

OPINION 6
A DBT FOR
MANUFACTURERS

WORLD 8
'CHINESE ACTIVITIES ALONG
INDIAN BORDER PROVOCATIVE'

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2ND ODI, SEAL SERIES

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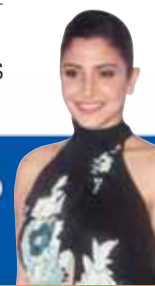
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Farmers reject Shah offer, set talk terms

Farmers union threaten to block all entry points to Delhi, demand Cabinet Committee for talks; Shah assures high-level team of Ministers for dialogue if farmers shift to Burari

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah held out an olive branch to farmers protesting at Delhi's borders for four days against the new farm laws for talks anytime provided they move to the Burari ground, the farmers on Sunday rejected Shah's offer and said they will not accept any conditional dialogue and threatened to block all five entry points to the national Capital.

The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) on Sunday demanded the Centre to name and authorise a Cabinet committee or a group of Ministers for future discussions with the farmers.

"The condition laid down by Home Minister Amit Shah is not acceptable to us. We will not hold any conditional talks. We reject the government's offer. The blockade will not end. We will block all five entry points to Delhi... The condition put for talks is an insult to farmers."

"We will never go to Burari. It is not a park but an open jail," Surjeet S Phul, Bhartiya Kisan Union's Punjab president, told reporters.

Reacting to their demands, the Centre on Sunday once again appealed to the farmers to shift to a ground in Delhi's

Burari and said a high-level team of Union Ministers is ready to hold talks with them at the capital's Vigyan Bhavan once they move to the designated place.

Later in the evening, Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar held deliberations over the farmers' protest against the three Central farm laws with BJP president JP Nadda.

As the standoff showed no signs of easing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi again batted for the new laws in his monthly radio address. Shah on Sunday said they were meant for the welfare of farmers and called their agitation apolitical.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "The new farm laws are meant for the welfare of farmers. After a long time the farmer is going to come out of the locked system. Whoever wants to oppose it politically let them do it. I have never said the farmers protest is political and would never say (that it is political)."

The Home Ministry too assured the farmers' organisations that a high-level team of Union Ministers will talk to them once the protesters move to the designated site. A meeting of over 30 farmer groups was held to discuss Shah's offer for talks before the scheduled date of December 3 once they



Farmers protest at Singhu border during their Delhi Chalo march against the Centre's farm reform laws, in New Delhi on Sunday
Ranjani Dimri / Pioneer

move to Burari in the city, but thousands of protesters refused to budge and prepared for spending another night in the cold at the Singhu and Tikri border points. Their representatives said Shah's condition that they shift the protest is not acceptable and claimed Burari ground is an "open jail".

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FARMERS' BODY ASK KISAN TO MARCH TO DELHI, URGE THEM TO START NATIONWIDE STIR FROM TOMORROW

New Delhi: The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) has decided to intensify stir, protests to start in other States from December 1. The AIKSCC has asked all farmers' organisations to immediately mobilise farmers to Delhi and to hold protests across the country from December 1.

MAN SLEEPING IN CAR NEAR PROTEST SITE ON CAPITAL BORDER CHARRED TO DEATH

New Delhi: A 55-year-old man from Punjab was burnt alive after the car in which he was sleeping caught fire on Saturday night near the Delhi-Haryana border. Janak Raj had come to Delhi border to express solidarity with the agitating farmers. A tractor repairman, he had gone to Delhi to voluntarily fix tractors that were being used by farmers camping near Delhi, to protest against the Centre's agricultural laws that were passed recently.

Don't be swayed by rumours as farm laws pro-farmers: Modi

New legislations have opened 'new doors of opportunities', benefits for farmers, says PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of demand by farmers for guaranteeing Minimum Support Price for their produce, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday asserted that new farm laws have opened "new doors of opportunities" and benefits for farmers and that "awareness" was key to progress in life.

Addressing the nation through his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi touched on the varied issues including coronavirus pandemic and need to preserve cultural heritage.

Even as hundreds of farmers continue protest against the Centre's farm laws which have been described "anti-farmer", Prime Minister stressed that these farm laws had broken the shackles of various farmers and begun to lessen their problems.

Giving example of one farmer Jitendra, he said the



farmer was not getting full-payment of his produce sold and he made use of new farm laws to receive payment with the intervention of District Magistrate who, according to new farm laws, is mandated to solve payment problem within one month.

"Don't be carried away by rumours, be aware", Modi said. Similarly, Modi gave example of a Haryana farmer Virendra Yadav who he said sold his "parali" to paper mill to earn Rs 1.50 crore in two years. "Jagruti hi jeevanata hain", he said seeking people to be fully aware about developments around them.

The PM said while coronavirus vaccine is still on its way, "any carelessness could be fatal" during the pandemic.

Continued on Page 2

CoviShield volunteer seeks ₹5 cr for ill effects

Drugs Controller General of India initiates probe into complaint

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has initiated probe into the complaint by a Chennai-based volunteers about alleged

adverse complications reported in a CoviShield vaccine trial. While the volunteer has demanded Rs 5 crore compensation for causing medical complications, the Serum Institute of India (SII) has also served a legal notice seeking damages of ₹100 crore from him, calling his complaint "malicious".

According to reports, the 40-year-old Chennai-based business consultant, who was a volunteer for the third phase of

the vaccine trial conducted by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), has sought Rs 5 crore compensation for alleged suffering serious neurological and psychological symptoms after taking the dose.

He was administered the shot at Chennai's Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SRIHER), one of the trial sites on October 1. Now on his behalf, a law firm has sent a legal notice to

Director General, ICMR, Drugs Controller General of India, DCGI, CEO, AstraZeneca UK, Professor Andrew Pollard, Chief Investigator, Oxford Vaccine Trial and Vice Chancellor of Sri Ramachandra Higher Education and Research.

The man has sought a compensation of Rs 5 crore and that the testing, manufacturing and distribution of the vaccine be stopped immediately. The SII has partnered with British-Swedish biopharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca AstraZeneca for manufacturing the Oxford vaccine candidate for Covid-19.

On its part, issuing notice against the complainant, SII refuted the allegation, terming his claims "malicious and mis-conceived in nature". The Pune-based pharma giant claimed that "there is absolutely no correlation with the vaccine trial and the medical condition of the volunteer."

"The allegations in the notice are malicious and mis-conceived. While the Serum Institute of India is sympathetic with the volunteer's medical condition, there is absolutely no correlation with the vaccine trial and the medical condition of the volunteer."

Continued on Page 2

Covid-19 IN INDIA TOTAL

CASES: 94,30,507

DEATHS: 1,37,151

RECOVERED: 88,44,502

ACTIVE: 4,46,691

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	18,20,059	47,071	16,80,926
Karnataka	8,83,899	11,765	8,47,612
Andhra Pradesh	8,67,683	6,988	8,52,298
Tamil Nadu	7,80,505	11,703	7,57,790
Kerala	5,99,601	2,224	5,32,668
Delhi	5,66,648	9,066	5,22,491
Uttar Pradesh	5,41,873	7,742	5,09,556
West Bengal	4,80,813	8,376	4,48,032
Odisha	3,18,307	1,787	3,11,296
Telangana	2,69,223	1,455	2,57,278
Rajasthan	2,65,386	2,292	2,34,336
Chhattisgarh	2,35,998	2,840	2,12,517
Bihar	2,35,159	1,259	2,28,251
Haryana	2,32,522	2,401	2,11,216
Assam	2,12,617	981	2,08,283
Gujarat	2,08,278	3,969	1,89,520

MARKETS
SENSEX 44,149.73 (-116.89)
NIFTY 12,344.95 (-14.80)
GOLD 48,106.00 (-411.00)
SILVER 89,165.8 (-773.80)

WEATHER
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MIN 9.6°C
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La Nina likely to freeze parts of India between Dec-Feb, predicts IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

North, central and some parts of east India may expect a harsher winter and can see a rise in the frequency of cold waves this season between December and February.

In its winter forecast for December 2020 and February 2021, the India Meteorological

Department (IMD) on Sunday said north, northwest, central and few subdivisions over east India to face below normal minimum temperatures between December and February due to La Nina conditions prevailing over the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

As per the forecast, night and early morning are likely to be chilly while day temperatures are likely to be above normal over the same regions.

According to the IMD, Srinagar recorded minus 1.4 as the minimum temperature on Sunday while Pahalgam and Gulmarg recorded minus 2.3 and minus 3.2 respectively as the lowest temperatures.

Leh town of Ladakh recorded minus 11.1 and Kargil minus 9.2 as the minimum temperatures.

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'Tiger State' MP loses 26 national animals in 2020

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh, which is known as the "tiger State" of India, has lost 26 striped animals so far this year, as per the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). Reacting to it, Madhya Pradesh Forest Minister Vijay Shah told PTI that the average death rate of tigers was less compared to their birth rate in the State in last six years.

According to the NTCA website, out of the 26 tiger deaths reported since April this year, MP lost 21 felines inside the tiger reserves, including 10 in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. No tiger death was reported in the first three months of this year, as per the data. In 2019, the State lost 28 tigers while three cases of seizures of body parts due to poaching were also reported.

Continued on Page 2

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STATE GOVT ISSUES FRESH GUIDELINES TO CONTAIN COVID-19

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Following the issuance of guidelines on surveillance, containment and caution in view of Covid-19 by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the State Government has also issued fresh guidelines to be followed in the state.

To encourage Covid appropriate behaviour, the district administration shall take all necessary measures. Strict enforcement of wearing of face masks, hand hygiene and social distancing must be ensured. To enforce the wearing of masks mandatory in public and work places, imposition of fines on persons not wearing masks shall be imposed as prescribed in the Health department order.

Observance and enforcement of social distancing in crowded places, especially in markets, weekly bazaars and public transport is also critical for containing the spread of Covid. For this, the SOP issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) to regulate crowds in markets shall be strictly enforced by the district administration.

SOPs issued for regulating travel in aircrafts and trains shall be strictly enforced and if found necessary, the transport department shall issue necessary guidelines for regulating travel in public transport like buses, Vikram and others.

For surveillance and containment, effective demarcation of containment zones in vul-

nerable and high incidence areas shall be carefully done by the district authorities at the micro level, considering the guidelines issued by the MoHFW to break the chain of transmission and control the spread of virus. The containment measures as prescribed by the MoHFW will be scrupulously followed within the demarcated containment zones.

These include allowing only essential activities, strict perimeter control, intensive house to house surveillance, testing as per prescribed protocol, quick isolation of Covid-19 patients in treatment facilities/home and administering prescribed clinical interventions among others. It shall be the responsibility of the local district, police and municipal authorities to ensure that the prescribed containment measures are strictly followed.

All activities have been permitted outside containment zones except some permitted with certain restrictions. Cinema halls and theatres will function with 50 per cent capacity, swimming pools will be open only for training of sports persons and exhibition halls will be only for business to business purposes. Similarly, social/religious/sports/entertainment/cultural will be allowed with upto maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity with a ceiling of 100 persons in closed spaces and considering size of ground/space in open space.

389 positive cases & eight deaths reported on Sunday

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A total of 389 persons were found positive for Covid-19 in the state on Sunday while eight persons succumbed to the disease. On the same day, a total of 278 persons recovered from the disease. The number of active cases in the state is currently 4,970 while the recovery percentage is 90.77.

According to information provided by the Health department, the total cumulative positive Covid-19 cases in the state are 74,340 out of which 67,575 have been cured. A total of 1,222 persons have succumbed



to Covid in the state so far. Further, the results of 13,844 samples area still awaited.

Of the persons found positive for Covid on Sunday in the state, the highest number - 146 is in Dehradun followed by 57 in Pauri district. Among the other districts, seven were found positive in Almora, two in Bageshwar, 21 in Chamoli, 10 in

with neighbouring countries. No separate permission/approval/e-permit will be required for such movement. However, all asymptomatic inbound persons travelling from other countries to Uttarakhand shall mandatorily register on the portal <http://smarctydehradun.uk.gov.in>. Similarly, registration on this portal prior to travel is also mandatory for all inbound persons in case of inter-state movement. All inbound asymptomatic persons if coming for a specific purpose for a duration of less than seven days will not be quarantined.

Champawat, 49 in Haridwar, six in Nainital, seven in Pithoragarh, nine in Rudrapur, 24 in Tehri, 33 in Udham Singh Nagar and 18 in Uttarakashi.

When it comes to the active cases in the state, the highest number is in Dehradun district which has 1,395 active cases. Among the other districts there are 186 active cases in Almora, 119 in Bageshwar, 322 in Chamoli, 179 in Champawat, 598 in Haridwar, 458 in Nainital, 542 in Pauri, 360 in Pithoragarh, 118 in Rudrapur, 266 in Tehri, 285 in Udham Singh Nagar and 142 in Uttarakashi.

However, if they are coming for a longer duration, they will be placed in home or institutional quarantine for 10 days and self monitor their health.

All asymptomatic persons who are travelling outside the state from Uttarakhand for a maximum of five days shall on return be exempted from quarantine. However, in case of out-bound travel for more than five days, such persons shall have to undergo 10 days home quarantine on their return. All asymptomatic inbound persons shall be exempted from home quarantine if they undergo RT-

Market remains closed on weekly closure day in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

On the weekly closure day for shops and market-places in the Dehradun city on Sunday, the commercial establishments that do not fall under the essential services category remained closed. This was informed by the city magistrate Kusum Chauhan who also added that the district administration had already instructed authorities to ensure the implementation of the orders of the weekly closure of market-places that helped considerably in keeping shops closed on Sunday. She said that she herself made rounds in the city to ensure the closure of all the shops in marketplaces except the commercial establishments selling medicines, vegetables, fruits, petrol and dairy products. According to her, the residents as well as the local businessmen of the city cooperated thoroughly in this weekly closure. Moreover, the Dehradun district magistrate Ashish Kumar Srivastava has ordered the district officials to take action under the Uttarakhand Epidemic



Patali Bazaar wears a deserted look during weekly closure in Dehradun on Sunday. Pioneer Photo

Diseases Covid-19 Regulations 2020 against those who do not follow the rules on weekly closure. Responding to this, Chauhan said that the day of the weekly closure went smoothly and the authorities did not face any serious trouble from the locals due to weekly closure.

The officials said that the weekly closure provided an opportunity to sanitise the marketplaces and minimise the risk of Covid-19 in the city. Meanwhile, the deputy municipal commissioner Rohitash Sharma stated that the Municipal Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) sanitised all the main marketplaces of the city. The officials informed

that about 50 tractors were used to sterilise the main marketplaces of all the 100 wards. Moreover, the DM also appealed people to use face masks, sanitisers and maintain physical distancing in public places to minimise the risk of Covid-19 contagion. He also asked people to contact a medical professional as soon as they notice any symptoms of the disease.

It will be recalled here that the authorities had earlier provided some relaxation in the routine weekly closure during the festive period. In order to check the spread of Covid-19 the authorities have once again started enforcing the weekly closure.

While tourists arriving by all modes also have to register on the portal, it is not mandatory to bring Covid negative test report before check in

hotel/homestay. Checks like thermal scanning and other prescribed health protocols for hotels and restaurants must be complied with.

CM inaugurates dream project Suryadhar reservoir

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the Late Gajendra Datt Naithani-Suryadhar reservoir on the outskirts of Dehradun on Sunday. Built at a cost of Rs 50.25 crore and with a capacity of 77,000 cubic metres, this reservoir is 550 metres long, 28 metres wide and 10 metres deep. In addition to boating in the reservoir, the CM also dispersed fish eggs in the lake which is one of Rawat's dream projects.

Speaking on the occasion, the CM said that there is a long term vision behind this project along with a major purpose and message. The purpose of making this lake is not just supplying drinking water and irrigation as it will achieve bigger results. It will recharge water sources and improve the ecosystem. The State government is attempting to make this area a better destination for tourism in the coming times. This will also facilitate increased employment opportunities in the area in the future. He said, "This reservoir will facilitate gravity based water supply to



18 villages along with irrigation for 1,247 hectare area. Due to this reservoir, the per capita per day water availability for the 30,000 population in the area will increase from 40 litres to

100 litres. Attempts will also be made to develop water sports at Suryadhar."

Rawat further said that the reservoir had been named after the Late Gajendra Datt

Naithani recalling that he had dedicated his entire life to social service. Connected to the ideology of the RSS, Naithani's sole aim was to serve the society.

Speaking about the Doiwala region he said that development is taking place swiftly here with CIPEI established and national law university being made at Ranipokhari. A multispecialty hospital for mothers and children is being built at Harrawala while a science college will also be built at a cost of Rs 400 crore. Research will also take place in the college which will be built on 35-40 hectare land which has been identified for the purpose. Scientists from across India and abroad will come here as visiting professors, making the college an achievement for the state and nation. Rawat further informed that work is also being undertaken on two important projects - Song dam in Dehradun district and Jamnara dam in Nainital district. The Song dam will facilitate gravity based drinking water supply for 60-65 years to Dehradun and its nearby areas. It will also save electricity worth more than Rs 100 crore. With forest clearance being received for Song dam, the government is attempting to lay its foundation by March 2021.

Cong & other parties misleading farmers, says Dushyant Gautam

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Bharatiya Janata Party national general secretary and State in-charge Dushyant Kumar Gautam accused the Congress and some other political parties of confusing the farmers. Addressing the media here on Sunday, he said, "The farmers are our brothers and the government is ready for talks with them. However, Congress and other parties are misleading them. It is a matter of concern that disruptive elements have entered the farmers' protest. The Aam Aadmi Party which failed to provide food to labourers during the Covid period is pitching tents for the agitating farmers and facilitating food for them. Those who are involved in the farmers' protest are also getting involved with this agitation."

