

**WORLD 6**  
TRUMP BANS ENTRY OF CERTAIN GROUPS OF CHINESE STUDENTS TO US

**MONEY 7**  
'ECONOMIC REVIVAL MAY TAKE 6 MONTHS'

**SPORT 8**  
BCCI NOMINATES ROHIT FOR KHEL RATNA

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**USUAL SUSPECTS**  
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

## Covid a blessing in disguise for Opp

One of the natural consequences of a prolonged lockdown is the surfeit of what can best be described as 'timepass' activities. Among those that I found quite enjoyable — and hugely instructive — was trawling YouTube for old documentaries and TV programmes of another era. In the process I have sat through many hours of BBC election night broadcasts for the polls of 1955, 1959, 1964, 1966 and 1970. In due course I shall complete the lot and move to the coverage of US presidential elections.

Elections have fascinated me and, having been involved in all the counting day programmes since the Indian general elections of 1998, not to mention countless State Assembly polls, I was particularly interested in the evolving styles of presentation, the quantum of partisanship and the use of graphics and technology. While these can await elaborate dissection at another time and perhaps a more specialised publication, what interested me above all was to experience the results as it unfolded to those watching on the day.

To me this was an important experience. History, as we often know, is written with the benefit of hindsight. We know, for example, that the Congress Party led by Indira Gandhi suffered a crushing defeat in the 1977 general election held after 19 months of a draconian Emergency. The scale of the Congress defeat, particularly in north India, makes it seem that the outcome was widely anticipated by everyone. I wasn't in India to experience that election and had to depend on perfunctory reports in the Western media and occasional letters from friends who were in the thick of the campaign. From these sources, two things were apparent. First, that the mood, especially after the desertion of Jagjivan Ram from the Congress, was vehemently anti-Congress; secondly, that the widespread feeling was that while the Congress would be jolted, it would return to power with a narrow majority.

The significance of May 30, 2020 is that these very same people now believe that Covid-19 has given them a chance to reacquire relevance, on the backs of popular misery

I have not been able to discover the records of the TV telecast of the results on the internet. But the Soviet-style programme would not have been terribly interesting. Contemporary accounts suggest that Doordarshan wilfully chose to focus on the results from South India, where the Congress performed creditably, and chose to delay news of the Congress reverses for as long as possible. By then, I am sure the bush telegraph must have communicated the news

of the Prime Minister's defeat in Rae Bareilly and Sanjay Gandhi's failure in Amethi. Still, getting a glimpse of how Doordarshan broke the news to the Indian people would have been interesting. India has moved a long way since 1977. Just as looking at the BBC's election night coverage in the 1950s and 1960s has only an archival relevance, invoking the 1977 election — or indeed any election prior to 1996 — is purely academic. The media has mushroomed, thanks to both deregulation and technology. What the state-controlled broadcaster does and doesn't do is swamped by other sources of information that range from multiple TV channels in different languages, the press and, most important, social media. However, the principle of tracking an election "in flight" — the avowed objective of the Nuffield College studies on British general elections since 1945 — remains intact.

May 30 is the first anniversary of the second term of Narendra Modi. It will be observed and commemorated in a relatively restrained way, courtesy the looming danger of Covid-19. The achievements of the Government, particularly in the very purposeful 10 months that culminated in the Delhi riots shortly before the lockdown, have been noted and both appreciated and pilloried. However, given the dramatic jolt given by the lockdown to every Indian, there is an understandable tendency to divide politics into pre-Covid and post-Covid compartments. In my view this should be resisted.

The conventional wisdom-in-hindsight is that Modi coasted to any easy and predictable victory a year ago. Certainly, the magnitude of the victory and the impressive margins, not to speak of the failure of the Congress to make any headway for the second election in succession, makes it seem that way. In reality it wasn't quite so effortless.

Anyone who goes back to the original sources will be struck by the fact that Modi's opponents quite genuinely and sincerely believed that the BJP would be deprived of its majority. It was believed that the much-lauded Samajwadi-BSP alliance in Uttar Pradesh, the Mamata steamroller in West Bengal and the united opposition of all of India's Muslims and Christians would send Modi packing. Remember the contrived excitement over the Rafale deal, the emotional pitch of the anti-demonetisation campaign and the frenzied partisanship of a powerful section of the media that saw itself as a part of the Opposition. Also let us not forget the united front of all the economics professors living outside India that sought a return to the culture of doles and sops. Together they created the impression that Modi should be packing his bags, despite Balakote and the surgical strikes.

In hindsight, May 2019 was an emphatic defeat for the old Establishment that was united in its desire to end the Modi raj at all costs. They may have preferred the Gandhis back in the saddle but they were quite willing for anyone but Modi. On the morning of counting day, these worthies looked expectantly to BJP wickets falling one by one. They looked forward to resuming their control over Lutyens' Delhi. Some were talking of the BJP being reduced to less than 10 seats in Uttar Pradesh.

It didn't happen that way and the party hats for the Restoration had to be put aside for another day. The significance of May 30, 2020 is that these very same people now believe that Covid-19 has given them a chance to reacquire relevance, on the backs of popular misery. From 2014 to 2020, it is the same faces and the same forces trying to bring back the Old India that now exists only in the archives of YouTube.

# Phased exit begins in lockdown 5.0

## India to open up largely on June 8 except in containment zones

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Barring some States which have decided to extend the lockdown, India will largely open up on June 8 except in containment zones. The Union Home Ministry on Saturday issued guidelines to open up malls, hotels, hospitality services and religious places from June 8 with strict social distancing norms, like wearing of mask, etc.

The decision to open schools and colleges will be decided by the States in consultation with stakeholders in July. The lockdown guidelines will be applicable in containment zones up to June 30 and only essential services will be permitted in these areas.

The MHA's new guidelines say after assessment of the situation, opening up of international airlines, metro rail, cinema halls, swimming pools, bars, auditoriums and social political gathering will be decided later.

The night curfew will remain in place and movement of individuals shall remain strictly prohibited between 9 pm and 5 am throughout the country, except for essential services.

Local authorities are permitted to implement Section 144 in this regard, said the



Migrants wait outside Nampally Railway station to board a train to reach the native places in Hyderabad on Saturday PTI

MHA giving more power to States.

"Schools, colleges, educational/training/coaching institutions etc will be opened after consultations with States and UTs," the MHA said, adding that the States may hold consultations at the institution level with parents and other stakeholders. Based on the feedback, a decision on the re-opening of these institutions

will be taken in July, said the MHA.

Containment zones' geographical area and demarcation will be decided by the States and powers are given to local authorities for house to house and patient tracing. States are empowered to demarcate buffer zones outside containment zones were new cases likely to occur, said the MHA. "In the containment zones,

only essential activities shall be allowed.

There shall be strict perimeter control to ensure that there is no movement of people in or out of these zones, except for medical emergencies and maintaining supply of essential goods and services," said the guidelines, empowering local administration for strict implementation to contain Covid-19 pandemic areas.

### UNLOCK 1.0: WHAT'S OPEN?

- Phase I: Religious places for public, hotels, restaurants and other hospitality services, shopping malls to open from June 8, 2020
- Phase II: Schools, colleges, educational/training/coaching institutions, etc, will be opened after consultations with the States and UTs. Bases on the feedback with all the stakeholders, including parents, a decision in this regard will be taken in July
- Phase III: Resumption of international flights, metro services, cinema halls, gymnasiums, swimming pools, entertainment parks etc will be decided based on assessment of the situation
- Social/political/sports/entertainment/academic/cultural/religious functions will be re-started only after assessment of the situation
- Inter-state and intra-state movement of people and goods will be permitted from June 1 without permission or e-pass. However, the States will be empowered to regulate movement
- Night curfew will continue from June 1 but the timings have been relaxed to 9 pm to 5 am from earlier 7 pm to 7 am
- Lockdown will continue to remain in force in the containment zones till June 30
- In the containment zones, there will be stricter perimeter control to ensure that there is no movement of people in or out of these

There shall be no restriction on inter-State or intra-State movements of persons and goods. However, States are empowered to take a decision on not allowing this based on public health scenario, said the new guidelines.

The guidelines insisted that wearing of mask in public places is compulsory and also said that persons above 65 and children below 10 years and pregnant women and patients are advised to stay at home.

### Lockdown in MP, Bengal till June 15

**Bhopal:** Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Saturday that the lockdown in the State to contain coronavirus will be extended till June 15. The West Bengal Government too extended the coronavirus-triggered lockdown in the State up to June 15 with relaxations and conditions.

### Delhi-Moscow AI flight called back midway after pilot found corona +ve

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bizarre incident, an Air India's Delhi-Moscow Airbus A-320 Neo (VT-EXR) flight was forced to return midway on Saturday morning after ground team realised that the pilot was tested corona positive.

The VT-EXR Air India Flight was on its way to Moscow, under the Vande Bharat Mission to bring back stranded Indians. Somewhere near Uzbekistan, the crew was informed that one of the pilots onboard has tested positive for Covid-19 and they were called back immediately as per protocol.

This was a ferry flight, so only the crew was on board with around 6 people. The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will probe the lapses.

"Prima facie, this appears to be a lapse" as the pilot was not supposed to be on the plane if he was found positive," DGCA officials said.

### India, China in talks to resolve LAC tension, says Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With tension continuing at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Saturday that India and China are engaged at diplomatic and military levels to resolve the face-offs.

Making it clear that the issue is bilateral, Rajnath also said this was conveyed to his US counterpart Mark Esper in telephonic conversation on Friday.

It is the first time that a Minister has given a statement on the stand-offs.

Rajnath also said the country should be assured that, "We will not allow India's dignity to be hurt under any circumstances."

He went on to add that India has always tried to maintain a peaceful relation with its neighbours. "We do not seek to challenge any nation," he said.

## Art 370, Ram Mandir among Modi 2.0 feats

### As NDA-2 marks 1 year in office, PM pitches for a self-reliant India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One year into his second term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday listed abrogation of Article 370 and inclusion of Jammu & Kashmir into the mainstream, criminalising the practice of Triple Talaq, Citizenship Amendment Act, and cross-border air strikes as the "bold decisions" of his Government, which, he said, is on the path to overcoming the coronavirus pandemic with the collective resolve of 130 crore Indians.

Addressing the country through a letter, the PM said clearing of several administrative bottlenecks, major improvement of infrastructure, and freeing the country from the swamp of corruption in the first term had given the right momentum to the governance in the second term.

Modi took note of the fact that the coronavirus had suddenly put brake on the speed of development of the country which in comparison to nations with powers having great economic resources and state-of-the-art healthcare system is "besieged with problems amidst a vast population and limited resources."

The PM, however, assured that the country was "on way to overcome the crisis created by the pandemic." He said India must become self-reliant.

"Many feared that India will become a problem for the



world when corona hits it. But today, through sheer confidence and resilience, you have transformed the way the world looks at us," he said.

In his address, Modi, for the first time, specifically mentioned the troubles faced by the migrant workers due to the lockdown announced on March 24 to contain the pandemic with many walking on

foot to their native destinations. "In a crisis of this magnitude, it can certainly not be claimed that no one suffered any inconvenience or discomfort.

Our labourers, migrant workers, artisans and craftsmen in small-scale industries, hawkers and such fellow countrymen have undergone tremendous suffering," Modi said.

However, the PM said, "We have to take care to ensure that the inconveniences we are facing do not turn into disasters" and people have shown patience and followed rules and "this is one of the important reasons for India being safer and in a better state than many other countries."

"This is a long battle but we have started traversing the path to victory, and victory is our collective resolve," Modi said.

He short-listed feats of his Government in the last one year which also included "amicable solution" of the vexed and long-pending Ram Mandir-Babri Masjid dispute by the unanimous SC verdict.

## Hopes of corona abatement sooner dashed

### World reported 1.25 lakh fresh cases and more than 5K deaths on May 29

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

Any hope that the blazing sun or a favourable planetary configuration — if not the claustrophobic lockdown or some alternative medicine or malarky — could slow down the relentless march of coronavirus across the globe seems to be misplaced. The hopes of any approaching "global peak out" was dashed on May 29 when the world reported 1.25 lakh fresh cases and more than 5,000 deaths. This was the largest single-day spike since the start of the outbreak five months ago in China's Wuhan province.

It was a black Friday for the globe in its fight against the undead enemy. For the better part of May, the world reported around 90,000 fresh cases every day. Beginning the month at a figure of 33,94,152, the number swelled to 60,31,023 across the globe on May 29 with the addition of 1,25,048 cases during the day itself.



Friday's 35 per cent spike above the monthly average is a clear pointer to two things: Coronavirus is constantly on the move to find new hunting ground; and removal of lockdown will come with a price.

The global picture could be a serious cause of concern for epidemiologists and world leaders who were expecting that at some point in time the virus would lose steam and the world would learn to live it.

The globe was reporting around 80K-95K cases till May 10. Then it saw a sudden spike and recorded 1,06,000 new cases on May 25. Commenting on the sudden rise in the number of cases, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom

Ghebreyesus said, "We still have a long way to go in this pandemic." We are very concerned about rising cases in low and middle-income countries."

May 21 was another big day with a spike of 1,00,000 plus cases, followed by May 22 when the world reported

1,07,000 cases. And then came Friday, May 29, when coronavirus struck in a big way leaving 1.25 lakh new patients and over 5,000 dead in a day.

It's obvious that as the world begins to reopen after nearly two-months of lockdown, the virus gears up to take

advantage of the security breach in the geographical terrain it has already conquered.

Secondly, after leaving tens of thousands dead and millions infected in Europe and the USA, the virus has found new theaters of play — South America and India.

**Covid-19 in India**

**TOTAL CASES: 1,81,775**

**DEATHS: 5,185**

**RECOVERED: 86,875**

**ACTIVE: 89,704**

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	65,168	2,197	28,081
Tamil Nadu	21,184	163	12,000
Delhi	18,549	416	8,075
Gujarat	16,356	1,007	9,232
Rajasthan	8,617	193	5,739
Madhya Pradesh	7,891	343	4,444
Uttar Pradesh	7,701	213	4,651
West Bengal	5,130	309	1,970
Bihar	3,565	21	1,311
Andhra Pradesh	3,461	60	2,289
Karnataka	2,922	49	997
Telangana	2,499	77	1,412
Jammu & Kashmir	2,341	28	908
Punjab	2,233	44	1,967
Haryana	1,923	20	971

### CAPSULE

**RML HOSP: REFRIGERATED CONTAINER FOR BODIES**  
New Delhi: The Centre-run RML hospital here has procured a refrigerated container to store bodies in view of coronavirus fatalities as its morgue is full, official sources said.

**MORE THAN PREPARED TO DEAL WITH VIRUS: CM**  
New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday asserted that his Government is several steps ahead of the coronavirus and is more than prepared to deal with it.

**MERCURY IN CHECK WITH SCATTERED RAIN**  
New Delhi: There was relief for people from scorching heat as showers in several states in the north and west kept the mercury below normal levels on Saturday, but five people were killed in UP in rain-related incidents. According to the IMD, Wardha (Vidarbha) recorded the highest temperature in the country at 42.2 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperatures recorded on Friday was 45.4 degrees Celsius at Chandrapura in Maharashtra's Vidarbha

HOMETHEATRE

# Gritty thriller straight from hell

**PAATAL LOK**  
Amazon Prime Web Series  
9 episodes  
\*ing: Jaideep Ahlawat, Neeraj Kabi and others  
Produced by: Anushka Sharma  
Rated: 9/10

I learnt four things by watching the Amazon Prime thriller series *Paatal Lok*. One, online entertainment is deeper, faster and more engaging than mere cinema. Two, content is packaged and sold here without the wing clipper called funds and censorship and is, thus, delectably raw yet refined.

Three, viewers who have *en masse* switched to online entertainment, are going to stay there even after lockdown, thanks to the depth and nuance provided to them. Four, and most importantly, web series can be a good platform to enrich your glossary of Hindi abuses.

Having said this, the real value of online entertainment lies in Anushka Sharma's production *Paatal Lok* which flowers on a story that's grounded, real and tense. The thriller engages you with acumen, earthiness and pace, leading you from episode to episode on a binge prescription.

Jaideep Ahlawat is the quintessential cop disillusioned with a system which has sidelined him to the noxious peripheries of hell, which he calls *Paatal Lok*, a world from where very many police procedurals have emanated.

*Paatal Lok* opens with many questions and the best thing about it is that through all its nine episodes, it manages to dodge the



answers, instead, throwing intrigue, drama and, of course, wholesome *gaalis* at you, making you finally admit that the series does have the licence to abuse making it situationally the need of the hour.

Ahlawat as an out of sorts cop, lands with a case of a lifetime to salvage his botched-up reputation. He does the groundwork like the seasoned, low-ranked inspector that he is despite the rust that has gathered on his starless uniform over years of inactivity.

A TV journalist star is about to be shot before the gang is busted by Crime Branch, never mind, after an aborted mission. Things, however, are not a wee bit simple as they look. The onion layering of the plot gives viewers a time of their nail-biting life. And,

one gets to thank high heavens that unlike most web series, this one does not throw a Season 2 at you.

A complete, gritty police department thriller is just what the doctor, or should we say, the Prime Minister, prescribed for a healthy time for home quarantine.

The other good thing about the series is that it tugs at you with a reality ridden narrative which makes you understand the underbelly of police-criminal-political connection that will never die, only come dressed in new garbs to what they call oil the system.

The acting, plot, story, ambience, dialogue — all collude to make *Paatal Lok* a talking point for viewers, starved of impactful content.

## Fun take on lockdown

**METRO PARK QUARANTINE EDITION**  
Eros Now  
5 episodes  
\*ing: Ranvir Shorey, Purbi Joshi, Omi Vaidya, Vega Tamotia, Pitobhosh Tripathy  
Rated: 6/10

In this lockdown, we hear of crazy and funny things that people are doing to keep the blues away. Taking a leaf out of that, OTT platforms are coming up with Originals that will tickle the funny bone. The latest is *Metro Park Quarantine Edition*. There are several things that work here. First, each episode is between five to 10 minutes. One can watch these while taking a break in-between work or to refresh the mind if one is studying for an entrance exam. Second, it gives a sneak peek into crazy and funny things that people are doing. There is an episode where the lady of the house coaxes her son to be part of a haircut experiment by putting a steel bowl on the head to get the shape correct. Or a scene where a group of men, via webinar, have a party and tell each their lockdown problems and why they have their wives' display picture.

The edition is an extension of the *Metro Park* series about an Indian Gujarati family — Payal and Kalpesh Patel and their children, living in Metro Park in America. In the Quarantine edition, there is drama and lots of hilarious situations that find a connect with what people are



doing in real life.

Take the case of Kanan (Omi Vaidya) who in order to protect himself from the Coronavirus picks his mail with a pair of tongs and then microwaves them to kill the virus. Or the time when he self-quarantines himself in a room because he suspects he is COVID-19 positive and wants to protect himself.

The director and editor need to be applauded. Each of the actors were home bound and shot their pieces individually and nowhere does it give the impression that Vaidya is in Washington DC, Rnvir Shorey in Mumbai, Purbi Joshi in LA, California and Vega Tamotia in Delhi.

The mini-series couldn't have come at a better time, typically when is looking at creative ways to come up with ideas on a tight budget. Kudos to the actors for their performance given the restriction. A big pat on the back to family members who turned directors for the series. The camera work is bound to be simple but the performance catches attention.

Shorey and Joshi are a delight as in Vaidya and his paranoia relate to the Coronavirus.

Though the episodes are entertaining they come with a message on how there is need to be well-informed and not believe everything that is shared on social media platforms.

A fun way to spend one's *chutti* given the lockdown and no stopping the rising number of cases. Stay home, stay entertained.

— Shalini Saksena

## Plan Your Stay At Home Week

There is a good news for all the JK Rowling fans, especially the young ones. Gear up to treat your eyes and mind with the latest fairy tale — *The Ickabog*. Rowling started writing the story during the Wizarding World series but then decided to take a step back from launching children's story books. The draft was lying in her attic for years and it is only during the Coronavirus-led lockdown that she decided to make the story available online for free at <https://www.theickabog.com/king-fred-the-fearless/>.

Till date, eight chapters have been published online and Rowling will continue to do so for a few more weeks. The first chapter of the story reads King Fred The Fearless which is followed by The Ickabog, Death of a Seamstress, The Quiet House, Daisy Dovetail and others.

