

OPINION 6
EDUCATING A
GLOBAL CITIZEN

WORLD 8
UK SC TO DECIDE IF ISIS BRIDE
CAN BE BACK TO LONDON

SPORT 12
AT 34, MY DAYS ARE
NUMBERED: WARNER

BHOPAL, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2020; PAGES 12-11.50

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**BAFTA COMES
TO INDIA:
TIM HUNTER
11 VIVACITY**

SC raises concerns over Covid relapse

Apex court asks Centre, States to file status report in 2 days on steps taken to deal with situation; Maha told to be prepared for worst in Dec

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said that the Covid-19 situation has worsened in Delhi and gone out of control in Gujarat even as it warned Maharashtra to be prepared for the worst in December. Expressing concern over the surge in number of Covid-19 cases across the country, the court asked the Centre and all States to file within two days status reports detailing the steps taken to deal with the situation.

"Things have worsened in Delhi especially in November. You file a status report on what steps have been taken," a Bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan told Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, who was appearing for the Delhi Government.

"In Gujarat, the situation is going out of control," said the Bench, also comprising Justices RS Reddy and MR Shah. "There is spike in cases and this is only November. Prepare for the worst in December. You have to take steps," the Bench told the lawyer appearing for Maharashtra.

The Bench was hearing a matter regarding the need for proper treatment of Covid-19 patients and dignified handling of dead bodies in the hospitals. It has posted the matter for further hearing on November 27.

The court pointed out that Covid-19 cases have risen across the country especially in Delhi, Maharashtra and Gujarat and noted the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who said steps are being taken to deal with the situation in Delhi.

Jain told the Bench that as

per earlier order of the SC, an expert committee has been constituted and other directions have also been complied with by the Delhi Government. He said that a separate space has been earmarked for the cremation of 385 bodies.

"We have no difficulty that you have complied with orders of this court. But looking at the present situation, what else are you doing," the Bench observed and asked Jain to file a status report.

The apex court also questioned the Gujarat Government over its policy of marriage celebration during the pandemic time, saying cases are rising there and the situation has worsened in the State after Delhi and Maharashtra.

"After Delhi and Maharashtra situation in Gujarat has also worsened. What is that you are allowing marriage celebration during day time? You file an affidavit on the status report on steps taken as on date," the SC said.



A health worker collects samples from a passenger for the Covid-19 test, as coronavirus cases surge across Delhi, at ISBT Kashmere Gate in New Delhi on Monday

HC DECLINES 'HALF-BAKED' PLEA FOR IMMEDIATE LOCKDOWN IN DELHI

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to entertain a plea seeking directions to the AAP Government to immediately place the city under lockdown in view of the rising Covid-19 cases and air pollution levels, saying the petition was "half-baked" and "unnecessary".

OXFORD UNIVERSITY VACCINE 'EFFECTIVE' AT PREVENTING COVID-19; SHOWS 70% PROTECTION

London: The vaccine candidate being trialled by Oxford University on Monday presented crucial Phase 3 interim results which show that it is "effective" at preventing Covid-19 and offers a high level of protection from the deadly virus.

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL

CASES: 91,75,627

DEATHS: 1,34,213

RECOVERED:

86,00,057

ACTIVE: 4,39,280

COVID-19 IN MADHYA PRADESH

District	Total Cases	Fresh Cases
Bhopal	29701	343
Indore	38247	596
Gwalior	14022	108

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	17,84,361	46,653	16,54,793
Karnataka	8,74,555	11,678	8,38,150
Andhra Pradesh	8,62,758	6,948	8,42,416
Tamil Nadu	7,71,619	11,622	7,47,752
Kerala	5,67,204	2,072	4,99,338
Delhi	5,34,317	8,512	4,88,476
Uttar Pradesh	5,28,833	7,582	4,97,475
West Bengal	4,59,918	8,072	4,26,816
Odisha	3,14,629	1,710	3,06,726
Telangana	2,64,128	1,433	2,51,468
Rajasthan	2,47,168	2,181	2,20,871
Bihar	2,31,044	1,227	2,24,701
Chhattisgarh	2,23,436	2,732	1,99,311
Haryana	2,19,963	2,216	1,97,335
Assam	2,11,682	975	2,07,525
Gujarat	1,98,899	3,876	1,81,287

At least 5 die of Covid an hour in Delhi in 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 fatalities have increased in the National Capital with at least five people dying of the deadly virus every hour on an average in Delhi in the last 24 hours.

While a total of 511 Covid-19 deaths were recorded across the country in the past 24 hours, Delhi accounted for the largest chunk of such fatalities with 121 fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

This was accounted for the largest chunk of such fatalities across the country, which recorded an average of 21 deaths in this period.

The analysis was based on the data from the Union Health Ministry which gave the total number of deaths recorded in the country and all States and UTs due to Covid-19 in the past 24 hours.

MBBS, students, dentists to assist in Covid-19 care

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday ordered MBBS students and dentists to be allowed to assist in hospitals and Covid-19 ICU units to meet the manpower shortage.

His decision came after a surge in the coronavirus cases and fatalities reported since last week in the national Capital. According to an official order, the fourth- and fifth-year MBBS students and dental doctors will assist duty doctors at the honorarium of ₹1,000 for an eight-hour shift and ₹2,000 for a 12-hour shift per day.

The Delhi Government, in its order, had also said in the case of interns, the honorarium would be over and above their stipend. According to Government database, Delhi has reported 40,212 active cases, 4,81,260 recoveries, and 8,391 deaths.

Covid -ve report must for entering Maha

Those from NCR, Guj, Raj, Goa must carry RT-PCR report with them

TN RAGHUNATH ■ MUMBAI

In a safety precaution taken in view of increasing Covid-19 cases in the national Capital and three other States, the Maharashtra Government on Monday made it mandatory for

all domestic passengers travelling to Maharashtra by air, trains and roads from the National Capital Region and the States of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Goa to carry RT-PCR negative test report with them.

Amid a fear of a second Covid-19 wave gripping Maharashtra in the wake of increasing incidence of Covid-19 in New Delhi, Ahmedabad and Surat, the Maharashtra Government put in place a mechanism to prevent the passengers carrying Covid-19

virus from entering Maharashtra from Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Goa.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had, in his address to the people across the State, said on Sunday that his Government was on a "high alert" in view of increasing pandemic cases in cities like New Delhi, Ahmedabad and Surat. "Though there is no wave in the State, we cannot lower our guard. The State health author-

ities are well-equipped to tackle the second pandemic wave if it hits the State. My request to people is to take all health precautions," he had said. Amid speculation that Maharashtra may suspend train and air transport services between Mumbai and Delhi, Uddhav Thackeray made the first move when the State made compulsory for those arriving in Maharashtra by air, train and road to carry RT-PCR negative test report with them.

China's mad infra push along LAC alarms India

Bunkers, roads, dwelling units in eastern sector of LAC besides Ladakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While efforts are on to resolve the seven-month-old stand-off through sustained dialogue, China continues with infrastructure development all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Military ammunition bunkers, roads and prefabricated dwelling units have come up in eastern sector of the LAC besides Ladakh.

These developments come at a time when the two sides are preparing for the ninth round of Corps Commander-level talks soon. While both the commanders reiterated their commitment to continue talks, China's aggressive infrastructure push has alarmed the



Indian security establishment. Earlier, rapid construction was only confined to Ladakh sector of the LAC in the backdrop of the face-offs. However, the furious pitch of work in the East in Doklam near Sikkim is a cause of serious concern, sources said here on Monday.

The Doklam region saw more than 70-day long face-off in 2017 after India objected to construction of a road by China there. The issue was resolved after intense negotiations at the

diplomatic and military levels. In the latest developments, satellite images show construction of hardened ammunition bunkers, two kilometers from Sincin-La (pass) on the eastern periphery of the Doklam plateau near the border between Bhutan and China.

The new structures will enable the Chinese troops to withstand intense cold there and face any challenge with sufficient logistical support, sources said here.

High-resolution images from Maxar Technologies indicate road access from the site of the bunkers to the Sincin-La pass, which is then connected to an all-weather road constructed by Chinese workers that stretches across the 5 kilometre-wide Doklam plateau. The new bunkers and construction of the road on the Doklam plateau after the stand-off in 2017, the construction of a "village" and 9-kilometre track adjacent to the plateau are strong indications that China has no hesitation in construction activity in territory which Bhutan claims to be its own.

A September 2020 study by STRATFOR, the world's leading geopolitical intelligence platform, said the 2017 Doklam crisis "appears to have shifted China's strategic objectives, with China more than doubling its total number of air bases, air defence positions and helicopter bases near the Indian border over the past three years."

AIMIM leaders join TMC to stop minority votes' division

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In a sudden development, a number of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) men, including their senior leader Anwar Pasha, on Monday joined the Trinamool Congress in an apparent bid to stop division of minority votes in Bengal by claiming

Asaduddin Owaisi-led party was only acting as a "polariser of votes" to help the BJP.

The AIMIM, however, claimed, Pasha was just a "party worker", and the TMC leadership was trying to fool the masses. Alleging that a few people are trying to steer the country towards destruction using religion, Pasha said those who are eyeing Bengal at present, whether "wearing saffron or green", should know that there is no place for creating religious

divisions in the State.

"AIMIM has played a hand in the polarisation of votes in Bihar and thus helped the BJP in forming the Government there, but this will not happen in Bengal," he said.

Pasha, who was welcomed to the TMC fold by Ministers Bratya Basu and Moloy Ghatak, said that 30 per cent of West Bengal's population are Muslims, asserting that the political developments in Bihar cannot be emulated in Bengal.

Urging Muslims in the State to stand by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, he said the AIMIM chief should not come to Bengal.

Owaisi had said on Sunday that the party is deliberating with the West Bengal unit over contesting the assembly elections and will take a decision on getting feedback from them. Pasha said fear was being

created in the minds of minorities over CAA and NRC and the West Bengal CM "is fighting for us and has taken to the streets to support us."

"Making a law in Parliament is not the end, it has to be implemented on the ground," he said.

Senior AIMIM leader and in-charge of Bengal, Asim Waqar, declined to attach much importance to the development and urged the TMC not to fool the masses with their "dirty tricks".

"Those who have joined the TMC today are neither leaders nor office bearers of the state AIMIM unit. They are just party workers, just like lakhs of AIMIM workers across the state. The TMC should stop pursuing such dirty tricks. Their joining would not have any impact on our prospects in Bengal," Waqar said.

CAPSULE

MINIMUM TEMP IN DELHI DROPS TO 6.3 DEGREES C
New Delhi: A cold wave gripped Delhi on Monday as the minimum temperature dropped to 6.3 degrees Celsius, five notches below normal and the lowest in the month of November since 2003, according to the India Meteorological Department.

KASHMIR RECEIVES SEASON'S 1st SNOWFALL
Srinagar: Most of the plain areas in Kashmir experienced the season's first snowfall on Monday, even as the higher reaches witnessed heavy precipitation, leading to the closure of Srinagar-Leh road which connects the valley with Ladakh, officials said here.

CBSE CLASS 12 PRACTICAL EXAM DATES
New Delhi: The CBSE on Monday released the tentative dates for the Class 12th board practical exams amid the speculation of postponing or cancellation of the exams in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Kerala puts on hold changes in Police Act after criticism

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The CPI(M)-led Left front Government in Kerala on Monday decided to put on hold a controversial amendment to the Police Act as the law triggered a political storm across the country with many describing the measure as an assault on freedom of expression and media.

Shortly after CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury announced in New Delhi that the amendment providing for up to five years jail term to those making defamatory social media posts would be reconsidered, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said his government was not "intending" to implement it now. Further action would be

taken after detailed discussions in the Assembly and hearing views from various quarters, he said, with the announcement coming amid widespread criticism of the amendment and protests by Congress and threat by BJP to legally challenge it. While the Government has said it brought the amendment through an ordinance to check cyberbullying, opposition parties and even Left sympathisers have slammed it, saying it was against the freedom of speech and media.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Ramesh Chennithala dubbed as a "hoax" Vijayan's statement that his Government was not intending to implement the act and demanded that it be repealed at the earliest.

Gogoi succumbs to post-Covid disease

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Veteran Congress leader and a three-term former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi died here on Monday while undergoing treatment for post-Covid-19 complications, State Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Gogoi, thrice Chief Minister of the state from 2001 to 2016, breathed his last at the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) at 5:34 pm, Sarma said. He was 84 and is survived by wife Dolly, daughter Chandrima and son Gaurav, a Lok Sabha member.

The veteran Congress leader was first admitted to the hospital on August 26 after testing positive for Covid-19 and was discharged for a brief period before being admitted again on November 2. His condition deteriorated on November 21, following multi-organ failure and was put



TARUN GOGOI
APRIL 1, 1936 — NOVEMBER 23, 2020

on invasive ventilation. Gogoi was given dialysis on Sunday. His condition deteriorated further over the past few hours and the hospital where he was admitted said he was "very, very critical". "Extremely sad to know of the demise of Shri Tarun Gogoi, former Chief Minister

of Assam. The country has lost a veteran leader with rich political and administrative experience. His long tenure in office was a period of epochal change in Assam," President Ram Nath Kovind tweeted.

Expressing his anguish at the death of Gogoi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi

described him as a popular leader and veteran administrator who had years of political experience in Assam as well as at the Centre.

Modi tweeted, "Shri Tarun Gogoi Ji was a popular leader and a veteran administrator, who had years of political experience in Assam as well as at the Centre. Anguished by his passing away. My thoughts are with his family and supporters in this hour of sadness. Om Shanti."

"Shri Tarun Gogoi was one of the tallest leaders of the Congress party, admired and respected for his extraordinary wisdom, vision and ability. With his long years of experience as an MLA, an MP, a Central Minister and Chief Minister of Assam, he was someone to whose unfailingly wise counsel and advice we could always turn to," said Congress chief Sonia Gandhi.

Netflix web series hurts religious sentiments, FIR registered against officials

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh police on Monday registered an FIR against two executives of OTT platform Netflix for allegedly hurting religious sentiments through its web series A Suitable Boy by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) national secretary Gaurav Tiwari, who demanded apology from Netflix and makers of the series, and

removal of objectionable scenes, which he stated were also encouraging love jihad.

"I had asked officials to examine the series 'A Suitable Boy' being streamed on Netflix to check if kissing scenes in it were filmed in a temple and if it showcased religious practices in the examination prima facie found that these scenes are hurting the sentiments of a particular religious community," Mishra said in a video statement.

On the basis of a complaint filed by Gaurav Tiwari, an FIR is being registered under section 295 (A) (malicious acts to outrage and insulting the religious feelings and beliefs) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in Rewa against Netflix officials- Monika Shergill and Ambika Khurana, he added.

Continued on Page 3

CM to review rollout status of PWSs

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan will visit various cities and villages of the State and will review the status of implementation of public welfare schemes. Beginning by his visit to various areas of Bhopal today, Chief Minister Chouhan reviewed the construction works and the facilities being provided to the people.

After reviewing these works, Chief Minister Chouhan instructed the officials concerned to ensure the completion of these works within the stipulated time. Chouhan said that punitive action will be taken against those who deprive the general public of the facilities available to them. Chief Minister Chouhan inspected the works of Lok Seva Kendra at the Collectorate Bhopal, new sewage treatment plants at Bhopal and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Kota region.

During the inspection of Bhopal city, Chief Minister Chouhan first visited the Lok Seva Kendras at the Collectorate and met people. Chouhan also held talks with applicants, who informed him that their work is being done in a day, but they



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan inspects Public Service Centre at district collectorate office in Bhopal on Monday
Pioneer photo

also have to pay a fee of Rs five per document for a copy of the document. Chouhan said that a new policy will be formulated to reduce this fee in the Kendras. The Lok Seva Kendras aim at solving the problems of the common man besides freeing them from the economic burden of the fee on

these works.

The Chief Minister, instructed Collector Bhopal Avinash Lavania to change the system of charging fee and to provide relief to the public. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan asked applicants Gulab Singh, Parvati Sahu and others about the solution to

their problems. The Chief Minister also spoke to Shivam, assistant sitting at Counter Number-1 and Madhuri posted at Counter Number-2 and sought information about the facilities being provided to the general public. Chief Minister Chouhan lauded the employees sitting at each counter for

wearing masks.

Chief Minister Chouhan inspected the newly constructed sewage treatment plant at Koh-e-Fija, Ahmedabad area near Bhojtal. When he enquired about the delay in the construction period of the plant, it came to light that its construction was to be completed in the year 2019. Chouhan instructed to complete the procedures related to the starting of the plant and fix a date for its dedication. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that such plants should work to their full potential for the purification of water bodies and the officers must ensure that the citizens avail its benefits. Chief Minister Chouhan issued instructions to complete the incomplete works of sewage treatment plants being constructed at other places and the officers must ensure the dedication of three other under-construction plants of Bhopal city by completing them on priority.

Chief Minister Chouhan also inspected the houses being constructed by Bhopal Municipal Corporation in Kota located on Raisin Road under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

CM holds high level meeting to regulate vegetables' price

Highlights

- Such a market system should be developed that farmers get the right price for their produce
- There should not be much difference between wholesale and retail prices of vegetables
- Officers of Animal Husbandry department and related departments should make

surprise inspection of sabji mandis etc. to see at what price the vegetables are being purchased from the farmers and at what price it is being sold to the consumers

○ Arrangements in other States should be fixed of minimum support price of vegetables should be prepared

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that our farmer toils hard day and night for his produce but middlemen take away the profit. Such a market system should be developed that farmers get the right price for their produce. There should not be much difference between wholesale and retail prices of vegetables. A report should be prepared regarding the support price of vegetables.

Chief Minister Chouhan was taking a high level meeting of the Horticulture department in connection with the prices of vegetables in Madhya Pradesh today. Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Agriculture Production Commissioner K.K. Singh, Additional Chief Secretary Rajesh Rajoura, Principal

Secretary Horticulture and other concerned officers were present.

Chouhan said that our aim is to get farmers the proper price for their vegetables and produce. For this, the arrangements in other States should be studied and the report on fixing of minimum support price of vegetables should be prepared and presented to him in two days.

It was informed in the meeting that in states like Kerala etc., there is a system of declaring the minimum support price of vegetables. Farmers are being registered in Kerala for this.

The Chief Minister instructed that the officers of Animal Husbandry department and related departments should make surprise inspection of sabji mandis etc. to see at what price the vegetables are being purchased from the farmers and at what price it is being sold to the consumers. There should not be much difference between wholesale and retail prices.

Chief Secretary Bains said that there is no restriction on transportation of vegetables etc. anywhere in the state. Farmers can easily transport their crops to any market or place.

Doukho of Bhotia community exhibited in IGRMS's exhibition series

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Under the latest and popular online series of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya entitled 'Exhibit of Week' the Doukho, woolen coat collected from 1988 of the Bhotia community of Chamoli, Uttarakhand was exhibited. It's Measurement Length - 90 cm, Width - 85 cm, displayed in the audience as The Fourth Exhibit of the month of November, 2020 through official website, Facebook, Instagram and twitter page of the IGRMS.

In this regard Praveen Kumar Mishra, Director, IGRMS (Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya) said that, initially this series will focus on the masterpieces from its collection which are considered as unique for their contribution to the cultural history of a particular ethnic group or area. Doukho is a traditional woolen coat used by



the Bhotia community of Chamoli, Uttarakhand. It is a short sleeveless jacket reaches up to the knees and tied at waist by a woolen girdle. Doukhos

are usually made of un-dyed white wool of the sheep or goat. As the jacket is very warm, it protects the nomads from extreme cold weather.

Regarding this object Sudeepa Roy said that Bhotia inhabiting in the high mountainous range has traditionally been associated with practice of pastoral nomadism, weaving and agriculture. So woolen handloom craft prevalent among Bhotias has a long history.

Bhotias weave various woolen items like shawl, sweater, blankets, caps, carpets etc. Weaving is mainly the autonomy of the women folk whereas extracting wool and processing work is mainly done by the male folk. Woolen clothes are woven by the Bhotia women only during winters as they have other seasonal engagements such as cultivation, harvesting and storing the crops. Bhotias weave these woolen items not only for self-use but also sell it in nearby markets and go to remote villages to sell the woolen materials.

