

## WORLD 7

PAK COURT JAILS 2 MORE  
AIDES OF 26/11 BRAINS

## MONEY 8

PETROL, DIESEL PRICE HIKED  
FOR SECOND DAY IN A ROW

## SPORT 10

HAMSTRING IS FEELING  
ABSOLUTELY FINE: ROHIT

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USUAL SUSPECTS  
SWAPAN DASGUPTAFair distribution of  
Covid shots must

Last Thursday, India became the second country after the United States to reach the 9 million Covid-19 mark. This is not an achievement, although policy makers may take solace in the fact that it took 22 days for the deadly infection to travel from 8 million to 9 million. The earlier travel time for a million had at one time touched 11, 12 and 13 days.

It is hardly worth reiterating that we have by no means crossed the danger mark. As the experience of Europe clearly demonstrated, it merely takes the people a small relaxation of vigil for the pandemic to resume its rampage. This was also the case with Delhi, India's national Capital, where the pre-Diwali festivities led to all the gains of the monsoon season being wiped out. It is unknown if the foul air of the city resulting from the burning of stubble in neighbouring States played a part in the Covid-19 spike, but certainly the air people inhaled didn't help.

However, it is difficult to make generalisations about mass gatherings — usually religious festivals — acting as super-spreaders. The Onam festival in Kerala certainly pushed up the numbers of those infected in a State that once claimed to lead the way in pandemic management. Yet, curiously, the secular festival of democracy in Bihar which experienced mass political rallies and zero social distancing, didn't have any visible impact on the spread of the coronavirus.

In West Bengal, the great fear was that the week-long festivities centred on Durga Puja would create a health crisis. The fear was legitimate since the ruling party in the State often conveyed the impression that celebrations took precedence over all other considerations. However, the High Court stepped in with draconian restrictions that the people — with the exception of a small group of the reckless — by and large adhered to. This week the High Court once again stepped in by imposing restrictions on the Chhath Puja, popular among the large Bihar community in the State.

The intrusive role of the judiciary has often attracted criticism on the grounds that the judges are encroaching on the business of the executive. This is not the place to assess judicial activism, even at a time of pandemic. What is more important is that, despite the widespread fear of Covid-19, there is a growing mood of exasperation in people at the restrictions that have been in place since March this year.

Part of this impatience stems from boredom, especially among the young. However, more of it can be attributed to the growing belief that Covid-19 is not guaranteed to be a killer disease. No doubt the aged and those with respiratory ailments are most at risk but others seem to get away reasonably lightly.

Then there is the concern with the serious economic consequences of the disruption of normal life. Apart from the slowdown and job losses, there is a legitimate belief that the greater the delay in getting back to normal life, the more will be the economic sufferings. In such situations, there is inevitably a temptation to bank disproportionately on Government handouts. But there are limits on how much a Government can mitigate sufferings of every individual. However, to be fair, as the Bihar election demonstrated, the exacting demands on the Government haven't become overwhelming. Yet, sooner or later the economic devastation will have political consequences.

No wonder all eyes, all over the world, are on the pharmaceutical companies engaged in finding a vaccine that will ward off the virus. Almost every progress, whether in Oxford or somewhere in Russia, is being closely monitored. So far the results of the tests have been very encouraging and there is an expectation that people will start receiving the miracle jabs by January 2021.

Although Indian companies have negotiated agreements with multinational pharmaceutical giants for the supply of the vaccine, it is still uncertain when adequate supplies will be available in the country. It is certain that the relief over the availability of the vaccine will be coupled with fissures over who gets to the top of the queue. This is an important matter since non-availability of a vaccine that is bound to be in short supply — at least temporarily — will create political complications for any Government, not to mention rampant allegations of nepotism and even profiteering.

Having braved the pandemic for nearly a year, the last problem the country must overcome is the fair distribution of a cure whose demand is certain to far exceed supply

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Having braved the pandemic for nearly a year, the last problem the country must overcome is the fair distribution of a cure whose demand is certain to far exceed supply.

Stop backing terror,  
India tells PakistanDelhi summons  
Pak envoy to  
register protest

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded security forces for neutralising four Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists in Nagrota, India on Saturday summoned Pakistani envoy here to register its protest over Islamabad's continued backing of terror activities emanating from its soil.

Reiterating its demand that Pakistan must fulfil its international obligations not to allow any territory under its control to be used by terrorists, Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires Aftab Hasan Khan was told that the huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosive material indicated a detailed planning for a major attack to destabilise the peace and security in Jammu & Kashmir to derail the polls to local District Development Councils.

Registering its protest, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the attack was prevented due to the alertness



of the Indian security forces.

"India reiterated its long-standing demand that Pakistan fulfil its international obligations and bilateral commitments not to allow any territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India in any manner. It was demanded that Pakistan desists from its policy of supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from its territory and dismantle the terror infrastructure operated by terrorist outfits to launch attacks in other countries," the MEA further said.

It also added that the Indian Government was "firmly and resolutely committed" to take all necessary measures to

safeguard its national security in the fight against terrorism.

The MEA said the JeM is proscribed by the United Nations and several countries. The Government of India expressed its serious concerns at continued terror attacks by JeM against India. The JeM has been part of several attacks in India in the past, including the Pulwama attack in February 2019.

The four suspected Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed in a three-hour encounter with security forces on the Jammu-Srinagar NH near Nagrota early Thursday.

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AIADMK, BJP  
to fight Assembly  
elections togetherADMK leaders  
announce decision

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu on Saturday said its alliance with the BJP will continue for the 2021 Assembly elections and exuded confidence it will win a hatrick poll next year.

AIADMK top leaders O Panneerselvam and K Palaniswami made the announcement at a Government event here, attended by Union Home Minister and BJP veteran Amit Shah. Chief Minister Palaniswami is the AIADMK Co-Coordinator while Coordinator Panneerselvam is his deputy.

"I would like to inform through this meeting that in the coming election (2021), the victorious alliance of AIADMK and BJP will continue," Panneerselvam said.

Palaniswami, who said Prime Minister Modi and Shah were working towards making the country a superpower,

asserted that "the alliance formed for the Lok Sabha polls will continue."

"Our alliance will win maximum seats and AIADMK will retain power," he said.

The AIADMK and the BJP aligned for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, along with others, including PMK, but the combine could win only the lone Theni seat out of the 39 segments in Tamil Nadu, with the ruling party clinching it.

The top leaders' assertion comes against the backdrop of the Government's denial of permission to the BJP's Vel Yatra, aimed at exposing the DMK for "lending support" to an atheist group accused of denigrating Tamil hymn 'Kanda Sashiti Kavacham', sung in praise of Lord Muruga, citing the Covid-19 pandemic.

The AIADMK had recently lashed out at its saffron ally on the matter and accused it of attempting votebank politics.

BJP State president L Murugan has been courting arrest in different towns after trying to take out the procession despite denial of permission.

Ayurveda PG doctors can now  
do ENT, dental, eye surgeriesGovt allows formal  
training in such  
procedures part of  
their curriculum

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move aimed to meet the shortage of doctors across the country, the Government has allowed the Postgraduate (PG) students of Ayurveda to perform a range of general surgery, including orthopedic, ophthalmology, ENT and dental.

The Centre has issued a gazette notification in this regard allowing Ayurvedic PG passouts to receive formal training for such procedures. The training modules for surgical procedures will be added to the curriculum of Ayurvedic studies.

The amendments in the Indian Medicine Central Council Regulations, 2016 has been carried out to introduce formal training in these procedures as part of the curriculum for postgraduate students of shalya (general surgery) and shalakya tantra (diseases of ear, nose, throat, ENT, eye, head, oro-dentistry) special-



sations.

Union Ayush Secretary Rajesh Kotecha explained the Ministry has specified the procedures that an Ayurveda doctor can conduct while handling a patient.

The gazette notification issued on November 19 stated that during the period of study, the PG scholar of Shalya and Shalakya shall be practically trained to acquaint with as well as independently performing specified activities so that after completion of his/her PG degree, he/she is able to perform the procedures independently.

As per the legislation, Ayurveda practitioners can legally perform common procedures such as skin grafting,

cataract surgery, and root canal treatment.

As per the amendments, the complete list of procedures that will be taught in MS (Ayurved) Shalya tantra will include perianal abscess, breast abscess, axillary abscess, cellulitis, all types of skin grafting, ear lobe repair, excision of the simple cyst and benign tumours (lipoma, fibroma, schwannoma, etc) of non-vital organs, excision/amputation of gangrene.

They will also be allowed to take up traumatic wound management all types of suturing, haemostatic ligatures, ligation and repair of tendon and muscles, removal of metallic and non-metallic foreign bodies from non-vital organs among many other areas.

Under MS (Ayurved) Shalakya Tantra, the Ayurveda doctor can practice in medical areas pertaining to diseases of eyelids such as Glaucoma and trained to carry out various surgery, including cataract surgery.

The practitioners will also be eligible to conduct local Anesthesia in the eye, and varied surgeries related to nose, ear, and dental-related medical issues.

Delhi-NCR's air quality  
improves but still poor

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi's air quality recorded a marginal improvement on Saturday morning due to favourable wind speed but remained in the "poor" category. Similar situation was witnessed in NCR cities of Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurgaon and Faridabad.

Government agencies said the air quality index (AQI) was likely to improve to the "moderate" category later in the day.

Delhi's AQI was 263 at 9 am. The 24-hour average AQI was 296 on Friday. It was 283 on Thursday and 211 on Wednesday.

Similarly, the average 24-hour AQI at 4 pm on Saturday was 256 in Gurgaon, 246 in Faridabad, 238 in Ghaziabad,



231 in Noida and 228 in Greater Noida, according to CPCB's Sameer app.

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

Calm winds and low tem-

peratures trap pollutants close to the ground, while favourable wind speed helps in their dispersion. Delhi's ventilation index — a product of mixing depth and average wind speed — was around 13,000 square metre per second on Saturday and is likely to be 6,000 square metre per second on Sunday.

## CAPSULE

COMEDIAN BHARTI SINGH  
HELD IN DRUG CASE

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday arrested comedian Bharti Singh following seizure of ganja (cannabis) from her house in suburban Andheri, an official said.

AIM TO REDUCE CARBON  
FOOTPRINT BY 30-35%: PM

Gandhinagar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the country was moving forward with the goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 30 to 35 per cent. He also said that efforts were on to increase the use of natural gas by four times in this decade and to double the oil refining capacity in the next five years. The Prime Minister said this while addressing the eighth convocation of Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University (PDPU) here via video conference.

SHIVAKUMAR GETS CBI  
SUMMONS IN DA CASE

Bengaluru: Congress Karnataka unit president DK Shivakumar on Saturday said he has received summons from the CBI in connection with a disproportionate assets case, and he will be appearing before the investigating agency on November 25.



**HOME THEATRE**

**Predictable & boring**



**MISMATCHED**  
**Netflix**  
**\*ing: Prajakta Koli, Rohit Saraf, Muskaan Jafari, Devyani Shorey, Taaruk Raina, Vihaan Samat, Rannvijay Singh, Suhasini Mulay, Vidya Malvade**  
**Rated: 5/10**

This film is based on Sandhya Menon's book *When Dimple Met Rishi* and the series has been written by Gazal Dhaliwal and directed by Akarsh Khurana and Nipun Dharmadhikari. On the face of it, *Mismatched* is a light rom-com and at the heart of it are diverse students. This is something that the younger viewers are going to identify with. But then given the theme and the story of the movie, this one is totally for the teenagers — those between the ages of 16 to 19 — young, angry, rebelling, want to have fun, experimenting and just being themselves away from the prying eyes of their parents.

Then there is the lead pair. A girl who only has one thing in mind — to excel and have a career — unlike her mother who only wants to see her daughter married. The boy, a romantic and a

Bollywood movie fan is looking for a wife. Yes, at 18. Sounds bizarre. But it is funny to see how he goes about winning his girl.

But this is make-belief and there has to be drama and nothing comes easy in reel life or real. There are bound to be twists and turns and there are several here.

But if you are the kind of person who likes to watch shows that have a clear-cut ending, this one be avoided since it is season one and given by how things end here, season 2 is definitely on the cards. When? Time will tell. Also, those who are always looking for meaningful content, this is predictable and somewhat boring, at least it will be for the adults. The teenagers are sure to find a connection and see themselves in at least one of the several characters.

While it is interesting to see diverse characters, since the focus is on the lead all the time, the back stories of the others have not been explored even when each has one. This means that there isn't much depth to the characters, at least for now.

Overall, one can binge watch these six episodes. — Shalini Sakseena

**A fun Christmas watch**

**THE PRINCESS SWITCH: SWITCHED AGAIN**  
**Netflix**  
**\*ing: Vanessa Hudgens, Sam Palladio, Mark Fleischmann, Mia Lloyd, Nick Sagar, Suanne Braun, Lachlan Nieboer**  
**Rated: 6/10**

Those who saw the original, this sequel will only be a takeoff where things left off. However, one does have to see the first one to enjoy this rather cute but preposterous love story. Preposterous because not only are there three Vanessa Hudgens but they switch again just so one from the original pair is able to spend time with her ex and they need closure while everyone around them is hell bent on getting them together

because they look sweet together.

Preposterous because one of the three Hudgens' is a villain and wants the crown for herself, steals all the jewels and disappear to a non-extradition country! Her own millions have sadly disappeared and her minions are not below stealing or kidnapping from the royalty even though she is one.

But it is a Christmas movie as well and everything has to be sweet and cute with plenty of love thrown in for good measure.

Also, one can't have a Christmas movie where the halls and the entire façade doesn't scream Christmas in bold letters. With everything warm and fuzzy around you, all you have to do is sit back with a mug of hot chocolate and enjoy this one.

— Shalini Sakseena

**Sets the Christmas mood**

**HOLIDAY HOME MAKEOVER WITH MR CHRISTMAS**  
**Netflix**  
**\*ing: Benjamin Bradley**  
**Rated: 6/10**

Even though Christmas is more than a month away, people will tell you that there isn't enough time to ensure things are in place if you want to get into the spirit of this festival. *Holiday Home Makeover with Mr Christmas* with Benjamin Bradley who is known in the industry and his clients as a designer of incredibly detailed, atmospheric and beautiful interiors is a series just right for you if you want to know how things are done.

If you don't know how to do it right, then also, the show is interesting to

watch. So much so that one actually wants to go out there but all the decorations there are so make one's home welcoming and full of the festival spirit with family and friends and good food to eat.

One can always tweak it to Indian tastes and we do love a festival and love to celebrate it with all its trimmings — tree, food and OTT decorations. And even if you don't have to go all overboard, Bradley gives little gems of advice on how one can still celebrate without being ostentatious and staying away from the commercial aspect of this festival.

But it is difficult to stay grounded when he goes around doing the absolutely beautiful home transformation. All one wants is to enjoy the brilliance of the reveal.

— Shalini Sakseena

**A SIMPLE MURDER**  
**SonyLiv, 7 Episodes**  
**\*ing: Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, Priya Anand and others**  
**Rated: 5/10**

A lot of content is being generated on the OTT platform and in a hurry at that. Reason is simple, once the cinemas open and start getting populated the relegation of alternate

**NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL**

entertainment avenues will become a natural process. Of course, committed OTT viewers will stay and carry on with their web series but the vertical surge of viewership will recede — equally vertically once life returns to normal.

Sensing this as no rocket science,

the producers are dishing out jiffies and also getting lapped up by home bound bored viewers. *A Simple Murder*, in that sense is not so much of a drag, but calling it run-of-the-mill small budget series would not be an exaggeration.

Greedy is of course at the centre of

the story revolving around a proposed *supari* killing but on actual show is the degeneration of society at large. Be it marital relationship, adultery, sexual harassment at office, political criminal nexus, contract killing or, for that matter, even honour killing and inter-religion marriages, there is a peep into

the pace is slow even though there is so much happening all at the same time. It is amazing to see how the makers have slowed the storyline without compromising on the tautness and the whole nail-biting thing to know what comes next.

There are so many characters and their stories and each intertwined rather beautifully to bring you a tale of a father's love for his son and how a parent would go to any lengths to protect their child whatever be the cost, even it means at the cost of one's profession and belief.

It is definitely a show that is not to be missed. Unfortunately, one will have to wait and see what the final outcome of this one will be since only half will be aired from December 6, 2020. The series will also air on Zee Cafe.

— Shalini Sakseena

**Reality bites, and how!**

**DAS CAPITAL — GULAMON KI RAJDHANI**  
**On Cinemapreneur**  
**\*ing: Yashpal Sharma & others**  
**Rated: 5.5/10**

If you don't mind added depression in these Corona days, *Das Capital* will grip you with a dark drama embedded in a complete loss of faith in humanity and humanness. Seeped in corruption, our society has nowhere to go except to hell and there is no gentle way of saying this. *Das Capital* encases the total ruination of man's integrity, his existential compulsions and his ugly will to survive the life and times of modernity, whatever it takes. And if it takes selling his loving wife's dead body to skeleton sellers, so be it.

Yashpal Sharma gives a stellar performance throwing up all this dirt at you with such convincing depression that you would be part of his society to not get affected.

This story of poverty, corruption and all that a rural society is beset with unfolds in the

villages of Bihar where the BDO is king and king-maker, a shark who has no qualms in biting away the last flesh of decency from a trait called scruples. He makes money and down the line the racket eats up the insides of everybody — the common man, the clerks and even the crops and vegetation of the area.

What gets you in the end is the fact that all this is reality and it happens all the time as so-called well meaning administrators, politicians and NGOs look the other way, if at all they are not party to the chain of organised corruption.

Yashpal as a reserve quota clerk trying to make ends meet gives a reality slap to the audience with his topline performance which brings tears to your eyes along with his.

You cry with him, for him and ultimately for yourself for living in such torrid times where the life and death of a common man is of no consequence whatsoever.

*Das Capital* is a very gripping drama but too negative to take in, in such negative times.

all aspects of what urban jungles ae all about.

Showcasing such wholesome negativity comes with obvious baggage and that's what *A Simple Murder* carries with a lot of unease.

The characterisation and the actors chosen for it complement each other with excellence but for a story to carry on through the seven episodes and then into a second season, there needs to be something more.

**T E L L Y T A L E**

**FUN FILLED DIWALI WITH ABHIGYA**

While the pandemic might have posed its own challenges for all of us this year, Diwali brought with it a ray of hope. To delight its viewers, Zee TV had a special Diwali surprise in store for audiences with a three-hour special



episode of *Kumkum Bhagya*, *Jashn Milan Ka*. Fans of the show had been waiting with bated breath for Pragya to return to Abhi's house. With the festival marking a new beginning for the audience's favourite on-screen *jodi*, viewers got a chance to witness Pragya receiving a *bahu*-like welcome from Dadi, followed by Abhi Pragya performing the Diwali rituals together with hope in their hearts.

The fun and entertainment quotient of the show doubled up as Abhi calls for a Diwali celebration at his house and joining him were all the popular Zee TV faces like Karan-Preeta (Dheera) Dhoopar and Shraddha Arya), Ranbir-Prachi (Krishna Kaul and Mugdha Chapekar), Agasty-Chhoti Guddan (Savi Thakur and Kanika Mann) and Rishabh-Shrishti (Manit Joura and Anjum Fakhir) along with TV stars like Krystle D'Souza, Surbhi Jyoti, Avinash Mishra, Vrushika Mehta and Deepika Singh.

During the shoot of *Jashn Milan Ka*, Sriti Jha and Shabir Ahluwalia's passionate act left everyone mesmerised. The *Kumkum Bhagya* stars swayed to romantic songs like *Ve Maahi* and *Tu Hi Yaar Mera* and we have to say that their chemistry was out of this world. But what was surprising was that our favourite Abhi and Pragya pulled off this flawless act without any prior rehearsals. Their steps, their co-ordination and their expressions were all on point as these seasoned actors danced in sync and complemented each other extremely well.

Talking about their *Jashn Milan Ka* act, Shabir Ahluwalia revealed: "It was absolutely fun performing with Sriti once again. We've done several acts together, but this one was special. However, we

didn't get any time at all to rehearse. First of all, we were shooting for *Kumkum Bhagya* back-to-back and after that, we wanted to avoid contact with a lot of people as much as possible during the pandemic. Hence, we came directly to the set on the day of the shoot, we went over the steps with our choreographers and then went for the take. It all went smoothly, and it was really fun."

Sriti Jha also added: "It was a beautiful act, and we had some really amazing songs, and the choreography was simple and sweet. So, it was easy to get into the groove of things without much effort. It is always great dancing with Shabir and we had lots of fun while shooting for *Jashn Milan Ka*."

While Sriti and Shabir have reunited, Alia (Reyhnaa Pandit) is planning a new twist. What will happen next in AbhiGya's life?

**INDIAN IDOLS MEET KAPIL**

With *Indian Idol Season 12* on the anvil, this weekend, *The Kapil Sharma Show* will extend a warm welcome to the judges Himesh Reshammiya and Vishal Dadlani along with the charming host of the show, Aditya Narayan. Apart from all the fun and banter, there is a little surprise in store for the viewers. The viewers will be privy to some of the *Indian Idol* aspirants of this season — Mohd Danish, Shanmukha Priya, Sireesha Bhagavatula, Ashish Kulkarni and Anjali Gakwad. These talented singers had the



entire cast of *TKSS* in awe with their unique *jugalbandi*!

If this is a teaser, then we can't keep calm for the upcoming *Indian Idol S12* which is all set to premiere on November 28 and will air every Sat-Sun from 8 pm onwards.

**RAJU SRIVASTAV IS A FAN OF HAPPY**

Known for his incredible comic timing and excellent mass appeal, ace comedian, Raju Srivastav recently disclosed how much he loves and enjoys watching &TV's *Bhabiji Ghar Par Hai* and *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan*, both which have a strong Kanpur flavour in dialect and narrative. Raju being a Kanpur native, is a 'High Voltage Fan' of both these shows.

On his two favourite shows, Raju Srivastav says: "I am from Kanpur as you all know, and my family and I thoroughly enjoy watching the two shows. *Dono hi*



shows *mein ek apnapan hai aur dhansu Kanpuria jumle hain joh sabhi ko hasate hain*. We have till date never missed a single episode. I especially love Happu Singh and his family, their constant *nok-jhoks* and typical Kanpuria one-liners — *Niyocchavar Kar Do, Arrey Dada, Gurde Chheel Denge, Guiyaan Ke Khet Mein, Kantaap, Nimbu Nichod Denge, Bhaukal, Chiraand*, are my favourites. *Sabhi kirdaron ka chikai karne ka andaaz nirala hain. Mein toh Kehta Hoon, agar aap UP ya Delhi ke nivasi hain toh you are very lucky as now both these shows are now available in all the pay packs of Den cable. Dono shows ke naye episodes dekh kar aap sabhi haste-haste lotpot ho jayegein!*"

Replying to Raju ji, Daroga Happu Singh (Yogesh Tripathi) from &TV's *Happu Ki Ultan Paltan* says: "Thank you, Raju ji, for your immense love and encouragement. We are quite humbled and feel elated to be admired by our own *kanpur ke, aur bharat ke itne bade aur mashqoor haasy abhineta. Ab iss Khushi ke saath, hum ek aur khushi bhi jod dete hain. Toh khoob haste rahiye aur &TV ke shows ko apne poore parivaar se saath roz maaze se dekhite rahiye.*"

**AECL SEASON 3 IS HERE**

After the successful completion of IPL 2020, the fun is yet to continue for the cricket lovers. As the fans are eager to watch their favourite celebrities and artists, battling it out on the ground with bat and ball, Artist Event Cricket League (AECL) is soon to commence their upcoming Season 3 of the league.

