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Farmers reject Shah offer, set talk terms

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

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



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

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

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

Giving example of one

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

"Don't be carried away by rumours, be aware", Modi said.

Similarly, Modi gave example of a Haryana farmer Virendra Yadav who he said sold his "parali" to paper mill to earn Rs 1.50 crore in two years. "Jagrukta hi Jeevantata hain", he said seeking people to be fully aware about developments around them.

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

IED blast kills CoBRA officer, hurts 8 troopers

STAFF REPORTER ■ SUKMA

An officer of the CRPF's jungle warfare unit CoBRA was killed while eight commandos were injured when Maoists triggered an IED blast in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, police said on Sunday.

The improvised explosive device exploded in the Chintalnar forest area around 9 pm on Saturday. The injured were evacuated by a Mi-17 V5 helicopter of the Indian Air Force (IAF) around midnight, Inspector General of Police (Bastar) Sundarraj P said.

Assistant Commandant Nitin Bhalerao (33) succumbed to injuries early on Sunday. The injured commandos included the team leader Dinesh Kumar Singh, a second-in-command rank officer, the police officer said.

All eight commandos were treated at a hospital in Raipur while two were moved to a unit hospital at Chintalnar, in the south Bastar area. Sukma district is located about 400 km from Raipur.

The injured belong to the 206th Battalion of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA).

CoBRA and local police



personnel were on an area domination exercise when the blast took place.

Bhalerao, a resident of Nashik in Maharashtra, was a decorated commando and had been adjudged the best in various combat competitions, a senior officer said. He joined the CRPF in 2010 and came to CoBRA in 2019.

Chief Minister Bhupesh

Baghel and Home Minister Tamradhwaj Sahu condemned the attack and paid tribute to the dead officer. They prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

This is the second major incident at Tadmela under Chintalnar police station limits after April 6, 2010 when 76 CRPF jawans were killed. As per police, the Naxalites had

changed their strategy of attack. Instead of direct attack, they are using IED spikes and placing it where expected movement of jawans are higher.

The police have recovered 70 holes from different areas and 600 spikes mainly iron-spikes using metal detectors. But, now they have started using wooden-spikes which miss the metal detector.

La Nina likely to freeze parts of India between Dec-Feb, predicts IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

In its winter forecast for December 2020 and February 2021, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday said north, northwest, central and few subdivisions over east India to face below normal minimum temperatures between December and February due to La Nina conditions prevailing over the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

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

CoviShield volunteer seeks ₹5 cr for ill effects

Drugs Controller General of India initiates probe into complaint

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has initiated probe into the complaint by a Chennai-based volunteers about alleged adverse complications reported in a CoviShield vaccine trial. While the volunteer has demanded Rs 5 crore compensation for causing medical complications, the Serum Institute of India (SII) has also served a legal notice seeking damages of ₹100 crore from him, calling his complaint "malicious."

According to reports, the 40-year-old Chennai-based business consultant, who was a volunteer for the third phase of the vaccine trial conducted by Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII), has sought Rs 5 crore compensation for allegedly suffering serious neurological and psychological symptoms after taking the dose.

He was administered the shot at Chennai's Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SRIHER), one of the trial sites on October 1.

Now on his behalf, a law firm has sent a legal notice to Director General, ICMR, Drugs Controller General of India, DCGI, CEO, Astra Zeneca UK, Professor Andrew Pollard, Chief Investigator, Oxford Vaccine Trial and Vice Chancellor of Sri Ramachandra Higher Education and Research.