During these extended summer vacations children can have a gala time while reading Rowling's fun fairytale, a chapter every week.



to create one of the most highly-anticipated films in Walt Disney Animation Studios' near-century of moviemaking. For the first time, cameras were there to capture an eye-opening — and at times jaw-dropping — view of the challenges and the breakthroughs, the artistry, creativity and the complexity of creating the #1 animated feature of all time.

Movies on Disney+ Hotstar Premium.

**Jojo Rabbit (June 2):** Acclaimed writer/director Taika Waititi brings his signature humor and pathos to Jojo Rabbit, a World War II satire that follows a lonely German boy whose world view is turned upside down when he discovers his single mother is hiding a young Jewish girl in their attic.

**Terminator: Dark Fate (Jun 16):** Decades after Sarah Connor prevented Judgment Day, a lethal new Terminator is sent to eliminate the future leader of the resistance. In a fight to save mankind, battle-hardened Sarah Connor teams up with an unexpected ally and an enhanced super soldier to stop the deadliest Terminator yet. Humanity's fate hangs in the balance in this action-packed thrill ride

**Ford vs Ferrari (June 30):** Academy Award® Winners Matt Damon and Christian Bale star in FORD v FERRARI, based on the true story of visionary American car designer Carroll Shelby (Damon) and fearless British-born driver Ken Miles (Bale), who together build a revolutionary race car for Ford Motor Company and take on the dominating race cars of Enzo Ferrari at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in France in 1966.

Another month, another great list of shows and movies to watch. This month watch Academy Award Winning movies *Jojo Rabbit* and *Ford vs Ferrari* along with blockbusters like *Terminator: Dark Fate*. Go behind the scenes of the biggest animated movie *Frozen II* with *Into the Unknown: Making Frozen 2*. For mystery and drama lovers, a legendary literary character comes to life in *Perry Mason*. Ring in the monsoon with some captivating new shows and movies, exclusively on Disney+ Hotstar Premium.

**Disney+ Originals**  
**Into the Unknown: Making Frozen 2 (June 26):** With the clock ticking and less than a year until the world premiere of *Frozen 2*, the filmmakers, artists, songwriters and cast open their doors to cameras for a six-part documentary series to reveal the hard work, heart, and collaboration it takes

# 'Fame is not my goal, acting is' OF EPIC PROPORTIONS

SHIVIN NARANG shot to fame after playing Ranvijay Singh in Ek Veer Ki Ardaas...Veera. The actor speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA how he recently met with an accident and had to undergo a surgery, how much fun he had doing a music video and what he loves watching

**■ Hope all good with your hand and you are doing better.**

Yes, all good. I am much better. It has been three weeks since the accident. The pain is still there but bearable now. It will take time, around two months before all is back to normal; I cut my tendons. It was such a freak thing and happened in a fraction of a second. I slipped and I tried to break my fall and fell on a glass top table. Though I knew that the injury was serious I was calm and drove myself to the hospital.

**■ Did playing Ranvijay Sampooran Singh propel you to stardom?**

Initially, when I started my first show, *Suvreen Guggal-Topper of The Year*, I wasn't aware of how things worked. I am from Delhi, didn't know how the industry worked and was entering a new world. It was the love for my craft that made me stand where I was at that time. The good was that it was a hit show and realised that people liked my work. Then came *Ranvijay*. The kind of craze and how people connected with me as the character and the series was totally different. I got to see first-hand mass following. It was a changing experience. This show made my image — that I was more than a pretty face and could act.

**■ What made you take to acting?**

There was attraction towards cinema and acting like any other person. But I knew that fame was never the trajectory. I was not the kind who wanted to do a reality show to get recognition. I was attracted to the world of acting and filmmaking. I took to modeling and got the offer doing a TV. When I heard the script and took it up to look how things worked. I gave my 100 per cent to the show. My journey was a fairytale. First day in Mumbai and first day of shoot.

**■ Was it tough for a Delhi boy to be in Mumbai?**

It was tough. Taking a decision to leave Delhi and go to a new city from where one

had got a call not knowing if it was hoax or I was truly selected for a TV show. I was in college and my parents are a working class. There were many questions but I took a risk and here I am.

**■ How did you come on board for Khatron Ke Khiladi 10?**

I never did it because of the name. It was due to what the show represents. It has been eight years since I have been in this

industry and it had been coming my way again and again. This time I asked myself it was time to face what was holding me back and face my fear and took it up. I haven't taken it up to make a name for myself but to test myself and how much I can push myself. It was not taken up to entertain anybody.

**■ You have also done a music video. How much fun was it?**

It was definitely a different experience. From the very beginning I never restricted myself to a medium. Acting is acting. I am asked if I am interested in TV or films. I have done three music videos till now. I am happy to explore myself and happy with my choices.

**■ Usually films are the endgame. Is it the same for you?**

For me, it is always the work. I believe we are infinite but the world tries to limit us by giving you titles. It has always been goal to do diverse work. I have done ads, music videos, TV shows and a film as well on Hotstar.

**■ People watch you in series. What do you watch?**

After work, I of course don't watch my own shows. I watch whatever looks promising and pick up stuff as an audience rather than to critique it. I watch regional show as well. I try to be neutral and not dissect it. I love to see English shows since you learn from them.

**■ Your best fan moment.**

There have been so many. Over time, you take each fan moment in your stride and thank God for putting me there. You take it as a gesture of kindness and get a sense of gratitude. Wherever I go, whether in India or abroad, I get so much love. I have even done a show in Indonesia, the fans are so nice and good to you. I got so many messages enquiring after this injury. It was overwhelming. This makes me work harder towards my craft.

**■ What was your international project about?**

It was a TV show. I was offered this project because *Veera* was such a hit in Indonesia.

It was fun to do and a different experience.



Empty roads and people glued in front of their TV sets was a common sight in almost all parts of the country when Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan* was aired on DD back in 1987. Despite being a Sunday people would be up early and bathe. After all, they were about to see Lord Ram come alive. In fact, many people would not eat till after the episode ended since they had to do *pooja* and eat *prasad* before starting their day.

Such was the craze for the show that over the years almost every channel since then has run a mythological show. For many it is a recollection of the takes that they had heard from their grandparents, for others it is the back story to a story and for some others it is the best way for the kids to know more about their culture, Gods and Goddesses.

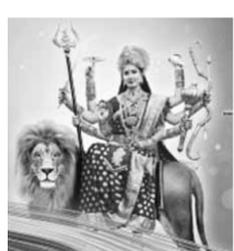
Tarun Khanna who has played Lord Shiva eight times and is currently seen as Mahadev in *Devi Aadi Parashakti* on Dangal TV tells you that this generation doesn't know much about our history. "Ram and Krishna, I believe were real people. That is why we celebrate Diwali. These are true events but there is no written record. There are so many versions of *Ramayan*. When you don't know your history and you want to know about it, these programmes in the name of mythology shows give you a sneak peek of the past, people watch them because they want to stay connected to their roots. In this mythology are their Gods — Vishnu and his *avatars* and Shiva. People want to watch them again and again and the stories of their manifestations," Khanna explains.

Another attraction is to see how an actor will play a certain character and how the makers will interpret the era. "When I tell you a story, there is some part in that story where the person will have his own interpretation while narrating it. These alternations make things interesting. People want to know how the makers and the actors would play it on the screen," Khanna says. Vishal Karwal, who plays Lord Krishna in *Dwarkadheesh-Bhagwan Shri*

*Krishna* that airs on Dangal TV says that the when he used to watch TV back in the 90s, the shows were so good and progressive. But since the 2000s the content has been somewhat regressive. "There are not many shows that are happy and one can learn from them. But from mythological shows, one can learn life lessons and are a visual treat too. There is so much positivity in them," he says.

Arpit Machhar, head of marketing, Enterr10 Television Network tells you that historically, mythological shows especially *Ramayan* has always had a strong appeal with viewers. "Re-runs of some popular mythological and costume drama shows like *Chandragupt Maurya*, *Mahima Shanidev Ki* and *Dwarkadheesh, Devi Aadi Parashakti* were already being broadcasted before the lockdown. The re-run of 2008 *Ramayan* during the lockdown was soon extended to one hour a day because of viewership interest. Within the first week itself, the slot grew by 45 per cent indicating enthusiasm. We have understood that mythological content appeals to viewers and they find a connect with these shows," Machhar says.

One is told that producing a mythological show is a very different ballgame as compared to regular fictional shows since the audience has a preconceived notion about the costumes of the characters, the look and feel of the sets and it is the makers responsibility to stand up to their



expectations.

"The mythological stories tend to have a lot of versions in different parts of the country and people are also sensitive about it. Hence, the research becomes the most important part of the whole process. Additionally, the grandeur of a period drama is at a different level, in terms of set size, location, costumes, number of artists and the post production team involved," he tells you.

There is a reason why many of the mythological stories revolve around *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* or on *Shiv* and *Krishna*. "These are the most common stories that people have heard at least once. The audience tends to resonate more with them," Machhar tells you.

Ishita Ganguly who plays Mahakali/Goddess Uma/Parvati in *Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishno Devi-Kahani Mata Rani Ki* that airs on Star Bharat tells you that the reason why she chose to be part of mythological shows is because our epics have so much to tell and very few people know everything about our

Gods and Goddesses. "I am from Kolkata and devout of Ma Kali. The role is so challenging and I get to play many shades. The drama, colours and costumes come alive so beautifully that it attracted me to the show," Ganguly says.

She agrees that the same holds true for the audience too. "The characters in mythological shows are larger than life, they are Gods and Goddesses. It is not just the dialogues but the VFX, the research that goes into costumes and character, it takes time to flesh these out. Also, for the audience to see a God whom they pray to come alive, is a pull.

For the children, such shows are the perfect way to know about our mythology since both parents are working and live in nuclear families. The idea of listening to stories from grandparents is a thing of the past. Such shows are not only entertaining because there is a story behind a story but you get to learn life lessons as well," Ganguly tells you.

Sha points out a case. "Take the *Jag Jaanani*... We talk about woman empowerment. Maha Kali is the perfect *roop* that talks about how a strong energy can kill negativity and false ego. When you watch such shows, it gives out a message to women that they can be strong and positive. Men also need to realise this. As a woman, if I can make another woman become strong, I feel obliged that I got to play this role," Ganguly says.

# Covid count mounts to 749 in State

## 33 NEW PATIENTS REPORTED ON SATURDAY

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

After showing the biggest single day jump of 216 new patients a day before and consistently recording high numbers in the past week, Saturday provided some relief with the state health department reporting 33 new patients of the novel Corona virus (Covid-19). With them the toll of the disease in Uttarakhand mounted to 749. Five patients who were positive for the disease have so far died in the state and 102 have recovered from the disease.

On the day, 21 patients were reported from Dehradun while five patients surfaced in the worst hit Nainital district. Four patients were reported from Tehri while health department found three patients from Haridwar district.

In Dehradun, the Covid-19 is continuing to wreck havoc in the Niranjanpur sabzi mandi. On Saturday seven new patients were reported from among the vegetable brokers and their staff members. So far 26 patients have been found in the Mandi which has forced authorities to shut down a portion of the vegetable mandi. Ten patients reported on the day have travel recently from Maharashtra. In Haridwar and Nainital districts all the new patients reported on Saturday have a travel history from Mumbai. Similarly the four patients reported from Tehri district on the day too have a travel history from virus infested state of Maharashtra.

Nainital district is maintaining its lead in the list of active cases with 205 such patients while Dehradun district is at second spot with 141 active cases.

Tehri district with 74 active patients is at third position. Haridwar has 44 active cases while Almora has 42 active patients. Udham Singh Nagar

district has 35 active cases and Pauri has 24 active patients of the dreaded disease. Pithoragarh district has 21 active patients while Bageshwar has 16 active cases. Uttarkashi has 13 active cases while Chamoli and Champawat have 11 and eight active cases respectively. Rudraprayag district is at bottom of table with five active patients of Covid-19.

The additional secretary, state health department, Yugal Kishore Pant said reports of 819 samples were found negative for the disease on Saturday. He added that reports of 5232 samples are still awaited by the department. On Saturday, a total of 1269 samples were collected for COVID -19 testing. The authorities have so far taken swab samples of 28433 suspected patients for COVID-19 test. Out of the total samples taken, 3.25 percent samples have been found positive for the disease. On Saturday, the rate of recovery from the COVID-19 in the state slid further down to

# Cabinet Minister's wife tests positive

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Amrita Rawat, former Minister and wife of Cabinet Minister Satpal Maharaj has reportedly tested positive for Covid-19. This was stated by Health department sources. It is stated that she may have contracted the virus from some visitors from Delhi who had visited Maharaj's residence in Dehradun some days ago.

14.03 percent. The doubling rate of the disease has shown some improvement and is now at 5.23 days.

# State to plan implementation of Unlock 1.0 guidelines: CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

With the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issuing guidelines for Unlock 1- the phased reopening of areas outside containment zones from June 1, Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Saturday that the state will draft a plan for implementation of the latest guidelines received from the Government of India. The National Disaster Management Authority has directed extension of the lockdown in containment zones upto June 30 and reopening prohibited activities in a phased manner in areas outside containment zones.

Rawat said that attempts are being made to gradually resume economic activities while maintaining necessary precautions to check the Covid-19 contagion. Providing maximum relief to the people is being attempted, he added.

According to the latest MHA guidelines, in areas outside containment zones, all activities will be permitted expect a few which will be allowed, with the stipulation of following SOPs to be prescribed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), in a phased manner. In the first phase, religious places,



**Attempts are being made to gradually resume economic activities while maintaining necessary precautions to check the Covid-19 contagion. Providing maximum relief to the people is being attempted- Rawat**

hotels restaurants and other hospitality services and shopping malls will be allowed to open from June 8.

In the second phase, schools, colleges and other educational institutions will be opened after consultations with the States. The State Governments may hold consultations at the institution level with parents and other stakeholders and based on the feedback, a decision on reopening these institutions will be taken in July. Based on the assessment of the situation, dates for restarting cinema halls, theatres, bars and auditoriums, social/political/sports/entertainment/cultural/religious and other large congregations will be decided in the third phase. While

the State Government may prohibit certain activities outside containment zones or impose restrictions deemed necessary based on its assessment of the situation, there shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra- state movement of persons and goods.

No separate permission/approval will be required for such movements. Meanwhile, wearing of face cover will be compulsory in public places, workplaces and during transport. Individuals must maintain a minimum distance of six feet in public places. Large public gatherings will remain prohibited with maximum 50 guests allowed in marriage related gathering and maximum 20 allowed in a funeral/last rites.

# No need to worry, active cases likely to drop in a fortnight: CS

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

There is no cause for worry due to number of Covid-19 positive cases having increased in recent days in Uttarakhand. Community spread has not occurred in the State yet. Stating this, the chief secretary Utpal Kumar Singh said that all the cases are either due to travel history or contact and all of these have already been under monitoring. A rise in the total cases is possible in the coming days but in about a fortnight there will be a drop in the number of active cases.

Addressing the media, Singh said that the State's doubling rate has shown some improvement in the past three days while the positivity rate is less than the national average. The Covid-19 mortality rate in Uttarakhand is less than one

per cent compared to the national average of about 2.8 per cent. The State is laying special focus on patient care management and contact tracing. A strict system is being followed in the 31 containment zones in the state.

Singh further said that attempts are being made to increase the number of Covid tests. In the first week, the average sample per day was one which increased to 834 in the 16th week and will soon rise to 1,000 per day.

About 5,500 people per million in Dehradun and about 3,185 per million in Nainital are being tested, which is higher than the national average. Efforts are also being made to increase the number of testing labs and the number of tests in other districts. Analysis of the contagion in Uttarakhand

reveals that 41 per cent cases are asymptomatic, 53 per cent have very mild symptoms, 4.5 per cent have medium while 1.74 per cent have more symptoms.

The state doesn't have serious cases, he added.

Singh further informed that most of the migrants wanting to return to Uttarakhand had come back. Out of the 2.62 lakh who had registered online, 1.81 lakh have returned while the remaining and now less willing to return. Stating that the pandemic has created a challenging situation, he stressed that there was no need to panic as the government is fully prepared. With discipline, patience and courage, the state will soon bring Covid-19 under control in Uttarakhand, he added.

# Health secretary reviews anti-Covid measures

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The secretary medical health and family welfare Amit Negi has said that the state Government is not allowing any hindrance in providing budget for the war against the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19). He was addressing a video conferencing session with the district level officers on Saturday.

In the meeting, he held elaborate discussion with every district magistrate (DM) and chief medical officer (CMO) and took stock of their requirements and demands.

He also reviewed the arrangements at the dedicate Covid care hospitals in the districts and directed them to take measures needed for effective control of the disease. Negi said that doctors, staff

In the meeting, he held elaborate discussion with every district magistrate and chief medical officer and took stock of their requirements and demands

nurses and technicians should be deployed in sufficient numbers and recruitment on outsource should be made. The secretary said that necessary budget for arrangement related with Covid-19 is being provided instantly by the state administration.

He said that in view of increasing cases of the disease all districts should strengthen their Covid care centres, availability of ambulances,

centralised supply of oxygen and other preparations for controlling the contagion.

He said that the rate of testing of swab samples should be increased and for it the state administration has sent six True Nat machines.

On a stern note, he said that the earmarked hospitals should be reserved only for treatment of Covid patients and the other patients should be sent to the private hospitals covered under the Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana and Ayushman Bharat. Negi said that the data provided by the Asha workers after screening of patients at fever clinics should be carefully examined.

It was decided that the Narendra Nagar hospital of Tehri would be made Covid care hospital, level II.

# One year of Modi Govt 2.0 marked by historic decisions, major developments: Rawat

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has congratulated the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all citizens on the completion of one year in office by the Modi-2 Government.

Rawat said that successes in this past year have proved Modi a global leader. During this period, he abrogated article 370, facilitated freedom from triple talaq, helped pave the way for Ram Mandir construction in Ayodhya.

That there was no tension in the country due to such developments is a sign of the PM's capabilities. "The PM has to work for four more years. I am confident that the manner in which he is leading

the nation and guiding the citizens, whether it be on the economic front or the global platform, the PM will succeed in these endeavours," said Rawat.

Meanwhile, cabinet minister and State Government spokesman Madan Kaushik said that this past one year will prove to be a developmental milestone for Uttarakhand. Developmental works like the all weather road project, Rishikesh-Karnprayag rail line, Jamrani multipurpose project, Haridwar, Rudrapur and Pithoragarh medical colleges being facilitated with the help of the Centre will prove to be major contributions in the state's development.

# Modi Govt has failed on every front: Pritam

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Terming the performance of Narendra Modi Govt as dismal, the Pradesh Congress Committee president, Pritam Singh has said that the Govt has proved to be a failure on all fronts. In a statement, he said that the Modi Govt has nothing to claim as its achievement during last one year. Singh said that the Modi Govt has set up new records of failures during its five years of rule in first term and one year of its second term at centre with all sections of society facing problems. "The policy of the Modi Govt has ensured that the farmers and traders are forced to commit suicide and has created an army of unemployed youth. The labourers are on the

roads," he said.

The PCC president alleged that the Modi Govt has closed many development schemes started by the Cong Govt. Singh said that all the promises made by the PM Modi to the poor, unemployed, farmers and traders during the election campaign have proved to be a bundle of lies. Singh said that it has only concentrated itself to meet narrow political goals and threw the people of the country at the mercy of Covid-19 pandemic. He added that due to the failure of the government, the pandemic is becoming out of control. The PCC chief accused the BJP government of registering false and fabricated cases against Congress leaders for hiding its failures.

# Cong cries foul on Cabinet decisions on district plan and Panchayats

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Congress has raised objection over the State Government's decision to hand over the powers of releasing funds for the schemes under district plans to the district magistrates (DM) and Ministers in charges in the absence of district planning committees.

The Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president Pritam Singh said that the decision taken by the state cabinet on Friday is impractical, anti democratic, dictatorial and would spawn corruption.

In a letter directed to the chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, the PCC chief said that



the state government failed to conduct the elections of Panchayats on time due to which the district and village Panchayats are facing problems.

He said that the decision to hand over powers of district plan funds to the DMs and

ministers amounts to murder of democracy.

He alleged that the decision of state cabinet is a conspiracy to swindle the funds of district plan. Singh added that the state cabinet took refuge in the Covid pandemic and promulgated an ordinance to appoint administrators in 105 vacant posts of Pradhans and paved way to nominate persons of their choices over the vacant 4951 posts of Panchayat representatives.