Formed in 2019, AECL has been a mega success with eight and 16 teams participating in the respective seasons. Eminent and renowned personalities including Sapna Choudhary, Hussain Kuwajerwala, Millind Gaba, Shibani Kashyap, Ashok Mastie, Tarun Dutt and DJ Sumit Sethi were present along with the founder/MD of AECL Ashish Mathur to officially announce the launch.

The matches will be played with a tennis ball with 12 overs for each side during the league stage and 15 overs for each side during the knockout stages.

**‘You should be able to convince audience’**

RATI PANDEY, who plays Adi Parashakti on Dangal TV's Devi Adi Parashakti, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about her fear of getting back to shoot, why she chose to do reality shows and her Bollywood plans

■ **How tough was it to come back to shoot after lockdown opened?**

As much as I was excited to be back on set but there was also a sense of fear. Actors don't have the luxury to always wear a mask so that was something I was scared of. But I was sure that our producers took all the precautions and sanitised the sets frequently. Our shots were also spaced out and only the people required were allowed on the sets. So yes, it was fun yet different.

■ **How's your equation with the co-stars? Is there a bit of awkwardness due to social distancing that needs to be maintained?**

The equation was nice as I knew Kanan and Tarun and are good friends. Before the lockdown we had a really good time but after the lockdown we had to shoot separately to follow social distancing. We hardly met. We miss each other while shooting.

■ **Is the costume heavy to walk around in? How much time does it take to be ready?**

Definitely the costume is heavy. It used to take two hours to get ready. We have assumed our Gods and Goddesses wearing heavy jewellery so I had to follow that according to the genre of the show. Also, after the lockdown I had to do my own make-up and it used to take time as we had to sanitise our rooms and maintain hygiene. It has already been four months and I have now started getting used to this.

■ **You have been part of many reality shows as well. What was the attraction?**

I have not been a part of many reality shows apart from two or three probably. It's a really different experience altogether. Working for daily soaps is a bit stressful, you are always sleep deprived and it's kind of monotonous. So, it was a really good break from that genre. The good thing about reality shows is that you get to be yourself and as an individual you get to show your own talent. I love dance shows but I don't think I'll be a part of any conversational show.

■ **Did you have apprehensions in taking up Shaadi Mubarak?**

I was a little apprehensive about the character as it was an elderly one. When I watched the show, I came to know that it was a central character and there will be a love angle and it's an interesting concept. The lead of the show is a wedding planner so we get to do a lot of new things daily as we interact with different characters and it's a mixture of lot of emotions and



**The costume is heavy. It used to take two hours to get ready. We have assumed our Gods and Goddesses wearing heavy jewellery so I had to follow that. Also, after the lockdown I had to do my own make-up and it took time as we had to follow proper hygiene as well**

relationships. It's a different show.

■ **How easy is it to play Preeti Jindal?**

I don't consider any character as easy as I am still a learner in this industry. Even today I am nervous on the first day of shoots. It takes time for me to get into the skin of the character. But yes, now I am at ease. The main concern with Preeti Jindal was that it was a replacement and I have never replaced anyone before. It was a challenge as the audience has seen the character as some other person. I am sure I will leave a mark but let's hope the audience accepts me.

■ **Is it okay to draw comparisons when actors are replaced?**

Everybody has their own individuality and personality and pattern of performing. Comparing is like an expectation for the actor to be a mimicry artist. The most important aspect is to get into the skin of the character and then add in your element. You should be able to convince the audience by your performance and that is what matters.

■ **You have hosted shows as well. How has the experience been?**

I have hosted a couple of shows and I love doing it. I would love to get such opportunities. It is very different from acting. I feel actors should not be bound to acting. They must explore all fields of this fraternity. So, I would love to do it again

■ **What about Bollywood plans?**

Every actor dream's to be in Bollywood. So yes, still looking forward. Let's see what's there.



COVID-19

AAP holds awareness campaign

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the national Capital witnessing fresh surge in coronavirus cases, Aam Aadmi Party leaders led by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia organised an awareness campaign on social distancing and distributed free masks in various Assembly constituencies.

In this regard, a mask distribution and social distancing awareness campaign was organised at Shanti Marg, West Vinod Nagar and Narwana Road in Patparganj focusing on the local citizens, fruit sellers and shopkeepers.

Sisodia said we are respectfully appealing to people to wear masks and follow the social distancing norms. But there are few folks who are not following the rules and hence, it is important to take strict action against them. He said wearing masks is the safest way to prevent one as well as others from getting infected with coronavirus.

"The Delhi Government has taken every possible step to handle the Covid situation with proper home isolation mea-



sures and enough Covid beds in hospitals. But, it is important to not let the spread of the disease increase much. Hence, it is important to follow the social distancing norms and wear masks until there is a reliable vaccine for Covid 19," he said.

Ward councillor Geeta Rawat along with large numbers of volunteers and local citizens joined the awareness

drive. Post the drive, Sisodia had rounds of conversation with citizens and volunteers at his camp office in Patparganj.

Meanwhile, party MLA from Kalkaji Assembly constituency Atishi distributed protective face masks in Govindpuri to enforce Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal's urgent plea to follow Covid-19 safety protocols. She encouraged the

**We are respectfully appealing to people to wear masks and follow the social distancing norms. But there are few folks who are not following the rules and hence, it is important to take strict action against them. — Manish Sisodia**

residents and shop owners to keep a set of masks and further distribute to those who are not wearing them.

Atishi began her awareness drive in Ward 91 of Kalkaji and walked all the way up to Nehru camp, urging people along the way to wear a mask and follow social distancing. She also emphasised that just by following these two simple rules, the possibility of contracting the virus can be reduced. The fight against Covid19 is still on and it is our collective responsibility to protect each other, she said.

2 held for robbing taxi in Govindpuri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested two men for allegedly robbing a taxi in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area.

The accused have been identified as Akshay (20) and Shantanu Kumar Pandey (29). Police said that the duo along with their associate Vineet Singh, who is still absconding, were planning to sell the robbed vehicle but failed to do so.

"Singh works in a steel factory in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar," said police.

According to RP Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, the incident took place on the intervening night of November 17 and 18 when the driver picked up a woman passenger from Tughlakabad Extension.

"On the way, when he stopped the car near a traffic signal, the accused, who also came in a taxi, forcibly entered the car. They evicted the driver and the woman passenger and fled with the vehicle," said the DCP.



Devotees offer prayers to the rising sun on the occasion of Chhath Puja in New Delhi on Saturday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Doctor commits suicide over wife's affair

**Gurugram:** A doctor, who worked in a prominent hospital in Gurugram, allegedly committed suicide by injecting himself with a poisonous substance at his flat on Saturday. It is suspected that he was mentally disturbed over his wife's alleged extramarital affair, the police said.

Police said, they have received a complaint against the deceased's wife given by the victim's father Vinod Sodhi at Sector-50 police station in Gurugram.

According to the police the deceased has been identified as Manuj Sodhi (47), a native of Bhiwadi in Rajasthan.

The victim was a doctor in a hospital in Gurugram and he was posted at the ICU ward.

Sodhi was living with his wife Monika and children in his Gurugram flat located in Orchid Petals Society at Sector-49. The couple had a love marriage around 22 years ago, the police said. **SR**

12 people injured after UP roadways bus collides with tree on Mathura Road

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

At least 12 people were injured after an Uttar Pradesh roadways bus collided with a tree on Mathura Road in national Capital on the early hours of Saturday. Police said the driver fled after the accident and efforts are underway to nab him.

According to RP Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, a police control room (PCR) call regarding the accident near Sukhdev Vihar was received around 3:22 am following which Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) was dispatched for the spot.

"When police team reached the spot they found that 12 passengers sustained minor injuries who were then shifted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre, while 10 more were given first-aid at the spot by CATS ambulance staff," the DCP said.

"During initial investigation it was revealed that the crash took place in front of the Central Road Research Institute near a CNG pump. The bus was coming from Bah in Agra and was headed for ISBT Sarai Kale Khan," the DCP said.



"A case of accident has been registered and an investigation is in progress. Police have informed Agra depot officials regarding the accident," the DCP added.

AAP to hold series of Press conferences to expose rampant 'corruption' in corporations

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled municipal Corporations of being involved in "corruption", the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj on Saturday said the party will hold a series of 181 Press conferences to expose the rampant "corruption" in the corporations.

Presenting the 'Municipal Corporation of Delhi' (MCDs) audit report, Bhardwaj said that corporations in Delhi are poor even after the property rates are higher compared to other States. "The councillors are rich here because of the rampant corruption in property tax collection in the MCD by the BJP leaders," he said.

The AAP leader said when the AAP Government was formed in 2015, the Delhi Government had an income of Rs 30,000 crore, which got increased to Rs 60,000 crore in a span of four years without increasing taxes, but the MCD's taxpayers decreased in a year.

As per the report, in 2015-16, the MCD collected taxes from 3,95,219 people, the next year, they collected taxes from 4,41,879 people. The taxpayers decreased in 2017-18, and the MCD collected taxes from only 4,05,774 people, he said.

Bhardwaj also said as per the MCD audit report, the tax from the Parsvanath Developers never reached the MCD treasury despite sending a tax notice of Rs 7 crores, which means it went into the pockets of BJP leaders, or officials or both.

The AAP spokesperson

added, "The main source of revenue of the municipal corporations across India is property tax. And the surprising fact is that in Delhi, which is the capital of India and where the property tax is one of the highest in the country due to high property rates, the MCDs are lacking funds.

The MCD here is poor but the councilors are rich. How is it possible?

Bhardwaj said, "The lower the taxes the higher the compliance. The lower the taxes, the more and more people will pay the taxes and the treasury of the government will have a much higher collection. But, a reverse trajectory has been noticed in MCD, where the taxes are higher and the compliance and collection are lower, and the corruption is more.

Bhardwaj also said the property tax collection in 2015-16 was Rs 336 crores, it was Rs 614 crores in 2016-17, and it was again decreased to Rs 553 crores in 2017-18.

"Another instance which has been mentioned in their audit report, the property is situated at Magazine Road in the Civil Lines area in the name of Parsvnath Developers.

This property was vacant land till 2015-16, which is why their taxes were Rs 65,43,000. After that, the property was redeveloped, and 23 towers of 10 stories each were constructed. You can imagine the amount of tax that the MCD was collecting from this single property. The tax which was collected owing to the land being vacant was seized, and the MCD did an assessment and gave a tax notice of Rs 7,72,00,000," he said.

NMC to provide 4 PPE kits to those who carry body to perform last rites at Nigam Bodh Ghat

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NMC) will provide four Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Kits to those who carry the body to perform last rites at Nigam Bodh Ghat.

A senior NMC official said the corporation has earmarked 52 wooden pyres and three 'Compressed natural gas' (CNG) furnaces for last rites of Covid deaths.

"We have made adequate arrangements for cremation of bodies. The total number of bodies of Covid patients received is not more than 22 in a day for the last ten days. Twenty bodies of Covid patients came for last rites on Saturday. North Corporation also appeals to the citizens to come in less numbers with bodies for last rites as it will help in maintaining social distance. More rush may lead to spread of virus," he added.

The Municipal Health Officer of North DMC has also asked his counterparts in other both corporations to ensure to route bodies to attached cremation grounds to the hospital as per the order issued earlier. The medical superintendents of Covid hospitals have also been asked to release bodies at intervals so that there is no rush at cremation ground at one point of time, he said.

Moreover, three new CNG furnaces are likely to start on Monday so six furnaces would be available for last rites, he said.



STUBBLE FOR VILLAGER A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Rajesh Dhanda, a villager from Haryana, Budhana village in Hissar district has turned farm stubble into a business opportunity by collecting agro-waste from farmers and selling it to various districts in Rajasthan

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ HISSAR

Rajesh Dhanda, a villager from Haryana, Budhana village in Hissar district has turned farm stubble into a business opportunity by collecting agro-waste from farmers and selling it to various districts in Rajasthan.

Several reports came up this year which showed stubble residue being burned blatantly in the region of Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The national Capital was also gripped in pollution, after a major contribution being the smoke and soot coming from the fields of Punjab and Haryana where farmers burn paddy stubble as they prepare the farm for the rabi crop.

During the season, Dhanda provides a super seeder machine, which is used for sowing seeds to farmers, in exchange for paddy stubble. "I encourage farmers in my village not to burn paralli (stubble) and give it to me. In exchange I provide them with super seeder to sow their next crop," said Dhanda.

"I collect these paddy stubbles in my fields and various traders from Rajasthan's Churu, Rajgarh, Bikaner and Jaipur come here with their truck to buy this stubble residue," said Dhanda. "Traders pay around Rs 7,000 to Rs 9,000 for paddy stubble per acre and it is sometimes also sold for Rs 250 per quintal. This year in my village I had taken stubble residue from around 450 acres of land," said Dhanda.

"This practice and awareness regarding different use of stubble residue rather than burning was initiated by me in my village five years ago and this year I had earned around 10 lakhs rupees from the stubble residue I collected from the farms of my village," said Dhanda.



"Collection of stubble residue also provides wages to around 10 to 15 people. I wish to extend this stubble residue collection to other villages next year," Dhanda added.

Punjab and Haryana alone

generate 30 million tonnes of paddy straw every year, of which only a small fraction is used for such trading, as per experts.

"In order to boost farmers for not burning stubble, the Haryana Government this year initiated a scheme and those farmers who were not burning stubble were given Rs 100 per acre or Rs 50 per quintal as an incentive," said Surendra Saini, the District Public Relation Officer (DPRO), Hissar.

"For storage of paddy straw, a field or a community centre was also designated in every village to store paddy straw. The buyers had also visited these places to buy stubble residue. The farmers were also allowed to buy paddy straw and sell it further," said Saini.

"The Government's process of incentive for stubble residue takes time as we have to register first on website and then initiate the process but giving directly to Rajesh has benefited us as in exchange he provides us super seeder machine which saves us a lot of money as compared to what government is giving us," said Harish, a resident of Budhana village.

JOIN INDIAN COAST GUARD (MINISTRY OF DEFENCE) AS NAVIK (DOMESTIC BRANCH) 10th ENTRY - 01/2021 BATCH APPLICATION WILL BE ACCEPTED 'ONLINE' FROM 30 NOV TO 07 DEC 2020 PRINT OUT OF E-ADMIT CARD FROM 19 DEC - 25 DEC 2020

1. Applications are invited from Indian male candidates possessing educational qualifications and age as prescribed below for recruitment to the post of Navik (Domestic Branch) (Cook & Steward) in the Indian Coast Guard, an Armed Force of the Union.

2. Educational Qualification. 10th Class with 50% marks in aggregate from a board of Education recognised by Central/State Government (5% relaxation in above minimum cut off will be given for SC / ST candidates and outstanding sports person of National level who have obtained 1st, 1ind or 1lird position in any field of sports events at the Open National Championship/ Inter-state National Championship).

3. Job Requirements.

(a) Cook. They would be required to prepare food as per menu (both vegetarian and non-vegetarian including handling of meat products) and accounting of ration. In addition, they will also be allotted other duties for efficient running of the organisation.

(b) Steward. They would be required to serve food in the Officer's mess as waiters, housekeeping, maintenance and accounting of funds, wine and stores handling, preparation of menu etc. In addition, they will also be allotted other duties for efficient running of the organisation.

4. Vacancy. The total post for Navik (DB) 01/2021 batch is 50. (approximately).

UR (GEN)	EWS	OB	ST	SC	Total
20	5	14	3	8	50

Note:- These vacancies are tentative and may change depending on availability of training slots.

5. Age. 18 to 22 years as on 01 Apr 2021 i.e. born between 01 Apr 1999 to 31 Mar 2003, both dates are inclusive. (Upper age relaxation of 5 years for SC / ST and 3 years for OBC candidates). Selection procedure includes Written Test and Physical Fitness Tests followed by Medical Examination.

6. Applications will be accepted 'Online' only from 30 Nov to 07 Dec 2020 till 1700 Hrs. Candidates are to login www.joinindiancoastguard.gov.in The Recruitment Zone and State wise examination centres are listed below:-

Ser	Zone	Examination Centre	States -Candidates Residing/Domicile
(a)	Northern Zone	Noida	Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
(b)	North-Eastern Zone	Kolkata	Bihar, Jharkhand, Mizoram, West Bengal, Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Tripura.
(c)	Eastern Zone	Bhubaneswar	Odisha
(d)	Western Zone	Chennai	Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Union Territory of Puducherry.
(e)	Western Zone	Mumbai	Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
(f)	Western Zone	Kochi	Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Union Territory of Daman & Diu and Dadra Nagar Haveli.
(g)	North-West Zone	Gandhi Nagar	Kerala, Lakshadweep and Karnataka.
(h)	North-West Zone	Gandhi Nagar	Gujarat

Note:- The candidates are to choose only one choice of Centre from the list mentioned against state to which they belong to. However, the centre opted can be changed by ICG view administrative reasons. The Indian Coast Guard reserves the right to cancel/ re-conduct the examination of a particular Centre or the entire recruitment at any stage (Written Exam/PFT/Medicals) without assigning any reason.

7. Important Instructions.

(a) The candidates are to choose only one choice of Centre from the list mentioned against state to which they belong to. However, the centre opted can be changed by ICG view administrative reasons. Indian Coast Guard reserves the right to cancel/ re-conduct the examination of a particular Centre on the entire exam at any time without assigning any reason.

(b) Cut off percentage (%) of a particular State / Centre will be decided depending upon the number of applications with higher percentage received.

(c) Last date for 'Online' applications is 07 Dec till 1700 Hrs. For detailed eligibility criteria, filling up of forms and other details, download the full Advertisement from Indian Coast Guard website www.joinindiancoastguard.gov.in

(d) Candidate needs to read the complete advertisement. Showing ignorance at the time of registration at examination Centre and not meeting eligibility criteria will not be entertained.

\* Candidates to see Coast Guard Recruitment Website for complete update. This is an indicative advertisement only.

CAUTION: SELECTION IN INDIAN COAST GUARD IS FAIR AND ON MERIT BASIS. CANDIDATE SHOULD NOT FALL PREY TO UNSCRUPULOUS PERSONS POSING AS RECRUITMENT AGENTS. FOR COMPLAINT AGAINST SUCH PERSONS / AGENTS, CANDIDATE MUST APPROACH THE DIRECTOR (RECRUITMENT) COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS, RECRUITMENT CENTER, NOIDA ON TELEPHONE - 0120-2975817.

DISCLAIMER

The terms and condition given in this advertisement are subject to change and should therefore be treated as guidelines only. Details available on Indian Coast Guard website www.joinindiancoastguard.gov.in as updated periodically will be final.

LAST DATE FOR ONLINE APPLICATION - 07 Dec 2020

davp 10119/11/0009/2021



# Shivakumar gets CBI summons in DA case

**Bengaluru:** Congress Karnataka unit president D K Shivakumar on Saturday said he has received summons from the CBI in connection with a disproportionate assets case, and he will be appearing before the investigating agency on November 25. “It is true that the CBI has issued summons, on November 19. CBI officers had come to my house to issue summons, but we were not here as we were attending a personal event. Next day morning when I came home, they issued me summons,” Shivakumar said. Speaking to reporters here, he said CBI has asked him to appear on November 23 at around 4 pm, but it will not be

possible on that day as he along with Congress legislature party leader Siddaramaiah will be touring Maski and Basavakalyana assembly constituencies, where bypolls are likely to be announced soon. “From tomorrow I will be touring Hospete (Ballari), Maski (Raichur), Basavakalyana (Bidar). I will be back on November 25. I have officially communicated that I can appear in the afternoon that day and have also spoken to CBI officials over phone and they have agreed to it,” he added. On November 19, Shivakumar’s daughter Aishwarya had got engaged to senior BJP leader S M Krishnas

grandson and the late Cafe Coffee Day founder V G Siddharthas son Amartya. CBI on October 5 had conducted searches at 14 locations, including in Karnataka, Delhi and Mumbai at the premises linked to Shivakumar and others. The investigating agency had said searches have led to recovery of Rs 57 lakh cash and several documents, including property documents, bank related information, computer hard disk etc, and the investigation is continuing. The CBI had also registered a case against Shivakumar and his family members on the allegations of possession of disproportionate assets worth Rs 74.93 crore. **PTI**

# Maha deaths plunge to 62

■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 deaths plunged to 62 in Maharashtra on Saturday, even as the infections went up marginally to 5,760 in the state. A day after Maharashtra logged 155 more deaths and 5640 fresh infections, the number of deaths came down 93, while the infections rose by 120 in the state. With 62 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in the state increased from 46,511 to 46,573. Similarly, with 5670 fresh infections, the total infected cases jumped from 17,68,695 to 17,74,455. As 4,088 more people were discharged from various hospitals the number of people discharged from the hospitals on Saturday after full recovery since the second week of March this year went up to 16,47,004. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 92.89 per cent to 92.82 per cent. With 17 new deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai went up from 10,639 to 10,656, while the infections rose by 1,093, triggering a jump in the total infections in the

metropolis from 273,486 to 2,74,579. Meanwhile, the number of “active cases” total cases rose from 78,272 to 79,873. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.62 per cent. Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,44,750 to 3,45,663 while the total number of deaths in Pune increased from 7266 to 7278. Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 2,33,866 to 2,34,552, while there was no increase in the pandemic toll which stood at 5436. A day after Maharashtra recorded a milestone of sorts as the number of the Covid-19 tests conducted in the state crossed 1 crore figure to touch a figure of staggering 1,00,35,665, the total number of tests went up to 1,01,20,470. Of the total samples sent to laboratories, 17,74,455 have tested positive (17.53 per cent) for COVID-19 until Saturday. Currently, 5,22,819 people are in home quarantine while 4569 people are in institutional quarantine.

# Yogi orders Gangster Act slapped on liquor mafia

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday ordered stern action under the stringent Gangster Act against those found selling spurious liquor in the state. The chief minister cracked the whip a day after five persons died and many others were taken ill after consuming hooch in a village in Allahabad district on Friday. “The Chief Minister has taken serious cognizance of the incident in Allahabad in which some people died,” said the Uttar Pradesh government in an official statement. “Those found selling spurious liquor should be booked under Gangster Act, and their properties should be seized. The seized property should be auctioned and the money received from it be used to help the aggrieved families,” the statement said in a direction to government officials.

The hooch tragedy occurred in Amlia village under Gangapur Phulpur Police Station of Allahabad district. Allahabad’s Senior Superintendent of Police Sarvashreshtha Tripathi had on Friday told PTI that five people died while others were admitted to Swaroopnani Nehru Hospital as a precautionary measure. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav, meanwhile, on Saturday said the BJP Government is not bothered about the health and life of the common people. Akhilesh Yadav said despite the tall claims by the chief minister, the spurious liquor business has been registering speedy growth in the state. “The confidence level of the liquor mafia is so high that they are violating all laws and laid down norms and selling spurious liquor openly,” he said. **PTI**

# Crime Branch to probe voice clipping purported to be of Swapna Suresh

**Thiruvananthapuram:** The Crime Branch will conduct a probe into the voiceclip purported to be of gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh, now in judicial custody, alleging that central agencies were putting pressure on her to give a statement against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. The direction in this regard was issued by state DGP, Loknath Behera on Saturday. A Special Investigation Team of the crime branch has been entrusted to conduct the preliminary enquiry, police sources said. In the clip, released by an online portal on Wednesday, Suresh, lodged in a women’s prison here, purportedly said that the investigation agencies allegedly tried to force her to name Vijayan, which she refused to do. She was also asked to sign documents regarding her statement without being permitted to read them, it was alleged

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had requested Jail DGP Rishi Raj Singh to conduct a probe into the circulation of the voice clipping, alleged to be of Suresh. Singh had informed DGP Behera about the ED’s request, following which a preliminary probe by the crime branch has been ordered. The Customs, the National Investigation Agency and the ED conducted separate probes into the gold smuggling racket using a diplomatic channel that was unearthed with the seizure of Rs 15 crore worth of the precious metal from a baggage of the UAE consulate at the airport here on July 5. The ruling CPI(M) had said ‘attempts’ to force the accused to turn approver amounts to challenging democracy and the law of the land, while Union minister V Muraleedharan had alleged that it was a ‘political plot’ to divert attention from corruption charges, ahead of the local body polls next month. **PTI**

# 1,781 new Covid-19 cases in Karnataka, 20 deaths

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka reported 1,781 new COVID-19 cases and 20 fatalities on Saturday, taking the total number of infections to 8,71,342 and the toll to 11,641. The day also saw 1,799 patients getting discharged after recovery. Bengaluru Urban topped the list of fresh infections, accounting for 972 cases. Cumulatively 8,71,342 COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed in Karnataka, which includes 11,641 deaths and 8,34,968 discharges, the health department said in its bulletin. It said that out of 24,714 active cases, 24,220 patients are in isolation at designated hospitals and are stable, while 494 are in Intensive Care Units.