Indian Idol S12 all set to start from Nov 28

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

After successfully hosting the first Digital Auditions - Ghar Se Manch Tak Ka Safar, in the new normal, Sony Entertainment Television is all set to unveil the 12th season of Indian Idol, one of the most loved vocal talent hunt platforms on the small screen. Produced by Fremantle Media, Indian Idol S12 is set to woo TV and music lovers starting Nov 28, every Sat and Sun at 8pm only on Sony entertainment television.

On the enormous pool of talent that auditioned for this season, this year's judging panel, which is graced by renowned singer and music composer Vishal Dadlani, popular singer and youth icon Neha Kakkar and the much-loved Himesh Reshammiya, have narrowed down the voices for theatre rounds.



Like every year, Indian Idol is set to unleash diverse musical talent from across the country, bringing forth the country's rich multi-cultural, multi-demographic milieu.

The competition among the Top 15 will intensify as the audience and judges root and vote for their favorite contestants' week after week, till the nation finds its next Indian Idol!

Suave and Sureela Aditya Narayan will be seen as the show's host for the new season and promises to enthral viewers by celebrating the charm & power of music.

Prabha Khaitan Foundation launches Shashi Tharoor's latest book

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Shashi Tharoor's latest book 'The Battle of Belonging' was formally launched at Bhopal, Prabha Khaitan Foundation's signature event Kitab by Chief Guest Hamid Ansari, former Vice-President of India, Farooque Abdullah, David Davidar, Payan K. Varma, Makarand Paranjape, Author Shashi Tharoor shared details of his inspiration for writing "The Battle of Belonging". The online event, organized by Prabha Khaitan Foundation in association with Aleph Book Company and moderated by journalist Karan Thapar.

The formal launch was fol-

lowed by a stimulating discussion and critical appraisal of Shashi Tharoor's 22nd book 'The Battle of Belonging', social, political and cultural issues confronting India. Guests lauded Shashi Tharoor's latest book but contested some of the core concepts like nationalism, patriotism, civilizationalism, the idea of India and others elaborated in the book.

Hamid Ansari said, "This is a passionate plea for an idea of India that was taken for granted and is now seemingly endangered by air for DNA test. Samples of dog's biological parents has also been taken from Pachmarhi by the police accompanied by veterinary experts on Saturday.

Dispute had escalated after the police had taken the dog from Shadab and handed it over to Kratik till the matter was settled. Kratik had claimed that he had the dog with him for several months and recently some policemen came with some persons and took the pet away from his home.

The test is to incur Rs 30,000 and Shadab told the media he was ready to bear the expenses to get his loving dog back. Kratik however said it's his dog and the test will confirm this.

14 selected for Junior National Equestrian Competition

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The 14 equestrians of the State Equestrian Academy have qualified for the Junior National Equestrian Competition by performing brilliantly in the Regional Equestrian League held at Madhya Pradesh State Equestrian Academy Bhopal.

The Junior National Equestrian Competition will be held at the Army Polo Riding Club, Delhi from 20 to 30 December 2020.

In the Regional Equestrian League played for two days at the State Equestrian Academy, seven players from Junior Group, three from Children

Group-2 and four from Children Group-One have been selected for Junior National Competition.

Under this, in the junior group, the players of the academy, Omar Ali, Meera Malaviya and Heral Joshi qualified in De Saj, Adarsh Rathore, Anshpreet Singh Bindra Aditya Ayush Singh and Raju Singh in De Saj and Jumping. Similarly, Arjun Singh, Sanskar Rathore and Vineet Parihar in Children Group-2 and M.D. in Children Group-1.

Hamza Aqil, Arjun Malaviya, Jyoti Vishwakarma and Bhola Parmar qualified in dressage and jumping. The cavalry of the academy participated in the league under

the guidance of Captain Bhagirath, the chief instructor of the academy.

Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Yashodhara Kumar Raj Scindia while congratulating and wishing the selected players for the Junior National Equestrian Competition said that through the Madhya Pradesh State Equestrian Academy, international level sports facilities and training are being provided to the players.

Sports Minister has expressed happiness over the successful organization of the Regional Equestrian League held at the Equestrian Academy, Bhopal. She appointed Jury Member Commandant

(Re) Naresh Tehlan and Colonel (Re) R.S. Ahluwalia was honored with a memento. Director Sports and Youth Welfare Pawan Kumar Jain welcomed the jurors.

Director Sports and Youth Welfare Pawan Kumar Jain said that Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, established at the initiative of Yashodhara Raj Scindia.

The State Equestrian Academy players have so far won 22 medals including 11 gold, 04 silver and 07 bronze in international equestrian competitions. While it has earned 134 medals in national equestrian competitions including 49 gold, 53 silver and 32 bronze medals.

Youth attacked with sharp edged weapon over old enmity

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Fuelled with old enmity a 23-year-old youth was attacked by three miscreants with sharp-edged weapons at Sunder Nagar under Chhola Mandir police station area on Sunday evening.

Police said that a youth was rushed to hospital after he was attacked by three armed miscreants. The injured was identified as Surendra Malviya who was attacked by Pintu, Lala and Nikhil who with sharp edged weapons and thrashed him badly.

The condition of the victim is reportedly critical who is undergoing treatment at Hamidia hospital.

In his complaint, the victim told the police that he was attacked by the three accused while he on his way to home after visiting his aunt. Pintu attacked with sharp edged weapon in his stomach and Lala and Nikhil continued to thrash him and later escaped the spot.

Based on the complaint after the preliminary investigation, the police have registered a case under section 307 and 34 of the IPC. Lala and Nikhil hit the victim till he went unconscious and considering him dead they escaped the spot.

Police found that the dispute between the victim and accused occurred three days ago during cricket match in which the two groups scuffled but fight was pacified after locals intervened.

On Sunday evening victim was on his way to home when Pintu along with two others obstructed his way at deserted area and attacked him.

DNA test conducted on 3 years old dog to ascertain ownership

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

DNA tests are common to settle parental disputes among humans but it is a three-year-old Labrador breed dog who is undergoing this test in Hoshangabad. The samples have been sent to Hyderabad lab.

The ownership dispute of this dog has remained talk of the town with the police being clueless about how to ascertain the ownership of the canine.

After a probe failed to settle the feud between two youths, the police have decided to put the dog under a DNA test.

Shadab Khan, a journalist by profession and Kratik Shivhare, an activist of Akhili Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad are engaged in the ownership feud. Shadab is terming that the dog is his missing pet tiger 'coco' while Shivhare claimed it was his pet 'Tiger'.

Shivhare who had refused to hand it over saying it was his dog. According to Shadab, he brought the dog from a Pachmarhi in year 2017 while Shivhare says he had sourced the pet from a breeder based in Piparia.

Not succeeding in finding the rightful owner of the dog, the police collected blood samples of the dog on Saturday and is planning to send it to Hyderabad by air for DNA test. Samples of dog's biological parents has also been taken from Pachmarhi by the police accompanied by veterinary experts on Saturday.

Dispute had escalated after the police had taken the dog from Shadab and handed it over to Kratik till the matter was settled. Kratik had claimed that he had the dog with him for several months and recently some policemen came with some persons and took the pet away from his home.

The test is to incur Rs 30,000 and Shadab told the media he was ready to bear the expenses to get his loving dog back. Kratik however said it's his dog and the test will confirm this.



Women offer prayers on the occasion of Amla Navami in Bhopal on Monday
Pioneer Photo

Police nab 3 miscreants, recover stolen valubles

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Shahpura police nabbed three miscreants from Sevoy Market and recovered valuables stolen from four burglaries; two women were among the nabbed three miscreants. According to the police, acting on a tip off regarding three persons including two women trying to sell goods at low price were nabbed and when they were questioned they failed to provide and confessed that the goods have been burgled.

The nabbed miscreants were identified as Raipal Pardi (26) of Sehore, Sutraj Bai (40) of Kotra Sultanabad and Alpna Bai (25) of Kotra Sultanabad. They confessed stealing the goods from different areas of Shahpura. Later, in the investigation they revealed that they have committed burglaries along with their aides in the past and have helped in disposing the valuables.

After the three were nabbed police recovered one pair of silver ring, one pair of gold ring, two pieces of silver toe ring, three nose rings, one gold chain, one pair of gold earring, computer table and other house hold goods were recovered from their possession.

The recovered valuables were over worth Rs 2 lakh. Police have registered a case under section 41 (1-4) of the CrPc and sections 379, 457 and 380 of the IPC. The number of burglaries committed by the gang is yet to be investigated. The number of accomplices who have helped the miscreants in disposing the stolen goods would be investigated.

VISHWARANG CHILD LITERATURE, ART AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

Day 2 begins with French painting workshop

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The second day of Vishwarang Child literature, art and music festival that is organised in co-ordination with renowned YouTube channel Get Set Parent with Pallavi commenced with French Painting workshop.

Pallavi, Rao Chaturvedi talked to Akanksha Goenka in this session. This session was all about Claude Monet's Painting.

In the beginning of the workshop, Pallavi Chaturvedi and Akanksha Goenka talked about Claude Monet's techniques, work, style and his life.

During the workshop, Akanksha Goenka shared that Claude Monet was born on November 14. We celebrate this day as children's day and Claude Monet was also very close to children. He would



love to do his paintings about children. Apart from this, Claude Monet loved to paint the different shades of nature. During the workshop, Akanksha showed many pictures of Claude Monet, his different paintings of the same garden in different seasons. She also made children aware of the simple techniques of painting. The workshop ended

with making Monet's famous Japanese Bridge painting. Vishwarang's first Child literature, art and music festival that has been organised in co-ordination with renowned YouTube channel Get Set Parent with Pallavi had its second session of the second day about Storytelling. Priya Narayan and Janki Sabesh joined the programme.

The coordinator of the programme was Pallavi Chaturvedi. This storytelling was about a book 'The Friend of Numbers' that is written about India's renowned mathematician Ramanujan. Book's writer Priya Narayan participated in the programme and shared her experiences.

Famous Storyteller Janki Sabesh shared the story of the book, where the life of Ramanujan is described. Janki Sabesh shared that how Ramanujan was different from other children, where other kids used to go outside and play, Ramanujan used to play with numbers through his slate and chalks. He used to see patterns in Rangoli as well. Her mother used to narrate stories of Ramanujana and Mahabharata to her.

While narrating story of

her school life, Janki shared that her teacher told the class, 'We will distribute 3 apples to 3 friends, each one will have 1 apple in their side.' He was trying to make them understand the division of 3. To which Ramanujan asked, 'If there will be no kids and no apple, how will the answer be?'

While talking to Pallavi, Priya Narayan shared that she started writing since her high school. By that time, she was more into Poetries, later, she studied about different aspects of literature.

After giving birth to a child, she started writing for kids. She shared that after reading a story about an architect, she also decided to write a story on someone who got famous because of his talent. After a long time, Ramanujan's name came in her mind.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan offers face masks to the people during his visit at Abbas Nagar in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer Photo

Lecture, dance presentation on Kathak held under MPTM's 'Gamak' series

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A lecture and Kathak Dance presentation by Mayura Pandit Khatavkar, and Ustad Alaudin Khan Music and Arts Academy was held on Monday under the 'Gamak' series at Madhya Pradesh Tribal Museum.

Mayura Pandit started the presentation with his lecture. He said that Kathak was born by telling stories, storytellers used to sing the saga of god in the temples, gradually instruments were

included in it, then gradually dance was incorporated and Kathak originated from there. Referring to the Raigad style, he said that in this, both the rhythm and the emotional aspect are given equal importance.

Mayura started the dance with the praise of Maa Durga in the form of Adi Jagat Janani Shakti, followed by the presentation of Tritala pure Kathak in the Raigad style choreographed by senior Guru Pandit Ram Lal, Samvare Aajayo - A gopika's loving devotion to

Krishna, Taraana and Thumri. Abolished her performance with the lead actress.

Mayura started learning Kathak dance from the age of eight years from the dance guru Pandit Ram Lalji of Raigad Gharana. He received his Ph.D. in Kathak from Indira Kala Sangeet University, D.D. You have made your presentation on many prestigious forums in India and abroad. Currently in Mumbai, she is teaching Kathak to over ninety students.

Article of RITS's faculty member published in American journal

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The two chambers written by her and associate professor of Radharaman Institute of Technology and Science on the subject of cyber security, have been published in books by two world renowned publishers of America.

These publishers include CRC Press and Wiley Publications. The publications publish articles written in humanities, social sciences, behavioral sciences, science, technology and medicine by scholars and professionals such as world-class writers, scientists, researchers.

Articles are invited from all over the world by these publications, out of which selected articles found best, are published in books, magazines

like MANIT present in the group. He said that he has always received encouragement from his senior colleagues, due to which he is able to achieve such achievements. On this achievement, Chairman of Radharaman Group RR Saxena has expressed happiness that the selection of Verma's article among selected writers from 15 countries is definitely a matter of pride. He said that since its inception, the Radharaman Group has not only provided a world-class environment to its students to read and learn, but has also encouraged its faculty members to pursue education and research. This is the reason why the research of many faculty members of the group has been published in the world-renowned journals over the years.

Verma has given credit for this success to highly educated and experienced faculty members from national institutions

and journals etc.

Verma has given credit for this success to highly educated and experienced faculty members from national institutions

Movie 'Our Armed Forces' screened at Shaurya Samarak

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A movie depicting about Armed forces 'Our Armed Forces' was screened at Shaurya Samarak here on Monday under regular film screenings about Indian Army.

The movie was directed by Ravi Prakash and Mohan Bhavnani. The movie was made by Film Division of India. The movie focussed on the working, sacrifices and hard work of Indian Armed Forces. The Indian Armed Forces are the military forces of the Republic of India. It consists of three professional uniformed services: the Indian Army, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force. Additionally, the Indian Armed Forces are supported by the Indian Coast Guard and paramilitary organisations (Assam Rifles, and Special Frontier Force) and various inter-service commands and institutions such as the Strategic Forces Command,

the Andaman and Nicobar Command and the Integrated Defence Staff.

The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces. The Indian Armed Forces are under the management of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of the Government of India.

With strength of over 1.4 million active personnel, it is the world's second-largest military force and has the world's largest volunteer army. It has also the fourth-largest defence budget in the world. The Indian armed forces have been engaged in a number of major military operations, including: the Indo-Pakistani wars of 1947, 1965 and 1971, the Portuguese-Indian War, the Sino-Indian War, the 1967 Chola incident, the 1987 Sino-Indian skirmish, the Kargil War, and the Siachen conflict among others. All the major incidents were depicted in the movie.



A damaged vehicle after the cars in the cavalcades of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Congress State president Kamal Nath collided during a road accident at VIP Road in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

55-yr-old man held for selling mortgaged property in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police a 55-year-old man for allegedly selling mortgaged property in National Capital.

The accused has been identified as Jai Bhagwan Singh, a resident of Punjabi Bagh,

area. According to Dr O P Mishra, the Joint Commissioner of Police, EOW, a case was registered on the basis of complaint given by Alok Kumar, Authorised Representative, Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited against Jai Bhagwan Singh.

"The complainant alleged that Jai Bhagwan and his family members availed loan against a plot in East Punjabi Bagh of Rs.4.95 Crores and created equitable mortgage of the property by submitting original title documents of the property," said the Joint CP.

After availing the loan, accused Jai Bhagwan sold the second floor to V. Sunita Rao for a sale consideration of Rs.1.25.50,000. Similarly third floor with still and terrace right of the above property sold to Anand Singh for a sale consideration of Rs.1.06,00,000 without any permission from DHFL and also filed wrong information with the Sub-Registrar office that the property is free from all sorts of encumbrances and mortgage," said the Joint CP.

WESTERN RAILWAY TO RUN WEEKLY KISAN RAIL PARCEL SPECIAL TRAIN BETWEEN LAKSHMIBAI NAGAR AND NEW GUWAHATI

To fulfill the commitment towards the nation and the people, Western Railway has decided to run KISAN RAIL Parcel Special for transportation of onion & potatoes: eligible fruits & vegetables under OPERATION GREEN as a part of AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT ABHIYAN between Lakshmibai Nagar and New Guwahati. Train will run upto February, 2021.

LAKSHMIBAI NAGAR - NEW GUWAHATI - LAKSHMIBAI NAGAR

Days of operation : From Lakshmibai Nagar wef 24.11.2020 every Tuesday & From New Guwahati wef 26.11.2020 every Thursday.

Train No. 00907		STATIONS ↑	Train No. 00908	
Arr.	Dep.		Arr.	Dep.
—	15.00	LAKSHMIBAI NAGAR	22.15	—
19.05	19.10	SANT HIRDARAM NAGAR	16.55	17.00
21.30	21.40	BINA	14.25	14.35
01.10	01.20	JHANSI	10.45	10.55
06.00	06.10	KANPUR	05.55	06.05
08.00	08.10	LUCKNOW	04.25	04.35
13.50	14.00	GORAKHPUR	22.35	22.45
18.30	18.40	CHHAPRA	17.50	18.05
20.10	20.20	HAJIPUR	16.15	16.25
02.20	02.30	KATIHAR	10.05	10.15
04.30	04.40	KISHANGANJ	07.55	08.05
06.45	06.50	NEW JALPAIGURI	05.45	05.55
13.50	14.50	CHANGSARI	22.35	22.45
15.25	—	NEW GUWAHATI	—	22.00

Note: 1) Parcel has to be Loaded / Unloaded within allowed halt. 2) No passenger is permitted to travel by these trains. 3) Minimum load of Train no. 00907 & 00908 rake would be 20GS + 1SLR.



Farmers Delhi Chalo protest on Nov 26-27, all preparations made

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

Our fight is on; join in huge numbers — that's the appeal the farmers, protesting against the Centre's agriculture laws across India, made on Monday, while clarifying that there was no change in the 'Delhi Chalo' call for November 26-27.

At the same time, the farmers' Delhi Chalo programme has garnered support from a cross-section of society with not just the political parties and leaders, but the social activists, singers, actors, film makers, and even common man too coming forward to be part of the "indefinite" agitation.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) — a pan-Indian umbrella organization comprising 250 farmers' organizations — issued a clarification making it clear to the farmers from across the country that the combined 'Delhi Chalo' programme, from November 26 onwards, will be held as planned and no changes in the program has been done.

The clarification follows unsubstantiated reports that the farmers had called off the 'Delhi Chalo' and/or, after the initial suspension of rail roko agitation by the farmers. Notably, Punjab's 30, out of total farmers' bodies on Saturday agreed to suspend their protest for 15 days, and allow movement of passenger trains in Punjab.

Appealing the farmers not to be misled by any misinformation or distorted facts, the AIKSCC stated that as the collective resolve of farmers from across India demanding

repealing the 'anti-farmer' and 'anti-people' laws has become a headache for the Central Government, "it would use various agencies under its control of the Delhi Police, to thwart our peaceful and democratic agitation programme".

"All the federations and organizations involved in the program, including AIKSCC, are working hard to ensure the success of the Delhi Chalo Andolan programme," said a statement issued by the working group of AIKSCC.

Bharti Kisan Union (BKU), Rajewal, president Balbir Singh Rajewal, who is also the member of all India level committee, also appealed the farmers and "well wishers" to "come out on roads" on November 26.

"All farmers and their well wishers must come on roads on 26th Nov to protest against black laws and join jain (recitation) of the Delhi Police, to shake atma (soul) of BJP leadership. Come on nearby roads. Thanks all," tweeted Rajewal.

Notably, the farmers have already warned that they will block all roads to Delhi. The authorities stop them during their march on November 26 and 27. As per the plan, the farmers from across the country are scheduled to reach the national capital on Thursday via five highways as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march.

The farmers' unions have declared that they will sit on dharna (sit-in) wherever they be stopped on their march towards Delhi. "Lakhs of farmers, family members, would start moving towards Delhi on tractors and trolleys and reach there on November 26-27.

Netflix web series...

From Page 1
Rewa superintendent of police Rakesh Kumar Singh told reporters that the FIR has been registered and further investigation is underway.

On Saturday, Gaurav Tiwari had submitted a memorandum to the Rewa superintendent of police demanding an apology from Netflix and makers of the series, and removal of 'objectionable scenes' from "A Suitable Boy".

"Kissing scenes (filmed) inside a temple of Lord Maheshwar (a historic town located on the banks of Narmada in Madhya Pradesh) have hurt the sentiments of Hindus. This is an encouraging 'love jihad'," Tiwari had stated.

