

**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

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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 Asok Bhushan told Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain and 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 of 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



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 -ve 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 from Maharashtra by air, train 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 authorities 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 a few days ago 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 the road on the border 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 Sinche-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 leadership by 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.

**MARKETS**

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

"Sri 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.

## Capital's air slips to 'very poor' as wind loses speed

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The worsening of the air in Delhi for the next two days has been attributed to strong winds and low ventilation as on Monday Delhi's air quality deteriorated to the "very poor" category after nearly 10 days, Government agencies said.

Stubble burning, which accounted for 12 per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Sunday, contributed six per cent on Monday.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) mobile app, SAMER, the city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded at 281 on

Monday morning and deteriorated to 302 in the evening. It was 274 on Sunday, 296 on Friday, 283 on Thursday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

However, according to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, "Stubble burning share in PM2.5 in national Capital's air is estimated as six per cent for today (Monday), mainly because calm wind is likely to hold intruded mass for a day," SAFAR said.

## Boost income through animal husbandry & fisheries: CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has directed that the works being undertaken by the Animal Husbandry department for employment generation under the Mukhyamantri Swarozgar Yojana should be reviewed at the state level on a monthly basis. The CM said this while chairing a review meeting of the Animal Husbandry and Fisheries department here on Monday. The CM also inaugurated the animal husbandry department's toll free number 1800-120-8862 on the occasion.

Rawat said that there are considerable employment opportunities in the spheres of agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries. For this, the public should be made aware of the various works being undertaken by the department and various government schemes. Focus should also be laid on how to increase the income of rearers through wool production and value addition for good use of wool. Regular monitoring should be done to ascertain which districts are

doing well in poultry, dairy, wool production and other sectors along with districts where more work needs to be done. The department should make efforts to increase the annual income of farmers and cattle rearers.

Rawat said that cooperatives should be formed for increasing the income of cattle rearers so that they are able to enhance their profits through dairy production and its marketing. Special efforts are also needed for growth centres as they can play an important role in income generation through dairy products.

The CM said that the state government intends to remove the load of fodder from the heads of women on which the animal husbandry department also needs to focus. Every year a number of accidents occur due to wild animals and when women fall while carrying fodder back to home. The department should focus on how to ascertain adequate food for milk cattle at home. Stating that women are working well in all spheres in the state, the CM said that better results

will be achieved if they should be linked to skill development and other activities.

Officials informed that 523 beneficiaries had been provided loans by the department under the Mukhyamantri Swarozgar Yojana. Among mountain states, Uttarakhand is ranked second in dairy production. Under the National Animal Disease Control Programme 17.34 lakh cattle have been vaccinated in the state. Under the National Livestock Mission, the Centre has released Rs 16.80 crore for 2020-21.

Reviewing the fisheries department, the CM said that funding should be increased for fisheries. He further said that trout farming should also be encouraged. Fisheries enable good income at low cost so people should be encouraged for it, he added.

State minister for Animal Husbandry, Rekha Arya, secretary Om Prakash, secretary R Meenakshi Sundaram and other officials concerned were also present in the meeting.

## Jain flaggs off three equipped ambulances

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain flagged-off three fully equipped ambulances donated by BSES Yamuna Power Limited (BYPL) under its 'Suraksha' initiative. The keys to the ambulances were handed over to the minister by the BYPL CEO P R Kumar.

The three Life Support ambulances were in-turn handed-over by the Minister to the senior officials from the three Delhi Government hospitals, GTB Hospital, GB Pant Hospital and Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital. These will be deployed to provide timely care to the patients in East and Central Delhi.

Apart from the ambulances, the BYPL CEO also handed over 50 automatic sanitiser cum thermal temperature scanner machines to the Minister. These will be installed at Mohalla Clinics in East and Central Delhi. Thirty such machines were handed over to the Minister at East Delhi a few days earlier.

Over the next few days, three more life support ambulances will be handed-over to the Delhi Government by BSES Rajdhani Power Limited (BRPL) CEO Amar Sinha for the use of Covid patients in



Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain inspects the ambulance donated by BSES to GB Pant, GTB and LBS hospital part of its social responsibility, during handing over ceremony at Delhi Secretariat

South and West Delhi. These will be attached to the Government's CATS Ambulance Services. BRPL promoted self help groups are also stitching affordable masks and a lot of 1500 such masks were handed over to DM, West Delhi.