Gautam further informed that the BJP national president JP Nadda will be on a tour of Uttarakhand from December 4 to 7. On his first day in the state, Nadda will meet members of the religious fraternity in Haridwar. Later, from December 5 to 7 he will attend



organisational meets and interact with the media. One of the features of his tour will be a booth committee meeting which will have only booth committee heads on the stage with him. He further informed that on December 5, Nadda will hold a meeting with the chief minister and cabinet ministers, attend the core committee meeting and a seminar with various cells and district heads. He will also hold a virtual public meet with all party workers at and above the zonal level. On December 7, Nadda will hold a booth committee meeting, meet

social media volunteers and address a Press conference.

Regarding Uttarakhand government, he said that the State government is doing commendable work with good coordination between the party and the government. He reiterated that in the next Vidhan Sabha elections, the BJP will win 60 out of 70 seats to form its government once again in Uttarakhand. The BJP will approach the public in the Assembly elections with the achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Central and State governments.

The BJP State president Banshidhar Bhagat, BJP State co-in-charge Rekha Verma and other office bearers of the party were also present on the occasion.

Children found after fleeing from State observation home

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

After two children allegedly fled from the State observation home in Kedarpuram around midnight on Saturday, the police found them outside their houses the next day.

According to the official sources, both the children were kept in the observation home as per the orders of the State juvenile justice board.

They both purportedly fled from the observation home

The official sources informed that while one child was caught outside his house, the other child was caught from his maternal uncle's house in Sahaspur the same day

around midnight and the management filed a complaint to

the police as soon as they got to know about it on Sunday morning.

The official sources informed that while one child was caught outside his house, the other child was caught from his maternal uncle's house in Sahaspur the same day.

As per the sources, the police reportedly brought the children back to the police station and then sent them back to the observation home in Kedarpuram.

Officials answerable to public, must resolve their issues swiftly: Maharaj

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The State's Tourism, Culture and Irrigation minister Satpal Maharaj inaugurated and unveiled the foundation for various developmental schemes of the Irrigation and Tourism departments in Chamoli district on Sunday.

The minister unveiled the various schemes at a function in Joshimath where he also heard the issues of the BJP's district office bearers and workers, assuring them of necessary action. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Maharaj said that the officials should establish coordination with



local public representatives to resolve the issues of the public without delay. As the State of Uttarakhand was formed after a long struggle by the people, the officials should understand that they are all the more answerable to the public.

The minister unveiled the various schemes at a function in Joshimath where he also heard the issues of the BJP's district office bearers and workers, assuring them of necessary action

Establishing communication with the public, the officials should without fail pick up the phones made by citizens. The minister further said that the Tourism department is moving ahead on the chief minister's 13 districts 13 destinations

tourism map, he added.

On the occasion, Maharaj inaugurated the open air ice skating rink costing Rs 1.38 crore at Auli. He also unveiled the foundation for construction of a cooking gas agency to be constructed at Badrinath at a cost of about Rs 48 lakh. He also inaugurated the Devalbagarh development scheme costing about Rs 34 lakh and a gate costing Rs 13 lakh built at Simli in memory of Mohan Uttarakhandi.

The Badrinath MLA Mahendra Prasad Bhatt and other BJP workers were also among those present on the occasion.

1,889 students pass out in IIT(R) virtual convocation

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, organised its annual convocation in the virtual mode on Sunday. Institute alumnus and executive chairman of Happiest Minds Technologies Limited, Ashok Soota was the chief guest while the executive chairman of Cyient and institute's board of governors' chairman BVR Mohan Reddy presided over the function. During the convocation, 1,889 students were conferred degrees which included 939 UG, 677 PG and 273 PhD degrees.

Speaking on occasion Soota said, "It's a privilege for me to deliver this Convocation address at my alma mater from where I graduated more than 50 years ago. It is a matter of pride that IIT-Roorkee ranks

amongst the best technological institutions in the world and has contributed to so many sectors of technological development. I am also pleased to see the increased emphasis on R&D and consulting as it is evident from the large number of sponsored research and consultancy projects which have also generated over Rs 130 crores of revenue for the institution last year.

However, even more, important are the innovations introduced in recent years. These include students' representation in decision making, the same rules for the hostel of men and women, and no hierarchy amongst faculty."

Addressing the gathering, Reddy congratulated the outgoing students. He said, "Covid-19 is profoundly impacting our lives, livelihood and learn-



ing; this convocation is no exception. Today we are stepping into real-world to embark on a unique journey, into a



world that is undergoing unprecedented changes. The

change that is fundamentally transforming the way we live,

consume, communicate and manage our resources. Today

every industry is on a threshold of a massive technology-led transformation.

You are very fortunate that you are graduating at a time when technology changes are on exponential trajectory opening doors to countless opportunities and challenges at the same time. You must work to use the technology for a better society and gain excellence in whatever you do."

The institute director Ajit K Chaturvedi said, "Virtual and online events are now a part of us, the lack of physical presence of the graduating students at the time of Convocation is something that we have not yet been able to come to terms with."

We eagerly await normal times when we can warmly welcome you back to the campus."

Over 88L recovered from Covid in India



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In just three months after crossing the 20 lakh mark on August 7, India has added whopping 70 lakhs Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to nearly touch 94 lakh on Sunday while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 88 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 93.71 per cent.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 93,92,919 with 41,810 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,36,696 with 496 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The active Covid-19 case-load remained below 5 lakh for

the 19th consecutive day. There are 4,53,956 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 4.83 per cent of the total caseload.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 88,02,267 pushing the national recovery rate to 93.71 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.46 per cent.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20.

According to the ICMR,

over 13.95 crore samples have been tested up to November 28 with 12,83,449 samples being tested on Saturday.

The 496 new fatalities include 89 from Delhi, 88 from Maharashtra, 52 from West Bengal, 30 from Haryana, 28 from Punjab, 25 from Kerala and 21 from Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 1,36,696 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 46,986 from Maharashtra followed by 11,750 from Karnataka, 11,694 from Tamil Nadu, 8,998 from Delhi, 8,322 from West Bengal, 7,718 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,981 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,765 from Punjab, 3,953 from Gujarat and 3,237 from Madhya Pradesh.

AI plans to operate non-stop flights on Chennai-London route from Jan next year



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India is planning to operate non-stop flights on the Chennai-London route from January next year, making Tamil Nadu's Capital the ninth city to be connected with London. Air India is currently operating non-stop flights to London from Delhi (seven flights a week), Mumbai (four flights a week), Kochi (three flights a week), Ahmedabad (two flights a week), Bengaluru (two flights a week), Goa (two flights a week), Kolkata (one flight a week) and Amritsar (one flight a week).

Asked how has been the occupancy rate in London flights after the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the spokesperson said the "load factors have been generally good." "Some of the stations like Delhi, Kochi, Goa and Ahmedabad have seen quite a heavy demand (for London flights)," the spokesperson said.

"We have plans to com-

Airlines have been permitted to operate special international flights under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under the bilateral air bubble pacts since July

mence direct operations between Chennai and London from January, 2021," the spokesperson said. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in India, that is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, airlines have been permitted to operate special international flights under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under the bilateral air bubble pacts since July. Flights between India and the UK have been operating under an air bubble pact only post the lockdown.

In BJP-RSS vision of India, Adivasis and Dalits should not have access to education: Rahul

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday attacked the Government over a media report which claimed that scholarship for 60 lakh SC school students was stuck after Central funding was ended and alleged that in the "BJP-RSS vision of India, Adivasis and Dalits should

not have access to education".

Along with his tweet attacking the government, Gandhi tagged the media report which said a key central scholarship scheme to help over 60 lakh Scheduled Caste students of classes 11 and 12 to complete their schooling has nearly shut down across more than 14 states after the Centre ended funding to states under a 2017 formula.

"In BJP/RSS vision of India, Adivasis and Dalits should not have access to education," Gandhi alleged.

"Stopping scholarships for SC-ST students is their way of ends justifying their means," the former Congress chief said in the tweet.

Not in favour of having cells in party on caste basis: Gadkari

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said he was not in favour of having cells in a political party on the basis of castes, religions or communities, and added that talent was more important than these factors.

He was referring to the cells formed within political parties to represent different castes or communities, like the minority community and Scheduled Caste (SC).

The minister was addressing a rally for Sandip Joshi, BJP's graduates' constituency candidate from East Vidarbha.

"I have a clear opinion that a man is not great by his caste, but by his talent. In BJP also we have different cells. When I was the party president, I had expe-

Gadkari was referring to the cells formed within political parties to represent different castes or communities, like the minority community and Scheduled Caste (SC)

rienced this," he said.

"I am of the opinion that no cell should be formed on the basis of caste and religion, as there is no use of such units. The representatives of such cells ask how many tickets people from their caste have got from the party," he said.

"I always say that our party, our workers are our family. We have never done politics on the basis of caste and community. We stand behind those party workers who work hard, considering them as the members

NIA denies reports that it recovered straw and sipper from Stan Swamy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Sunday denied reports that it recovered straw and sipper from Elgar Parishad case accused Stan Swamy and sought 20 days time from the court to respond to his plea to allow him a straw and sipper in Talaja Central Jail.

These are false, incorrect and mischievous reports as the agency neither recovered straw and sipper from the accused nor sought 20 days time to file reply in the said application before the court, the NIA said.

Swamy was arrested by NIA on October 8 for his involvement in the activities of CPI (Maoist) and for furtherance of the agenda of the banned terrorist organisation as one of the conspirators in Bhima Koregaon Elgar Parishad case.

The case relates to widespread violence, arson and stone-pelting resulting in loss of lives and property near Bhima Koregaon, as a result of the provocative speeches during organisation of Elgar Parishad programme at Nashik, Maharashtra, Pune on December 31, 2017.

After arresting accused Swamy, the NIA had produced him before the Special Court in

Mumbai along with chargesheet on October 9 and never took his police custody, the agency said.

"All the necessary legal formalities such as his medical examination etc. were duly observed. Since then, accused Stan Swamy has been in judicial custody at Talaja Central Jail. Nearly after a month, i.e. on 6/11/2020, accused Stan Swamy filed an application in the NIA Court at Mumbai for getting back his straw and sipper, (which he falsely claimed to have been kept by NIA)," it said.

The court asked the agency to file its reply on next date, which was scheduled on November 26.

The NIA filed its reply in the court on the scheduled date stating therein that it had conducted his personal search in presence of independent witnesses and no such straw and sipper were recovered.

The court rejected Swamy's application but issued direction to the jail authorities to provide straw and sipper to Swamy.

As the accused was in judicial custody, the matter was between him and the jail authorities which come under the Maharashtra State Administration, the NIA said in a statement.

NMC issues do's and don'ts to ensure safety of staff, students from Covid-19 infection



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Union Health Minister advised the States and Union Territories to reopen medical colleges, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has issued guidelines to the education institutions enlisting do's and don'ts to ensure safety of the staff and students from Covid-19 infection.

It has also asked the colleges administration to take extra care of the anxiety, mental health and psychological issues of students developed during the lockdown period and fear of infection after the opening of the campuses.

The colleges have also been asked to set up helplines for mental health, psychological concerns and well-being of students in their campus which "need to be regularly monitored by Counsellors and

other identified faculty."

As directed by the NMC, the NIA has advised all medical colleges to re-open on or before December 1, 2020 to maintain uniformity in academic sessions.

Sanitisation of premises, thermal screening, ensuring physical use of face mask, face cover/mask wearing, respiratory hygiene and hand-hygiene etc. are some of the day-to-day basic Covid-19 preventive measures that the colleges/Universities have to follow regularly, as per guidelines.

The universities/colleges have been advised to re-open in phase-wise manner with such activities where they can easily adhere to social distancing, use of face masks and other protective measures. This may include administrative offices, research laboratories and libraries etc.

Institutions should have a plan ready for students who cannot join the programme due to travel restrictions. Online teaching-learning arrangements should also be made for them, it said.

Cultural activities, meeting etc. may be avoided. However, such extra-curricular and sports activities may be allowed where physical distancing is feasible and is in accordance with the Union Home Ministry, it said.

All Students must bring all a RT-PCR report that is negative at the time of re-joining the hostels and they must be re-called in batches. "However, the sharing of rooms may not be allowed in hostels. Symptomatic students should not be permitted to stay in the hostels under any circumstances," said the guidelines.

Also, noting that residential students may be coming from different locations, the guidelines permit that they shall remain in quarantine and self-monitor their health for a period of 14 days before being allowed to attend classes or as per the policy opted by the State government for quarantine.

"We are also envisaging a test report or the university/college plan to test them on arrival."

Sweden acknowledges India's role as 'pharmacy of world'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Acknowledging India's role as the "pharmacy to the world," leading European nation Sweden said it is focusing on expanding bilateral cooperation in the areas of health and life sciences in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Swedish Ambassador Klas Molin also said Sweden and India have been working "firmly and unequivocally" in the fight against terrorism even as he noted the growing Indian role in the Indo-Pacific region.

On the long-pending free-trade agreement between India and the European Union, the envoy said there is still some work to be done in calibrating expectations and scope on both sides, noting that it will be mutually beneficial for both sides.

Molin told PTI that overall bilateral ties between India and Sweden have been excellent and that both sides are looking at broader cooperation in eight key areas including innovation, trade and investment, health and defence.

"The pandemic has focused our thinking, and our cooperation in health and in

life sciences has increased.

"India is the pharmacy to the world and some of our companies, some already established here, some venturing here now, are looking for new matchups," the ambassador said. "AstraZeneca is a well-known example, currently in phase three trials for a COVID-vaccine, but also researching other vaccines in India in other areas," he said.

India has supplied medicines and other medical assistance to over 150 countries in the last few months to help them deal with the coronavirus pandemic at a time when the country itself was reeling under its impact.

India's medical assistance has drawn recognition from several countries as well as multilateral fora.

Molin told PTI that he anxiously waits for a COVID-19 vaccine. British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca Plc and the University of Oxford are holding trials of a vaccine candidate.

"India, AstraZeneca is partnering with the Serum Institute of India (SII) for the potential vaccine.

To a question on security

issues, Molin said that India and Sweden stand together firmly and unequivocally in the fight against terrorism.

"We firmly believe that an FTA would be mutually very beneficial.

There is still some work to be done in calibrating expectations and scope on both sides.

"This year's EU-India Summit opened on a high-level economic dialogue. Hopefully, this will pave the way for resumption of negotiations," he said.

The FTA talks have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector.

Launched in June 2007, negotiations for the proposed agreement have witnessed many hurdles.

Asked how the overall ties progressed after the visit of Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia to India last year, the ambassador said the relations have been "excellent" and it was reflected in the visit.

"The pandemic has meant that some of the con-

tracts have been focused on new areas as we try to help each other cope with this unprecedented challenge.

And Sweden are on an upswing in the last few years. In April 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Stockholm during which both sides agreed to further deepen innovation partnership for a sustainable future.

It was a visit to Sweden by an Indian prime minister after nearly three decades.

Asked about Sweden's Global trade and investment, Molin said this year the programme comprised several elements "which strengthen the synergies our two countries share as partners with complementarity."

"We are also envisaging a virtual interaction between Swedish Trade Minister Anna Hallberg and the 200 plus Swedish companies in India, where the minister would give her outlook on Global trade and investment scenarios, and more specifically trends for Sweden and Swedish industry in the ongoing pandemic," he said.

Environment-friendly 'kulhad' to replace plastic tea cups at railway stations

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Tea will be sold in environment-friendly 'kulhads' (earthen cups) in place of plastic cups at all railway stations in the country. Railway minister Piyush Goyal said speaking at an event organised at the Digawara railway station in Rajasthan's Alwar district, the minister said the initiative will be the contribution of the Railways towards a plastic-free India.

"Tea is given in 'Kulhads' at nearly 400 railway stations in the country today, and in future, it is our planning that tea will be sold only in 'Kulhads' at all the railway stations in the country.

This will be the contribution of the Railways towards a plastic-free India," he said.

The minister said before addressing this gathering, he was having tea in a 'Kulhad' and the taste was really different.

'Kulhad' saves the environment and lakhs of people get employment from it, he

said.

The minister was speaking at an event to mark the inauguration of the newly electrified Dighawara-Bandikui section under north-western Railways.

The minister said before the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, the railway sector was ignored in Rajasthan as electrification had not been taken up in the last 30 years after the electrification of Delhi-Mumbai route.

He said the investment by Railways and infrastructure development projects in Rajasthan have increased multiple times between 2014-2020 as compared to that between 2009-2014.

Goyal said 65 underpasses were constructed from 2009-14 while 378 underpasses have been constructed from 2014- September 2020.

He said only four over-bridges were constructed in five years till 2014 whereas 30 such bridges have been constructed from 2014 to September 2020.

While Bhumi Adhikar Andolan have urged the judiciary to actively come forward and make sure no coercive action is taken against any protesting farmer and put an end to the rabid allegations against farmer organizations and their leaders by paid media channels and other political leaders.

Meanwhile, President, BKU Krantikari (Punjab) Surjinder Singh said they want allow any political parties including Congress and AAP to share their stage during the ongoing protest.

The minister said electrification of railway lines across the country will save the environment as engines will run on electricity produced in the country, saving fuel, money and time.

Also, the speed of trains will also be increased, he said.

"This will also help farmers who will be able to take their crops to any part of the country (through rail freight transport) in less time," he added.

Goyal said the prime minister is very concerned about the environment and therefore emphasis is being given on electrification.

The minister flagged off the first train on the newly electrified 34 km-long Dighawara-Bandikui section.

He said after the entire line from Rewari to Ajmer has now been electrified with the electrification of this stretch.

Dausa MP Jaskar Meena, GM-NWR Anand Prakash and other public representatives and railway officials were present in the function.