'Tiger State' MP loses 26 national animals in 2020

PTI ■ BHOPAL

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

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

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Covid cases on perpetual decline: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Sunday said that the positivity rate has become less than half that of reported on November 7 which is a sign of relief as it points to the fact that the outbreak is on perpetual decline. The national capital recorded 4,906 fresh Covid-19 cases on Sunday and a positivity rate of 7.64 per cent while 68 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 9066. The active cases tally on Sunday stood at 35,091 and the total number of cases has climbed to 566648 of which 522491 have recovered. The number of Covid-19 containment zones in Delhi rose to 5441. The bulletin said

that of the total number of 18661 beds in COVID-19 hospitals, 10418 are vacant. The health minister said that the positivity rate was down to 7.64 from 15.26 per cent. It has become less than half since November 7. RT-PCR tests were ordered to be increased by the central government; however the labs do not have that much capacity. We are doing our best to provide each and every result on them. As far as the decreasing number of cases is concerned, we only take into the consideration the individual whose report has duly been provided," Jain said. Jain said that the government has already issued work-from-home orders for 50 per



cent of its employees associated with non-essential services and advised private establishments to stagger timings and presence of staff and only Class 1 officers will be required to report to office. "Private offices have been given the freedom to take decisions as per their will but most of the private sector has been following the work from home policy and have

extended it till 31 December," he added. According to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi Health Department on Sunday, these relatively high numbers of fresh cases came out of the 64186 tests conducted on Sunday including 29839 RT-PCR tests. The national capital had recorded its highest single-day spike of 8,593 cases on November 11 when 85 fatalities linked to the pandemic were also registered. Responding to the query surrounding the lack of oxygen supply in Delhi due to the ongoing farmer agitation, the minister said "Initially there was a hiccup for a few hours, but that was resolved immediately and the supply was

restored. Oxygen supply comes from Rajasthan and is a life saving necessity, therefore it will be made available in abundance." Commenting on the Union Home Minister's directions that they will speak with the farmers once they reach the designated place, Jain said "There should not be any terms and conditions pertaining to deliberations with the farmers. They are our providers and they should be tended to immediately and be allowed to carry out their peaceful protest. We have to respect the effort they have made to come from their homes all the way to Delhi to voice their opinion. We should not be ignorant of their problems."

AAP slams Shah for imposing conditions for talks to farmers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday attacked the Union Home Minister Amit Shah for 'imposing' conditions for talks to the farmers who are protesting against the Centre's new farm laws. Sanjay Singh, Member of Parliament and senior AAP leader said that the party demands the Union Home Minister to first resolve the issues of the farmers by listening to them and find out an immediate solution. "We will fight shoulder to shoulder with the farmers and we welcome the farmers to Delhi. Today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed these anti-farmer laws which show that the BJP has no intention to solve the problems of the farmers."

AAP Chief Spokesperson Raghav Chadha on Sunday slammed the Punjab chief minister Captain Amrinder Singh, saying that he is in conspiracy with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to dupe and destroy the Indian farmers and to stop the protests. "Captain Singh pleaded the farmers to agree to all conditions and proposals given by Amit Shah, which is the last nail in the coffin that exposes the true identity of the captain as the BJP CM and not Punjab CM. The AAP is standing like a rock with the farmers, on the direction of Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal," he said. Addressing the media, Chadha said that he has four points to support the veracity of his statement. "First, Captain Singh and Modi are close acquaintances and friends a fact which is known to us and everyone. They talk on the phone daily and meet often.



Second, the three black laws that have been passed by the Modi Government were mentioned in the Congress in their 2019 election manifesto. Under Section 7, it stated that they will eradicate APMC markets if they come into power. The conditions of the three black laws are the same as mentioned in the 2019 Congress election manifesto," he added. Chadha said that the central government had appointed a high-powered committee and chief ministers of many states nation-wide were summoned to hold discussions and deliberations before bringing these three black laws. "Punjab Chief Minister too was invited for the same. You will be surprised to know that Captain Amrinder Singh's government agreed to these laws in the meeting, by saying that they stood by these laws brought in by Modi ji," he said. Senior AAP Saurabh Bhardwaj on Sunday said that the Union Home Minister Amit Shah has shown utter "irresponsibility" by leaving Delhi to campaign for Hyderabad municipal election at the time when lakhs of farmers are waiting here to talk to him.