According to a BSES spokesperson, "Complimenting the efforts of the Delhi Government, BSES discoms have been playing their part in the fight against Covid. Dry food rations, Hygiene kits and masks have been provided to the needy. In fact, over the past

few months, over 2 lakh gloves, 2 lakh masks, over 20,000 hygiene kits, and 6000 PPE kits have been provided by the discoms."

"Apart from this, discom promoted Women Self Help Groups are stitching affordable and reusable masks for hun-

dreds of people residing in the slums. Besides helping these women supplement their loss of income during the pandemic, they are also being distributed amongst the needy and the vulnerable population", he said.

## Pollution led to high Covid death rate in city: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Monday attributed the high Covid-19 death rate in the national capital to the pollution caused by stubble-burning and expected a downturn in it in the next two-three weeks.

The pollution due to stubble-burning has caused problems in breathing and those who had Covid-19 inhaled the smoke, which aggravated the seriousness, he said.

Jain said that its effect on the city's Covid-19 death rate will go away in the next two-three weeks since pollution due to stubble-burning has lessened in the last few days.

The health minister further said that there was heavy pol-



lution due to stubble-burning amid the Covid-19 pandemic and it came as a double attack. Since the pollution due to stubble-burning is less now, the downturn in deaths will be there in a few weeks," Jain said.

This was the fifth time in 11 days that the daily number of deaths crossed the 100 mark in the national capital. The authorities reported 111 deaths on Saturday, 118 on Friday, 131 on November 18,

the highest till date, and 104 on November 12. Delhi has reported a death rate of 1.58 per cent among COVID-19 patients as compared to the national fatality rate of 1.48 per cent.

Experts attribute the high figure of daily COVID-19 deaths in the national capital to a large number of "critical" non-resident patients coming to the city for treatment, an unfavourable weather, pollution and a better reporting and mapping of fatalities.

They say the easing of restrictions has exposed the vulnerable population, such as the elderly and those having comorbidities, to the deadly virus.

Jain said the number of fresh cases as well as the posi-

tivity rate is gradually going down in Delhi, showing that the COVID-19 situation is improving.

Since November 7, when the positivity rate was more than 15 per cent, it has come down to over 12 per cent now. The number of fresh cases was over 8,500 on November 10, which reduced to 6,746 on Sunday, he said.

The health minister said 9,418 hospital beds have been occupied by COVID-19 patients in Delhi currently, whereas 7,900 are still vacant.

Delhi recorded 6,746 fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday and a positivity rate of 12.29 per cent, while 121 more fatalities pushed the city's death toll due to the disease to 8,391, authorities said.

## Hold Punjab, Haryana CMs liable for pollution: Atishi to air quality panel

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AP MLA and chairperson of the Environment Committee of Delhi Assembly Atishi on Monday met the newly-appointed panel for Air Quality Management and urged it to hold Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana liable for causing pollution in the national capital.

Talking to the media after the meeting, Atishi said two

main issues were raised with the commission. "The commission was requested to fix the accountability of the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Haryana on the issue of burning stubble and take strict action against them by filing a case."

Atishi said that the commission was also requested to order the governments of Punjab and Haryana to resolve the stubble burning with bio decomposer technology.

"This is effective as well as an efficient alternative to this problem. Secondly, we have also requested them to take stringent action against the chief ministers of Punjab and Haryana for they have failed to curb stubble burning. The Air Quality Commission has the power to take legal actions and can order jail to anyone causing pollution. We have requested them to hold them accountable for the pollution caused in Delhi," she said.

## Sisodia: Govt to reduce performance security to 3% of value of contract

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Considering the problems being faced by commercial entities and contractors, the Delhi Government has decided to reduce performance security from existing 5-10 to 3 per cent of the value of the contract for all existing contracts.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia informed that all tenders or contracts issued and concluded till December 31, 2021 should also have the provision of reduced performance security.

Delhi Government has also noted that 'Additional Performance Security' in case of Abnormally Low Bids (ALBs) is being taken from the contractors by various departments though there is no provision for the same in General Financial Rules or the Manuals for Procurement, he said.