Baptism by fire

As Uddhav Thackeray completes a year in office, the reluctant politician seems to have mastered some rules of the game



Nobody had any expectations of Uddhav Thackeray. Not even as a descendant of Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray, who always had a wish of one of his own becoming the Chief Minister. But Balasaheb had probably not bargained for the circumstances under which Uddhav became one. Or imagined him to stand out with quietude and resolve in a hostile environment of competitive politics. For years after tamely acquiescing to his bigger partner, the BJP, the Shiv Sena stood up to it following its improved performance in the Assembly elections last November and demanded chief ministership on that basis. The BJP, the single largest party, thought

it could rustle up the numbers to form its own Government and was surprised when Uddhav snapped ties with it, engineered a coalition with the opposition Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)-Congress combine and negotiated the chief ministership. A manoeuvre that was so not expected from a man who was hardly thought capable of the aggression of Thackeray senior. But one year down the line, he is on a steady course, walking with ideologically divergent partners, not overstepping the ego of the Maratha strongman and NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who is believed to have been the architect of the alliance based on a shared pursuit of power. Apart from a few creases here and there, Uddhav hasn't been an embarrassment for the Congress despite his avowed commitment to Hindutva causes and that party's to its minority plank. The BJP, not quite accustomed to the Sena's revolt yet, has expectedly been placing hurdles along the way of the coalition government, be it through gubernatorial interference, by thrusting Central probes or generally shaming Uddhav's lack of administrative experience. As for the last, Uddhav had no time to settle in as the State recorded its first COVID-19 case on March 9, posing a severe challenge to the healthcare system. And before he could get a grip on it, Maharashtra became the State with the highest number of cases across India. Then the exodus of migrant labourers caught him by surprise, a fact played up by the BJP as an example of his ineptitude and lack of foresight. Still, Uddhav did not lose his cool and went in for aggressive containment measures, testing and medical protocols as Asia's biggest slum, Dharavi, put him on trial. Today, Mumbai is doing better than Delhi in handling the pandemic despite infrastructural weaknesses. Its case-load is going down, it is going for a graded reopening of sectors — unlike other States giving in to populist and commercial pressure — and is the first State in the country to have introduced international-style travel protocols to control the spiral of imported infection. The management of the Dharavi outbreak is a model example of how effective community engagement, awareness and deployment can tame the virus in resource-scarce and congested clusters. As the worst-hit State with a spiralling death count, Maharashtra seems to be finally getting there. And Uddhav, who may be borrowing lessons from the governance he'll get of the NCP-Congress, must be credited with having the will to deliver without drawing attention to himself. In fact, given his administrative inexperience, he has empowered efficient bureaucrats and shunted out the slackers, clearly emphasising that performance would be the only qualifier of assessment. The best part is he hasn't failed to call a spade a spade. He publicly admonished the police for indiscriminate use of force during the lockdown and in matters religious has taken an apolitical stand despite his Hindutva moorings. So when Maharashtra Governor B G Koshiyari prodded him on opening temples, wondering if he was delaying because of his "secular" partners, Uddhav shot back, asking if Hindutva meant simply opening religious places and as someone who had sworn on the Constitution, was he denying the secularism enshrined in it? Besides, he managed the festival season with reason. By confining the Ganesh Mahotsav to a largely indoor celebration, he avoided a super spreader event. In an editorial in *Saama*, he even questioned the utility of all shrines in a pandemic. At the same time, he calibrated his response to Muslims, considering the Sena's stand on the Babri masjid and the Ram temple. He used the Congress to urge the community not to congregate in mosques and stayed away from fanning the fire on the Tablighi Jamaat. In fact, Uddhav, in his own way is trying to posit his Hindutva as nationalism rather than the BJP kind of communalism so that he can justify his togetherness with the NCP-Congress. And given the Sena's history of rowdiness, he is trying to split his politics from bogeyism.

Uddhav's assets so far have been his straightforwardness and realism, which have held him in good stead. His respect for Pawar in keeping the coalition largely frictionless is the other reason for his stability. But he has to watch out against ambitious leaders who have already accused him of setting up a coterie to enable a smooth transition to his son Aaditya. And a jilted BJP with the means won't give up trying to break him and picking up dissenters. It almost had him on the lynching of sadhus in Palghar, who were mistaken by villagers for thieves and child lifters. Luckily for Uddhav, who was slow on the investigation, some BJP office-bearers were found to be among the lynch mob and spared him the criticism of running over another Hindu cause. Of course, the BJP baited him on the suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, though the CBI ultimately ruled out a conspiracy. But going by the State Government's demolition drive at an actress' office or a journalist's arrest, Uddhav must stop falling prey to the BJP's design of reactive politics. He certainly could have handled these cases better despite the provocation. If he is to last a full term, he needs equanimity. He doesn't need to flex muscles.

Bubble trouble

The problems with the Pakistani cricket team in NZ highlight the challenges of sequestering sportsmen



While the Indian cricket team began its tour of Australia, not minus some controversy surrounding the fitness of Rohit Sharma, it had already spent a few weeks in quarantine without any issues. Not so for the Pakistani cricket team playing across the Tasman Sea. While every player carried a clean bill of health on leaving Pakistan, it is reported that seven cricketers have tested positive for the Coronavirus since they arrived. This throws into doubt Pakistan's COVID-19 testing regime and with the players being a bit loose and fast regarding the quarantine. The New Zealand cricket board issued the Pakistani team "a final warning" and if the latter is in contravention of the quarantine or if more players test positive, then it could be sent home without having played a single match.

This incident, rather a series of incidents, highlights the problems of athlete bubbles and indeed the "bubble" travel system anywhere. Even with vaccine development moving along at an unprecedented rate, it is still at least two years before a substantial number of people worldwide can be inoculated. With the delayed Summer Olympics still on track and several other major international sports tournaments, such as the European Football championships, also due to be played, it is vital that national authorities and sports federations work out the kinks as quickly as possible. And that includes player behaviour. Athletes are almost always extremely social young men and women, so asking them to stay locked up for a period of up to two weeks requires immense self-determination that not all of them have. These are challenges that have to be met if we expect a completely normal sporting calendar for 2021 and if eventually fans are to return in full numbers to stadia. And on that last point, there were several Indian supporters during the first One-Day International between Australia and India. Despite the stadium only being at half capacity, Indian fans were clearly ignoring social distancing protocols, which looked Covidiotic and callous on television.

A DBT for manufacturers

The PLI scheme is result-oriented. The cash incentives will be paid only if the manufacturers make the goods. It is a better alternative



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

The Central Government has approved production-linked incentives (PLI) for manufacturing in 13 sectors. It essentially means that if an eligible manufacturer produces and sells/exports eligible goods worth ₹100 crore, the Government will give him ₹5 crore (assuming five per cent incentive) as a reward/incentive because such sale/export of locally-manufactured goods will create local jobs.

The PLI will be available for sale/export for the next five years in addition to the existing incentives. Now this is one of the concerns that remains for investors and would need to be addressed. It makes the scheme a success. As the PLI benefit has been assured only for five years, the investor has to assess the financial viability of the project beyond the PLI period. Once a manufacturing unit has been set up with a lot of fixed investment, recovery may be difficult. So the five-year period has to be utilised to make life easy for all businesses and job creators. In other words, the "ease of doing business" has to improve substantially.

The Government expects that it may be called upon to pay about ₹2 lakh crore, which means a total sale/export of about ₹40 lakh crore (assuming five per cent PLI rate) during the next five years. This PLI will increase local manufacturing of eligible goods by an output equal to about 10 per cent of the current GDP.

Thus, the second concern is changing growth dynamics and the global demand scenario, especially in the post-pandemic world. To get free cash of ₹2 lakh crore from the Government, specified goods worth about ₹40 lakh crore would need to be produced in India and a matching demand would be needed in a world where the cut-throat competition is going to deepen.

The third concern is about how this PLI benefit will be used to boost the investor's actual post-tax income. In October, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) approved PLI benefits (four per cent to six per cent) to 16 companies. The PLI is available for the sale of goods manufactured in India five years subsequent to the base year (FY 2019-20).

Now, whether the incentive of four per cent to six per cent of invoiced price for five years would be enough compensation to offset



the cost disadvantage in India and has been a major point in favour of the new manufacturing units is 15 per cent corporation tax that was announced last year. For them, manufacturers of highly branded products like Apple iPhones, the PLI scheme and reduced corporate tax are major incentives. Since such manufacturers face little competition for their products, they can set prices of their products on their own. The PLI benefit may or may not be fully passed on to the retail buyers in this particular case.

Most other manufacturers may face stiff price competition and may not be able to fully pocket the PLI benefit to offset their cost disadvantage. Their discerning, hard-bargaining buyers will demand price discounts on the basis of the PLI benefit.

The percentage of PLI benefit may vary across beneficiaries and depending on the competition, the post-tax actual benefit could vary from investor to investor. The PLI scheme, therefore, needs supplementation by sustained investor facilitation and improvement in ease of doing business.

Incentives like income tax and Central excise exemptions, VAT/GST reimbursements, interest and insurance subsidies, subsidies on plant/machinery and so on are typically provided for industries set up in industrially backward areas like North-eastern states.

At present, the total manufacturing output of all items (whether PLI eligible or not) in a year is about 16 per cent of the GDP. The services sector has a 55

to 60 per cent contribution in GDP and has been a major employer so far.

The PLI will be available to all new manufacturing units and also to existing manufacturing units for their extra production, additional over baseline output. For example, existing mobiles and electronics manufacturers are entitled to PLI benefit for whatever they produce over and above the 2019-20 level production in the next five years. The manufacturing units will have to apply, register and go through a vetting process and enter into proper agreement with the Government so as to ensure that only eligible manufacturers get the incentive for actual local manufacturing.

On April 1, a PLI scheme promising ₹40,951 crore incentive (four to six per cent of production value) was notified for manufacturers of mobile phones and other electronic components. Medical devices and bulk drugs (active pharmaceutical ingredients) were added to PLI eligibility in July and on November 11, 10 more manufacturing sub-sectors were added.

Cash incentive has been promised in the next five years to manufacturers of automobiles and auto components (₹57,042 crore); mobile manufacturing and specified electronics/technology products (₹45,951 crore); advance chemistry cell batteries (₹18,100 crore); pharmaceuticals and drugs (₹21,940 crore); medical devices (₹3,420 crore); telecom and networking products (₹12,195 crore); processed food (₹10,900 crore); man-made fibres

and technical textiles (₹10,683 crore); high-efficiency solar PV modules (₹4,500 crore); white goods like ACs and LEDs (₹6,238 crore) and speciality steel (₹6,322 crore).

For its move in October to approve grant of PLI benefit (four to six per cent) to 16 companies, MEITY received a very good response from mobile handset manufacturers.

The production of mobile phones surged from about ₹18,900 crore in 2014-15 to ₹170,000 crore in 2018-19. Samsung, Foxconn Hon Hai, Rising Star, Wistron and Pegatron have been granted PLI benefit only for manufacturing high-end phones (invoice value ₹15,000 and above).

Foxconn Hon Hai, Wistron and Pegatron are contract manufacturers for Apple iPhones. They expect to have a major export turnover for high-end phones. Some Indian mobile phone companies, including Lava, Bhagwati (Micromax), Padget Electronics, UTL Neolynx and Optiemus Electronics, have also been approved for PLI.

This scheme aims to make India a manufacturing hub of global repute, reduce imports and generate employment. It covers both low-value and high-employment items like textiles and food as well as high-value and low-employment items like automobiles, mobiles, electronics, white goods, including high technology items like Advanced Chemical cell battery. Incentivising local manufacture of items like ACC battery, auto and electronics components will help India

become part of the global value chains. The automobile industry turnover already accounts for almost half of the total value of manufactured items.

The auto, electronics and pharma industries, which have substantial import dependence and also high export potential, are major beneficiaries of the scheme while textiles and processed food are major employment generators.

A pertinent question is why should the Government give financial assistance of ₹900 to a phone manufacturing company for every phone sold at ₹15,000 (assuming six per cent PLI)? After all, more than half of the value of a phone may comprise imported components. The answer to this question is local employment.

The exports, in any case, are tax-free. Under the WTO rules, a Government can refund all taxes collected from exports so that the local taxes are not exported to foreign buyers. So, whatever Customs excise duty and GST are paid on exported items, they are eventually refunded by the Government. Often, exporters face the problem of working capital if the refund is delayed.

There is a growing demand in the world for diversification in supply chains and India can become a major player. The promotion of the manufacturing sector means forward integration with global supply chains and backward linkages with the MSME sector.

The domestic electronics hardware manufacturing faces a lack of large-playing field vis-à-vis competing nations. It is assessed that it costs about 8.5 per cent to 11 per cent more to manufacture electronic items in India on account of lack of adequate infrastructure, domestic supply chain and logistics; high cost of finance; inadequate availability of quality power; limited design capabilities and focus on R and D by the industry; and inadequate skill development. Sunrise sectors need support in the initial stages.

Traditionally, we have tried to attract investors with investment subsidies like giving land at subsidised rates and subsidising plant and machinery cost at a fixed percentage of say 15 per cent to 20 per cent of price. Thereafter, if the unit does not properly run, the subsidy goes waste. The PLI scheme is result-oriented. The cash incentive will be paid only if the manufacturers make the goods. It is a better alternative from the Government's viewpoint.

(The author is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry)

SOUNDBITE

I honestly don't believe anyone could pull off a *Coolie Number 1* redux other than Varun Dhawan. This is gonna be the mass commercial blockbuster 2020 we have been waiting for.



Musician
—Vishal Dadiani

Had a good interaction with the team at Serum Institute of India. They shared details about their progress so far on how they plan to further ramp up vaccine manufacturing.

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi



Historian
—S Irfan Habib

The history of peasant resistance in Punjab goes back to 1906/07 when Ajit Singh, Bhagat Singh's uncle, led a movement known popularly as Patti Samhal Jatta movement.



Vaccine will be distributed initially in India, then we will look at the COVAX countries which are mainly in Africa.



CEO, Serum Institute
—Adar Sonawalla

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Memories of Diego

Sir — Football legend Diego Maradona visited our football-crazy Indian cities during his lifetime — Kolkata and Kannur. We cherish the day when Maradona came to our city, Kannur, eight years ago. He came, he saw and conquered the hearts of thousands.

This city, which has given to the country some of its best footballers, was decked up with huge welcome posters and hoardings. Soccer fans came from everywhere to catch a glimpse of the "god of football." I still remember how the area outside his hotel was jam-packed. As soon as they saw him waving from the balcony of his room, they were euphoric. There was a big cheer for him from the people, who were whistling, clapping, shouting, dancing and some even crying.

Later at Jawahar stadium, Maradona mesmerised the crowd — perhaps the biggest in the city so far — with his unique brand of stunts and tricks. There was a cake in the shape of the football stadium. He made sure that he didn't slice the ball because for him, they say, it was his life and soul. The

Farmers have the right to protest

The right to have a protest is intrinsic to a democratic society. The blockade of major highways in order to prevent farmers from nearby States to enter Delhi constitutes a curtailment of this right. The denial of democratic space to farmers shows the Government is disinclined to adopting a consultative approach in dealing with their issues.

The crackdown on farmers with water cannons and tear gas shells was disturbing and inappropriate. The authorities did more harm than good by using strong-arm tactics against farmers and widened the trust deficit. Thankfully, the Government has now belatedly allowed the protesting farmers to gather in Delhi and even promised discussions. We hope that the Government will wisely defuse the situation instead of levelling baseless charges against parties in the opposition for "instigating" the farmers to protest. The Government should not turn its back on them but be empathetic to their community that provides food security to the nation.

The farmers' organisations are just in asking the Government to either repeal the new law, pushed through unilaterally without consulting them, or to give legal guarantees on the Minimum Support Price



(MSP). The Government can't reject their demands using vague claims that the new law will open up the markets and benefit them.

The farmers are fully justified in opposing the new Acts, which have the potential to undercut the prices of their produce. It will pave the way for contract farming and even the loss of their agricultural fields. We urge the Central government to accede to the farmers' demand and rescind the anti-farmer laws.

G. David Milton
Marathancode

BJP's desperation

Sir — A desperate BJP, seeking to gain a toe-hold in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, has ruffled feathers in a big way in its local rank and file as "outsiders" have

been appointed to oversee the December 1 election.

One immediate reaction to the paratrooping of the saffron party's leadership was the self-inmolation bid by a grassroots worker in Musheerabad division in front of the OBC

Morcha National president Dr K Laxman's camp office. The unfortunate incident reflects the seething anger among the BJP workers against the unwell come moves made by the party leadership. The incident occurred hours before Congress leader and former Hyderabad Mayor Banda Karthika Reddy joined the BJP.

The appointment of BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav and four deputies from other States to oversee the GHMC polls, ignoring Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy, party's State unit president Banda Sanjay Kumar and other State leaders, has not gone down well with the party cadre. Following the party's success in Bihar polls, the BJP leadership is counting on Yadav to deliver in Hyderabad. Even though the State is represented by Reddy at the Centre, party president JP Nadra preferred Yadav over him. This is quite demoralising for the cadre. One should not ignore workers of a region just for political gains.

Bhagwan Thodani
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

What of India's 'Act East' policy?

By rejecting the RCEP membership, we have given China a free hand to integrate its economy with Asian nations. Maybe India should look West now



SANJIB POYIT

The 'Act East' policy, with a focus on an extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific Region, has been the cornerstone of India's diplomacy in the current decade. While it was originally conceived as an economic initiative, in recent years, it has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions, including the establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation. India has upgraded its relations to a strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Singapore and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and has, thus, forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific. Further, apart from the ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), it has been actively engaged in regional fora, such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and the Indian-Ocean Rim Association (IORA). The 'Act East' policy has laid emphasis on India-ASEAN cooperation for our domestic agenda on infrastructure, manufacturing, trade, skills, urban renewal, smart cities. Make in India and other initiatives. The objective is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationships with countries in the Asia-Pacific through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.

As a follow-up, India has entered into Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and comprehensive economic engagements with many Asian countries. Notable among them are RTAs with the ASEAN, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, APTA (Bangladesh, China, Korea, Laos and Sri Lanka) and South Korea.

However, India decided against joining the mega trade bloc or the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). It is a free trade agreement (FTA) between the Asia-Pacific countries of Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. These 15 countries account for about 30 per cent of the world's population (2.2 billion people) and 30 per cent of the global GDP (\$26.2 trillion) as of this year, making it the biggest trade bloc in history.