"We are in a very serious situation right now. Farmers from across the states of North India have reached the borders of Delhi. Nearly 10,000 farmers from Punjab are sitting at the borders of Delhi. They have faced water cannon, tear gas and lathi from Haryana police. Despite such treatment, these poor farmers are protesting against the anti-farmer laws passed by BJP ruled central government." "The Delhi police are not allowing the farmers to enter the capital but union home Minister is imposing the condition in front of these farmers that he will only talk to them if they settle down at the Burari Ground. Party senior leader Atishi said, "Our farmers have left their homes, farms, villages and are marching towards Delhi to protest against the three anti-farmers farm bills. Our farmers from Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh are reaching Delhi in such a cold winter season because they want the central government to listen to their voices. The centre is so intolerant towards thousands of farmers who are sitting on the border of Delhi."

Farmers at Ghazipur took to streets for fourth day

ASHOK NIRWAN ■ GHAZIABAD

Farmers from western Uttar Pradesh, who had gathered here at Ghazipur border to mark their protest against the Centre's new farm laws, took to the streets for the fourth day. Rakesh Tikait, the national spokesperson of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, along with other farmers has been camping with farmers at UP Gate (Ghazipur border) for last two days. On Sunday the farmers several times tried to enter Delhi by breaking police installed barricading but they could not succeed due to strict police vigilance. Rakesh Tikait along with thousands of farmers on tractors had reached the UP gate all the way from Meerut,

Modinagar, Muradnagar Rajnagar Extension. After reaching UP Gate, these farmers tried to enter and broke a barrier and entered about two meters inside but the police stopped them there. On Sunday, the farmers were joined by others in a large number. Farmers also raised slogans against the new agricultural laws and demanded the Central Government to withdraw these new laws. State Vice President of Bakiu, Rajvir Chaudhary said that the central government's message is that farmers should gather at Burari and then the government will initiate talks but what we want is unconditional conversation with the government. "So we will continue our protest from the border," he said.

AAP Govt adopting method to hide actual Covid figures: Alka Lamba

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Alka Lamba alleged the Arvind Government of deliberately "adopting" a particular coronavirus testing model to hide the actual figures of Covid-19 pandemic in the national capital. Addressing the media, Lamba said that the method to cover up the Covid surge was to hold more Rapid Antigen Tests, instead of the gold standard RT-PCR tests. She said that between November 1 and 24; Rapid Antigen Tests consisted of 63 per cent but in the same period, out of the RT-PCR tests conducted among 4.11 lakh people, 28.6 per cent turned out to be Covid positive. She said that in the same period, 14 per cent Covid positives turned out in Delhi (Rapid-RT-



PCR), though thousands of Covid-affected might have escaped detection because the majority of the tests were rapid antigen. "The Congress has been demanding ever since that all those Rapid Antigen Test negatives should be re-tested through RT-PCR to detect all positive cases. The Delhi High Court had also raised questions

about holding more Rapid Antigen Tests than the reliable RT-PCR tests. Lamba said that when 10,000 daily tests per million were needed in November, the Arvind Government conducted only 2700 tests, which was 83 per cent less than what was required. "The door-to-door survey being conducted by the Delhi Government should have concluded by last Wednesday but the survey is yet to finish. She said that as per the statistics available by Wednesday, 14 per cent symptomatic cases had not bothered to get tested. The survey was conducted on 57 lakh people, out of which 13516 showed Covid symptoms while only 11790 people had got tested for Corona till Wednesday.

Rly Minister Goyal inaugurates newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday inaugurated the newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section of north-western railway and flagged off first train on this route in a function organised at Dhigawara station. Speaking on this occasion, Goyal said that under the leadership of Prime Minister, Indian Railways is moving forward in a phased manner with fast pace and quality and is making great achievements with everyone's cooperation, teamwork and motivation. The minister also said that the electrification work was done on the Kota-Mumbai line in Rajasthan 35 years ago after that no one paid attention to this area. "While working on this in the railways, a target has been set to electrify the entire percentage of railway lines across India" he added. Talking about Rajasthan, he said that till 2009-14, there was no electrification in this area which was 1433 km in the last five and a half years (till September 2020) i.e. 240 km route was electrified every year. He said that there has been a change in thinking over the