It has also been decided that no provisions should be



kept in the bid documents regarding Additional Security Deposit/Bank Guarantee (BG) in case of Abnormally Low Bids, Sisodia added.

The Delhi Government is in receipt of many representations that on account of slowdown in the economy due to the pandemic, there is acute financial crunch among many commercial entities and contractors, which in turn is affecting timely execution of the contracts. The deputy further said that it has been decided by the

Delhi Government that no provisions regarding bid security should be kept in the bid documents in future and only provision for 'Bid Security Declaration' should be kept in the bid documents, as it has been noted that bid security or earnest money deposit is still being taken from the contractors by various departments.

Sisodia informed that the instructions will be applicable for all the tenders issued till December 31, 2021.

## 'North Corporation doesn't maintain property tax account'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj on Monday accused the leaders of BJP-ruled North Corporation of being involved in "massive" manipulation of the rented and commercial properties as the civic body does not maintain any account related to property tax despite the direction issued by the apex court in 2002.

"The property tax collection is the key way of revenue for the municipal corporations across the country. According to a data this year the North MCD was supposed to receive Rs 2838 crore from the property tax but the MCD has collected only Rs 1703 crore. The biggest betrayal by the BJP ruled North MCD is that they do not maintain any proper documentation regarding the collection of property tax. There is no way to find out how much corruption or financial



disputes they have.

"In 2017 before the MCD election the BJP claimed that they will replace all the sitting councillors because there were various corruption charges against them. After the election, the BJP won in all the three municipal corporations of Delhi but the corruption did not go away and flourished in a massive way," he said.

**The property tax collection is the key way of revenue for the municipal corporations across the country. According to a data this year, the North MCD was supposed to receive ₹2,838 crore from the property tax but the MCD has collected only ₹1,703 crore**



Bhardwaj said, "The local MCD officials decide about the property tax collection from an individual establishment. They can change the usage of the

property which means if a property is rented then they can show that it is not rented. If the property is vacant then they can show that it is being

used for commercial purposes. Moreover, very significantly there is no report or documentation of the fact regarding the property tax exemption."

In 2002 when this law was passed then the BJP ruled MCD decided to conduct a survey of all these properties but this nothing happened, he said.

The audit report noted that the survey was never conducted after the implementation of the unit area method of the property tax nor were the property tax returns scrutinised hundred per cent. In absence of survey and non-scrutinised PTRs, loss of revenue on account of property tax cannot be assessed. They have never maintained any kind of assessment books," he added.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform you people that Sri Anshul Mohan Kala S/o Sri D.D.M. Kala R/o 1-A Omkar Road, Dehradun has applied for registration of a will made on 01.08.2020 of Dr Manju Kala Dio Late G.S. Rastogi R/o 1-A Omkar Road, Dehradun u/s 40 Indian Registration Act, 1908 (posthumous) in my office on 10.11.2020.

It is hereby informed that if anyone has objection on the Will or its registration then the person may submit the objection in writing in the office of the Sub-Registrar(2) Dehradun within 35 days from the date of publication of this press release. Thereafter the present Will shall be registered (posthumous) according to law.

## Drunk man rams car into main gate of Safdarjung tomb

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old man rams his car into the main gate of the Safdarjung tomb in central Delhi in the hourly early hours of Monday. Police said the man was allegedly under the influence of alcohol during the time of incident. The man has been identified as Vijay Bahri, a resident of Delhi's Rampur. According to a senior police official, around 3 am, a car came from the direction of Lodhi Road and rammed into the main gate of the Safdarjung Tomb.

"The vehicle also hit the notice board of the monument made of stone and damaged it. Bahri was allegedly in an inebriated state and lost control over the car, the police said. He was rushed to the Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) hospital," said the senior police official. "He did not sustain any serious injury. An FIR under section 279 (rash driving) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act, 1984 and section 185 of the Motor Vehicles Act has been registered. There was no damage to the monument," he said.

## 2 held for raping, molesting 28-year-old Mumbai-based freelance event manager

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two men for allegedly raping and molesting a 28-year-old Mumbai-based freelance event manager in Delhi's Aerocity area.