He had named Monika Shergill and Ambika Khurana in his complaint application. The six-part Netflix series has been directed by renowned filmmaker Mira Nair, who is known for her critically-acclaimed films such as "Salaam Bombay", "Monsoon Wedding" and "The Namesake".

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER P.W.D. Division Budni Distt- SEHORE (M.P.)

Main Road Budni Distt- SEHORE Tel No. 07564-235305

Date 20.11.2020

Online Tenders for below-mentioned work have been processed on E-Procurement system of Public Works Department on the Portal <https://tenders.gov.in> Tenders details are as below :-

System Tender ID	Name of the work	PAC (In Rs. Lacs)	Earnest money deposit (In Rs.)	Time Allowed	Call	EMD & Tender Related Document
2020_PWDRB_114617_1	Construction of C.C. Road in Gohari Village Length 0.70 Km	94.02	94020.00	09 Month including rainy season	7	1 All Tender related documents and EMD will be accepted online only
2020_PWDRB_114619_1	Construction of Badodiyi to Ribhadd Road Length 2.00 Km	115.79	115790.00	09 Month including rainy season	1	
2020_PWDRB_114622_1	Construction of Kishampur to Chundpura Road Length 5.00 Km	363.40	363400.00	12 Month including rainy season	1	
2020_PWDRB_114625_1	Construction of Mandargur Minor Canal (Right Side) to Baya 1R Length 2.50 Km. and 2R Length 3.0 Km. Total Length 5.50 Km	406.81	406810.00	12 Month including rainy season	1	
Maximum Amount		406.81 Lakhs				

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for purchase of Document (Document Download/Sale End Date) on line is Dated 10-12-2020 up to (17:30). Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website only, and not in newspaper.

With Reference to the order of Engineer-in-Chief PWD Bhopal vide Letter NO 401/sa/E-tendering/09/1088/Bhopal, Dated 05/11/2020 in which All Tender related documents and EMD will be accepted online only.

Executive Engineer
P.W.D. Division Budni (M.P.)
07564-235305
G-15731/20 नय तक कोरोना को दबाई नहीं, तय तक दिखाई नहीं।

COVID-19

Solution to virus elimination lies in rapid testing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Testing half the population weekly with inexpensive, rapid-turnaround Covid-19 tests would drive the virus toward elimination within weeks — even if those tests are significantly less sensitive than gold-standard clinical tests, claim researchers.

The observation holds importance in the context of India where while RT-PCR is considered the gold standard for Covid-19 testing because of the high sensitivity of the test, Rapid antigen testing (RAT) is preferred in areas where mass-scale testing needs to be deployed for it gives results in minutes and is cheaper. The test is highly specific, which means it can accurately detect true positive cases.

However, because of the limitations of the test in terms of not being that accurate in detecting true negatives, the Indian Government has advised states to mandatorily test through RT-PCR all RAT negative samples of individuals having Covid-19 like symptoms. RAT is also quicker and gives results in minutes rather than hours taken to get RT-PCR test results.

The rapid antigen test is also cheaper to perform as compared to the RT-PCR, which is a complicated test requiring a specialised laboratory.

Study lead author Daniel Larremore from the University of Colorado Boulder in the US



supports RAT test as he said, "Our big picture finding is that, when it comes to public health, it's better to have a less sensitive test with results today than a more sensitive one with results tomorrow."

"Rather than telling everyone to stay home so you can be sure that one person who is sick doesn't spread it, we could give only the contagious people stay-at-home orders so everyone else can go about their lives," Larremore added.

For the study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, the research team teamed up with the Harvard University to explore whether test sensitivity, frequency, or turnaround time is most important to curb the spread of Covid-19.

The researchers scoured available literature on how viral load climbs and falls inside the body during infection, when

people tend to experience symptoms, and when they become contagious.

They then used mathematical modeling to forecast the impact of screening with different kinds of tests on three hypothetical scenarios in 10,000 individuals in a university-type setting of 20,000 people; and in a city of 8.4 million.

When it came to curbing spread, they found that frequency and turnaround time are much more important than test sensitivity. For instance, in one scenario in a large city, widespread twice-weekly testing with a rapid but less sensitive test reduced the degree of infectiousness of the virus by 80 per cent.

But twice-weekly testing with a more sensitive PCR

(polymerase chain reaction) test, which takes up to 48 hours to return results, reduced infectiousness by only 58 per cent. When the amount of testing was the same, the rapid test always reduced infectiousness better than the slower, more sensitive PCR test. That's because about two-thirds of infected people have no symptoms and as they await their results, they continue to spread the virus.

This paper is one of the first to show we should worry less about test sensitivity and, when it comes to public health, prioritize frequency and turnaround," said senior co-author Roy Parker.

The study also demonstrated the power of frequent testing in shortening the pandemic and saving lives.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah launches a mobile laboratory that will conduct free RT-PCR tests for Covid-19 here and the results will be available in six to eight hours. SpicHealth, an initiative of the promoters of SpicLab, and led by Anil Singh, CEO, SpicHealth, will be setting up a number of portable testing facilities across the country to make the highly sensitive RT-PCR testing readily accessible

AstraZeneca: We will have 200 million doses by end of 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stating that its Covid-19 vaccine could be around 90 per cent effective, and potentially cheaper to make, British drug-maker AstraZeneca on Monday said it will have as many as 200 million doses by the end of 2020 — around four times as many as US competitor Pfizer.

Seven hundred million doses could be ready globally as soon as the end of the first quarter of 2021. The combined analysis from both dosing regimens topped in an average efficacy of 70 per cent.

The vaccine was 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 when it was administered as a half dose followed by a full dose at least a month later, according to data from late-stage trials in Britain and Brazil. No serious safety events were confirmed, the company said.

"This means we have a vaccine for the world," said Andrew Pollard, director of the Oxford University vaccine group that developed the drug. The vaccine's cost works out at just a few dollars a shot,

a fraction of the price of drugs from Pfizer and Moderna, which use a more unconventional technology.

And it can be transported and stored at normal fridge temperatures, which proponents say would make it easier to distribute, especially in poor countries, than Pfizer's, which needs to be shipped and stored at -70C, the sort of temperature typical of an Antarctic winter.

The effectiveness of AstraZeneca's vaccine depended on the dosing, and fell to just 62 per cent when given as two full doses rather than a half-dose first. But scientists cautioned against seeing this as evidence that it would be less useful than rivals. Vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna each prevented about 95 per cent of cases according to interim data from their late-stage trials.

"I think it is a real fool's errand to start trying to pick these three (Pfizer/Moderna/Astra) apart on the basis of snippets of phase 3 data from press releases," said Danny Altmann, professor of immunology at Imperial College London.

India Covid-19 caseload breaches 91-lakh mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 caseload breached the 91-lakh mark on Monday as India registered

less than 50,000 infections daily since November 8, while the death toll climbed to 1,33,738 with 511 new fatalities. The Union Health Ministry said that less than 50,000 cases trend assumes significance as several countries in the Western Hemisphere are witnessing a surge in cases at the onset of winter. The number of people who have recovered from the disease has

surged to 85,62,641 which exceeds active cases by 81,19,155.

A total of 44,059 people were found infected with Covid-19 in a span of 24 hours with 25 states and UTs contributing to 78.74 per cent of the new infections.

Delhi reported 6,746 cases in a day followed by Maharashtra recording 5,753 new cases while Kerala reported 5,254 new cases.

Of the 511 case fatalities reported in a span of 24 hours,

74.95 per cent are concentrated in ten states and UTs. Delhi, with 121 reported deaths, contributes 23.68 per cent to the new fatalities, the ministry said.

Maharashtra saw a fatality count of 50 while West Bengal followed closely with 49 new fatalities.

India's present active caseload (4,43,486) comprises 4.85 per cent of the total cases, and has been sustained below the 5 per cent mark. The national Covid-19 recovery rate continues to be above 93 per cent as 93.68 per cent of all cases

have recovered as of date with 41,024 new recoveries being registered in a day.

"The gap between recovered cases and active cases is steadily increasing and presently stands at 81,19,155," the Ministry said.

Ten States and UTs are contributing to 77.44 per cent of the new recoveries. Kerala saw 6,227 people recovering from Covid-19. Delhi reported 6,154 recoveries. Maharashtra reported another 4,060 new recoveries in the last 24 hours.

PM: Constructed key buildings within time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said his Government initiated the construction of many major buildings in the Capital which were in limbo and were only on file for the past two decades and finished the work well before the targeted time.

Inaugurating the new three towers with 76 apartments for MPs, Modi cited that many important buildings like National War Memorial, Ambedkar International Centre, National Police Memorial and CIC building constructions were started from mid 2014.

Modi said delay in construction of major buildings leads to economic burden. "It also leads to economic burden. But serious efforts to overcome this problem began especially after 2014."

The decades-old problems can be resolved by finding solutions to them and not by avoiding.

Not only the accommodation for MPs, there were several projects in Delhi which had been lying incomplete for many years, and were in limbo. The Construction of several buildings began during this Government itself and was completed in the stipulated time, even before the scheduled time. When there was the Government of Atal Bihari



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses at the inauguration of multi-storied flats for Members of Parliament, through video conferencing, in New Delhi on Monday

Vajpayee ji, discussion began on the Ambedkar National Memorial. It took several years for its construction and it was completed only after the formation of this Government.

The Doctor Ambedkar International Centre was built by this government after a long wait of 23 years. The new building of the Central Information Commission was completed by this Government. The Doctor Ambedkar National Memorial was, for decades, discussing a proposal of the War Memorial. The brave soldiers of our country were expecting and demanding this for a long time. Our Government also had the privilege of constructing a war memorial near India Gate in

memory of the country's martyrs. Thousands of policemen in our country have sacrificed their lives to maintain law and order. Thousands of policemen have been martyred. The National Police Memorial in their memory was also built by this Government," said Modi, narrating several projects completed by his Government on time.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union Minister Prahlad Joshi and Hardeep Puri were present in the function.

The 76 new residences for MPs have been built within 27 months at a cost of Rs 188 crore. In three towers named after Rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati.

CBI books UP resident for impersonating agency official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case against a UP resident, who impersonated an official of the (accused Ponzi company) in pursuance to a conspiracy with other Directors of said Group of Companies (a Ponzi Company) had illegally collected Rs 454.54 crore (approximately) from the investors under various fraudulent schemes on assurance of paying high returns on such investments on maturity," the CBI said in a statement.

It was further alleged that the accused fled away after cheating the said investors and misappropriated the invested money.

The arrested accused SK Nazubulla, Managing Director of Angel Agriculture Group of Companies (a Ponzi Company), was produced before the Court of ACJM, Barurip (West Bengal) and remanded to 10 days police custody, officials added.

A case was registered against the Ponzy company) and others.

It was alleged that the Managing Director of the (accused Ponzi company) in pursuance to a conspiracy with other Directors of said Group of Companies (a Ponzi Company) had illegally collected Rs 454.54 crore (approximately) from the investors under various fraudulent schemes on assurance of paying high returns on such investments on maturity," the CBI said in a statement.

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The arrested accused SK Nazubulla, Managing Director of Angel Agriculture Group of Companies (a Ponzi Company), was produced before the Court of ACJM, Barurip (West Bengal) and remanded to 10 days police custody, officials added.

Foreign Secy briefs envoys of key nations on attempts by JeM to carry out terror attack in J&K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Monday briefed top envoys of key nations, including the US, Russia, France and Japan on the planned terror attack by Pakistan-based terrorist group JeM in Nagrota in Jammu which was foiled by security forces on November 19, sources said.

The heads of missions were provided with a comprehensive "information docket" giving the details of the incident, and also list of items and munition recovered from terrorists, clearly indicating their Pakistani origins. The envoys were sensitised about India's concerns regarding Pakistan's sustained efforts to "destabilise" the situation in Jammu & Kashmir and to "subvert" upcoming local elections and democracy in the union territory, sources said.

"In terms of the bigger picture, it was clear that the terrorists were planning the biggest terror attack in India since Pulwama in February 2019 and the implications can be guessed," said a source, adding that details of JeM's involvement in previous such incidents were also shared with the envoys.

Four suspected JeM terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed by security forces near Nagrota in an encounter on Thursday morning after which the government asserted that the planned terror attack was foiled by the Indian security forces.

It was the first of several briefings to be conducted by the MEA in small groups in view of the Covid-19 situation, the sources said adding other secretaries will also be holding similar sessions with heads of missions of other countries.

CPWD using PEB technology at Africa Avenue in national Capital to cut pollution, water consumption in construction

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To reduce pollution caused by construction activities, the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) is using pre-engineered building (PEB) technology to build 44,000 sqm built up area in three blocks of G+8 storey at KG Marg, and 49,000 sqm built up area in four blocks of G+7 storey at Africa Avenue in the national Capital. The technology being used will also help to reduce water consumption during the construction.

PEB is the one which is engineered in a factory and assembled on site.

CPWD is using advanced Modelling Techniques of BIM (Building Information System). Fabricated at Shop and Brought to Site in completely knock-down (CKD) condition, assembled and Erected at Site with Nut-bolts reducing Time of construction.

According to the CPWD, the foundation consists of reinforced cement concrete with crystalline admixture and zinc cathodic protection system to reduce porosity of concrete and corrosion of reinforcement bars, thus increasing its durability.

Nivar likely to make landfall along TN coast tomorrow

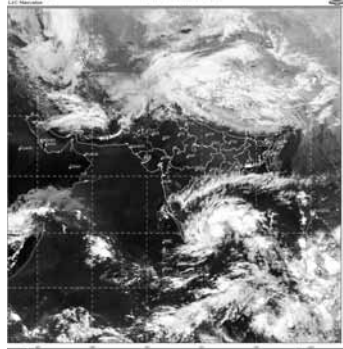
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cyclone Nivar is brewing in the Bay of Bengal and might make landfall along the Tamil Nadu coast between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram on the afternoon of November 25. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has upgraded the tropical threat to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry coats to a severe cyclone and issued an advisory to this effect.

This will be the first cyclone to make landfall on the Indian coast in 2020 and the second to form in the North Indian Ocean region after severe cyclone Gati in the Arabian Sea in 2020. The months from October to December are the most intense in terms of sea and several originate in the Bay of Bengal.

According to the IMD, Nivar currently lies as a depression some 600 km south south east of Puducherry in the Bay of Bengal. The system is expected to upgrade to a severe cyclone by the evening of November 23 and a cyclone by the morning of November 24. The wind speeds at the time of landfall are likely to be in the range of 100-110 kilometres per hour with gusts of up to 120 km/hr making the storm a severe cyclone. It might bring heavy rainfall to the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana from November 24-26.

The IMD warned that the severe cyclone may inflict damage to thatched houses/ huts with the possibility of rooftops being blown off and unattached



IMD satellite image captured on Monday shows a depression over the Bay of Bengal

metal sheets flying away. Damage to power and communication lines could be expected. Kutch roads may suffer major damage while it would be less severe to pucca roads. Escape routes could get flooded after breaking down of tree branches and large avenue trees getting uprooted. The severe cyclone can also cause major damage to banana and papaya trees, horticulture and crops, orchards and coastal crops.

The sea condition was 'rough to very rough' (wave heights of 8-20 ft) over South-West and adjoining West-Central and South-East Bay along and off Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coasts and over the Gulf of Mannar on Monday afternoon.

Fishermen are advised not to venture into South-West and adjoining West-Central and South-East Bay along and off the Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and south Andhra Pradesh coasts from Monday to Wednesday. Those out into the sea already are advised to return to the coast

Union Cabinet Secy chairs meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Monday chaired a meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to review the status of impending Cyclone through video conferencing with the Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

The Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry briefed the NCMC about their preparedness and mentioned that the authorities are fully prepared to meet any eventuality. They also informed about the coordination with the NDRF and other agencies to meet this challenge.

"Director General, India Meteorological Department made a presentation on the present situation and mentioned that the status is being shared with the concerned State Governments. He mentioned the above sea areas.

Throughout August, the Arabian Sea was warmer than usual by two-three degrees Celsius. While the normal sea surface temperatures here are about 28-29°C, the temperatures this August reached up to 29-31°C. The sea surface temperatures in the Bay of Bengal are also in the range of 29-30°C, according to IMD's latest cyclone update. A deep depression in October had also carried much more rainfall than normal, causing extremely heavy rainfall in many parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Riots case: SC rejects plea of Delhi Police challenging bail granted to man

New Delhi: The Supreme Court dismissed the plea of the Delhi Police challenging the bail granted to a man, who has been accused of selling a SIM card on a fake ID to a Jamia Millia Islamia University student, which was allegedly used for inciting violence during the protests here in February against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan rejected the appeal of the police against the October 23 order of the Delhi High Court granting bail to the accused, observing that the police have not shown that he was party to a conspiracy to organise protests against the CAA.

Alleging that the SIM card obtained on a fake ID was used to coordinate protests against the CAA, the police had invoked the stringent UAPA against the accused. PTI

Palghar lynching case: SC adjourns to next week plea seeking CBI probe

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday adjourned to next week hearing on the pleas seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or a court-monitored SIT into the Palghar mob lynching incident. A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan adjourned the matter after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta requested for adjournment of the case to the next week.

Maharashtra Government had earlier informed the apex court that all guilty police officials have been punished or suspended from services.

"Departmental enquiry was ordered against police personnel, who have been prima-facie found negligent and derelict in the performance of their duties in handling the incident and preventing the commission of crime at and around the time of the incident," the Maharashtra Government had submitted in a status report. PTI

SC extends parole of Rajiv Gandhi assassination convict for medical check up

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday extended by a week the parole of AG Ravivarman, serving life sentence in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, for undergoing medical check-up.

A bench comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and Ajay Rastogi extended by one more week. "As prayed for, further extend the parole of the petitioner by one week from today and direct the respondent — State of Tamil Nadu to provide the necessary police escort to the petitioner to enable him to visit the hospital for treatment. List the matter on January 19, 2021, for final disposal," the bench said. PTI

Good enough?

The AstraZeneca vaccine has been clinically tested to have an average efficacy of 70 per cent. We still need containment drills



With India clearly in the midst of a third wave — some might even call it a tsunami of new Coronavirus cases — we should not be surprised. Even a cursory glance of what happened during the 1918-1919 Spanish influenza pandemic should have warned us to be prepared for winter, because even a century ago, there was a massive increase in cases in winter when the cold compromises lungs thanks to congestion and any influenza virus can be devastating. With the Delhi and Gujarat governments in a state of panic, it is almost certain that cases will begin to increase across the country whether the authorities admit to them or not. But there is some positive news with British pharmaceutical firm AstraZeneca, which has jointly developed a vaccine with University of Oxford to combat the Coronavirus, coming out with its trial results. That is because the Serum Institute of India (SII) has been a partner to this research as well and has promised that it will produce hundreds of millions of doses of this vaccine for Indians. Yet, the results have only indicated an average of 70 per cent efficacy with two full doses taken a month apart and up to 90 per cent when an initial half dose is combined with a full dose taken after one month. Promisingly, the vaccine doesn't need super-cold storage like the ones developed by Pfizer and Moderna, requiring only refrigeration. It also appears that as many as five other promising vaccine candidates might make it to the markets by early 2021.

However, as we have maintained, the development of a vaccine is not equal to its deployment. Also, if as the trials have indicated, with at least one-and-a-half doses required for maximum efficacy, India will need a whopping two billion doses. Even if costs are kept in check, this is looking at a time frame that might take well over three-four years to inoculate a substantial number of Indians in order to gain a decent amount of protection. At the same time, because efficacy is not the same as effectiveness, even with 90 per cent efficacy, the Coronavirus will continue to pop up, tens of thousands will continue to get infected and many more will die before the Wuhan pandemic truly settles down. Till then, preparedness and preventable behaviour are the only containment devices against an unexpected surge and given India's population density, we better reconcile ourselves to the fact that our crests will be a constant for some time. Maharashtra, which has been the worst-affected State in the country, fighting the longest battle and is now threatened with a new front, has finally released its new screening SOPs that make a RT-PCR test report mandatory for visitors who are travelling to the State from hotspots. All entry points to the State will have testing and screening centres for those not carrying such a report. This is the first time that international travel protocols are being followed domestically and perhaps would be adopted by other States, too, to keep the numbers down. It is a shame indeed that the Supreme Court has had to pull up State Governments on laxity and seek a status report on preparedness. The court also had to get into the nitty gritty of ensuring dignified treatment of the dead and vetting hospital conditions to treat the sick. A fatigue has undoubtedly set in, socially, psychologically and physically. Doctors are the worst affected, some of whom need to be relieved with younger colleagues now being drafted in to ease frontline pressure. Anticipation is the best defence now. The pandemic has forced Governments to invest in public health like never before but now investments in vaccine manufacturing and deployment will be the challenge. These are positive developments but let us not pretend that the news of a vaccine is a silver bullet that will magically cure the world.