The fear is that India's agricultural and manufactured goods will not be in a position to stand up to competition from cheaper imports from abroad. Of course, lobbying by multiple associations protecting the interests of processed agricultural product and manufactured goods makers plays a significant role in the policymakers' decision. In contrast, India's service sector, which no doubt would have benefited by gaining access to the large market, could not play its cards well. In the end, the belief that India's merchandise trade deficit (already negative with ASEAN and other Asian countries due to the existing RTAs) will further worsen, tilted the balance in deciding that the country's interests would be best served by not joining the RCEP.

In the long run, this decision will hurt India in a big way. Let me flag up the issues on this count. First, when you have RTAs with some members of the RCEP, it will be a Herculean task to stop merchandise from third countries being routed through these nations with whom we have an existing pact. For instance, imports from China may be routed through ASEAN members like Vietnam and Malaysia with whom we have RTAs. Of course, one can argue that the 'rules of origin' clause will stem this flow. However, in reality, the 'rules of origin' clause is not effective enough to curtail third country imports.

Second, India is missing the golden opportunity to be a part of the global value chain. If multinational corporations (MNCs) are thinking of shifting their value chains from China to other countries, they would go for any member of the RCEP like Vietnam and so on. This will be a win-win situation as they will have access to a large market and also benefit from the economies of scale of production. The same holds true for new investment from the European Union or US firms. The usual argument that India has a demographic dividend and MNCs will come here to make a production base falls flat. Given the income inequality, a significant part of the population does not have jobs and thereby income to purchase consumer goods. Gains from the demographic dividend are realised only when people are employed or else it becomes a burden on society.

Third, the service sector, where India has a comparative advantage, would be at a disadvantage because of this decision. Fourth, this decision should have been made based on long-term gain and not based on a higher trade deficit in the short run. By joining the group, Indian industries may suffer in the short-run. But in the end, they will be more competitive, which will open up opportunities in the world markets. It will be a win-win situation for the consumers, too, as they will have access to a variety of goods at a cheaper price. Also, there is no one to lobby for the consumers' interests.

Fifth, is it realistically possible to 'Act East' without entering the mega trading bloc of the East? By rejecting the RCEP membership, India has given China a free hand to integrate its economy with Asian countries. Maybe India henceforth should look West.

(The writer is Professor, NCAER. The views expressed are personal)

THE PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER IS FANNING THE PROTEST. HIS OFFICE BEARERS ARE LEADING IT. TRIED TO CONTACT HIM BUT GOT NO RESPONSE.

—HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER

MANOHAR LAL KHATTA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



I WILL NOT EVEN ANSWER THE HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER'S PHONE CALLS NOW BECAUSE OF THE WAY HE HAS ACTED WITH THE POOR FARMERS.

—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH

A wake-up call

Let not the recent incident at Nagrota meet the fate of similar encounters in the past. It should ring warning bells and lessons should be learnt from it



ANIL GUPTA

The recent encounter at Nagrota, near Jammu on National Highway (NH) 44, in which four Kashmiri youth were killed by the Indian security forces, has once again exposed the fact that the 'Deep State' in Pakistan continues to rule the roost with the singular agenda of bleeding India through a thousand cuts. Similar encounters had taken place on the same highway in the past, too. Pakistan continues to use the International Border (IB) sector as a preferred route of infiltration not only for terrorists but also for narco-terrorism, as it provides the twin advantage of movement into Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Punjab. Also, the *modus operandi* adopted in most cases is near identical. After revocation of Article 370 in J&K, Pakistan's desperation to create trouble has increased manifold. With the Indian Army adopting a very strong counter-infiltration grid on the Line of Control (LoC) and an equally impenetrable counter-terrorism grid inside the Valley, the Pakistan Army has shifted its focus to the IB sector with a comparatively higher success rate.

Pakistan is going through the worst phase of its history. Ever since its formation, the country has suffered the dilemma of identity. Regional loyalties have surpassed national ones, leaving the Pakistan Army alone as a symbol of national identity. This has been exploited by the Army to its advantage by becoming the virtual ruler. To ensure its continued hold over the nation's defence and foreign policy, the Army has created a myth of India being a perennial threat. At the same time it has promoted Kashmir as an unfinished agenda of the Partition and as our jugular vein. Despite Islamabad's obsession with Kashmir costing it dearly, both economically and strategically, it refuses to relent. Terrorism continues to remain an instrument of its State policy. Kashmir continues to be the *raison d'être* for the continued supremacy of its Army.

Politically and economically, Pakistan is on the verge of collapse. Prime Minister Imran Khan is the target of a domestic rebellion against his Government by the conglomeration of 11 Opposition parties under the banner of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). Even Imran Khan's mentor, Chief of the Army Staff General Bajwa, and his ISI chief are not being spared by the public. This has unnerved the Army as it is quite conscious of its image among the people. But that aura is gradually eroding due to the involvement of senior Army officers in corruption. While the common man is finding it difficult to survive, the Army is eating up a large slice of the national budget. The economy is in the doldrums. Saudi Arabia, a liberal donor till now, is unhappy with Imran Khan due to his growing proximity with Turkey. Pakistan is neck deep in debt and is resorting to borrowings to service it. Unemployment and inflation are common and Imran Khan is doing nothing to resolve these issues. His total surrender to China is also being resented by Pakistanis.

Pakistan is close to an implosion at this stage due to the growing turmoil in Balochistan, increased unrest in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, revolt in Pakistan-Occupied J&K and Gilgit-Baltistan and the growing unending civil unrest in the Punjab. Attempts to integrate Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth province and holding of elections there have been met with stiff opposition from the locals. The results of the elections are being contested as fudged. The Balawaristan Movement for an independent Gilgit-Baltistan is gaining momentum.

With the Pakistan Army under tremendous pressure from China to tie the dots, the Army is the time-tested Pakistani formula of creating an India

“UNFORTUNATELY, THE BORDER REMAINS OUR WEAKNESS, WHICH IS BEING EXPLOITED BY THE ENEMY. MANY QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ANSWERED BY THE BSF WHICH IS RESPONSIBLE FOR GUARDING THE IB. WHY IS IT THAT THE TUNNELS ARE DETECTED ONLY AFTER INFILTRATION HAS TAKEN PLACE? WHY IS NO ACTION TAKEN TO PIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LAPSES? WHY ARE NO PROACTIVE MEASURES TAKEN TO PREVENT SIMILAR FAILURES IN THE FUTURE? IS IT LACK OF RESOURCES, PROFESSIONALISM OR SINCERITY?”



bogey at home has been put into practice to generate an anti-India public opinion. Repeated unprovoked ceasefire violations and attempts to push in terrorists have become a norm. Apart from attempts to distract public attention at home, these are also being used to keep Kashmir in the focus of the international community as a potential flashpoint.

Pakistan's nuclear blackmail has been exposed and is no longer being used as a threat by its leadership. So it has increased its dependence on terrorist activities in India and the 'Deep State' is involved in spreading its tentacles in other parts of the country apart from Kashmir. However, Kashmir for the time-being continues to remain its main focus because of the realisation that with the passing of each day peacefully, Pakistan is losing its relevance there. That was the main reason behind infiltrating a heavily-armed group with about 750 kg of RDX to create mayhem in Kashmir on the eve of the District Development Council elections in J&K.

Plus, China is egging Pakistan on to keep the pot boiling in Kashmir. It needs a hold in Gilgit-Baltistan and does not want to part with Shaksagan and Aksai Chin. Hence, irrespective of the success achieved by us at Nagrota, Pakistan is not going to relent. We have to be proactive and make the cost of such attempts as prohibitive for the 'Deep State' as possible.

Unfortunately, the IB sector remains our weakness, which is being exploited by the enemy. Many questions need to be answered by the Border Security Force (BSF) which is responsible for guarding the IB. Why is it that the tunnels are detected only after infiltration has taken place? Why is no action taken to pin responsibility for the lapses? Why are no proactive measures taken to prevent similar failures in the future? Is it lack of

resources, professionalism or sincerity?

The Government has spent crores of rupees to equip the BSF so that it can stop infiltration, including the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) to overcome the difficulties of the terrain. Not very long ago BSF officers had displayed to the media a tractor modified for tunnel detection. There were also claims of importing tunnel detection equipment. What happened to all that and why is that equipment not being used?

The BSF has been provided with seismic sensors and any underground disturbance is meant to be picked up by them. Definitely, the digging of a 150-metre-long tunnel should have been picked up by these sensors but it wasn't. Are these sensors non-functional or have they not been sited and deployed tactically? Incidentally these tunnels serve a dual purpose and the BSF knows that apart from sneaking in terrorists, these are also used for smuggling narcotics. Plus, what was the need to make the detection of the tunnel public? Rather it should have been booby-trapped and kept under surveillance. We have to accept that there are major chinks in our armour. First and foremost the IB sector is concerned and the enemy is exploiting these to its advantage.

Knowing the enemy's compulsion to keep Kashmir on the boil, strict measures need to be taken to prevent Islamabad from treating the IB sector as a preferred route for infiltration. First and foremost the BSF needs to reconsider its pattern of deployment of ambushes at night. Apart from avoiding predictability, it needs to give up the pattern of deploying in a single line without depth. For day patrolling, it needs to be provided with detection equipment.

A 'no gap pattern' deployment of CIBMS has to be ensured, including

liaisoning with neighbouring units to cover gaps. The fact that the terrorists trekked on foot for nine km undetected and thereafter boarded a truck on the NH and travelled up to Nagrota unchallenged is a matter of concern and exposes the gaps in the surveillance and vigilance of depth areas and the NH. Hence, armed highway patrols have to be activated. Mobile checkpoints have to be established to avoid predictability. Cameras need to be installed 24x7. There is an urgent and inescapable need for full body scanners at select places on the NH.

There is a valuable asset of co-service men in these areas. A Border Defence Volunteer Force to strengthen the depth area surveillance and patrolling should be raised for utilising the services of these ex-servicemen. They should be deployed on either side of the NH, up to a depth of five-km, depending on the distance of the IB from the NH. It will strengthen the hands of the local police.

A serious review of command and control of all border guarding forces on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the IB is an urgent requirement. To have greater coordination and effective command and control, these need to be placed under the Ministry of Defence and the local Army formation. The present system has been found wanting time and again. Let not this act of national security become a victim of turf wars. Let not the recent incident at Nagrota meet the fate of similar encounters in the past. It should ring warning bells and lessons should be learnt from it. Pakistan is not going to change, we will have to change ourselves if we want to have a zero tolerance policy against terror.

(The author is a Jammu-based veteran political commentator, columnist, security and strategic analyst)

Through the eyes of 'the other'

The term is used to define 'the self' in contrast. But 'self-Orientalism', ironically, looks towards assumed Western authority for validation



NADEEM PARACHA

In philosophy and literary criticism, the term 'the other' means an entity which is constructed to define the self. According to J. Miller in *The Sage Encyclopedia of Quantitative Research Methods*, "the other" is the opposite of the self. Both are perceptions though, constructed by an individual, community or the State. For example, the Nazis in Germany perceived the Jews as being racially inferior compared to the pure Aryan races. So the 'imperfect' Jews were constructed as 'the other' to define the 'perfectness' of the Aryans (white Germanic races). The self in this respect can be an individual or an ide-

ology belonging to a perceived social, religious or political whole that can only be defined in contrast to 'the other', which is either explained as being inferior, different or even threatening to the whole. The nationalist idea which led to the creation of Pakistan was almost entirely based on this. Muslim nationalism in India could only be defined in contrast to Hindu majoritarianism, 'the other', which was explained as being 'culturally different' and politically threatening to the Muslim community of the region.

In the same way, Hindu nationalism cannot be defined without the Muslim 'other'. The self in this context can only reassure, and strengthen its perceived self-image by assuring the assumed dissimilarities of 'the other'. Scholars such as Edward Said and the post-modernist philosopher Michel Foucault severely criticised the self as an agent of conformity. To bolster the power and self-image of social and political conformity (of an elite), it demonised non-conformists as 'the other'. To Said, the act

of European colonialists of imagining the colonised native as an uncouth, entirely sensual and overtly emotional, al being was an act of enhancing the self-image of the superiority of the European self in contrast to the oriental other.

In his 1961 book, *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault argues that the conventional idea of madness was a 'social construct' imposed by a conformist elite upon those who refused to conform. Years later, Foucault went on to praise the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran by deriding Western powers for demonising Ayatollah Khomeini as 'the other'. According to the Lebanese author Kim Ghattas, in her book *Black Wave*, Foucault did not retract his portrayal of Khomeini even when he established an authoritarian theocracy and ordered the execution of hundreds of Iranian men and women.

On the other hand, according to the critics of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Said dubbed together a diverse array of colonised peoples of Africa and Asia

as a homogenous whole and then defined this abstract totality in contrast to a ruthless European colonial project. In other words, to define a perceived homogenous self, he created 'the other' in the shape of a colonial European elite, which was dismissed, in a rather binary manner, as being an entirely evil entity. This is understood as 'Occidentalism'.

This can imply that 'the other' is not always passive. But on occasions, rather ironically, it strikes back, not by overturning how it is being perceived and demonised by a conformist collective-self, but by actually becoming exactly that. Foucault praised Iran's revolution as a 'spiritual' event which was not understood by the 'non-spiritual' West. He believed this was why the West was demonising Khomeini as being fanatical and mad.

Yet, in response, Khomeini himself was often used by the West to perpetuate 'Islamic Iran' from the secular West. He moulded a collective Islamic self in Iran in contrast to a Western secular other. This often

leads to what is known as 'self-Orientalism' or when 'the other' begins to define exactly how a collective self portrays and perceives it as being.

The idea is either to own the characteristics and labels given to it by the collective self and weave them into an aggressive ideology against the collective self, or to own these labels and present them as being superior as that to the collective self. Khomeini owned the label given to him by Western governments of being 'a fanatic' and used it to intimidate the West, and on the other hand, normalise it as an ethos in Iran. Muslim radicals around the world followed suit.

Things in this respect are even more intriguing in India. For decades, self-Orientalism in India meant producing cultural and spiritual products that were designed according to how 'mystical, magical and spiritual' India was perceived in the West. This play was good for business and public relations. But 'the other' was missing. This made Indians seem entirely passive

and, as the historian Markus Daechsel demonstrates in his book *The Urdu Middle-class Milieu in Mid-twentieth Century India*, this image was problematic and too 'effeminate' for Hindu nationalists, especially compared to the 'masculinity' of some forms of Muslim nationalism.

After 2014, once Hindu nationalists gained an overt political majority in the Parliament, they began to create a 'masculine' self-image and a collective self in contrast to 'the other': i.e. the Indian Muslim community. Ironically, decades earlier, by creating a Hindu other to define his idea of Muslim nationalism, this is exactly what Jinnah was warning about. So, in a way, Hindu nationalists eventually decided to own and then flex the label that Jinnah gave them.

That of being hegemonic and a threat to India's Muslim community. Self-Orientalism is often used by tourism industries to cater to the 'Orientalist' perceptions of the West. But even if some practitioners of Self-Orientalism pose as being anti-colo-

onial and authentic (as in being non-Western, or more spiritual), they are usually overtly conscious of how the West is perceiving them. During the 2013 elections in Pakistan, campaign commercials of Imran Khan's Centre-Right party, the PTI, showed a Pakistani being gladly welcomed by an immigration officer (in a blonde wig) at Jamnani-i-Islami, the late Qazi Hussain Ahmad, said there was nothing wrong in behaving or looking religious "because the West is more appreciative of this." This is an example of how self-Orientalism looks towards the West for validation. An image was adopted (of religiosity) to attract attention (and maybe praise) of 'the others' by confirming to the perceptions of a 'pious Muslim'.

(Courtesy: Dawn)

'Chinese activities along Indian border provocative'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

An influential US lawmaker has expressed concern over reports of China's continuing construction activities along the Indian border in Ladakh, saying if the reports are true, it is a "provocative measure" on the part of Beijing and fits the pattern of its conduct in the South China Sea.

India and China have been locked in a military standoff, which began in May along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Armies of both countries have deployed a large number of troops along the LAC. Multiple rounds of talks between the two sides to resolve the standoff have not yielded any concrete outcome.

"If it (reports) turns out to be true, it would be yet another provocative measure by the Chinese military to change the status quo," said Rep. G. L. Democratic Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi told PTI.

"It would also fit the pattern of their conduct in the South China Sea, where they build islands, where they try to change the facts on the ground, which is understood then, and they would be deeply disturbing, to say the least," said Krishnamoorthi, who is the first-ever Indian-American to be on the US House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

China claims almost all of

the 13 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. It has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

Beijing has also impeded commercial activity like fishing or mineral exploration by countries like Vietnam and the Philippines in the resource-rich region, claiming that the ownership of the territory belonged to China for hundreds of years.

Krishnamoorthi, who was recently re-elected to the House of Representatives for the third consecutive time, said the US stands with India.

The Congressman from Illinois said reports including satellite images are his source of information about Chinese construction activities.

"I have to say that we currently in the US Congress, but also the Trump and the incoming Biden administration stand by our Indian partners and the Indo-Pacific region," he said.

The recently concluded Malabar exercise of the US, India, Japan, Australia and the United States — is a signal that the democracies in the Indo-Pacific region will continue to stand with each other and push for a rules-based international order, the Congressman said.

Responding to a question,

Krishnamoorthi said US President-elect Joe Biden has been a longtime friend of India, and he along with Indian-origin vice president-elect Kamala Harris will stand with New Delhi.

"I think his selection Kamala Harris only cements a relationship given her own Indian roots. Secretary of State nominee Anthony Blinken is also a longtime friend of India. He knows the region extremely well. I trust that incoming Secretary Blinken is going to take the relationship to new heights, along with President Biden and vice president Harris," he said.

"They are going to continue the approach that has largely been taken by Democratic and Republican presidents, which is we stand with India in the region, and opposing any kind of militaristic action on the part of any neighbour, including China," he added.

Krishnamoorthi also said addressing COVID-19 needs to be the number one priority for India and the US.