They have been identified as Sandeep Mehta (57) and Naveen Dawar (47), both eatery owners in Haryana's Sonapat. According to a senior police official, the incident was reported on Friday and the woman told the police that she met Mehta on social media.

"She came to Delhi on Wednesday and was staying at a hotel in Aerocity. The next day, she met Mehta and his friend Dawar at Connaught Place. The woman alleged that Dawar tried to molest her. Later, Mehta came to drop her at the hotel and allegedly raped her inside her room," said the senior police official.

Mehta took her from the hotel and after dropping her at Anand Vihar, fled, police said, adding that the woman thereafter made a PCR call. "Mehta was booked under section 376 (rape) and is in police custody, while Dawar, who was booked under section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), has been sent to judicial custody," said police.

**CANCELLATION OF TRAINS DUE TO MEGA TRAFFIC-CUM-POWER BLOCKS**  
In order to upgrade the existing rail infrastructure and to enhance the passengers' and road safety, Moradabad Division of Northern Railway will launch Foot Over Bridges (FOB) at Aithal, Rishikesh, Haridwar & Motichur stations and a Limited Height Subway (LHS) at Level Crossing No. 16 at Jwalapur Yard. Further, Division will also undertake the work of launching of Girders on Road Over Bridge (ROB) between Motichur & Raiwala Stations. To execute these works, the Moradabad Division will take Mega Traffic-Cum-Power Blocks on different dates upto 27.11.2020. Consequently, the following trains will remain cancelled on dates shown against each :-

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS		
Train No. & Train Name	Date of Cancellation (from Originating Station)	
02017/02018 New Delhi-Dehradun-New Delhi Shatabdi Express	23, 24 & 27.11.2020	
02091/02092 Kathgodam-Dehradun-Kathgodam Jan Shatabdi Exp	24 & 27.11.2020	
04887/04888 Barmer-Rishikesh-Barmer Special	23, 24 & 27.11.2020	
04113 Prayagraj Jn. - Dehradun Special	23.11.2020	
04114 Dehradun-Prayagraj Jn. Special	24.11.2020	

Note: For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

Security Helpline No. 182 and Integrated Helpline No. 139

26/11/2020

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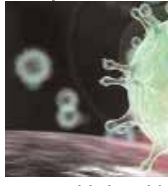
# Covid-19 death toll reaches 1,162 in State

**Seven deaths, 376 fresh cases of disease reported on Monday**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The death toll from the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) in Uttarakhand climbed to 1162 on Monday with the state health department reporting seven deaths from the disease. The department also reported 376 fresh cases of the disease on the day which further increased the tally of the disease to 71632 in the state. The authorities discharged 428 patients from different hospitals of the state after their complete recovery on Monday. A total of 6550 patients have so far recovered from the disease in the state. The recovery percentage from the disease is now at 91.48 while the sample positivity rate is 5.70 percent.

Five patients of the disease



were reported dead at Sushila Tiwari government hospital on Monday. Similarly one patient each of Covid-19 was reported dead at the Mahant Indresh hospital, Dehradun and HNB Base hospital Srinagar.

Out of the 428 patients discharged on Monday, 116 were from Pauri, 87 from Nainital, 49 from Dehradun and 34 from Tehri.

The provisional state capital Dehradun is continuing to reel under the onslaught of the virus. Here the health department reported 133 fresh cases of the disease on Monday. The department reported 49 cases of Covid-19 from Haridwar, 49 from Nainital, 26 from Pauri, 24 from Chamoli, 23 from

Pithoragarh, 18 from Champawat, 12 each from Tehri, Udham Singh Nagar and Uttarkashi, 11 from Almora, five from Rudrapur and four from Bageshwar on Monday.

Uttarakhand now has 4298 active patients of the disease. Dehradun district with 1333 active cases is at top of table while with 433 active cases Haridwar is now on second position. Pauri has 399, Nainital 377, Chamoli 277, Tehri 265, Pithoragarh 246, Udham Singh Nagar 225, Almora 178, Uttarkashi 156, Rudrapur 146 and Bageshwar 139 active cases of the disease. With 124 active cases of Covid-19, Champawat is at the bottom of the table.