Ten out of the total 20 deaths reported on Saturday are from Bengaluru Urban, followed by Dakshina Kannada (3), Tumakuru (2), Ballari, Dharwad, Haveri, Kolar and Mysuru (1). Most of the deceased either had a history of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) or Influenza-like illness (ILI). Mysuru followed Bengaluru Urban in the number of new cases with 126. Tumakuru had 92, Vijayapura 63, Dakshina Kannada 46, Chikkaballapura 38, Ballari and Mandya 37. The rest of the cases were scattered in other parts of the state. Bengaluru Urban district also topped the list of positive cases with a total of 3,62,626 infections, followed by Mysuru 49,923 and Ballari 38,055. **PTI**

# Security being used as pretext to impede, customise democracy in J&K: Farooq

**Srinagar:** The PAGD continued on Saturday with its tirade against the administration of its candidates being allegedly prevented from campaigning and security used as a “pretext to impede and customize democracy” in Jammu and Kashmir, a week before the first democratic exercise post the abrogation of its special status. People’s Alliance for Gupkar Declaration president Farooq Abdullah sent a two-page letter to Jammu and Kashmir Election Commissioner K K Sharma, saying providing security to a select few and “literally intern” the rest was a “gross interference” in a democracy. “I am taking the liberty of writing to you about the upcoming DDC (district development council) elections. A strange and a

unique feature has come to the fore,” the National Conference leader said in the letter. “Candidates put up by the PAGD are immediately whisked away to ‘secure locations’ in the name of security and confined to those ‘secure locations,’” he said. “They are not allowed to canvass, they are completely out of touch with those from whom they are supposed to seek votes.” The former chief minister said the current state of affairs in the realm of security was “blatantly oriented” towards providing security to a select few and confining others. “This comes across more as an attempt to interfere in the democratic process than any real concern for the wellbeing of the contestants. Security cannot and should not be

used as a tool or an excuse to interfere in democratic processes,” the Srinagar MP said. The PAGD president’s letter comes amid allegations by the Valley’s major political parties, including the NC and the Peoples Democratic Party, of not having a level-playing field for the polls. The parties have accused the administration of locking up their candidates in accommodations at several places and not allowing them to campaign. The DDC polls will be held in eight phases beginning November 28 and ends on December 24. The PAGD is an alliance of several political parties seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status abrogated by the Centre in August last year. **PTI**



Tourists visit a water stream frozen due to drop in the temperature at Nursery near Sissu in Lahaul-Spiti district on Saturday **PTI**

# Bengal Govt to come out with norms for post-Covid follow-up treatment

**Kolkata:** The West Bengal health Department will soon come out with guidelines on follow-up treatment of those who have recovered from COVID-19, amid rising cases of people falling sick or dying shortly after being cured of the disease, a senior official said on Saturday. Depending on their present health parameters after recovering from COVID-19, the department would divide them into two groups and continue the necessary treatment for a period of at least two months, he said. “There are reports that several of those who recovered from COVID-19 are falling sick again. There are cases where people have even died. So, we have decided that those who have

recovered must continue follow-up treatment,” the official said. The decision was taken following an expert-committee meeting held on Friday. “The follow-up tests will be done as per requirement. A cured patient can go for a test within a week, within a fortnight or after a month depending on the health condition,” he said. The patient need not go to a COVID-19 hospital to undergo the test, he added. “He or she can visit any government hospital where such tests will be done as per the advice of the doctor,” the official said. In the recent past, many of those cured of coronavirus in the state have lost their lives due to acute respiratory distress syndrome or cardiac ailments. **PTI**

# Refugee resettlement: Tripura man shot dead in police firing, 23 hurt

■ AGARTALA

One youth was killed and 23 others including security personnel injured in police firing, attacks and clashes on Saturday as the police had to fire on an agitating mob, who went berserk while observing a shutdown during a protest that had been on for the past six days in northern Tripura to oppose the government’s decision to rehabilitate thousands of refugees. These tribal refugees had fled to adjoining Mizoram 23 years ago following ethnic strife in the state. Police said that 45-years-old Srikanta Das was shot dead and 23 others including security and fire service personnel seriously injured when police had to open fire on the agitating mob that also attacked the security forces at Panisagar in North Tripura district.

“The agitated mob damaged three government and police vehicles and a motor-bike. Government would give Rs 5 lakh relief to the family of Srikanta Das,” North Tripura district Magistrate and Collector Nagesh Kumar told the media on Saturday evening. He said: “Huge contingent of security forces including Tripura State Rifles troopers led by senior police officials were mobilised in Panisagar and Kanchanpur sub-divisions (in North Tripura District) to deal with the situation.” The injured were admitted to various government hospitals. A tweet of Tripura police said: “Even after facing brutal attack, police personnel showed utmost restraint and sensitivity in maintaining law & order and proportionate force was used in self defence in Panisagar incident today (Saturday).” **PNS**

# Youth held for rape attemp in UP’s Fatehpur

**Fatehpur (UP):** A youth was arrested here on Saturday evening for an alleged attempt to rape a 10-year-old girl, police said. Kishanpur police station Pandhari Saroj said around 1 pm on Saturday, the had gone to agriculture fields to attend to the nature’s call when her 19-year-old neighbour tried to rape her. “As the girl started crying, a woman rushed to help her,” the SHO said. **PTI**

# Stop backing terror...

**From page 1** Two policemen were injured during the gunfight and the driver managed to escape. The police said it was likely that the terrorists were “planning a big attack” and that they were headed towards the Kashmir Valley where local elections are due later this month. Modi on Friday held a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and others. “Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to

their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in Jammu & Kashmir,” Modi tweeted. Incidentally, this is the second time in a week that a Pakistani official has been summoned. Last Saturday, India had summoned the Charge d’Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission to register a strong protest over the heavy shelling by Pakistani forces on multiple sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir that left at least nine people dead.

# UP: 24 new Covid deaths, toll rises to 7,524

**Lucknow:** With 24 fresh COVID-19 deaths in Uttar Pradesh, the toll due to the disease rose to 7,524 in the state, while the total cases surged to 5,24,223 with 2,326 new infections, officials said on Saturday. Briefing reporters here, Additional Chief Secretary Medical and Health Amit Mohan Prasad said that in the past 24 hours 2,326 fresh cases were reported from the state. “So far, 4,93,228 COVID-19 patients have recovered from the disease in the state. **PTI**

# 57 trainee officers test Covid +ve at Mussoorie centre

**From page 1** Chopra said that the hostels, mess, administrative office, and the library have been sanitized. “All non-essential departments have been closed, complete sanitation for the entire campus has been undertaken,” said Chopra adding that the academy, the Dehradun District Administration and Health Department of Uttarakhand are working together to address the challenge. There are currently 428 trainee officers of the 95th Foundation Course of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Forest Service (IFS), and Indian Revenue Service (IRS) at the academy campus that started on October 13. Later in a statement, the personnel

ministry said that all officer trainees, who have tested positive, have been quarantined in a dedicated COVID care Centre. “The academy has conducted more than 162 RT-PCR tests in coordination with district authorities since Friday, the statement said. The academy is taking every measure to break the chain of COVID-19 spread in consonance with the guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the District Administration, Dehradun, the ministry said. “The academy has decided to conduct all activities, including training, online till the midnight of December 3, 2020. The protocols relating to social distancing, frequent hand wash and wearing of mask are being strictly followed by the officer trainees and staff members,” it said. The academy had announced special

measures to deal with Covid-19 including keeping medical kits, masks, and sanitizers in each room, allocation of time slots and venues for dining, separate time slot allotment for use of the library among many other measures to tackle Covid-19 spread. Food and other necessities are being delivered to the officer trainees in their hostels by staff who are equipped adequately in protective gear, it added. LBSNAA is a research and training institute on public policy and public administration in India. The academy’s main purpose is to train civil service officers of the IAS and also for Group-A Central Services. After completion of training, the trainee officers are awarded an MA degree in Public Management from Jawaharlal Nehru University. **PNS**

IN THE COURT OF THE HONOURABLE  
ADDITIONAL SUBORDINATE JUDGE OF HOSUR  
I.A.803/2018 & I.A.804/2018 IN O.S.333/2018

**Pillappa @ Pillalaih**, S/o, Munivenkatappa,  
Thiruchipalli @ Village, Thorapalli Agraharam  
Post, Hosur Taluk, Krishnagiri District,  
...Petitioner/Plaintiff

VERSUS

**12. V.Sankar, S/o R.S. Valdeswaram,  
Door No C-197, Saket, New Delhi- 110 017  
13. RamMohan, S/o Ramanathan,  
Door No. A. 23, Saket, New Delhi- 100 017  
... Respondents 12 & 13 in I.A. 803/2018/  
Respondents 2 & 3 in I.A. 804/2018/  
Defendants 12 & 13**

**Public Notice**

Please take notice that the above  
named plaintiff has filed a suit for the relief  
of declaration and permanent injunction  
against you on the file of the Honourable  
Additional Subordinate Judge Court,  
Hosur in O.S.333/2018 and the same is  
posted for your appearance on  
**05.12.2020** at about: **10.30 AM** in person  
or through your counsel and to file your  
objections, failing which that this  
Honourable Additional Subordinate Judge  
Court, Hosur may kindly be passed an  
exparte order against you and decreed the  
suit in favour of the plaintiff without your  
absence.

**M.S.TAMILNATHAN, M.L.A.,**  
Advocate & Notary Public  
Near Peiyathah hole, Opp. Court Building,  
Taluk Office Road, Hosur-635 109, Krishnagiri District.  
Mob: 9443438045, 9489349696

# Covid reinfection unlikely for six..

**From page 1** “This ongoing study involving a large cohort of healthcare workers has shown that being infected with Covid-19 does offer protection against reinfection for most people for at least six months — we found no new symptomatic infections in any of the participants who had tested positive for antibodies, while 89 of those who had tested negative did contract the virus,” he said. Prof Eyre explained that we know from a previous study that antibody levels fall over time, but this latest study shows that there is some immunity in those who have been infected. “We will continue to follow this cohort of staff carefully to see how long protection lasts and whether the previous infection affects the severity of infection if people do get infected again,” he said.

Additionally, the opposite also proved true — healthcare workers who did not have antibodies against Covid-19 were more likely to develop the infection. The latest study is part of a major ongoing staff testing programme supported by the NIHR Oxford Biomedical Research Centre and Public Health England and covered a 30-week period between April and November this year, with 12,180 healthcare workers employed at OUH. “This is an exciting finding, indicating that infection with the virus provides at least short-term protection from re-infection — this news comes in the same month as other encouraging news about Covid vaccines,” said Dr Katie Jeffery, Director of Infection Prevention and Control for OUH. The healthcare workers were tested for antibodies to the virus that causes Covid-19 as a way of detecting who had been infected before. The hospital

tested staff regularly for Covid-19, both when they became unwell with symptoms and also as part of regular testing of well staff. The researchers then followed whether staff who had been infected before had the same number of new Covid-19 infections as those who had not been infected before. During the study, 89 of 11,052 staff without antibodies developed a new infection with symptoms. None of the 1,246 staff with antibodies developed a symptomatic infection. Staff with antibodies were also less likely to test positive for COVID-19 without symptoms, 76 staff without antibodies tested positive compared to just 3 with antibodies. The three healthcare workers with antibodies who tested positive for the virus that causes COVID-19 were all well and did not develop symptoms of COVID-19 again. Susan Hopkins, Deputy Director, National Infection

Service, PHE and one of the study’s authors said: “This study is a fantastic example of how well-structured long-term cohort surveillance can produce hugely useful results. “Studies like this one are absolutely vital in helping us to understand how this new virus behaves and what the implications are for acquired immunity.” “Our comprehensive staff testing programme is revealing a regular stream of valuable information as we try to better understand how to tackle this disease,” added OUH Chief Executive Officer Dr Bruno Holthof. Despite an estimated 51 million people infected with the virus worldwide, with high levels of transmission ongoing, reports of patients becoming re-infected after already having had COVID-19 remain rare. However, up until now there have not been any large-scale studies of how much protection from reinfection people get after Covid-19. **PTI**

# Protesting Punjab farmers agree to lift rail blockade

**From page 1** Buta Singh Burjigill, president of the BKU (Dakonda), said their protests at toll plazas, outside railway stations, shopping malls and residences of BJP leaders will continue. According to railways, it has suffered a loss of Rs 2,220 crore, including Rs 67 crore in passenger revenue, due to the ongoing protest by farmers in Punjab. A total 2,352 passenger trains have been cancelled or diverted since farmers began a protest in September against the Centre’s new farm laws. The Railways said around 230 loaded rakes for Punjab are currently held up outside the State. This includes 78 rakes of coal, 34 of fertiliser, eight each of cement and petroleum, oil and lubricants and 102 containers carrying steel and other commodities. Around 33 rakes are stuck in Punjab itself, it said. The deadlock between the protesting

farmers and the Railways continued with the national transporter rejecting a proposal by the protesters that only freight trains will be allowed to run in the State. The farmers’ organisation that resorted to ‘rail roko’ agitation from September 24 over the farm laws, had already agreed to allow goods trains to run in the State, besides clearing rail tracks and vacating platforms. The Railways has maintained that it needs full guarantee from the State Government that no trains will be disrupted and both passenger and freight trains would be allowed to operate. As per a State Government statement, the industry had suffered losses of Rs 30,000 crore and the major industrial hubs of Ludhiana and Jalandhar had suffered Rs 22,000 crore in losses, while more than 13,500 containers were lying at Dhandari Dry Port, from where they could not be sent to other parts of the country due to the rail transport suspension.



PARL PANEL ASSESSMENT

Exorbitant hospital charges caused more Covid deaths



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Inadequate beds in Government hospitals and absence of specific guidelines for Covid treatment resulted in private hospitals charging exorbitant fees, a Parliamentary panel on Saturday said as it pulled up the Government and asserted that a sustainable pricing model could have averted many deaths.

The first report by any parliamentary committee on the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic was submitted by Chairperson of the parliamentary standing committee on health Ram Gopal Yadav to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu.

Underlining that health-care spending in the country with a population of 1.3 billion is "abysmally low", the panel said the fragility of Indian health ecosystem posed a big hurdle in generating an effective response against the pandemic.

"The committee, therefore, strongly recommends the Government to increase its investments in the public healthcare system and make consistent efforts to achieve the National Health Policy targets of expenditure up to 2.5 per cent of GDP within two years as the set time frame of year 2025 is far away and the public health cannot be jeopardised till that time schedule," the report stated.

The National Health Policy 2017 has set a target of government expenditure on healthcare up to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025 from just 1.15 per cent in 2017.

Stating that the public had to undergo trauma and distress due to absence of a dedicated healthcare system, the committee observed that the number of Government hospital beds in the country were not adequate to handle the increasing number of COVID and non-COVID patients.

"... Cost of health service

delivery increased due to absence of specific guidelines for COVID treatment in private hospitals as a result of which patients were charged exorbitant fees," the committee noted in the report.

Stressing on the need for better partnership between the government and private hospitals in wake of the pandemic and shortage of state-run healthcare facilities, the report said, "The Committee is of the view that arriving at a sustainable pricing model to treat COVID patients could have averted many deaths."

The committee believes healthcare should never be limited to only those who can afford to pay but should move towards the noble vision of universal health coverage. For this to happen, the Government needs to be considerate and support the private health care sector, the report said.

The committee was all praise for healthcare workers and doctors for being on the frontline in handling the deadly virus and said they should have defined working hours, predictably functioning reliever rosters and scheduled off-duty days.

The doctors, who have laid down their lives in fight against the pandemic, must be acknowledged as martyrs and their families be adequately compensated, it suggested in the report.

ED raids seven locations in Srinagar, Ananatnag in J&K

Bank money laundering case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday conducted searches at seven places in Jammu and Kashmir under the provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act in a case relating to suspicious transactions in J&K Bank.

Among these seven locations, six are in Srinagar and one in Ananatnag district.

The ED initiated investigation under PMLA after CID, Srinagar registered an FIR against officials of J & K Bank, unidentified public servants and private persons and others for suspicious transactions in various bank accounts.

It has been alleged in the FIR that the bank accounts were used for routing money of public servants as well as some private parties. Further, bank officials, in connivance with these public servants, deliberately omitted to raise the alerts as required under Anti-Money

Laundering (AML) norms, officials said.

Investigations conducted under PMLA so far have revealed that the transactions in many of these bank accounts maintained with J & K Bank were not genuine and these accounts were utilized for the purpose of laundering, the ED said in a statement.

On the basis of specific information, searches at seven places belonging to accused Mohammad Ibrahim Dar, Murtaza Enterprises, Azad Agro Traders, M & M Cottage Industries and Mohd. Sultan Teli were conducted which resulted in recovery of evidence of money laundering as the bank accounts have been found to be used for routing suspicious transactions, the agency said.

The individuals and entities covered under searches are involved in hospitality and agro based Industries, civil construction and real estate, it said.

India's Covid tally breaches 90.5L mark with 46,232 new infections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's coronavirus tally crossed the 90.5 lakh-mark on Saturday with 46,232 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, even as the total number of tests conducted across the States has crossed the 13-crore mark with the last one crore done in just 10 days. The total cases in the country now stand at 90,50,597 including 4,39,747 active cases and 84,78,124 recoveries. With 564 new deaths, the count mounted to 1,32,726.

The number of active cases remained below five lakh for the eleventh consecutive day. The total recoveries have surged to 84,78,124 pushing the national recovery rate to 93.67 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.47 per cent.

According to ICMR, the total number of tests conducted in India for the detection of COVID-19 infection has crossed the 13-crore mark with last one crore done in just 10

days, while the cumulative positivity rate remained low and continues a downward trajectory, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday.

On Friday 10,66,022 were tested.

The cumulative national COVID-19 positivity rate has declined and stood at 6.93 per cent as on date while the daily positivity rate on Friday was just 4.34 per cent.

Higher volumes of testing eventually lead to low positivity rate, the ministry said.

"An average of more than 10 lakh tests conducted daily has ensured that the cumulative positivity rate is sustained at low levels and is presently following a downward trajectory," the ministry underlined.

Twenty-four states and Union Territories have conducted more tests per million population than India as a whole. Twelve states have lower tests per million population than the national average and they have been advised to substantially ramp up the levels of testing, the ministry under-

scored.

"In view of the increase in coronavirus cases of some of the north Indian states, the Centre has advised all states and Union Territories to ramp up testing," the ministry said.

Around 78.19 per cent of the new recovered cases was contributed by 10 states and UTs.

Delhi saw 8,775 people recovering from COVID, while Maharashtra and Kerala reported 6,945 and 6,398 new recoveries, respectively. Besides, ten states and UTs have contributed 77.69 per cent of the new cases of coronavirus infections. Delhi reported 6,608 cases in a day. Kerala recorded 6,028 new cases while Maharashtra reported 5,640 cases on Friday.

Of the 564 new fatalities, 82.62 per cent have been reported from 10 states and UTs. With 155 deaths, Maharashtra reported 27.48 per cent of the new fatalities, Delhi accounted for 20.92 per cent of the daily toll with 118 deaths.

Country to increase natural gas use by 4-fold in decade: Modi

PNS/PTI ■ NEW DELHI/GANDHINAGAR

Maintaining that India was moving forward with the goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 30 to 35 per cent, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that efforts are on to increase the use of natural gas by four times in this decade and to double the oil refining capacity in the next five years.

He said this while addressing the eighth convocation of Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University (PDPU) via video conference.

"Today, the country is moving forward with the goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 30 to 35 per cent. When I told this to the world, it expressed surprise and wondered if India could achieve this," he said.

"Our effort is to increase the share of natural gas in our energy needs by four times in this decade. Work is also on to nearly double the oil refining capacity in the coming five years," he added.

He also expressed confidence that the country will achieve its renewable energy generation target "before time".

"Today, per unit cost (of solar power) has come down to less than ₹2 from ₹12-13 earlier. Today, solar power has become the country's priority. We have made a commitment to generate 175 gigawatt renewable energy and I am confident that we will achieve this before 2022," he said.

"Also, our renewable energy target of 450 gigawatt by 2030, a big aim, will be achieved before time...I am confident of that," he said.

Modi said that the oil and gas sector will see an investment of crores of rupees in this decade, which will create opportunities for the graduating students of the university in the fields of research, manufacturing and others.



He also said that work is underway to strengthen the start-ups ecosystem related to the energy security sector, and a special fund has been allocated for the purpose.

"If you have any idea, product or any concept which you want to incubate, then this fund will be a good opportunity for you, and a gift from the government," he said.

The PM said that despite the hardships caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the graduating students should remember that their strength and capacities are much bigger than the challenges, and asked them not to lose confidence.

He asked the students to recall the period of the country's Independence movement and how people sacrificed their lives for it. He asked them to similarly become a soldier for "Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

"There is a lot to do for the country, but your commitment, your aim should not be fragmented. You see that only they become successful in life who do something with a sense of responsibility...Failures are those who live with a sense of burden. The youth of the 21st century should go ahead with

a clean slate. The concept that "nothing will change" will have to be cleaned..." he said.

The PM asked the students to take sustained efforts as it will bring about positive results.

He said the "Clean India" programme was an example of this, and said small efforts of crores of people turned it into a movement.

During his address, he also recalled how his decision to segregate domestic and agriculture feeders made it possible for the households to get 24-hour electricity in Gujarat.

Modi inaugurated five state-of-the-art facilities to mark the eighth convocation of the PDPU.

The facilities he unveiled at the university are a 45 -MW production of monocrystalline solar photovoltaic panel, a tech business incubator, a sports complex, and a Translational Research Centre at the PDPU, as well as an Indo-EU bilateral project under Horizon 2020 "India-h2o" for industrial waste and desalination.

Modi also suggested the state government to change the name of the Petroleum University to Energy University.

Malabar maritime drill concludes on a high, friendly note

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Malabar maritime exercise hosted by the Indian Navy in two phases concluded on Friday in the Arabian Sea. The Quad countries including India, the US, Australia and Japan took part in the prestigious drill. Australia participated for the first time after India invited it for the event despite Chinese protests.

Giving details of the exercise, navy officials said here on Saturday the 24th edition of the annual Malabar was conducted in two phases. 20. Phase 1 of the exercise involving participation by Indian Navy (IN), United States Navy (USN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF) and Royal Australian Navy (RAN), was conducted off Visakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from 3-6 November. The second phase was conducted in the Arabian Sea from 17-20 November.

The first phase witnessed participation of Indian Navy units with United States Ship (USS) John S McCain, Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Ballarat with integral MH-60 helicopter, and Japan Maritime Self Defence Ship



(JMSDF) Onami, with integral SH-60 helicopter. Indian Navy's participation in this phase was led by Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet and included destroyer Ranvijay, indigenous frigate Shivalik, Offshore Patrol Vessel Sukanya, Fleet Support Ship Shakti, submarine Sindhuraj, P8I and Dornier maritime reconnaissance aircraft and Advanced Jet Trainer Hawk.