Putin's nyet to Biden

Russia yet to acknowledge US President-elect given his past stance on sanctions. Can arms control break the ice?



When all world leaders are already confabulating with President-elect Joe Biden, Russian President Vladimir Putin is not ready to acknowledge the US' chosen leader just yet. In fact, given his history with US President Donald Trump, his latest diplomatic stance portends what the latter might be up to. One that's serious enough for Putin to acknowledge. Although the electoral certification process technically is still on, Biden has emerged the clear winner from the State-by-State vote tallies. And the Electoral College is expected to formally confirm the results on December 14. Trump may exhaust all legal options and challenge

counts but the margins are by now too large to change the outcome in his favour. But he is making the transition difficult, determined to make Biden's job difficult and most importantly, fairly decided about weighing his rival down with his flamboyance and show him as a weak leader, who doesn't deserve to be in a chair that demands his kind of robustness. Putin's words on State TV would seem like they were scripted by Trump himself as he said he would work with "anyone who has the confidence of the American people. But that confidence can only be given to a candidate whose victory has been recognised by the opposing party, or after the results are confirmed in a legitimate, legal way." The contrast is sharper as in 2016, Putin had wasted no time in congratulating Trump for winning the election. Of course, Clinton had conceded the day after the vote and the Russian involvement in influencing the election in Trump's favour is not quite a secret. So beyond the personal equation, Putin's continued deference to Trump as a world leader seemed less than diplomatic, considering the impact it could have on US-Russia relations and global geopolitics. Putin, of course, claimed that his latest stance wouldn't impact mutual relations much as they were "already ruined." The Trump Administration has already withdrawn from the Open Skies Treaty and the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Thanks to the US, Russia is already under international sanctions for actions, including its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 (one where Biden had a key role to play), interference in the US election in 2016 and reported involvement in a nerve agent attack in the UK in 2018. So unless Putin is humoring Trump in the run-up to 2024, which the latter is seemingly keen to contest, and investing for the future, little else makes sense. Besides, Trump's "America first" policy and withdrawal from global arenas of conflict had helped Russia somewhat regain its theft and self-worth in Europe in the power vacuum thus caused, all the way up to Turkey. With Biden's renewed commitment to world bodies, particularly NATO, Russia's clout could be considerably diminished. In fact, it could be blindsided again.

The Kremlin has historically not been comfortable with the Democrats and finds Biden an impediment, given his tough stance on Putin. As Vice-President, Biden had stridently pushed for sanctions against Russia in response to the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. With no signs of conflict resolution on that count, Putin now expects tougher counter-measures against him. Besides, given Biden's stance that morality must play a role in US foreign policy, Russia fears sharper US condemnation of its rights issues and what the US considers "subversive" activities in the neighbourhood. This brand of US exceptionalism is antithetical to Russia's newly extended sphere of influence. All through his campaign, Biden did mention Russia's meddling in US elections as also its alleged endorsement of Taliban attacks on US troops in Afghanistan. So rightfully, Putin does expect a hitback and is probably raising his stakes to deflect the US. Of course, Biden and his team are pragmatic and a balanced lot and would not want to precipitate a crisis, working on areas of mutual interest. The renewal of arms control could be a starting point. Biden has already said that he wants extension of existing or new treaties on reducing US-Russian nuclear arms. That works with the Russians, too.

Educating a global citizen

Character-building just cannot be envisioned in isolation unless linked to culture. The NEP respects Gandhi's vision of young Indians



J.S. RAJPUT

Policies are formulated on the strong foundation of the outcomes of incisive analysis of past experiences coupled with futuristic vision that could respond to emerging issues, concerns and aspirations. Gandhi consistently articulated the India of his dreams and his concerns about the impediments ahead. These are evident in the seven social sins he published in the *Young India* of October 22, 1925. These are: politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and worship without sacrifice.

No policy, the one on education included, can ignore the contemporary severity of these sins. It could also be witnessed in the seven tensions identified in the report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st century — also known as the Delors Commission Report. These are the tensions between global and local, universal and individual, tradition and modernity, long-term and short-term considerations, the need for competition and concern for opportunity, extraordinary expansion of knowledge and the human beings' capacity to assimilate, and finally, the conflict between the spiritual and the material. One could, in the present context, reformulate to prepare human beings to be perilous to neglect any of these. The 'sins' are taking stronger roots while the 'tensions' are disturbing human habitation and systems that are already under severe strains and pressures as consequences of declining moral, ethical and humanistic considerations.

An incisive scrutiny of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 would indicate the extent to which both the sins and tensions need to be responded to, as is essential to prepare human beings imbued with character, commitment and concern. It acknowledges the guiding light it derived from the "rich heritage of ancient and eternal Indian knowledge and thought." The pursuit of knowledge, wisdom and truth is considered the highest goal of human life. The NEP mentions, "The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realisation and liberation of the Soul. World class



institutions in India, such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and Vallabhi, set the highest standards of disciplinary teaching and research and hosted scholars and students from across backgrounds and countries." The ancient Indian system of education valued the pursuit of knowledge with the sole objective of utilising it for the welfare of humanity. "Let all be happy, let all be healthy; let all see good around and let none suffer pain of any kind." Could there be a better comprehension of the essential unity of human beings as one family? And in a family, differences and diversities are accepted and respected. This is what the NEP has imbibed in word and spirit. It recalls how the products of ancient Indian education system strived tirelessly to make seminal contributions in diverse fields of knowledge including mathematics, astronomy, metallurgy, surgery, health, architecture, engineering, ship building, navigation, yoga, fine arts and so much more. Every Indian student — inheritor of this great legacy — must be made familiar with it and accept the responsibility to enhance it further through excellence in his chosen area of activity and expertise. Each one of them is an inheritor of the legacy of luminaries like Chanakya, Kautilya, Bhaskaracharya, Brahmagupta, Nagarjuna, Gautama, Maitreya, Gargi and Thiruvalluvar.

Once the NEP 2020 is implemented appropriately, no Indian shall remain "delinked from India." Every learner would be exposed to modern knowledge that would be given to him/her in institutions following the most modern pedagogy, and with due emphasis on critical thinking, creativity and innovations. It would aim at developing a student's full human potential. Higher education, the NEP 2020 acknowledges, must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded and creative individuals. Obviously, the school education would take note of these aspects in the most sensitive years. Recommendations on multi-disciplinary universities, robust autonomy, revamping of curriculum and pedagogy, reforms in governance of higher education institutions (HEIs), creation of National Research Foundation (NRF) and National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) would be positive additions to the quality and contemporary relevance of the future model of Indian education.

India could finally turn into an international education hub and certainly attract attention of the corresponding international community. The proposed changes in structure, flexibility, autonomy, pedagogy, multi-dimensionality, assessment procedures, including transfer of credit systems, would remove several agonising technicalities. The availability of internationally relevant curricula in the history, heritage and culture of India, as also modern subject areas, could attract a sizeable number of foreign students, who we achieve the goal of "internationalisation at home." Some well-thought out suggestions like opening of foreign campuses by established Indian institutions and permitting top international universities to operate in India would effectively put Indian education firmly on the international podium, with dignity, credibility and expectations. Shared courses with reputed international institutions could pave the way for a much-needed morale boosting and encourage our young to compete with and excel among

foreign students. One has to be cautious about certain aspects though. Global credibility and recognition would require certain minimum levels of infrastructure and facilities which, sadly enough, are still missing in a large number of education institutions across the board. The NEP 2020 assures availability of all of these. "Every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experiences." There can be no compromise on the professionally acceptable teacher-taught ratio. This raises several requirements. Quality just cannot be raised by engaging guest teachers, teachers on lecture-based payments, part-time teachers and keeping more than a million posts of school teachers vacant for decades together! In HEIs, the quality of products, research and innovations would be greatly impeded if there are 40-60 per cent vacant academic positions. The NEP 2020 boldly acknowledges this concern and articulates, "The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-educate teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to enable teachers and help them do their job as effectively as possible." Expressing serious concern on the quality of teacher education, the recommendation is to replace by 2030 all of the present one-year school teacher preparation programmes by four-year integrated teacher education programmes. It may be worthwhile to recall that the four-year integrated teacher preparation programmes began in the four institutions of the NCERT in 1964-64, and the products

were indeed far ahead of others in their professional performance system and teacher education institutions. Unfortunately, the module was not replicated.

In higher education, the policy acknowledges the "criticality, quality and engagement" of the faculty. It also accepts that "faculty motivation" remains far lower than the desired level. Several steps have been listed to attract "the best, motivated, and capable faculty in the HEIs." The right teacher-student ratio, access to education technology, freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches, incentives like appropriate rewards, promotions, recognition and movement into institutional leadership are included in the list.

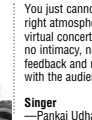
A book of 1932, *Remakers of Mankind*, Carl Washburne writes that when asked, "What is your goal in education when India obtains self-rule?", Gandhi answered, "Character-building. I would try to give the best, courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literacy; academic learning is only a means to this great end." Character formation was the strength of the traditional Indian system of knowledge quest that included creation, generation, utilisation and transfer of knowledge to generations ahead. With all the experiences gained globally in varying contexts and approaches, it is now accepted globally that education in every country must be rooted to culture and committed to progress. Character-building just cannot be envisioned in isolation unless linked to culture. No culture would flourish in isolation and our youth, to become global citizens only when they are made well aware and conversant with their own culture before being introduced to others. India painfully suffered as the transplanted system deliberately kept "educated" Indians away from getting familiar with the nuances of their own culture; they were systematically indoctrinated in the "superiority of the Western culture." This was very comprehensively articulated by Gandhi in the *Young India* of September 1, 1921. "It is my firm opinion that no culture has a treasure so rich as ours. We have not known it, we have been made even to depreciate its value. We have almost ceased to live it." Let us hope that the proposed educational reforms would prepare young people with credentials, and they would be looking after the masses. Education must lead to human dignity for one and all. (The author works in education and social cohesion)

SOUNDBITE

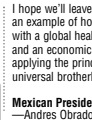
Virat Kohli will be missed. But like I say, in adversity comes opportunity. There are a lot of young guys on the side and it's a head coach, Team India — Rav Shastri



You just cannot create the right atmospheres in a virtual concert. There is no immediate feedback and no interaction with the audience. Singer — Pankaj Udhass



I hope we'll leave in history an example of how to deal with a global health threat and an economic crisis by applying the principle of universal brotherhood. Mexican President — Andrés Obrador



I've got to learn next year to get off my devices. You scroll through social media for your news and it just annoys you, which just brings you anxiety and puts you in depression. Singer — Shaggy



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Will Cong ever act?

Sir — The Congress Party has suffered a debacle in the just-concluded Bihar elections due to its political blunders and poor organisation. It has also suffered defeat in the byelections in different States.

Because of the worrisome state the party is in all over the country, senior leaders like Kapil Sibal and P Chidambaram have lashed out against the present leadership of the Congress. They have echoed the words of those members of the grand old party who wrote a dissent letter in August. The Congress Party has become weak because of the trust deficit, loss of public appeal, identity politics and political polarisation. There is a crisis of leadership due to the lack of vision and idealism. Bundled together by senior leaders and dissenters in a democratic spirit of accommodation will help overhaul the party. A graceful and dignified change of leadership can also help open a new and meaningful chapter in its history.

This, in turn, will help build a strong Opposition, which is essential for the growth of a healthy and vital democracy in

No room for divisive politics in TN

The announcement about the continuity of the AIADMK-BJP alliance in Tamil Nadu has finally laid all speculation to rest. The reception given to Union Home Minister Amit Shah by the party's top leadership has confirmed that the AIADMK Government is tied to the NDA Government's apron strings. This is partly attributed to the fear of Central agencies being unleashed upon its leaders. Interestingly, the number of AIADMK cadres out to greet Shah was more than the BJP's men. Significantly, the "Go back Amit Shah" hashtag that was trending showed the strong anti-BJP sentiment that is prevailing in the State as it is inhospitable terrain for divisive politics, especially on religious grounds.

With the sealing of the AIADMK-BJP pact for the Assembly election, the prospect of any significant political realignment or formation of a third front, making it a triangular contest has now receded. At the same time, the moves by late Jayalalitha's companion, Sasikala, who will be out of jail by January 27, superstar Rajinikanth and MK Alagiri will be watched with interest.

In the present political situation, the ideological incompatibility between a Dravidian party and a Hindu-oriented party could get stark. This would lead to the disadvantage of both the parties as the election nears. Obviously the State unit of the BJP has made the restrictions on idol immersion during the Vinayaka



Chaturthi an issue. It has invoked the traditional Tamil deity Lord Murugan and undertaken the Vetrive Yatra (why bring Muruga Peruman from the shrine to the street?) despite the denial of permission because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As an ally, the AIADMK supported the BJP on the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act and the three farm Acts. True, the BJP holds sway over much of the country but it has only a negligible presence in Tamil Nadu. In its eagerness to gain a toehold and build a base in the State by piggybacking on the AIADMK, the BJP could bargain for stark disproportionality to its strength. Overall, the DMK looks the firm favourite to occupy Fort St George.

G. David Milton
Maruthanad

Help others in need

Sir — We are being buffeted by yet another wave of the pandemic. As feared by health experts, the cold, the pollution

and the cavalier attitude of the milling masses roaming around in overcrowded markets without masks during the festive season have led to this surge. Many States are again thinking of going into a lock-

down. This will be nothing short of a disaster for our country as the economy, which has been ailing for quite some time now, cannot take yet another hit.

Amid all this, we cannot ignore the plight of the poor who have been forced out of even daily wage and minimum wage jobs. Also, street vendors have been struggling. With the unlocking of the country, their lives were just about getting back on track again as people had begun spending.

Now, if there is another lockdown, the wheels of the economy will stop moving again and the poor will be left to starve and fend for themselves in a nation that does not have unemployment benefits or social security. Till we get a Universal Basic Income in India, we as citizens of the country, should find it in our hearts to help the underprivileged. We need to stop being so self-centred and reach out and help those in distress.

Ashmit Aaron
Noida

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Shape the future at cyber speed

Being prepared to weather any storm is possible with the right digital strategy and continuous, concerted effort



ALOK OHRIE

The need for businesses to digitally transform themselves is something that has been discussed for years. However, as we saw in the 2018 Digital Transformation Index that serves as a benchmark for computerisation technology adoption among organisations, many enterprises' digital transformation programmes did not keep up with the advancements in computing power and the influx of emerging technologies. Coupled with the imperative to adapt to today's unprecedented business disruption, the need to digitally transform has never been more urgent and challenging.

It is encouraging to see that many enterprises are rising to the occasion. In the 2020 Digital Transformation Index, it was found that 95 per cent of respondents in India have successfully accelerated at least some of their transformation programmes this year. This shows immense progress in computerisation. However, there is still a lot of work to be done. As it is, continuous digital transformation is not easy, with 97 per cent of Indian businesses facing entrenched barriers to cyber networked business processes as they navigate their future.

By committing to continual transformation — even amid uncertainty such as the kind the world is facing right now — businesses can help shape their ideal future. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated that organisations can be nimble and transform quickly. A third have already extended their business domain; however, what companies do next will be telling. Ongoing transformation is vital, and there is plenty of room for advancement.

As of now, just 12 per cent of Indian firms surveyed are defined as "Digital Leaders", meaning these are companies with digital transformation ingrained in the DNA of their business, end-to-end. And even though they are leaders in cyber networked business processes, they recognise that change requires continuous effort — with more "Digital Leaders" accelerating their transformation programmes this year compared to "Digital Laggards", meaning those that don't even have a computerisation plan or their investments in such technology are few and far between. Here is some inspiration from more mature digital businesses as they consider how to implement an ongoing advancement plan for their firm:

Data privacy and cybersecurity: These are constant and evolving concerns that should not be overlooked. Mature digital businesses recognise more often than others that data privacy and cybersecurity warrant proper consideration. In fact, 47 per cent Indian businesses are of the opinion that data privacy and cybersecurity are the major barriers in their digital transformation journey.

Budget and resources: Financial constraints — both budget pressures and lack of economic growth — have not slowed down transformation for the more mature digital businesses. They position Information Technology investments as strategic drivers for innovation instead of thinking of them as a cost. However, a whopping 32 per cent Indian respondents said that lack of budget and resources is a barrier to digital progress in their organisation.

Data is the lifeblood of a company: As we move towards a Zettabyte era, the ability to extract insights from data will become a major stumbling block if it is left unresolved. There is hope that the recent disruption will ignite a new wave of data-first, data-anywhere businesses. We found that 94 per cent of Indian organisations agree that extracting valuable insights from data will be more important for their business than ever before as one of the great benefits of this is the ability to track metrics and analyse them. Using these insights allows firms to optimise their strategies and processes for better results. In businesses, two things matter more than most — costs and revenue. It's possible to make massive changes to both by integrating data-based insights into the company culture. However, working towards this change sooner rather than later is imperative.

Overall, businesses should be applauded for adapting so quickly to the extreme and sudden onset of disruption from recent events. Some companies were poised to respond better than others, based on where they were on their digital journey. However, being prepared to weather any storm is possible with the right digital strategy and continuous, concerted effort.

In this hyper-connected data decade, every business needs to be a cyber business to survive and thrive. With digital disruptors snapping at the heels of many sectors, success will come to the organisations that ensure their workforce is skilled in the best practices of the digital age. Moreover, this change must be woven into the DNA of the firm and championed by its leadership to have a maximum impact. With a strong ally by your side, businesses of varying sizes, industries and digital maturities can find ways to adapt to new routines and push the frontiers of what's possible.

(The writer is president and MD, Dell Technologies, India)

WITH THE AMENDMENT TO THE POLICE ACT, THE KERALA GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO SILENCE THE VOICE OF THOSE WHO CRITICISE IT.
—LEADER OF OPPOSITION IN THE ASSEMBLY
RAMESH CHENNITHALA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



MANY HAVE VOICED CONCERN OVER THE ACT'S AMENDMENT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO IMPLEMENT IT.
—KERALA CHIEF MINISTER
PINARAYI VIJAYAN

Fertiliser DBT an illusion

Despite tall claims made by the UPA and the NDA dispensations since 2012, a gradual transition to direct cash or benefit transfer of subsidy to the farmers has not been done



UTTAM GUPTA

The additional provision of ₹65,000 crore towards fertiliser subsidy (over ₹71,000 crore allocated in the Budget for 2020-21), that was announced by the Finance Minister under "Stimulus-III" on November 12, will help in clearing all pending dues to the industry. This has led the latter to believe that this is a precursor to a gradual transition to direct cash or benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy to the farmers. This is illusory, as despite tall claims made by the UPA and the NDA dispensations since 2012, this has not been done. The dominant stumbling blocks are a threat to the viability of high cost units in the public sector, including revival projects viz Sindri, Gorakhpur, Barauni and so on. Plus there is the risk of inviting the farmers' wrath if subsidy does not reach them in time. Bureaucratic red tape is a third major factor. Till these are addressed, DBT to farmers won't see the light of the day.

In the Budget for 2012-13, the then UPA Government had announced tracking the movement of fertilisers from retailers to farmers, and linking part of the subsidy payment to manufacturers for sale to farmers by retailers. In the mid-year economic analysis of 2012-13, the Finance Ministry came out with a blueprint on modalities for implementing the Budget announcement. Pilot projects in 10 districts spread over nine States were to be launched, which were to be followed by DBT in these districts from April 1, 2013. Concurrently, the Government planned to track fertilisers movement in the whole country. A pan-India launch was contemplated from April 2014.