## U'hand Governor admitted in AIIMS-Rishikesh

**She was tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

After she was detected positive for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) on Sunday, the Governor of Uttarakhand Baby Rani Maurya was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh on Monday. The AIIMS-R

a team of five specialist doctors which would monitor the health of the Governor on a daily basis. Following her admission in the hospital, CT scan of the chest was done and blood samples were taken for the tests. The Dean, hospital administration, AIIMS Rishikesh, U B Mishra said that Maurya is healthy and a team



of five specialist doctors is supervising her treatment.

## BJP ready for Assembly polls, confident of bigger victory than last time



PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party is ready for the 2022 Vidhan Sabha elections in Uttarakhand. The party will contest the polls on the issue of development as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with the historic achievements of the State and Central governments. The BJP State president Banshidhar Bhagat said this while addressing the media at his residence here on Monday.

Bhagat said that the party is confident that in the coming Vidhan Sabha election, it will win more than 57 seats it had won in the last election to once again form the government in Uttarakhand. The BJP will select its candidates on the basis of performance. He said that though the party's MLAs are performing well, the party will get a survey conducted about six months before the election. Replying to a query, Bhagat said that a Modi wave is very much active across the nation and its

effect was seen in the recent elections in Bihar and other elections. The BJP will definitely benefit from the Modi wave in the Vidhan Sabha elections in Uttarakhand too, he added.

He further informed that the BJP national president JP Nadda will be on an Uttarakhand tour on December 5, 6 and 7. During his tour of the state, Nadda will hold 14 meetings which will include meetings with ministers, MLAs, position holders and other organisational categories. Stating that the BJP national president is starting his national tour with Uttarakhand, Bhagat said that the party workers are enthusiastic about Nadda's state tour. Bhagat said that after Nadda's visit, he will undertake a tour of all the Vidhan Sabha constituencies and also spend the night in most of the constituencies.

Regarding former chief minister and senior Congress leader Harish Rawat's statement

that he would retire from politics after Rahul Gandhi becomes the PM, Bhagat said that Rawat seems to be intent on spending his whole life in politics because Rahul Gandhi will never become the Prime Minister and Rawat will never retire from active politics. Welcoming the chief minister Trivedi Singh Rawat's decision to reinstate the river status for Ganga at Har Ki Paudi in Haridwar, Bhagat said that the mistake made by the then chief minister Harish Rawat would now be rectified.

Regarding the state government's performance, the BJP State president said that in more than three and a half years in office so far the State government received the full support of the Central government. Due to the chief minister's will power and vision, about 85 per cent of the promises made in the party's election manifesto have been fulfilled so far while the remaining will be fulfilled in a few months, he added.

## Many important trains cancelled

**Traffic in U'khand to remain affected due to rail block for constructing foot over bridge in Lakkar**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Many important trains connecting Uttarakhand with different parts of the country would remain affected due to the traffic block taken by the northern railways in the Lakkar. Haridwar rail section. The rail block has been necessitated due to the construction of a foot over bridge on Lakkar-Haridwar section of Moradabad railway division.

The chief public relations officer (CPRO) of Northern Railways, Deepak Kumar said that the train number 02017/02018 New Delhi-Dehradun-New Delhi Shatabdi express special would remain cancelled on November 23, 24 and 27. Similarly the train number 02091/02092 Kathgodam-Dehradun-Kathgodam express special would remain cancelled on November 24 and 27. Train number 04887/04888 Barner-Rishikesh express special would not operate on November 23, 24 and 27. Similarly Prayagraj-Dehradun express special (train number 04113) would remain cancelled on November 23 while Dehradun-Prayagraj special express (train number 04114) would not operate on November 24.

## Negi seeks probe against sexual abuse of minor by uncles

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) has received a complaint from a 17 year old girl who has alleged that her maternal uncles tried to sexually assault her while her mother and grandmother did nothing despite being aware of the situation. The complainant who arrived in the commission on Monday mentioned to the chairperson of SCPCR, Usha Negi that she basically belongs to Haryana but she was living with her uncles and grandmother in Dehradun during the lockdown. Her mother was living with a man she had an affair with along with her younger sister and brother in Haryana about which the complainant came to know later, said Negi. When her mother returned to her grandmother's house, the



complainant told her about the attempt of sexual assault but her mother did not support her, said Negi. However, the younger sister of the complainant mentioned to her that the man living with them in Haryana sexually abused her too, informed Negi. She further informed that the complainant told about this to her father who took his children back to Haryana where they have filed a complaint against the mother and her alleged partner.