During Phase 2 of the Exercise, the four navies par-

ticipated in joint operations centered on the Vikramaditya Carrier Battle Group of the Indian Navy and Nimitz Carrier Strike Group of the US Navy. The two aircraft carriers, along with other ships, submarine and aircraft of the participating navies, engaged in high intensity naval operations including cross-deck flying operations and advanced air defence exercises by MIG 29K fighters of Vikramaditya and F/A-18 fighters and E2C Hawkeye from Nimitz.

The US Navy's Strike

Carrier Nimitz was accompanied by cruiser Princeton and destroyer Sterett in addition to P8A maritime reconnaissance aircraft.

The Royal Australian Navy and JMSDF were represented by frigate Ballarat and destroyer Murasame respectively, along with their integral helicopters.

Indian Navy's participation in Phase 2 was led by Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet and included aircraft carrier

Vikramaditya, indigenous destroyers Kolkata and Chennai, stealth frigate Talwar, Fleet Support Ship Deepak and the integral helicopters of these warships, indigenously built submarine Khanderi and P8I and IL-38 maritime reconnaissance aircraft.

In addition to 'Dual Carrier' operations, advanced surface and anti-submarine warfare exercises, seamanship evolutions and weapon firings were also undertaken during both phases of the exercise demonstrating the synergy, coordination and inter-operability between the four friendly navies.

The Malabar series of exercises, which began as an annual bilateral naval exercise between India and the US in 1992, has seen increasing scope and complexity over the years.

The 24th edition of MAL-ABAR, conducted in a 'non-contact at sea only' format in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic, was reflective of the commitment of the participating countries to support a free, open, inclusive Indo-Pacific as well as a rules-based international order.

Depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal during next 48 hrs: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal during the next 48 hours. A low pressure area, formed over equatorial Indian ocean and adjoining central parts of south Bay of Bengal on Saturday, may hit Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coast as a cyclone of lower intensity on November 25.

Predicting the possibility of cyclone, the IMD on Saturday said the depression is likely to intensify further during the subsequent 48 hours. This would expectedly revive the North-East monsoon yet again over the Tamil Nadu coast from Monday itself.

Under the influence of the 'low pressure' area, formed on Saturday, the rainfall activity is likely to increase over extreme south peninsular India from November 23 onwards with fairly widespread to widespread rainfall/thunderstorm activity over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal and Kerala & Mahe during November 24-26, and over south coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema during November 25-27.

PM Modi to virtually inaugurate multi-storey flats for MPs on Nov 23



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

**The construction of these flats has been completed with savings of about 14 per cent from the sanctioned cost**

The wait of a number of first-time Lok Sabha MPs for an official accommodation in Delhi will end soon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate multi-storeyed flats, three towers known as Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, which have come in place of old bungalows at Dr BD Marg in the national capital, for members of Parliament on November 23 via video-conferencing. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will also be present during the inauguration.

A PMO statement on Saturday said that three towers having 76 flats were constructed on land housing eight old bungalows, which were more than 80 years old. The construction of these flats has been completed with savings of about 14 per cent from the sanctioned cost and without time overrun despite the impact of Covid-19, it added.

The new flats have four bedrooms, offices for the MP and his or her secretary and parking spaces and are centrally air-conditioned. In addition, the flats have elevators that connect the basement parking, the ground floor office and living spaces and the first floor bedrooms.

The PMO statement said several green building initiatives have been incorporated in the construction, including bricks made from fly ash and construction and demolition waste, double glazed windows for thermal insulation and energy efficiency, energy efficient LED light fittings, occupancy based sensors for light control, air conditioners with VRV system for low power consumption, low flow fixtures for conservation of water, rainwater harvesting system and rooftop solar plant.

President to launch all-India Speakers' conference in Kevadia on November 25

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind will inaugurate the two day long all India Speakers' conference in Kevadia in Gujarat on November 25 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the valedictory function on November 26.

Addressing the media on Saturday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said that the theme of the two-day meeting will be 'harmonious coordination between legislature, executive and judiciary. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu will also address the presiding officers.

This is the 80th meeting of presiding officers. Birla said that the All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPO) was launched in the year 1921 and since then, this Conference has been ceaselessly striving to strengthen the democratic way of life and promoting a sense of unity and oneness in the Indian Legislatures. This Conference provides a platform to share new ideas, views, and experiences with all the Presiding Officers in India. He said that the collective wisdom of our venerable legislators has helped the Legislatures to keep pace with the changing times. Many of the significant

**Addressing the media on Saturday, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said that the theme of the two-day meeting will be 'harmonious coordination between legislature, executive and judiciary**

innovations in parliamentary democracy trace their roots to the deliberations that took place during the Sessions of these Conferences.

Birla said that During this Conference, the Presiding Officers of the Legislatures shall discuss the need for better cooperation and coordination between the three pillars of democracy. "This is in line with our Constitutional obligations that spell out the jurisdictions of the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary and the balance amongst them. It is our collective efforts to maintain the constitutional sanctity, which is very important for mutual coexistence between the three organs of governance and the sustenance of democracy in the nation," he said.

SC judge inaugurates 'North East Delhi Riots Claims Commission'



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court Judge Justice Ssurya Kant on Saturday inaugurated the North East Delhi Riots Claims Commission (NEDRCC) for providing compensation to victims of the communal violence that took place in February.

Justice Kant inaugurated the commission online and said in

a statement that justice to victims of the riot was the need of the hour.

"Justice to the riot victim is the need of the hour. Riot victims must be compensated with promptitude. To achieve this objective, I wish this commission (NEDRCC) all the very best," Justice Kant said in the statement.

Communal clashes had broken out in northeast Delhi on February 24 after violence between citizenship law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

There are about 750 cases registered in north east Delhi and around 1,200 persons have been arrested in matters related to the riot.

Court asks if there is chance of settlement between Akbar, Ramani in defamation case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday Asked former Union Minister M J Akbar and journalist Priya Ramani whether there was a chance of settlement between them in a criminal defamation complaint filed by him against her. Akbar had filed the complaint against Ramani for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist.

Ramani had said the allegations against Akbar, made in the wake of #MeToo movement in 2018, were her truth and were made in public good. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Ravindra Kumar Pandey posed the query on Saturday as he started hearing afresh the final arguments in the case since the previous judge hearing the matter was transferred to another court on Wednesday.



# Country has rallied behind PM in fight against Covid: Shah

**Chennai:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said the country has rallied behind Prime Minister Narendra Modi to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic and it was doing better than even developed countries over the handling of the contagion. Patting the Tamil Nadu government over its effective handling of the situation under the Palaniswami-Panneerselvam leadership, he said it was duly implementing the various instructions of the Centre on the matter. "The world and country are fighting against COVID-19.

Not just the Government and its machinery, but the entire 130 crore people were fighting against the pandemic, he said

The country has successfully faced it under PM Modi. On a comparative note, India has fared better than many developed countries," he said. Not just the government and its machinery, but the entire 130 crore people were fighting against the pandemic, he said at a state government function here. **PTI**

## 7 of family charred to death in Gujarat road accident

**Gandhinagar:** Seven members of a family were charred to death in a road accident near Surendranagar at around 3 a.m. on Saturday when a dumper truck hit their Echo vehicle. The accident caused a fire in the vehicle, in which all the seven persons trapped inside perished, according to police. The Surendranagar police have nabbed the person who was driving the dumper and have sent him for corona testing. The seven victims belonging to the Nai (Barber) community included three women (one girl child) were returning from Chotila pilgrimage to their homes in Patan district. One unit of the extended family was from Nanapura village in Radhanpur Tehsil of Patan while the other was from Korada village in Santalpur Tehsil of Patan. "The accident is believed to have been caused between 3 to 5 in the morning. We received the information around 5.30 a.m. There were seven persons, including the driver, inside the car which was hit by the dumper. All the bodies are badly burnt. We have sent the bodies for postmortem to the Rajkot hospital. We have caught the driver of the vehicle which caused the accident, who had fled the scene and sent him for corona testing. The Bajana police is investigating the matter," said BN Jadeja, Inspector, Bajana police station, who is investigating the case told IANS.

## 78 cows die of suspected food poisoning in Churu's Govt-aided shelter: Official

**PTI ■ JAIPUR**

A total of 78 cows belonging to a privately-run government-aided cattle shelter in Churu district have died of suspected food poisoning in the last 24 hours, an official said on Saturday. While 78 cows have died since Friday night, a few others are sick, said an official of the state's Animal Husbandry Department. Prima facie, the animals died of food poisoning, said Animal Husbandry Department's joint director, Dr Jagdish. He said the teams of the department are present in the cow-shelter located in Bilyubas Rampura village in Sardarshahar. The fodder samples have been collected for testing, he added. The death of such a large number of cows occurred on a day before 'Gopasthmi', a festival dedicated to cows and Lord Krishna.

## Army jawan martyred, two women injured in Pak firing

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

A soldier of the Indian Army made a supreme sacrifice while two women received injuries during separate incidents of ceasefire violations along the line of control in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch on Saturday. To prevent any misadventure by the Border Action Team (BAT) of the Pakistan army in the region, the foot soldiers of the Indian army have been maintaining tight vigil and conducting regular patrolling in the forward areas. According to the ground reports, there was no let up from the Pakistan side to provoke strong Indian response. Several sectors remained active across the region since early morning. Local villagers alleged Pakistan army was targeting civilian areas with heavy mortar shelling. Defence Spokesman in Jammu, Lt-Col Devender Anand said, "Havaladar Patil Sangram Shivaji received critical injuries during unprovoked ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army along the line of control in

Nowshera sector of Rajouri on Saturday". He said the Indian Army retaliated strongly. Havaladar Patil, hailing from Kolhapur district in Maharashtra, later succumbed to his fatal injuries. In the evening, the Pakistan Army once again provoked the Indian army by resorting to fresh mortar shelling in the same sector. Indian army retaliated befittingly, Defence spokesman said. After a small gap of 15 minutes, ceasefire violation was also reported from the Degwar and Malti sectors of Poonch. Defence Spokesman said, Pakistan army resorted to intense shelling leading to civilian injuries. According to local villagers, two women identified as Sakina Bi (40 years) W/o Nazm Din and Mansha Bi (18 years) D/O Shams Din of village Bagyal Dara in Poonch received injuries during ongoing mortar shelling. The injured were evacuated to the district hospital in Poonch amid constant shelling. The large population living in the forward villages remained closeted inside their homes due to intense shelling.

# BOLLYWOOD-DRUG MAFIA CASE: Comedian Bharti Singh arrested, husband under probe

86.5 grams of cannabis seized during raids

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday evening arrested television comedian Bharti Singh for alleged possession and consumption of a banned drug, hours after it seized 86.5 grams of Cannabis during the raids on one of two homes in north-west Mumbai. Continuing their investigations into the Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case, the NCB sleuths raided the homes of Bharti Singh and her husband Harsh Limbachiyaa at Andheri's Lokhandwala Complex and Versova in north-west Mumbai to look out for banned drugs. From one of their homes, the NCB officials seized 86.5 grams of cannabis. After the

raids, the couple was taken to the agency's office where Bharati was placed under arrest as per the provisions of NDPS Act 1986 late in the evening, while the questioning of her husband Harsh was continuing till late in the evening. During the questioning, Bharti and her husband reportedly confessed to having consumed cannabis (ganja). The drug consumption is in addition to the charge of possessing banned drugs that Bharati faced. The raid on the homes of Bharti and her husband Harsh and the subsequent arrest of the television comedian came after their names figured in the custodial interrogation of a 21-year-old drug trafficker whom the NCB officials had arrested earlier the day on Saturday. During the raid conducted at a location in Khar Danda area, the investigators seized various drugs including 15 blots of LSD

(commercial quantity), ganja (40 gm) and Nitrazepam (psychotropic medicines). In a statement released to the media, the NCB said that in a follow-up on the inputs provided by the arrested drug trafficker, the agency "raided two another places on 21.11.2020 including production office and House of actor-comedian Ms Bharti Singh and from both the places 86.5 grams of Ganja was recovered". "Both Ms Bharti Singh and Her Husband Harsh Limbachiyaa accepted the consumption of Ganja. Ms Bharti Singh was placed under arrest as per the provisions of NDPS Act 1986 and examination of Shri Harsh Limbachiyaa is underway," the NCB said in its statement. The NCB said that it had arrested two more persons in connection with seizure of MD, a popular club drug that's sold

in pills (ecstasy) or as a powder (MDMA). The arrest of Bharti comes on the heels of raids carried out at the residence of Bollywood actor Arjun Rampal on November 9, his and his live-in friend Gabriella Demetriades' questioning and the subsequent arrest of his Australian friend Australian friend Paul Bartel was on Friday arrested by the NCB in the much-discussed Bollywood-drug mafia nexus case. Earlier on November 8, the NCB officials had carried out searches at film producer Firoz A. Nadiadwala's residence along Gulmohar Cross Road at Juhu Vile Parle Development (JVPD) Scheme in north-west Mumbai. During the searches, the NCB sleuths seized a total of 717.1 gm of Ganja, 74.1 gm charas and 95.1 gm MD (Commercial Quantity) along with Rs 3,58,610. They also seized 10 gm

of Ganja from another accused Wahid Abdul kadir Sheikh @ Sultan. After the seizure of drugs and cash, the NCB officials arrested five persons, including Firoz A. Nadiadwala's wife Shabana Saeed. On November 9, the NCB officials carried out searches at Rampal's residence for seven hours and seized 11 electronic gadgets including a laptop, mobile phones and tablets from there. They also seized some documents from Rampal's residence. The raid on Rampal's residence and his subsequent questioning should be seen in the context of the arrest of a South African national Agisilaos Demetriades - the brother of Rampal's live-in partner Gabriella Demetriades - made by the NCB from Lonavala near Pune last month. Agisilaos is alleged to be a part of a larger drug syndicate operating in

Bollywood, which is being investigated after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Forty-seven-year-old Rampal was grilled for eight hours by the NCB on November 13 in connection with the nature of his links with Agisilaos and Bartel, the seizures made during the raid conducted at his Bandra residence for seven hours on Monday, the role of his live-in partner Gabriella, a South African model in the nexus with the drug peddlers. On his part, Rampal had said that he had nothing to do with drugs and he was co-operating with the NCB. Rampal's grilling came after two rounds of questioning that the NCB subjected his live-partner Gabriella to, on November 11 and 12. The NCB's investigations have revealed that Agisilaos was in touch with Omega Godwin, a Nigerian national

who had earlier been arrested for supply of cocaine in Mumbai. During his custodial interrogation, Godwin had named Agisilaos. Earlier, ex-Dharma Productions employee Kshitiij Prasad had earlier been arrested by the NCB in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput's death-related drug case and expanded Bollywood-drug nexus case. Sushant, it may be recalled, was found hanging from a ceiling fan in his closed room of his duplex flat at Mont Blanc building at Bandra's Carter Road in north-west Mumbai on June 14. Incidentally, the raid on Rampal's residence came a day after the NCB officials carried out searches at film producer Firoz A. Nadiadwala's residence along Gulmohar Cross Road at Juhu Vile Parle Development (JVPD) Scheme in north-west Mumbai. During the searches,

## Aligarh: Volunteers' identity to be kept secret in vaccine trials

**PNS ■ ALIGARH**

As volunteers line up to get the first doses in the Phase-III trials of the vaccine to cure Covid-19 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College (JNMC), Aligarh Muslim University, their identities will remain confidential in view of the social stigma related to the pandemic. The step has been taken in line with various Supreme

Court and High Court judgments on identity protection of volunteers for medical/scientific study, privacy laws, data protection laws for which provisions are made under the India Penal Code. JNMC is conducting the Phase-III, Covid-19 Covaxin trials aimed at evaluating the safety and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine study led in collaboration with ICMR and Bharat Biotech.

## K'taka CM warns against forceful enforcement of bandh against Maratha Corporation

**Bengaluru:** As pro-Kannada groups decided to go ahead with Karnataka bandh on December 5 against the establishment of the Maratha Development Corporation (MDC), Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday asked them to withdraw it, as he warned against any forceful enforcement. Asserting that he was for Kannada and Kannadigas, Yediyurappa said, "I'm ready for all that is required to be done for Kannadigas, but it is not right to call for bandh for some other reason, people will not appreciate it." Speaking to reporters here, he said he will not allow forceful enforcement of bandh. "I'm observing the burning of effigies and bad behaviours. We will have to take strict action. Let them protest peacefully, but the government will not tolerate attempts to give it a different turn," he added. Pro Kannada organisations at a meeting on Friday had decided to go ahead with the bandh on December 5 as planned earlier, and have set a

November 30 deadline for the government to withdraw its decision to establish Maratha Development Corporation. Terming the bandh call 'unnecessary', Yediyurappa had earlier told warned pro-Kannada groups against forcing a bandh on the people of the state. He had even clarified that the decision to set up a Maratha Development Corporation had nothing to do with the Marathi language, and it is for the Maratha community residing in the state. Noting that his govern-

ment was making all honest efforts to provide justice to all the sections of the society, Yediyurappa on Saturday said, there is no room for discrimination. "Let them (Kannada groups/activists) understand this and withdraw their bandh. I request the activists for cooperation with folded hands," he added. Kannada activists have been opposing the creation of Maratha Development Corporation, ever since the government mooted the move earlier this month. It has now been approved

by the cabinet also. The government had earlier announced the setting up of the Maratha Development Authority, but subsequently changed it to corporation, as authority has to be constituted by a law, by passing an act in the legislature. The creation of the corporation is seen as a move by the BJP to woo the Maratha community that has considerable presence in the Basavakalyan assembly constituency also Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency, which is due for a bypoll. **PTI**

## Tripura Advocate General succumbs to coronavirus

**IANS ■ AGARTALA/KOLKATA**

Veteran lawyer and Tripura's Advocate General Arun Kanti Bhowmik died of Covid-19 early on Saturday in Kolkata, official and family sources said. Family sources said that Bhowmik, 80, was ailing for quite some time due to his heart disease and was shifted to a private hospital in Kolkata on Friday.

## Diya Vashist of Aligarh shines in 2020 German shooting championship

**Aligarh:** 14-year-old Diya Vashisht, the star shooter of the district got 8th rank in the prestigious Walther Meton Cup-2020 shooting championship of Germany and has been selected for the finals. She has become the first girl shooter of the state to play in this championship of Germany at such a young age in a 10-meter air pistol event. She also won bronze in the open shooting championship organized by the Shooting Sports Federation in Indonesia. Due to the Corona, these competitions were conducted online in which more than 365 countries took part. Diya said that at the age of eight, she won the first bronze medal in the 16th Uttar Pradesh Inter School Shooting Championship in 2014 in Agra, and in 2017, she was qualified for the National in All In Diya Inter School Championship and won a gold medal in Varanasi. Since then, she dreamed of playing in Germany's championship. **PNS**

## Hathras case: Mother not ready for Narco test of Chhotu

**PRADEEP SAXENA ■ HATHRAS**

The mother is not ready with the decision of CBI to conduct a narco test of Vikrat alias Chhotu who first arrives at the scene. She has mentioned her son as a minor. He was a target of CBI since the beginning of the investigation. The field belongs to this family. Chhotu has been questioned by the CBI several times. The High Court has asked CBI to submit a status report on 25 November. Due to this, CBI is investigating fast. The girl was attacked on 14 September at Chhotu's farm. Here, the girl went to cut fodder with her mother and brother. She died on 29 September. CBI started investigat-

ing this on 11 October amidst uproar in the country. Chhotu's name came up only two days later. He was the first to reach the scene. Chhotu gave this same information in several inquiries. Chhotu is an important link in this case. According to Chhotu, the CBI had asked him to conduct a narco test which created panic in the family. Chhotu's mother Bitta Devi told the media that she would not give consent to a narco test for her son because he is a minor (16 years old). Narco should be made for those who were present at the scene and those who are associated with the incident. The elder brother has said that CBI has questioned Chhotu several times.

## AMU tailor shot dead in Aligarh

**Aligarh:** The Tailor of Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), who was returning home was shot dead in Nagla Mallah of Kwsari area. One of the fleeing attackers was captured by the mob and handed over to the police after beating. The police are investigating the murder as an illicit affair. 20-year-old Salman, son of Sarfuddin Abbasi was a contractual tailor in AMU. Salman was returning home from the mosque in the locality in the evening after offering namaz. On the death of Wahid's son from the locality, there was a crowd in the street. Salman was surrounded by three attackers and fired rapidly. **PNS**

## Goa Police preparing for tourist surge in Dec amid Covid fears: DGP

**Panaji:** Goa Police is gearing up for a surge in tourists ahead of the peak tourism season in December, Director General of Police Mukesh Kumar Meena said on Saturday, adding that preparedness for crowds especially in wake of the pandemic was a challenge for the security force. Meena also said that nearly 900 police personnel had tested positive for Covid-19, ever since the outbreak earlier this year. "I could see on beaches, the crowd has increased and hotels too are seeing more and more bookings. It will be a

challenging task," Meena said, when asked about the police preparedness for tourists during the peak tourism season. "We have already discussed with officers, they are forming a strategy. Because of Covid it is a challenging task to deploy force round the clock," Meena said. The top cop said that around 900 police personnel, including himself, had tested positive for coronavirus. "People are fed up with being in one place now. They want to come and relax. They

think Goa is the best place," Meena said, adding that all activities, including those related to tourism should be allowed by following existing SOPs, wearing masks and maintaining social distancing norms. Tourism activity in Goa, peaks during the Christmas week leading up to New Year, during which hundreds of thousands of tourists visit the state annually. This year though, tourism activity is slowly picking up, after a several month-long lull in wake of the pandemic. **IANS**



Crowd at Chandpole Bazar amid rise in the Covid-19 cases in Jaipur on Saturday

PTI

## Give Maha housing quota to minorities: Activist to Govt

**Mumbai:** A prominent rights activist has demanded that the Maharashtra Government provide 15 per cent reservations for minorities in the public and private space in the upcoming new housing policy to help maintain the country's 'secular character', here on Saturday. In a letter to Housing Minister Jitendra Awhad and Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Harmony Foundation President Abraham Mathai said that he had made a similar suggestion in 2003 when he was the Chairman of the Minorities Commission. However, no government initiated any policy that could encourage multi-cultural habitations even as "the rapacious cancer of communalism and radicalism" ruthlessly devastates the fabric of nationhood. Despite attempts, Minister Awhad and other government officials were not available for comments on the issue. Mathai said that unlike the past when communities lived in harmony as good neighbours, in recent years, the communal forces have led to minorities seeking refuge in ghettos, which in turn led to further divisiveness and rise of radical hate-mongers on

both sides. In order to curb such 'ghettoization', it is imperative to accommodate the minorities in all housing colonies which have now become vote-banks with political parties soliciting support on communal lines, said Mathai. He pointed out how such polarisation has resulted in many prominent personalities including Bollywood actors like Emran Hashmi denied a house in an elitist complex in Bandra. "This only proves that there has been a divide for decades as the majority community is suspicious of the minorities especially the Muslims. When we as a society keep them away it is only natural that they would find security in their ghettos where some have the propensity to embrace extremism and eventually become radicalised," Mathai pointed out. He urged the Maha Vikas Aghadi partners - Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Congress - to give top priority to this and give 15 per cent reservations to all religious minorities in the private housing sector as well as MHADA, CIDCO and other government bodies building homes. **IANS**

## 15 security personnel among 66 new Covid patients in Mizoram

**PTI ■ AIZAWL**

Mizoram's COVID-19 tally rose to 3,607 on Saturday as 66 more people, including 15 security personnel, tested positive for the infection, an official statement said. Aizawl district reported the highest number of new cases at 46, followed by Lawngtlai (eight) and Serchhip (six), the statement issued by the state Information and Public Relations Department said. Forty-two infections were detected during RT-PCR tests, seven during TrueNat and 17 during rapid antigen tests, it said. Eleven policemen, three Assam Rifles personnel and one Army jawan are among the new patients, the statement said. Twenty-five new patients have travel history, while 36 infections were detected during contact tracing and it is yet to be ascertained how five patients contracted the disease, it said. The state now has 491 active coronavirus cases, while 3,111 people have recovered from the disease and five patients have succumbed to the infection so far, the statement said.