Even as the Department of Fertilisers developed the technology platform called e-Fertiliser Monitoring System (e-FMS) to execute the blueprint, the DBT remained on paper. Meanwhile, the NDA Government under Narendra Modi recognised that there was rampant misuse of subsidy. According to the *Economic Survey 2015-16*, as much as 24 per cent of the subsidy was spent on inefficient producers, 41 per cent was diverted to non-agricultural uses, including smuggling to neighbouring countries, and 24 per cent was consumed by unscrupulous retailers. The latter left a gap of 11 per cent for small and marginal farmers, who alone, according to Modi, should have been the sole beneficiaries of the subsidy. The survey advocated DBT using the Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) platform. In the Budget for 2016-17, the then Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, made an announcement to this effect followed by the launch of pilot projects for linking subsidy payments to producers with the sale of fertilisers to farmers by retailers in 18 districts spread over 12 States. In March 2018, the scheme was launched across the country.

Under it, the Government has made disbursement of 100 per cent of the subsidy to producers conditional upon actual sales to farmers, getting registered on point-of-sale (POS) machines at the dealer's shop (prior to this, they were getting 95 per cent of subsidy on receipt of material at a district's railhead point or approved godown and the balance five per cent on confirmation of sales to farmers by States). But this is not DBT as subsidy is disbursed by the anti-Brahmin movement, of the 50s and the 60s, many caste-based parties like the Vanniyars (dominant in north-west parts of Tamil Nadu, Thevars (dominant in southern part of the State in the Madurai belt) and Gounders (residing in Kongu belt in the west), have sprung up in the last three decades, resulting in the splintering of votes. Fifth, the BJP's stand on conversions to Christianity and its hostility to Islam

“THE SUBSIDY MAY BE COMPUTED ON A PER HECTARE BASIS AND GIVEN ANNUALLY AS MOOTED BY THE COMMISSION FOR AGRICULTURE COSTS AND PRICES. IN ITS RABI REPORT FOR THE 2021-22 MARKETING YEAR, IT HAS PROPOSED A SUBSIDY OF ₹5,000 PER YEAR TO BE GIVEN IN TWO TRanches OF ₹2,500 EACH IN THE KHARIF AND RABI SEASONS. THIS SHOULD BE GIVEN ONLY TO THE SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS OR THOSE WITH LAND HOLDINGS OF LESS THAN TWO HECTARES

”



tem works. The Centre controls the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of urea at a low level, unrelated to the cost of production and distribution, which is higher. It reimburses the manufacturers for the shortfall as subsidy on a "unit-specific" basis under the New Pricing Scheme (NPS). The current MRP of urea is ridiculously low at ₹5,360 per tonne even as the cost can vary from about ₹15,000 per tonne to ₹25,000 per tonne. Even as all units (31) sell urea at the same price, each one of them gets paid on the basis of its own production cost. Thus, an efficient unit producing at, say ₹15,000 per tonne, gets a subsidy of ₹9,640 per tonne whereas another producing at ₹25,000 per tonne, gets a subsidy of ₹19,640 per tonne.

In the case of P and K fertilisers, the Government gives "uniform" subsidy on per nutrient basis to all manufacturers under the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme. For arriving at the MRP, they are expected to deduct the subsidy amount from the cost. For instance, if a unit produces DAP (dia-ammonium phosphate) at a cost of say ₹34,000 per tonne and subsidy is ₹10,000 per tonne, then it will have to fix the MRP at ₹24,000 per tonne.

Now, if instead of routing through the manufacturers, the subsidy is to be given directly to farmers, the transition in case of P and K fertilisers may not face much of a hurdle. The subsidy of ₹10,000 per tonne or ₹500 per bag (50 kg) of DAP can be credited to a farmers' account even as the manufacturer will sell at the market-based price, say ₹34,000 per tonne or ₹1,700 per bag, this being the cost of the most efficient producer (this could also be an average of all units depending on how market dynamics evolve). However, the farmer will have to spend ₹500 per bag

extra at the time of purchase, though he will get back this amount from the Government as subsidy later.

In the urea segment, however, the transition will be tough for manufacturers as well as farmers. For producers, since each one of them will have to sell at the market-based price, all those whose production cost is higher than that of the most efficient producer or the industry average, will either have to perform or wind up. As for the farmer, he will have to spend, at the time of purchase, at least thrice (based on the market price of ₹15,000 per tonne or ₹750 per bag) of what he is spending now.

The Government has fears on both counts. On the production front, there are several public sector plants, which fall in the high cost zone and hence risk being chopped under the DBT. Even the revival projects, like Sindri, Gorakhpur and Barauni, on completion (2021) will have a production cost of over ₹30,000 per tonne. Hence it won't be viable under the new regime. As for farmers, it risks inviting their wrath if subsidy money does not reach them in time, which is inevitable if the budgetary allocation is inadequate.

There are other roadblocks which are not so explicit. Under the present system of urea being available at a throwaway price of ₹5,360 per tonne, a mere one-fourth of the cost, dubious operators make a quick buck by diverting it to chemical industries or smuggling it to neighbouring countries. This won't be possible without the tacit consent of those in the hot seat. Further, urea imports are canalised through State agencies like the Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation (MMTC), State Trading Corporation (STC) and there is a lot to gain for deci-

sion-makers. Clearly, there are vested interests in continuing with the *status quo*.

Unless the above roadblocks are cleared, the transition to DBT will be next to impossible. But this is doable provided Modi sheds his plan of linking development of eastern India with the revival of Sindri, Gorakhpur, Barauni (alternatively, their production cost needs to be cut drastically), pledges to fully fund subsidy requirement (if it can be done for 2020-21, why not every year then); ruthlessly applies his dictum of "naa khaonga, naa khane doonga (neither will I take bribe nor will I let anyone else take it)"; and does away with bureaucratic red tape by removing all controls on spending on urea import. The subsidy may be computed on a per hectare basis and given annually as mooted by the Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP). In its Rabi report for the 2021-22 marketing year, it has proposed a subsidy of ₹5,000 per year to be given in two tranches of ₹2,500 each in the Kharif and Rabi seasons. This should be given only to the small and marginal farmers, i.e. those with land holdings of less than two hectares. Further, a cultivator must not be denied subsidy merely because s/he does not own the land tilled by her/him.

The Government should garner data on all 140 million farm households and put it on a web portal. This is an absolute must to ensure that no one is left out. At present, there is a void as even under PM Kisan, just about 80 million farmers are receiving the eligible amount of ₹6,000. Under a business as usual scenario, leaving out 60 million from subsidy payments could be catastrophic.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

BJP yet to consolidate Hindu votes down South

Success has been eluding the saffron party so far as its penetration has been restricted to Karnataka. It has failed in TN, Puducherry and Kerala



KALYANI SHANKAR

After the big win in the Bihar Assembly elections this month, the BJP is now focussing on the South, where Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry are going to the polls early next year. Elections are scheduled for West Bengal and Assam, too. Will the BJP achieve its goal of gaining a foothold in the South? Success has been eluding the saffron party so far, as its penetration has been restricted to Karnataka. It has failed in Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala because of historic, religious, social and ideological reasons.

In Tamil Nadu, the BJP firmed up its poll alliance with the ruling AIADMK during the weekend. Eyebrows were raised at this early pact when the State's Deputy Chief

Minister and party coordinator O Panneerselvam announced it at a party event attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Though the late AIADMK chief J Jayalithaa had a good equation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she did not go for a tie-up with the BJP in the 2016 polls. After her demise, in 2019, the UPA made it in 37 of the 40 seats won. The BJP went with the AIADMK.

The BJP now wants to make a mark in the South, riding piggyback on the AIADMK. The Congress is in alliance with the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) while smaller parties like actor Vijayakanth's Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK), S Ramadoss' Paattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Thiruvalluvar's Vithalaal Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and others choose the DMK or AIADMK coalition according to the situation.

The BJP has strengthened its Tamil Nadu unit by appointing Murugan, a lawyer, as its chief and has also activated its workers. There has been a recruitment spree in the State since 2014. It has brought to its fold celebrities, bureaucrats and politicians from other parties. Recently, the

actor-turned-politician and Congress spokesperson Khushbu joining of the party was a significant event. So the big question is why was the BJP unable to make inroads in Tamil Nadu till now?

First of all, the saffron party had no tall leaders to match the iconic Dravidian leaders like MK Karunanidhi, J Jayalithaa and MG Ramachandran. It is likely to be Modi versus DMK chief MK Stalin now. Second, the BJP is perceived to be a North Indian Brahminical party and the word Brahmin is anathema to Dravidian parties. Third, Tamil Nadu saw a huge anti-Hindi agitation in the 60s. The Dravidian parties are against any imposition of Hindi and the Modi Government is in favour of it. Fourth, influenced by the anti-Brahmin movement of the 50s and the 60s, many caste-based parties like the Vanniyars (dominant in north-west parts of Tamil Nadu, Thevars (dominant in southern part of the State in the Madurai belt) and Gounders (residing in Kongu belt in the west), have sprung up in the last three decades, resulting in the splintering of votes. Fifth, the BJP's stand on conversions to Christianity and its hostility to Islam

and other religions has no takers in the South. The BJP's polarising tactics won't work in the South. Sixth, new parties have sprung up with two untested superstars — Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth — on the horizon.

Preparations for some months now and MK Stalin has already announced an alliance with the Congress. In the 2019 Lok Sabha, the Congress-DMK combination swept the polls. The State has been alternating between the DMK and the AIADMK and now it is the turn of the DMK. It was only in 2016 that the AIADMK got a second term.

The neighbouring Puducherry often reflects Tamil Nadu politics. In any case, it is a small Union Territory and has just one seat in the Lok Sabha. Currently, the Congress is ruling in the State.

Kerala is a different story. The Left-Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) alternate in power. It is the UDF's turn now. The BJP has not been able to penetrate much in the State despite the groundwork done by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Further, the Kerala electorate consists of a sizeable number of Christians and Muslims and they remain non-BJP voters.

In 2019, the LDF posted a landslide victory, winning 19 of the 20 seats in the State Assembly. The UDF and the BJP got zero seats. The RSS tried to mobilise support on the contentious Sabarimala issue but the counter-mobilisation presented an effective alternative control.

With more literate voters, Kerala alternates between the Communist or anti-Communists. The BJP is seeing slow growth in the State because of it. While the minority communities in the State have successfully ensured the protection of their respective cultures, the Hindu community has relentlessly coded its own caste space. The BJP is taking advantage of it, but it is taking time to translate into votes.

Also, the BJP is facing factionalism in Kerala. The RSS has cautioned the central leadership that the friction in the State would just impact the performance in the polls.

Kerala won kudos in containing the COVID-19 pandemic. A few months ago it looked as if the LDF could return to power but that came to a screeching halt in July after the Chief Minister's Office was found to be allegedly involved in a gold smuggling scam. Several protests broke out across Kerala after the smuggling of 30 kg gold worth ₹14.82 crore through diplomatic channels came to light on July 5. The case is currently being probed by the ED, the National Investigation Agency and the Customs Department. Another nail in the coffin was the recent promulgation of The Kerala Police (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020. Vice this Ordinance, a new Section 118A was introduced in the Kerala Police Act, 2011. This was widely viewed as a brazen assault on freedom of speech.

Though the Chief Minister insisted that "no action would be taken against the media or critics who stay within the limits of the Constitution" and in the end decided not to implement the amended Act, the damage has been done to the Government's reputation and credibility in a fiercely independent State.

Now, it remains to be seen whether the BJP can consolidate its Hindu votes in the South.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



THE TIME TO THINK IS NOW

Plans for mass immunisation against COVID-19 are developing fast. The last year has exacerbated anti-vaccination emotions, and they will not disappear when lockdowns end. Restoring confidence in immunisation may require the much more fundamental rethink that many hoped this pandemic might produce. A reappraisal of who and what is valued, and how we should be living and relating to each other.

(The Guardian editorial)

'Biden to pick Antony Blinken as State Secy'

Washington: Joe Biden intends to pick his trusted foreign policy advisor Antony Blinken as the US Secretary of State and Jake Sullivan as National Security Adviser, media reports said on Monday, as the President-elect is poised to make his first round of Cabinet announcements on Tuesday.

Blinken, 58, has served as the Deputy Secretary of State in the second term of the Obama administration and National Security Advisor to Biden when he was the vice president.

A strong India-hand, Blinken was the top foreign policy advisor to the Biden campaign.

President-elect Joe Biden intends to nominate Antony Blinken to serve as secretary of State, turning to a trusted diplomat and foreign-policy adviser to oversee the rebuilding of US relationships around the globe, according to people familiar with the deci-

sion," The Wall Street Journal reported.

"President-elect Joe Biden is planning to announce that he has selected Antony Blinken, one of his closest and longest-serving foreign policy advisers, as secretary of state," The Washington Post said.

"Jake Sullivan, another top Biden adviser, is expected to be named as national security adviser, according to two people familiar with the announcement," the daily said.

Last week, Biden said he had decided on his name for the Treasury Secretary. **PTI**

New Zealand's Ardern offers virus know-how to Joe Biden

Wellington: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Monday became the latest world leader to congratulate President-elect Joe Biden on his election victory, saying she offered to share her nation's expertise on dealing with the coronavirus.

Ardern said the tone of the 20-minute phone call was approval, on the 11th or on the 12th of December," he told CNN on Sunday.

"What has been really at the center of our response has been some fundamentals around testing, contact tracing, isolation, and personal safety. What's over and above what we've done at our borders... New Zealand has been largely successful in eliminating the virus after imposing a strict lockdown in March and closing borders. Only 25 people in the nation of 5 million have died from COVID-19. **AP**

US TROOP WITHDRAWAL

China worried Afghan may become hotbed for Uighur militants

Beijing: A wary China on Monday urged the US to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in an "orderly and responsible manner" amidst increasing concern here that the war-torn country, which shares borders with the volatile Xinjiang province, could become a breeding ground for Uighur Muslim militants.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian's remarks came after acting US Defence Secretary Christopher Miller last week said that the US would cut its military presence in Afghanistan to 2,500 troops by January 15.

"China calls on foreign troops to leave Afghanistan in an orderly and responsible manner, give terrorist forces no breathing space and contribute to Afghanistan peace and reconstruction," Zhao told a media briefing here.

He also condemned the recent Islamic State attack on

Kabul, saying "China will continue to firmly support the Afghan government and people in their efforts to combat terrorism and safeguard the national stability and their own security."

Observers say that America's latest plan to speed up the withdrawal of more troops from Afghanistan may have troubling consequences for China as Washington's withdrawal also coincides with its move to lift the ban on the Uighur militant group - the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM).

Earlier this month, the Trump administration, in a sudden move, lifted the ban on the separatist ETIM, which has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the UN's 1267 counter-terrorism committee in 2002 for its alleged association with al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden and the Taliban. **PTI**

China lashes out at US withdrawal from Open Skies Treaty with Russia



Beijing: China on Monday lashed out at Washington over its withdrawal from the "Open Skies Treaty" with Russia, saying the move undermined military trust and transparency and invited future attempts at arms control.

The treaty, to which China is not a signatory, had allowed each country oversight rights to inspect military facilities.

That leaves only one arms-control pact still in force between the former Cold War foes, the New START treaty, which limits the number of nuclear warheads each may have. That treaty will expire in February and the Trump administration had said it was not interested in extending it unless China also joined, something Beijing says it will not do. **AP**

UK SC to decide if ISIS bride can be back to London

London: Britain's Supreme Court is set to decide whether a woman who ran away from her London home as a teenager to join the Islamic State group in Syria can return to the UK.

The British government is fighting to keep Shamima Begum from coming back to the country where she was born.

At a hearing beginning on Monday, it is challenging a lower court's ruling that Begum can return to Britain to mount a legal challenge aimed at restoring her UK citizenship, which was revoked on national security grounds.

The Court of Appeal said in July that "the only way in which she can have a fair and effective appeal is to be permitted to come into the United Kingdom."

But James Eadie, a lawyer acting for the UK government, told the Supreme Court justices that Begum "is considered to pose a real and current threat

to national security."

Begum, now 21, was one of three east London schoolgirls who traveled to Syria in 2015 to live under IS rule.

She says she married an Islamic State member from the Netherlands and had three children, all of whom have died.

She resurfaced at a refugee camp in Syria in 2019 and told reporters she wanted to come home, but was denied the chance when then-Home Secretary Sajid Javid revoked her citizenship.

He argued that she was Bangladeshi by descent and could go there.

The ruling has thrown into sharp relief the larger question of how Western societies deal with people who joined IS but want to go back to their home countries.

Begum challenged the decision, arguing she was the citizen of another country and that Javid's decision left her stateless. **AP**

First Americans could be vaccinated next month: House vaccine chief

Washington: The first Americans to receive a COVID-19 vaccine could be as early as the second week of December, according to the White House vaccine czar.

American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech submitted an application to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on November 20 for emergency use authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate. An FDA vaccine advisory committee is slated to meet December 10.

Dr Moncef Slaoui, the head of the US coronavirus vaccine programme said that it means, if authorised by the FDA, the vaccine could be rolled out the next day

(December 11).

"Our plan is to be able to ship vaccines to the immunisation sites within 24 hours from the approval, so I would expect maybe on day two after approval, on the 11th or on the 12th of December," he told CNN on Sunday.

The vaccine, which requires two doses, has been shown by tests to be 95 per cent effective. Pfizer hopes to produce up to 50 million doses by the end of the year.

US pharmaceutical company Moderna has also reported that its vaccine is nearly 95 per cent effective, according to test data. The company is expected to start approving the vaccine in the coming weeks. **PTI**

Burkina Faso counts ballots; extremist threats affected vote

Ouagadougou: Votes are being counted in Burkina Faso after Sunday's presidential and legislative elections, with threats of extremist violence linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State prevented parts of the country from casting ballots.

Election workers began the counting after polls closed by holding up the ballots up for observers and marking the votes on a chalkboard beside the candidate's name. Preliminary results are expected within the next two days.

While the vote were not reported incidents of major attacks, threats of violence prevented people from casting ballots in hard-hit parts of the country, in the North, Sahel and East regions. Nearly 3,000 polling stations out of 335 didn't open, according to a report from CODEL, a local



Election officials count the ballots in at a polling station in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, for the presidential and legislative elections late on Sunday **AP**

from voting, said Newton Ahmed Barry, president for the National Independent Electoral Commission, on local television.

In Tapoa province in the east, 224 polling stations out of 335 didn't open, according to a report from CODEL, a local

organization monitoring the elections. CODEL said it was "concerned about the situation in areas weakened by insecurity." Local officials in the Sahel and Center North, the epicenters of the violence, told the AP that people were angry about not being able to vote. **AP**

HK's Joshua Wong to plead guilty to protest charges

Hong Kong: Prominent Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong said on Monday that he plans to plead guilty to charges related to a demonstration outside police headquarters during anti-government protests last year.

Ahead of a court hearing Monday, Wong said he and fellow activist Ivan Lam would both plead guilty to organizing, taking part in and inciting protesters to join an unauthorized protest outside police headquarters in Wan Chai last June.

Wong and Lam were members of the now-disbanded Demosisto political party. "I am persuaded that neither prison bars, nor election ban, nor any other arbitrary powers would stop us from activating the people," Wong said. "What we are doing now is to explain the value of freedom

French ex-Prez Sarkozy stands trial for corruption

Paris: Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy goes on trial Monday on charges of corruption and influence peddling in a phone-tapping scandal, a first for the 65-year-old politician who has faced several other judicial investigations since leaving office in 2012.

Sarkozy is being accused of having tried to illegally obtain information from a magistrate about an investigation involving him in 2014.

He stands trial in a Paris court along with his lawyer Thierry Herzog, 65, and the magistrate, Gilbert Azibert, 73.

They face a prison sentence of up to 10 years and a maximum fine of 1 million euros (\$1.2 million). They deny any wrongdoing.

Hearings are scheduled until Dec. 10. **AP**

US provides missiles, renews pledge to defend Philippines

Manila: President Donald Trump's administration provided precision-guided missiles and other weapons to help the Philippines battle Islamic State group-aligned militants and renewed a pledge to defend its treaty ally if it comes under attack in the disputed South China Sea.

National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien represented Trump in Monday's ceremony

at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, where he announced the delivery of the cache of missiles and bombs to the Philippine military. Trump pledged to provide the \$18 million worth of missiles in a phone conversation with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in April.

O'Brien expressed condolences to the Philippines after

back-to-back typhoons left a trail of death and devastation in the country and outlined US Help to the country battle the coronavirus pandemic.