years and there has been a change in the way we work. "Today, after the electrification of this line, the route from Rewari to Ajmer has been electrified and now the electrified trains from Delhi to Ajmer will start soon. After running of these trains, the diesel trains will be stopped, which will eliminate pollution as well as the dependence on the fuel imported from outside and trains will be operated from the electricity produced in self-reliant India," he said. Apart from this, he said that the average speed of trains will increase and there will be development of industries, agro-based businesses and progress of villagers and farmers. "To avoid any inconve-

nience to the farmers, Kisan Rail are being operated by the railways to transport their agricultural products. The government is committed for the progress of farmers," he added. The electrification work is being done by the Central Organization for Railway Electrification (CORE), Prayagraj. The work of electrification of Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Madar (Ajmer) section was sanctioned by CORE and handed over to Rail Electrification project, Jaipur. A total of 23418 foundations, 26 switching stations, 6 traction sub stations and 7 OHE depots have been set up for electrification on Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Madar (Ajmer).

MP: Farmers dump guavas in garbage vehicle as prices crash

PTI ■ INDORE

A video showing a group of farmers dumping freshly-harvested guavas into a civic garbage collection vehicle here has gone viral on social media, with the experts saying that a bumper crop of the fruit this year has resulted in its prices falling. The wholesale prices of this vitamin C-rich fruit at Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar Fruit and Vegetable Market in Indore currently ranges between Rs 4 and Rs 10 per kilo, sources in the market said on Sunday. Farm sector experts said the prices of guava have nosedived due to its abundant crop, which is ultimately causing losses to the cultivators. Due to the falling prices, disappointed farmers are leaving behind the fruits in the market after finding that they are not getting enough returns. The farmers know that transporting the fruits back was not beneficial due to the costs involved, they added. Talking to PTI, Rajesh Patel, who grows this fruit in Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam district, said, "The bumper guava harvest in Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and other states has sent its prices crashing." The wholesale market of guava in Delhi, which supplies this fruit to the northern part of the country, has been hit hard due to the coronavirus situation there, he said.

1 crore sample tests done in AP; caseload below 10,000 after nearly 5 months

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh crossed a Major Milestone on Sunday as it completed one crore sample tests for coronavirus even as the active caseload in the state fell below 10,000 for the first time in close to five months. The state saw the addition of 620 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the gross positives to 8,67,683, a health bulletin said. AP has vastly ramped up its testing capacities and over the last four months has been conducting an average of over 50,000 tests per day, majority being RT-PCR tests. At 1,87,587 tests per million population, AP leads the major states in the country and has so far completed screening a gross of 1,00,17,126 samples till date, the bulletin said. The one crore-plus tests turned out an overall infection positivity rate of 8.66 per cent, against the national average of 6.73 per cent. After a long time, 3,787 patients were reported cured in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday, thereby pushing the overall recoveries so far to 8,52,298. Another seven patients succumbed in 24 hours, taking the toll to 6,988, the bulletin said.

The recovery rate shot up significantly to 98.23 per cent from 97.86 per cent in a day. The mortality rate remained stable at 0.81 per cent. In 24 hours, West Godavari reported 107 and Guntur 101 fresh cases of COVID-19 while Krishna added 85 and Chittoor 64. The remaining nine districts added less than 50 new cases each. State topper East Godavari district reported less than 50 fresh cases on Sunday for the first time in four months. It also saw 2,755 recoveries in a day, taking down the active caseload to 1,190 from 3,945. East Godavari's COVID-19 chart now showed 1,22,246 total positives, 1,20,420 recoveries and 636 deaths. Now, only Guntur (1,301) and Krishna (1,387) districts have active cases in four digits, along with East Godavari, while the remaining ten districts have less than 1,000 each. In fact, three districts have less than 200 active cases each. In 24 hours, Krishna and Visakhapatnam reported two fresh coronavirus fatalities each while Chittoor, Guntur and West Godavari added one each to their tally.

