough time for yourself to look after the needs of your body, mind, and soul. Professionally you are doing well. You will generally enjoy positive energy throughout the week. In business, certain financial gains are indicated. This is the time when you least expect and achieve more. You are likely to get in touch with someone you love or admire. Relationships will be redefined with your efforts. You could likely be caught up in the excitement, committing more than you can deliver.

**Lucky number 6**  
**Lucky colour Purple**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week people around you will appreciate you and your efforts and notice the quality of what you do. Keep doing what you're doing as you are on the right track. You don't need to scrap something and start again. Your health is likely to show a positive change, but this is not a result of a miracle, it is your dedication, commitment and disciplined approach to life. On the work front, you set good examples for others to follow. It is a good time to resolve business problems in which you can show pride. It is an excellent time in love. Your partner feels very protective of you. No wonder he/she would go all out to take on those who would try to mistreat you or create differences between you. You command respect and honour in a relationship.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour Brown**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

You will enjoy good health, food and entertainment. Prosperity, progress and happiness will keep your spirits up. You are likely to have several clear flashes of important spiritual insights during this time. It is your determination and a disciplined approach to life that keeps you a stronger and healthier person. You establish yourself wherever you are, whether in business or job. This is the time when your teamwork is being appreciated and acknowledged. Your leadership qualities are being watched and so are your potentials. You are likely to do something commendable in the relationship area this week. After the investment of time, energy and money, things are going well for the person that you have your heart set on.

**Lucky number 17**  
**Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You spread vibrant energy this week amidst a little chaos. Your health and feelings of well-being should be at a high point. This is a great time to take some time off if you can and just enjoy life. If you look back you are likely to find that your attitude has been more positive of late too. This would directly affect how well your body works for you. You may face a set-back or financial loss in business. Things may not be as productive as you thought. You may experience problems at work that may cause concerns regarding your financial security. You may want switch job due to stagnation in growth. Personal relations may not be enriching. You need to check your attitude and know you've reached the point where things will begin to look up.

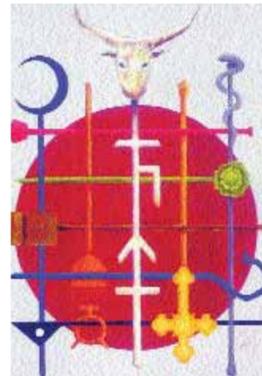
**Lucky number 15**  
**Lucky colour Sky Blue**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week follow the rule of 'Live in the moment and seize the day'. You will be radiating very good energy and good attitude. You must share your good attitude with the people around you who are down or who need this positive energy. A genetic illness that runs in your family is under control any way and stressing about it won't change a thing. Your finances are likely to be on the upswing, largely due to your efforts and wise investments. This is not a time to speculate wildly. You can take calculated risks, but don't get carried away. On love and relationship front, you need to spice up your personal life. Check your appearance, your attitude and lifestyle. Bring some excitement or changes in your lifestyle.

**Lucky number 11**  
**Lucky colour Beige**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

Bring a balance between work and family, body and mind. You are very imaginative and spend a lot of time thinking, dreaming and weaving stories. The desires and passions could increase this week, making you a weak person. Your efficiency may go down. On the work front, the things will keep on moving as per your desires giving you much scope and hopes for the future. Be prepared for a surprise. An important project may be assigned to you; a great responsibility makes you popular with your friends. You may work for the cause and attain immense satisfaction. This week does not predict well in terms of matters of the heart. You may feel emotionally hurt and broken. Love relationships could be disheartening to the extent that you decide to stay alone.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour Peach**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Since you are fun-loving and filled with child-like energy, just don't let your desire for fun make you overlook the real thing should it come your way. You may be accident-prone. Be mindful at the moment and not take silly chances. Though your overall health is likely to be on the upswing but prevention is advised. At work, you are kind, considerate and willing to take responsibility for your actions but in a sensitive, generous manner. This is time to enjoy the quiet power associated with providing loving energy to others. There may be rift at home, or family members have their assumptions and accusations which probably you are not able to solve. Those who are jealous of you won't be able to malign you despite their best efforts.

**Lucky number 19**  
**Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

You may need to create time and space to focus on yourself first, for your health to truly improve. If you are constantly putting everyone before you and before your needs, then your health may suffer as a result. Balance in all things is important. You are just as important as anyone else. This week is good for imagination and creative ideas and it will further be fuelled by friends who you are likely to meet soon. Some old associate or college mate brings concurrent opportunity, to invest time, talent or treasure in something you always wanted to do. You are feeling blessed. Your soft romantic emotions and desires are fulfilled. If you have been in a long-term committed relationship, you are likely to find it rising to deepen and intensify.

**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour Mauve**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week is fabulous health-wise. If you are waiting on test results of some kind, they are likely to be very good. You'll be calm, relieved and inspired. Take good care of yourself. The others need your light of wisdom and your happiness. Give it a chance to shine. You may find things going much better at work, almost out of the blue. A powerful person is likely to support you. This is a good time to ask for a raise. On the whole, your work/career front is looking up. This is a good week for career advancement. You can expect major career progress followed by financial gains now. This week is also good for your personal life as well. You will enjoy good health, charm and personality. Joy and celebrations are on the cards.