He alleged that the government is determined to stifle democracy in the Panchayats. Singh demanded that the cabinet decisions should be reversed immediately.

# Cong playing petty politics amid pandemic, says BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party has stated that the Congress is playing petty politics during the Covid-19 pandemic too. Leveling this allegations, the BJP State chief spokesman Munnna Singh Chauhan questioned the objections raised by the Congress to the DM being authorised under the guidance of the Minister in-charge for spending district plan funds.

He pointed out that article 243 K (1) of the constitution authorises the State election commission and not the government to discharge the responsibility of conducting district planning committee (DPC) elections. The state election commission had

**BJP State chief spokesman Munnna Singh Chauhan questioned the objections raised by the Congress to the DM being authorised under the guidance of the Minister in-charge for spending district plan funds**

started the election process on time, completing the process from filing of nomination upto withdrawal of nomination. However, the commission stopped further process in the election due to the lockdown

enforced in view of Covid-19. "Leveling allegations to question the capability and impartiality of a constitutional body like the election commission is improper. The Congress should understand that this temporary arrangement has been made in view of the Covid health emergency to enable execution of necessary public welfare works in absence of DPC. The allegation that this will fuel corruption is arbitrary because the DPC is not the executing agency. The expenditure will be made as earlier through the departments concerned. The Congress is unnecessarily playing narrow politics on this issue even in this difficult time," said Chauhan.

# Guest column

BY VIR SINGH



# Celebrate biodiversity for Celebrating life

What is most wonderful on the living planet? It is undoubtedly the biodiversity. What is needed to be protected, conserved and enhanced at the first place is biodiversity. Biodiversity must be the primacy of all ideas, plans, all programmes and all projects. Biodiversity must be central to all celebrations of life. Biodiversity is the very foundation of sustainability. There can be no sustainability without the consideration and operationalisation of biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity is not just totality of all life forms. It also encompasses the ecological processes with which it flowers with great varieties at genetic, species, community and ecosystem levels.

"Celebrate Biodiversity" is the theme ascribed to the

World Environment Day 2020 to be marked on June 5. We Indians have been celebrating forests, trees and all forms of life. Our culture has sacred notions for soil, land, species, rivers and all shapes and colours of life. The most outstanding celebration is reflected in the variety of genetic resources we have been cultivating and conserving on farm in our agricultural systems. An extraordinarily broad genetic base of all food and non-food crops and livestock is worth appreciating. About 5000 years ago we used to derive our foods from as many as 5000 plants. We used to cultivate about 60,000 varieties of rice and rear hundreds of livestock breeds. Our agriculture throughout its 10,000 years old history has been replete with biodiversity.

Indian farmers continuously enriched agriculture by adding more and more biodiversity. Spelling out the beauty, fragrance and numerous virtues of agro-biodiversity, our agriculture is a unique example of biodiversity celebration. However, the so-called Green Revolution that began in the West and landed at Indian soil in 1960s, has squeezed out most of the agro-biodiversity from cultivation practices. The Green Revolution type agriculture depended on a limited number of so-called HYVs (high-yield varieties). The HYVs are fertiliser-responsive and their high yield potential can only be sustained by applying high doses of chemical fertilisers and frequent irrigation. Since narrow base of species and genetic biodiversity in

agriculture is extremely susceptible to insect and disease onslaughts, plant protection measures dependent



on life-annihilating pesticides became necessary for realising yield potential of HYVs.

Biodiversity and sustainability go hand in hand. The higher the level of biodiversity, the greater the degree of sustainability. What is worst in modern agriculture is raising the crops in monocultures. Monocultures are extremely vulnerable to various diseases and insect pests. Biodiversity in nature creates barriers against damaging agents in nature, physical as well as biological. It imparts resilience to ecosystems. Resilience is an essential attribute of biodiversity for operationalising sustainability.

Among the three major processes of species extinction - natural, mass level, and anthropogenic - the

anthropogenic, that is, due to human activities, is the worst and most impactful. At present we face the danger of losing as many as one million species. It is estimated that due to adverse human activities we shall have lost about 50 per cent of the total species by the end of the 21st century. Biodiversity depletion accelerates processes of unsustainability and creates an environment of economic uncertainty. Continuous biodiversity loss and faster pace of species' extinction would snatch hope of ushering in a sustainable and happy future.

The "Celebrate Biodiversity" notion at the heart of the World Environment Day in 2020 helps awaken our consciousness for the greatest value of life (that lies in biodiversity), calls for

conservation and augmentation of Earth's biodiversity, and makes us reinvent our socio-cultural values based on biodiversity of the Nature.

Let this wonderful world of ours blossom with biodiversity in its climax form. Our own survival, our health, our safety, our material progress, our hopes, our sustainability, our future, and our happiness all depend on biodiversity. Celebrating diversity is an imperative of our life. Let us celebrate by preserving, protecting, conserving ameliorating, sustainably utilising and appreciating biodiversity of the Earth.

(The author is a Professor of Environmental Science in GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology)

# Punjab announces lockdown extension till June 30

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Saturday announced a 4-week extension in the lockdown in Punjab, till June 30, with certain more relaxations, subject to the guidelines of the central government.

Though experts have advised against opening of the hospitality industry and malls, the Chief Minister said the state would take into account the central government guidelines for Lockdown 5.0.

The CM announced his decision after an on-ground assessment of the Covid situation through a Video Conference with health experts, along with top officials and Cabinet Ministers Bharat Bhushan Ashu, Balbir Singh Sidhu and Tript Singh Bajwa. The move is also in line with the central government's decision to extend the national lockdown beyond May 31.

Later, during his weekly Facebook Live session, Capt Amarinder said the threat of

Covid was not over yet, and if necessary, he would continue to take tough measures to save the lives of Punjabis. Underlining the need to continue to exercise extreme caution, he lauded the citizens for following all health norms to help the state government in controlling the pandemic spread to a great extent.

Making it clear that the extension of the lockdown in Punjab would be conditional to strict adherence to Covid safety protocols, including physical distancing and wearing of masks, the Chief Minister also ordered distribution of free masks to the poor.

He directed Food & Civil Supplies Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu to ensure immediate steps for the distribution of masks as part of ration kids to the needy and poor, who could not afford to purchase them. DGP Dinkar Gupta told the review Video Conference that wearing of masks was being strictly enforced across districts, with more than Rs 1 crore collected so far in fine from the offenders.

The Chief Minister sought an update during the meeting on the state government's plans for launch of home surveillance and Covid Foot Soldiers deployment to track and trace infections. He was informed by Anurag Agarwal, Principal Secretary (Health & Family Welfare) that both would be launched over the next couple of days. Asha workers and other local women from the community were being hired to undertake home to home surveillance across districts, and they would be paid Rs 2 per head in every household surveyed, he said.

As for the tracing and tracking of symptomatic cases who were not reporting to the health authorities, an app was currently being field-tested and would be launched in 2-3 days. Youngsters would be asked to download the app to voluntarily report on such cases, said Agarwal, adding that mandatory OTP verification of these Covid Foot Soldiers would be ensured to check false reporting.

Capt Amarinder in his FB



session, said non-reporting to health authorities by those returning to the state, especially from abroad, was a big challenge, as it complicated their contact tracing and endangered the lives of others. He revealed that 9560 of such people had been traced and tested, and some positive cases had been found among these. Though there was an overall decline in the daily cases, and of the 2158 positive cases so far, 1946 had recovered fully, the new cases that had emerged in the last few days was a matter

of concern, he added, appealing to people to report any instance of returnees someone jumping medical checking by the state government.

Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh apprised the Chief Minister during the VC of the screening/testing being done at airports and railway stations to check the spread of the Covid in view of the large influx of people coming from other states. While all entrants to the state were being screened, and had to undergo 14-day mandatory home

quarantine, testing facilities had also been installed to undertake random testing at the airports and stations, he added. Those who could not download COVA app would have to fill in declaration forms on the trains, and submit the same at the stations, he said.

Underlining the need to strictly adhere to all health norms, Capt Amarinder said in his FB session that 36,820 people have been fined for not wearing masks and 4032 persons for spitting in public in just 11 days from May 17 till May 28. As many as 6061 persons had been fined for not wearing masks in just the last 24 hours, he said, adding that 503 FIRs had been registered in this period for violation of rules.

Expressing his concern about possible community spread in his reply to another query, he said this is the threat we face now and he would keep this fact in mind while deciding about relaxations. Referring to cases in Amritsar, in reply to another query by a resident, he said out of 7 cases reported

yesterday, six were contact cases.

Regarding rapid testing kits, he said those received by the state from China and South Korea had to be returned as they were defective.

More flights are resuming, with three flights daily from Dubai, the Chief Minister said in reply to a Dubai resident seeking to come to Chandigarh. Normal flights had not yet resumed, he said, asking the questioner to get in touch with the Consulate Office.

We have not stopped private buses in villages to operate, but the decision was up to private operators, he told a questioner.

On the crackdown on spurious liquor during lockdown, the Chief Minister said 97 bhattas had been sealed, with 1,729 FIRs registered and 1360 persons arrested. The government was also taking stern action against those trying to smuggle liquor into Punjab, he added.

He expressed his appreciation for farmers for another bumper crop year,

saying that around Rs 23,000 Crore had been infused in the rural economy due to the procurement of 128 LMTs wheat. On the locust threat, he said all arrangements had been put in place in seven districts bordering Rajasthan and Haryana.

Responding to a question, the Chief Minister said he was happy to note that 85% of the state's industry had already started operations with 65% of labour engaged in it. The government was facilitating many multinational IT firms, including Quark, to set base in Mohali and many more would come to Punjab as the situation improves, he said in reply to another query.

To a question regarding the Centre's conditions for availing additional debt, the Chief Minister said that in a federal structure, a state is responsible for ensuring the economic growth of its people. "We are custodians of our people's financial needs," he said, asserting that the Centre would have to remove these conditionalities in the spirit of federalism.

## 202 fresh COVID-19 cases reported in Hry; total tally now 1,923

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

As many as 202 people tested positive for COVID-19 in Haryana on Saturday, taking the tally to 1,923. Of the 202 new cases reported on Saturday, 157 are from Gurugram alone. Faridabad accounted for 32 cases, the second highest district of the State.

The State has a recovery rate of 50.49 per cent, fatality rate at 1.04 per cent while tests per million being conducted are 4,524. The doubling rate in the State is 11 days. As per the Health bulletin, 20 deaths have been reported so far in the State. With 971 people cured and discharged from the hospitals, there are 932 active COVID-19 cases in Haryana now.

Meanwhile, the district health authorities in Hisar, on Saturday, home quarantined 11 members of a court, including a judge, court reader, two stenographers, three 'ahalmads', two peons, a naib court and an additional district attorney (ADA), after an undertrial was tested positive in the Central

Jail number one in Hisar on Friday.

Gurugram reported 157 new cases of the disease, taking the total in the district to 677. Faridabad reported 32 new cases of the deadly disease, taking the total in the district to 339. Sonapat has reported so far 199 cases while 97 in Jhajjar.

Two more corona virus cases reported in Nuh, taking total to 70. Ambala reported three more cases, taking the tally to 50. One more case reported in Panipat, taking total to 61.

Rohtak reported one more case, taking count to 31. Two more cases have been reported in Karnal, taking total to 50. Three more cases reported in Fatehabad, talking total to 15. One more case has been reported in Kaithal, taking total to 18.

According to officials, a total of 31 Covid patients were discharged from various districts including 15 in Faridabad, four in Sonapat, two in Jhajjar, one in Panipat, six in Jind, one in Kaithal and two foreign (USA) returnees.

## Rath Yatra without devotees this year!

The big fest, like Snan Yatra, to be telecast

PNS ■ PURI

For the first time in the history, Snan Yatra (bathing festival) and Rath Yatra (Car Festival) of Lord Jagannath and His siblings will be conducted here in the absence of devotees.

As stated by Puri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb on Saturday, both festivals can be conducted as per the rituals but in the absence of devotees in view of the Covid-19 crisis.

After a meeting of the Temple Managing Committee held in Bhubaneswar, Deb informed that the Snan Yatra on June 5 would be conducted at the Meghanad Pacheri inside the temple as per the rituals but with limited servitors and in presence of selected administrative officials. But the temple would not open for devotees.

The Gajapati Maharaja said the Information and



Public Relations Department has been asked to ensure live telecast of the entire Snan Yatra and share it with media houses.

Devotees across the world can have darshan of the deities staying in their houses through television, he said.

Regarding Rath Yatra scheduled on June 23, he said that a proposal has been given to the Government for holding the festival in accordance with the rituals but without devotees.

The festival would be held only if the Government gives

permission for it. The Government would take steps to ensure that no outside devotees come to Puri and no local devotees gather on the Bada Danda during the entire festival.

The Gajapati further said the Shreemandir would remain closed for devotees till Niladri Bije (return of the deities to the main shrine from the Gundicha Temple) even if the Centre eases the lockdown norms and allows religious institutions to resume normal functioning.

## 180 migrants from Andaman & Nicobar land in Ranchi

PNS ■ RANCHI

At least 180 Jharkhand Amigrants, stranded in different parts of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, were flown down to Ranchi in a chartered Indigo flight on Saturday at the behest of chief minister Hemant Soren - a development that comes close on the heels of the return of 60 such migrants from Leh on Friday, a press communique from the Chief Minister's office said.

The stranded migrants boarded the flight at Port Blair at around 3.30pm and landed at the Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi at 6.10 pm. State Drinking Water and Sanitation Minister Mithilesh Thakur welcomed the migrants at the airport with red roses. The Government also ensured food packets and water for all the returnees.

"Several stranded migrants have returned to Jharkhand in the past 48 hours. I welcome them home," Soren said. "The Government is committed in reaching out to all the stranded migrants of our state and ensure their safe return," he added.

The Government spent



around Rs 21 lakh in the return of these migrants, an official from Soren's office said.

The migrants, mostly from Santhal Pargana region of the state, were taken to their respective districts from the Ranchi airport by buses, he added. Dhanik Oraon, one of the migrants who was stranded in Andaman and Nicobar for over two months said, "All of us are grateful to the chief minister for coming to our rescue in this time of crisis," he said.

Jharkhand became the first state to airlift its migrants from Leh on Friday. Earlier, on Thursday, the alumni of

National Law School in Bangalore leased an Air Asia flight for return of 180 odd migrants from Mumbai to Ranchi. At least 400 migrants have returned to Jharkhand by air in the past 48 hours.

At a time when migrant workers are reportedly covering miles on foot to reach home as they battle abandonment by their employers, this development is among the rare positive happenings for migrants in India.

Over a dozen Jharkhand migrants have died in road accidents while returning home during the lockdown, while many have fallen prey to COVID-19 infection.

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## COVID-19 cases cross 550 mark in Jharkhand

PNS ■ RANCHI

Jharkhand again witnessed an unprecedented surge in cases of COVID-19 infection on Saturday as 41 suspects tested positive for the viral infection in 24 hours, officials from the health department said. Besides, East Singhbhum - a district which had not reported even a single case of COVID-19 infection until May - reported 26 new cases on Saturday, officials added.

"Most of the suspects who tested positive are migrant workers," said Health Secretary Nitin Madan Kulkarni. At least 45 new cases were reported on Friday, the highest in a day, he added. With Saturday's findings, the number of new cases reported in Jharkhand in the past 48 hours goes up to 86.

According to a daily COVID-19 bulletin released by

the National Health Mission (NHM), the total count of COVID-19 cases crossed the 550 mark in Jharkhand on Saturday. At least 563 cases were reported in the State by the time this report was filed on Saturday. Out of the 563 cases, at least 355 are migrant workers, the NHM bulletin said.

While 41 new cases surfacing on Saturday is worrisome for the Government, it is worth noticing that around the same number of patients also recovered from the viral infection on the same day, officials said. According to the NHM bulletin, at least 40 COVID-19 patients won their battle against the virus on Saturday and were discharged from hospital. Besides East Singhbhum, cases were reported from Hazaribag, Simdega, Garhwa, Gumla, Palamu and Khunti.



PPF personnel feeding the poor near Hatia Railway station in Ranchi on Saturday

Pioneer photo

According to figures with the NHM, at least 216 COVID-19 patients have recovered in

Jharkhand so far. There are more than 300 active cases in State as reported on Saturday

late evening. More than half of the 563 odd people infected by COVID-19 virus so far in

## Community kitchens providing good food in Ranchi, says ACS

PNS ■ RANCHI

Additional Chief Secretary, Food and Civic Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Government of Jharkhand, Arun Kumar Singh on Saturday conducted a surprise inspection of various Dal Bhat Centers operating in Ranchi District and found no irregularities there. Singh said that the Centers are providing proper food to people.

Singh inspected Dal Bhat Center of Bariatu Police Station. He found that the people were present at the Center and were having food. The Station In-Charge informed that allotment is received for 200 people

per day, but due to RIMS hospital, 400-500 people are getting food here daily.

After this Singh visited, the special Dal-Bhat Centre or Chief Minister Mega Kitchen operated at Ruin House, Morhabadi, is equivalent to 10 centers, which are being fed daily to about 8000-10000 persons from the Center for the last two months in collaboration with the operator of the Ruin House. The system of cleanliness and packaging of food was found to be good at the Center. Subsequently, the Anjuman Islamia, a typical Dal Bhat Center, is also equivalent to the 10 Centers operated in the Anjuman Plaza complex located in Hindapiri



was inspected.

After that, the Additional Chief Secretary visited the Chief Minister Dal-Bhat Center located in Namkom block. A huge quantity of Khichdi with soybean was prepared at the Center and the system of cleanliness

was also found good. A total of 31 Centers of Mukhya Mantri Dal Bhat Centers, 40 Centers of Special Dal-Bhaat Yojana, 33 Centers of Additional Dal-Bhaat scheme and 22 Centers of Specialized Dal Bhat Yojana are being operated in Ranchi District. A total of 14,61,132 persons have been fed food since last two months.

The State Food Corporation warehouse located in Namkom block was also inspected by Singh. Assistant Warehouse Manager and Transport-cum-Handling agent were present at the warehouse during the inspection. Most of the public distribution system shops were allocated against the allocated food grains of May 2020.

During investigation, the capacity of State Food Corporation Godown, Namkom was found to be small and in a very poor condition. The Secretary directed to make land mark available in the Block Headquarters so that a new warehouse can be constructed quickly.

According to the instructions of Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Rai Mahimapat Ray, free food is being provided to the poor and helpless through the Chief Minister Didi Kitchen running in the Panchayats of various blocks of Ranchi District. So far 2326798 people have been provided free food through these centers.

# 1 YR IN OFFICE OF MODI GOVT 2.0 CONG: 1ST YEAR OF DISAPPOINTMENT

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday described the first year of the Modi Government as a "year of disappointment, disastrous management and diabolical pain."

Congress leader KC Venugopal said the six years of the Modi dispensation have seen fraying of bonds of empathy, fraternity and brotherhood with increase in acts of communal and sectarian violence.

Party's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said that at the end of six years, it appears the Modi Government is at war with its people and is inflicting wounds on them, instead of healing them. "It is inflicting wounds on Mother India," he said.

"This Government is trying to fill coffers of the select rich and is inflicting pain on the poor," Surjewala said.

On the BJP's charge of the Congress playing politics over the Covid-19 crisis, Venugopal said the Opposition party did not indulge in any politics and gave suggestions instead.

"Being a responsible opposition, it is our duty to raise the problems faced by the common people. As Opposition, we

highlighted the failures of the Government," he said.

Venugopal said the Government "is totally insensitive" to the plight of migrant labourers and farmers.

Surjewala also demanded that a virtual session of Parliament be convened immediately to discuss pressing issues and the due process be set in motion for holding of meetings of various parliamentary committees. Modi and his cabinet had taken oath on this day last year for a second term in office.

The Congress also highlighted the failure of the Government on the economic front, saying the Prime Minister announced two crore jobs whereas India witnessed the highest unemployment rate in the last 45 years which reached in 2017-18 to 6.1 per cent overall — 7.8 per cent in urban India and 5.3 per cent in rural India.

"Post-Covid, India's unemployment rate has soared to an unprecedented 27.11 per cent (CMEI)," he said.

He said under the Modi government, the GDP has become synonymous with "Grossly Declining Performance".