"A global health partnership that involves India, the United States, and all of our partners and allies around the world, and others, is crucial for defeating the pandemic," he said.

"I'm confident it's going to happen, especially with Joe Biden as one of the world's premier preeminent leaders pushing this change," he said.

Strike Haifa if Israel killed scientist: Iran newspaper

AP ■ TEHRAN

An opinion piece published Sunday by a hard-line Iranian newspaper urged Iran to attack the Israeli port city of Haifa if Israel carried out the killing of the scientist who founded the Islamic Republic's military nuclear programme in the early 2000s.

Though the hard-line Kayhan newspaper has long argued for aggressive retaliation for operations targeting Iran, Sunday's opinion piece went further, suggesting any assault be carried out in a way that destroys facilities and "also causes heavy human casualties."

Israel, suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over

the past decade, has not commented on the brazen slaying of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh. A military-style ambush Friday on the outskirts of Tehran reportedly saw a truck bomb explode and gunmen open fire on the scientist, killing him and a bodyguard.

US Intelligence agencies and UN nuclear inspectors have said the organised military nuclear programme that Fakhrizadeh oversaw disbanded in 2003, but Israeli suspicion of Tehran's atomic program and his involvement has never ceased.

Kayhan published the piece written by Iranian analyst Sadrallah Zarei, who argued Iran's previous responses to suspected Israeli airstrikes that

killed Revolutionary Guard forces in Syria did not go far enough to deter Israel. He said an assault on Haifa also needed to be greater than Iran's ballistic missile attack against American troops in Iraq following the US drone strike in Baghdad that killed a top Iranian general in January.

Striking the Israeli city of Haifa and killing a large number of people "will definitely lead to deterrence, because the United States and the Israeli regime and its agents are by no means ready to take part in a war and a military confrontation," Zarei wrote.

While Kayhan is a small circulation newspaper in Iran, its editor-in-chief Hossein

Shariatmadari was appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and has been described as an adviser to him in the past.

Haifa, on the Mediterranean Sea, has been threatened in the past by both Iran and one of its proxies, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah.

Such a strike likely would draw an immediate Israeli retaliation and spark a wider conflict across the Mideast. While Iran has never directly targeted an Israeli city militarily, it has conducted attacks targeting Israeli interests abroad in the past over the killing of its scientists, like in the case of the three Iranians recently freed in

Thailand in exchange for a detained British-Australian academic.

UN CALLS FOR RESTRAINT AFTER KILLING OF IRANIAN NUCLEAR SCIENTIST

United Nations: The United Nations urged restraint Saturday after tensions rose in the Middle East with the assassination of a top Iranian nuclear scientist.

Iran has blamed Israel for Friday's slaying of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and vowed revenge.

Chinese Def Minister meets Nepal's top leadership to bolster military cooperation

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has urged his Conservative Party lawmakers to back the Government's tier-based Covid-19 lockdown in a Parliament vote in a letter stressing that there "a sunset" clause — or expiry date — of February 3 on the latest restrictions.

In an attempt to curb a growing rebellion within his own ranks against the new measures which face a new height, Gen Wei, who is also a State Councillor, held bilateral talks with Army chief Gen Thapa at the army headquarters here during his day-long "working visit" to Nepal, said a statement issued by the Nepali Army.

Boris defends tier-based lockdown in letter to rebel colleagues

PTI ■ LONDON

Johnson has urged his Conservative Party lawmakers to back the Government's tier-based Covid-19 lockdown in a Parliament vote in a letter stressing that there "a sunset" clause — or expiry date — of February 3 on the latest restrictions.

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"Regulations have a sunset of 3 February. After the fourth fortnightly review (27 January), Parliament will have another vote on the tiered approach, determining whether the measures stay in place until the end of March," he wrote.

In his attempt to placate angry MPs opposed to further lockdowns, he also committed to publish more data and outline what circumstances need to change for an area to move down a tier, as well as analysis of the health, economic and social impacts of the measures taken to suppress coronavirus.

Most of England's population is set to fall under the two toughest tiers when the second national lockdown ends on December 2. Around 32 million people — covering 57.3 per

cent of England and including London — will fall into Tier 2 or high alert level which means the rule of six applies with up to six members of different households allowed to meet outdoors.

Hospitality venues are allowed to open but operate under these strict rules, with dining indoors restricted to single households and support bubbles and alcohol sale permitted only with a substantial meal.

Besides, some 23.3 million people — or 41.5 per cent of the population — are going to be placed in the highest alert level of Tier 3, which prohibits any mixing of households and hospitality venues allowed to open only for takeaways.

Only three regions of the

isle of Wight, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly will be under the lightest Tier 1 controls where the rule of six applies overall and most venues are allowed to function near normally.

After the slaying of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, the UN measures after four weeks of a stay-at-home lockdown has triggered a backlash among Johnson's own Tory MPs and the changes could now face a fight in Parliament over the Opposition Labour Party remains undecided and may abstain in the vote on Tuesday.

The Cabinet has been rallying around to try and ensure the latest measures to curb the spread of coronavirus infections clears the Commons hurdle.

34 killed in separate suicide bombings in Af

AP ■ GHAZNI

At least 34 people were killed on Sunday in two separate suicide bombings in Afghanistan that targeted a military base and a provincial chief, officials said.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks, which took place in Afghanistan government representatives and the Taliban hold face-to-face talks in Qatar for the first time to end the country's decades-long war.

In eastern Ghazni province, 31 soldiers were killed and 24 others wounded when the attacker drove a military humvee full of explosives onto an army commando base before detonating the car bomb, according to an official in the Afghanistan National Security Council, who spoke anonymously because he was not permitted to speak directly to the media. Ghazni's provincial health department chief, Zahir Shah Nikmal, also confirmed the death toll and casualty figures from the attack.

Afghanistan's Defense Ministry released a statement claiming 10 soldiers were killed and nine wounded. The ministry also offered a different account of what happened. Interior Minister spokesman Tarik Arian said a suicide bombing took place, though he did not provide further details. The soldiers stationed at the base were responsible for conducting night raids, providing support to the army and police forces during the siege, and taking part in large-scale operations against the Taliban and Islamic State group in eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan.

Thai pro-democracy protesters rally outside Army base

AP ■ BANGKOK

Thailand's indefatigable pro-democracy activists took to Bangkok's streets again Sunday, this time to protest the army as they push forward with their campaign for sweeping reforms, including to the nation's monarchy.

Around 800 protesters gathered in the afternoon and in early evening marched to the base of the 11th Infantry Regiment, which is closely associated with the country's royal palace. Their number grew to well over 1,000 as they settled in for speeches by protest leaders.

An advance group of protesters had already pulled away two decrepit buses that had been used to block the entrance to the base and removed strands of razor wire. A large contingent of riot police, several rows deep, stood in front of the gate but they didn't appear to be an imminent cause of a clash.

The protesters believe that the army undermines democracy in Thailand, and that King Maha Vajiralongkorn wields too much power and



Protesters carry inflatable yellow ducks, which have become good-humored symbols of resistance during anti-government rallies, while marching towards the base of the 11th Infantry Regiment, a palace security unit under direct command of the Thai king, on Sunday.

influence in what is supposed to be a democratic constitutional monarchy.

The student-led protesters for months now have been demanding reforms to make the monarchy more accountable, even though criticism of the

institution has long been considered taboo and comments judged defamatory of the king and key royals are punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

"People should be able to criticize the king. People should be able to inspect what he

does. In this way, people will respect and love him more," said activist Somyot Pruksakasemsuk, who served seven years in prison for defaming the monarchy and is facing criminal charges in connection with this year's protests.

Taliban: Doha negotiators have agreed on rules

IAN ■ KABUL

A Taliban spokesperson has said that negotiators from both sides for the Afghan peace process have agreed on procedural rules with 21 items for the talks to proceed, the media reported.

"The procedure of intra-Afghan negotiations between both sides for the Afghan peace process was completed and finalized in 21 articles on the 15th of November," Tolo News quoted spokesperson Mohammad Naem as saying in a report on Saturday.

Last week, sources reported a breakthrough in the talks and said both sides have agreed to include the US-Taliban agreement, UN endorsements for the Afghan peace process, commitments of the negotiating teams and the will of the

However, no direct talks have started because of disagreements on procedural rules for the negotiations, Tolo News reported.

Afghan people as the base for upcoming negotiations.

The peace negotiations between teams from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban started on September 12.

However, no direct talks have started because of disagreements on procedural rules for the negotiations, Tolo News reported.

Violence continues and appears to be escalating since the talks began. The Taliban has staged attacks on the centers of at least 50 districts in 16 provinces following the signing of the peace deal with the US in February, according to officials.

New model to enable drug predictions against Covid-19

IAN ■ LONDON

Researchers have developed a computational model of a human lung cell which has been used to understand how SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind Covid-19 disease, uses the host to survive, and to enable drug predictions for treating the virus.

Using a computer model of a human lung cell metabolism, the study published in the journal Life Science Alliance, have captured the stoichiometric amino and nucleic acid requirements of SARS-CoV-2. Their model has identified host-based metabolic perturbations inhibiting SARS-CoV-

2 reproduction, highlighting reactions in the central metabolism, as well as amino acid and nucleotide biosynthesis pathways.

In fact, researchers found that only a few of these metabolic perturbations are able to selectively inhibit virus reproduction.

"We have created a stoichiometric biomass function for the Covid-19-causing SARS-CoV-2 virus and incorporated this into a human lung cell genome-scale metabolic model," said study author Orkun Soyer, from the University of Warwick in the UK.

Mysterious metal monolith in US desert reportedly disappears

Los Angeles: A mysterious metal monolith found in the remote desert of the western United States, sparking a national guessing game over how it got there, has apparently disappeared, officials said.

The Bureau of Land Management in Utah said Saturday it had received "credible reports" that the object had been removed "by an unknown party" on Friday evening.

The bureau "did not remove the structure which is considered private property," it said in a statement. AFP



Cars among other debris litter the street in Bitti, Sardinia, Italy, on Sunday. The town of Bitti in Sardinia was hit by a storm and flooded by a massive mudslide on Saturday.

Singapore woman who had Covid gives birth to baby with antibodies: Report

Singapore: A Singaporean woman, who was infected with the novel coronavirus in March when she was pregnant, has given birth to a baby with antibodies against the virus, offering a new clue as to whether the infection can be transferred from mother to child. The baby was born this month without Covid-19 but with the virus antibodies, the Straits Times newspaper reported on Sunday, citing the mother.

"My doctor suspects I have transferred my COVID-19 antibodies to him during my

pregnancy," Celine Ng-Chan told the paper.

Ng-Chan had been mildly ill from the disease and was discharged from hospital after 19 days, uses the host to survive, and to enable drug predictions for treating the virus.

Dave Prowse, actor who played Darth Vader, dies at 85

AP ■ LONDON

Dave Prowse, the British weightlifter-turned-actor who was the body, though not the voice, of arch-villain Darth Vader in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, has died. He was 85.

Prowse died Saturday after a short illness, his agent Thomas Bowington said on Sunday.

Born in Bristol, southwest England, in 1935, Prowse was a three-time British weightlifting champion and represented England in weightlifting at the 1962 Commonwealth Games before breaking into movies with roles that emphasized his commanding size, including



Frankenstein's monster in a pair of Hammer Studios horror films.

Director George Lucas saw Prowse in a small part in "A Clockwork Orange" and asked the 6-foot-6-inch (almost 2-meter) actor to audition for the villainous Vader or the Wookiee Chewbacca in "Star Wars."

Prowse later told the BBC he chose Darth Vader because

"you always remember the bad guys." Physically, Prowse was perfect for the part. His lilted English West Country accent was considered less ideal, and his lines were dubbed by James Earl Jones.

Prowse donned Darth Vader's black armor and helmet for "Star Wars" (1977). "The Empire Strikes Back" (1980) and "Return of the Jedi" (1983).

He expressed some regret that, thanks to Vader's mask, "I can walk around with complete anonymity."

"All actors crave recognition and I'd like to have some like Luke Skywalker and Han Solo," he told The Associated

Press in 1980. "Fortune tends to follow fame."

Prowse also worked as a trainer for other actors, helping Christopher Reeve prepare to be the Man of Steel in his 1978 film "Superman."

Prowse was also known to a generation of British children as the Green Cross Code Man, a superhero in a series of road safety advertisements during the 1970s and '80s.

He was a regular at "Star Wars" fan events, but was banned from official conventions by Lucas in 2010 after the pair fell out.

Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the "Star Wars" films, tweeted that Prowse was "a kind man & much more than Darth Vader." Hamill said the actor "loved his fans as much as they loved him. #RIP "Ant-Man" director Edgar Wright also paid tribute to Prowse on Twitter.

"As a kid Dave Prowse couldn't be more famous to me, stalking along corridors as evil incarnate in the part of Darth Vader & stopping a whole generation of kiddies from being mown down in street as the Green Cross Code man," he wrote. "Rest in Peace, Bristol's finest." Prowse is survived by his wife Norma and their three children.

MAN HELD FOR NOT WEARING MASK ON FLIGHT New York: A 44-year-old man was arrested after refusing to wear a face mask on a Delta Airlines flight heading from Salt Lake City to San Francisco in the US, a media report said. The man, identified as Joshua Colby Council, was rushing to board his flight at Salt Lake City International Airport on Wednesday night when a gate agent stopped and asked him to put on a face mask, the New York Post reported.

CENTRE-RIGHT MAYOR FACES SOCIALIST Sao Paulo: The mayor of the largest city in the Americas is trying to fend off a reelection challenge from the socialist leader of a squatters' movement, as 57 Brazilian cities hold runoff elections on Sunday. Guilherme Boulos, backed by former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, pushed his way into a surprising runoff with 40-year-old Mayor Bruno Covas.

N KOREA TOUGHENS RULES OF ENTRY TO SEOUL: North Korea is further tightening restrictions on returning South Koreans as part of elevated steps to fight the coronavirus pandemic, state media said Sunday, two days after South Korea said the North had banned sea fishing. The Korea Central News Agency reported the country is mobilising more anti-virus units and establishing strong steps to "completely remove uncleaned and unhygienic elements that could help make room for the spread of an epidemic" at winter.

RBI likely to maintain status quo for 3rd straight time on inflation concerns

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank is likely to keep the benchmark interest rates unchanged in its next monetary policy review in view of heightened retail inflation which has persistently remained above its comfort level, feel experts.

However, with the economic growth continuing to remain in the negative territory for the second consecutive quarter ending September, the central bank is likely to continue with the accommodative monetary stance keeping the hope alive for a rate cut next year when needed.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor is scheduled to meet for two days starting December 2. The resolution of the sixth bi-monthly MPC meeting would be announced on December 4.

In its last MPC meeting in October, the RBI kept policy rates unchanged to help tame inflation that in the recent times has surged past 6 per cent mark. The RBI projected the country's GDP to contract 9.5 per cent in the current financial year due to the pandemic.

It has cut policy rates by 115 basis points since February. With inflation continuing to trend well above RBI's medium-term target of 4 per cent, there is limited room for a rate cut in the upcoming policy. We have seen encouraging signs of a pick-up in economic activity and a return of consumer demand, buoyed by the festive season," Kotak Mahindra Bank group president consumer banking Shanti Ekambaram said.

The next few months are

Retail inflation, calculated on the basis of Consumer Price Index (CPI), continued to rise for the ninth month in a row in October, reaching 7.61 per cent on the back of high food prices. This is the highest level of retail inflation since May 2014 when the inflation was at 8.33 per cent

critical as it needs to be seen whether demand levels will

sustain and the central bank will closely monitor the growth trajectory and high-frequency data points, she added.

On the basis of Consumer Price Index (CPI), continued to rise for the ninth month in a row in October, reaching 7.61 per cent on the back of high food prices. This is the highest level of retail inflation since May 2014 when the inflation was at 8.33 per cent.

The government has mandated the RBI to keep retail inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per

cent). On concerns of elevated level of inflation, CRISIL Chief Economist Dharmakirti Joshi said the RBI policy will be on hold.

Echoing similar views, CARE Ratings Chief Economist Madan Sabnavis said, "I think RBI has no choice but to go for a pause now because inflation is still very high. Also, the scope for rate cut is more or less exhausted for this financial year. The RBI will address the issue more through OMOs, operation twists to

influence the g-se yields rather than the repo rate cut."

According to M Govinda Rao, Chief Economic Advisor, Brickwork Ratings, considering that CPI inflation remains at an elevated level, the MPC is likely to continue with the pause in the rate.

"With real interest rates already in the negative zone, the space for rate reduction is limited at present. However, the accommodative stance is likely to continue," Rao said. The RBI is expected to maintain status quo given the fact

that food inflation continues to be high, whilst core inflation has also inched up. Moneybox Finance co-CEO Deepak Agarwal said.

However, Anuj Puri, Chairman of real estate consultant Anarock said the real estate industry's perennial hope is fixed on lower interest rates, which would be enabled by reducing the repo rate.

The last meeting of the MPC was held from October 7 to 9, 2020. It was the 25th meeting of the rating-setting panel.

US second biggest FDI source for India during Apr-Sep 2020

New Delhi: The US has emerged as the second biggest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India, replacing Mauritius, during the first half of the current financial year, according to data of commerce and industry ministry.

During April-September 2020, India attracted FDI worth USD 7.12 billion from the US and USD 2 billion from Mauritius, which slipped to fourth position, the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Investment and Internal Trade) data showed.

Mauritius was the second biggest FDI source during the same period previous year. The US was the fourth biggest investor during that period.

Singapore with USD 8.30 billion foreign inflows continued to be the top source of FDI for India in April-September 2020-21.

The country has received USD 1.2 billion inflows from Cayman Islands.

The islands were followed by Netherlands (USD 1.5 billion), UK (USD 1.35 billion), France (USD 1.13 billion), Japan (USD 653 million), Germany (USD 202 million), and Cyprus (USD 48 million).

According to experts, increasing FDI from the US reflects the first strengthening of economic ties between the two countries since 2019-20. The US was also India's top trading partner in 2019-20.