The US assistance projects normalcy in Washington's foreign relations as Trump worked to challenge the results of the November 3 presidential election, claiming he was a victim of fraud. Duterte had asked Filipino Americans to vote for Trump but congratulated Joe Biden, through his spokesperson, for winning the election.

O'Brien has represented Trump in a recent online summit between the US and leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and an expanded East Asia summit of heads of state attended by China and Russia that was also held by video and hosted by Vietnam. **AP**

Yemen rebels claim attack on Saudi oil facility in Jiddah

Dubai: Yemen's Houthis rebels said they struck a Saudi oil facility in the port city of Jiddah on Monday with a new cruise missile, just hours after the kingdom finished hosting its virtual Group of 20 leaders summit.

The kingdom did not immediately acknowledge any attack on videos on social media suggested a fire at an Aramco oil facility.

Brig. Gen. Yehia Sarie, a Houthi military spokesman,

tweeted that the rebels fired a new Quds 2 cruise missile at the facility. He posted a video online that matched Aramco's North Jiddah Bulk Plant, where oil products are stored in tanks.

That facility is just south-east of Jiddah's King Abdulaziz International Airport, a major facility that handles incoming Muslim pilgrims en route to nearby Mecca.

Online videos appeared to

show a tank farm similar to the bulk plant on fire. Details of the video, posted on Monday, matched the general layout of the bulk plant.

Saudi state-run media did not immediately acknowledge the Houthi claim.

Saudi Aramco, the kingdom's oil giant that now has a share of its worth traded publicly on the stock market, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. **AP**

Officials: 113 bodies found in secret graves in Mexico

Mexico City: Mexican authorities have recovered 113 bodies and additional human remains from a secret grave outside the western city of Guadalajara.

Jalisco state Attorney Gerardo Octavio Solis said on Sunday night that 30 of the victims had been identified.

The state is home to Jalisco New Generation Cartel, one of Mexico's most violent and powerful. More bodies have been found in secret graves

there than in any other state in recent years.

According to Mexico's Interior Ministry, from 2006 through September 30 of this year, 897 bodies had been recovered from secret graves in Jalisco, 605 of those during the administration of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who took office in December 2018.

The burial ground in El Salto, southeast of Guadalajara, was found in October. **AP**

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. 82205012 date :- 23.11.2020
Invitation of Tenders through E-procurement system
Principal chief materials manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief description	Qty.	Closing date
1.	82205012	Diode Laser	1 Nos	15.12.2020

Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS websites i.e. www.reps.gov.in for details.
2. No Manual offer will be entertained. 26/12/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, Shaal Tower, New Roshik Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

Whereas
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned date and the public in general is hereby notified that the undersigned has no deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

S. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand	Name of Branch
1.	Ashray Raj Singh & Durg Pat Singh (LBDEL00001232867)	Flat No-T/ 3-13-05, Valley View Estate, Gurgaon, Haryana/ Nov 18, 2020	January 31, 2020 Rs. 6,83,107.57/-	Delhi NCR
2.	Dayanand Sharma/ Jaiwinder Kaushik/ LBFG00001181891	Flat No-207, 2nd Floor, C-11, Belvedere Tower, Chandra Mohan Village, Suraj Kund Road, Faridabad/ Nov 18, 2020	October 04, 2019 Rs. 23,74,540/-	Delhi NCR
3.	Hastinder Taneja & Raschna Taneja/ LBGR00002382513	Unit No G- 018, Ground Floor Platinum Tower, Sector-47, Sohna Road, Gurgaon/ Nov 18, 2020	February 26, 2020 Rs. 15,58,036/-	Delhi NCR
4.	Prashanth Kumar & Sakshi Garg/ LBH000004355898	Flat No CVN- T/ 10-09/04, 9th Floor, CHD Vann, Tower 10, Sector- 71, Gurgaon/ Nov 18, 2020	February 22, 2020 Rs. 90,78,208.75/-	Delhi NCR
5.	Chetna Sharoni Santosh Gupta/ Sanjay Gupta/ LBDEL00001867389	402 A, Tower B- 3, Alpha, AEZ Inspirations, Sector-57, Gurgaon/ 12/20/10/ Nov 18, 2020	July 23, 2020 Rs. 90,45,995/-	Delhi NCR

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under Section 13 and 14 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Date :- November 24, 2020
Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

South Africa judge files criminal complaint against ex-Prez Jacob Zuma

Johannesburg: A South African judge said he will file a criminal complaint against former South African president Jacob Zuma after he staged a dramatic walkout while attending a commission of inquiry looking into corruption during his tenure from 2009 to 2018.

Zuma left the commission hearing without the permission after Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo dismissed an inquiry, Zuma alleges Zondo is biased against him.

Zuma has been asked to respond to various allegations implicating him from at least 35 affidavits by witnesses who have appeared before the commission.

These include allegations, among others, that he was involved in converting that members of the controversial Gupta family secured lucrative state contracts and influenced his appointments of cabinet ministers.

Zondo announced Monday that he would also file an application to the Constitutional Court, the highest court in the country, to enforce a summons issued against Zuma and compel him to appear before the commission. **AP**

UJVN LTD (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)
H.O.: "ULJWAL", Mahatma Bhagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507
CIN No. U40119UP200512SC028866 Website: www.uttarakhandjvnltd.gov.in

Ro.No.- 757 NOTICE INVITING TENDER Date- 23.11.2020

For and on behalf of UJVN Ltd., Executive Engineer (Civil), Pashulok Barrage, Rishikesh, invites sealed & separate tenders from interested contractors for following work:-

1. **Tender Item Reference:** NIT No.-14/2020-21/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage-Annual Horticulture Upkeep & Sweeping Cleaning Work of Civil Power House Premises at Chilla.
2. **Estimated Value of Tender:-** Rs. 24,29,445.51 Only.
3. **Date of availability of bid document on website:-** 23.11.2020 from 17:00 Hrs. (IST)
4. **Last Date for Submission of Tender:-** 14.12.2020 upto 14:00 Hrs. (IST).

For eligibility criteria and full and further details kindly visit our web site. The tenders can be downloaded from our web site i.e. www.uttarakhandjvnltd.gov.in and tender cost shall be paid at the time of submission of the tender.

Executive Engineer (Civil)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Anita D/o Pappu R/o House No. CH-4, Gali No. 11, Parasa Ram Ka Makan, Sushant Vihar, Delhi.** Age: 15 yrs. Height: 5'0", complexion wheatish, face oval, Build thin. Wearing Blue colour suit and salwar and blue colour hawai chappal in feet is missing since 20.10.2020 from the area of PS Swaroop Nagar, Delhi.

In this regard a FIR No. 512/2020 dated: 20.10.2020 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS Swaroop Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl, but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: ccib@delhi.gov.in S.H.O.,
Fax: 011-230111334
Ph: 011-23014046
011-23015218

P.S. Swaroop Nagar, Delhi
Ph: 011-27811415, 7065036327

DP/BD/OT/20

WESTERN RAILWAY
E-PROCUREMENT
TENDER NOTICE No. S/28/2020 Date 19.11.2020

S. N.	Short Description of Item	Tender Quantity	T.O.D.
723	Security Plate for Centre Pivot Arrangement	900 Nos	25.11.2020
724	Resistor R P Q O P for Relay	200 Nos	04.12.2020
725	Brake Gear Bush	122000 Nos	11.12.2020
726	Ball Joint Traction Lever	2000 Nos	14.12.2020
727	Lateral Bump Stop	1400 Nos	14.12.2020
728	Angular Contact Spring Complete	525 Nos	17.12.2020
729	Wire Wound Fixed Earthing Resistance	73 Nos	17.12.2020
730	Electroplated Pin ICF Rogie	2429 Nos	18.12.2020
731	Yoke for Upgraded High Tensile CBG	214 Nos	18.12.2020
732	Rubber Spring	1169 Nos	21.12.2020
733	Set of Spares of Valves	1 Set	26.12.2020

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.westernrailways.gov.in

For Principal Chief Materials Manager 0458

Like us on: Facebook.com/WesternRailway Follow us on: Twitter.com/WesternRailway

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found lying dead on the footpath of Mahila Park, Chandra Chowk, Delhi dated 19.11.2020. In this regard a Vide DD No. 58A, dated 19.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification at Sabzi Mandi Mortuary, Delhi for 72 hrs. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unknown, S/O: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: About 35-40 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Thin, Face: Long, Hair: Maximum Black and brown of Head and black beard Wearing: Black jeans Paint, pink checkered shirt, meharoon banian and yellow sweater, Bare Footed.

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. Kotwali, Delhi
DP/40IN/2020 Ph: 011-23977100, 8750870121

Markets march higher on vaccine progress

RIL, IT STOCKS SPARKLE

PTI | MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks made a winning start to the week on Monday as positive results from another COVID-19 vaccine candidate bolstered investor confidence globally.

A recovering rupee and unabated foreign fund inflows added to the momentum, traders said.

After touching a record intra-day high of 44,271.15, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 194.90 points or 0.44 per cent higher at 44,077.15.

Rupee extends gains by 5p to end at over 2-week high against dollar

PTI | MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 5 paise to settle at more than two-week high of 74.11 against the US dollar on Monday tracking positive domestic equities and weak American currency.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit traded in a narrow range as rising COVID-19 cases offset positive sentiments surrounding the progress on the vaccine front.

AstraZeneca on Monday said that late-stage trials of its COVID-19 vaccine were "highly effective" in preventing disease.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose 67.40 points or 0.52 per cent to close at 12,926.45.

ONGC was the top performer on the Sensex chart, surging 6.84 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech and TCS.

Index heavyweight Reliance Industries climbed 2.72 per cent, accounting for most of the Sensex's gains, after the Competition Commission on Friday evening said it had approved the conglomerate's proposed acquisition of Future Group's retail assets.

On the other hand, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, SBI

and M&M were among the main laggards, slumping up to 3.55 per cent.

Global equities were on the upswing after Oxford University and AstraZeneca announced that their COVID-19 vaccine candidate was found to be around 90 per cent effective in preventing the disease.

This is the third major vaccine to have reported encouraging results, after Moderna and Pfizer came out with positive Phase 3 data.

"While global cues remained favourable, a sharp rebound in IT, pharma, metals and Reliance Industries led domestic equities to register further gains. However, profit booking was witnessed in select heavyweight financials after recommendation of IWG (Internal Working Group) of RBI did not favour them much, which led financials to end in red today.

Gold futures gain on spot demand

PTI | NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose ₹45 to ₹50,257 per 10 gram in futures trade on Monday as speculators created fresh positions on firm spot demand.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for December delivery traded higher by ₹45, or 0.09 per cent, at ₹50,257 per 10 gram in a business turnover of 5,444 lots.

Fresh positions built up by participants led to the rise in gold prices, analysts said.

In the international market, gold traded 0.03 per cent higher at US\$1,878.80 per ounce in New York.

Bank licences to corporates a 'bad idea': Raghuram Rajan

PTI | NEW DELHI

Days after an Internal Working Group (IWG) of Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recommended allowing large Indian corporates to enter the banking sector, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan and Deputy Governor Viral Acharya have hit back at the suggestion and questioned the timing for it.

Termining the recommendation as a "bombshell", in a blogpost, they said that although several recommen-

Momentum of economic reforms will continue, FM assures industry

PTI | NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday assured the industry that momentum of economic reforms will continue to make India a hotspot of global investment.

India has turned the crisis created by COVID-19 pandemic into an opportunity to push the economic reforms, which remain pending for decades, she said while addressing the National MNC's Conference 2020 organised by the industry chamber CII.

"Even at the time (of) COVID pandemic, the Prime Minister has not lost an opportunity to take deep reforms, to undertake those kinds of reforms which have not seen the light of the day over the decades.

The momentum for reform will continue. Several more active reform-related steps are being taken up,"

Sitharaman said.

The financial sector is being professionalised and the

government will continue with disinvestment agenda, she added.

Govt's 'unprecedented' reforms to usher in new era of growth: Kant

New Delhi: Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on Monday said that "unprecedented" reforms undertaken on both governance and economic fronts by the government will usher in a new era of growth and prosperity.

Kant also stressed the need to increase expenditure on research and development and strengthen intellectual property rights (IPR) laws.

The economic and governance reforms undertaken by the government have been quite unprecedented and they

will usher in a new era of growth and prosperity," he said. "We are making states compete on ease of doing business parameters. We are ranking states and naming and shaming them," he said while addressing a virtual event organised by industry body CII. Listing out reforms undertaken by the government in recent times, Kant said as the world battles contraction in economic growth, India has initiated reforms in key sectors including agriculture, labour and mining.

India exports 11mn smartphones in Jan-Sep

Gurgaon: The exports of smartphones from India is expected to cross \$1.5 billion (by value) this year -- constituting 98 per cent of the total mobile phones exported from the country, a new report said on Monday. A total of 12.8 million mobile phones were exported from India from January to September this year and of these, 10.9 million units were smartphones, according to market research firm techARC.



houses can easily get financing, with no questions asked, in case they have an in-house bank.

No respite from rising onion prices till Dec, potato prices decline

PTI | NEW DELHI

Due to the declining onion imports from abroad, the price of the staple vegetable is once again set to soar even while there is a large supply of onions coming from Rajasthan. The retail price of onions in the national capital is between Rs 50 to Rs 70 per kg while the wholesale price in the city is 15 to Rs 47.5 per kg which had fallen slightly to Rs 42 per kg before the Diwali season.

According to traders, there are slim chances of getting a respite from the rising onion prices before December this year. However, there is a relief for the common man as

the prices of potatoes sharply declined due to the new potato crop.

The prices of onions in onion prices is being attributed to the decrease in imports even as the fresh supply of onions from Rajasthan is in full swing. Various parts of the country, including north India, are seeing a decline in onion prices. Traders said that in the last few days due to the increasing supply of locally-produced onions, the pace of onion imports has slowed down.

Horticulture Produce Exporters' Association President, Ajit Shah, said the



import of onions has not stopped but it has considerably reduced. He said that onions have also been imported from Turkey this week. At present, although onions are coming from Rajasthan, its price will fall only when onions from Nashik in Maharashtra flood the markets, Shah added.

Reliance Retail's 'vocal for local' mission expands to 30,000 artisans

PTI | NEW DELHI

Reliance Retail on Monday said it showcased more than 40,000 artisan-crafted products from over 50 GI clusters to its customers this festive season in a strong push to locally-made artisan products.

A direct result of its three-year-old flagship initiatives - 'Indie by AJO' and 'Swadesh' - started to provide avenues for sales and employment to local craftsmen, the programmes now engage with more than 30,000 craftsmen, representing

over 600 art forms across a wide spectrum of clothing, textiles, handicrafts and hand-made natural goods," the company said in a statement. Indie by AJO is an online marketplace for local artisans and handcrafted products. It features this distinctive idiom beautifully in the wide lifestyle products ranging from apparel to home furnishing and accessories such as jewellery and footwear, it said. The craft repertoire includes Ikatt, Shibori, Banarasi, Bagh, Ajrak to Jamdani, Tangail, Chanderi and many more.

HC TO AIR INDIA Consider paying one month's salary to terminated contractual pilots

PTI | NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday asked Air India to consider paying at least one month's salary to its pilots, engaged on contractual basis, whose services were suspended in April and later terminated in August, saying that employees cannot be left to hang high and dry.

Justice Navin Chawla asked the counsel for national carrier Air India to take instructions on paying one month's salary to the contractual pilots, who

number around 61. The services of the pilots were terminated in August.

The court also asked the airline to hear out the grievances of the pilots, who were engaged on contract after superannuation, and to see whether something, like a "golden handshake," can be done for them.

With the suggestions, the court listed the matter for hearing on December 16. The court was hearing two pleas moved on behalf of the terminated contractual pilots

who have sought quashing of the termination order and suspension of their services and the subsequent order of August 7 by which they were all terminated.

The pilots, represented by advocates Lalit Bhardwaj, Krishan Gopal and Jatin Anand Dwivedi, have sought a direction to AI to restore their contractual engagements or pay them salaries along with flying allowances with effect from April 1 till their licenses are restored to current ratings.

Google to delay 30% in-app purchase policy amid backlash

PTI | SEOUL/NEW DELHI

Facing backlash from developers, Google said on Monday that it will postpone enforcing a 30 per cent commission on in-app purchases of digital content from its Play Store from next January to next September.

Under the new policy set to be adopted in late September, Google plans to take a 30 per cent commission on all digital content purchases by users from app developers.

Like Apple, Google also collects a 30 per cent commission on in-app purchases. Apple last week announced it will reduce the standard commission on its App Store from 30 per cent to 15 per cent for app developers with yearly proceeds of less than \$1 million from next year.

According to market watchers, Google apparently postponed the policy as it faced strong backlash from South Korean developers, reports Yonhap news agency.

While Google has taken a 30 per cent cut for all in-app purchases on the Play store through its billing system, some apps have circumvented the rule by using other systems, such as direct credit card payments.

SALE NOTICE

The under mentioned Assets will be sold through auction on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" for recovery of dues as per court orders, in the following cases:-

Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD Amount (10% of reserve price)	Place of Auction	Date and Time of auction
225/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. VIRASHI	Vehicle no- HR38V6041, Manu yr- 2015, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT BASE CRDI	68000/-	6800/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurgaon-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM
CM (M)- 231/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. ANKIT BHADANA	Vehicle no- HR38V7561, Manu yr- 2015, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT	85000/-	8500/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurgaon-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
FAO 213/ 2015, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. KULVINDER SINGH	Vehicle no- NR, Engine No- D12AC204942, Chassis No- MA12AC1561691, Manu yr- 2012, Make and Model- Maruti Eriga	200000/-	20000/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurgaon-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
CM (M) 22/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. CHATURVEDI	UP14F71814, Manu yr- 2016, Make and Model- CHEVROLET SAIL UVA LT	68000/-	6800/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurgaon-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
229/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. MUNEEB KHAN	Vehicle no- UP16AH0220, Manu yr- 2016, Make and Model- FORD ENDEAVOR XLT	160000/-	16000/-	JCS Financial Services & Parking Security Plot No. 112, Old Rajpur Road, Near Kishan Nagar, Kanpur Nagar, Pin 209304, Uttar Pradesh	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
222/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. RAHUL YADAV	Vehicle no- UP16T0642, Manu yr- 2014, Make and Model- TATA ACE HT	70000/-	7000/-	A.N. Motors 14 KM - Stone, Agra - Mathura Road, Runkata Agra- 282007	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

EMD: 10% of EMD amount to be made in favour of ICICI Bank Limited, payable at Delhi.

Contact Person- Rajeev Ranjan (854874809)/ Jitendra Kumar (7304914763)/ Avinash Kumar (8953652366)

Terms of Sale

The particulars of the said asset specified herein above have been stated to the best of the information and knowledge of the undersigned, who shall however not be responsible for any error, misstatement or omission in the said particulars. The interested participants are therefore requested, to satisfy themselves in relation to the said asset and other relevant details pertaining to it before submitting the bids. All bidders are required to come at site with original DD/P.O of EMD amount along with original KYC proofs to participate in the auction.

Successfully/undesired bidder shall have to deposit sale amount (Excluding EMD amount) within 5 days from the auction date by the way of pay order/demand draft/RTGS/NEFT. In case if you fail to make the remaining sale amount within 5 days, your EMD amount will be forfeited.

The intending bidders may visit at ICICI Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, SD Tower, Community Center, Plot no-7, Rohini Sector-8, New Delhi-110085, for details and inspection of the said hypothecated vehicle.

SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely Sanjay S/o Nirottam R/o H.No.A-51-C, DDA Flats, Tagore Garden, Delhi Aged-45 Years has been reported missing since 12.10.2020 at about 09:30 AM from his residence vide DD No.45A Dated 12.11.2020 registered at Police Station Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Shallow, **Height:** 5'5", **Face:** Round, **Build:** Normal, **Clothing:** Blue coloured shirt, Blue coloured jeans and White coloured shoes in feet.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing male, may inform SHO, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in or website: <http://cbl.nic.in>

Sd/-
Tel. No.: 011-24368638 or 24368641
Fax No.: 011-24368639
DP/274/ND/2020

SHO, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi
Tel.: 011-25448685, 25161102
Mob.: 8750871127

SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely Sunil S/o Late Sh. Gahinar R/o Shop Classic Chicken, Gole Market, New Delhi Aged-about 19 Years has been reported missing since 07.11.20 at 09:30 PM from his residence vide DD No.70-A Dated 10.11.2020 registered at Police Station Mandir Marg, New Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Shallow, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Long, **Build:** Thin, **Clothing:** Cream Coloured shirt and White coloured jeans.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing male, may inform SHO, Mandir Marg, New Delhi at E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in or website: <http://cbl.nic.in>

Sd/-
Tel. No.: 011-24368638 or 24368641
Fax No.: 011-24368639
DP/157/ND/2020

SHO, Mandir Marg, New Delhi
Tel.: 011-23364100, 23366730

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one male namely Pankaj, S/o Suresh, R/o Jai Kumar Ka Makana, H.No. 37, Village Sannoth, Delhi, Age: 25 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Build: Medium, wearing White colour Shirt & Blue colour Pant, has been missing from his house since 30.09.2020 at 10:00 AM. In this regard a DD No. 52-A, dated 27.10.2020 has been registered at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website: <http://cbl.nic.in>
E-mail: cic@cbl.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/583/ON/2020 Ph. No.: 011-27787592, 27787593

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 40 Years, Height: 5'5", Sex: Male, Complexion: Wheatish, Injury Marks: Body damaged in different shops, Wearing: Green and White colour Checkdard Shirt and Black Colour Pant & Plastic Chappal in Feet.

Place of Recovery: Found dead on 17.11.2020 at KM Pole No. 153, 143/1 UP Line Railway Track, Near Under Pass, Mangolpuri Railway Station.

In this regard FIR/DD No. 1A, dated 17.11.2020 has been lodged at Police Station, Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, Delhi. Any clue come to notice please inform undersigned.

SHO
P.S. Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, Delhi
Ph.: 011-28714802, 28711697
DP/14/RLY/2020 87508 71308

DOCYARD
DR KUSHAL BANERJEE
Consultant Homeopath

DR KALYAN BANERJEE'S CLINIC,
NEW DELHI



Take help from Homeopathy



India is considered as the Diabetes capital of the world. Approximately eight-point seven percent of Indians between the age of twenty to seventy years are Diabetic. The country suffers substantial loss of productivity and thus bears a huge economic burden because of Diabetes.

An exceedingly high number of Diabetics around the world are looking to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to act as an adjunct or substitute for the management of their condition. Diabetes affects multiple organ systems resulting in a wide range of serious issues in patients. Many of these complications of Diabetes do not have any specific treatment in conventional medicine.

India is known for its larger than life festivals, and sweets and delicacies is a part and parcel of it. However, during this time, Diabetics should exercise caution and only consume extremely limited quantities of sweets or restrict themselves to food items which will not increase their blood sugar levels if they have very high levels of blood sugar. A temporary but sharp rise in blood sugar can cause irreversible damage to vital organs. Elevated blood sugar may take days to settle to its previous levels. We are also looking into the correlation between Diabetes and COVID-19. Although research is still new, it is being postulated that diabetics have a higher chance of severe clinical outcomes and mortality due to COVID-19. Again, experts recommend that patients should strive for good control of their blood sugar levels to prevent severe complications.

Diabetes affects multiple organs resulting in a wide range of serious issues in patients. Many of these complications do not have any specific treatment in conventional medicine

earlier.

Doctors usually spend a lot of time explaining the importance of lifestyle changes, including diet, mealtimes, exercise and sleep patterns, in addition to advising homeopathic medicines. Many of these patients can report lasting blood sugar control with these modifications. There are many cases where homeopathic medicines can be completely withdrawn.

Some of the other complications which occur in chronic Diabetics are conditions like peripheral neuropathy (degeneration of the nerves in the periphery of the body), Diabetic retinopathy (degeneration of the retina and related structures) and diabetic nephropathy (degeneration of the structures of the kidney, affecting its functioning). These conditions are known to respond poorly to conventional medicines. However, homeopathy can address these issues in many patients. From providing relief to pain, burning and loss of sensation of limbs, to improving or preventing further loss of vision. There is anecdotal data demonstrating improvement or arrest of degeneration of kidney functioning with homeopathic management in cases of nephropathy. We are also able to see remarkable improvements in cases of Diabetic foot, where the foot of patient begins to degenerate into a gangrenous condition due to poor blood supply. Patients are often able to avoid an amputation!

As the country takes some early steps towards an integrated healthcare system, it is important to consider homeopathy as an essential option for patients in all stages of Diabetes.

WARMFOODS

BROWN RICE: Brown rice is rich in proteins, thiamine, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and potassium. For those trying to lose weight or those suffering from diabetes, it can prove a healthy staple given its low glycemic rating which helps reduce insulin spikes.

It is rich in selenium which reduces the risk for developing common illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and arthritis. One cup of it provides 80 per cent of our daily manganese requirements. Manganese helps the body

synthesize fats. It also benefits our nervous and reproductive systems. The naturally occurring oils are beneficial for the body as they help normalise cholesterol levels. The fiber content of brown rice keeps bowel function at its peak since it makes digestion that much easier. It is the perfect addition to the daily diet for those seeking bowel regularity. In addition, it also makes the tummy feel full which translates to smaller meal portions.

TEST YOUR LUNGEVITY

Pneumonia is common among people of all ages. DR SAMIR GARDE busts myths related to the disease and tells you symptoms to look out for

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs. It causes the air sacs (alveoli) of the lungs to get inflamed (irritated and swollen). They may fill up with fluid or pus. This causes a variety of symptoms, which range from mild to severe. Pneumonia is usually caused by bacteria or a virus. It also can be caused by fungi or irritants that you breathe into your lungs. How serious pneumonia is depends on many factors. These include what caused the pneumonia, your age, and your overall health.

SYMPTOMS
The symptoms of pneumonia can range from mild to severe. This depends on your risk factors and the type of pneumonia you have. Common symptoms are similar to the symptoms caused by a cold or the flu. They include:

- Cough
- Fever
- Bringing up mucus when you cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Chest pain

You may also sweat, have a headache, and feel very tired. Some people also experience nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

MYTHS
■It can always be treated with antibiotics
■Elderly people are the only ones required to receive vaccinations
■Healthy people can't get pneumonia

■In an individual with pneumonia must be hospitalised

FACTS
■With many possible causes for pneumonia, treatment could include

Turn to breathing exercises

Like people say, prevention is better than cure. So is the case with pneumonia. Here are a few tips that can help.

- Having good immunity is the single most important factor in prevention of pneumonia.
- Healthy lifestyle — a good

more than just antibiotics
■People age 65 and older are at a higher risk, but anyone can catch pneumonia at any age and therefore should consider getting vaccinated
■People who are considered healthy have a lower risk, but could still catch pneumonia

■If the condition is less severe, treatment may not include hospitalisation

CAUSES
Bacterial: This is the commonest cause of pneumonia. There is a wide range of bacteria that can infect the lungs - in children as well as adults

Viral: Nowadays due to COVID 19; everyone seems to have got alerted about viral pneumonia. Viral infections are rather common in children and there are dozens of viruses that cause infection of the lungs. Influenza related pneumonia are common in adults and various other viruses can cause lung infection in adults where immunity is compromised. COVID-19 related infection is not a pneumonia in true sense; its more of inflammatory condition of the lungs — the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this article.

Fungal: Happens in immuno-

compromised individuals. People who are suffering from Diabetes; chronic kidney disease; those having HIV/AIDS; or those who are on medicines that compromise the immunity; especially after organ transplant etc are immunocompromised people.

Tuberculous infections: Infection caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis (popularly known as TB) is the biggest menace in front of our country and needs to be tackled on war footing. There are other

The symptoms of pneumonia can range from mild to severe. This depends on your risk factors and the type of pneumonia you have. Common signs are similar to the ones caused by a cold or flu

As discussed above; depending on the causative agent (Bacterial/viral/TB etc.) and patient's condition (stable or critical) medicines are prescribed to be taken orally (at home) or intravenously (in the hospital). Patients also need supportive care in the form of hydration; control of Diabetes; vitamin supplements etc.

The writer is Consultant Respiratory Medicine, Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre

apry should take regular guidance of their treating physician; to keep their conditions under control.

- Avoiding smoking
- Taking influenza and Pneumococcal vaccines as per the advice of regular doctor/chest physician.

bacteria from the Mycobacterium family that can cause lung infections.

Aspiration pneumonia: When one ends up aspirating contents of the stomach into the lungs via; breathing pipe — one gets — chemical pneumonitis.

How is pneumonia diagnosed? When a person reaches a doctor/hospital with above mentioned symptoms and after clinical examination pneumonia is suspected; X-ray of the chest is done to diagnose pneumonia. At times a CT scan of the chest is necessary to see the extent of the infection. Sending sputum for culture test helps in deciding the causative factor of pneumonia.

How is it treated? As discussed above; depending on the causative agent (Bacterial/viral/TB etc.) and patient's condition (stable or critical) medicines are prescribed to be taken orally (at home) or intravenously (in the hospital). Patients also need supportive care in the form of hydration; control of Diabetes; vitamin supplements etc.

The writer is Consultant Respiratory Medicine, Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre

DON'T MISS YOUR CHILD'S VACCINATION

Approximately 3.7 lakh children die of pneumonia annually in India. DR SISIR PAUL tells how timely immunisation can reduce the risk

Pneumonia is one of the leading causes of sickness and mortality in children in developing countries especially under the age of 5 years. Pneumonia can be easily prevented by immunisation, adequate nutrition, and taking care of some environmental factors.

As per WHO Pneumonia accounts for almost 15% to 18% of all deaths (1.3 million deaths) globally of which 99% cases seen in 15 developing countries, in children under 5 years age. Approximately 3.7 lakh children die of Pneumonia annually in India. Pneumonia can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungi.

Pneumonia can spread in several ways like via air-borne droplets from a cough or sneeze from an infected person or the organisms which are normally present in one's nose and throat can become infective if conditions are unfavourable and can infect the lungs if they are inhaled. In addition, in young infants it can spread through blood also. Various factors that may influence the occurrence of pneumonia include, premature and low birth weight child, undernutrition, indoor overcrowding, poor hygiene, previous history of allergies, recent history of Measles and Chicken Pox, Pneumonia or hospitalisation and many more.

The presenting features of viral and bacterial pneumonia are similar. However, the symptoms of viral pneumonia may be more when compared with bacterial pneumonia. In children under five years of age they can present with cough and/or fast and difficult breathing, with or without fever and there may be retraction of lower chest wall. Wheezing is more common in viral pneumonia. Very severely ill infants may be unable to take feed or drink.

Three strategic interventions include-vaccination, breastfeeding/nutrition and access to care and antibiotic treatment along with Parent Education Programs, Pneumonia awareness Program, Community and health workers. Awareness of practices like hand hygiene-washing hands frequently, avoiding indoor pollution (smoking, usage of firewood, kerosene, incense, deep-sprays etc.) as well as outdoor pollution.

The ideal precautions as already discussed keep your child's vaccination upto date which starts from six weeks of age.

All children should be given vaccines to prevent against bacterial infections like Pneumococcus and Hib. All children six months of age or older should get a flu (Influenza) vaccine yearly at least up to eight years of age (MOH) because the maximum spread in the community is through children in this age group.

Children should also be vaccinated against Measles and Chicken Pox because these illnesses can reduce the immunity and increase the risk of secondary pneumonia. Older children should follow cough and sneeze etiquettes (cover their nose and mouth with facial tissue or a sleeve of their shirt when sneezing and throw away tissues after use).

If the child is showing symptoms suggestive of pneumonia consult your Paediatrician and do not indulge in self medications.

The writer is Clinical Director for Paediatrics, Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital

DadiKa Kehna

Winters are here and with it the usual problems of dry skin, dandruff and cracked heels. A few simple ingredients available in your kitchen can help tackle the issue, says ROSHANI DEVI

While we all look forward to winters sitting in front of the fire, drinking tea and talking about everything under the sun; there are some annoying problems that crop up — dry skin and dandruff. There are many products available in the market but a few home remedies work just as well with long lasting effect.

If you have dry skin, one of the best remedies is to mix two parts glycerin, two parts rose water and one part lemon juice. Keep this in a bottle. Apply on the skin. Avoid areas where there is a break in the skin. Leave it overnight. Wash

with warm water the next morning. One can do this on the face — the results are amazing. For cracked heels mix beeswax and mustard oil by heating them together in equal parts. Pour it into a container. Let it cool. Apply over the cracked heels. Wear socks. Wash feet the next morning. Repeat till you get smooth heels. Dandruff is another winter problem that many face. Mix orange peel powder and coconut oil to make a mask. Apply this on the scalp. Leave overnight or at least for an hour. Wash off with shampoo. Do this thrice a week till dandruff disappears.

Ultrasound is key

India is severely impacted by the sudden outbreak of highly infectious COVID-19 pandemic which is overwhelming our healthcare system & the number of patients being diagnosed with it is staggering. Amidst these unprecedented times; Point-of-care Ultrasound (POCUS) technology has emerged as a key screening tool for physicians to access the actual clinical conditions in the medically fragile patients.

Nowadays, compact ultrasound machines are increasingly being used to diagnose, monitor and manage patients in ICU, emergency wards and other inpatient services. For patients diagnosed with COVID-19 infection, it is an excellent adjunct tool for performing comprehensive head-to-toe clinical study & is an ideal device for bedside examination of the lungs. COVID-19 primarily attacks the lung in the initial stages of the disease and it can also have significant

cardiac manifestations in the later stages of the disease.

So, lung ultrasound and focused echocardiography has the potential to aid the diagnosis and management of patients with COVID-19 infection. Moreover, the patients infected with COVID-19 require airway management, or venous access under ultrasound guidance (to administer essential fluids & medications), or some patients in shock or trauma needs a proper shock assessment where ultrasound plays a vital role in clinical evaluation process.

Portable diagnostic ultrasound machine is like a Swiss army knife which has multiple advantages as it is non-invasive, possess no ionising radiations, can be quickly & repeatedly performed at the bedside, cost-effective and is easily sanitised as compared to other imaging modalities in indoor settings.

Hospitals need to

employ proper set of cleaning protocols for machine disinfection prior to use in COVID-19 isolation wards. Because the utility of each application varies by setting, hospitals should consider how they can best use ultrasound within their specific environment.

As per the directive from Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW) and guidelines of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the portable ultrasound plays a significant role in clinical evaluation of COVID-19 patients and should be considered as an invaluable tool for isolation wards.

Major player in this segment is Fujifilm Sonosite company which has partnered with different medical societies across India and assisting healthcare professionals in their battle against this pandemic by providing them the right technology, disinfection guidelines and ultrasound educational resources.

INBRIEF

Therapeutic food makers in the country have asked for launching specific programmes at the community level to tackle the problem of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) in the country since Covid restrictions and severe migration are feared to lead to drop in the nutrition levels in the vulnerable sections of society.

CMAM Association of India, comprising manufacturers of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Foods (RUTF) globally used in community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM), has urged the Government to expedite CMAM develop new products so as to eradicate SAM under the PoshanAbhiyan.

In a communication to the Ministry of Women & Child Development, CMAM Association of India has offered to support and implement any feeding protocols to be laid down by the Government in the upcoming nutrition guidelines used in its R&D and product development prowess to ensure that the children receive adequate nutrition.

Feeding protocols that use a combination of home-based food and high-quality energy dense nutrition supplement, including all micronutrients, which are easy to transport to villages, deliver to families and administer to children need to be urgently explored, CMAM Association has stated.

According to Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Children with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) have nine times higher risk of dying than well-nourished children. CMAM Association has pointed out the urgent need for collaboration between Government, therapeutic food manufacturers and civil society to meet the challenge of SAM in the country.

TrendSlazer

Sanjana to star opposite Aditya

Actress **SANJANA SANGHI**, who starred opposite **Sushant Singh Rajput** in *Dil Bechara*, is set to join actor **ADITYA ROY KAPUR** in the forthcoming action film, *OM: The Battle Within*.

"Getting to delve into the action genre so early on, is something I view as an absolute honour. I have immense gratitude for my producers and my director Kapil (Verma) for the potential they have seen in me being able to pull off such a part in our film," Sanjana said. "After exploring many scripts and possibilities, *OM* felt just right since it was the spectrum jump I was looking for in terms of throwing myself into an entirely uncharted territory," she added.



'The beauty is Rajkumar (Rao) has never lost his humility and generosity that he always had

as an actor. He has remained that same person. What has changed is that Rajkumar has become really popular. I think the success has brought with it some limitations. But his success makes me happy. I feel like a happy parent.'

—Hansal Mehta

Comedian-actor **VIR DAS** feels celebrities should not post videos on social media that show them undergoing COVID-19 tests.

"Please stop posting videos of your COVID tests. From the collection to the test, you are literally doing none of the work. The fact you tilted your head back and managed not to sneeze is not engaging content," he wrote.

"Hear me out please. There's someone drenched in a full PPE kit one foot away from you who does this 30 times a day, door to door. You're not the one struggling. The test sucks for them more," Vir urged.

Swift wins 'Artist of the Year' at AMAs

Singer **TAYLOR SWIFT** won Artist of the Year award for the third year in a row at the American Music Awards but had to skip the ceremony.

In 2019, Swift expressed anger over her former record label, Big Machine Label Group, selling her master recordings to Scooter Braun, the manager of singers like Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande. So she was busy re-recording the albums she made with the label.

"Thank you so much for this. This is a fan-voted award, which means so much to me. You guys have been beyond wonderful all the years of my career, but especially this one, when we've been so far apart, we haven't been able to see each other in concert, but I still feel really connected to you through the music," she shared.

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) is taking its first step into India with a talent hunt initiative that lets the Academy identify and nurture up to five talents working in film, games or television in India. The exercise, known as BAFTA Breakthrough initiative, is part of the Academy's year-round effort to support new talent, operating alongside their Awards ceremonies.

The programme has in the past supported artists such as Tom Holland, Letitia Wright, Florence Pugh, Jessie Buckley, Josh O'Connor and Callum Turner. Coming to India is part of BAFTA's global expansion effort of the initiative. BAFTA Breakthrough India aims at facilitating the development of relationships between British and Indian talents.

The chosen participants will be offered a year-long support programme from BAFTA and will be showcased across India and the UK. By showcasing talent global-

BAFTA comes to India

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts is taking its first step at global inclusiveness with a local talent hunt



ly, BAFTA Breakthrough aims to push their careers ahead by helping them to learn more about the industry, overcome barriers to

progression and network globally with people who can influence their careers. The programme is a new inter-

national iteration of the successful Breakthrough initiative, which has been running in the UK since 2013 and China since 2019. The effort was launched in the United States this year, supporting over 130 emerging talents to date.

Industry supporters of the initiative in recent years include actors Oliva Colman, Naomi Harris, Tom Hiddleston and Tilda Swinton, actor-producer Brad Pitt, directors Tom Harper and Barry Jenkins, game designers Brenda Romero and Tim Schafer and actor-writers Sharon Horgan and Amy Schumer. "BAFTA is uniquely placed to facilitate creative partnerships

across the moving arts, being one of the only art charities to work across film, games and television and on a global scale," said Tim Hunter, Director of Learning and New Talent, BAFTA.

"India is one of the most prolific and accomplished industries and a fascinating centre for the screen arts with lots of creative diversity, which extends far beyond the world-famous Bollywood. Some of the best practitioners in the world work in Indian film, games and television — and practitioners from around the world have much to learn from them," Hunter added.

The initiative will showcase and support emerging stars of

film, games, and television in India, supported by Netflix. "We share BAFTA's vision and responsibility in providing 'breakthrough' opportunities to emerging talent."

We're thrilled to extend our support to the programme in India and help amplify our country's new voices. This initiative will meaningfully bring together creative communities across borders, support their stories, unearth raw talent and provide them with recognition on the world stage," said Monika Shergill on behalf of the streaming giant.

Under the initiative, BAFTA will work closely with local cultural bodies and industry in India to reach each sub-region and identify excellent individuals. The programme will be supported by a series of craft masterclasses, which will feature British and Indian talent sharing their expertise and insights with the audience across India and the UK.