Negi said that the complainant arrived in the commission with her father and since the complainant was a minor, the commission provided her counselling too. Negi stated that she has written to the deputy inspector general/superintendent of police of Dehradun to submit the investigation report and actions to be taken against the culprits within 15 days.

## Will retire in 2024 after making RaGa PM, says Harish Rawat

**Minister Subodh Uniyal had recently advised Rawat to retire**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In a strong message to his detractors in the Congress party and outside it, former chief minister and general secretary of All India Congress Committee (AICC), Harish Rawat has said that he would not retire from active politics before 2024. In his facebook post, which immediately became a talking point on Monday, the former CM said, "many people are waiting anxiously for my retirement. I would retire but in the year 2024 after making Rahul Gandhi, the prime minister of this country. The such issue who are waiting for my retirement should have to wait until then."

It is worth mentioning here that on the issue of rebels coming back to Congress party's fold the



camps headed by former CM Rawat and Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) chief Pritam Singh had sharply divided opinion. Amid these talks, the agriculture minister Subodh Uniyal who too had switched sides before the assembly elections of 2017, stated that Congress is a sinking ship and advised that Harish Rawat should retire from politics. In his unique style, Rawat replied to Uniyal's barb by stating that some warriors after taking classes from RSS are targeting him but they had just been born when he was preparing for the next battle after facing first electoral defeat. Rawat also took the

Congress leaders to the task that recently has been targeting him for defeat of Congress party in the elections of 2017. "These people have not remembered their ancestors as many times they have reminded me about my electoral reverses. Many of these have not been able to get the candidate of the party elected in their own wards," said Rawat in his post.

## Technical glitch in DSCL portal to be resolved by November 25

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Due to a technical glitch in the Dehradun Smart City Limited (DSCL) portal, those who have registered in the portal as volunteers for the district literacy campaign will have to wait for two more days to get the response from the administration. Many locals who have applied to be volunteers in Padho Doon Badho Doon campaign of Dehradun district administration stated that it has been over a month since they applied and they are yet to receive any response from the administration. It will be recalled that about 35,000 people in the district were found

out to be illiterate in the survey done by Anganwadi workers and the chief development officer (CDO) Nitika Khandelwal had informed that the district administration has already educated people in the Gram Panchayats so far with the help of the volunteers.

Regarding the issue of no acknowledgement to some applicants who registered in the portal to be volunteers, Khandelwal said that there was some glitch in the DSCL website which would be resolved soon but the issue still persists in the portal. Several volunteers are still waiting for the response of the district administration. Talking

about the issue in the website, the public relations officer (PRO) of DSCL, Prerna Dhyani stated that the site was under maintenance for past few days and though most of the maintenance work is done, there are still some glitches in the site which will be sorted out completely by November 25. As per the officials, there are about 60 volunteer registrations so far and the eligible applicants will be accepted as volunteers once the issue gets resolved. It is pertinent to mention here that any educated person can apply to be a volunteer for the literacy campaigns at <https://dsclservices.org.in/volunteer.php> as there is no age bar.

## Coaching centres await students in Dehradun

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Though the State Government has allowed the coaching centres to operate from November 10, the operators of these institutes are still waiting for the students to join back the classes. Khajan Rana from Uttarakhand Coaching and Library Association (UCLA) stated that there are hardly ten students in a coaching centre since the administration permitted the classes.

According to him, there are many competitive exams coming up and the owners of coaching centres were optimistic that at least 40 percent

to 50 percent students will join classes but most of the students are still reluctant. Most of them are still in other districts and mountainous regions while the recent increase in Covid-19 cases has also worsened the condition, said Rana. He also informed that none of the students of board classes joined any institutes too. "Most of the students will probably join classes next year only. However, most of the coaching institutes are opening institutes irrespective of the number of students present and though there are very few students who actually take e-classes, we have continued them too," added Rana.