**Lucky number 3**  
**Lucky colour Pink**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

Health remains good and you feel energetic. Your mental energies are amplified too, and you involve with ethical behaviour, encouragement or matter of the mind. Your entire situation is one covered with the spirit of learning, discovery and mental activities of all kinds. At such times, use your mind and enjoy the delights of the intellect. At work, you may have more options than you typically think possible. If you're looking for work, know that you have the resources and the skill set to find it. You may be struggling with an issue in a relationship and finding the way to doing the right thing, as you are unsure about what is right for you to do. Know that the answers are within you. This is not the time to be unconventional any more.

**Lucky number 8**  
**Lucky colour Magenta**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week pay attention to your health. Take second, third opinion if you are suffering from a serious ailment. If you're having symptoms that are not specific, educate yourself as much as possible before you walk in the door. You can deepen your spiritual awareness and practice by actively seeking out new sources of information and insight. At work, your expectations are high and have more weightage than your worth. Dreams and high ambitions are good to grow in life but expecting the Moon is not. Stay grounded and practical. Balance in relations is a must. You may have romantic choices at hand. Be clear and specific about what you want, evaluate your choices thoughtfully. You have to bring some desirable changes in you for long term relations.

**Lucky number 18**  
**Lucky colour Silver**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

The theme of balance particularly holds for in terms of health. Energy aimed at balancing your *chakras* or your body/mind/spirit is particularly effective. Paying adequate attention to all three is the key to good health. Your health is in better shape than you fear. On the work front, the week is mixed with positive and negative energies. You have both mental and physical agility. Your versatile and sharpened skills would motivate you to perform outstandingly. This could be a time of sudden personal growth if you use your energies for something meaningful and not involve yourself in petty discussions. It may be a hard time in a relationship. It can be that your beloved is undergoing a rough time that has nothing to do with your relationship but needs your support.

**Lucky number 14**  
**Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Thursday**

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Existence is God

A great majority of people believe in the existence of God, which different philosophies perceive in their own ways. They believe that there exists an eternal reality that creates, sustains and recycles life cycle. Also, administers the whole world, having eyes on our conduct individually and collectively. It is, as if, there exists a reality distant from us, who would judge our conduct and set the terms of our future qualitatively, according as one would deserve.

There are many philosophies that do not subscribe to the concept of God, even of Indian origin such as *Samkhya*, Jainism and Buddhism. The self-acclaimed rationalist just deny the existence, even though they may not be having any philosophy in hand to justify their stand. Many scientists, based on their perception, deny the existence of God. Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinova in their book, "*The Great Design*", maintain that "God did not create the Universe and the Big Bang was an inevitable consequence of the laws of Physics. The fact that there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something

rather than nothing, why the Universe exists, why we exist." I think he had the Christian concept of God in mind, to deny its existence as in their concept, God and Existence are two different realities. That made it difficult for them to reconcile the scientific perception with that of the concept of God. Hawkins has written volumes on the concept of creation, but he could not decipher the dynamics of life holistically, not to say anything on their bearing in human functionalities in their day-to-day life.

There is no denying the fact that "God or No God", there is system in place engaged in uninterrupted creativity, which has been driving the world individually and collectively in almost an autopilot mode. See how functionalities in the cosmos such as the Sun, Moon, and all functionalities of the nature, vital to our life cycle have been going on, following involuntarily developed design parameters mandated for them, and with such precision. One may believe or deny the concept of God, but can anybody exist without the support of nature driven perennial resources? And these resources are not manmade. And that's what divine creations mean in real terms.



Vedanta says that God is formless and attribute-less, the 'One' without a second, having in store the fundamental elements of creation, carrying the potential to manifest all by itself. It is pure consciousness that is all-pervading, and available with all. Consciousness element animates all our functionalities including our 'power of knowing'. It also lends necessary intelligence to all nature driven functionalities to move in an orderly fashion with precision. Consciousness, thus, weaves through the whole world into a unified organism where no individual has a reality independent of the whole. This concept is quite in conformity with the scientific perception of creation. So said eminent Australian Physicist, Paul Davies: "For a naive realist, the world is a collection of objects. For a quantum physicist, it is an inseparable web of vibrating pattern, where no individual component has a reality independent of the entirety, included in that entirety is the observer."

It, would, therefore, be fair to surmise that there is a system in place that would be necessarily having a Primal-Source, having in store fundamental elements of creation, intrinsic to which is the fundamental elements of consciousness. That

includes the manifest world with all its diversity and enormity. There are lot of intervening dynamisms operative at visible and imperceptible levels playing in between. All moving in togetherness as a unified organism, have been driving the world individually and collectively. In this scheme of things, courtesy the consciousness element, there always remain connect between the primal source and the manifest. "Without Him, I exist not, without me He is unmanifest" said Mirra Alfassa, the spiritual consort of Rishi Aurobindo, popularly known as 'Mother'.

According to Vedanta, the living world may get dissolved one day, when it gets back to the primal source, carrying along the seeds of creation. Out of those seeds, a fresh world comes into being. So, the existence is always there in one form or other. So, "Existence is a reality". For the sake of our understanding, the system would need a naming. If we shed our individualistic belief, what better than the three lettered word "God" to name it.

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