"Most international and national rating agencies have

predicted negative GDP growth in Financial Year 2020-21. The economy had been mismanaged to the point of ruin long before Covid-19," he said.

"The way in which the Prime Minister holds talks with the chief ministers through video conferencing, why cannot the standing committees and Parliament also be allowed to convene important meetings through virtual sessions," he said.

Venugopal also said that the six years of the Modi government witnessed "loan write-offs" for bank fraudsters to the tune of Rs 66 lakh crore from 2014-2015 to September 2019.

He pointed out that in the last six years, India witnessed 32,868 bank frauds involving public money to the tune of Rs 2.70 lakh crore and stressed assets of the banks rose to Rs 16.5 thousand crore. "Bank NPAs rose 423 per cent from Rs 2.24 lakh crore on June 30, 2014 to Rs 9.5 lakh crore in March 2020," Venugopal said.

"The most shocking revelation of write-offs came on April 24, 2020, in an RTI reply. In the midst of Covid-19, the Modi government wrote off loans worth Rs 68,607 crore for the likes of Mehul Choksi, Nirav Modi, Jatin Mehta, Vijay Malhaya and others," Congress alleged.

The Congress also slammed the Government over the Rs 20 lakh-crore Covid-19 relief package touted by the Prime Minister as 10 per cent of GDP to be a mere 0.83 per cent of GDP in reality.

lakh crore package, the WHO accepted that India is the country which has shown that economic aspect is also to be taken into consideration during the time of Covid-19 crisis," he said.

Nadd said the Modi Government took bold decision and did not stop at ifs and buts. "If we felt it was right then we went ahead with a decision and did not waver," he said.

BJP president listed abrogation of Article 370, Citizenship Amendment Act, criminalisation of triple talaq, resolution of Ayodhya temple dispute and cross-border air strikes as the major achievements of the Modi Government.

He charged the Congress of putting hurdle on the way to the resolution of court decision on the temple issue and "delaying" it.

BJP president said while the Government did all to contain coronavirus, the Congress sought to politicise the pandemic and described Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's comments as "irresponsible" and "without proper facts and study".

Nadda said in last six-years, Modi has moved the country from the indecisive and paralytic mood prevailing during the Congress Government to a culture of decisiveness.

Former BJP president and Union Home Minister Amit Shah also congratulated Prime Minister on the first anniversary of his government's second term.

He described the second term of PM Modi as "historic" and claimed that the ruling Government has corrected many "historic wrongs."

# BJP: It is year of accomplishments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda on Saturday applauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Government for completing the first year of its second consecutive tenure and called it a year of "accomplishment with unimaginable challenges" saying that a "cultural change" in political arena is very much visible with the BJP dispensation showing its capacity to take bold decisions unlike the paralysis reflected during the Congress regimes.

He said Prime Minister's leadership has been acknowledged globally and in the time of global pandemic, he has led the country with a "timely lockdown" and situation has been "stabilised".

"This has been a year of accomplishments and we have also faced unimaginable challenges. The Prime Minister led from the front to give a vision to the country and managed the coronavirus crisis well. Starting from testing facility to developing PPE kits and ventilators in the fight against Covid-19, the country under Prime Minister Modi's leadership is heading towards indigenous and self-reliant India. A holistic package was also announced by our Government," BJP president said addressing a digital Press conference from BJP headquarters.

Nadda said his party would conduct 2,000 virtual rallies through one month as he accepted that coronavirus has created a problem for future political campaigns and activities. "We have seen that this Government is responsive, receptive and has the capacity to take bold decisions. With the announcement of Rs 1.70

lakh crore package, the WHO accepted that India is the country which has shown that economic aspect is also to be taken into consideration during the time of Covid-19 crisis," he said.

Nadd said the Modi Government took bold decision and did not stop at ifs and buts. "If we felt it was right then we went ahead with a decision and did not waver," he said.

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# Conditions still not right to declare onset of monsoon over Kerala: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said conditions are still not right to declare onset of monsoon over Kerala.

The IMD's reaction came after the private forecaster Skymet Weather announced that the southwest monsoon has arrived in Kerala before its onset schedule. After this, in a tweet Ministry of Earth Sciences secretary Madhavan Rajeevan said the news about monsoon onset over Kerala in social media is not correct. Monsoon has not arrived over Kerala. The IMD also issued a twin depression alert for the Arabian Sea as the latter readies to match the Bay of Bengal in terms of the build-up for a spectacular onset of the mon-

soon over Kerala. The monsoon had hitched a hike on an eventual super cyclone Amphan to enter the Bay almost 10 days ago.

According to the IMD director general Mrutunjay Mohapatra, conditions are still not right to declare onset of monsoon over Kerala. "Conditions are becoming favourable for further advance of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of south Arabian Sea, Maldives-Comorin area, southwest and the southeast Bay of Bengal during next 48 hours," the IMD said.

According to the IMD, there are three major conditions to declare the onset of monsoon. The first is if, after May 10, 60 per cent of the 14 weather stations -- Minicoy, Amini, Thiruvananthapuram,



Punalur, Kollam, Allapuzha, Kottayam, Kochi, Thrissur, Kozhikode, Thalassery, Kannur, Kudulu and Mangalore - report rainfall of 2.5 millimetres or more for two consecutive days, the onset over Kerala will be declared on the second day. The second is the depth of westerlies should be maintained up to 600 hectopascals (hPa) and the third is

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the precise origin of SARS-CoV-2, which has caused havoc across the world, remains a mystery, researchers have found evidence that a combination of genetic shuffling and evolutionary selection of near-identical genetic sequences among specific bat and pangolin coronaviruses may have led to the evolution of the deadly virus and its introduction to humans.

The study is published in the peer-reviewed journal Science Advances.

The team led by Duke University in North Carolina showed that the virus' entire receptor binding motif (RBM), a component that plays a key role in viral entry into host cells, was introduced through recombination with pangolin coronaviruses.

Understanding the origins of SARS-CoV-2 is critical for deterring future zoonosis, discovering new drugs, and developing a vaccine.

"We show evidence of strong purifying selection around the receptor binding motif (RBM) in the spike and other genes among bat, pangolin, and human coronaviruses, suggesting similar evolutionary constraints in different host species," explained Xiaojun Li, the lead researcher from Duke University.

"We also demonstrate that SARS-CoV-2's entire RBM was introduced through recombination with coronaviruses from pangolins, possibly a critical step in the evolution of SARS-CoV-2's ability to infect humans," he added.

The study joins ongoing efforts to identify the source of the virus that causes Covid-19.



"Proximity of different species in a wet market setting, for example, may increase the potential for cross-species spillover infections, by enabling recombination between more distant coronaviruses and the emergence of mutations," the authors wrote.

By analyzing 43 complete genome sequences from three strains of SARS-CoV-2-like coronaviruses from bats and pangolins, Li and colleagues delineated which strains were most and least similar to the

novel coronavirus, with a special focus on genes related to the virus' spike protein complex, - a critical component that facilitates viral entry into host cells.

They found evidence of strong evolutionary selection

around the RBM among the bat, pangolin, and human coronaviruses they studied.

Amino acid sequences from these viruses and SARS-CoV-2 were identical or nearly identical in the regions adjacent to the RBM, suggesting that common evolutionary mechanisms shaped these distinct viral strains.

Together, evolutionary selection and frequent recombination among coronaviruses from bats, pangolins, and humans may have allowed the closely related viruses to readily jump between species, leading to the introduction of SARS-CoV-2 in humans, said the study.

# Do sero-survey in high-risk populations to assess exposure to Covid: ICMR to States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ICMR has advised the States to conduct sero-survey to measure coronavirus exposure in the population using IgG ELISA Test. The sero-surveys help to understand the proportion of population exposed to the virus infection including asymptomatic individuals.

Depending upon the level of sero-prevalence of infection, appropriate public health interventions can be planned and implemented for prevention and control of the disease. Periodic sero-surveys are useful to guide the policy makers, said the ICMR in a statement here.

IgG antibodies generally start appearing after two weeks of onset of infection, once the



individual has recovered after infection and last for several months. Therefore, while the IgG test is not useful for detecting acute infection, it indicates episode of SARS-CoV-2 infection in the past.

In an attempt to decide the future course of action against the pandemic, ICMR has already shared a detailed plan to all the States to measure coronavirus exposure in general population as well as in high risk populations. This sero-survey will

guide appropriate public health intervention. The ICMR has provided an indicative list of different groups to be tested with states depending upon the requirement and situation in that particular area.

To increase availability of the IgG ELISA test, ICMR has transferred this technology to many pharma companies viz. Zydus Cadila, J Mitra & Company, Meril Diagnostics, Votxur Bio, Trivritron Healthcare, Karwah Enterprises, Avecon Healthcare, etc.

The technology has been transferred to various entities without exclusivity clause and therefore can be further shared with others as per demand and capability. IgG ELISA tests from other USFDA/CE-IVD/indigenous sources are also available.

● The sero-surveys help to understand the proportion of population exposed to the virus infection including asymptomatic individuals

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# WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

## WHO to reach out to Gen Z!

To make them aware, alert about nefarious tactics adopted by tobacco lobby to lure them to their nicotine, tobacco products

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Catch them young! The World Health Organization (WHO) on World No Tobacco Day on Sunday is reaching out to Generation Z — the kids and school students to make them aware and alert about the nefarious tactics adopted by the tobacco lobby to lure them to their nicotine and tobacco products.

It will launch school kits exposing the tactics such as parties and concerts hosted by the tobacco and related industries, e-cigarette flavours that attract youth like bubble-gum and candy, e-cigarette representatives presenting in schools, and product placement in popular youth streaming shows.

The kit for school students aged 13-17 has a set of classroom activities including one that puts the students in the shoes of the tobacco industry to make them aware of how the industry tries to manipulate them into using deadly products. It also includes an educational video, myth-buster quiz, and homework assignments.

The focus of World No Tobacco Day, this year, is "protecting youth from industry manipulation and preventing them from tobacco and nicotine use". Health experts say that industry eye children in a bid to replace the eight million people that its products kill



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every year. Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO Regional Office for the South-East Asia (WHO SEARO) in her message on the occasion advised the countries of the South-East Asia Region that schools can raise awareness of the dangers of initiating nicotine and tobacco use by providing information resources and making their campuses tobacco and ENDS free.

"Youth groups can organise local events to engage and educate young people on the many harms of tobacco use, including its impact on personal finances," she said.

Dr Jagdish Kaur, Regional

Adviser, Tobacco Free Initiative (WHO SEARO) added protecting youth from tobacco use, new and emerging tobacco and nicotine products and the tactics of tobacco industry is of paramount importance for a tobacco free generation.

According to the WHO, every year the tobacco industry invests more than USD 9 billion to advertise its products.

Even during a global pandemic, the tobacco and nicotine industry persist by pushing products that limit people's ability to fight coronavirus and recover from the disease. The industry has offered free branded masks and delivery to your door during quarantine and has lobbied for their products to be listed as 'essential'. Little wonder that over 40 million young people aged 13-15 have already started to use tobacco.

"Educating youth is vital because nearly 9 out of 10 smokers start before age 18. We want to provide young people with the knowledge to speak out against tobacco industry manipulation," said Ruediger Krech, Director for Health Promotion at WHO.

Countries can protect children from industry exploitation by putting in place strict tobacco control laws, including regulating products like e-cigarettes that have already begun to hook a new generation of young people, said the WHO.

# Srijan scam: ED attaches assets worth ₹14.32 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached movable and immovable assets worth Rs 14.32 crore of Srijan Mahila Vikas Sahyog Samiti Limited (SMVSSL) and others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in a case relating to embezzlement of Government funds.

The attached assets includes 20 flats at Noida, Ghaziabad, Pune, Ranchi, Bhagalpur and Patna, 19 Shops at Noida, Ghaziabad and Bhagalpur, 33 Plots/Houses in Bihar, a Volkswagen Car and available balances in bank accounts amounting to Rs 4.84 crore. Probe under PMLA has revealed that during 2003-04 onwards funds to the tune of Rs.557 crores have been siphoned off from the Government accounts after being illegally transferred to the bank accounts of SMVSSL.

The ED initiated investigation under PMLA against SMVSSL and others under PMLA on the basis of FIR registered by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for commission of offences under Indian Penal Code Sections relating to criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust and forgery besides provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act. Late Manorma Devi was the Secretary of the society SMVSSL since its inception till her death on February 13, 2017.

# LADAKH STANDOFF

## Rajnath: India, China engaged to resolve face-offs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With tension continuing at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Saturday India and China are engaged at diplomatic and military levels to resolve the face-offs. Making it clear that the issue is bilateral, he also said this was conveyed to his US counterpart Mark Esper in telephonic conversation on Friday. It is the first time in the last 25 plus days since the four stand-offs that a senior Central Minister has given a statement.

Making these assertions, Singh also said "the country should be assured that we will not allow India's dignity to be hurt under any circumstances" adding "India has always tried to maintain a peaceful relation with its neighbours. We do not seek to challenge any nation."

Elaborating upon the Government's plan of action to address the ongoing confrontation in Ladakh with China also bolstering its troop strength besides intruding into the Hot Spring area in Galwan valley, the minister in an interview with a private television channel said he told the US that India will resolve the issue with China bilaterally.

"Yesterday (Friday) I spoke to the Secretary Defence of the US and I told him that India has a set mechanism under which we resolve our disputes with China, both at the military and diplomatic level. The mechanism is in place and our talks are on with China," Singh said.

His comments come days after US President Donald Trump said he is willing to mediate between India and China to resolve the ongoing dispute in Ladakh region and termed it "raging border dispute." The foreign ministries of India and China had rejected his offer two days back and said parleys were on.

At least seven rounds of talks at the local commander level of two armies have already taken place in the last fortnight. However, the face-offs are still on as there is no breakthrough so far. The external affairs ministry had said some days back that the issue will be



resolved as per the five agreements on border management signed between the two countries between 1993 and 2013.

Without going into the specifics, Singh said "India is trying to ensure that this tension does not escalate. Engagements are on with China both at the military and diplomatic level. Even China has said it wants to settle this via dialogue."

On the current situation on the LAC, he said "India's policy has been very clear that we should have good relations with all neighbours. This has been a long-standing effort. But sometimes, circumstances arise with China that things like this happen," he said.

To a question on China's ability to exert pressure on India, the Minister said there was no question of this happening since the country had a strong leadership and the people knew this. Asked about reports that Chinese troops have crossed into Indian territory in Ladakh, Singh said there were differing perceptions on the alignment of the LAC due to which both sides patrol across the LAC till their lines of perception.

Singh also referred to the Doklam stand-off between the two armies in Sikkim plateau in 2017 and said "it appeared at that time that the situation was very tense. But we did not step back... Ultimately, we were able to resolve the situation." The eyeball to eyeball confrontation there last for nearly 73 days and intervention at the highest diplomatic level led to the two armies stepping back.

Asked about dispute with Nepal over Lipulekh and Kalapani regions, Singh said, "Nepal is our brother. We will settle our difference via dialogue." Kathmandu is protesting against opening of nearly 100 km long road near Lipulekh in Uttarakhand by India thereby reducing Kailash Mansarovar yatra by more than ten days. Incidentally, Singh had inaugurated this road earlier this month.

'I CAN'T BREATHE'

# Protests over Floyd's death overwhelm US authorities again

**Minneapolis:** Fires burned unchecked and thousands protesting the police killing of George Floyd ignored a curfew as unrest overwhelmed authorities for another night in Minneapolis, and the Governor acknowledged on Saturday that he didn't have enough manpower to contain the chaos.

The new round of tumult — which has also spread to other cities — came despite Minnesota Gov Tim Walz vowing Friday to show a more forceful response than city leaders had the day before. But by early Saturday morning, Walz said he didn't have enough troops, even with some 500 National Guardsmen.

"We do not have the numbers," Walz said. "We cannot arrest people when we are trying to hold ground." Walz said he was moving quickly to mobilize more than 1,000 more Guard members, for a total of 1,700, and was considering the potential offer of federal military police. But he warned that even that might not be enough, saying he expected another difficult night Saturday.

The Pentagon on Saturday ordered the Army to put military police units on alert to head to the city on short notice at President Donald Trump's request, according to three people with direct knowledge of the orders who did not want their names used because they were not authorized to discuss the preparations. The rare step came as the violence spread to other cities: A man shot dead in Detroit, police cars battered in Atlanta and skirmishes with police in New York City.



Protesters and National Guardsmen face off on East Lake Street

AP

Criminal charges filed Friday morning against the white officer who held his knee for nearly nine minutes on the neck of Floyd, a black man who was handcuffed at the time, did nothing to stem the anger. Derek Chauvin, 44, was charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter.

Minneapolis police said shots had been fired at law enforcement officers during the protests but no one was injured.

As the night dragged on, fires erupted across the city's south side, including at a Japanese restaurant, a Wells Fargo bank and an Office Depot. Many burned for hours, with firefighters again delayed in reaching them because areas

were not secure.

Shortly before midnight, scores of officers on foot and in vehicles moved in to curb the violence, one day after city and state leaders faced blowback for their handling of the crisis. On Thursday, protesters had torched a police station soon after it was abandoned by police and went on to burn or vandalize dozens of businesses.

The Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association urged Gov Walz to accept any help.

"You need more resources," the group said in a tweet. "Law enforcement needs leadership." Not all the protests were violent. Downtown, thousands of demonstrators encircled a barricaded police station after the 8 p.m. Friday curfew. "Prosecute the police!" some

chanted, and "Say his name: George Floyd!" Some protesters sprayed graffiti on buildings.

Anger filled the streets of Minneapolis. Ben Hubert, a 26-year-old local resident, said he wasn't surprised people were breaking curfew and setting fires. "I'm outraged," he said of the Floyd case. "But I'm also sad. The injustice has been going on for so long. It's been swelling for years."

Chauvin was also accused of ignoring another officer who expressed concerns about Floyd as he pleaded that he could not breathe, while Chauvin pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes. Floyd had been arrested on suspicion of using a counterfeit \$20 bill at a store. AP

## Trump walks back his incendiary Minneapolis 'thugs' tweet

**Washington:** President Donald Trump has tried to walk back his post-midnight "thugs" tweet about Minneapolis protesters that added to outrage over the police killing of a black man.

Trump's repeated condemnation of the killing and outreach to the man's family was a marked change in tone from his earlier comments that also invoked a civil-rights-era phrase fraught with racist overtones.

"When the looting starts, the shooting starts," Trump had written in a tweet that was quickly flagged by Twitter as violating rules against "glorifying violence."

Trump later said his comments had been misconstrued. "Frankly it means when there's looting, people get shot and they die," he said.

Trump's whiplash comments came after protesters torched a Minneapolis police station on Thursday night, capping three days of searing demonstrations over the death of George Floyd, who was captured on video pleading for air as a white police officer knelt on his neck for over eight minutes.

And they underscored Trump's complicated relationship with race as he tries to maintain a law-and-order

mantle while looking to appeal to black voters during an election year.

They also highlighted his refusal to avoid controversy or cede the spotlight even as the battered nation tries to make sense of another killing and reels over the mounting COVID-19 death toll.

Trump, in his tweets, borrowed a phrase once used by former Miami Police Chief Walter Headley in a 1967 speech outlining his department's efforts to "combat young hoodlums who have taken advantage of the civil rights campaign." AP

## Police: 1 dead after shots fired at protesters in Detroit

**Detroit:** One person was killed in downtown Detroit after someone in an SUV fired shots into a crowd of people protesting George Floyd's death in Minneapolis custody, a Detroit police spokeswoman said Saturday. The shooting occurred about 11:30 pm on Friday near Detroit's Greektown entertainment district as officers were confronted with dozens of protesters, said Sgt. Nicole Kirkwood, a police department spokeswoman. She said an officer wasn't involved in the shooting. AP

## Biden speaks of racial open wound, contrasting with Trump

**Washington:** Joe Biden lamented the "open wound" of the nation's systemic racism on Friday as he responded to the police killing of a black man in Minnesota. He drew an implicit contrast with President Donald Trump, who has suggested authorities could respond with violence to the protests that followed George Floyd's death.

"The original sin of this country still stains our nation today," Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, said in remarks broadcast from his home in Wilmington, Delaware. "It's time for us to take a hard look at uncomfortable

truths." Biden announced his bid for the presidency last year arguing he's uniquely positioned to unite a deeply divided country. He pointed to Trump's response to a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, as unworthy of America's people and values.