—IANS

Directed by **RAJAT KAPOOR**, a rendition of the Shakespearean play *As You Like It* comes to screens for Aadyam's debut digital theatre fest

FROM STAGE TO SCREEN

How many clowns does it take to recreate a Shakespearean classic while doing this? Well, seven clowns across a runtime of 106 minutes, as seen in veteran director Rajat Kapoor's clowning glory. *I Don't Like It As You Like It*, a rendition of Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*, will premiere on the screens with Aadyam's digital edition this December.

A raging hit, this play was first staged during Aadyam's second season in 2016 and will be coming back for its digital edition as the theatre takes the stage to the screen. Maintaining the authenticity of its theatre-going experience, the digital showcase will be a striking affair — to be recorded with a multi camera set up, enveloped for virtual viewing for three limited edition screenings via Insider.in's digital streaming service for audience across the country.

With equal nervous and excitement about their first play, Shernaz Patel, the actor's returning artistic director says, "There is great excitement and challenge in reinvention. In taking a show that has been successful on stage and finding a novel way to reinterpret it for the camera. That's what we have set out to do with all three of our plays, the first of which is this hilarious and boisterous Shakespeare adaptation. We are lucky to have a good lineup of actors with impeccable comic timing. They make clowning seem effortless. And a film and theatre director at the helm, who is a master of this genre. As with all our shows, we dream big. We want our viewers to have a theatre experience with high production standards. That's why we are shooting the play professionally in an auditorium and on a set and not in isolation or on Zoom. This is the closest we can come to the magic of live theatre because the actors will be performing together on the stage, feeding off each other. So beat those pandemic blues and make the stage your world for a couple of hours. Laughter is



'ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IS THE PROCESS BEHIND RETAINING A PLAY'S IDENTITY AS A THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE. TRADITIONALLY, I HAVE NEVER REALLY AGREED TO THIS IDEA OF RECORDING PLAYS TO BE WATCHED ELSEWHERE BECAUSE I FEEL SOMETHING DIES IN TRANSITION'



the only medicine right now. Let these lovable and joyous characters prove that to you."

On adapting his play for screen, director Rajat Kapoor adds, "This is one of the biggest challenges — the process behind retaining a play's identity as a theatrical experience. Traditionally, I have never really agreed to this idea of recording plays to be watched elsewhere because I feel something dies in transition. For me, the play exists for the purpose that it was designed for — to be watched live. Ensuring what we present and how we do it, I believe, will elevate its identity from a mere recording to then hold a deeper meaning for the production and the audience alike. With this firmly in mind, we move forward to present this new version of our play."

"This digital edition has been months

in the making. We have been evolving and adapting our efforts to suit the needs of the new viewing format. We are all very excited to see the final product and the audience reaction to it," mentions Brian Tellis, Co-Founder and Group CEO of Fountainhead MGTG that produces and promotes Aadyam in India.

This is the Rajat's fifth Shakespearean adaptation that is retold through clown style theatre as the plot follows a group of clowns who endeavour to put up *As You Like It*. In the play, the troupe director has no faith in the tale itself and believes it to be a comedy that is 'two laughs and a death away from tragedy'. A lack of skill, rehearsal space and fondness for his troupe, creates a comedy of errors that takes the spectators on a hilarious ride, complete with gender role reversal led by the thought, 'Shakespeare made Rosalind Ganymede. What an underachiever. I will make all the men play women, and all the women play men.'

This story explores the highs and lows faced by a circus troupe highlighting the fact that to find yourself, you must become the other. It depicts that behind the smiles and entertainment, these are just ordinary people dealing with stress, angst and the madness that is life.

It has some of the most talented actors — Aadar Malik, Cyrus Sahukar, Faheez Jalali, Joy Fernandes, Rytasha Rathore, Shruti Vyas and Vinay Pathak.

(The play opens on Insider's streaming platform on December 7. Tickets are available on Paytm Insider.)

Sumeet recalls his defining moment



Actor Sumeet Vyas recalls the defining moment when he decided to become an actor, two decades ago. "I think it was 20 years ago. I was already working in the studio as an editor and earning money. Since I grew up watching theatre, surrounded by people who were constantly talking about plays, literature, art, history and culture, I took them as a part of my life, without thinking of taking it up professionally. Then one day, I watched a play in Prithvi Theatre, in which my father acted. After the play ended, when I was returning home, I just told myself I will live to perform — that this is the true calling. I have been acting seriously, since then," he said.

Sumeet will soon be seen in the web series *Dark 7 White*, produced by Ekta Kapoor.

"It is interesting that in the two shows (with Ekta), I play drastically different characters. Previously on *The Verdict: State vs Nanavati*, I played the lawyer Ram Jethmalani, a much older character. With heavy prosthetics and a different body language, I was almost unrecognisable. In this show, *Dark 7 White*, I play a young man from a royal family who starts off as an aimless brat and turns into a manipulative individual with a great plan. My idea is always to play something different and challenge myself," Sumeet said. About playing his role, he added that it was "interesting to tap into a mindset that is so multi-layered."

The series, which also features Nidhi Singh, Jatin Sarna, is on ZEE5 and ALTBalaji.

—IANS

Dhoom 2 turns 14



cuts through and becomes popular because it was important for me at that time. It's always important for a song to become popular but at that time I was just hoping and praying. I remember the day *Dhoom* was releasing, I was going to Shirdi and on the way I

heard in two places — one was a car back horn with the *Dhoom Machale* tune and the other when somebody in Shirdi was singing it. Then I knew, *gana toh popular hogaya!* It was a great experience. Recounting his experience of choreographing two of the most

good-looking superstars, Hrithik and Aishwarya (Rai Bachchan), Shiamak says, "I had worked with Aishwarya in *Taal* and before she became Miss World, I'd worked with her already in a Sufi jazz piece, so she was already quite close to understanding my style

and delivering it really well. Hrithik was very new to what I do, but the best part about Hrithik was that he is just so natural with dancing and my kind of style on him worked so well. I think he was also quite excited with the fact that he could do such a different, unusual kind of work from what he was normally doing, which is a very strong Bollywood dance. Suddenly, we were to put a little bit of jazz and contemporary. It was quite a thought process to see him and Aishwarya interpret the song. I was very happy that they both did a good job. I was very proud of them because when they both came in together, it was electrifying."

Vijay Krishna (Viktor) Acharya, the writer of the series, says, "The success of *Dhoom* told us that there was a possibility of a cooler style of an action film in India. However, Adi was very clear that we should never make a film only to satisfy the idea of a franchise. We had to stick to that principle throughout. *Dhoom 2* had everything pushed up a couple of notches, in every department. I think we managed a racy screenplay, one that keeps you wanting to know more and personally, I really enjoyed writing all the characters and their minor quirks."

He adds, "I remember when *Dhoom 2* was announced, every-

one felt that this will have a natural continuation — since the first part had bikes and this one has cars. But the fact is that you don't make a film about inanimate objects. Even if there are bikes and there's action, we are always trying to encapsulate a feeling. You are always trying to convey an emotion, whatever that might be and *Dhoom 2*, with its love story, connected with everyone."

Talking about Hrithik's character, Viktor reveals, "Aryan was in the tradition of what we think is the *Dhoom* anti-hero. And for me, the idea was someone who exists within society and yet on the fringes of it. Yes, he is a criminal, but he is somebody who is also looking for things which are only special. He is someone exceptionally good at his craft. Those things went into the making of the character and that helps the actor embody something. It helps the director visually realise something. He is actually a passionate collector. Curiously enough, his arc is that through his theft, what he finally manages to steal, is somebody else's heart and that ends his life of crime. So, in a very unusual way, there was a kind of redemption to his character. I think both Hrithik and Aishwarya, in that sense, came into the film in a very exciting manner."

At 34, my days are numbered: Warner

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia's big-hitting opener David Warner on Monday said his "days are numbered" in international cricket and continuing an approach of keeping his aggression in check, he would rather ignore than engage if Indian players attempt to sled him during the upcoming series.

Warner, in a virtual press conference on Monday, touched upon his evolution as a batsman in the past couple of years.

"I've just recently turned 34, so my days are numbered, when you're in the 30s. There's obviously a risk element but there's obviously a cricket smarts element to it as well," the explosive opener said ahead of the limited-overs series against India starting with the first ODI on November 27.

Warner, who has had his share of aggressive on-field showdowns, said he would prefer to look the other way if Indians try to get chatty with him.

"I'll always draw from that mate. To try and get engaged, that's the way they like to play as well," he said.

"We're learning over time, trying not to engage in that. Probably try and reversing the effect by trying and ignoring it,



trying to take it on board and using it against them by using your bat," he added.

"It's probably something I've learnt over time. And you don't know the effect it can have on your teammates as well. You've got to be a bit more humble in that respect."

Warner said at 34, he has become a calculated risk-taker and is focussed on maintaining a strong strike rate.

"For myself, it's about getting off to a good start and taking calculated risks in that middle-overs period if we're talking about 50-over games," he said.

"For me, it's about making sure that I am batting as much as I can and at a good strike rate as well. I think last year was probably the most disciplined I've batted in Test cricket, he said.

"I really took pride in the last 12-24 months, to apply that discipline and you keep learning as you get older...You've got to be on top of your game to be able to adapt to that."

Warner, who is the Indian team, which will not feature in-form opener Rohit Sharma at least in the ODIs and T20s, Warner said it would be a big hole to fill but Virat Kohli's men do have the winning mental edge.

"Obviously he is a big piece of their team, that they are going to be missing, but they have got great in-form guys KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan and Mayank (Agarwal), these guys

'Don't think Burns did anything wrong last summer'

IANIS ■ MELBOURNE

David Warner on Monday stated that Joe Burns hasn't done "anything wrong last summer" but the left-handed batsman insisted he'll embrace uncapped prodigy Will Pucovski if selected for the much-anticipated first Test against India to be played at the Adelaide Oval from December 17.

Burns, who is Warner's incumbent partner — and Pucovski have been named in the 17-member squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Pucovski, who is among the five uncapped players, has made a strong case for selection in the playing XI with back-to-back double centuries for Victoria in the Sheffield Shield.

Right-handed Queensland batsman Burns, however, has had a highest of just 29 in his five innings this season.

"If they go the way of Will, he has batting fantastic and been in and out of the Test squad. He is in the right frame of mind at the moment. It probably is an opportunity for him to come into the team. But as we know it's harder to get out of this team than get in," Warner was

quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"At the moment I didn't think Joe did anything wrong last summer. We had some great partnerships and averaged over 60. And that's what you want from your opening partnership. And at the end of the day I have to be happy with it and embrace (whoever they pick)," he added.

Warner and Burns have combined six century opening stands and average more than 50 for the first wicket till now — a record bettered only by Warner's combination with Chris Rogers.

"Yeah definitely. What do you want to see? 100 of 10 overs or something? In the one-day stuff, I'll still come out and play the way I normally do. There's probably going to be no change to that," he said.

"Here in Australia, it's a bit different, in 50-over cricket, you can still play the normal way you do and I think I showed that last year, the way I played against Pakistan and Sri Lanka."

I played pretty much the same way as I did during the back of that IPL. I won't be changing my game and will go out and tackle it the way I always do," added Warner, who has 5,303 ODI runs.

"It's like chalk and cheese with them (Kohli and Rahane) and as a player to try and engage him on the field, as we're talking about engaging, and getting into that contest as players, it's obviously lots to think about."

Warner said he is especially with Ajinkya as captain.

"The great thing from India's perspective is that you've got three if not four very good players who could captain the team. With him, he'll bring a calm and measured approach with his nature."

Warner was seen playing aggressively at the back end of the IPL and he stressed that he won't be changing his game.

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Surya should've made cut in Indian team: Lara

PTI ■ MUMBAI

West Indies great Brian Lara feels that a batsman of Suryakumar Yadav's calibre should have been in the Indian white-ball squad for the tour of Australia.

The Mumbai Indians batsman's non-inclusion, despite being born to do that, impressed not just by the runs but also the manner in which Yadav has scored them.

"Ye a h, definitely. He is a class player. I don't just look at players that score runs, I look at their technique, capabilities under pressure, positions that they are batting and for me."

"Suryakumar Yadav has done such a wonderful job for Mumbai."

The only explanation that has come for the 30-year-old's exclusion is the lack of space in the line-up. Lara said he fits the bill for the No 3 slot.

"He comes to bat on the back of Rohit Sharma, and Quinton de Kock and every time, they are under pressure, he comes in at No 3," he said.

"Just remember, other than the openers, the No 3 batsman in any cricket team is normally your best player, your most reliable player and for me, he (Surya) has been that for Mumbai Indians," he stated.

"I see no reason why, looking at the (Indian) squad, he can't be a part of it," Lara said on Star Sports show *Cricketer Connected*.

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"Just remember, other than the openers, the No 3 batsman in any cricket team is normally your best player, your most reliable player and for me, he (Surya) has been that for Mumbai Indians," he stated.

"I see no reason why, looking at the (Indian) squad, he can't be a part of it," Lara said on Star Sports show *Cricketer Connected*.

Lara said he is impressed not just by the runs but also the manner in which Yadav has scored them.

"Ye a h, definitely. He is a class player. I don't just look at players that score runs, I look at their technique, capabilities under pressure, positions that they are batting and for me."

"Suryakumar Yadav has done such a wonderful job for Mumbai."

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CA confirm full BBL 10 schedule

IANIS ■ MELBOURNE

Western Australia, New South Wales and Victoria have been confirmed host matches in the upcoming edition of the Big Bash League (BBL) in January next year. It confirmed that bubbles in Hobart and Canberra will host the initial games starting December 10 before venues in Queensland (Dec 23) and Adelaide (Dec 28) join the party.

Five matches will be played at Optus Stadium in Perth, with the first on January 3. Four of these matches will be Perth Scorchers home games.

From January 13, the BBL will travel to Sydney and Melbourne for the run to the finals. Eight matches will be played in Sydney, with the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sydney Showground Stadium to host four each.

Melbourne will host 11 matches in total. Five of these will be held at Marvel Stadium and six at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Additional matches have also been confirmed for the Adelaide Oval (three), the Gabba (two), Metricon Stadium (four) and Blundstone Arena (two) in early January.

The final day of the regular season will be played on January 26 and feature a triple-header between the SCG (one match) and MCG (two matches). The five-match final series begins on January 29 with the final slated for February 6.

BBL 10 will start with the season opener between Hobart Hurricanes and defending champions Sydney Sixers at the Blundstone Arena on December 10.

Haven't set any personal goals: Gill

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Flamboyant youngster Shubman Gill is looking forward to the challenge of taking on mighty Australia but has not set any personal goals for the upcoming assignments where a good outing could help cement his place in the Indian team.

Gill has so far played only two ODIs for India and is part of the limited overs as well as the Test squad for the Down Under tour.

"I am really looking forward to Australia because this is my first trip. As a kid growing up, I always watched the matches between India and Australia. I am really excited," Gill said in a video posted by his IPL franchise Kolkata Knight Riders on Twitter.

The 21-year-old batsman headed to Australia after an impressive outing in the Indian Premier League season with KKR where he accumulated 440 runs in 14 matches.

"The fact that a lot of my friends are travelling with the team, so it will be fun and exciting. But, obviously, when the practice session starts then it's a whole different situation."

"I have not really set any personal goals, but I am really looking forward to the tour," he added.

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Virat bhai said that tough situation will make me stronger: Siraj

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Away from family while grieving the recent loss of his father, Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj says skipper Virat Kohli's advice to "be strong" has helped him stay afloat as he gears up for a gruelling series against Australia.

Kohli is no stranger to overcoming personal tragedy while carrying on with professional duties. In 2007, Kohli, then a teenager, lost his father in the middle of a Ranji Trophy match but he came back next day to score 97 for Delhi, showing his mental fortitude.

Siraj's father Mohammed Ghouse, 53, died due to a lung ailment in Hyderabad last week and despite BCCI offering him the option to return around him, he fast bowler decided to stay put on national duty.

"Virat bhai said 'Miyaan tension mat le (don't be tense) and be strong. Your dad wanted you to play for India. So, do that and don't stress', the 26-year-old Siraj told bcci.tv."

"The skipper told me, 'If you can be strong in this situation, it will only help you'. So those were positive words from the Indian captain and it felt nice."

Siraj's father drove auto rickshaws during his formative years as a cricketer and has been the single biggest influence on the Hyderabad man as "It's a huge loss for me as

he was the biggest support system of my life. He wanted me to shine for my country and my mindset now is to fulfil his dreams," he said.

Siraj thanked his teammates, who have rallied around him.

"I am indebted to my teammates as they stood by me in these tough times and every thing was well taken care of," he said.

Siraj said even his mother-in-law has been in charge of the assignment, which starts with the limited-overs leg from November 27.

"Mom said that 'everyone has to go one day. Today, it's your dad, tomorrow it will be me. Just do what your dad wished for you. Play well for India'."

"Maybe he, is not physically present but I can feel that he is always there with me," Siraj said.



Stoinis playing five times better than a year ago: Ponting

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Batting legend Ricky Ponting believes all-rounder Marcus Stoinis is playing "five times better" than what he was a year ago and could take up "multiple roles" for Australian cricket, including the job of a finisher.

Stoinis scored 352 runs and snapped 13 wickets to play a big role in Delhi Capitals, coached by Ponting, reaching the final of the recent IPL in the UAE. He is in Australia's ODI and T20I squads for the series against India starting on Friday.

Ponting said he is Alex Carey who had told him about Stoinis' incredible turnaround during the IPL.

"From the moment he turned up at the IPL, having come straight from England... he was pretty keen to show me improvements that he'd made. And his first few net sessions, I could just tell that," Ponting told *cricket.com.au*.

"Having spent a fair bit of time with him over the past couple of years, what I saw from him at the IPL suggests to me that he's a five times better player than he was 12 months ago."

The 31-year-old Stoinis was dropped from Australia's T20 squad after a disappointing 50-over World Cup last year.

But, he made a successful comeback, riding on his incredible performance for the Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League where he scored 705 runs in a single season and also smashed tournament's highest individual score of 147 not out.

Ponting said Stoinis has proven himself as a finisher but believes he should open the innings.

"I think the future for him either at Delhi or whoever he plays for in T20 cricket will be at the top of the order. I think he can (the finishing role). I can't help but think that he can do multiple different roles now," said Ponting.

"And I think the more responsibility he gets in the white-ball team, the better he'll be as well. We'll see what happens over the next few weeks (against India), but if he gets a decent chance at it, I think he'll impress everyone."

"With the way he's thinking about the game, with a bit of experience and the consistent exposure he's had with the Aussie guys, I don't think it really matters where he plays."

Ponting also said Stoinis looks "a lot more positive and aggressive against spin bowling now" compared to the past.



Mitchell Marsh hopeful of comeback in warm-up game

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Re recuperating from an ankle injury, Australia all-rounder Mitchell Marsh says he is "hopeful" of playing next month's warm-up game against India 'A' as he eagerly waits for a clear picture to emerge this Friday.

The 29-year-old Marsh suffered an ankle injury in the opening match of the Indian Premier League in September and has been out of action since then.

He was included in the Australia 'A' squad which will play two three-day tour games against India 'A' on December 6-8 and December 11-13 respectively.

"I'm hopeful, I'll probably find out this week whether I'm ruled in or out," Marsh was quoted as saying by *The West Australian*.

"I'll probably know on Friday. I've got a few things to tick off rehab-wise and then go from there."

Marsh said he won't be able to bowl and might play as a batsman.

"I started running last week and I've got a few kilos to shed before I start playing. It's been a pretty slow process but speaking to a few AFL players about it gets pretty good quickly at the end so hopefully that's the case in the next couple of weeks."

"At this stage it will just be batting. I wouldn't imagine I would be bowling until midway through the Big Bash at this point in time."

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To combat Covid-19 threat, SA cricketers training in two groups

JOHANNESBURG: Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada revealed on Monday that the South African cricket team are training in two groups to minimise the risk of further Covid-19 infections ahead of their series against England.

Two members of the South African squad have tested positive for Covid since the squad assembled last week and two other players have also gone into isolation because of their close contact with one of the infected players.

"It's been quite bizarre," Rabada told an online press conference from the team hotel in Cape Town.

"We have to train in groups — a group of non-contacts and a group of close contacts."

"It doesn't mean anyone is positive but we have to take that extra precaution."

Rabada did not reveal how many players were in each group but planned intra-squad matches on Saturday and Monday were cancelled, presumably to reduce the risk of infections.

He said more Covid tests would be conducted with the players' soon.