Natives push for diverse Biden Cabinet

Washington: Native Americans are urging President-elect Joe Biden to make history by selecting one of their own to lead the powerful agency that oversees the nation's tribes, setting up one of several looming tests of Biden's pledge to have a Cabinet representative of Americans.

OJ Semans is one of dozens of tribal officials and voting activists around the country pushing selection of Rep. Deb Haaland, a New Mexico Democrat and member of the Pueblo of Laguna, to become the first Native American secretary of interior.

Tell Semans, a member of the Rosebud Sioux, that a well-regarded white lawmaker is considered a front-runner for the job, and Semans chuckles. "Not if I trip him," Semans says.

African Americans, Mexican Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans and other people of colour played a crucial role in helping



Biden defeat President Donald Trump. In return, they say they want attention on problems affecting their communities — and want to see more people who look like them in positions of power.

"It's nice to know that a Native American is under consideration," said Haaland, who says she is concentrating on her congressional work. "Sometimes we are invisible."

In Arizona, Alejandra Gomez was one of an army of activists who strapped on face

masks and plastic face shields in 100-plus-degree heat to go door-to-door to get out the Mexican American vote. Intensive Mexican American organising then helped flip that state to Democrats for the first time in 24 years.

"We are at a point where there was no pathway to victory" for Democrats without support from voters of colour, said Gomez, co-executive director of the political group Living United for Change in Arizona.

BIDEN TURNS 78, WILL BE OLDEST US PRESIDENT

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden turned 78 on Friday. In exactly two months, he'll take

the reins of a politically fractured nation facing the worst public health crisis in a century, high unemployment and a reckoning on racial injustice.

Michigan election staff recommend state to approve Biden victory

Detroit: Michigan's elections agency on Friday recommended that the November 3 results be certified next week by state canvassers, a decision that would bless Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump but likely not cool partisan strife over the vote.

The recommendation was posted online with the formal Monday meeting notice of the Board of State Canvassers.

The guidance came at the end of a stormy week in which Trump summoned Republican

state lawmakers to the White House on Friday in an extraordinary effort to try to set aside Biden's 154,000-vote victory.

On Tuesday, GOP canvassers in Michigan's largest county, Wayne, refused to certify local results but then changed their position after hours of intense public criticism over Zoom. Then after talking to Trump, they said a day later they were rescinding their previous vote but it was too late.

Top Tibetan political leader visits White House for first time in 6 decades

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The head of the Tibetan government in exile has visited the White House for the first time in six decades and met the newly appointed senior US official on Tibetan issues, the Central Tibetan Administration said on Saturday, a development that could enrage Beijing, which has accused the US of trying to interfere in China's internal affairs.

Dr Lobsang Sangay entered the United States White House on Friday — a historic feat. This is the first time in the last 6 decades the head of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) has been invited into the White House, the CTA said in a statement.

"It is a great honour to be the first political head of the Central Tibetan Administration to formally enter the White House," Sangay said in a tweet.

"Today's visit amounts to an acknowledgement of both the democratic system of the CTA and its political head... This unprecedented meeting perhaps will set an optimistic tone for CTA participation with US officials and be more formalised in the coming years," said the CTA, which is based in Dharamshala in India.

Sangay, the President of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), was invited to the White House to meet the newly appointed US Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, Robert Destro, on Friday, it said.

Pak court jails 2 more aides of 26/11 brains

Lahore: A Pakistani court has jailed two more aides of Mumbai attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawah (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed in a terror financing case.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Lahore on Friday handed down six and five-and-a-half years of imprisonment to JuD leaders Muhammad Ashraf and Lucman Shah, respectively.

ATC Judge Arshad Hussain Bhutta also imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 on each of them.

On Thursday, the 70-year-old JuD chief was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment in two terror cases by ATC Lahore. Saeed's two close aides — Zafar Iqbal and Yahya Mujahid — were sentenced to

10 and a half years each, while his brother-in-law Abdul Rehman Makki was sentenced to six months of imprisonment in the same cases.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested on July 17 last year in the terror financing cases. He was sentenced to 11 years in jail by an anti-terrorism court in February this year in two terror financing cases.

The JuD chief is lodged at Lahore's high-security Kot Lakhpat jail.

Saeed is wanted in India for planning the 2008 Mumbai attacks when 10 Pakistani terrorists killed 166 people, including six Americans, and injured hundreds others.

Chief Afghan peace envoy says US troops pulling out too

Ankara: Afghanistan's chief peace envoy Abdullah Abdullah said on Saturday that the US decision to begin withdrawing troops from Afghanistan has come too soon, as his country is still struggling to attain peace and security amid an ongoing conflict.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Abdullah also described as "shocking" an Australian military report that found evidence that elite Australian troops unlawfully killed 39 Afghan prisoners.

He welcomed a decision by Australian authorities to pursue the perpetrators.

Abdullah spoke in Ankara where he sought Turkey's support for negotiations between

the Afghan government and the Taliban that are taking place in Qatar to find an end to decades of war. The talks have made little progress so far.

"This is the decision of the US administration and we respect it," Abdullah said of the US decision this week to reduce troops levels in Afghanistan from more than 4,500 to 2,500.

"Our preference would have been that with the conditions improving, this should have taken place," Acting US Defense Secretary Christopher Miller announced that Washington would reduce troop levels in Iraq and Afghanistan by mid-January, in line with President Donald Trump's pledge to bring US forces home.

Thai students rally for edu and political reforms



A crowd flashes the three-finger protest gesture during a student rally in Bangkok Saturday

Bangkok: Secondary school students in Thailand's capital rallied Saturday for educational and political reforms, defying government threats to crack down with legal action against the country's high-profile protest movement.

The rally was called by a group that calls itself "Bad Students," mocking their status as rebels against traditional school rules and authorities.

Reflecting their light touch toward protest actions, they used props including people in dinosaur suits and oversize beach balls standing in for asteroids.

Just as an asteroid hitting the earth is believed to have led to the extinction of the

Twitter to hand @POTUS account to Joe Biden on Jan 20

Los Angeles: Micro-blogging site Twitter will hand control of the presidential @POTUS account to President-elect Joe Biden the moment he is sworn in on inauguration day on January 20, even if President Donald Trump has not conceded his election loss, the company has said.

The @POTUS account is the official account of the President of the United States and is separate from the @realDonaldTrump account that Trump uses to tweet.

Biden, 78, will be the 46th US President when he is sworn in.

The handover requires no sharing of information between the outgoing Trump team and the incoming Biden team, Twitter said, adding that all existing tweets on those accounts will be archived and Twitter will transfer the accounts — reset to zero tweets — to Biden that day.

Trump's eldest son Trump Jr tests positive for Covid-19

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Donald Trump Jr, the eldest son of US President Donald Trump, has tested positive for COVID-19, his spokesperson said, latest in the First Family to have been infected by the deadly virus.

Trump Jr tested positive at the start of the week and has been "quarantining out of his cabin since the result," the spokesman said on Friday.

"He has been completely asymptomatic so far and is following all medically recommended COVID-19 guidelines," the spokesman added.

G-20 summit opens with Saudi urging united response to virus

AP ■ DUBAI

Saudi Arabia's King Salman opened on Saturday the Group of 20 summit as the coronavirus pandemic overshadows this year's gathering of heads of state, transforming it from an in-person two-day meeting of the world's most powerful leaders to a virtual gathering of speeches and declarations.

The pandemic, which has claimed more than 1.37 million lives worldwide, has offered the

G-20 an opportunity to prove how such bodies can facilitate international cooperation in crises — but has also underscored their shortcomings.

The G-20's member-countries represent around 85 per cent of the world's economic output and three-quarters of international trade.

"We have a duty to rise to the challenge together during this summit and give a strong message of hope and reassurance," King Salman said in his opening remarks.

Mortar shells hit Kabul residential areas, 8 dead

Kabul: About 23 mortar shells slammed into different parts of the Afghan capital on Saturday, killing at least eight people and wounding 31 others, an official said.

The shells were fired from two cars, Interior Ministry spokesperson Tariq Arian said. No one took immediate responsibility for the early morning attack that also targeted the posh Wazir Akbar Khan area of Kabul, which houses diplomatic missions.

The Taliban issued a quick

statement denying any responsibility for the attack. The Islamic State group affiliate also operates in the area and has claimed responsibility for recent assaults in Kabul including two devastating attacks on educational institutions that killed more than 50 people, many of them students.

As well as insurgent groups, there are several heavily armed warlords with militias living in Kabul with long-standing animosities against each other.

Aus will respond 'very seriously' to war crime allegations: PM

Melbourne: Australia will respond "very seriously" to war crime allegations against its defence personnel, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has assured the people of Afghanistan, a day after a long-awaited military report said the country's special forces unlawfully killed 39 people in the war-torn nation.

According to the report released on Thursday, there is "credible information" that at least 19 serving and former Australian special forces allegedly committed up to 39 unlawful murders during the conflict in Afghanistan.



Mourners gather for the funeral prayer of Khadim Hussein Rizvi, an Islamist scholar and leader of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, in Lahore on Saturday

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

Telefax :- 0194-2496089, Email Id:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

GIST of E -NIT NO: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/200/e-tendering (Short-Term Dated:-19.11.2020.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:- Name of Work:- Outsourcing of Manpower for operation of Central Heating System at Govt. Medical College, Anantnag from 27.11.2020 to 15.03.2021. Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) :- 2.80 Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) :- 200 Earnest Money (In Rs) :- 5600 Position of funds:- Available 1. The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 19.11.2020 (16.00 hrs). 2. The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 19.11.2020(16:00 hrs) to 25.11.2020(14:00 hrs) in two (02) cover. 3. The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 25.11.2020(16.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar. Sd/- Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar No. DIPK-9364/20 Dated:-21.11.2020

Around the Globe

Beirut: Nearly 70 inmates broke out of a prison in Lebanon Saturday after smashing their cell doors and attacking prison guards, police said. According to a police statement, five of the escaped inmates died when a car they stole while fleeing crashed into a tree during an ensuing police chase.

Paris: Rights campaigners and journalists organisations staged street protests in Paris and other French cities on Saturday against a security bill that they say would be a violation of the freedom of information. The proposed measure would create a new criminal offense of publishing images of police officers with intent to cause them harm.

CENTRAL RAILWAY		
MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT		
E-PROCUREMENT A.T. Notice No.: E-40/2020, DT. 19-11-2020		
Description	Qty	T.O.D.
Relay PC-8 AXM	270 Nos	17-12-20
Wheel Set Guide for WAP-5 Locomotives	28 Nos	17-12-20
Inverter Module Auxiliary Converter	05 Nos	18-12-20
450MM sweep fixed type carriage fan	1300 Nos.	18-12-20
Air brake hose coupling	7800 Nos	21-12-20
Buffer Recoil Spring	2000 Sets	22-12-20
Regarding detail notice & Tender Conditions please visit www.irops.gov.in		
Railway Helpline 139		537

**UJVNL LTD.**  
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006  
Telephones: 0135-2763808 Fax: 0135-2763508  
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 | www.ujvnl.com

पत्रांक: 746 दि 20.11.2020

**TENDER NOTICE**

The office of Executive Engineer (Test), Maneri Bhal Stage-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tenders is given below:

**Tender No: NIT-08/EE(T)/MB-II/20-21**

**Name of work / Supply/Services:** Procurement & Application of Insulation Epoxy Coating & Anti-Acid Coating At Dharasu Power House (MB-II), Chinyalisaur.

**Estimated cost:** Rs. 5,35,500.00 only (G.S.T. extra)

**Date of availability of bid document on website :** 23.11.2020

**Last date for submission of tender :** 16.12.2020 up to 16:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer (Test)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

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Retail Portfolio Management : Plot # 31, Najafgarh Industrial Area, Tower-A, 1st Floor, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, New Delhi - 110015.

**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the **HDFC BANK LTD.**, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002(54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 22/08/2020 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. Focus Imaging & Research Centre Private Limited Through Its Managing Director Dr. Prashant Sarin 2. Dr. Prashant Sarin S/o Mr. Ram Prasad Sarin 3. Mr. Vinod Kumar Sharma S/o Mr. Mithan Lal 4. Mrs. Rachana D/o Mr. Rai Singh Bhadoo to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 25,93,51,609/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crore Ninety Three Lakhs Fifty One Thousand Six Hundred and Nine Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules 2002 on this 19th day of Nov, 2020 (Thursday). The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of **HDFC BANK LTD.** for an amount of Rs. 25,93,51,609/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crore Ninety Three Lakhs Fifty One Thousand Six Hundred and Nine Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc, less amount paid if any. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

ENTIRE SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHT OF PROPERTY NO. 17-A, MEASURING 289 SQ. YARDS, SITUATED IN BLOCK N, GREEN PARK EXTENSION, NEW DELHI (OWNED BY MRS. RACHANA).

DATE :- 19/NOV/2020  
PLACE :- NEW DELHI

Authorised Officer  
HDFC Bank Ltd.

**APPENDIX IV A**  
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]

**Notice for sale of Immovable Properties**

E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to **Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.** [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the **constructive possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "without any recourse" basis on **09.12.2020 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M.** (with unlimited automated extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document), for recovery of **Rs. 259,14,82,511/- (Rupees Two hundred and fifty nine crores fourteen lakhs eighty two thousand five hundred and eleven only), i.e. Rs.105,42,01,834 /- (Rupees One hundred and five crores forty two lakhs one thousand eight hundred and thirty four only), Rs. 76,92,95,206/- (Rupees Seventy six crores ninety two lakhs ninety five thousand two hundred and six only) and Rs.76,79,85,471/- (Rupees Seventy six crores seventy nine lakhs eighty five thousand four hundred and seventy one only)** towards Loan Account Nos. **LAP0240519, LAP0240520 and LAP0240522** respectively, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till **19.11.2020** with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. **20.11.2020** legal expenses and other charges along with pending Tax Deducted at Source of **Rs. 2,09,66,038/- (Rupees Two Crore Nine Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Thirty Eight only), i.e. Rs. 81,86,870/- (Rupees Eighty One Lakh Eighty Six Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy only), Rs. 63,89,584/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Four only) and Rs. 63,89,584/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Eighty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty Four only),** towards Loan Account Nos. **LAP0240519, LAP0240520 and LAP0240522** respectively, due to the Secured Creditor from **BLISS HOUSE PVT. LTD., BLISS AGRI AND ECO TOURISM PVT. LTD., IMAGINE HABITAT PVT. LTD., IMAGINE RESIDENCE PVT. LTD., B. KAPOOR (GUARANTOR) and R. KAPOOR (GUARANTOR).**

The Reserve Price of the immovable Property(ies) will be **Rs. 133,00,00,000/- (Rupees One hundred and thirty three crores only)** and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be **Rs. 13,30,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen crores thirty lakhs only)** i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/ RTGS/ NEFT or through any other proper banking channels to the credit and in favour of **INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.,** Account No. **114505001412** with **ICICI Bank Ltd.** (IFSC: ICIC0001145), having its branch at **B1 and B2, Vanija Nikun, Enkay Tower, Udyog Vihar, Phase V, Gurgaon - 122015 (Haryana)** before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES)**

**ALL THAT PIECES OR PARCELS OF LAND/ PROPERTIES AS UNDER TOGETHER WITH ALL PRESENT AND/ OR FUTURE STRUCTURES, BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, FIXTURES, FITTINGS, STANDING AND/ OR PLANT AND MACHINERY INSTALLED/ TO BE INSTALLED AND/ OR CONSTRUCTED/ TO BE CONSTRUCTED THEREON AND ALL PRESENT AND/ OR FUTURE RIGHTS, TITLE AND/ OR INTEREST OF BLISS HOUSE PVT. LTD. THEREIN:**

**50% UNDIVIDED SHARE OF PLOT NO. 20 (ADMEASURING ABOUT 2,043 SQ. MTR. EQUIVALENT TO 2,443 SQ. YD.) (PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS PLOT NO. 9, BLOCK NO. 48), SITUATED AT DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE, SARDAR PATEL MARG, NEW DELHI - 110003, OWNED BY BLISS HOUSE PVT. LTD. AND BUTTED AND BOUNDED BY IN THE:**

**NORTH BY :PLOT NO. 19 SOUTH BY :PLOT NO. 21**  
**EAST BY : SERVICE ROAD WEST BY :SARDAR PATEL MARG**

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com) and [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)

Date : 20.11.2020  
Place : NEW DELHI

Sd/  
Authorized Officer  
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED



# India set to resume talks on free trade agreements with EU, US

■ NEW DELHI

India, which has not signed any trade agreement since 2012, will soon revive talks on the possible free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Union and the US. Even as the Narendra Modi Government opted out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), it is keen on inking trade deals with other economic blocs, a highly placed source said, adding that India could gain significantly amid a growing anti-China sentiment in many parts of the world.

The EU is India's largest

trading partner accounting for 11.1 per cent of total Indian trade, on par with the US and ahead of China (10.7 per cent). "We are positive that FTAs with the EU and US will benefit India and talks will be resumed," Gopal Krishna Agarwal, the Bharatiya Janata Party's national spokesperson on economic affairs, said. "India is not opposed to trade agreements with other countries, though now that seems to be the popular notion after we exited the RCEP, we understand the need to remain globally and regionally integrated," Agarwal added.

After intense negotiations

for an FTA with the EU, talks have been stalled since 2013 after differences on various issues could not be ironed out. Other Asian nations looking at trade deals with the west, Vietnam has already inked one. Vietnam, which is emerging as a formidable competition to many economies, has already signed at a trade pact with the EU. The European economy needs now every opportunity to restore its strength after the crisis triggered by the coronavirus," Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, said in a statement.

"India should not waste

time now. It must act fast before other countries seal the deals," Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) president S.K. Saraf told Indianarrative.com. "We must revive talks on the stalled FTAs and other trade pacts to cash in on the changing geopolitical order. The current anti-China sentiment in Europe could help India at this point and we must not waste an opportunity."

Typically, trade agreements including the one with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) have not worked in India's favour but experts opined that New Delhi

must remain engaged with other countries not only to boost trade but also to be heard in the global community.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla's seven-day trip to Europe just a few weeks ago is being seen as an important development in this direction. On Thursday the first stand-alone India-Luxembourg summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart Xavier Bettel was held via video conferencing, where the former underlined the need to expand trade and economic co-operation between India and the EU.

## Healing economy expected to keep markets high

**Mumbai:** Economic recovery along with hopes of a Covid-19 vaccine will keep domestic stock markets high during the upcoming trade week.

Analysts opined that markets are likely to oscillate between renewed fears of rising covid cases globally and optimism over vaccine development.

Besides, profit booking as well as expensive propositions

might dampen sentiments. Nevertheless, upcoming Q2FY21 GDP figures combined with sales push during the festive season is expected to arrest any major downside movement. "Going ahead, the market is likely to be volatile as sentiments oscillate between fear of rising covid cases globally and optimism over vaccine progress," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head of Retail

Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. "Investors would closely watch out the development over the US stimulus talks where the hopes are fading. However the overall structure of the market remains positive, as the economic activity continues to improve and Covid cases continue to decline domestically, except few regions." ■ANS

## Centre okays ₹107.42 cr grant for 28 food processing projects

■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Saturday said a grant of ₹107.42 crore has been approved for implementing 28 food processing projects spread over 10 states that are likely to generate jobs for nearly 10,000 people.

A decision in this regard was taken in the virtual meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee (IMAC) chaired by Food Processing Industries Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. Junior minister Rameswar Teli was also present

in the meeting.

The committee considered the projects applied through an unit scheme of Creation and Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities (CEFPCC) under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) for necessary grants-in-aid.

"28 projects with project costs of ₹320.33 crore, supported with a grant of ₹107.42 crore by Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) were approved under the CEFPPC Scheme by the IMAC," an official statement said.

Of this, a grant of ₹20.35 crore has been approved for six projects from north eastern states.

These projects are worth ₹48.87 crore, it said.

The projects will create a processing capacity of 1,237 tonne daily and are spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Assam, and Manipur.

These projects are likely to generate employment for nearly 10,000 people, it added.

## Focus on automobile aftermarket key to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat': Official

■ NEW DELHI

Focus on automobile aftermarket is the key to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', a senior official said.

According to H.J.S Pasricha, Head CMD and Scientist F, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), "Indian OEMs as well as their component manufactures have delivered to a large extent towards the twin objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat."

"Now, automotive aftermarket needs to be one of the key areas of focus. A well graded plan aimed towards curbing counterfeiters and substandard



products through proper certification and enforcement could very well be the way towards vibrant aftermarket."

Pasricha spoke at a webinar organised by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

The webinar as per a SIAM statement aimed to address contemporary aspects related to the aftermarket parts busi-

ness. It touched upon aftermarket tenets such as quintessential quality, curbing counterfeit, vocal for local, simplifying supply-chain, amplifying access and evaluating e-commerce.

"Aftermarket business is challenging with multiple players right from OEMs at one extreme to counterfeiters at the other end," said Prashant K. Banerjee, Executive Director, SIAM. "We look forward to have an active collaboration with government, BIS (Implementing Agency), ACMA, AIAWA, e-commerce entrants, aggregators etc. to create a quality conscious market."

## Harley-Davidson says working with partner Hero to ensure smooth transition for customers in India

■ NEW DELHI

American cult-bike maker Harley-Davidson on Saturday said it is working with its new partner Hero MotoCorp to "ensure a smooth transition" for its customers in India, including after-sale services and warranty. Last month, Harley-Davidson and Hero MotoCorp announced their partnership for the Indian market.

They have inked a distribution agreement, under which Hero MotoCorp will sell and service Harley-Davidson motorcycles. It will also sell

parts and accessories and general merchandise riding gear and apparel through a network of brand-exclusive Harley-Davidson dealers and Hero's existing dealership network in India.

Harley-Davidson Managing Director (Asia Emerging Markets and India) Sajeev Rajasekharan said in a statement, "As we change our business model in India, we are pleased to be continuing our journey in the country together with Hero MotoCorp. We are working closely with Hero to ensure a smooth transition for our riders."

## Residents of Sector 48 raise demand for cancellation of marriage ceremony



Noida Sector 48 park in question

Pradesh instead of Delhi.

A similar case has come up in Noida Sector 48. A Delhi party is going to organise a wedding ceremony in Sector 48 Park of Noida this week. Residents of Sector 48 are

angry about this controversial event.

Residents of Sector 48 have written a complaint letter in this regard to Ritumaheshwari, CEO of Noida Development Authority.

## Launch of 'ANANDA' - Atma Nirbhar agents new business digital application

Life Insurance Corporation of India launched its first Digital Application, "ANANDA", an acronym for Atma Nirbhar Agents NewBusiness Digital Application, on Thursday, the 19th of November 2020. The launch was done by MR Kumar, Chairman, LIC of India through Video Conferencing, in the presence of the Managing Directors, TC Suseel Kumar, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, Raj Kumar and other Senior Officials of the Corporation. The digital application is a tool for the on boarding process to get the Life Insurance policy through a Paperless module with the help of the Agent / Intermediary. It is built on

paperless KYC process using Aadhaar based e-authentication of the Life Proposed.