## Locals complain about overflowing garbage near bins, MCD blames irresponsible residents

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Overflowing garbage bins have become one of the most prominent issues in Dehradun city. Several garbage bins can be seen in various roadside sites of the city surrounded with both biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste. One of the similar cases can be observed near the Lakshman Chowk area in Gandhigram ward (number 45) where an overflowing garbage bin surrounded by trash every day is causing a nuisance to locals in the Park Road area. According to one of the locals, Madhukar Dhiman, the people including some sanitation workers throw all kinds of garbage in and outside the bin that include biomedical waste too. "This issue of overflowing garbage bin is not a recent issue. We are facing this problem here for the last many years. We have complained to several authorities concerned like Dehradun mayor and municipal commissioner but nothing has been done in this matter,"

said Dhiman. Moreover, the councillor of the ward, Meenakshi Maurya also stated that she has complained to the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) and a team of the corporation also inspected the place but nothing changed. The main issue is that most of the locals do not dump their garbage in the door to door collection service. The municipal workers take the garbage from the dustbin regularly but the garbage container site returns to the same condition again. I even started door to door collection service for locals three times a day in the area so that they refrain from throwing garbage there but still, they continue to do it," said Maurya. She added that the garbage bin was even covered with a tarpaulin cover but it made the situation worse. "The garbage was being thrown in the drains and the open areas and we could not allow this so we had to uncover the bin. The locals will have to act responsibly which seems to be the only solution to this



issue," said Maurya. Responding to this, the senior municipal health officer Dr R

K Singh said that the main problem is that the locals do not hand over domestic

garbage to the door to door collection service in that area. "Some locals wanted us to

remove the garbage bin from that area which is not possible. Where would we move it to? The issue is that the locals dump the garbage in the overflowing bins and outside it," said Singh. He also said that the corporation covered the place but nothing changed. He said that some people refrain from dumping garbage there to which Maurya and Dhiman have claimed that it was done by them and not by the MCD.

Meanwhile, Singh said that to tackle such issue across the city, the corporation will soon issue notices to such people who are not dumping domestic garbage in the door to door collection service. The locals will have to show the receipts of the bill they receive for the door to door collection service proving that they hand over their garbage to the sanitation workers, stated Singh. He said that if they fail, MCD will issue notices to such locals as a first warning and will even impose a penalty later on of minimum Rs 500 under anti-littering Act if they continue to violate rules.

## Thousands of Govt teachers seek transfer

**More than 3500 teachers have applied for transfer under rule 27 of transfer act**

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The state government has declared the ongoing year as zero year for transfers but has opened a window for the employees suffering from serious diseases, parents of especially ailed and those having some serious issue. As per the rules the transfer of these employees would be made under rule 27 of transfers act. The education department of the state is now grappling with the enormous number of transfer applications of teachers made under the rule 27. The department has received more

than 3500 transfer applications of the teachers. The department has forwarded these applications to the state administration. Now after scrutiny at the state administration level, the applications would be placed before the chief secretary. It is worth mentioning here that to give relief to the teachers who genuinely need transfer in the zero transfer year, the education secretary R Meenakshi Sundaram had directed the education department to seek applications from eligible teachers under section 27.

In response to the department's order, a large number of teachers applied for the transfers. It is learnt that about 1500 applications are of primary teachers and remaining of the Licensed Teachers (LT) and lecturers.

The secretary has made it clear that the department would check the eligibility of the teachers for transfers and the officials would be held responsible for the transfers.







## 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 left 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.

# Education

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. Gandhiji 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 prepared to meet the challenges of the 21st century — 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 stu-

dent'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-establish 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.

In his 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 develop the best character, 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 the author of the *Young India*, Mahatma Gandhi, on 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 instant 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's just an anxiety, 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](mailto: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 to 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 to be routed through the retailers, and not directly to farmers. The Government has cleared all subsidy dues to manufacturers, it gives no clue that this will happen soon. In fact, there are major roadblocks on the way — some explicit and others not so. To understand these, let us look at how the extant sys-

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 (dian-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 sack) 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 including 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 function 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' Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK), Thiruvalluvar's Vithuthalaithiruthigal 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 (in the 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.