Illegal gun factory unearthed in Bihar's Kaimur

Patna: A small illegal gun factory run by a history-sheeter was unearthed in Chainpur area of Kaimur district in Bihar on Sunday after three persons were held during checking of vehicles, police said. In another case, CRPF men also seized arms and ammunition hidden in Naxal-affected Gaya district. "We are holding special vehicle-checking drive in the district, during which three youths riding a motorcycle were signalled to stop in Chainpur area. The accused tried to escape by taking a U-turn from the spot, but alert policemen chased and overpowered them after a brief chase," Kaimur Superintendent of Police Dilnawaj Ahmed said. A .315-bore short-muzzle rifle, two cartridges were seized from their possession. Accused Jalim Ram, Anil Kharwar, and Sanjay Kharwar -- all residents of Bhabhua -- were interrogated, following which they named one Ram Dular Sharma of Tirauna village in Chainpur police station area as supplier of the illegal arms and ammunition. "The Chainpur SHO led the police raid at Sharma's house. He was running an illegal gun-manufacturing factory at his house. We seized two countryside pistols and 'kattas' each, six unfinished 'kattas', six cartridges and firearm-making instruments from his house," Ahmed said. "Sharma is a history-sheeter who was jailed for his illegal activities in the past. Jalim Ram is also a notorious criminal of the area and has been jailed three times in the past," the SP said. Kaimur is considered Naxal-affected area in Bihar. Local police is now investigating the possible links of Sharma with Maoists. **IANS**

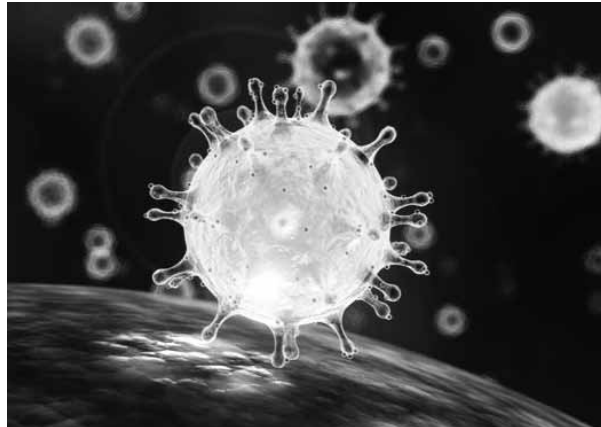


Deserted view of a market after the State Government ordered all shops to remain close every Sunday till 31st December, to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, at Palampur in Kangra district on Sunday

PTI

Gujarat's Covid tally reaches 2,08,278 with 1,564 new cases

Gandhinagar: Gujarat reported 1,564 new Covid-19 cases on Sunday, pushing the tally to 2,08,278, while the state's death toll has mounted to 3,969 after 16 more patients have succumbed to the virus, health officials said. Officials said that Ahmedabad reported 345 cases followed by Surat 278, Vadodara 171, Rajkot 149, Gandhinagar 58, Kheda 57, Mahesana 51, Surendranagar 40, Banaskantha 38, Jamnagar 35, Panchmahals 33, Patan 30, Junagadh and Bhavnagar with 29 each, Anand 28, Dahod 26, Kutch 22, Bharuch 20, Amreli and Sabarkantha with 18 each, Morbi and Mahisagar with 16 each, Aravalli 11, Gir-Somnath 9, Botad and Navsari with 8 each, Narmada 6, Tapi 5, Devbhumi Dwarka and Porbandar with 3 each and Valsad and Chhota Udepur with 2 cases each. Out of the 16 fatalities, 11 died in Ahmedabad, 3 in Surat and 1 each in Bharuch and Kheda.