As the country endures another spasm of racial unrest, the central premise of Biden's campaign is being tested. Biden is responding by positioning himself as an empathetic counter to Trump, who often struggles to convey emotion or connect on a personal level during moments of crisis. AP

## In unusual move, US embassies in Africa speak up on Floyd

**Johannesburg:** As Minneapolis burns over the police killing of George Floyd and shock and disappointment in Africa grow, some US embassies on the continent have taken the unusual step of issuing critical statements, saying no one is above the law.

The statements came as the head of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, condemned the "murder" of Floyd and said Friday the continental body rejects the "continuing discriminatory practices against black citizens of the USA."

Africa has not seen the

kind of protests over Floyd's killing that have erupted across the United States, but many Africans have expressed disgust and dismay, openly wondering when the US will ever get it right. "WTF? 'When the looting starts the shooting starts?'" tweeted political cartoonist Patrick Gathara in Kenya, which has its own troubles with police brutality.

He, like many, was aghast at the tweet by President Donald Trump, flagged by Twitter as violating rules against "glorifying violence," that the president later said had been misconstrued. AP

## US, UK raise Hong Kong issue in Security Council

### Angry China rakes up Minneapolis protests

**United Nations:** The US and UK raised the issue of China's controversial security law for Hong Kong during an emergency discussion in the Security Council, angering Beijing which said the UN organ should instead pay attention to the US' excessive use of force against protesters in Minneapolis and its racial discrimination against black communities.

The 15-nation Council discussed Hong Kong in an informal virtual meeting after the US and United Kingdom brought the issue for emergency discussion under "any other business" on Friday.

"Today I asked the Council one simple question: are we going to take the honourable stand to defend the human

rights and the dignified way of life that millions of Hong Kong citizens have enjoyed and deserve like all freedom loving people, or are we going to allow the Chinese Communist Party to violate international law and force its will on the people of Hong Kong who look to us to preserve their way of life and their freedoms?" US Ambassador to the UN Kelly Craft said.

Craft said that the US is resolute and calls upon all UN member states to join it in demanding that China immediately reverse course and honour its international legal commitments to this institution and to the Hong Kong people.

Beijing shot back, saying the adoption of the legislation is purely China's internal affair and has nothing to do with the work and mandate of the Security Council.

China's Ambassador to the UN Zhang Jun, along with Russia, slammed the US for the killing of George Floyd, an African-American man who died this week in Minneapolis after a white police officer knelt on his neck while he was handcuffed and pinned to the ground, triggering violent protests.

"It's our view that, instead of wasting time on this issue, the Council should pay more attention and even take action on issues more relevant to international peace and security."

"Just to name a few, the impact of the Brexit on international peace and security, the unilateral sanctions imposed by the US and other countries, the excessive use of force against protesters in Minneapolis, the killing of an African American young man and racial discrimination against African Americans.

This list can be endless. China stands ready to work with

you on these issues," Zhang said. PTI

## US action on Hong Kong 'doomed to fail': China

PTI ■ BEIJING

The mouthpiece of China's ruling Communist Party said US moves to end some trading privileges for Hong Kong "grossly interfere" in China's internal affairs and are "doomed to fail".

Saturday's editorial in the newspaper People's Daily was responding to an announcement from President Donald Trump, after China's ceremonial Parliament bypassed Hong Kong's local legislature to advance legislation that could severely curtail free speech and opposition political activities in the semi-autonomous

## Trump bans entry of certain groups of Chinese students to US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump has issued a proclamation banning the entry of Chinese students and researchers having ties with the People's Liberation Army to dismantle China's efforts to use graduate students to acquire intellectual property and technology from America.

Trump's announcement came amidst escalating confrontation between the US and China over trade, the origins of the novel coronavirus pandemic, Beijing's security crackdown in Hong Kong and the communist giant's aggressive military moves in the disputed South China Sea.

## EU urges Trump to rethink cutting funding to WHO

**Washington:** The European Union on Saturday urged US President Donald Trump to rethink his decision to cut American funding for the World Health Organisation amid global criticism of the move, as spiking infection rates in India and elsewhere served as a reminder the global pandemic is far from contained.

Trump on Friday charged that the WHO didn't respond adequately to the pandemic, accusing the UN agency of being under China's "total control." European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on Saturday urged Trump to reconsider, saying that "actions that weaken international results must be avoided" and that "now is the time for enhanced cooperation and common solutions." "The WHO needs to continue being

able to lead the international response to pandemics, current and future," she said. "For this, the participation and support of all is required and very much needed." The US is the largest source of financial support for the WHO, and its exit is expected to significantly weaken the organization. Trump said the US would "redirecting" the money to "other worldwide and deserving urgent global public health needs," without providing specifics.

The WHO wouldn't comment on the announcement but South African Health Minister Zweli Mkhize called it an "unfortunate" turn of events. "Certainly, when faced with a serious pandemic, you want all nations in the world to be particularly focused ... On one common enemy," he told reporters. AP

## Merkel won't attend G7 summit in person if US goes ahead

**Berlin:** Chancellor Angela Merkel will not personally attend a meeting in the US with the leaders of the world's major economies if President Donald Trump goes ahead with it, unless the course of the coronavirus spread changes by then, her office said Saturday.

After canceling the Group of Seven summit, originally scheduled for June 10-12 at Camp David, Trump said a week ago that he was again considering hosting an in-person meeting of world leaders because it would be a "great sign

to all" of things returning to normal during the pandemic.

Immediately after that announcement, Merkel suggested she had not yet made up her mind on whether to attend in person or by video conference, but her office told the dpa news agency she has now made a decision. "As of today, given the overall pandemic situation, she cannot commit to participating in person," her office said. It added that the chancellor would continue to monitor the coronavirus situation in case things change. AP

## Kenya police kill 2 children, fetus trying to catch father

AP ■ NAIROBI

Two children and their unborn sibling have been killed in a Kenyan police operation aimed at detaining their father, a human rights group said Saturday.

Police, who called the man a suspected Islamic extremist with an al-Qaida linked group, confirmed the children's deaths and asserted they were used as "human shields."

A police report seen by The Associated Press said an elite

unit went to the house of Mohamed Mapenzi in Kibundani area of coastal Kwale County in search of firearms Friday night.

The report said the unit had been directed there by another suspected member of al-Shabab, based in neighboring Somalia.

Al-Shabab has been carrying out attacks inside Kenya since 2011 in retaliation for Kenya's troop presence in Somalia. The report says officers ordered the suspect to open his house but he refused.

## Israeli cops shoot unstable Palestinian in Jerusalem

**Jerusalem:** Israeli police shot dead a Palestinian near Jerusalem's Old City on Saturday who they had suspected was carrying a weapon but turned out to be unarmed.

The police say he was carrying "a suspicious object that looked like a pistol" and ran away when ordered to stop. The police say they chased him on foot and opened fire.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld later said that no gun was found in the area. A relative of the deceased

identified him as Iyad Halak, 32. The relative said Halak was mentally disabled and was heading to a nearby school for people with special needs. The relative spoke on condition of anonymity because of privacy concerns.

The shooting came a day after Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank who they said had tried to ram them with his vehicle. No Israelis were wounded in either incident. Tensions have risen in

recent weeks as Israel has pressed ahead with plans to annex large parts of the occupied West Bank in line with President Donald Trump's Middle East plan, which strongly favors Israel and was rejected by the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority said last week that it was no longer bound by past agreements with Israel and the United States and was cutting off all ties, including longstanding security coordination. AP

## Lanka fears 2nd virus wave after thousands gather to pay tribute to Tamil leader

**Colombo:** A prominent doctors' body in Sri Lanka warned of a second wave of COVID-19 infections in the country after thousands of people defying social distancing rules gathered to pay tributes to a prominent Tamil minister, who died earlier this week.

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) leader Arumugam Thondaman, who represented Tamils of Indian origin, passed away on Tuesday and is due to be cremated on Sunday in the central hilly Nuwara Eliya district.

Tens of thousands of his supporters gathered to pay respects to Thondaman, defying all quarantine regulations put in

place to curb the pandemic.

In a statement on Saturday, the doctors' body warned that gatherings at the politician's funeral could trigger the second wave of coronavirus infection.

Thondaman's body was taken to the national parliament on Thursday for a lie-in-state and for public viewing at his Ceylon Workers' Congress party head office in Colombo before it was airlifted to his home district of Nuwara Eliya.

The doctors expressed their "displeasure" over the public funeral of Thondaman at a time when health authorities had asked people to restrict funerals to the closest family.

The country will impose a

nation-wide curfew tomorrow.

The government already declared curfew in Nuwara Eliya district on Saturday ahead of the funeral.

The island nation has reported a sudden spike in the number of COVID-19 cases, mainly among those who were recently repatriated from overseas.

The country has recorded 1,559 infections as of Saturday with 10 deaths. Over 750 of the COVID-19 patients have been discharged from hospitals. Only this week the Government formally ended the lockdown imposed since March 20 by lifting daytime curfew in the capital district of Colombo. PTI

## South Korea has another 39 cases linked to warehouse

**Seoul:** South Korea on Saturday reported 39 new cases of the coronavirus, most of them in the densely populated Seoul area where officials have linked scores of infections to warehouse workers.

Figures from South Korea's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention brought national totals to 11,441 confirmed cases and 269 deaths. At least 12 of the new cases were linked to international arrivals.

KCDC Director Jeong Eun-kyeong said Friday that at least 102 infections had been linked to workers at a massive warehouse operated by Coupang, a local e-commerce giant that has seen orders spike

during the epidemic.

The company has been criticized for failing to implement proper preventive measures and enforce distance between employees, with the virus discovered on safety helmets, laptops, keyboards and other equipment they share.

Health workers have also found at least 266 infections linked to nightclubs and other entertainment venues in the Seoul metropolitan area, which saw huge crowds in early May as officials eased social distancing guidelines. The resurgence in infections has alarmed officials as millions of children have been returning to school nationwide. AP

## New York City to begin re-opening on June 8

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Regions across New York State began their phased re-opening this month but New York City remained shut as it did not meet the seven health-related criteria necessary for the first phase of reopening.

Addressing a press conference on Friday, New York Governor Cuomo said the city is on track to meet all the metrics and will enter phase one of reopening on June 8. New York City has been shut since mid-March as coronavirus ravaged the metropolis, which has reported over 199,038 coronavirus cases so far and close to 20,000 deaths. US has so far reported more than 1,747,085 COVID-19 cases and over 102,835 fatalities -- both the numbers highest in the world. AP

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## Around the Globe

**Kathmandu:** Nepal on Saturday registered its highest single-day surge in coronavirus cases with 189 new infections, including 77 from a district bordering India, taking the COVID-19 tally in the country to over 1,400.

**Moscow:** Russia has recorded nearly 9,000 new cases of the coronavirus, roughly consistent with the increases reported over the past two weeks.

**Singapore:** Singapore on Saturday reported 506 new COVID-19 cases, the majority of them being foreign workers residing in dormitories, taking the total number of infections in the country to 34,366.

**Islamabad:** The coronavirus pandemic turned grimmer in Pakistan with 78 more fatalities in the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,395, while the total cases of the deadly viral infection nears 67,500-mark, the health ministry said on Saturday.

**Cairo:** Egypt on Saturday ordered its people to wear face masks in public, when taking private transportation, and inside government offices as it eases the partial lockdown imposed during the weekend Muslim holiday of Eid-el-Fitr.

**Gaza City:** Students are returning to high schools in the Palestinian territories for the first time in two months for final exams.

**Beijing:** China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier "Shandong" has started conducting sea trials and training to test its equipment and weapons, the Chinese military said.

# 'Economic revival may take 6 months'

**INDIA ■ NEW DELHI**  
 India will emerge stronger from multiple crises of economy, pandemic and super cyclone in the next 6-9 months, say industry leaders, based on the resilience shown by people, businesses and the Government.  
 The telecom and information technology will be key to survival and revival of lives and economy, said the business leaders as they shared their views on challenges faced by the Indian economy at a webinar organised by Confederation of Indian

Industry (CII), Delhi.  
 "Covid-19 has resulted in the world adopting to the 'new normal' by accelerating business transition towards digital practices. IT as the backbone of the economy responded immediately to this crisis as the industry was prepared and working towards digitalisation," said Sujit Bakshi, Head-APAC Business & President, Corporate Affairs at Tech Mahindra. Today around 93-94 per cent of our workforce is working from home.  
 We see this as an opportunity for our industry to change the way of working and

an enhanced engagement with the telecom sector, which has emerged as a lifeline, yet again. I am confident that the IT industry will bounce back in the second half of the financial year," Bakshi told the webinar on "New Normal: Impact of Covid on Business and Economy".  
 According to Prativa Mohapatra, VP Sales at IBM India/South Asia, as the new normal sets in, leadership, decisiveness, empathy and teamwork will become more essential.  
 "The telecom industry has emerged as the nervous system and IT as flesh and blood in the

current pandemic," she said.  
 Rajan Mathews, Director General, Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), the challenges also presents the telecom industry the opportunity to innovate and create critical solutions indigenously which can be globally scalable.  
 "Our industry faces an unprecedented financial crisis and at the same time we require investments in our infrastructure so that we can be future ready to take up emerging challenges," he said. According to Prashant Solomon, Managing Director, Chintels

India Pvt. Ltd and Treasurer, Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India NCR, the lockdown has greatly impacted the real estate sector which is the second largest employer in India.  
 "Operational resilience along with strong government initiatives, like increased liquidity and one-time restructuring of loans, are necessary to help the sector recover. CREDAI recently specified these requirements in an open letter to the PM and we are looking forward to further support," Solomon said.  
 "We are entering in an

economy contraction of 5 to 15 per cent depending on the industry and this economic crisis is unique for India as we have not experienced something like this in decades," said Aditya Berlia, Chairman- CII Delhi, Co-Promoter Apeejay Stya and Svrn Group.  
 "CII has immediately responded and is helping during the crisis but we know more can be done and will be done. The steps taken by the government are fantastic for the medium-term but what we require is something which can help businesses next week, not in six months.

# RBI slaps ₹4 crore penalty on Citibank

## PUNISHED FOR NON-COMPLIANCE OF REGULATIONS

**INDIA ■ MUMBAI**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a fine of ₹4 crore on Citibank for non-compliance of regulations.  
 In a statement issued on Friday, the RBI said the penalty has been imposed on Citibank N.A. for violation of banking regulations related to customer credentials.  
 According to the central bank, Citibank had not complied with the directions issued by the RBI on obtaining declaration from customers about credit facilities enjoyed with other banks, granting non-constituent borrowers, verifying data available in CRILC database and obtaining no-objection certificate (NOC) from lending banks at the time of opening current accounts, and submission of compliance to risk assessment findings.  
 "This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of Section 47 A (1) (c) read with Section 46 (4) (i) of the Act, taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to the aforesaid provision of the Act and the directions issued by RBI. This action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers," the RBI said.  
 The RBI said that the statu-

tory inspection of the Indian operations of the bank with reference to its financial positions as on March 31, 2017 and March 31, 2018 and the Risk Assessment Reports (RARs) pertaining thereto revealed, inter-alia, contravention with the provisions of the Act and non-compliance with the concerned directions of the central bank.  
 In furtherance to the same, a notice was issued to the bank advising it to show-cause as to why penalty should not be imposed for contravention of the provisions of the Act and failure to comply with the directions issued by the RBI.  
 "After considering the bank's reply to the notice, oral submissions made during the personal hearing and examination of additional submissions, the RBI concluded that the aforesaid charges of contravention with the provisions of the Act and non-compliance with RBI directions warranted imposition of monetary penalty," it said.  
 Further, the apex bank has also imposed penalty on three co-operative banks - Nagar Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd., Ahmednagar, TJSB Sahakari Bank Limited and Bharat Co-operative Bank (Mumbai) for non-compliance with various directions issued by it.  
 It has imposed a fine of ₹60 lakh on Bharat Co-operative Bank for non-compliance with the norms on income recognition, asset classification and reporting of frauds. Similarly, fines of ₹40 lakh and ₹45 lakh have been imposed on Nagar Urban Co-operative Bank and TJSB Sahakari Bank, respectively.

# RAI welcomes Govt decision to allow malls, shopping centres to resume

**INDIA ■ NEW DELHI**

Retailers Association of India (RAI) on Saturday welcomed the Govt's order to allow opening of malls and shopping centres from June 8, saying it is important for retailers to open up to get the economy moving forward. RAI CEO Kumar Rajgopal said the retailers' body has been in touch with various Govt officials since the lockdown.  
 "We believe that the government is satisfied that the malls would follow the SOPs as is required," he said in a statement. Stressing on the significance of the Home Ministry's order, he said: "It is important for malls and various retailers to open up and to get the economy moving forward".

# Govt decision to open shopping centres from Jun 8 will help ease pressure: SCAI

**INDIA ■ NEW DELHI**

The Government's decision to allow shopping centres and malls to open from June 8 will help ease enormous pressure that the industry was facing due to the lockdown, Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI) said on Saturday.  
 Welcoming the steps announced in the fresh guidelines by the Home Ministry, SCAI Chairman Amitabh Taneja said, "Revival and resurgence is a long process, which has just about begun". The relaxation is certainly going to help ease an unimaginable amount of pressure that was put on the industry following the lockdown. Taneja said SCAI will await further information from the Ministry of

# NHAI plans to develop model stretches in every State

**INDIA ■ NEW DELHI**

In order to exhibit the model stretches of National Highways as per norms, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is planning to develop 57 stretches of NH (1,735 km) across the country near each State capital.  
 These Model Stretches will also serve as a platform to educate the highway engineers of the country, including State PWD engineers.  
 These stretches will have all the required safety and aesthetic features like road signs, road markings, road furniture & safety items, proper junctions and entry/exit points, functional drains, pedestrian facilities, street lighting, planta-

tion & landscaping, toll plaza, user facilities & wayside amenities.  
 The stretches will also be equipped with CCTV cameras at all vulnerable locations, no black spots to avoid accidents and eco-friendly measures.  
 The idea is to make the highway stretch look like a perfect textbook version of a model road. Some of the NH sections identified for development as Model Stretches are Dausa to Jaipur, Jalandhar to Amritsar, Srinagar to Banihal, Varanasi Ring Road, Chennai Bypass, MP/MH border to Nagpur including Nagpur Bypass, Brahmaputra Bridge to Guwahati.

# Amid lockdown, Hyundai Motor India exports over 5K units

**INDIA ■ CHENNAI**

Car maker Hyundai Motor India Ltd. on Saturday said it has exported over 5,000 units in May after restarting production.  
 In a statement issued here the company said after restarting production on May 8 it has produced over 5,000 units for export markets.  
 Pointing out the company's exports of over three million cars since 1999, S.S. Kim, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer said: "We have once again made a humble beginning towards normalcy by exporting more than 5,000 units in May 2020".

# APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found dead under footover bridge, Near IIT, On Aurbindo Marg, New Delhi on 23.05.2020 at 09.00 AM. In this regard a DD No. 10A, Dated 23.05.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Malviya Nagar, New Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:  
**Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** about 40 years, **Height:** 5'6" **Feet:** Face: Oval, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Thin, **ID Mark:** Black Mole on forehead, **Wearing:** Purple colour linedar half sleeve shirt, Sky blue colour jeans and bare footed.  
 Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform SHO, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or Fax No.: 011-24368639.  
**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Malviya Nagar, New Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-26691861, 26691862**  
**DP/87/SD/2020**

# UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General public is hereby informed that an Unknown male person was found dead at truck parking, Timarpur, Delhi on dated 17.05.2020. The Dead body has been preserved for 72 hrs. in Sabzi Mandi Mortuary for identification. In this regard a DD No. 31 A dated 17.05.2020 has been registered at P.S. Timarpur, Delhi.  
 The description of the dead body is given as under **Name:** Prakash, **S/o** Unknown, **R/o** Unknown, **Age:** About 40-45 years, **Height:** 5'5", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Oval, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Sky Blue colour T-Shirt, Red & Camel colour Lower.  
 Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.  
**SHO**  
**P.S. Timarpur, Delhi.**  
**Ph.: 011-23812734, 8750870129**  
**DP/237/N/2020**

INDO COTSPIN LIMITED			
REGD. OFFICE : 78 K.M. DELHI MILE STONE, G.T. ROAD, NH-1, VILLAGE JATTIPUR, POST BOX NO. 3, POST OFFICE SAMALKHA, PANIPAT -132103			
CIN. - L1111H1959P0302541 Website: www.indocotspin.com			
Email: ID-ratpatagarwal2000@yahoo.com, info@indocotspin.com			
Statement of Standalone Audited Financial Results for the Quarter/Year Ended March 31, 2020			
PARTICULARS	(Amount Rs. in Lacs)		
	3 MONTHS ENDED	YEAR TO DATE FIGURES FOR CURRENT PERIOD ENDED	CORRESPONDING 3 MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR
	31.03.2020	31.03.2020	31.03.2019
	Audited	Audited	Audited
Total Income from operations (net)	296.44	997.37	365.22
Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary activities after Tax	-5.26	10.64	5.85
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary Items)	-5.26	10.64	5.85
Paid Up Equity Share Capital	420.05	420.05	420.05
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve of Previous Year)	-5.26	214.38	5.85
Earnings Per Share (before Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.00	0.25	0.19
Earnings Per Share (after Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each): Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.00	0.25	0.19

**NOTE:** (i) There is no qualification on the audit report for the Quarter/Year ended 31st March, 2020 (ii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly/Year Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Quarterly/Year Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange websites: [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com), [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com), [www.cseindia.com](http://www.cseindia.com), [www.scriindia.com](http://www.scriindia.com)

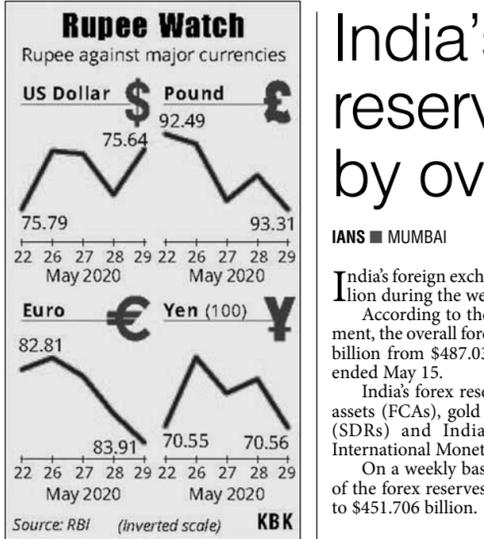
For Indo Cotspin Limited  
 Sd/-  
 Bal Krishan Aggarwal  
 Managing Director  
 DIN No. : 00458219

# FSSAI launches new online platform to issue licence, registration to food businesses

**INDIA ■ NEW DELHI**

Food regulator FSSAI on Saturday said it has launched a new online platform for granting licenses and registration to food business operators (FBOs) as well as regulatory compliance.  
 Since 2011, the FSSAI's online licensing platform FLRS (Food Licensing and Registration System) has issued 70 lakh licenses/registrations till date. Over 35 lakhs licensees/registrants are actively transacting on it. FSSAI is launching its cloud based, upgraded new food safety compliance online platform called Food Safety Compliance System (FoSCoS), the regulator said in a statement. The new URL [foscos.fssai.gov.in](http://foscos.fssai.gov.in) will replace the existing foodlicensing.fssai.gov.in, it added.

Since 2011, the FSSAI's online licensing platform FLRS has issued 70 lakh licenses/registrations till date.  
 The regulator said the new platform FoSCoS is conceptualised to provide one point stop for all engagement of an FBO with the department for any regulatory compliance transaction.  
 The platform has been integrated with its mobile app and will be linked with other IT platforms. "A single regulatory platform will enable pan India integrated response system to any food fraud and ensure an advanced risk based, data driven regulatory approach. For the start, FoSCoS will be offering licensing, registration, inspection and annual return modules," FSSAI said.

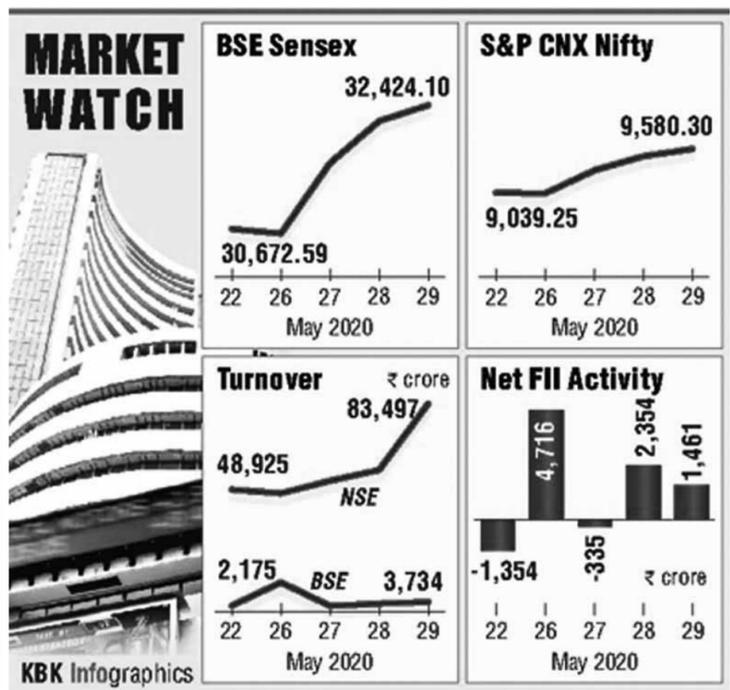


**UJVN LIMITED**  
 (An Undertaking Govt. Enterprise)  
 H.O. "JALANAL" MAHARANI BAGH, GMS ROAD, DEHRADUN - 248006, CIN No. U40101UR200150025868  
 Tel: 0135-2763308, 2763309, Fax: 0135-2763507, website: [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

Tender No. 343 Date : 30.05.2020

**"e" Procurement Date Extension Notice**  
 Due to unavoidable circumstances, due dates of receipt of bid in portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>" and opening of the bid at website against e-NIT No. 01/EE(P&C)/2020-21 for Procurement of Canon make cartridges for various offices of UJVN LTD located at Dehradun, invited by the office of the EE(P&C), Ganga Bhawan, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun is hereby extended as follows:  
 Last Date/Time for receipt of : 10.06.2020 up to 16:00 Hrs bid in the portal  
 Time for submission of original : 12.06.2020 up to 11:00 Hrs documents of above tender  
 Date of opening of bid on the website : 15.06.2020 at 13:00 Hrs  
 All other terms & conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "<http://uktenders.gov.in>" (EE(P&C), Ganga Bhawan, Dehradun)

**"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"**



**सार्वजनिक सूचना**  
 यह सूचना आम लोगों के लिए ICICI Bank द्वारा जारी किए गए श्री परवे 1 मार्मा का एक आईडी कार्ड नं. 12555, जो कि 15 मार्च, 2020 को लापता या खो गया है। जिस किसी भी व्यक्ति को प्राप्त होता है, से अनुरोध है कि वह उक्त आईडी कार्ड को प्रबंधन समूह ICICI Bank Limited, SD Tower, First Floor, Rohini Sector-8, Delhi-110085 पर लौटा दे। आईडीआईआईआई बैंक के सभी सम्मानित ग्राहकों को यह सूचित किया जाता है कि उक्त ID कार्ड रखने वाले किसी भी अनाधिकृत व्यक्ति को कोई भुगतान न करे। ध्यान दें किसी भी व्यक्ति ने उक्त ID Card रखने वाले व्यक्ति को भुगतान किया है या करे, उसकी जिम्मेदारी ICICI Bank की नहीं होगी।  
 दिनांक: 31.05.20  
 स्थान: दिल्ली ICICI Bank के लिए

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 Information is given to general public at large that my client, Shri Parika, Gupta owner of Freehold Residential Ground Floor North East Front Side, without roof rights, area measuring 692 Sq. Feet, Built up on Plot no. 184, part of Rect. No. 19, Killa No. 21, situated at Ashoka Enclave Extension-1, in the revenue estate of Village Pala, Tehsil & Distt. Faridkot, Hariana, vide Sale Deed dated 09.03.2004 as Regd. No. 8177, Book No. 1, Vol. No. 017, Page No. 14882-84, dated 09.03.2004, SHO Faridkot all date and has lost/impounded his original GPA dated 09.04.2002 as Regd. No. 2672 & SPA dated 06.01.2003 as Regd. No. 308 which was executed in favour of Shri. Sunesh Dwar and Lost Report has been lodged with Police Station SO No. 430/2014 LR No. 127/367/2020 dated 28.05.2020 in the State Crime Branch Deh. and same property is going to be financed by Aditya Birla Finance Ltd. Plot no. 15th Floor, Vijaya Bank Building Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001. If any person is having objection right/demand against the said property, contact to the undersigned along with supporting documents within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice and or the same to the undersigned found by any one.  
 Naveen Kumar Verma, Advocate  
 F-211, Sector-3, Vaidhali, Ghazabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010, Mobile: 09858871432

# India's forex reserves rise by over \$3 bn

**INDIA ■ MUMBAI**

India's foreign exchange reserves rose by over \$3 billion during the week ended May 22.  
 According to the RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the overall forex reserves increased to \$490.044 billion from \$487.039 billion reported for the week ended May 15.  
 India's forex reserves foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, special drawing rights (SDRs) and India's reserve position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).  
 On a weekly basis, FCAs, the largest component of the forex reserves, edged higher by \$3.035 billion to \$451.706 billion.

# IDBI Bank posts ₹135 cr profit in Q4

**INDIA ■ MUMBAI**

After being in red for 13 consecutive quarters, LIC-owned IDBI Bank reported a profit after tax of ₹135 crore in the quarter ended March 31, helped by higher interest income. The lender had reported a net loss of ₹4,918 crore in the same quarter last year.  
 "After a long gap of 13 quarters, we have been able to show net profit of ₹135 crore in the March quarter.  
 The profit would have been higher but for the recoveries that were affected during March due to the COVID-19 situation," the bank's managing director and CEO Rakesh Sharma told reporters.  
 He said recoveries had fallen short of ₹700 crore due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus outbreak. The recoveries and upgradation in the quarter stood at 1,457 crore and ₹328 crore, respectively.  
 The profit in the quarter was also supported by the reversal of ₹1,500 crore of provisions made for non-performing loans (NPLs). Net interest income (NII) improved by 46 per cent to ₹2,356 crore as against ₹1,609 crore last

year same period.  
 Net interest margin (NIM) improved by 154 basis points to 3.80 per cent for the fourth quarter, 2020 as compared to 2.26 per cent in the year-ago quarter.  
 For the full year, the bank reported a net loss of Rs 12,887 crore as against ₹ 15,116 crore of loss booked in the financial year 2019.  
 Gross NPA of the bank stood at 27.53 per cent as against 27.47 per cent. Net NPA improved to 4.19 per cent from 10.11 per cent. Fresh slippage in the quarter stood at ₹727 crore. Provision coverage ratio (PCR) stood at 93.74 per cent.  
 The lender, which is under RBI's prompt corrective action (PCA) since May 2017, expects to come out of it soon. Sharma said the bank has extended the Reserve Bank of India's moratorium on term loans repayments to all its borrowers.  
 In value terms, 66 per cent of retail borrowers and 97 per cent of MSME and agriculture borrowers have availed the moratorium. It had set aside ₹247 crore for COVID 19 related provisions as mandated by the RBI.

**SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
 Follow us on @SCRailways  
 Details of the Tender Notices of S.C. Railway can be seen on our website - [www.scriindianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scriindianrailways.gov.in)

**T. N.No. 50/2020 dt. 29.05.2020**  
**SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS**

**e-Procurement Tender Notice**  
 The following Tenders have been floated online. Tenderers are requested to visit the website [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in) and submit their offers online. The Tender Description, Qty, EMD, SD may be seen in website. Offers submitted manually will not be entertained. Tender Closing time is 14.30 hrs of the Due date of the Tender. "For all indigenous offers, EMD will be accepted only via online system as available on [www.treps.gov.in](http://www.treps.gov.in)."

Tender No.	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
82.20.5088B	N-95 Mask
82.20.5087A	PPE Kits
33.20.1094A	Secondary Spring Outer
33.20.1095A	Secondary Spring Outer
82.20.1824	Trastuzumab 440 Mg/Inj
82.20.1825	Dasatinib 50 Mg
82.20.4180	Afatinib 30 Mg
82.20.0014	Sacubitril 24 Mg+Valsartan 26 Mg Tab
31.20.1632	Body side Window argrt
82.20.1425	Metformin 500 Mg Tab
56.19.1200B	Lead acid cells 300 AH
16.20.1274	3 Yearly Overhauling Kit

**Note:- Due dates of Tender Opening:**  
 S.Nos. 01 to 02 on 15.06.2020; S.Nos. 03 to 04 on 16.06.2020; S.Nos. 05 to 08 on 22.06.2020; S.Nos. 09 to 10 on 23.06.2020; S.No. 11 on 26.06.2020; S.No. 12 on 29.06.2020.

Beside above mentioned tenders there are other tenders having value below Rs. 25 lakhs. For details, please visit Railway e-procurement website above.

**Principal Chief Materials**  
**A0658 Manager/Secunderabad**  
 For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.treps.gov.in> or [www.scriindianrailways.gov.in](http://www.scriindianrailways.gov.in)

# BCCI nominates Rohit for Khel Ratna

Shikhar, Ishant and Deepti in contention for Arjuna award

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's prolific limited overs vice-captain Rohit Sharma was on Saturday nominated for the prestigious Khel Ratna award by the BCCI for his stupendous performance in 2019 when he dazzled with five hundreds in the 50-over World Cup.

Rohit's opening partner Shikhar Dhawan and Ishant Sharma, the most-capped Test cricketer in the current set-up, have been nominated for the Arjuna Award.

In the women's section, Deepti Sharma got BCCI nomination for her consistent show across formats in the last three years.

Dhawan was nominated in 2018 alongside Smriti Mandhana for Arjuna but missed out on the award.

As skipper Virat Kohli has got the highest sporting honour, Rohit with his magnificent white-ball record over the years was an automatic choice. Having scored 9115 runs in 224 ODIs with 29 hundreds and 43 fifties.

He also has 2141 runs in 32 Tests with six hundreds and 10 fifties. In 108 T20Is, the 33-year-old has scored 2773 runs with four fifties apart from being ICC's Cricketer of the Year.

"We went through a lot of data and considered various parameters before shortlisting the nominees. Rohit Sharma has set new benchmarks as a batsman and achieved scores people thought were not possible in the shorter formats of the game," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said, referring to his three double tons in 50-over cricket.



"We feel he is worthy of getting the prestigious Khel Ratna award for his commitment, conduct, consistency and his leadership skills," Ganguly added.

Secretary Jay Shah termed Rohit as perfect "teammate" who led well in absence of regular skipper Virat Kohli.

"In the last five years, Rohit Sharma has not only raised the bar with his individual performances but has also led the

Indian team with distinction in Virat Kohli's absence," Shah was quoted as saying in a BCCI press release.

For 31-year-old Ishant, it was a long wait to earn the nomination as he is the senior-most member in the current Test set-up with 97 Tests under his belt apart from 80 ODIs and 14 T20Is.

Ishant has 297 Test wickets to his name and by the end of the year is

# Vaccine will bring cricket back to normal: Ganguly

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The world was in a "sheer shock" in the past few months due to the Covid-19 pandemic but BCCI president Sourav Ganguly is confident that life will be back to normal once the vaccine for the virus is developed.

"This is something that has got the world in sheer shock. I think things will be back on track. We did not have the medicines to take care of it. But over a six-seven months' period once the vaccine comes up everything will be normal," Ganguly said during a Live class on Unacademy app.

"We have this tremendous resis-

tance in ourselves. I think cricket will be back to normal. Yes, there will be some changes in schedule but I think the BCCI and the ICC will be hell bent to get cricket back to normal.

Ganguly believes once the vaccine is out, the virus will be like any other health issues like flu or jaundice but with a cure. "Cricket will be very strong. There will be different tests, medical examinations for players, but I don't see it coming in the way of sport and it will go forward. As the vaccine comes out, it's going to be normal. I think. If you fall sick, whether you have fever, jaundice you pick those medicines and get better."

expected to be second pacer in the country after Kapil Dev to complete 100 Test matches.

"Fast bowlers are prone to injuries and Ishant has had a fair share of them but he has fought hard to be back on the park every time," Ganguly commented on his nomination.

The 34-year-old Dhawan holds the record for the fastest Test century on debut and is the only batsman in the world to have won two consecutive golden bats (for most runs) in the ICC Champions Trophy.

He is also the quickest Indian bats-

man to reach 2000 and 3000 runs in ODIs and second-fastest Indian to score 4000 and 5000 runs in ODIs.

In 136 ODIs, he has scored 5688 runs with 17 hundreds apart from 2315 runs in 34 Tests (7 hundreds) and 1588 runs in 61 T20 Internationals.

The 24-year-old Deepti has already played 54 ODIs and 48 T20 Internationals for the country. She also holds the record of highest individual score by an Indian woman in ODIs — 188. She has so far scored 1840 international runs and taken 117 wickets across two formats.

# IPL can't happen without foreign stars: Wadia

NEW DELHI: The IPL is a tournament with global appeal and it does not make sense to host it without foreign stars, says Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia, who also feels that it's too early for the BCCI to decide on the fate of the T20 league, given the unpredictability caused by Covid-19 pandemic.

Franchisees have expressed mixed opinions on how they would want the cash-rich event to be organised this year with Rajasthan Royals proposing an IPL of only Indian players, considering the travel restrictions in place.

Three-time champions CSK have already rejected Royals' idea and now Kings XI Punjab too have echoed the same sentiment.

"IPL is an international tournament made by Indians. It is the premier cricketing event in the world, therefore it needs an international platform and international stars," Wadia said.

"But it remains to be seen which of the foreign players are allowed to travel at that time (considering the restrictions). I feel there are too many variables for the BCCI at the moment to even have a calculated guess on when it might happen.

"What if tomorrow the cases keep rising, what happens then? It would be unwise to think of anything other than Covid-19 for the moment," he said.

With some experts pointing



that the pandemic is likely to peak in India in July-August, Wadia said it is premature to talk about IPL.

"The most important thing for all of us is to deal with the current situation. It could last another month or two, may be more. Once the virus diminishes, then we can have more clarity on when the IPL can be held and where it can be held.

"I am sure the Indian audience will happy to see the IPL after what we have been through. Football in Germany has already started and EPL is starting soon but they have already peaked while we have not. "I see the possibility of IPL happening but it is all about combatting the virus for the next two months at least," added Wadia.

# Large part of me becoming captain has to do with Dhoni observing me: Kohli

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli on Saturday said his elevation to captaincy has a lot to do with Mahendra Singh Dhoni keenly observing his cricket smarts for six-seven long years.

During an Instagram chat with teammate Ravichandran Ashwin, Kohli spoke about how he was always keen on taking responsibility and becoming the India captain was a part of that process.

"I think a large portion of me becoming captain was also to do with him (MSD) observing me for a long period of time. It just can't happen like he goes and selectors say 'you become captain,'" Kohli replied to a specific question on the process of becoming the leader of the team.

"The guy who is there, he takes responsibility and says okay I think this is the next guy and I will tell you how he is going and then slowly that transition is formed.

"I think he played a big role in that and that trust you have to build over, say six seven years, it just doesn't happen overnight," Kohli said.

The transition happened when Kohli would station himself at the first slip and pick Dhoni's brains on tactical moves.

"I think that is the transition that slowly happens, then with your entry in the game you start talking to the captain regularly.

"I was always in MS's (Dhoni) ears, standing next to him, 'yeh kar sakte ho, woh kar sakte ho' (can we try these things), what do you think, he would deny a lot of things



but he would discuss a lot of things as well, so he got a lot of confidence that I can do this (captain) after him," the skipper said.

Taking responsibility is something he has always liked, Kohli said during the interaction.

"I was inclined to taking responsibility. Becoming captain of India was not even in my wildest dreams, to be honest. We all started playing at a similar time, I made my Test debut before you, you (Ashwin) made it just after in the next series.

"And after that it was all about wanting to play, wanting to be in the XI regularly, wanting to put my foot down and say I didn't play all the games but I wanted to be discussed whether this guy is good enough to play or not."

# One option is to cancel T20 World Cup this year: Sanga

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Sri Lankan batting great Kumar Sangakkara feels that one of the options is to cancel the T20 World Cup this year as many questions around the Covid-19 pandemic remain "unanswered". Sangakkara, who is the president of the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), feels the situation needs to be monitored.