ANANDA is a first of its kind in the Indian Life Insurance industry with LIC of India pioneering the process through its in-house IT enabled systems. This tool has been brought out at the right time, to enable and empower the Marketing force of LIC to face the current challenges and propel insurance selling to a higher level. With social distancing being the new normal, prospective customers can avail the facility of taking a New Life Insurance Policy in the comfort of their homes/offices without having to meet the Agent / Intermediary in person.

## Punjab & Sind Bank to raise up to ₹5,500 cr via pref issue

■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Punjab & Sind Bank on Saturday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to ₹5,500 crore by issuing shares on a preferential basis.

The board approval is in line with the Government sanction to infuse an amount of ₹5,500 crore in the bank towards contribution of the Centre in the preferential allotment of equity shares during FY2020-21. The board has cleared agenda to "offer, issue, create and allot equity shares up to ₹5,500 crore including share premium to the Government of India by way of preferential issue of equity shares", the bank said in a regulatory filing.

The fund raising will help bank meet its regulatory and growth capital.

## Drying-up FII inflows to weaken rupee

■ NEW DELHI

An expected slowdown in the rate of foreign fund inflows along with the upcoming Q2FY21 GDP figures is expected to weaken the Indian rupee during the coming week.

Besides, expectations on a further stimulus has fanned fears of higher Government borrowings.

Nonetheless, rising virus infection in the US amid hopes of more stimulus is expected to keep the US dollar subdued.

Consequently, the rupee is projected to range between 73.70 to 74.50 per greenback. "Flows into equity markets have been robust and supported the rupee," said Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities.

As per estimates, more than Rs 25,000 crore have

flowed into the country's stock markets till now during November.

"However, we expect the flows to slow down going forward and that can put some pressure on rupee and rising imports owing to normalisation can also keep strong rupee in check."

Last week, rupee appreciated to 74.11 levels but saw strong support at 74 handle.

Nonetheless, dollar purchases from RBI as reflected in the forex reserve capped further appreciation. On Friday, official data showed that India's foreign exchange reserves rose \$4.277 billion during the week ended November 13.

Accordingly, the reserves increased to \$572.771 billion from \$568.494 billion reported for the week ended November 6.

## Petrol, diesel price hiked for second day in a row

■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price on Saturday was hiked by 15 paise per litre and diesel by 20 paise, the second straight day of increase in rates after firming international oil rates broke nearly a two-month-long hiatus in price revision.

The price of petrol in Delhi was hiked to ₹81.38 per litre from ₹81.23, according to a notification from oil marketing companies.

Diesel rates went up from ₹70.68 to ₹70.88 per litre. On Friday, petrol price was raised by 17 paise per litre and diesel by 22 paise.

This is the first revision in petrol prices since September 22. Diesel rates had not changed since October 2.

**APPENDIX IV A**  
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Properties**

E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is", "whatever there is" and "without any recourse" basis on 09.12.2020 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. (with unlimited automated extensions of 5 minutes each in terms of the Tender Document), for recovery of Rs. 230,69,77,923/- (Rupees Two hundred and thirty crores, sixty nine lakhs seventy seven thousand nine hundred and twenty three only), i.e. Rs. 79,73,84,911/- (Rupees Seventy nine crores seventy three lakhs eighty four thousand nine hundred and eleven only), Rs. 66,83,71,475/- (Rupees sixty six crores eighty three lakhs seventy one thousand four hundred and seventy five only) and Rs. 84,12,21,537/- (Rupees Eighty four crores twelve lakhs twenty one thousand five hundred and thirty seven only) towards earlier Loan Account Nos. S000240450, [now LAP0240450], S000240451 [now LAP0240451] and S000240667 [now LAP0240667] respectively, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 19.11.2020 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 20.11.2020 legal expenses and other charges along with pending Tax Deducted at Source of Rs. 1,41,24,244/- (Rupees One Crore Forty One Lakh Twenty Four Thousand Two Hundred Forty Four only), i.e. Rs. 76,13,167/- (Rupees Seventy Six Lakh Thirteen Thousand One Hundred Sixty Seven only), Rs. 63,81,625/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakh Eighty One Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Five only) and Rs. 1,29,452/- (Rupees One Lakh Twenty Nine Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Two only), due to the Secured Creditor from BLISS VILLA (DELHI) PVT. LTD., B. KAPOOR (GUARANTOR) and R. KAPOOR (GUARANTOR).

The Reserve Price of the immovable Property(ies) will be Rs. 158,23,00,000/- (Rupees One Hundred Fifty Eight Crore Twenty three Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 15,82,30,000/- (Rupees Fifteen crores eighty two lakhs thirty thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price. The EMD shall be paid by DD/ RTGS/ in NEFT or through any other proper banking channels to the credit and in favour of INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Account No. 114505001412 with ICICI Bank Ltd. (IFSC: ICIC0001145), having its branch at B1 and B2, Vaniya Nikunj, Enkay Tower, Udyog Vihar, Phase V, Gurgaon - 122015 (Haryana) before submitting the tender in order to participate in the online public auction. The successful bidder shall pay 25% amount of the sale price (less 10% of the Reserve Price paid before submitting the tender) immediately i.e. either on the same day or not later than the next working day and the remaining balance of the Sale Price shall be paid within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY (IES)**

ALL THAT PIECES OR PARCELS OF LAND/ PROPERTIES AS UNDER TOGETHER WITH ALL PRESENT AND/ OR FUTURE STRUCTURES, BUILDINGS, FURNITURE, FIXTURES, FITTINGS, STANDING AND/ OR PLANT AND MACHINERY INSTALLED/ TO BE INSTALLED AND/ OR CONSTRUCTED/ TO BE CONSTRUCTED THEREON AND ALL PRESENT AND/ OR FUTURE RIGHTS, TITLE AND/ OR INTEREST OF BLISS VILLA (DELHI) PVT. LTD. THEREIN:

PLOT NO. 49 (MEASURING ABOUT 1,031.29 SQ. MTR. I.E. 1,233.30 SQ. YD.), BLOCK NO. 48, DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE, NOW KNOWN AS PROPERTY NO. 18, SITUATED AT KAUTILYA MARG, NEW DELHI - 110021, OWNED BY BLISS VILLA (DELHI) PVT. LTD. AND BUTTED AND BOUNDED BY IN THE:

NORTH BY : PLOT NO. 6  
SOUTH BY : PLOT NO. 20 (VIETNAM EMBASSY)  
EAST BY : KAUTILYA MARG  
WEST BY : OTHER'S PROPERTY

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com and www.auctionfocus.in

Sd/  
Date : 20.11.2020  
Place : NEW DELHI

Authorized Officer  
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED

**HDFC BANK** Retail Portfolio Management : Plot # 31, Najafgarh Industrial Area, Tower-A, 1st Floor, Shivaji Marg, Moti Nagar, New Delhi - 110015, We understand your world

**POSSESSION NOTICE APPENDIX IV [RULE 8(1)]**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of the **HDFC BANK LTD.** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SRA) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice dated 22/08/2020 calling upon the borrower(s) 1. Focus Imaging & Research Centre Private Limited Through Its Managing Director Dr. Prashant Sarin 2. Dr. Prashant Sarin 3. Mr. Ram Prasad Sarin 3. Mr. Vinod Kumar Sharma 4. Mr. Mithan Lal 4. Mrs. Rachana D/o Mr. Raj Singh Bhadoo to pay the amount mentioned in the notice Rs. 25,93,51,609/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crore Ninety Three Lakhs Fifty One Thousand Six Hundred and Nine Only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement. Rules 2002 on this 19th day of Nov, 2020 (Thursday). The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to charge of **HDFC BANK LTD.** for an amount of Rs. 25,93,51,609/- (Rupees Twenty Five Crore Ninety Three Lakhs Fifty One Thousand Six Hundred and Nine Only) and interest thereon together with expenses and charges etc, less amount paid if any. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

(A) ENTIRE FIRST FLOOR AND SECOND FLOOR WITH ROOF RIGHTS PART OF PROPERTY NO. B-184, ADMEASURING 180 SQ. YARDS, SITUATED IN THE LAYOUT PLAN OF MINISTRY OF WORKS HOUSING & SUPPLY CHS LTD. - THE SOCIETY, KNOWN AS THE NIRMAL VIHAR, DELHI-110092 (OWNED BY MR. VINOD KUMAR SHARMA).

DATE :- 19/NOV/2020  
PLACE :- NEW DELHI

Authorised Officer  
HDFC Bank Ltd.

**VINAYAK VANIYA LIMITED**  
CIN: L52110DL1985PLC020109  
Regd. Off.: Flat No. 28, Still Floor, Devika Tower, 6, Nehru Place, Delhi-110019  
Ph.: 011-4367 5500  
Email: vvanija1985@gmail.com, Website: www.vinayakvaniya.com

**35TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING**

Notice is hereby given that 35th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members of Vinayak Vaniya Limited ("the Company") is scheduled to be held on **Tuesday, 15th December, 2020 at 03.00 P.M.** IST through video conferencing (VC) or Other Audio Visual Means (OAVM) in compliance with applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015 and circulars issued thereunder, to transact the business items as set out in the notice of AGM which shall inter-alia contain the instructions for joining AGM through VC.

**Manner of registering/ updating e-mail addresses:**

Members holding shares in Demat form and who are yet to register/update their email IDs are requested to approach NSDL/CDSL ("Depository Participant") in case of dematerialized shares. Members holding shares in physical form are requested to send their duly signed request letters to **RCMC Share Registry Pvt. Ltd.** B-25/1, First Floor, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase - II, New Delhi - 110020 ("RTA") or by writing an e-mail on alok.sharma@rcmcindia.com to our RTA along with self-attested copies of PAN Card and address proof to register their email IDs.

Members will have an opportunity to cast their vote remotely on the business items as set out in notice of AGM. The manner of casting vote through remote e-voting/e-voting system including those by physical shareholders or by shareholders who have not registered their email ids shall be provided in notice of AGM. Copy of the AGM notice along with Annual Report for financial year 2019-20 and login details for such voting, will be sent to all the members whose email addresses are registered with the Company/ DP in due course.

The aforesaid notice of 35th AGM along with Annual Report will be made available on the website of the Company i.e. at [www.vinayakvaniya.com](http://www.vinayakvaniya.com) and on the website of stock exchanges viz. BSE Limited at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).

For **VINAYAK VANIJYALIMITED**  
Sd/-  
Anand Prakash  
Director  
DIN: 06918487

Date: 21.11.2020  
Place: New Delhi

**PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE**

**ICICI Bank** Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

**Whereas**

A housing loan facility was granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between ICICI Bank Limited ("Secured Creditor, which term shall include its successors and assigns) and the borrower & co-borrower, mentioned below ("Borrower(s)", which term shall include his/ its/ their respective [successors, assigns, heirs]). The undersigned being the authorized officer of the Secured Creditor ("Authorized Officer") under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 ("Act") and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, ("Rules") has issued demand notices under Section 13(2) of the Act calling upon the borrowers / co borrowers mentioned below to repay the amount payable pursuant to the loan agreement and as specifically mentioned in the said respective demand notices within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notices.

The borrowers / co-borrower, having failed and neglected to repay the amount as claimed in the said demand notices, a notice is hereby given to the borrowers / co-borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13 (4) of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Rules. The details including date of possession of the properties are as mentioned below

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Physical Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Rakesh Kumar Jain/ Shrirom Jain A/c No :- LBDEL00001174328	Flat No- D-180/C, Shyam Park Extension Sahibabad Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh/ 19- Nov- 2020	June 29, 2012 Rs. 6,65,051,07/-	Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : 21-11-2020  
Place: Delhi NCR

Authorised Officer  
Secured Creditor

## Therapeutic food makers support Poshan Abhiyan

**New Delhi:** With an aim to tackle the problem of severe acute malnutrition under the Poshan Abhiyan in the country, Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) Association of India, comprising manufacturers of ready-to-use therapeutic foods, has extended support to the Government to develop new products and implement feeding protocols. "CMAM Association is poised to align with various nutrition interventions through development of therapeutic products as prescribed by the Government and extending the PM's vision of a self-reliant India," said Akshat Khandelwal, president of CMAM Association.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is for the information of general public that my client Prakash Chand S/o Sh. Sonu Ram R/o E-164 Madipur Jy Colony New Delhi-110063 have disowned and debarred his son Ravi & his wife Sonu and their children Rishabh & Kanishka from all his moveable & immovable properties with immediate effect and severed all relations. Any body dealing with them in any manner whatsoever will be doing so at his/her own cost, risk and responsibilities.

Mohinder Dhawan (Advocate)  
Bar Room 3, Civil Side Tis Hazari, Delhi-54

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Munna Kumar R/o A-296, HM House to Umar Lal House, Bywasan Village, Delhi-110061 were issued a charge sheet dated 25.11.2019 by Institute of Driving & Traffic Research for committing misconduct of "Continuously absenting from duties w.e.f. 5th September 2019 without any information and authorization" and for investigating the charges levelled a domestic enquiry was constituted and I was appointed as an enquiry officer. After my appointment, I intimated you about the enquiry proceedings fixed for 03.10.2020, 14.10.2020 and 30.10.2020, however you failed to attend the enquiry proceedings and the letters sent to you returned with remarks "No such person at this address". Accordingly, you are now given a final chance to attend the enquiry fixed for 26.11.2020 at 2.30 PM at IDTR, Adjoining ISBT, Sarai Kale Khan, Ring Road, New Delhi-110013. Saurabh Munjal (Advocate) D-101, Plot Court, Essel Tower, MG Road, Gurgaon-122001.





# MAKING WORLD GREENER

SHALINI SAKSENA chats up remote sensing data scientist and a PhD student in environmental science and sustainable development to bring you a report on their innovative ideas and research. In a first, these women from India are proud winners of Green Talent Competition 2020

## ‘Need better Government policies’



**Nidhi Singh, 32**  
**PhD Student**  
**Institute of**  
**Environment and**  
**Sustainable**  
**Development, BHU**

THERE ARE NO STUDIES THAT DIRECTLY INDICATE THAT DIABETES OR EVEN BP COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO AIR POLLUTION. FOR PROPER CONCLUSION WE NEED BETTER MONITORING

Born and brought up in Varanasi, this PhD student always wanted to pursue a career in environmental sciences. When she was doing her PhD, it was a project that studied the effect of climate change on agriculture. During a discussion, she found that there was little work done on the impact of climate change on health. This made her shift her focus of study. Nidhi Singh, who has been doing her research for the last five years tells you that it has not been easy to collect the data. “Back in 2016, there were only a few reviews, one can say there was a big void from India that showed the impact of air pollution and climate change on health. We knew that there was an impact on health from studies from other countries, but no data from India,” Singh says. What got her interested in pursuing a PhD is her father who did his research in Psychological. “As a child, what he did fascinated me and I knew that I wanted to do something similar. I chose Science in Class XI as I wanted to be a doctor but I couldn’t. So environment beckoned me,” Singh recalls. However, to submit her thesis, it has not been easy. “Getting data was a challenge. Hospitals are unable to maintain a proper data. But we managed to get data from the

Municipal Corporation of Varanasi. That data had gender, age, place and date of death and cause of death. In 70 per cent cases, it read cerebrovascular death. I had to struggle to ascertain the actual cause of death. If we had specific data, my research would have better impact due to the findings. Also, there is no single body that keeps a record of proper cause of death; this is a limiting factor. There are no studies that directly indicate that Diabetes or even BP could be attributed to air pollution. Each city has different pollution levels depending on the weather. For proper conclusion we need better monitoring,” Singh opines. Since she lives in Varanasi, her primary focus involved two areas. First, the impact of heat and cold wave and second, impact of air pollution on mortality. In the first instance, she found that impact of heat wave was more pronounced here and the elderly and male were more vulnerable. Her second area of study involved black carbon, the first kind of study on this from India. In fact, both her studies are pioneer works from the country. “I used black carbon and PM2.5 and PM 10 and gases like NO2, SO2 and ozone. We wanted to study the impact of these on mortality. We found black carbon is the most important pollutant that increases the risk of mortality and is in fact most lethal of them. This was followed by SO2, NO2 and then particular matter. These are good findings and can help the Government to base their policies and include black carbon in order to define quality of air pollution,” Singh tells you. Also, the entire Indo-Gangetic region due to its geographical position makes cities in this area highly polluted and densely populated. “Many people, due to socio-economic conditions, are unable to take required steps to avoid extreme temperatures or air pollution. Again, these findings are important and immediate action is needed by the Government to take corrective steps,” Singh says. Her recommendation based on her research, for her city for now, better traffic rules, doing away with outdated vehicles, introducing LPG and doing away with burning fossil fuel and creating awareness among the public of the impact of air pollution on health.



**Parmita Ghosh, 25**  
**Remote Sensing Data**  
**Scientist**  
**CORTEVA Agriscience**

What if it was possible to predict that a disease was about to hit your lush crop? What if there was a way to pinpoint the exact time to harvest your crop to get the most out of it? What if there was a way to predict how the weather will affect your crop in a particular year and necessary steps one could take to prevent damage? This and much more is now possible due to the remote sensing data that is available and there are scientists who can read these numbers and help farmers. Meet one such scientist who won the Green Talent Award this year — Parmita Ghosh who has done her bachelors in agricultural engineering and masters in Geoinformatics. This young scientist who has been working with Corteva Agriscience in Hyderabad for the last one year tells you that her expertise is in remote data science agriculture, her company is a big player in this field and hence chose to be associated with them. “Working with this organisation will help me reach the farmer who can benefit from my research. Solutions I develop directly go to the farmer,” Ghosh says. She tells you that her work involves developing solutions that she gets from the remote sensing data assist the farmer in his cropping pattern like which crop to grow and when to sow the seed, how to save resources and then to generate an alert system for any risk that can arise due to a disease attack and take timely measures to protect their yield. For example, for a farmer in Punjab growing wheat, what Ghosh can do sitting in Hyderabad is monitor the entire wheat season and if there is any crop pests or if the crop needs

## Out with the old. Bring in the new

irrigation, she can, via the satellite images, monitor the health of the crop and check for any stress and inform the farmer accordingly who can then take preventive steps. What is even better is that Ghosh can even predict the yield so that the farmer can plan post-harvest activities much in advance. However, all the information that Ghosh has at her finger tips is not necessarily welcomed by the farmers. “There have been times when we have sent alerts to them but they are just not ready to accept our advice because they have been following ageold practices and beliefs. To educate farmers, we have ground staff who visit the farmers regularly. This instills some confidence in the advisory. There are so many new crop diseases today, diseases that their forefathers have not even heard of or seen. Take foliar new worms; this is new to India. So some farmers today depend on the advisory given to them and slowly they gain confidence in our methods,” Ghosh says. She agrees that it is easier to bring the younger farmer to the fold since we are living in the era of digital technology and so are they. “These young farmers are looking for methods to increase their yield. They are also aware of the alert system. Workshops that we hold regularly helps the traditional farmer to adapt to using technology to help them,” Ghosh tells you. While she has only been in the profession for a year, she tells you that there are a few basic problems that India’s farmers face. “More than the use of technology, it is the reachability of technology to each farmer,” Ghosh says. The good part is that the data models are available countrywide depending on cropping patterns and kind of diseases that may be indigenous to that region. “There are, of course, challenges that come when monitoring the satellite and getting the numbers and algorithm correct. But regular monitoring and taking into account the unpredictability of Mother Nature, we are able to get the number right up to 95 per cent. The advice we give therefore comes with riders,” Ghosh says.

THERE ARE SO MANY NEW CROP DISEASES TODAY. TAKE FOLIAR NEW WORMS; THIS IS NEW TO INDIA. SO SOME FARMERS TODAY DEPEND ON THE ADVISORY GIVEN TO THEM AND SLOWLY THEY GAIN CONFIDENCE IN OUR METHODS

## WHAT THE AWARD MEANS

Every year, the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) hosts the prestigious Green Talents – International Forum for High Potentials in Sustainable Development to promote the international exchange of innovative green ideas from various fields of research.

The award, under the patronage of Minister Anja Karliczek, honours young researchers each year. The winners come from numerous countries and scientific disciplines and are recognised for their outstanding achievements in making our societies more sustainable. Selected by a jury of German experts,

the award winners are granted unique access to the country’s research elite. The Green Talents Competition focuses on outstanding young scientists, who are active in the field of sustainable development. The BMBF fosters interdisciplinary approaches in this regard.



The programme offers a unique opportunity to become part of an exceptional world-wide network of outstanding young minds and German institutions. The first part of the prize consists of an invitation to a two-week science forum in Germany, where one will be introduced to renowned research

facilities and have individual meetings with experts. One will learn about collaborations and experience the country’s excellent research infrastructure at close hand. A workshop on research and funding opportunities will provide with further information for your future research stay

in Germany. The journey will culminate in a festive award ceremony hosted by a high-level representative from the BMBF. One will have the opportunity to return to Germany for up to three months to conduct a research stay at an institute of one’s choice the year after the science forum.



# HAMSTRING FINE, SAYS ROHIT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The hullabaloo over his hamstring was confusing as well as amusing for Rohit Sharma, who says he always knew that the injury was not that serious and he would be battle-ready for the tour of Australia.

India's white-ball vice-captain, in a detailed conversation with *PTI*, opened about the left hamstring injury during the IPL, which became a matter of intense speculation after he returned to action within days of being left out of the Australia tour earlier this month. He was subsequently added to the Test squad.

"I don't know what was going on, to be honest and what all were people talking about. But let me put this on record, I was constantly communicating with BCCI and Mumbai Indians," Rohit said.

He hit a match-winning knock of 68 off 50 balls in the IPL final against Delhi Capitals, playing through pain. Rohit is currently doing strength and conditioning work at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru before heading to Australia.



Indian opener Rohit Sharma

PTI/File Picture

"I told them (Mumbai Indians) that I can take the field since it is the shortest format and I will be able to manage the situation quite nicely. Once I made my mind clear, it was all about focussing on what I needed to do," he said.

"Hamstring is feeling absolutely fine. Just started the process of getting it nice and strong. Before I play the longer format, I absolutely needed to be clear in mind that there is no stone that is left unturned, that's probably the reason, I'm at the NCA," Rohit added.

For Rohit, the chatter on the outside regarding his injury and his subsequent participation in the IPL play-offs, didn't matter much.

"So for me, it was not a concern what x, y or z was talking about like whether he would make it to Australia," he said.

"Once the injury happened, the next two days all I did was to figure out what I can do in the next 10 days — whether I will be able to play or not."

Unless one goes to the ground, one won't know how the body is shaping up, feels the five-time IPL champion cap-

tain.

"But every day, hamstring (degree of injury) was changing. The way it was responding was changing, so I was feeling quite confident that I could play and that is the communication that I had with MI at that point.

"I told them that I think I will be okay to play just before play-offs. If there is any discomfort, I won't be playing the play-offs."

All Rohit needed was three and half weeks to get ready for Tests and he fails to understand what the fuss was all about given that the series starts December 17.

"Of course, there is still some work that needs to be done on my hamstring. That's why I didn't go to Australia for the white-ball leg as there are back-to-back games. Around 6 games in 11 days," he said about the limited overs leg beginning November 27.

"So I thought if I get to work on my body for 25 days, I can probably go and play the Test matches. So it was an easy decision for me and I don't know why it became so complicated for others," he wondered aloud.

## IPL performance has taken pressure off this Oz tour: Shami

PTI ■ SYDNEY

India's craftiest pacer Mohammed Shami is in the "right zone" after his impressive performance in the IPL, allowing him to prepare for the big Test series against Australia "without any pressure".

Shami had his best IPL season as his 20 wickets for Kings XI Punjab, including a spectacular defence of five runs in double Super Over game against Mumbai Indians, was one of the highlights of the tournament.