Biswajit Dhar, a professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said that "the US technology companies are buying stakes in Indian companies that is why FDI numbers are high."

Despite the fact that FDI from Mauritius is coming down, it still accounts for 29 per cent of the total inflows received by India during April 2020 and September 2020. In this period, India has attracted USD 500.12 billion foreign direct investment.

Foreign inflows into India grew by 15 per cent to USD 30 billion during the first half of the current fiscal. In August, India had attracted USD 17.5 billion worth of foreign investments.

FPIs net buyers for 2nd consecutive month in Nov, invest record sum of ₹60,358 cr in equities

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net buyers for the second consecutive month in November by pumping in a whopping ₹62,951 crore in Indian equities.

For equities segment, this is the highest quantum of money invested ever since the FPI data has been made available by the National Securities Depository Ltd.

According to depositories data, FPIs invested a net ₹60,358 crore into equities and ₹2,593 crore in debt segment, taking the total net investment to ₹62,951 crore between November 3-27.

In October, FPIs were net buyers to the tune of ₹22,033 crore.

Global investors are preferring to invest in emerging markets more than developed markets as the potential upside is much higher in emerging markets, said

Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

Inflows into other emerging markets like South Korea and Taiwan show a similar trend, he added.

"FPIs have invested into top bluechips of India in a big manner. A bulk of the investment that has come in has been into the banking sector. So, the inflow has been concentrated in a few stocks," Jain further said.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research, Morningstar India said that "few uncertainties have been behind us in November with the major one being the outcome of US Presidential election".

Attractive valuation compared to the developed markets and weakness in the dollar also supported buying, Srivastava said.

Resume REC trade soon, trading pause to impact discoms' ability to meet RPO targets: Power exchanges

PTI NEW DELHI

Further suspension on trading of renewable energy certificates (RECs) would impact state power distribution utilities' ability to meet renewable purchase obligation (RPO) targets, electricity exchanges PXIL and IEX said, stressing that the trading should be resumed at the earliest.

Talking to PTI, Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) Head and Senior Vice President - Business Development Rohit Bajaj said, "REC market is a key avenue for obligated entities such as captive power producers, discoms and open access consumers to fulfil their RPO requirements."

"Owing to the pause in REC trade since the last five months (July 2020), and compliance year coming to an end in the next four months, any further delay in resuming the trade will greatly impact their ability to meet their RPO targets in a timely manner," he added.

"We hope that honourable APTEL soon issues the final order so that the trading can commence in December," he added.

CII urges industry not to lower guard against Covid-19

New Delhi: Industry body CII has urged its member companies in north India to not lower guard against COVID-19 and ensure that the prescribed norms of wearing masks, maintaining physical distance of at least 6 feet and avoiding large gatherings are followed.

With COVID-19 cases rising for the past few weeks at an unprecedented rate, the pandemic continues to pose hardships for the country, the chamber said in a statement on Sunday.

Many states in northern India are experiencing probably the second or even the third wave of rise in infections and mortality. With the onset of winter, the problem is getting accentuated, especially for the vulnerable ones, it added.

Observing that while pandemic fatigue is an expected and natural response to a prolonged public health crisis, the chamber said "we need to understand and keep in mind the repercussions of dropping our guard only on the basis of health and safety of those around us but also its impact on our work and everyday lives."

CII Northern Region Chairman Nikhil Sawhney said, "As we can see, the signs of a rebound in our economy, the least we would want now would be another spate of shutdowns or closing of our workplaces due to infections."

"Already, we are seeing that some of the states are again being forced to announce night curfews and restrictions on social gatherings which I would say are not good signs."

Sawhney has written to the industry in north India, urging them to not lower guard against COVID-19 and to ensure that the prescribed norms are followed.

"We must also ensure that those around us, including family, friends and workforce also follow these rules at all times without fail. At the same time, in our offices, we need to maintain team from home policy for few more months," he said.

He highlighted that the government is committed to ensuring the availability of the vaccine and has stated that a definite process is underway for reaching it to the vulnerable sections of society.

In the light of this, it is essential for all industry members to be ready for a period of at least a year of continued vigil and precautionary measures for working towards containing disease prevalence, Sawhney said.

CAIT writes to PM, alleges violation of FDI norms by e-commerce firms

PTI NEW DELHI

Traders' body CAIT on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking "strong action" against e-commerce firms for alleged violation of FDI policy by them.

It also sought setting up of an empowered regulatory authority to regulate and monitor the e-commerce business in India.

In the letter to the Prime Minister, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) claimed that "big e-commerce companies having deep pockets are leaving no stone unturned in monopolising the e-commerce business and retail trade of India with their malpractices and violating FDI policy of the government and relevant laws and rules."

It further said that "despite making several complaints against them, so far no concrete action has been taken and therefore it has become a major roadblock for small businesses to conduct online business activities." The traders' body claimed that various government authorities have failed to ensure the safety of the policy and law of the government.

"Through the Ministry of Commerce has taken some initiatives to impress upon them to conduct their business activities under the purview of the law but these e-commerce companies have been avoiding the law on one pretext or the other," CAIT said in the letter.

"The traders' body while 'urging for strong action against e-commerce companies' also requested that an e-commerce policy should be announced immediately with an explicit provision of empowered regulatory authority."

FinMin asks PSU general insurers to cut flab; rationalise branches, other expenses: Sources

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry asked public sector general insurance firms, especially National Insurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance, to rationalise branches and cut down avoidable expenses to improve their financial health, sources said.

Earlier this year the Union Cabinet decided to halt the merger process of three state-owned general insurance companies due to weak financial positions of these three companies. Instead, the government approved fund infusion of ₹12,450 crore to meet regulatory parameters.

The finance ministry has asked these companies to cut the flab by rationalising branches and rein in other avoidable expenses like guest houses, etc, sources said.

Besides, sources said, they have been asked to expand their business through digital medium.

The Government in Budget 2020-21 had made a provision of ₹12,450 crore for capital infusion in these three insurance companies in order to maintain the requisite minimum solvency ratio

As part of capital infusion exercise, the government also approved raising authorised share capital of National Insurance Company Ltd (NICL) to ₹ 7,500 crore and that of United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIICL) and Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL) to ₹5,000 crore each.

The ₹12,450 crore capital infusion approved by the Cabinet in July includes ₹2,500 crore provided to these companies during 2019-20.

During this year, the Government infused ₹3,475 crore while announcing infusion of the balance ₹ 6,475 crore in

one or more tranches.

The government in Budget 2020-21 had made a provision of ₹6,950 crore for capital infusion in these three insurance companies in order to maintain the requisite minimum solvency ratio.

These PSU general insurers, with their large underwriting losses of ₹1,444.3 crore, together have been responsible for the overall losses of over ₹7,118 crore in 2019-20.

NICL, with a combined ratio of 160.8 per cent and underwriting losses of ₹5,759 crore, has suffered losses of ₹4,108 crore while OICL (141 per cent, ₹4,197 crore) and UIICL (132 per cent, ₹4,487 crore) have been hit with losses of ₹1,524 crore and ₹1,486 crore, respectively in 2019-20.

However, New India Assurance, the only exception out of the four public sector general insurers, posted a profit of ₹1,418 crore in 2019-20.

Cos raise ₹25,000 cr via IPOs in 2020 so far; next year expected to be equally strong

New Delhi: High liquidity and robust interest from investors helped companies raise nearly ₹25,000 crore through initial share-sales this year so far and 2021 is expected to be equally strong for the IPO market, experts said.

Adding to the depth of the IPO market, companies from diverse sectors like pharma, telecommunication, IT and financial services have made their way to the IPO space during the period under review.

According to an analysis of data available with the stock exchanges, 12 initial public offerings (IPOs) in 2020 so far raised around ₹25,000 crore, significantly higher than ₹12,362 crore mopped up through 16 initial share-sales in the entire 2019.

Prior to that, 24 companies had floated their IPOs in 2018 that raised ₹30,959 crore.

In 2020 so far, close to ₹25,000 crore has already been raised through IPOs and the figure could rise further as Burger King's Rs 80-crore initial share-sale is scheduled to open on December 2.

Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, attributed high fund raising in this year compared to 2019 to high interest of corporates and retail investors for the primary market despite huge contraction in the economy.

At the same time, companies opted for the IPO route to build war-chest during the uncertainties and to strengthen their balance sheet, he added.

US, UK and Australia among top mktks for Indian sellers exporting products on eBay

New Delhi: The US, the UK, mainland Europe and Australia across the top markets for Indian sellers that are exporting products through cross-border e-commerce on eBay's platform, a top official said.

Indian sellers have been witnessing strong demand across categories like apparel, fine jewelry, toys, auto parts and accessories and home decor, especially during the holiday season (Thanksgiving to New Year's), eBay India Country Manager Vidmay Naini told PTI.

"Evolving consumer demand and increase in the trust in purchases outside domestic e-commerce reflect a huge market potential that developing countries like India should tap into for e-commerce exports."

The US, the UK, mainland Europe and Australia are the top markets Indian sellers are

exporting products through cross-border e-commerce," he said. eBay's GBT (cross border trade) business in India has been in operation for over a decade with an aim to help Indian sellers list and sell merchandise to over 183 million buyers who shop on various global platforms on eBay across the globe, Naini said.

He noted that the overall global e-commerce business ranges around USD 4 trillion (based on data from eMarketer.Com).

"According to various estimates, the market B2C cross border e-commerce potential for Indian sellers is approximately USD 1 billion now. The top-shopped categories that Indian sellers have observed during the holiday season sales are clothing, shoes, accessories, toys and games; auto parts and accessories; fine jewellery and

watches; and home decor," Naini said. During the five days win-win of Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Indian sellers experienced a spike in the volume of orders and sales, and the holiday shopping continues till Christmas, he said.

Black Friday is celebrated a day after Thanksgiving with retailers wooing potential shoppers with special deals and discounts.

Naini cited data from a survey conducted among its users to state that shoppers have started relying more on digital marketplaces.

He said 31 per cent respondents said they had started holiday shopping before September 30 this year, and 41 per cent said they spent USD 1,000 on holiday gifts and celebrations in 2019. About 62 per cent said they planned to spend the same or more this year.

CBIC asks for physical verification of biz granted deemed GST registration between Aug 21-Nov 16

New Delhi: The CBIC has asked field offices to carry out physical verification of premises of businesses which have been granted deemed GST registration between August 21 and November 16 to ascertain that they have genuine business or intend to carry out so.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has also asked taxmen not to grant GST registration on deemed basis in cases where the applicant has not opted for Aadhaar authentication or the authentication has failed.

Current provision under Goods and Services Tax (GST) law allows for deemed registration upon completion of 21 days

of application if the proper officer has not issued any notice within the said 21 days.

The CBIC, in its instruction to field offices, said that data suggests that during the period from August 21, 2020 to November 16, 2020 deemed registrations have been granted in many cases where Aadhaar authentication has not been opted for or has failed.

"These registrations granted on deemed basis require verifications to ascertain that they have genuine business or intend to carry out so," the CBIC said while issuing Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for carrying out physical verification of persons who

have been granted deemed registration.

During the physical verification, the officer, among other things, would verify that in case the applicant intends to carry out manufacturing activity, the capital goods, if required for the said manufacturing activity, have been installed.

The officer would also verify electricity connection, bills paid in the relevant period, size of the premises - whether it is commensurate with the activity to be carried out by the applicant, whether premises is self-owned or is rented and documents relating to ownership/registered lease of the said property.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Name: Unknown S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown** was found dead at Footpath, Gate No. 3 in front of Govind Ballabh Pant Hospital, Delhi on 20.11.2020 in the area of P.S. I.P. Estate, Delhi. In this regard a case has been lodged vide **DD No. 52 dated 20.11.2020** at P.S. I.P. Estate, Delhi. The description of the dead person is as under- **Age: About 60-65 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Oval, Build: Thin, Wearing: Black colour jersey and black colour pant. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.**

SHO P.S. I.P. Estate, Delhi Ph: 011-23370928, 8750870426

DP/51/CD/2020

ई-निविदा सूचना

प्रक्रां - 3669/ई-निविदा सूचना/2020-21 दिनांक - 28.11.2020

महकूम मेला 2021 अखिल से यशवत व्याख्या से युवाकर सम्पादन हेतु उत्तराखण्ड जल संचयन, जलकल अधिकारी के सेवान्तरे यशवत व्याख्या से युवाकर सम्पादन हेतु निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा, दृष्टि लिस्ट (नकली विड एड कॉन्फिगरेशन विड) आधार पर निम्नानुसार आमंत्रित की जाती है :-

क्र.सं.	कार्य विवरण	बिडिंग राशि	निविदा प्रारंभ	निविदा समाप्त	ई-निविदा प्रारंभ	ई-निविदा समाप्त	नकली विड एड कॉन्फिगरेशन विड	निविदा की समाप्ति
1	कुम्भ मेला 2021 की व्यवस्थाओं के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न धारा के पथ संचयन की जागीर, धारा के पथ संचयन का कार्य।	78000.00	03.12.2020 from 11.00 a.m.	16.12.2020 upto 05.00 p.m.	16.12.2020 upto 05.00 p.m.	17.12.2020 from 11.00 a.m.	90 Days	
2	कुम्भ मेला 2021 की व्यवस्थाओं के अन्तर्गत खसबिल नकली हेतु संचयन कार्य की जागीर, धारा के पथ संचयन का कार्य।	58000.00	03.12.2020 from 11.00 a.m.	16.12.2020 upto 05.00 p.m.	16.12.2020 upto 05.00 p.m.	17.12.2020 from 11.00 a.m.	90 Days	

नोट - 1. निविदा हेतु निम्न में की गई सूचना (विषय सूची) के अनुसार उत्तराखण्ड जल संचयन से निविदा के अंतर्गत कार्य हेतु सूचना है।
2. ई-निविदा से सम्बंधित सचयन जानकारीयों व नक्शे उत्तराखण्ड जल की वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in पर जॉन लाइन देखी/प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

जल संचयन, जीवन संचयन

अधिशारी अभियन्ता

Trend Slazer

'Will shoot once I deliver my child'

Actor and mother-to-be **ANUSHKA SHARMA** says she will be back shooting once she delivers her first child.

"Being on the set brings me a lot of joy and I'm going to be shooting continuously for the next few days once I deliver my first child and establish a system at home that ensures me to balance my child, my home and my professional life. I intend to keep working for as long as I live because acting truly makes me happy," she said.

Anushka, who is currently shooting for endorsements after creating a protective, full-proof bio-bubble with her staff, said, "It's great being on the set & meeting my entire team, soaking in the madness of shoots."



'Remembering Kal Ho Naa Ho as it completes 17 years. A film that made me laugh and cry in a heartbeat.'

It was an experience that went beyond words. This was probably one of my best-written films. Thank you to the entire cast and crew for making this film so memorable. So I'd say, *aaj zindagi jee lo, kya pata kal ho na ho?*

—**Preity Zinta**

Bollywood veterans **HEMA MALINI** and **DHARMENDRA** are grandparents once again, this time to twin baby girls born to their younger daughter **Ahana Deol Vohra**.



"Delighted to share the good news of my younger daughter Ahana (Ahana's husband) Vaibhav who are blessed with twin girls," Hema Malini tweeted, sharing the news.

The twins have been named **Astraia** and **Asea**. Hema further tweeted that she and Dharmendra are "overjoyed grandparents" to the twins.

Not surprised by COVID-19: Jude

Actor **JUDE LAW** says he was not shocked by the COVID-19 pandemic as he already feared the possibility of a global health crisis after speaking to experts on the set of his 2011 release, *Contagion*.

"When 2020 started, and we heard about what was initially happening in China, what fast became apparent around the world, it rang alarm bells. Unfortunately, I wasn't hugely surprised," Law said.

Law essayed **Alan Krumwiede** in the thriller, and said that there was a feeling "this was going to happen" as they worked in the film.



You were possibly trained at a young age about ways by to improve your physical health, however, mental health and self-care might have taken a backseat. If you have been diagnosed with a mental health ailment like anxiety or depression, the treatment typically comprises of emotional therapies and medication.

The lifestyle changes which tend to impact our state of mind are often less observed. Fortunately, with many now prioritising mood and cognitive health as much as their physical health, mental health and the discourse around it, in current times is less stigmatised than it was in the past. Today mindfulness is equally valued as much as physical health. Even those not suffering from a cognitive health condition may still look for effective ways to further take care of their mood, reduce stress and accomplish day-to-day mental health.

As with physical health, nurturing mental health is an ongoing process; simple daily practices and lifestyle changes can aid in this. Kanchan Rai, Mental and Emotional Well-being Coach, Founder - Let Us Talk, mentions five lifestyle modifications to get you started:

Practice relaxation techniques: While sensory input can release

Put your mind at ease

The lifestyle changes which tend to impact our state of mind are often less observed. Here are a few things to elevate your mood

stress in the moment, relaxation techniques facilitate to condense overall stress levels. Practices like meditation, yoga, deep inhalation and progressive muscle relaxation can help put the brakes to anxiety levels and help balance your mind and body.

Healthy eating is a go-to option: In order to achieve an optimal brain functioning, you must increase the intake of wholefoods like green leafy vegetables, grains, legumes, seafood and lean meat in your diet. These foods encompass magnesium, folate, zinc and vital fatty acids which accelerate cerebral function. Edibles rich in polyphenols, such as wine, dark chocolates and berries are also vital in getting the mind activated.

Improving mental well-being through physical activity: Fitness activities to get your body moving can offer an instant mood elevation. Activities that involve



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social interaction and exposure to nature can possibly help mental well-being even further.

Reach out when you need help: Positive lifestyle alterations are not a replacement for medication or therapy but, rather, something you can undertake yourself in addition to treatment. While most lifestyle modifications can be encouraging, some fluctuations may be challenging if used as an emotional crutch. One might be required to deal with it delicately, and with expert support.