"Everyday, there are new learnings, new things being found out, so we will have to wait and see, but the options may be to cancel it this year, postpone it to another year, but to have in place anticipatory procedures that take into account health and safety of both the players and the spectators, and make sure that's iron clad," he said. Sangakkara said there are many unanswered questions around the pandemic, which has

brought sporting activity across the world to a grinding halt.

"The real thing is what's going to happen with the virus. Is it going to disappear like SARS and MERS, or is it something that's going to come back seasonally?"

"Will we have to live with this particular virus or different strains of it from time to time or do we have to live with it long term?" Sangakkara asked on Star Sports show Cricket Connected.

The former Sri Lanka captain added, "If that's the case, then some of the changes that we have seen in our lives now, may be the new normal for us for a few years until a vaccine is found or until there's enough immunity globally among the people to withstand this.

"So, those are really questions that I don't think anyone can answer at the moment. We will get more clarity as time goes by."

# ECB seeks virus replacements from ICC

LONDON: The cricket authorities in England are hoping that ICC would allow coronavirus replacements when the West Indies and Pakistan travel the country for upcoming Test series.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is in talks with the world governing body (ICC) over changes to the playing conditions, according to a BBC report.

"There are still some

considerations from an ICC perspective about a Covid-19 replacement. That still needs to be agreed. I would hope that would be in place well before the Test series starts in July," ECB director of events Steve Elworthy said.

The change would apply to Test cricket but not ODIs and T20Is.

As of now, a player can be replaced in a match if he is suffering from a concussion. For all other injuries and

illnesses, a substitute fielder may be permitted, but that player cannot bat or bowl. The ICC has banned the use of saliva to shine the ball amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"From a planning point of view, we have got everything in place. We're ready for it, but clearly we don't want to stray outside of Govt guidelines & Govt decision-making," said Elworthy.

# IPL must go on: Anirudh Chaudhry

NEW DELHI: Former Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Treasurer Anirudh Chaudhry feels the Indian Premier League (IPL) show must go on as it important not only from the revenue point of view, but also for domestic cricketers.

Chaudhry also backed MS Dhoni, saying one of the greatest cricketing brains still has much to offer to Indian cricket.

"It is the IPL GC's decision, but my view is that effort has to be made to try and have that situation where

the show must go on," Chaudhry said.

"It is important for domestic players also. The revenue is also important from it."

Asked about the possibility of the IPL being moved away from India keeping in mind the health crisis,

Chaudhry said: "Even if the GC decides to shift the match... it has to be in a country where time difference is not too much. Broadcasters will want that 8 pm slot. It is important for them."

# WI approves 'bio-secure' Eng tour

PTI ■ ST JOHN'S

The West Indies cricket board has approved next month's tour of England where the regional side will play three Tests in a "bio-secure" environment.

The series, if it gets the nod of the UK Government, will mark resumption of international cricket which has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Board gave approval in principle for the proposed upcoming West Indies Test tour of England," Cricket West Indies (CWI) said in a statement.

"The decision comes only after CWI medical and cricket-related representatives and advisors have been involved in detailed discussions with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), and their own medical and public health advisers."

The ECB has proposed two venues for the Test series starting July 8, Hampshire's Ageas Bowl and Lancashire's Old Trafford, both of



which have on-site hotels.

"CWI's management is now in the process of seeking to put all of the approvals and logistics in place within the Caribbean, including seeking permission from the various National Governments to facilitate the movement of players and

Speaking of decorated former India captain Dhoni, whom he has seen from close quarters, Chaudhry said: "Dhoni is fit, he is the best wicketkeeper in India and one of the finest minds in the game.

"During a match you would see him asking a player to move to his right, and then to the left. The player would end up standing in the same place, but the idea is to make him alert. Before that his mind might have been wavering a bit," Chaudhry said. "If I would be a decision maker, I would have him in the team."

PTI



# F1 season to open in Austria

AFP ■ VIENNA

Formula One's truncated coronavirus-hit season will finally get underway with the Austrian Grand Prix on July 5, the Austrian Government announced on Saturday.

The Spielberg circuit has also been given the green light to stage a second race the following weekend.

"The two Formula One races on July 5 and 12 at Spielberg will be staged without spectators," announced Austrian Health Minister Rudolf Anschober.

He said that the two races had been approved after F1 organisers "had presented a complete and professional plan" to combat the spread of Covid-19.

Anschober added a caveat to Saturday's statement, insisting the season's belated restart would only go ahead if all the health assurances made by F1 were fulfilled.

"In addition to strict hygiene measures the plan also involves regular testing and health check-ups for teams and all the other employees," he said.

# Anand back in India

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Former world chess champion Viswanathan Anand finally returned to India on Saturday after being stuck in Germany for over three months due to the travel restrictions imposed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Anand was in Germany to play in the Bundesliga chess league in February and was to return to India in March, but was forced to stay put after the Covid-19 outbreak disrupted sporting schedules across the globe apart from restricting movement.

The Chennai-based chess maestro arrived by an Air India flight (AI-120) from Frankfurt via Delhi and reached the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru around 1.15 pm.

"Yes...Anand has arrived. He is fine and settling down," his wife Aruna Anand said.

According to her, Anand said he is fine and happy to be back in India. "We are happy that Anand is back after a long time. He will complete quarantine procedures and come to Chennai as per protocol," she had said earlier.

As per the protocols for those returning to Karnataka, Anand will be under institutional quarantine for seven days until he is tested negative



and later he will be home quarantined for 14 days, a Health department official said.

Anand left Frankfurt on Friday night and reached Bengaluru on Saturday afternoon.

The flights from Germany are scheduled to land only in Delhi and Bengaluru.

Anand was staying near Frankfurt and did online commentary for the Candidates tournament in Russia before it was called off mid-way due to the pandemic and led the Indian team in the Online Nations Cup earlier this month.

He had been in touch with his family in Chennai on a regular basis via video calls and kept himself busy with chess related work.



# NBA eyes July 31 return

NEW YORK: NBA commissioner Adam Silver told team owners he's targeting a July 31 return to play, US media reported, although the format for completing the season remains unclear. The Los Angeles Times was among the outlets reporting Silver suggested July 31 as a potential re-start date when speaking to a conference call with the board of governors, citing unnamed sources familiar with the call.

The NBA suspended play on March 11 in response to the coronavirus pandemic and multiple scenarios for resuming and completing the season are still being considered.

One option would be to bring back all 30 teams to complete the tail end of the regular season before staging the playoffs — an idea that appears to have little support with many of those teams out of post-season contention. Also under discussion is the return of 20 teams, with competition being split into World Cup-style pool play that virtually serves as the first round of the playoffs.

Another suggestion would bring back up to 22 teams — all that were within six games of a playoff spot when play was halted. The scenario would include some regular season games and a play-in tournament for berths in the playoffs to follow.

# De Kock, Ngidi dominate CSA award nominations

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

Limited-overs skipper Quinton de Kock and speed merchant Lungi Ngidi dominated the nominations for the 2019/20 Cricket South Africa (CSA) men's international awards.

All-rounder Marizanne Kapp and Laura Wolvaardt have both won nominations in four categories in the women's section.

"The gala event to honour our South Africa's top performing professional cricketers over the past year will take place on Saturday, July 4 2020, in a virtual ceremony because of the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus," the CSA said.

De Kock and Ngidi have both been nominated in the following three categories: SA Men's Cricketer of the Year, ODI Cricketer of the

Year and T20 Cricketer of the Year.

In addition, the wicketkeeper-batsman has been nominated Test Cricketer of the Year along with Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje as well as for the SA Men's Players' Players award, while Ngidi has been nominated for the Streetwise Award.

Nortje, in his first year of international cricket, has also been nominated in the South Africa Men's Cricketer of the Year.

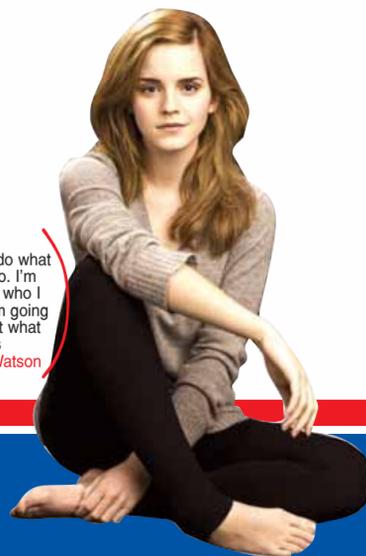
Makhaya Ntini (2005/06), Jacques Kallis (2004/11), Hashim Amla (2010/13), AB de Villiers (2014/15) and Rabada (2016/18) have won the South African cricketer of the year award twice.

Other South African men's players nominated in the various categories are Temba Bavuma (T20 Cricketer of the Year), Heinrich Klaasen (ODI Cricketer of the Year), David Miller (SA Men's Players' Player of the Year) and Vernon Philander (RAM Delivery of the Year).

# the pioneer agenda



I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm going to be who I really am. I'm going to figure out what that is  
— Emma Watson



FROM THE INSIDE

## A different planet

A graphic artist imagines the "new normal" post lockdowns to contain Covid-19, from a child's perspective



## Freewill versus fate

You can make a conscientious choice purported to deny the implication of fate

During the pandemic that has hurt most the vulnerable pockets of the population, we need solutions that cater to scale and affordability, says **MINIYA CHATTERJI**, as she shares the first hand experience of the work being carried out by her and her team in the battle against Covid-19. Chatterji has developed a PPE model where builders are incentivised to collaborate and offer their vacant buildings for Covid-19 recovery facilities

# A NOVEL PARTNERSHIP

It was business as usual in Paris. The cafes were crowded. Pavements busy with hurrying office goers and students. The manicured parks filled with more adults than children. Long queues at bakeries. Joggers out in the winter sun as much as in the gyms and health clubs. Subway trains packed. The shops luring in customers to the last discounts of the winter sale. Only the media was abuzz with around 800 new COVID cases being discovered in France every day.

So much so that the Indian government announced that the country would close its borders to any foreign national entering from France. My family and I had to scramble to get our air tickets for the very next day to leave Paris where we live three months every year to return to our home in Goa — my husband and toddler son are New Zealand citizens.

It was March 13, 2020 when we landed at Delhi international airport, where COVID related messages to socially distance were blasting on loudspeakers and all passengers had to undergo thermal tests. At that time India had 74 cases in total.

India has about 12 million children on the streets. Migrant workers often live in overcrowded temporary rooms in our cities. India is home to about one-third of the global slum population, with an average of one in six city residents living in slum zones where population densities vary between 277,136 persons per square kilometre (sq km) in Dharavi to 125,000 persons per sq km at the Rasolpoora slum in Hyderabad. In fact, in Dharavi, there is one toilet per 1,440 residents. How are they expected to 'socially distance' themselves?

Yet in India, that was our best bet and worth a try because with our size of population and low healthcare facility, we clearly have our own unique challenges to beat the Coronavirus. Testing is expensive and if the number of cases increase at the pace it did in Italy and France, then India would not have adequate numbers of beds to treat patients.

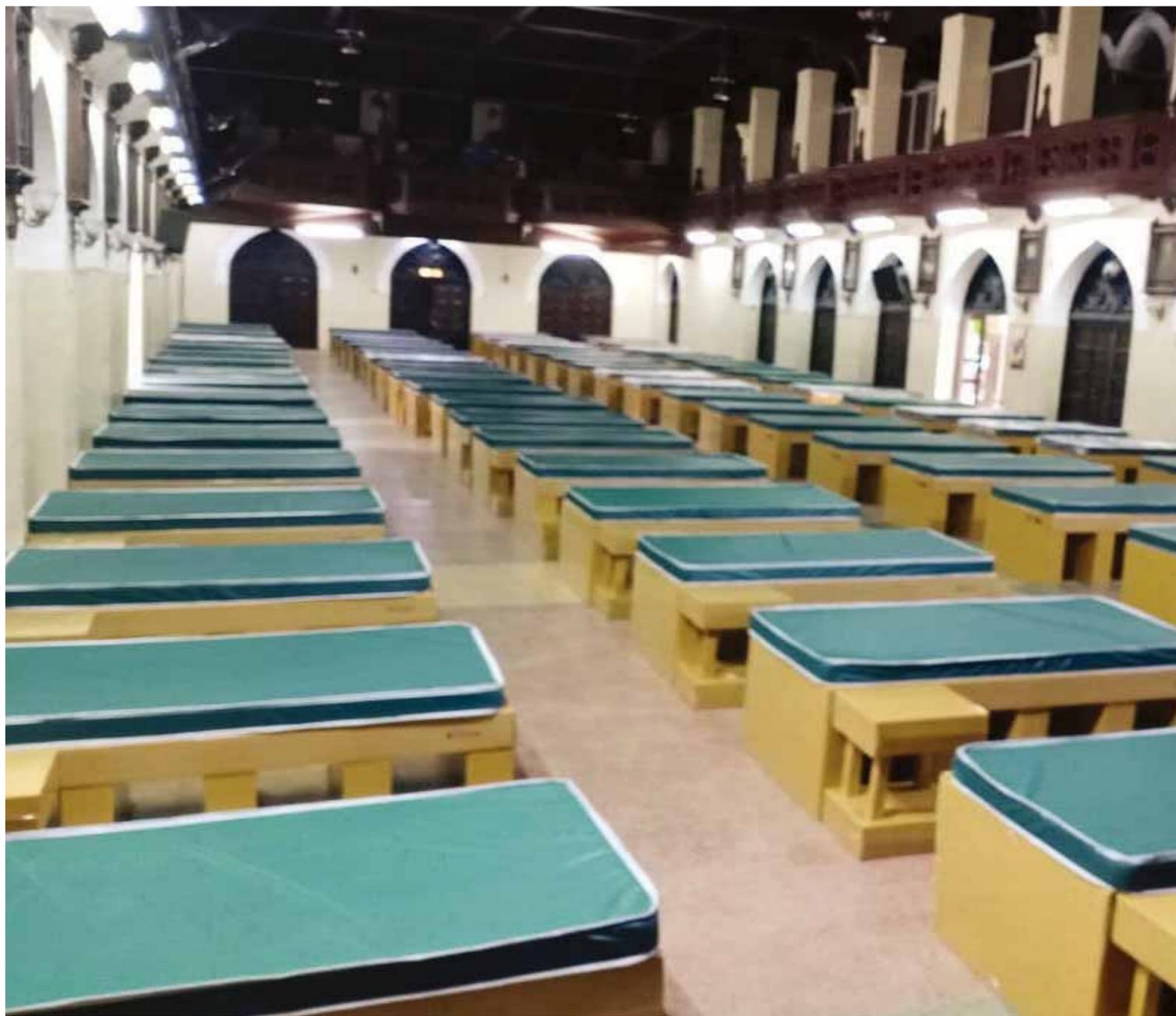
It was for this reason that on April 2, at the time that India had about 2,543 cases of COVID-19, that my team at Anant National University submitted a detailed proposal to the Prime Minister's Office about how to transform vacant community halls, marriage halls, office spaces, and residential buildings into temporary hospitals and quarantine facilities for COVID-19 patients in an effective yet highly affordable way.

I set up the Anant Centre for Sustainability as a think-teach-do tank about two years ago, and since the past 10 months the team there had been collecting primary data at a city level to unravel the reasons why 7.5% homes in India are vacant as well as what we could do with them to close the housing gap in the country. In our proposal to the PMO, we included intricate details about the vacant spaces that were suited for specific COVID-19 conditions, room layouts, list of equipment required, costs, vendors, as well as a financing structure that did not require the government to pay for the costs to set up COVID-19 recovery facilities in vacant buildings.

Yet wondering if we would ever even hear back from the Prime Minister, I also reached out to friends who I thought might help us implement our proposal. Anil Antony, who is national coordinator of the Parliamentarians for Innovators of India, a multi-party parliamentary organisation to which I too serve as a mentor, readily connected me to the Kerala state government. Milind Deora, former Minister of State, immediately connected me to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Before the end of the week, I did hear back from the Ministry of Commerce who requested immediate assistance for creating new categories on GeM, GOI's e-market for government projects, for building COVID-19 recovery facilities as we had proposed to the PMO. Indeed, AnantU was registered on GeM as well. But by that time we already had two spaces in Thiruvananthapuram and in South Mumbai that were ready to be converted into a 20 bed temporary hospital for moderate cases of COVID-19 patients and a 100 bed quarantine facility for mild cases, designed, implemented, and funded by AnantU.

Within the same fortnight we had transformed three more facilities totalling 700



beds in Mumbai in to quarantine facilities, at one tenth of the cost of traditional quarantine centres. Milind Deora generously arranged for CSR funds from Godrej. Dhaval Monani, Director of Affordable Housing at AnantU came up with an incredibly ingenious design of making hospital furniture out of laminated corrugated cardboard that were durable, water proof, priced at 10% of the cost of a steel bed. The equipment is at manufacturing cost and the cheapest in the market, while mine and the university team's efforts are at zero cost and completely on a voluntary basis. Due to the relentless efforts of Professor Monani and the team, within three days we built up the capacity of manufacturing 2,500 beds, tables, room separators every week, and transporting them to any place in India. Now every week we are setting up about two new facilities across India.

This extraordinary pace of scale of an innovative solution during a nationwide lockdown will probably make it to the bunch of stories I would tell my grandchildren one day. For now, I am convinced that it has been made possible only because of a government-university-private sector partnership which came with its share of challenges that essentially pointed to the lack of habitude for this.

For instance, is each entity a partner or a vendor? When the government-university-private sector come together as partners,

“WHEN THE GOVERNMENT-UNIVERSITY-PRIVATE SECTOR COME TOGETHER AS PARTNERS, EACH ENTITY IS CONTRIBUTING IN MONEY OR IN KIND. THIS IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM A TRANSACTIONAL APPROACH WHERE THE FUNDER IS THE OWNER AND THE PROVIDER OF GOODS IS SEEKING A PROFIT”

each entity is contributing in money or in kind. This is very different from a transactional approach where the funder is the owner and the provider of goods is seeking a profit. Another example is the ability for the three entities to tango, given that each would have their unique interests and concerns. And finally, the role of universities anywhere in the world is to further knowledge, with no bias and without seeking profit. The understanding of this is still at a nascent stage and must be mainstreamed in our country. At a time when some individuals and organisations (even while declaring to be non profit) might be trying to make a buck out of the desperation that this crisis creates, the advantage of partnering with good universities is that its mandate is only to push new thinking and research instead of profiteering. Overcoming these minor hiccups in government-university-private sector endeavours will only lead to greater innovation and accelerated implementation, besides attracting the best talent of the country to teach and implement research driven projects within universities.

During the pandemic that has hurt most the vulnerable pockets of the population, we need solutions that cater to scale and affordability. For instance another innovation we are bringing to market this week is a mobile testing facility fitted within the humble

autorickshaw — once again offered by a university and therefore at only the exact cost of the materials needed to manufacture it. We are putting mobile x-ray and swab collection centres upon an autorickshaw platform using insulated tarpaulins. It dramatically brings down the cost of testing while bringing the opportunity to test at the doorstep of residents living even in overcrowded zones.

In the wake of the relaxation in the lockdown in India, we must be prepared to live with the virus for an extended amount of time. Being prepared will help India avoid the path that France initially took with their 'business as usual' approach. Unless there is a vaccine, the virus is not going away. The rate of spread might flatten at some point and then spike again. No amount of modelling and simulations can predict the course of this. While those who have shelter and livelihoods during this crisis, can afford to physically distance (more apt than 'social distance!') from others, we need to tap in to frugal innovations to scale up solutions for those who need to choose between hunger and the virus.

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

# A DIFFERENT PLANET

What happens when you realise that the normal that you believed to be is no longer that? That the world has changed and there is no turning back? As the world grapples to get a grip of the “new normal” amidst restrictions post lockdowns imposed by the various governments to check the spread of novel Covid-19, SHISIR BASUMATARI, a graphic artist looks at this new world from the eyes of Bon Bon and imagines what might be going on inside the little heads... Basumatari recently authored *The Real Mr Barkotoki*, published by Speaking Tiger Books, 2019



# US Presidential poll in times of Covid



US President Donald Trump speaks during an event in the Rose Garden White House

AP/File



In this March 15, 2020, file photo, former Vice President Joe Biden, participates in a Democratic presidential primary debate at CNN Studios in Washington

AP/File

Among many grey areas which will decide the fate of the Democratic and the Republican candidates, the most striking is the desire of the 70 per cent people to go for voting by mail

US President Donald Trump has bumped his way along from one revolutionary decision to another. Not a bumptious fellow he is! President Trump has dedicated all his energies in opposing former US President Obama's health-care plan and the immigration conundrum and other electoral battleground issues such as the context of the terror outfits and other geo-economic non-State actors and institutions operating in the larger international system. President Trump's term has been a mixed one with both positive and negative consequences but the positive proclivities of tackling the terror infrastructure and the Chinese threat should go down well with the American electorate in the upcoming Presidential elections.