"My performances for KXIP in IPL has given me a lot of confidence and put me in the right zone," Shami told *BCCI.TV* on Saturday.

An artist with the red ball, Shami feels that a good IPL has taken off the burden from him.

"The biggest advantage is that I can now prepare for the upcoming series without any pressure. There is no burden on me. I am very comfortable at the moment.

"I had worked hard on my bowling and my fitness in the lockdown. I knew that IPL would take place sooner or later and I was preparing myself for it."

Shami made no bones that Test matches are a priority for him on this tour as he is trying to get into the groove during the training session over last one week.

"We are going to have a long tour starting with the white ball followed by pink and red ball Tests. My focus area has been the red ball and I am working on my lengths and seam movement.

"I have always felt that



once you start pitching the ball at the lengths you desire, you can succeed in different formats."

He feels that post IPL, his white ball form is in control and that's why he required more preparation with red ball.

"What you need is control. I have done well with the white-ball and now spending time in the nets bowling with the red ball. You don't bowl in the same area since both formats are different but your basics don't change much."

With Steve Smith and David Warner, who were missing during India's victorious campaign in 2018-19, back in the mix, things will get tougher for the Indian pace quartet.

But the senior bowler is hardly perturbed by their presence.

"India have quality batsmen and we bowl at them in the nets. We don't look at

names, we focus on our skills. You can be a world-class batsman, but one good ball will still get you out," Shami said.

The veteran pacer said that the diverse skill sets makes for a very potent attack like the one India has with him, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma and the menacing Jasprit Bumrah.

"Our fast bowling group can bowl at 140 kph plus and you need that kind of pace in Australia. Even our reserves are quick, you don't get to see that kind of an attack."

Shami reminded that the pacers have done well in all overseas conditions and have taken 20 wickets in a lot of away Test matches as well as in spin-friendly conditions at home.

"There is a healthy competition but there is no rivalry within the group. If you look at the numbers, we have managed to pick 20 wickets almost on all our away tours."

## Motivation has never been a problem for Kohli: Stoinis

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Virat Kohli is more than hundred percent charged up every time he takes the field and the Australian team is preparing in equal measure to counter the threat posed by the Indian captain, said all-rounder Marcus Stoinis.

Kohli, who is heading family way in January, will be returning after playing the six white ball games and the opening day/night Test scheduled in Adelaide.

"Don't worry about Virat. He is up for every single game that he's playing. Yeah, maybe there will be extra motivation, but I don't think there's any extra motivation than 110 percent," Stoinis was quoted as saying by *ESPNCricinfo*.

"So let's see. I am sure he (Kohli) will be ready to go. He is getting home for the birth of his kid, which is the right decision in my opinion. So I am sure he will be extra motivated."

Stoinis said that coach Justin Langer and his men will have foolproof strategy to counter the India skipper, who is in a league of his own when it comes to white-ball cricket.

"We've definitely got our strategies, we've had things that have worked in the past, and at other times the same plans haven't worked and he's made some runs.

"Obviously, he (Kohli) is a great player, and to all these good players, you do what you want to do, you have your plans, and on the day, you get extra competitive and you hope it all falls in your side of the court."

On the personal front, Stoinis scored 352 runs and took 13 wickets for Delhi Capitals in the IPL and wants to replicate that performance in the limited overs games against India, starting Friday.

Asked what changed for him this season, Stoinis said: "I will hopefully continue to bring that form into the summer, but there's nothing really too different (that I have been doing).

"The break was great — it was nice to come back quite fresh into all these competitions. I feel like I was going well in England before leading in as well, so hopefully the results keep coming my way," he said.

## Bereaved Siraj declines BCCI offer to fly back home

PTI ■ KOLKATA

BCCI secretary Jay Shah on Saturday said that pacer Mohammed Siraj, who has lost his father, was given the option of flying back home to be with his grieving family but he decided to stay back in Australia for "national duty".

Ghouse, who was suf-

fering from a lung ailment, died on Friday. He was 53.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had a discussion with Siraj and he was offered the option of flying back and be with his family in this hour of grief," Shah said in a BCCI media release.

"The fast bowler has decided to stay with the Indian contingent and con-

tinue performing his national duties. The BCCI shares his grief and will be supportive of Siraj in this extremely challenging phase," Shah added.

Board president Sourav Ganguly took to Twitter to laud the Hyderabad pacer for his resilience and mental fortitude in this hour of tragedy.

"May Mohammed siraj

have a lot of strength to overcome this loss..Lots of good wishes for his success in this trip... Tremendous character," Ganguly tweeted.

If Siraj had chosen to fly back to India, he would have had to do another 14-day quarantine here in Australian under the local government rules on his arrival.

## Ferguson not worried about missing Test spot

IANIS ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand fast bowler, who has not been named in the Test squad that plays West Indies next month is not too worried about it and says he will fight for a spot in the long-format side which already has a good pace-bowling attack.

The pace bowler, who is undergoing quarantine after returning from the Indian Premier League, where he impressed with his pace but had a mixed tournament performance-wise, will play the T20 series that begins on November 27.

"The Test side is a really tough team to break into, there is so much depth. Obviously, our big three (Boult, Southee, Wagner) have been so successful for a long period of time," Ferguson told reporters in an interaction.

"I've had chats throughout. Steady (coach Gary Stead) and I talk a lot, I've got some family engagements that week, but even then, (Jamieson) played so well last season, so he

certainly deserves a spot in that side," Ferguson said.

Ferguson picked six wickets in five games he played and conceded runs at just 7.46 in the IPL for KKR.

"When you see the depth, Kyle Jamieson, one of my good mates, coming through and taking the opportunity and playing well, puts pressure on other bowlers to perform well all through the levels. I think it is great. For me, honestly, if it means I've got to work hard to get an opportunity and have a chance for that side, as I always do, take it game by game, keep putting the work in in the back-ground, and if that opportunity comes I'll do everything I can to take it with open arms," Ferguson added.

The right-arm pace bowler had a forgettable Test debut in December last year against Australia when he limped off the field after bowling just 11 overs at Perth.

## 'Pakistan ready to host top cricketing nations in 2021'

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

After nearly a decade of hosting no home Test matches due to a terrorist attack on a rival team's bus in 2009, Pakistan says it's ready to welcome major cricketing nations like South Africa, New Zealand, England and West Indies in 2021.

"We're working hugely in terms of building relationships, nurturing those relationships with (other) cricket boards," Wasim Khan, chief executive of the Pakistan Cricket Board said.

South Africa is due to visit Pakistan in January to play a two-Test series which is part of world Test championship, followed by three Twenty20s.

New Zealand is penciled in for three ODIs and five Twenty20s in September, followed by two Twenty20s against England at Karachi. It will be England's first tour to Pakistan since 2005.

The PCB has also plans a home series against West Indies in December.

"We have a chock-a-block eight to 10 months coming up for us on the road playing at home," Khan said.

"We're also in discussions with Cricket Australia. They're due to be touring during the 2022 season, we're looking at them coming for an extended period of time."

When Sri Lanka's team bus came under a terrorist attack in March 2009, the doors of international cricket remained shut on



Pakistan until Zimbabwe became the first test-playing nation to play limited-overs series at Lahore in 2015.

Test cricket only returned to Pakistan late last year when Sri Lanka played two five-day games at Rawalpindi and Karachi.

Bangladesh also played a Test match before its second test was called off due to Covid-19.

In between the Zimbabwe and Bangladesh tours, a franchise-based domestic Twenty20 league — the Pakistan Super League — played a big role in pressing Pakistan's claims to host international games.

Players like Shane Watson, Dale Steyn and AB De Villiers were among some big names that toured Pakistan and have played for various city-based franchise teams.

Khan believes these players had a significant role in portraying Pakistan's improving image among cricket-playing nations.

"A lot of these players go back to their own countries ... and say,

you know what? Pakistan is one of the safest places to play," Khan said.

"These are those cricketers who are associated with their own cricket boards, who are international cricketers, who perhaps had a (different) perception of Pakistan before they came here."

Khan also wants to organize a limited-overs series against neighboring Afghanistan somewhere next year, after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, a former cricket captain for the country, visited Kabul and extended an invitation to Afghan national team this week.

"We will do everything we can to find a slot in the calendar to arrange fixtures against Afghanistan," Wasim Khan said.

## World record holders Kosgei, Yeshaneh add to field for ADHM



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Airtel Delhi Half Marathon on Saturday announced the entries of world record holders Brigid Kosgei and Ababel Yeshaneh for the upcoming event, adding lustre to an already star-studded field.

The event is part of the countdown to the World Athletics Gold Label Race.

At the Chicago Marathon in October 2019, Kenya's Kosgei stunned the world when she broke the long-standing women's world marathon record by more than a minute, clock-

ing 2:14:04.

Yeshaneh was a distant second on that occasion but still ran a superb personal best of 2:20:51.

However, the tables were turned at the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon in February this year when a contest between the pair in the final stages of the race saw Ethiopia's Yeshaneh prevail in a world record 64:31 with Kosgei second in 64:49.

In their most recent outings last month, the 26-year-old Kosgei won the rescheduled London Marathon in 2:18:58 while the 29-year-old Yeshaneh had to contend with misfortune and fell at the World Athletics Half Marathon Championships in Poland, with just over three kilometres remaining, which took her out of medal contention although she recovered quickly to finish fifth.

While the elite runners will be at the start line at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, amateurs across the world will join the event using the new Airtel Delhi Half Marathon Mobile App.

## Thiem downs Djokovic in instant classic

PTI ■ LONDON

Dominic Thiem became the first player in four years to reach back-to-back championship matches at the Nitto ATP Finals on Saturday, as he earned a milestone 7-5, 6-7(10), 7-6(5) victory against World No 1 Novak Djokovic.

The 2019 runner-up failed to convert four match points in a dramatic second-set tie-break, but held his nerve to rally in a final-set tie-break against Djokovic at the O2 for the second straight year. Thiem's victory was his 300th at tour-level and his fifth against a World No 1. The last player to reach consecutive finals at the season finale was Djokovic (2012-16).

Each set came down to just a few points and it was Thiem who claimed the biggest points in the decider. Thiem increased his aggression to win six consecutive points from 0/4 down in the final-set tie-break and converted his sixth match point with a powerful forehand approach shot. Thiem is only



the second player in 2020 to win a tie-break against the World No 1. Djokovic entered the third-set tie-break with a 15-1 tie-break record this season.

Thiem has now won five of his seven most recent ATP Head-to-Head matches against Djokovic, which includes two wins at this event. The Austrian also earned a final-set tie-break victory against Djokovic in the round-robin stage last year.

With his fifth win against Djokovic (5-7), Thiem joins

Andy Murray as the only players to beat each member of the Big Three on five or more occasions. Thiem also owns six wins against Rafael Nadal (6-9) and has triumphed five times against Roger Federer (5-2). Thiem has excelled in matches against the Big Three since the start of the 2019 ATP Tour season (9-3).

In a tight first set, neither player was able to earn a break point in their opening five return games. As Djokovic attempted to shorten points by coming to the net, Thiem made the crucial move at 5-5. The World No 3 consistently fired backhands down the line to Djokovic's forehand volley and extracted errors to serve for the set. Thiem converted his first set point with an ace down the T.

Thiem was put under pressure on serve in the second set, but he found big serves to save break point at 3-4 and two set points at 5-6, 15/40. In the tie-break, Thiem held four match

points but he could not convert as errors began to creep into his game. Djokovic served with power and fired a forehand onto the line to escape danger on two match points and levelled the match when Thiem drove a backhand into the net.

There were no signs of disappointment from Thiem in the decider. The 27-year-old continued to serve at a high level to stay ahead in the score and reach a tie-break. Thiem committed errors early in the final-set tie-break, but he charged back from 0/4 with consistent aggression to win six of the final seven points. Last year, Thiem recovered from 1/4 to beat Djokovic in another final-set tie-break.

Djokovic was attempting to reach his eighth championship match at the season finale and move one win away from matching Federer's record haul of six Nitto ATP Finals crowns. The six-time year-end World No 1 ends the year with a 41-5 record and four titles.

## Women's football camp from Dec 1

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian women's senior team will undergo its first national camp since the coronavirus-forced lockdown, in Goa from December 1, kick-starting its preparations for the 2022 AFC Asian Cup with a host of health safety measures.

As many as 30 players have been summoned by head coach Maymol Rocky for the camp. The 2022 edition of the continental event will be hosted in India.

A detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been prepared for the resumption of the team training, which lays down numerous Covid-19 protocols and guidelines in an exhaustive manner.

National teams director Abhishek Yadav said the team is eager to return to the field as soon as possible.

"The team is eager to get back on the pitch as soon as possible. The last few months have been unprecedented but we are taking cautious steps to take Indian football forward together." The AFC Women's Asian Cup is in sight and we have to

be at the top of our preparations by the time the tournament kicks off."

He stressed that the safety of the team is of paramount importance.

"We have formulated the safety protocols from the protocols laid down by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India; Sports Authority of India (SAI), our medical team and other stakeholders."

The SOP, as prescribed by Indian team doctor Shervin Sheriff, mandates that incoming players and support staff must get a COVID test (RT-PCR) done from an ICMR accredited laboratory prior to their departure from their home towns.

If the RT-PCR test result comes negative, they can proceed to travel with necessary precautions.

After reaching Goa, a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) has to be done and if the result is negative, they can proceed to their respective rooms for seven days of quarantine. They will be tested again on Day 8, before joining training.









# ‘Theatre is sacred for an actor’

■ **You were last seen in Khuda Haafiz playing a cop. Did you have to prepare for the role?**

I had to speak Arabic in the film. I also did action for the very first time. We had to prepare for that. Otherwise the part would have come very easily to me. But this was not the case here. I had to learn a different language and have command over the accent. When we got to the actual

## Talktime

AAHANA KUMRA

*She was last seen in Khuda Haafiz. The actor speaks with Shalini Saksena about how she had to prepare for essaying Tamena Hamid character, her role in theatrical Sir Sir Sarla and upcoming projects*

shooting, there was an action director. He trained all of us on how to throw a punch, how to take a jab and how to take a reaction shot. There was a lot of prep for me.

■ **Did you feel that the role was outside your comfort zone?**

My only worry was what if I am unable to do justice to the character. Since everything that we do is attached to our name. When I said yes to the project a lot of people told me that it would be quality work since I am known to now pick up good projects given the kind of films I have done in the past. Having said this, it is important to take risks and I am very grateful to the director Faruk Kabir and Apoorva for pushing me to take up the part. I came on board the project only a week before the film was to be shot and I saw Annuji (Kapoor) recite his lines with such conviction. I did the same and it came out well.

■ **Does that mean you get only certain kinds of films?**

Not at all. I have a plethora of films and each is different. I have had no role

where I have repeated myself. I can safely say that I can't complain that I have not got different roles to play or enough parts. I am the lucky few who have been offered different characters. In *Marzi*, I played a teacher and in *Betaal* I played as an IPS officer.

■ **What is your character in Sir Sir Sarla?**

I play a student of literature, Sarla. The play has not been set in any particular place; it is the house of the Professor Palekar and his two favourite students – Paridhar and Sarla. To begin with, when the play was first stage, the role of Sarla was essayed by Sonali Kulkarni. It was reopened in 2012 with a new cast and that is when I came in. The first half of the play is about memories. So Sarla keeps coming back in the memory of the Professor and Paridhar; Sarla has got married and gone away. Sarla was always in love with the Professor and Paridhar in love with Sarla. The second half is all about how she can't find a connection with her new family as they speak about money and not literature. And then all three of them come together and share their

problems.

■ **Was it tough to identify with the role? Were there any challenges?**

For me, I grew up with Sarla. I have been playing her for the last eight years. We started rehearsing for this play much in advance and have lived with the character since 2012. Doing theatre is a playground; we are all students. The audience is different, sometimes the timings are different or something else comes up. It feels weird when I was not on stage. For many of us, going back to theatre is like brushing up our skills time and again. When I started playing this role, I didn't understand much of it; I was so nervous since I knew people would make comparisons. The good is it stopped soon and the show has been a hit since then. Over the years, I have found a relationship with Sarla which is very special.

■ **You have been doing theatre for some time. What is the attraction?**

It is my medium. It's an actors' medium. All other mediums are directors'. He tells you what to do, how to do it and when to do it. An actor has no say what the director puts or removes.

I don't have a say here. In theatre, it is my stage; it is my show and it must go on. Theatre is sanity for actors otherwise it is very difficult for us to find our voices. The kind of time we spend on rehearsal, it is quite a bit. You develop a special relationship with every play. Ask any person who has done theatre, he will remember each and every rehearsal. It is very difficult to explain the relationship an actor has with theatre – it is very sacred.

■ **How did you come on board for the role?**

I got a call from Mak sir (Makarand Deshpande). I had already done a couple of plays with him but they were smaller roles. He was looking to revive Sir Sir Sarla. I had no idea about the play but only saw it as a kid. When I got a call, I was shocked to be offered Sarla. I know every actor would have cut an arm to get this role; it is such a powerful play. I was overwhelmed when I was offered the character.

■ **What next?**

I have completed shooting for *Sandwich* by Rohan Sippy. I am shooting for Shaad Ali's *Call My Agent*.

MUSBA HASHMI  
chats up  
RISHIKA AGARWAL  
and NAVAM GUPTA,  
Founders of  
WedHaven, a wedding  
management app,  
about how the idea  
hit them and whether it  
can be a game  
changer in the industry



## MADE IN WEDHAVEN

Most of us might be guilty of gatecrashing a wedding or the other both knowingly or unknowingly. However, no one would like to put himself in such an unsavoury situation. While putting a filter on the guests can be bit difficult for the organisers, but it is not much difficult to protect yourself from being one in this tech-savvy world.

Meet a 31-year-old husband-wife duo, Rishika Agarwal and Navam Gupta, who have devised WedHaven, a wedding management app that can help keep gatecrashers at bay, while also simplifying the tedious tasks that are involved in it.

Launched in late February, this year, WedHaven is a result of a lot of personal experiences of the duo. "Until we got married in 2014, we didn't know the hassle of arranging marriages in India. It is nothing short of a Herculean task. Moreover, the other big challenge is to make sure that all the guests reached the right location. It took us hours to make sure that all our friends and relatives reach the place on time and while engaging in this we ended up missing on some of the precious moments," Agarwal tells you. She adds that it took them a year for the ideation and research work.

The idea behind the app was to enable people to shed the burden off their shoulders and let the technology



Navam Gupta and Rishika Agarwal

do the work.

"Traditionally, people prepare guest lists by writing down the names on paper. It is a tedious task. Now, this is when our app comes to play. One can simply download the app and with the help of our WedHaven Gold plans, they can just export their contacts and prepare a guest list in a matter of seconds," Gupta explains and tells you that the paid plans start at ₹5,000. Not that one can't experience the app for free. There are some features like preparing cal-

endars or scheduling events that one can do for free on the app.

The app creates a digital wedding through the information provided, with details of all the events, venues, timings, real-time updates, and sending out invitations to the guests on the app. Further, one can also prepare a different guest list for all the different functions, given the limited number of guests allowed today. Not only this, to take it a notch higher, one can also track the status of *baraat*.

The other highlight of the app is that it prevents you from gatecrashing a *shaadi*. One doesn't need Google Map, just log in to the app and you will get the directions to the venue. Hence, there is not even a slightest chance to enter a wrong venue with more or less a similar name.

Living up to the name, the duo's aim is to make weddings as secure as possible. To cater to this, one can generate a code on the app for the guests and can always accept or deny entries as per their choice.

However, the loophole here is, which by the way the duo has decided to work upon, that there is no physical resources on the gate who can confirm the guest name and allow them entry. Moreover, it is also not mandatory for the guests to download the app.

"We are into the early stages of this process and we do have plans to address this problem. We are planning to hire people who can do the check on the entry way. But that will be at a later stage," Gupta says.

Another fact that can prove as a disadvantage for them is the fact that everything here is online. However, for some it may be the best thing that can happen, while for others, may be for our parents or grandparents it can be nothing but pure inconvenience.

"It is true to certain extent, but now that lockdown has made us all learn the

importance of going online, this will not be much of a problem for anyone. More so, since we have kept the design and feature user-friendly and extremely simple. There is no rocket science involved in it. Even our parents with a little guidance can do the trick," Gupta explains.

He points out that the fact that they are only offering wedding management services and is not involved in organising the same. "We don't have any intentions of eliminating wedding planners or to eat up their jobs, we are clearly a wedding management brand and our services are a proof of it. And also, only about 25 per cent of people actually involve wedding planners in India, rest of us rely on our parents and close relatives to get the job done. So, competing with wedding organisers and planners is out of context here," Gupta asserts and tells you that people can book services on the app itself or can do it over a call.

Post the lockdown, the duo has managed 10 weddings under their Gold plan, and the feedback was encouraging. "We have received a positive response from our customers. Like we mentioned before, there are a few features that we would like to add in the near future including logistics. We will continue to update the app and make it more user-friendly and accessible," Agarwal says.

■ **How did you get interested in acting?**

Since childhood, I had been performing in school plays and continued to do so even during college days. I was working with a shoe designing company and came to Mumbai. I wanted to join acting classes while working. That helped hone in my skills and realised that I could do this as a career. Then I quit my job and took up acting.

■ **How tough was it to quit a well-paying job?**

It was very tough. There was a lot of family pressure. They wanted to know why I was leaving a corporate to pursue acting. But I knew this is what I wanted to do and knew that I would make a mark even if it took time. I took this time, I polished my skills and kept training.

■ **From shoe designing to acting. How did that hap-**

## Acting is like breathing: Sanchita

SANCHITA PURI, who made a mark in the industry as Anjali in Zee5's The Final Call, made her debut with Ginny Weds Sunny. SHALINI SAKSENA chats up the actor

pen?

I was also interested in designing and wanted to pursue it. Acting was and is my passion. I wanted to go into acting when I was in Class IX and X. But you know how parents are; always protective of the girl child. So, I decided to pursue designing after Class XII. But then when I came to Mumbai, I was right there in the middle of it all. I was so fascinated with the industry. I fought with my parents and told them this is what I wanted to do. I got some commercials and small acting roles.



■ **You are from Kanpur. Were there adjustment issues when you came to Mumbai?**

When I was working, the pace was hectic. Mumbai is a tough place to be. But I followed my dream and worked hard. I was flexible since the aim was to get into acting.

■ **Was it tough to get your first break?**

Initially, it was. With time, I sorted myself. Newcomers tend to become impatient and desperate. But I do a lot of yoga and meditation. I realised I was not giving myself enough time. I calmed myself down and

things started happening automatically. *Ginny Weds Sunny* came to me in 2019 after I finished training in 2018.

■ **How was the experience of being part of Ginny Weds Sunny?**

It was fun. The atmosphere was very friendly. My co-workers were great. We would sit around and chat. *Scam 1992* was a quick project which came because I was part of a festival. The makers saw me there and asked if I wanted to audition for the same. I got the script and got selected. Since it was a Hansal Mehta project, I

agreed even though my part is very small — just two scenes. Every actor wants to play the main lead but then when I heard the story and about the cast of *Ginny Weds Sunny*, I liked it and was convinced this was the right movie to begin with.

■ **You have done short films, web shows, theatre and ads. What do you love doing?**

I love to be in front of the camera. I also love to write which takes a lot of my time as well. When I am in front of the camera, I feel like I am breathing.

## ‘Inspiration to write songs can come from anywhere’

Singer-songwriter and music producer SRIHARI JAGANNATHAN speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how his musical journey began, his band, Chennai Street Band and latest EP



■ **How did your music journey begin?**

I was always interested in music but my passion started when I was in college with cultural events that used to take place. By the end of my engineering degree I knew that I wanted to pursue music in some form or the other. Since I had a passion for music and writing songs, I formed my Chennai Street Band in 2015. But due to the lockdown earlier in the year, I was stuck in my room as was my band, I worked on some of my work as an independent artist.