Prioritising sleep: Along with improving sleep patterns, sleep hygiene techniques also help to treat insomnia. These comprise of limiting caffeine usage, regulating your sleep time, limiting screen time and ensuring you wake up at a similar time in the morning. Never force yourself to sleep, if you are unable to sleep within around 20 minutes, it may be best to get up and focus on an activity until you feel tired. The other mainstay of achieving an enhanced sleep pattern is to limit light exposure. This will surge the emission of melatonin, which aids in sleep. Getting quality sleep is significant for regulating stress levels, thus indirectly mending mind health. —JNS

POWER OF THE PALETTE

Abstract artist **WASSILY KANDINSKY**'s works revolved around Russian folklore and culture, portraying his belief in art's ability to transform the self and society. By **UMA NAIR**

The newly-opened Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in New York is now home to a stellar exhibition by abstractionist Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky. The most enchanting works here are his early woodcuts. Scholars say that before he abandoned the figurative idiom, Kandinsky created evocative works on paper, largely in black and white.

LAWYER-TURNED ARTIST

A very few people are aware that Kandinsky had traded a very promising career in law for a position of an art director at a printing firm in Moscow. The next year he came to Munich, carrying with him the knowledge of classic printmaking techniques like woodcut, etching and lithography.

The woodcut, in particular, challenged the artist to reduce compositions and narratives to simplified, expressionist forms, often using just black ink or limited palettes.

In 1907, Kandinsky produced numerous original woodcuts featuring women in traditional Russian costumes, embodying the romantic, fairytale imagery he favoured early in his career. Among them, *Birches* (Schalmei), *Women in the Woods* (Frauen im Wald), *Two Birds* (Zwei Vögel), and *Church* (Kirche) — as well as another woodcut, *Horsemen* — were reissued as photogravures with the title, *Xylographies*, in the Parisian magazine, *Les Tendances Nouvelles* in 1909.

CHURCH (1907)

The title, 'Church,' draws attention to the pervasive musical elements of the portfolio. Kandinsky's fascination with the emotional power of music inspired his later abstract compositions, and was a lifelong interest for the artist. In this woodcut, we see a composition that blends the architectural setting of a church with an onion-shaped dome with two women in the foreground. The women are standing on each side — left and right — and both are lost in their own contemplation. The details and elements of the children, the sky and the street — all become a part of a panoramic spread that juxtaposes each detail and anchors them with a singularity.

Scholars say that in this series of woodcuts, Kandinsky prepared one block for the artwork's lines and another with its coloured areas, pressed both onto the same paper, and then hand-painted the resulting image through watercolour. Kandinsky's lifelong and passionate interest in music was a great inspiration to his later abstract period. Although these works seem traditional to the contemporary audience, the reduction of forms was an important step forward for his early career.

Kandinsky's woodcuts are experi-



mental in technique but fully assured and characterised by juxtapositions and combinations of events. The woodcuts trained in style from Kandinsky's early fairytale idiom to fully-fledged abstracts of great power and beauty.

For him, 1907 became an important year. He produced a body of woodcuts that was published as *Xylographies* in 1909 in the Parisian periodical, *Les Tendances Nouvelles*. In the works, we see a current of nostalgia for traditional Russian folklore and culture — the onion-shaped domes of Church, the costumes of the women and an ambient sense of fullness.

Hence, Church is an important woodcut in the life works of Kandinsky as it reveals how his Russian roots continued to move and inspire him. He

believed that great artists were like prophets but they had to be driven by a spirit. This woodcut testifies his brilliance, passion and love for the everyday idiom, which we so often take for granted.

INNER NECESSITY

Drawn primarily from the Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation's rich holdings, this comprehensive exhibition traces the four geographic sections of the aesthetic evolution of Kandinsky, one of the foremost artistic innovators of the early 20th century.

He set out on a crusade against conventional aesthetic values and discovered a new subject matter based solely on the artist's 'inner necessity' in a dream of a more spiritual future through the transformative powers of art. As his calligraphic contours and rhythmic forms revealed scarcer traces of their representational origins, Kandinsky began to advance abstraction and elicit what he called the "hidden power of the palette."

PIONEER OF ABSTRACTION

For Kandinsky, even the most abstract forms retained expressive, emotive content. For instance, the triangles embodied active and aggressive feelings; the squares denoted peace and calm; and the circles represented the spiritual and the cosmic realms. As a pioneer of abstraction and a renowned aesthetic theorist, he is among the foremost artistic innovators of the early 20th century. In his endeavour to free painting from its ties to the natural world, Kandinsky's work was based on an artist's 'inner necessity'.

In Munich, in the 1900s and the early 1910s, he began exploring the expressive possibilities of colour and composition but he was forced to abruptly leave Germany with the onset of World War I in 1914. The artist eventually returned to his native place, Moscow, where his pictorial vocabulary started to reflect the utopian experiments of the Russian avant-garde. He emphasised geometric shapes in an effort to establish a universal aesthetic language.

Kandinsky subsequently joined the faculty of the Bauhaus, a German school of art and applied design, that shared his belief in art's ability to transform the self and the society. Compelled to abandon Germany again when the Bauhaus closed under Nazi pressure in 1933, he settled outside Paris, where surrealism and the natural sciences influenced his biomorphic imagery. This exhibition extols his brilliance both as an artist and as a thinker.

Photo: Guggenheim Museum, NY



Nirvana Inn set for digital premiere

The Adil Hussain-starrer *Nirvana Inn* will have a digital world premiere on a pay-per-view basis for 99 hours on December 11. The Hindi-language psychological horror drama, which also stars Sandhya Mridul and Rajshri Deshpande, is directed by Vijay Jayapal. It follows the story of a boatman who becomes the caretaker of a Himalayan resort after an attempted suicide.

"*Nirvana Inn* is very unique in its narrative. We hardly see this style in Indian cinema. I loved how the reality of my role easily slips into nightmarish vision. Very intelligently done. Never played a role of this kind. I think Vijay Jayapal has a lot to offer to Indian cinema. I hope he gets what he really wants to," said Adil.

Sandhya shared that director Jayapal brings a simple real personal approach to his films and a "normalcy in the handling of relationships between characters and a palpable emotional thread occasionally which is interesting, especially in the genre of horror it's more uncomfortable and then terrifying. For me this role was easy and then not."

Nirvana Inn, which had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival 2019, will be available on the digital platform Cinemarepreneur.

The film is produced by Stray Factory, Uncombed Buddha, Stop Whinging (Australia) and Harman Ventures in association with Magic Hour Films (Singapore).

The producers said in a collective statement: "With theatres closed and OTTs crowded, independent films have to find truly independent ways of distributing their film. We have decided on an unconventional release because this gives the power to the audience to decide the fate of the film, we hope this sets a trend for many more independent films."

WEBBED



ALIEN WORLDS

Applying the laws of life on Earth to the rest of the galaxy, this series blends science fact and fiction to imagine alien life on other planets. Season 1 releases on December 2 on Netflix.



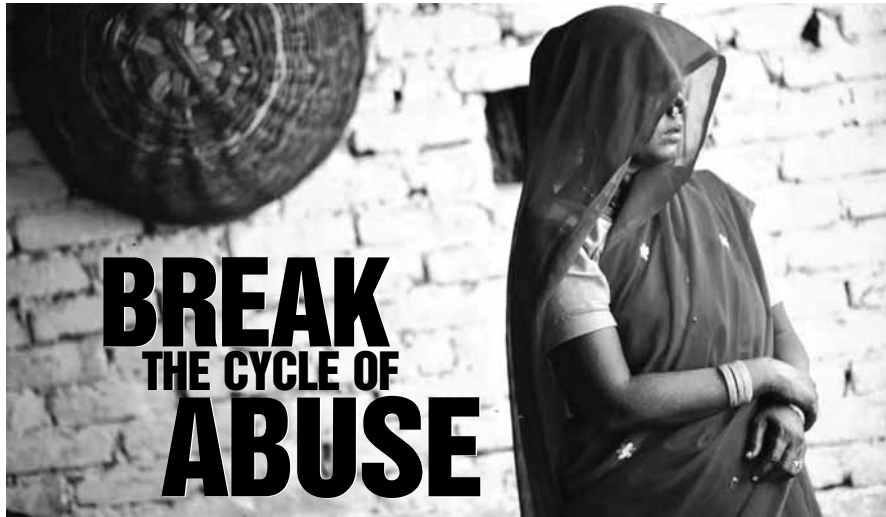
THE SURGEON'S CUT

They're philosophers, storytellers and pioneers in their fields. Four surgeons reflect on their lives and professions in this inspiring docuseries. Season 1 releases on December 9 on Netflix.



THE MIDNIGHT SKY

In the aftermath of a global catastrophe, a lone scientist in the Arctic races to contact a crew of astronauts with a warning not to return to Earth. Starring George Clooney, Felicity Jones and Kyle Chandler, the film releases on December 23 on Netflix.



India saw a sharp escalation in the cases of violence against women during the lockdown. RAMA SHARMA reports that the situation is worse in remote areas as women neither have information regarding their rights nor have access to necessary resources

Last week on November 25, people from across the world protested violence and abuse against women on International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women. In the context of the ongoing pandemic, a United Nations report suggests that all types of violence against women and girls, particularly domestic, has intensified. Several women's rights organisations across the world are demanding their respective governments to take effective measures to safeguard young girls and women caught in the cycle of violence. Considered to be the 'Shadow Pandemic', growing amid the COVID-19 crisis, the UN has stated that to stop the same, global collective efforts are needed. 'As COVID-19 cases continue to strain health services, essential services such as domestic violence shelters

and helplines have reached capacity. More needs to be done to prioritise addressing violence against women in COVID-19 response and recovery efforts', highlighted the report published by the UN. India, which reported a 7.3 per cent increase in rape cases from 2018 to 2019 as per the National Crimes Record Bureau, saw sharp escalation in incidences of violence against women during the nationwide lockdown implemented to contain the spread of virus. As per different news reports, the National Commission of Women (NCW) received 13,410 complaints of crimes against women between March-September 2020, of which 4,350 were domestic violence. Complaints peaked in the March-May period with 1/3rd of them being filed in these three months

alone. The situation was worse in rural and remote areas. From Rajasthan's Chaksu municipality, located 40 kilometres from Jaipur district, many women shared their ordeals with the writer confirming the statistics. 'My husband has posed his own lockdown on us. He doesn't allow either me or our children to step out of the house and fights if we ask him for financial support. He is strictly against the idea of letting me work outside the house,' shared Sujata Sharma. Semvati Swami, another woman from Tonk district, shared how her husband indulges into physical violence under the influence of alcohol and wouldn't allow her to speak to anyone. Rajasthan reported a surge of over 100 per cent in crime cases against women in May as compared to the

'AS COVID CASES CONTINUE TO STRAIN HEALTH SERVICES, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SHELTERS AND HELPLINES HAVE REACHED CAPACITY. MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PRIORITISE THE ISSUE'

—Charika Features

beginning of the year when the average jump was around 25 per cent. The total number of cases registered under various categories of crime against women in April were 879 which increased to 1,960 in May this year.

A 40-year-old woman, who got stuck for 30-days in Sawai Madhopur district during the lockdown, decided to walk her way to return to Jaipur. En route, she entered Barrakhundi village and stayed at a government school-turned-quarantine centre by the local head constable, where she was later gang raped by three men who were the residents of a nearby village.

'It is beyond my comprehension as to why the administration allowed a woman to be alone in an isolated quarantine facility. Despite increased presence of police everywhere during the lockdown, the crimes against women increased rapidly,' rued Manisha Kukkar who is associated with a non-government women's organization in Rajasthan. As per Kavita Srivastava, a social activist working in Rajasthan, cases that are reported to police or to women commissions represent only the tip of the iceberg. There are several cases which go unreported, especially from remote areas where women neither have information regarding their rights nor have access to the resources. 'As civil society organisations, we have collectively organised many campaigns to end sexual and physical violence against women in the state. To achieve this, the role of police and administration is crucial,' said Kavita.

Besides concerned authorities, many non-profit organisations had intervened in the situation by providing online counselling to women impacted by the situation. However, women who have absolutely no information about how to access such platforms remain invisible and vulnerable. The systemic violence against women that is promoted by the basic structure of our patriarchal society is the main reason why violence against women increases even in situations which require humans to be extra sensitive. Blaming it on alcohol, household chores and other reasons is one thing but addressing the root cause of the problem is the need of the hour. The ongoing '16 Days of Activism' against Gender-based Violence (GVB) campaign, which is part of International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women and will end on December 10, is exactly an opportunity to rethink our strategies and actions for a more equitable future.



A better world

If we want all sections of society to have moral values, we need to educate people about the right religious beliefs, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Offlately, there has been a lot of buzz around the topic of values in every profession. To achieve this, the role of education is being repeatedly and vociferously that our education should be value-based, science should not neglect values, politics should observe some moral principles, business and industry should follow some ethics, media should have a code of conduct and administrators should have a set of values to put into practise. Thus, inculcation of values is being stressed upon everywhere. This need for values in all walks of life and human activity emanates from the growing realisation that all conflicts arise from infringement or dissonance of values and that the problems of deterioration in the state of law and order and the lack of harmony have arisen because of violation of values by people. Therefore, we must not miss the essential moral dimension if we want to have peace and happiness in our life and harmony and synchronicity in the society. However, it is little realised that values are derived from our beliefs. Hence, our visions and aspirations determine the set of values necessary to realise our goals and ideals.



There is no human being, however remote from the civilised society he might be living, who has absolutely no beliefs as they are basic to life. Even a cave-man has some values but there is no value which is not derived from some belief knowingly or unknowingly. So, we should be clear in our mind as to what do we mean when we talk of a particular value. In other words, we should be aware of the particular 'belief system' that is behind that value. For example, when Mahatma Gandhi talked of non-violence, he included *Brahmacharya* also in his concept of *Ahimsa*. He said that a person, who aspires *Ahimsa* as a value in his life, must follow celibacy. So, when he pledged himself to it, he announced that he would consider his wife as his mother. In other words, he was saying that non-violence was pretty different from what many others, professing the observance of these values would say.

Similarly, if we were to ascertain what 'tolerance' as a value meant to different communities, we would have to know their religious beliefs. Like, in some religions, the concept of definition of tolerance does not include tolerance to the condemnation of, or even adverse comment on their sacred book or a derogatory remark about a revered person in the history of their religion. In such matters, they feel that they are under attack and hence they feel highly provoked and throw tolerance to the winds. So, tolerance has a limited scope in their value system because they think that their beliefs are such.

History is witness to many events where numerous places of worship of a religion were destroyed by people of another religion. They initiated attacks on and acts of destruction of, what was a holy place to the followers of another faith, because, according to the belief of the former, 'the holy place' of others was a place of false beliefs and practises and, therefore, it was natural for them to destroy such places. Thus, the value, called 'respect' for the faith and the holy places of other religions or sects had a very narrow scope.

The above mentioned examples should make it clear that all systems of human values have the same background and implying the same virtue because their belief systems are different. So, if we now wish to transform the world and have moral values in all sections of society, we will have to work to educate people to have right beliefs because, without transforming them, you cannot have a changed value system with or without the latter, you cannot have a better world.

Celebrate yourself

The meaning of self-care has evolved during the pandemic as the isolation forced people to focus on their priorities and needs

These days, with a pandemic raging, this is what life can look like: Staring at your face on Zoom for hours instead of occasionally glimpsing it in the mirror. Living out the days in loungewear. Wearing minimal makeup because no one sees much of you. Considering an investment in home exercise equipment because gyms are closed or restricted.

The pandemic has forced people to spend more time with themselves than ever. Along the way, it has reshaped and broadened the way many think about and prioritise how they treat themselves — what has come to be called self-care.

The pandemic-era incarnation of self-care isn't about buying a signature outfit, wearing a trendy shade of lipstick or getting a perfect haircut. It has, for many, put the purpose and meaning of life front and centre, reconfiguring priorities and needs as the virus-infected months drift by. No longer are worries about longevity and fears of mortality mere hypotheticals. They are 2020's reality.

It is this undeniable reality that has skyrocketed the importance of "me" time: stress-baking the latest viral creation, tending to a garden, learning a new skill, getting dressed like you're going out just to feel some semblance of normalcy. "People are social beings. And while the social fabric has been torn down, and you can't be a normal social person, you have been more focused on yourself," says Rod Little, CEO of Edgewell Personal Care, which makes Schick and Bull Dog products. Rod adds, "It's beautiful for longevity, as opposed to how I

look in the office tomorrow."

The pandemic has forced the feeling that life is careening forward haphazardly in so many ways. That's true for Tonya Speaks, a 43-year-old wardrobe coach from Fort Mill, South Carolina. Before the pandemic, she was always zipping to and from business meetings. Now, the mother of two teenagers exercises regularly and opts for luxurious baths at night instead of quick showers in the morning. She's happier doing so. "Taking care of myself," Speaks says, "is one way for me to have control."

Beyond the 'lipstick index'
Self-care isn't a new fad. The difference is that pre-pandemic, it could fall by the wayside if a to-do list got crowded. Now, eight months into the new reality, it is a priority. After all, the thinking goes: If we're not taking care of ourselves, how can we do jobs, parent children, care for loved ones?

For those who have the means — and that's a small caveat during this pandemic — feeling good can mean looking good. And the widespread isolation has produced new trends in beauty and clothing.

Popstar Lady Gaga, who has her own beauty line, recently posted a close-up shot in which



she wears a cat-eye look with natural, peach-colored lipstick. She did her makeup "to cheer myself up." But when it comes to consumer products, the pandemic is pushing makeup aside as people gravitate towards skin care products. The virus is even turning the "lipstick index" upside down.

Typically, lipstick sales skyrocket when the economy gets rough because it is an inexpensive way to feel good. But during the pandemic, makeup sales have been rocky, and sales of skincare products are up. In fact, 70 per cent of consumers scaled back their use of makeup this year,

according to the NPD Group Inc., a market research firm. As a result, skincare has edged makeup up as the top category in the beauty industry's market share from January through August.

"People are being more mindful of what they are putting on their skin because of the pandemic," says Lauren Yavor, a beauty influencer.