The Democrat presumptive candidate has hopped on to the popular bandwagon which tarnishes President Trump's striving at containing the Covid-19 malady through a grand American lockdown along with other palliative measures. Such a partisan way of politicking will not go down well for the Democratic Presidential candidate, Joe Biden, though it can be contended that during the intra-Democratic primaries, none of the candidates posed a viable threat to his nomination for the Democratic Presidential candidature. The current

President has to do well to keep his Wasp constituency intact and make further forays into the Red States in United States of America. Despite the reading of the international media, immigration amendments, the judges' recruitment and his acerbic replies and tweets might not become brickbats for Democrats to beat and hide President Trump with, as it's a stable constituency of homeland and inward-looking Americans which stays intact with President Trump and the roaring Republicans but the Covid-19 theme has to be cannily dealt with by the Republican electoral machinery and the attendant war-room.

The question that can be raised is that will the US elections be disrupted by the intervention of the Covid-19 outbreak which as a possibility has been negated as a non-probability in one of the policy statements of President Trump while Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden has ranted otherwise. Moving away from it, it has to be kept in mind that the Pew Research Centre, a public opinion think tank, reports in one of its releases that the American electorate prefers voting by mail, which as a rankling theme by the Opposition in the America's hustings. The Pew Research Pool contends, "The national survey by

Pew Research Center, conducted from April 7 to 12 among 4,917 US adults on the Center's American Trends Panel, finds broad public support for giving voters the option of voting by mail — and less widespread but growing support for conducting all elections by mail." The poll further suggests, "Overall, 70 per cent favour allowing any voter to vote by mail if they want to, including 44 per cent who strongly support this policy. About half of the public (52 per cent) favour conducting all elections by mail. The share supporting this proposal has increased 18 percentage points since 2018."

It can also be surmised that the Asian Americans are the largest growing electorate in the US and have to be wooed by both the political parties, but traditionally this ethnic group has been voting for the democrats since they found their feat in the homeland. The number of Asian American electorate has nearly doubled since the benchmark year of 2000 till the rabid and Covid infected contemporary context in 2020. They make up for a handsome and decisive 5 per cent of the total American electorate and are mostly constituted by the naturalised citizenship and not originally born in the American homeland. Indian-origin denizens are the largest section of the Asian

Americans who have at least a bachelor's degree along with high annual incomes of the order of 105,000 dollars in comparison with other African and Latin American groups which amount to annual incomes much below the 80,000 benchmark for the other bevy of immigrants in the American homeland.

The Vice President's kitty of votes is formidably constituted by African Americans while other Presidential hopefuls such as Bernie Sanders and Michael Bloomberg had a lesser quantum of African Americans supporting them. This analysis posits and pits President Trump squarely in the face of the following enjoyed by the Democratic Presidential Candidate, Joe Biden. The rally behind the flag phenomenon has been marred by both President Trump and Joe Biden containing themselves to campaign indoor and to shun the rallies at least for the time being.

The presumptive candidate Joe Biden has already faced a key allegation of debauchery by a Capitol Hill staffer in 1993 and if Richard Nixon had the debilitating tapes and candidate Hillary Clinton in 2016 had her emails serving as their bête noire, it is yet to emerge as to what will prove to the failing of the Democratic Presidential nominee, Joe

Biden. One element going in Joe Biden's favour is his vast Senatorial experience with reams of white papers and other Government and public opinion documents prepared by himself and his Governmental team which posits him undeniably as an insider. The archives of Joe Biden had been transferred to the University of Delaware in 2012 which can serve as a treasure trove of his seat success in the upcoming elections.

The Guardian pinpoints towards the fact that the Democrat Presidential nominee might have information in the closet which might be good staple fare for investigative reporters. The Guardian cites three such grey areas which are of the order of, "His long political career includes the 1991 confirmation hearings for supreme court justice Clarence Thomas, accused of sexual harassment, as well as his support for a 1994 crime law that contributed to mass incarceration. Then there was his 2003 vote authorising the invasion of Iraq, which he has since said he regrets."

President Trump has made a comeback with his slogan and acts of MAGA, which in the expanded for amounts to, "Make America Great" and will definitely echo in the hearts and minds of the homeland electorate but for the Covid outbreak and

an iota of 85,000 deaths as a result of the outbreak. Still, what needs to be rummaged through the idiom that it's not President Trump but any other President would have had to go through the same firestorm and the outbreak does not categorically poses questions for the Presidential policies, but, for the larger preparedness of the American health infrastructure and attendant resources. And, this is no laughing matter by any context.

With the Chinese dragnet hanging over the American homeland and a review still adrift, President Trump can conveniently pose as a victim of the Wuhan Lab's ministrations. No nation would want a military conflict at the cusp of these testing times but other predominant issues are up for the tasking. Candidate Joe Biden's job eradicating Green New deal in the past, his support for NAFTA and TPP and his repeated nonchalance over the fact that the Chinese are responsible to a certain extent for the employment scenario in the American homeland are some of the power keg themes which have been rumbustiously ratcheted up by the Republic election war room.

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MANAN DWIVEDI

## PERSPECTIVE

# Maoist mayhem under new leadership

The March 21, 2020, horrific Naxal attack on the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma, killing 17 personnel and injuring 15 others, after a long time highlights a critical shift in the ideological moorings of the CPI-Maoist. Arguably, a critical factor leading to such a tactical change in the Maoists' approach can be attributed to the new leadership under Namballa Keshava Rao, alias Basavaraj.

Considering the involvement of the District Reserve Guard (DRG), Special Task Force (STF) and the elite Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in a joint operation against the Maoists, the Maoists carried out the brutal attack with surgical precision. It is important to mention that Sukma district continues to be a hotbed of Maoist activities as it accounts for 25 Maoist-related deaths so far in 2020. At a time when the State has been claiming the Maoist violent movement is on a terminal decline in terms of its diminishing activities and reducing number of recruits, the Sukma attack, the audacious acts against the elite security forces, warrants revisiting the Maoist movement. Also, as the Maoists are continuously losing their support base substantially and are limited to a few pockets, the high-level attack confirms a tactical shift in the Maoist strategy.

In the last two years, especially since Basavaraj took over as CPI-Maoist general secretary following the resignation of Muppala Lakshmana Rao, alias Ganapathy, as Maoist chief in September 2018, there has been a major tactical shift in the Maoist activities. Under the leadership of Basavaraj, who was also the chief of Maoists' Central Military Commission (CMC) prior to his elevation as chief, the Maoists are carrying out "spectacular" attacks, choosing elite commandos and high-profile political leaders, to scotch the growing understanding that the Maoist movement is on its last legs. Ever since Basavaraj has taken over the leadership, the Maoists have carried out four major attacks in the last two years. On May 1, 2019, the Maoists killed 15 personnel belonging to the commandos of the C-60 force of the Maharashtra Police and a civilian with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Gadchiroli district. Preceding the incident, the ultras had torched 26 vehicles used for construction work at the National Highway-136 site to lure the security forces in their trap. Earlier on April 9, 2019, the Maoists attacked the convoy of Chhattisgarh BJP MLA Bhima Mandavi, killing the MLA and two others just before the first phase of the general election. A critical commonality among all the above-mentioned attacks is the surgical precision in which they were carried out.



The surgical precision of these attacks is stressed as the Maoists are believed to be in a Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) under the new leadership of Basavaraj. As the Maoist activities have been largely contained, the new leadership aims to revive the strength and reclaim the areas through militant activities. Considering his experience as the chief of the Central Military Commission of the CPI-Maoist, Basavaraj believes in

instilling fear through the attacks, especially against the state machinery and leaders. This is a critical shift in the ideological framework that instills new tactics into the new recruits and legitimise the "revolutionary causes" via violent activities. Such a tactical shift also highlights the shrinking space of the Maoists which have caused the state wholesome measures — security, development, surrender, and rehabilitation and ensuring

rights and entitlements of the local communities. These state measures have prevented the Maoists to garner local support and recruit trusted cadre.

Ganapathy was held responsible for not being able to spread to the new areas and for losing the areas of influence. This was a major factor for Ganapathy to step down. However, as the ideology takes a backseat under the new leadership and selective violent activities take prominence, the

Maoists seem to expose their vulnerability like never.

When it comes to carrying out guerrilla attacks, the Maoists seem to have an edge over the security forces which have been a major drawback that the later must overcome sooner. In more than five decades of their existence in multiple forms and shades, the Maoists have never been so delegitimised before in terms of popular support. As the romanticising of "revolutionary" ideas doesn't have many takers,

the Maoists under this new leadership would continue to resort to such attacks now and then. The important motives of the Maoists behind killing the security personnel in large numbers are to highlight the vulnerability of the state and to boost the morale of its cadre so that they could plan a possible revival of the movement.

(The writer is Associate Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru)

Basavaraj's prime strategy, it seems, is to scotch the growing understanding that the Maoist movement is on its last legs



ANSHUMAN BEHERA



THE WILL IS NOT FREE — IT IS A PHENOMENON BOUND BY CAUSE AND EFFECT — BUT THERE IS SOMETHING BEHIND THE WILL WHICH IS FREE — SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

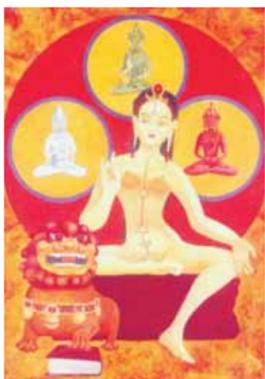
YOUR WEEK AHEAD

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19  
This week you are likely to be under stress due to various reasons. Be gentle with yourself. Avoid anger and aggression. Release your frustration to express it rather than turning your anger and sorrow on yourself. Try to bring moderate changes in your lifestyle. Rest is important. On the career front, you are facing numerous challenges right now. Arguments and an unsettled working environment may upset you emotionally. You are determined and this will enable you to work hard to overcome the problems created by others. On the personal front, you are feeling generous and compassionate this week. A new relationship is possible. Existing relationships will find new meaning, and you will cherish memorable moments.

Lucky number 9  
Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Sunday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22  
Keep your stress level under control to stay in good health. Do not avoid any problems that come up, deal with them up front. Take adequate rest. If you need healing, ask for it on both literal and spiritual planes. Avoid indulgences such as alcohol or any kind of addiction, else you may face health hazards. Professionally, finance will occupy your mind this week and you will have difficulty in making decisions about money. Put an end to your indecisiveness over short term goals. This is not the time to start new projects, forge business partnerships, or make any significant purchases. On the personal front, you may sense negative vibes in your relationship. The energy of the week indicates that conflict with the near and dear ones is likely.

Lucky number 5  
Lucky colour Indigo  
Lucky day Saturday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21  
Your fear seems to be enslaving you. A lot of times when we are in extreme fear, we find it difficult to move forward. You may be chained to your past or an old health condition may recur, making you all the more worried. This is a good time to explore your fears, limitations, and unhealthy attachments. Succumbing to addictions to forget about your worries is indicated. Do not give in. On the career front, beginning of a project in which a great deal of creative energy is invested is on the cards. You possess a high maturity level to meet your immediate demands at the workplace. There could be explosive arguments with the near and dear ones. You tend to forget about the responsibilities as a family member, but at the same time, you demand your rights.

Lucky number 8  
Lucky colour Red  
Lucky day Saturday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20  
Worry, stress, and anxiety are likely to affect your health this week. Take good care of yourself. Balance in exercise, food and water intake, and getting adequate rest is important. Breathing exercises are useful. If you are waiting on test results, remember that being optimistic is all you can do. On the professional front, if you are currently in a job, you may pursue an online course, simultaneously. Find out about course options that match your requirement. In fact, find out all about education opportunities and post studies work options. If you are in the partnership business, you will work together with selfless motives. Keep your balance and your perspective. Females are likely to become extra emotional during this time in domestic affairs.

Lucky number 3  
Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Thursday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22  
Live in the moment and pay attention to keeping balance in your life. Moderation is an important part of living a sensible and healthy life. Balance is the theme of this week. Work on maintaining proper diet, workout, rest and sleep for healthy living. On the career front, this week you will get the chance to shine and be in limelight. You project yourself with self-respect and modesty. You will use your power and leadership for the benefit of others. You should also be in a position to tell people at the workplace where to get off as and when required. Family members will treat you affectionately. A new friendship, romance, or loving relationships is on the cards. Aim for deep relationship and move towards a meaningful life.

Lucky number 16  
Lucky colour Orange  
Lucky day Tuesday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19  
A complete transformation in your health is indicated. Those suffering from a serious illness would be amazed to see an improvement in their test results. A disciplined and controlled lifestyle is required. Resist the craving for sweets and fried foods. Professionally, be very careful of the sources through which you are making money. Any shortcut to gain quick success, or unfair dealing, may put you in legal purview and invite legal action. You need to review how you have been interacting with others. Even in your relationship, you may get hyper over small things with the people who matter to you. You work with your mind than heart. This way your spouse may also get hyper and conflicts may arise. Remember words echo louder than action.

Lucky number 2  
Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20  
Change is inevitable in your health this week. You may feel tested on your commitment to a certain goal. Be prepared for a surprise. Expect someone new and exciting to make a move in your direction. Everything is under control. Self-confidence is at an all-time high. Now is the perfect time to get healthy by eating right. On the career front, you may get a position where you can use power and authority. Keep a tight control on your temper when dealing with subordinates. Your dominating attitude may turn them against you and you will not be able to get the work done. Stick to a reliable way of making money. This is a great time when your bonding with the loved one will increase. You work together and spend quality.

Lucky number 20  
Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Friday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22  
This week happiness is on the cards. Good news awaits you. You will have reasons to feel good and enjoy life. Feeling of contentment in terms of spirituality will make you enthusiastic about life. You will be full of energy and enjoy good health. Career-wise you will be quite busy. You may have to take some important decisions related to your professional and personal life. This decision will charge you up and help in handling other issues. The money will not be a limitation for you. Those who are looking for a job, a woman holding powerful designation may help you in your endeavour. This week you need to keep your emotions in check. Your mind will take over your heart to hold back many delicate feelings. You will gain a position of trust and authority.

Lucky number 10  
Lucky colour Yellow  
Lucky day Sunday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18  
Your cheerful state of mind and positive thinking is reflected in your personality. You share your good experiences with the loved ones. Connecting with old friends brings back happy memories. Health remains good. On the career front, someone is threatened by your success. Therefore, maintain a low profile. Don't share your working plan with anyone. The negative forces are active and will try to run you down. Stay away from temperamental seniors at workplace. Avoid silly arguments. Be aware of this nitty-gritty for a better career and smooth running of your business. The cards suggest a phase of intense emotions. Your partner will be close and kind to you. You will enjoy a romantic time.

Lucky number 7  
Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Monday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22  
You will enjoy the good health and admiration of your friends. Self-confidence is high and will attract people to you like a magnet. Do not worry about your health. Things are not as bad for you as you fear. There is an underlying, spiritual strength that will sustain your health and of others who matter to you. Connect with the joy within you, and share it with all. On the career front, good opportunities will arise and promote your ideas. It's a good week to bring your projects out into the limelight. A good opportunity is likely, seek advice before accepting an invitation. Uncertainties about a relationship may bother you. You need to seriously reconsider a relationship. Being in an unhealthy relationship is much worse than being alone.

Lucky number 11  
Lucky colour Golden  
Lucky day Monday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21  
A confusion over a medical test and diagnosis results is likely. Take second opinion before reaching the final decision. The card suggests that any health changes are likely to take place slowly. And this may be for the best, irrespective of how fast you would like things to move. This week you can win over any situation at the workplace by your wit and intelligence. You have the logical and analytical skills that help you to overcome any difficulty and face the challenges. On the personal front, there is hope. There still exists a spark in your existing relationship, which you feel is over. You will look at your life and relations with a deeper, more spiritual understanding and will begin to change some of your priorities.

Lucky number 12  
Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Thursday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20  
In this period, it is likely that stress may have taken a serious toll on your body. There are things that you can do to re-build. First and foremost, calm down. Try to get adequate rest and sleep. If fatigue and sleeplessness and physical problems persist, get treatment done. On the professional front, you will be held accountable for your actions. If you have acted in an unfair manner, it may come back to haunt you. It can lead to legal issues. You may receive help from an outside party that can move the legal matter in your favour. Rely on your intuition especially when dealing with strangers. In your relationship, you feel romantic and are in a joyful mood. Keep your cool and that means a lot to the person you love. You may plan a surprise for your beloved.

Lucky number 13  
Lucky colour Maroon  
Lucky day Wednesday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Freewill versus fate

It is in human nature to look towards a better tomorrow. So, invariably we begin life with high hopes and aspirations. Accordingly, we set our dream destination. Dreams are necessary for reaching heights one is capable of, as they serve a focus to reach an objective. Since time immemorial, the Moon fascinated and evoked man's curiosity, seen every day — yet unknown. A longing to know and understand, it led scientists to send man on the Moon. Yet, not everybody's dreams get fulfilled. Non-realisation often brings in frustrating experiences. Why? Are we so helplessly fated? If so, what is the relevance of freewill, we are supposed to be endowed with?

The obvious question now is: What primarily drives our lives — freewill or fate? This debate has been ongoing since ages, which finds reflection in *Ramayana*, *Yoga Vashishtha*, and even *Mahabharat*. The rationalists and those belonging to science fraternity have often challenged the relevance of Astrology, which primarily deals with fate. Little reflection would reveal that it is the exercise of freewill option, which is an exclusive human privilege, that binds you to fate. This option is not

available to other species. Remember, the freewill option grants you with the freedom to make choices. It needs to be appreciated here that if there is choice in hand, the probability of its use and misuse becomes equal. And there is nothing like a free lunch in this world. You have to own up and bear with consequences of the choices you make. This way, you become stuck to a cause-effect chain, which runs in succession. In this scheme of things, there has to be a cause behind every effect, which, in turn becomes the cause of future happenings.

Someone curious to understand the relation between freewill and fate sought a wise man's help for the answer. The wiseman asked the questioner: Stand on one feet with the other raised in air. The questioner followed. The wiseman then asked him to raise the other leg also. How can I? I will fall. Now you have the answer said the wiseman. Freewill option gave you the choice to raise either the left or right leg, or not raise any. If, however, you raise one leg, you are stuck and so fated. To sum, the exercise of freewill binds you to fate.

So said Rousseau: "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One



man thinks himself the master of others but remains more of a slave than they are."

The obvious question now is: Is there any scope to come out of the binds of fate? The answer is 'yes' and 'no'. Well, the choice option you have also enjoins upon you with the capacity to make necessary amends. You can make a conscientious choice purported to deny the implication of fate. Remember, what is fated is imprinted in your memory in the form of thought-seed, which when gains a congenial ground, it comes into play. Remember, a seed if kept on a table will remain inert. The same seed when planted into earth mass may breed a plant.

It is pertinent to note here that human mind is empowered to self-reflect upon its own space and identify undesirable thought-trends. Following which, you could consciously deny the ground necessary for its fruition. Or you could modify it by feeding the mind with fresh educative inputs. Therefore, in so far as human potential is concerned, one is capable to come out of the binds of fate. It is, however, easier said than done.

The fact of life is that all ordinary

mortals are born unique, each being's mind pre-programmed one way or the other, coming as they may as Karmic carry-over from the past. Remember, one's Karmic cycle keeps running in succession, transgressing birth-death cycles. So, ordinarily, we are all born fated, each manifesting varying desire and mind-trends. That leads us, all through the run of life, unless otherwise consciously modified, which is not easy. Not that we can't change. Our indwelling faculty of discriminate intelligence empowers us to dispassionately see things in perspective and make necessary amends. But it can't come into play involuntarily. It has to be consciously invoked for due diligence, which is the prerogative of *Ahamkara* (ego consciousness). The irony, however is that often our ego plays the spoiler by identifying itself with the indwelling desires, and is tempted to pursue it as an end game. It then doesn't leave scope to look beyond for a better option if any.

The topic continues...

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