■ **Tell us about your Chennai Street Band.**

I will continue to be associated with it once things are back to normal. Thanks to platforms like Gaana, it opens a chance to perform virtually. I will perform some of my songs and some of our band's. But we are looking forward to getting back on the stage. We do alternative pop in Tamil. But we recently released our first Hindi single.

■ **What is your EP Intezaar about?**

I worked on this EP during the lockdown period and it was released in August. For our band, we released a full-length record in November last. Post that, we had a long tour. But just before the Pune-Bengaluru leg of the tour the lockdown kicked in. Whatever we had wanted to do as a band couldn't be done. But I wanted to try my music. I love the beach and *Intezaar* is all about that. It has two parts. A guy sitting at the beach is having a conversation about finding his love when he spots a couple celebrating the sunset.

■ **What were the challenges working on your music projects during this lockdown?**

There were a few limitations. If you look at our previous album, it took us two-and-a-half years to bring it out. Each and every detail was worked on before we went ahead with it. We spent money on the highest level of production that was available out there for recording. We wanted to give our best to the listeners. But when *Intezaar* happened, it was in May, there were challenges. But it was also good to explore alternatives. I went and got myself a set of home equipment and explored. Of course, there would be a difference in the quality. But I wanted to put out some music and this was a good time to experiment.

■ **How did you get associated with Gaana LaunchPad?**

This was a surprise. One day I was just added to the LaunchPad. One day I got a call from one of the team members. She told me that they were doing an exclusive with independent artists and you are among the 30 who are featured in the playlist and that's how I got associated with it. But my association with them started last year with our band. We did have a bunch of fans on the platform.

■ **Do you think artists like yourself need such launchpads?**

It immensely helps. Even if we have releases, what is missing due to the present pandemic is the connection with the listeners. When we perform on stage, we have a direct connection with our listeners. Through this launchpad, we get to expand our fan base and interact with them in terms of music. Also, every independent artist seeks some sort of support from streaming platforms to get recognition. When you have launchpads like this, it is going to do wonders for your music especially now.

■ **Who has been your inspiration in the indie music space?**


To write, half the time, I don't know if there is a process to it; it just happens. Like when *Intezaar* happened, I was sitting on a cliff in Varkala beach (Kerala) with the golden sun and saw a couple who I could feel were very much in love. That image stuck in my head and the song was born. Song writing can come from anywhere. As for artists whom I look up to, one of them is AR Rahman. He drove me to listen to music; internationally I love ColdPlay. There are many brilliant indie artists in India, I would like to mention Parvaaz, Prateek Kuhad and Maalavika Manoj aka Mali.

■ **What are your upcoming projects?**

We will be releasing our first Hindi single.







# the pioneer agenda



In this world,  
everyone wants to  
know everything  
about you, and I  
think that's funny  
— Leighton Meester

## FROM THE INSIDE

### Accounting for Karma

The law of karma provides a system of justice in which one is rewarded for good karma and punished for bad ones

### 2



### 4

### Know what you are worth

You can't simply blame time or destiny indications for your failure. Better look into your own fault lines

As we learn to live with Covid-19 around, things have been particularly harsh for children who are finding themselves trapped and are struggling to get back to normal, writes KAARTIK GUPTA, as he suggests measures to ensure that our children remain healthy and emerge stronger from this crisis

# THE NEW CRISIS POINT

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Till now, the year 2020 has been a difficult one to say the least. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed everything around us. How we meet and greet others, type of clothes we wear, how we stand and even sit in public places, how often we go out; basically everything has changed. Months of uncertainty, lockdown, reports of chaos caused due to the pandemic all over media, restricted movements and forced isolations have taken a toll on the mental and emotional health of a large number of people.

As per recent reports, there has been a significant rise in people seeking psychological help over the past few months. Anxiety, Depression, increased incidents of domestic violence, substance abuse, stress due to loss of livelihood and financial crisis, escalation in the number of suicides were some of the grave issues for which people sought psychological help. People of all ages have been deeply impacted due to the changed world order.

As the nation is in a gradual phase of unlock at present, most of the workforce and economy has opened up. People have resumed work with varied work days and shifts. However, children are still stuck at homes. They are unable to go to their respective schools and colleges as Covid cases continue to rise and thus as a safety measure, educational institutions have not yet been given the nod to operate completely. Students, at different educational levels, are forced to continue with online classes. Some have even appeared for online exams, while few others wait for the technical glitches to be sorted. These have been challenging times especially for children as not just they had to adapt to a very different method of learning, they have also been deprived of the fun times they share with their friends in school and college. Those belonging to the lower socio-economic strata have found it even more difficult to keep up with the teaching due to lack of resources like smartphones, laptops and slower internet speed.

Problems faced by children due to the pandemic include:


- **Online learning:** Technological advancements made it possible for students to continue with their studies even from the space and safety of their own homes. Online classes, e-lectures, webinars replaced regular classrooms and lecture halls. However, it came with the side-effects of reduced attention span, virtual absenteeism as students would login for class but would be watching or playing something else rather than listening to their teachers, lack of writing skills as all the assignments or projects had to be virtually completed and submitted. Poor internet connectivity, concurrent online classes of sibling, lack of smartphone also affected the children's ability to attend e-schools/colleges. In addition to this, time-bound assignment submissions and exams heightened the child's anxiety if in case he/she is unable to upload the document for a reason beyond his/her control. Back-to-back classes also affected the children's ability to pay attention to what is being taught.
- **Restricted outdoor activity:** Childhood is a period where an individual grows not just by learning things at school, but also by engaging in play activities with his/her peers. It is a treasured time of the day and almost all children look forward to going out and playing with their friends. But the pandemic forced them to stay indoors and thus restricted their ability to play with friends and siblings. This has been one of the most important factors for children having more psychological and behavioural issues during the past few months. Regular exercise and playing activities ensure adequate production and secretion of endorphins and

growth hormones which are vital for a child's overall health and well-being.

- **Lack of privacy:** With everyone being at home for most part of the day, one's personal space has also been compromised to a certain extent. This is especially true for adolescents as more family time, less time with friends has been tough on some teenagers. Although, many have utilised this time well to bond with their family members, some found it difficult which often led to an increase in arguments and conflicts at home.
- **Increased screen time:** Ask any parent of a teenager or even a child and they will tell you how fed up they are due to their child's excessive phone/laptop usage. Social media, OTT platforms, messaging apps, online games; this cocktail is any parents' worst enemy and ironically their child's go to thing. Excessive screen time has been an issue for a very long time now, but due to the pandemic when even studies started happening online things just went from bad to worse for children and adolescents. As per a recent pre-Covid times study, an adolescent on an average spends around 6-7 hours watching or using phone/laptop screen; much higher than the healthy usage. Children and adolescents are completely hooked onto the screen which has adverse effects on their psychological well-being.
- **Restricted socialisation:** Due to the pandemic, our social interactions and gatherings have been severely affected. Humans are social animals and we need to socialise for us to feel safe and secure. Adolescents and young adults, especially the ones in their last school or college year, are apprehensive if they would be able to meet their friends and teachers properly one final time before they pass out from the educational institutions. Children have reported feeling isolated and lonely during the past few months as they have not been able to go and meet their friends in person.
- **Increased risk of child abuse:** The pandemic has increased the prevalence of many common sources of family stress, placing children at risk of abuse and neglect. As per recent reports, the incidents of domestic violence and abuse had significantly gone up during the lockdown period placing children at a greater risk and adversely affecting their impressionable minds. A child who has been a victim or even a witness to abuse at home can experience a variety of psychological and emotional issues both as a child and even later on as an adult. Providing a safe and nurturing home environment for a child to grow in is each one's responsibility and we need to take adequate steps to ensure the same. Any incident of abuse needs to be reported to the police and Child Welfare Committee so that the child can be immediately secured and the perpetrators be punished.

As the number of new cases has lessened over the past few weeks and we all learn to live with Covid-19 around, things are slowly getting back to normal; a new normal. As a child/adolescent going through any of the above mentioned issues, you can take the following measures to ensure that you remain healthy and emerge stronger from this crisis:

- **Communication:** Talk to your parents, siblings or friends about how you are feeling about the current scenario. Confide in the one you trust. Share whatever you are feeling or thinking about, no matter how trivial you might think it may sound to them. As a parent, be patient and a good listener to your child/adolescent. Hear them out and try to understand what he/she is going through. Encourage them to talk about their feelings, their thoughts, any apprehensions or anything they are worried about. Listen to understand, rather than to reply. Provide a caring, supportive and non-judgmental environment at home for him/her to feel safe and secure at home. Do not



AS PER RECENT REPORTS, THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT RISE IN PEOPLE SEEKING PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, INCREASED INCIDENTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SUBSTANCE ABUSE, STRESS DUE TO LOSS OF LIVELIHOOD AND FINANCIAL CRISIS, ESCALATION IN THE NUMBER OF SUICIDES WERE SOME OF THE GRAVE ISSUES FOR WHICH PEOPLE SOUGHT PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP. PEOPLE OF ALL AGES HAVE BEEN DEEPLY IMPACTED DUE TO THE CHANGED WORLD ORDER



dismiss their fears or thoughts as illogical, even if they seem so to you.

- **Get involved at home:** Use the current situation to your benefit and try to get involved with some tasks at home. Learn new skills, take up responsibilities and help out at home in whatever way you can.
- **Limit screen time:** It might be difficult with online classes but reduce your screen time as much as possible. Attend classes sincerely rather than trying to multi-task or fool your teacher as you are the only one who'll suffer because of it. Take short breaks between classes. Always sit on a chair or floor and do your work; use your bed only for sleeping. Be mindful of your posture, as long usage of phone/laptop can lead to problems like cervical spondylitis.
- **Read books:** Do not limit your learning only through phone/laptop. Put in the extra effort and prepare through books as well; reading thoroughly helps in concept clarity and thus can be better recalled during exams.
- **Maintain a routine:** Having a structured day will lessen the anxiety or boredom you may feel. Go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday, do some physical exercise for half an hour at least, eat healthy home cooked food. Fix a time for your studies and engage in your hobbies regularly.
- **Socialise but responsibly:** Gradual unlocking of the country has begun and thus it has become easier to meet your friends. Once in a while you can go out and meet your friends for lunch or dinner provided you are following the safety guidelines laid down by the government for prevention of spread of Covid-19. It will be a good change for you and you can catch up with your friends in person after many months. If not

this, you always have the option of being in touch with them over video calls or normal phone calls. The important thing is to be in touch with your loved ones and not be withdrawn or isolated.

- **Avoid substance use:** Teenage is a time when the individual wants to explore and experiment different things in life. The new found sense of independence and an emotional roller-coaster driven by the hormonal changes can tempt one to seek thrill even at the expense of their well-being. Substance or drug use, which can rapidly develop into an abuse, is a major issue which plagues our children and adolescents. With the glorification of such activities in popular songs and movies, it poses a major threat as engaging in such things is wrongly considered to be cool and youngsters give into it just to be a part of a group. Please be advised to stay away from such stuff and use your intelligence and smartness wisely.
- **Seek Professional Help:** If you notice a significant change in your child's behaviour which is affecting his/her personal, social, academic/occupational functioning please be advised to consult your nearest Mental Health Professional like Clinical Psychologist, Child Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Psychiatric Social Worker or Counsellor.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going! Let us all do our bit to ensure that we all emerge stronger and wiser from this pandemic.

*The author is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist at AKGsOVIHAMS Medical Centres at Pitampura and Satya Niketan. He provides psychotherapy, counselling, psychological assessment, and de-addiction counselling to people of all age groups*







# Women in a just society in New India

*“The awkward fit of theory to actuality is most vivid for poor women in poor economies. These women may depend on others, but lack the supposed securities of dependence. They are impoverished, but are often providers. They are powerless, yet others who are yet more vulnerable depend on them for protection. Their vulnerability reflects heavy demands as much as slender resources.”*

— **Philosopher Onora O’Neill**

Concerns about inequality and injustice women face in various societies don’t require a league consisting only of economists and policy-analysts. Both historically and contemporarily, philosophers and literary figures world over have reaffirmed their interest through their characters in these overwhelming problems. I will like to initiate this article by bringing into picture two characters: Sissy Jupe from Charles Dickens’s novel *Hard Times* and Vasilisa Arsenyeva from Salman Rushdie’s novel *The Golden House*. One may wonder what these novelists writing in different centuries have to do with women and a just society. Both Dickens and Rushdie in their own way handled hard facts of life with an unflinching appeal to their readers.

Mr M’Choakumchild was exploring Sissy’s knowledge about national prosperity. “Now, this schoolroom is a Nation. And in this nation, there are fifty millions of money. Isn’t this prosperous nation, and ain’t you in a thriving state?” Sissy pleaded ignorance but nevertheless explained her ignorance. She said she could not answer the question unless she knew, “Who had got the money, and whether any of it was mine.” Obviously Sissy Jupe, not happy with sad affairs of distributive justice chose to lament it.

Rushdie, in *V Arsenyeva*, finds a different version of a woman. Rushdie captured her emotions while she delivered a monologue on poverty, love and need. Let me quote from her monologue. “Please. I require no sympathy regarding the poverty of my origin... Poverty is a disgusting condition and to fail to emerge from it is also disgusting. Fortunately I excelled at all things both physical and mental and so I have been able to come to America... I know my presence here is the fruit of my own labour... The past is a broken cardboard suitcase full of photographs of things I no longer wish to see. I am the general of myself and my body is the foot soldier that obeys what the general commands.”

The two characters share some commonalities. First both are women: one a young school-going girl and the second *V Arsenyeva*; a relatively older Russian girl with origin in Siberia, and living in America. Next both concern themselves with resources: their distribution and empowerment. Both characters, through their outpourings, set the ball rolling: an emotive story of real agony and anguish of a little girl who would be a woman a few years later and a young woman who was a little girl a few years earlier. Sissy for her age was quite wise; poverty taught her wisdom from very early stage of childhood; it gave her far-sightedness early in life. She could distinguish between finer nuisances of micro and macroeconomics and had no qualms in believing macro affluence did not suo motu convert itself into micro affluence and socio-economic comfort. The monologue of *V Arsenyeva* is a reflection on overcoming paucity of resources and ignorance by dint of “great self-discipline” and the acquired ability to “build a house” so that “one can live in it (this being an example).” Sissy lamented lack of empowerment, *Arsenyeva* believed in self-determination and relentless pursuance of her dreams.

Both these women used their experiences to remind the world it fell short of being completely just. History bears us out the world has always fallen short of being completely just particularly when it comes to women. The exclusion of women outside the realm of opportunity to partner in building prosperous societies and economies is denial of a just society to them and others too.

Much work both in theory and practice has been done for exploring the methods to improve the lot of the weak, the exploited and the marginalised. Looking at the recent history of empowerment, a conference that took place at World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki in 1988 to deliberate upon issues like what is meant by “quality of life”, and the requirements in terms of socio-economic policy for improving and ultimately achieving it there-



by empowering the deprived ones, started a lively discussion on way ahead. Helsinki conference unequivocally stressed on the need to assess a number of distinct areas of human life in determining how well people are doing rather than measuring quality of life by hinging on single index of per capita national income.

From Helsinki conference the world travelled through Millennium Development Goals and reached in 2015 more comprehensive and inclusive Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 5 of Sustainable Development Goals 2015 aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women in the public and private spheres and to undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources and access to ownership of property. Descent work, equal access to education, and representation in political and economic decision making processes are the rights women must enjoy. Investment in the empowerment of women results not only in making progress on Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals but also in fuelling sustainable economic development. Let us have a look at Indian scenario.

On August 14, 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru reminded the nation about the task ahead i.e. “...the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity.” But unfortunately for close to six decades (which indeed is a long period) the tasks identified by Nehru remained largely unaccomplished with not much success. Many countries like Cuba, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Costa Rica, etc, following different growth strategies could achieve huge reduction in human deprivation and inequality. In these countries much stress was laid particularly on expansion of basic education and health care. India’s performance was certainly not worth bragging about and not very enthusiastic in the field of opportunities for women and their empowerment. When it comes to women, where does the problem lie particularly in traditional societies like ours?

Julia Annas, Professor of Philosophy, Columbia University, in an essay titled “Women and the Quality of Life: Two Norms or One?” tries to answer above question by analysing the existence of “two actual norms for human life”. She gives examples from traditional societies where certain practices have withheld benefits accruing to women. For example, unfortunately it is still believed that resources should not be “wasted” on educating daughters. The reason adduced for

this as cited by Annas is “...the women in the traditional society, with their domestic futures, don’t desire education.” Annas further gives similar examples like, to quote Annas, “...women may justly be kept from participation in public life because they are more self-centered and less capable of impartial thought than men.” This example shows how such reasons adduced result in various assertions of differences between men’s and women’s natures. Annas ridicules this reasoning and asserts that “superficial desires” as compared to “informed desires” where all positive aspects of education are known to women must recede and thus women will show desire for education. What the learned philosopher means is, “...injustice results from the existence of two norms,” and harps on mitigating superficial desires “resting on an unreflective view of their circumstances.”

Even now it has been a known practice in many households that the woman who cooks food is the last to eat it and that too whatever meagre is leftover. They are not expected to complain and they are ever ready to confess that their nutritional status and physical health are good even when they have physical ailments. Thus desires adjust to deprivation and division of functions. This sort of exclusionary neglect needs immediate attention and equipping women with adequate information not justifying “superficial desires” is the first crucial step towards eliminating cases of exclusionary neglect. Annas rightly concludes in any society gender issues are not focused on women alone but the relationship between men and women.

Current efforts afoot in India under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflect on concerns expressed by philosophers like Professors Julia Annas and Onora O’Neill. Narendra Modi has visualised through his vast experience as leader of Gujarat and afterwards the nation the use of comparative perspective by going beyond the limited.

For example, the need to understand the nexus between social conditions and economic opportunities has been properly appreciated. He has realised the crucial linkages between creating basic educational facilities and opening up of new economic opportunities and expanding the scope for better use of labour and skills. Most importantly, it has also been recognised that social opportunities are influenced by a host of factors like the state of health and educational services, the nature and availability of finance, the presence

of markets, including policies to promote and restrict these markets, presence of middlemen in markets and very importantly gender injustice. Therefore, the Prime Minister insists on unified approach to empowerment and this is reflected in various programmes launched by present Government.

The commitment of India to implement the Sustainable Development Goals was spelt out through the speech and commitment made by Prime Minister of India at the UN Summit for the adoption of post 2015 Development Agenda. In his speech the Prime Minister said, “Today, much of India’s development agenda is mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals.” Further with reference to empowerment, he said, the attack on poverty includes not only expanded conventional schemes of development, but also a new era of inclusion and empowerment, turning distant dreams into immediate possibilities. He further spoke about new bank accounts for 180 million; direct transfer of benefits, micro enterprises and micro finance, drawing on the strength of digital and mobile applications with the focus on basics, housing, power, water and sanitation for all. These are important not just for welfare, but also human dignity. Development is intrinsically linked to empowerment of women and it begins with a massive programme on educating the girl child that has become every family’s mission.

He clarified these are goals with a definite date, not just a mirage of hope. Thus the broad agenda towards empowerment with reference to SDGs in India is set.

The Prime Minister’s constant emphasis on inclusion and inclusiveness is at the root of developmental efforts progressing in India. Sincere, honest and transparent efforts to achieve overall development for all with no exceptions are clearly visible. The Prime Minister’s historic speech makes it amply clear that overall human development has much to do with making structural changes to conquer the inequities and exploitations that characterise society. This in turn constitutes an efficient and effective blend of meeting “basic needs” and equipping people with “capabilities”. Efforts aim at planning and intertwining capabilities created now with a bigger expansion of capabilities in the future. Possible conflicts between immediately enhancing capabilities i.e meeting basic needs and long-term expansion of capabilities in the future i.e economic prosperity cannot be ruled out and

need be addressed in time.

Though SDGs cover all human beings, for the purpose of this article and due to paucity of space, I will limit myself with some important schemes launched in recent past to enhance opportunities for women empowerment.

The Government of India has recognised, amid others, two important ways to empower women: Economic empowerment through participation in economic activities and opportunities and second through mitigation of educational deprivations. The schemes chalked out and implemented broadly address these requirements and thereby endeavour to ensure that women gain equal rights, opportunities and access to resources. The first and foremost thing is their safety, security and economic empowerment. Towards that end, schemes like Mahila Police Volunteers (MPV) envisaging engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers in States/UTs who act as a link between police and community and facilitate women in distress; Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana empowering women below poverty line and protecting their health by providing LPG cylinder free of cost.

Working Women Hostel (WWH) ensures the safety and security for working women by providing safe and conveniently located accommodation. Pradhan Mantri Sukanya Samridhi Yojana aims at economic empowerment of girls by opening their bank accounts and enabling their parents to save funds for their female child’s education and marriage. Under this scheme the account can be opened at any post office or a branch of an authorised commercial bank in India between the birth of the girl child and till the age of ten by a parent or guardian. The account offers 8.6 per cent interest with the girl child able to operate the account once she is ten years old and the account allows for fifty per cent withdrawal at the age of eighteen for higher education. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana aims at prioritising housing for women. Launched in 2016, Mahila-E-Haat is a bilingual marketing platform intended to help aspiring women entrepreneurs, NGOs and self-help groups to showcase their services and products. Mahila Shakti Kendra was launched in 2017 to provide women with opportunities for skill development, employment, health, nutrition and digital literacy.

Each Mahila Shakti Kendra working at National, State, District and Block levels, provides an opportunity to women to approach the

Government for their entitlements through capacity building and training. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana that came into being in January 2015, drives at generating awareness and improving the efficacy of welfare services for girl child. Most important components of the scheme include addressing the issue of declining child sex ratio, gender-based sex-selective eliminations and protecting survival, protection and education of the girl child.

These schemes resonate well with the sustainable targets on gender equality and are marked by inclusionary coherence. For example, the Government has identified ending violence against women and providing security and safety to women as a key national priority. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme aims at equal opportunity and education for girls; Sukanya Samridhi Yojana aims at prosperity of girl child and Janani Suraksha Yojana provides safe motherhood intervention under National Health Mission with the objective of reducing maternal and neo-natal mortality among poor pregnant women.

The most novel feature of these schemes is generally these don’t flow from a common perception that problems faced by women are cases of more general difficulties of the deprived and marginalised population. Each and every scheme with its distinct identity and full-fledged mission is intended for girls and women and aims at establishment of a just society for women without any discrimination.

The crux of recent efforts in India in the field of women empowerment is reduction of women inequality and injustice by providing them resources and opportunities and equipping them with decision-making power including political powers. Onora O’Neill suggests, “a serious account of justice cannot gloss over the predicaments of impoverished providers in marginalised and developing countries.” That is an important lesson for policy makers who plan for creating a just society or making society less unjust. An emerging New India very well addresses the issue raised by Onora O’Neill. The concept of a just society is firmly embedded in the multi-peaked idea of a New India.

*(The writer, a retired Additional Deputy CAG, is a poet, writer and columnist. His fourth book “Soliloquy of a Small-Town Uncivil Servant”, a semi-autobiographical account, published in 2019 by Rupa Publications, New Delhi, has been getting international acclaim)*

**Current efforts afoot in India under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi reflect on concerns expressed by philosophers like Professors Julia Annas and Onora O’Neill. The crux of recent efforts in India in the field of women empowerment is reduction of women inequality and injustice by providing them resources and opportunities and equipping them with decision-making power, including political powers**



KK SRIVASTAVA