Beauty chains and department stores are ramping up offerings in moisturisers and bath and body products. Walmart teamed up with Unilever, maker of Dove and Suave, to launch shops called "Find Your Happy Place" aimed

at customers looking to destress. The concept, in the works before the pandemic, was accelerated by one year.

Within makeup, eyeshadow and eyeliner as well as false eyelashes are thriving as people play up the features that are peeking through their masks when they're out, says Larissa Jensen, NPD's beauty industry advisor. Hair products saw an 11 per cent sales increase during the third quarter as people take a DIY approach to colouring and styling.

Says Ed Eggleston Bracey, chief operating officer of Unilever North America's personal care and beauty division: "This is a wellness revolution."

A deeper importance
How deep does this run? It is all the pandemic self-care working, or are people are just going through haphazard motions? One psychologist compares it to a roller coaster — up on some days, down on others.

"Some days, you have a great day when you did all the things you wanted to do. You got up on time, you made a salad. And then the next day, it's Cheetos for lunch," says Dr Vaile Wright, a senior director at the American Psychological Association.

Being kind to one's self feels especially important during the

pandemic, where every aspect of human life has been impacted and there is little control over what's next. That level of uncertainty is unnerving, Wright says, and further depletes already limited energy levels.

Self-care, of course, is only one dimension of coping during stressful times. Surveys have shown a sharp increase in anxiety disorders. Many therapists are reporting a 50 per cent increase in caseloads. Virtual mental health services are booming — another form of self-care, in a more medical sense. "Having a toolbox of coping skills is really critical," Wright says. She highlights other types of self-care like meditation, journaling and organising — each of which has its own culture and committed practitioners. "We have a tendency to isolate emotionally. It is really important that people don't do that," Wright says.

Ultimately, "self-care" contains as many definitions as there are people who take care of themselves — a Google search of the term will show you that. The World Health Organisation takes an expansive view, describing it as a "broad concept" that includes hygiene, lifestyle, social habits, income levels and cultural beliefs — and, in the best cases, can "strengthen national institutions" to encourage a society's overall health.

For all the horror the pandemic has brought, it has also revealed things that matter. And from the way people have reacted through this time, it seems clear that, in all the forms it takes, self-care matters — particularly right now, particularly with so many unknowns still ahead. —AP

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. —Nelson Mandela

ANXIETY LINKED TO ALZHEIMER'S ONSET RISK

Researchers have discovered that anxiety is associated with an increased rate of progression from mild cognitive impairment to Alzheimer's disease.

Anxiety has been frequently observed in patients with mild cognitive impairment, although its role in disease progression is not well documented.

"We know that volume loss in certain areas of the brain is a factor that predicts progression to Alzheimer's disease," said study senior author Maria Vittoria Spannato from the University of South Carolina, US. "In this study, we wanted to see if anxiety had an effect on brain structure, or if the effect of anxiety was independent from brain structure in favouring the progression of disease," Spannato added.

The study group included 339 patients, average age of 72 years, from the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative 2 cohort.

SEROTONIN ZONES IDENTIFIED

Researchers have identified specific areas of the brain that individually promote patience through the action of serotonin, a chemical that the body produces.

The research, published in the journal, *Science Advances*, gains significance in view of the fact that learning to suppress the impulse for instant gratification is often vital for future success, but how patience is regulated in the brain remains poorly understood.

Serotonin is one of the most famous neurotransmitters of behaviour, helping to regulate mood, sleep-wake cycles and appetite," said study co-author Katsuhiko Miyazaki from Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University in Japan. The study on mice showed that serotonin-releasing neurons from dorsal raphe nucleus (DRN) penetrate many areas of the brain, including the nucleus accumbens (NAc), orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) and medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC).



A PERSON'S ESSENCE REMAINS SAME ALL LIFE

In a unique study, researchers have now shown that the essence of an individual remains largely stable over the years. "In our study, we tried to answer the question of whether we are the same person throughout our lives," said study author Miguel Rubianes from the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM) in Spain.

"In conjunction with the previous literature, our results indicate that there is a component that remains stable while another part is more susceptible to change over time," Rubianes added.

The 'continuity of the self' — the capacity for self-awareness and self-recognition — remains stable whereas other components such as physical aspects, physiological processes and even attitudes, beliefs and values are more liable to change.

Even components such as personality traits tend to change slightly over the years, but "the sense of being oneself is preserved, improving our understanding of human nature," Rubianes said.

GENUS OF BACTERIA IN THE GUT LINKED TO IBS

Researchers have detected a connection between *Brachyspira*, a genus of bacteria in the intestines, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) — especially the form that causes diarrhoea.

Although the discovery needs confirmation in larger studies, there is hope that it might lead to new remedies for many people with irritable bowel syndrome, the study published in the journal *Gut*, reported.

The pathogenic bacterial genus, *Brachyspira*, is not usually present in human gut flora. A new study links the bacterium to IBS, particularly the form with diarrhoea. The bacterium hides under the mucus layer protecting the intestinal surface from fecal bacteria. "Unlike most other gut bacteria, *Brachyspira* is in direct contact with the cells and covers their surface," said study author Karolina Sjöberg Jabbar from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.



EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY HELPS RELATIONSHIPS

Being emotionally flexible may be one of the most important factors when it comes to longevity and overall health of romantic and familial relationships, say researchers.

The study, published in the *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, statistically combined the results of 174 separate studies that had looked at acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness, and emotion regulation.

The researchers' aim was to clarify how and why emotional flexibility on one hand and inextensibility, mindless, and rigid inflexibility on the other were linked to the dynamics within families and romantic relationships.

"This meta-analysis underscores that being mindful and emotionally flexible in tough and challenging situations not only improves the lives of individuals, it might also strengthen and enrich their close relationships," said study co-author Ronald Rogge from the University of Rochester in the US.



Smith does it again

Former Oz skipper makes second consecutive 62-ball hundred to lead hosts to ODI series win despite India's fight with bat

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia buried India under an avalanche of runs for a 51-run drubbing in the second ODI and an unassailable 2-0 series lead after the majestic Steve Smith produced another master-class in the form of a 64-ball 104 here at Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Batting first, Australia rode on five fifty-plus scores including Smith's blazing knock, to post an imposing 389 for four against a sluggish India.

This was the Australian run-machine's fifth century against India in the 50-over format and second on the trot after his ton in the series-opener, which came off 66 deliveries.

A target of 390 proved to be too much for India as they were stopped at 338 for nine, with captain Virat Kohli (89) and KL Rahul (76) finishing as their main contributors in what turned out to be another forgettable outing for the beleaguered visitors.

India started the big chase in earnest with the in-form Shikhar Dhawan (30) and Mayank Agarwal (28) dealing in boundaries from the onset.

If Agarwal found the fence twice in the first over, Dhawan struck Mitchell Starc for three successive fours to get the Indian innings going. A magnificent cover drive by Agarwal took the visitors past 50 in 6.1 overs. However, in trying to go for one too many, Dhawan perished.

In came Kohli and he has mostly done through his illustrious career, the Indian captain played some delightful shots on the way to his 87-ball innings to keep the visitors in with a chance.

During his stay in the middle, Kohli pulled, drove, flicked and cut with plenty of success as India tried to keep the required rate within 9-10 runs per over.

But pacer Josh Hazlewood provided Australia their biggest breakthrough when he had Kohli caught brilliantly by a diving Moises Henriques at mid-wicket.

That brought Hardik Pandya in

I tried to whack the ball a bit too hard in the IPL, now I have started to hit the ball with a bit more finesse which is probably working better for me. I'm just playing nice cricketing shots... Nice to score some runs again for the team and get us to a good total.

STEVE SMITH
AFTER SCORING TWO BACK TO BACK HUNDREDS

As he (Smith) said the other day, he has found his hands, he is looking pretty scary at the moment for opposition teams. He is placing the ball as well as anyone around the world

GLENN MAXWELL
ON STEVE SMITH FORM

We are doing lot of things right, we just need to learn how to bowl better on such beautiful batting wickets. Not a lot that we have done wrong, we need to get better with skills and execution.

KL RAHUL
ON INDIAN DRESSING ROOM MORALE

We were completely outplayed: Kohli

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India skipper Virat Kohli had no qualms conceding that the visitors were outplayed by a confident and ruthless Australia in the series-deciding second ODI on Sunday, pinning the blame on the ineffective and inconsistent bowling by his side.

"We were completely outplayed. I think with the ball, we were not that effective, we didn't hit the areas that we wanted to consistently and they have a strong batting line-up, they know the conditions and the angles well,"

the middle and the all-rounder, in the company of KL Rahul, played some big shots. But they were never going to be enough.

Rahul departed after striking five sixes and four boundaries in his 66-ball knock. India completely lost the plot after that.

Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins picked up 3/67 in his 10 overs. Besides Smith's 104-run knock, swashbuckling opener David Warner smashed 83 off 77 while skipper Aaron Finch contributed 60 in a first-wicket stand of 142 in under 23 overs.

The duo of Marnus Labuschagne and Glenn Maxwell

Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

Chasing Australia's 389, India finished at 338 for 9 with Kohli (89) and KL Rahul (76) being the top-scorer.

"Look at the scoreboard, we got 340 and still fell short by 50 odd, so the chase always felt steep and we knew one or two wickets would take the required rate to up to 13, 16 and so we had to keep hitting," the India skipper said.

"They took the chances that they created in the field, which was the difference, otherwise it would have been a much closer

game."

"...Credit to them, they bowled much more consistently and used the dimensions well."

Kohli said the two catches which led to his and Shreyas Iyer's (38) dismissal were the "defining moments" of the game.

"Me and KL (Rahul) were talking if we stick around till 40-41 (overs), even 100 in the last 10 overs with Hardik to come, it was game on, that was the game plan but the two catches that they hung on to were the defining moments," he said.

Indian bowlers. To dislodge Smith, India needed Pandya to bowl for the first time since returning from a back surgery more than a year ago, and he did the trick in his third over, luring the imperious Australian to slash one straight into Mohammed Shami.

Warner suffers injury, taken to hospital for scans

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Australia's swashbuckling opener David Warner's participation in the remainder of the limited-overs series against India was thrown into doubt after he suffered a groin injury during the second ODI on Sunday.

Warner hobbled off the field after he struggled to get up following a dive in the fourth over of the Indian innings. A car waited outside the Sydney Cricket Ground to take the



David Warner leaves the field after injury

senior player to a nearby hospital for undergoing scans.

Asked about the opener's condition at the post-match presentation ceremony, Australian skipper Aaron Finch said he was not aware of its severity but didn't expect the south-paw to be available.

"No idea. We've got to reshuffle it around, I don't think he'll be available," Finch said after the game. In his trademark unconventional manner, Smith played shots all round the wicket to torment the

diving to stop the ball, it appears he could not only miss the third and final ODI but also the following three-match T20 series. The Twenty-20 games are scheduled to start on December 4 in Canberra.



SINGLES



Haas driver Romain Grosjean is helped by medical staff after he crashed his car during the F1 race in Bahrain International Circuit in Sakhir on Sunday



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, centre, and Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel, right, take the knee in support of the Black Lives Matter campaign and End Racism Recognition event ahead of the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix



Manchester United's Edinson Cavani celebrates with Victor Lindelof after scoring Utd's second goal against Southampton at the St Mary's stadium on Sunday



AC Milan's Franck Kessie, left and Fiorentina's Patrick Cutrone embrace at the end of the Serie A match at the San Siro

Our bowlers need to adapt to conditions quicker: KL

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Backing his struggling bowlers to the hilt, India's vice captain KL Rahul on Sunday said that Jasprit Bumrah and Co have endured hard lessons in adapting to conditions so far and it is not a surprise that wickets have been hard to come by on batting-friendly Australian tracks.

The Indian bowlers, who did exceedingly well in the IPL before landing in Australia, have bled runs in the first two ODIs, letting the hosts run away with a decisive 2-0 series lead.

The ever-reliable Bumrah and the fiery Mohammed Shami have been made to look quite ordinary by the home team batsmen, who have scored at will.

"I would not agree when you say they are struggling. It's different conditions, different format. It's



learning for us to sit back and think of how to do better when playing on such good batting wickets," Rahul said at the post-match conference.

"In white-ball cricket, it is vital to get wickets regularly, then only you can keep the run-rate under check... We have to find (our) mantra to get wickets and the batting unit has to think about how

to stretch the 30-40-run partnerships," he assessed.

Rahul said Australian bowlers could do well because of the familiarity with the conditions.

"We did not adapt quick enough. It's a learning curve for the bowling group to adapt quicker."

Asked if it's just a bad phase for Bumrah, who struggled even in New Zealand earlier this year, Rahul said the speedster will come back strongly.

"We all know Jasprit is very fiery and competitive on the field. He means a lot to this set up, we know the value of Jasprit. It's about time that a champion player comes back and delivers and gets wickets for us."

"In New Zealand and Australia, the wickets are too good to bat, you will see that bowlers will not get wickets, that's acceptable."

Phillips' record-breaking ton sets up Kiwis win

AFP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard accused his side of not performing to international standards on Sunday after New Zealand comprehensively won the second T20I by 72 runs on the back of a record century by Glenn Phillips.

New Zealand wrapped up the series at Mount Maunganui with a game to spare, after winning the opening match on Friday by five wickets, as Phillips provided a batting masterclass.

Called up to the T20 side while regular skipper Kane Williamson focuses on the upcoming Tests, Phillips plundered eight sixes and 10 fours on his way to 108 as New Zealand posted a mammoth 238/3 and then restricted the West Indies to 166/9.

"You never know when the next opportunity is going to come



and I came into this going 'let's go in as hard as I possibly can. I know I can do it'." Phillips said. The 23-year-old, who was born in South Africa but moved to New Zealand at the age of five, took just 46 deliveries to reach his century, the 10th fastest in T20Is and one ball faster than the previous New Zealand record held by Colin Munro.

New Zealand stand-in skipper Tim Southee called Phillips' performance "incredible", adding that his two catches, one diving at full stretch on the boundary, and the sharp run out showed "he's got that X-factor about him".

But while Phillips, along with Devon Conway who produced an unbeaten 85, put the game firmly in New Zealand's hands, opposing captain Pollard was left fuming.

After winning the toss and sending New Zealand into bat under overcast skies, Pollard believed the West Indies were in control when the Black Caps reached the halfway mark at 84/2. "But between overs 10 to 15 we sort of lost it there," Pollard said. "In terms of the energy and feel and erratics in the field, that's not the standard that we want to set for ourselves, and not the standard anyone wants to see in international cricket."

Walegn, Yehualaw win ADHM with record times

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ethiopians Amedework Walegn and Yalemzerf Yehualaw smashed event records to win the men's and women's titles respectively in the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon held in a bio-secure environment amid the Covid-19 pandemic, here on Sunday.

The results in this World Athletics Gold Label road race were unprecedented with both the elite race winners re-writing the event records.

Both Walegn (58:53 seconds) and Yehualaw pocketed \$27,000 first prize and an additional \$10,000 as event record bonus.

In fact, Yehualaw ran the second fastest women's half marathon ever. Her timing of 1:04:46 was just a quarter of a second outside the world record time (1:04:31) of compatriot Ababel Yeshaneh, who finished third.

For India, Tokyo Olympics-bound Avinash Sable smashed the national record with a time of 1:00:30.

The 26-year-old Sable, from Maharashtra, was 10th overall. He pocketed ₹3.5 lakh first prize and



Women's elite category Gold Medalist Ethiopian Yalemzerf Yehualaw (C) flanked by Silver Medalist Kenyan Ruth Chepngetich (L) and Bronze Medalist Ethiopian Ababel Yeshaneh

Championships last month. Belihu, who had won the title in 2018 and 2019, settled for the Silver with a time of 58:54sec in the 21.09km distance. Ugandan Stephen Kissa was third in 58:56.

The 21-year-old Walegn bettered the earlier ADHM record of 59:06, who was in the name of compatriot Guye Adola, set in 2014.

Avinash Sable, who qualified for Tokyo Olympics in 3000m steeplechase, emerged winner

among Indian elite runners, clocking 1:00.30. This was the first time an Indian ran below 61 minutes in the ADHM.

Srinu Bugatha, who won the race last year, was second with a time of 1:04:16 while Durga Bahadur Budha was third, clocking 1:04:19.

In the star-studded women's elite race, Yehualaw surged ahead after the halfway mark to win in record time, bettering the earlier mark of 1:06:00 in the name of compatriot and defending champion Tesheye Gemechu, who could not finish on podium this time.

Kenya's Ruth Chepngetich was second in 1:05:06 while another Ethiopian and world half marathon record-holder Ababel Yeshaneh was third in 1:05:21.

Yehualaw had finished second in last year's ADHM and third in the World Half Marathon last month.

Among Indians, Parul Chaudhary, who had finished second last year, took the Gold in 1:12:18 while Sanjivani Jadhav (1:13:00) and Komal Jagdale (1:14:04) were second and third respectively.

Messi, Barca remember Maradona in winning style

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi paid tribute to Diego Maradona by stripping off his Barcelona top to reveal the Argentina great's shirt after he scored the final goal of a 4-0 rout of Osasuna on Sunday.

Messi celebrated his powerful strike from outside the box to cap the comfortable victory by taking off Barcelona's blue-and-burgundy to bare the red-and-black of Maradona's shirt from his stint at Newell's Old Boys.

Messi then blew a kiss with both hands to the sky as he looked up.

Messi played for Newells before he joined Barcelona at age 13. Maradona played five matches for Newell in 1994 near the end of his glorious playing career.

That made him a legend in his home country.

Before the match, the club played *The Song of the Birds* by a Catalan cellist Pablo Casals as the teams stood around the centre circle where a Maradona shirt was laid on the cent spot.

Messi had kept his head bowed during the minute of silence before kickoff at the empty Camp Nou for Maradona.

Maradona played for Barcelona from 1982-84. Martin Braithwaite, Antoine Griezman and Philippe Coutinho also scored for Barcelona.