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. The BJP got just one seat 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 and class 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 could 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 Advisor, 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 expert 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 lockdowns. Only 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 all 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 close 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 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 hearing 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 in the UK government, 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 U.S. 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 screenshot of an online map 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's 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(14) 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/ LBDE0000232267	Flat No-T/ 3-13-05, Valley View Estate, Gurgaon, Haryana/ Nov 18, 2020	January 31, 2020 Rs. 6,83,107/-	Delhi NCR
2.	Dayanand Sharma/ Jaidav Kaushik/ LBFB00001181891	Flat No-207, 2nd Floor, C-11, Belvedere Tower, Charwood 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 & Sarika Gera/ LBH00000435686	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 Sharni/ Santosh Gupta/ Sanjay Gupta/ LBDE00001867389	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 borrower(s)/ guarantor(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 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 permission implicating him from at least 35 affidavits by witnesses who have appeared before the commission.

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

**UJVN LTD** (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)  
H.O.: "ULJWAL", Mahanadi Bagh, G.M.S. Road Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40119UP2001SC020866 Website: www.uttarakhandajivn.co.uk

**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.uttarakhandajivn.co.uk](http://www.uttarakhandajivn.co.uk) 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: 5'2". 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: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.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	Electropneumatic Pin ICF Bogie	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.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) and [www.mr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.mr.indianrailways.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, Chandni 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 bearded. 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. Prices in other parts of the country, including north India, are also rising.

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



## 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 being superannuated, 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 their termination orders 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 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. VIKASH	Vehicle no- HR38V6041, Manu yr-2015, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT BASE CRDI	68000/-	6800/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chok, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-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 Chok, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-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- D12-204942, Chassis No- MA1215151691, Manu yr-2012, Make and Model- Maruti Eriga	200000/-	20000/-	Godara Yard, Khowat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chok, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-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 Chok, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-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 202034, 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 (895362366)

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 Nitram 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](mailto: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, 25116102  
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](mailto: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](mailto: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

## BoneSay

Compared with people who ate meat, vegans with lower calcium and protein intakes (on average) had a 43 per cent higher risk of fractures anywhere in the body, researchers have warned. According to the findings, published in the journal BMC Medicine, vegetarians and people who ate fish but not meat had a higher risk of hip fractures, compared to people who ate meat



## 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 observing 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**

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 improvement 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 synthesise 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. It's its peak in digestion that makes it so 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  
■ 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 pneumonia 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

breakfast; two square meals per day, having fresh fruit everyday; regular exercise with deep breathing exercises; adequate sleep are of utmost importance to maintain good immunity.  
■ People with Diabetes; renal conditions; those on chemotherapy 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.

**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**

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 cause; pneumonia is treated with Antibiotic (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, and Community and health workers. Awareness of practices like hand hygiene-washing hands frequently, avoiding indoor pollution (smoking, usage of firewood, kerosene, incense, dho-sprays etc) as well as outdoor pollution.

The other important 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 severely 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 it 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 patients in isolation wards. 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 and disinfectant 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 environments.

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. The Government is 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 have severely impacted the food supply and 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 the development of new products so as to eradicate SAM under the Poshan Abhiyan.

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 process 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.



## Trend Slazer

### 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 roles 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 actress 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 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 said to 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, *ganaa 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 have tried 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 had big 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 their 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 tell the idea of a franchise. 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."

"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 attitude.

"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'

IAN ■ 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 end 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. But I think, 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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# 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 T20 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.

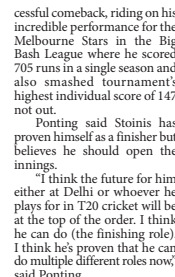
Ponting said Stoinis has proven himself as a finisher but believes he should open the innings.

"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 do (the finishing role). I can't help but think 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 a 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 despite being hurt to do that 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.

Despite the unusual training arrangements, Rabada said "training is going smoothly" ahead of the first T20 against England at Newlands on Friday.

"The team is doing well at sticking to strict rules."

Rabada is undergoing his second "bio-bubble" experience in a short period of time after starting for the Delhi Capitals, and becoming the leading wicket-taker, in the recent IPL.

Rabada said living in the bubble was tough but added a note of realism.

"It's like luxury prisons that you are in but at the end of the day you have to remind yourself that you are fortunate," he said.

"People have lost their jobs and people are struggling. I try to remind myself that we must be grateful for the opportunity to earn some money and do what we love," AFP

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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