The overall death toll in Ahmedabad reached 2,044. Besides, Surat reported 899 fatalities, Vadodara 218, Rajkot 174, Gandhinagar 98, Bhavnagar 68, Patan 49, Jamnagar 34, 33 each in Kutch and Junagadh, Mahesana 33, Banaskantha 32, Amreli 27 and Gir-Somnath 25. Gujarat's mortality rate was stable at 1.90 per cent. So far, the health authorities have conducted 77,59,739

tests in Gujarat. A total of 1,451 patients were discharged after recoveries on Sunday. Till now, 1,89,420 have been discharged in the state. Out of a total tests carried out in the state, 75,51,461, have been found negative. The total of active cases is around 15,000 with 14,889 active cases, out of which the condition of 14,803 is stable, whereas 86 critical patients are still on ventilator. **IANS**

Odisha Assembly adjourned sine die month before schedule

Bhubaneswar: The winter session of the Odisha Assembly adjourned sine die on Sunday, a month ahead of the schedule. The session, which began on November 20, was scheduled to continue till December 31. Speaker Surya Narayan Patro adjourned the House sine die after the passage of appropriation bill of Rs 11,200 crore. The session was held with adherence to the Covid-19 guidelines. Several bills were passed in the session. However, the Oppositions BJP and Congress reacted strongly to the abrupt adjournment of the Assembly session. "Many problems of Odisha were to be discussed in the House in the month-long time. We feel sad that the House was adjourned sine die before the schedule," said leader of opposition Pradipta Naik. **IANS**

Our target is Gandhi's Ram-Rajya: Baghel

STAFF REPORTER ■
SHIVRINARAYAN

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said his government is working to establish a 'Ram-Rajya' which Mahatma Gandhi had dreamt of. The real 'Ram-Rajya' propagates equality, love and brotherhood.

In such a reign, there will be no fear for anyone, and even the lions and goats can drink water from the same waterhole, he said.

Baghel was addressing a religious event at Shivrinarayan, in Janjgir-Champa district organized by Shivrinarayan Matt based on 'Ramcharitmanas' on Sunday, states an official communication.

Chhattisgarh has always had a tradition of worshipping the benevolent Ram, he said.

"We worship both in 'Saguna' (God with form) and 'Nirguna' (Without form). Goswami Tulsi Das reached out to the people in 'Saguna'



while Saint Kabir offered prayers for 'Nirguna'. The 'Ramnaami' community of Chhattisgarh tattoos Lord Ram's name on the body to offer reverence to the formless God," said Baghel.

If each child to senior cit-

izen of the state feels there is their own government, then the dream of 'Ram Rajya' will be fulfilled.

On 'Ram Gaman Path', he said the tourism circuit plan is ready and the first phase work is in progress. As

Shivrinarayan is linked to Lord Ram, it would be developed as a religious tourism centre and provided the best facilities to devotees and tourists.

Baghel announced to commence a 30-bed hospital

at Shivrinarayan and a three-day 'Manas Gaan Mahotsav'. He inspected the proposed model of works to be undertaken at cost of ₹36 crore. He unveiled statues of Lord Rama, Laxman and Mata Shabri at the fair ground.

CM prays at Shivrinarayan temple



STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel offered prayers at the Shivrinarayan temple in Janjgir-Champa district on

Sunday. He prayed for the state's happiness and prosperity.

Earlier, Baghel was welcomed with Chhattisgarhi cuisines in Shivrinarayan, the famous Ramayana era site of Chhattisgarh, an offi-

cial communication said.

On reaching Shivrinarayan Math, he was also weighed with delicious Chhattisgarhi cuisines like thethri, khurmi, papachi, airsa, murku, khaja and saloni.

Union Govt's directives for mental illness management

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry has issued fresh directives for management of mental illness steaming due to Covid pandemic.

The directives have been issued to lessen the risk of Covid exposure to people with mental problems and health workers on the frontline, a press release said on Sunday.

The directives have suggested connecting Covid hospitals with the nearest mental health centre through hotline.

The directives have been framed keeping in mind Covid positive people undergoing trauma or those who have gone into depression due to the pandemic or are already suffering from mental illness, it said.

The directives have been framed keeping in mind Covid positive people undergoing trauma or those who have gone into depression due to the pandemic or are already suffering from mental illness

For ensuring the implementation of the directives, a nodal officer will be appointed to

review the guideline periodicaly and inform mental health centres about updates.

The guideline has recommended extending mental health services to communities so that existing mental patients and those mentally affected by Covid could be provided better protection.

The government wants to publicize correct facts about mental health on digital, print and social media platforms.

It also suggested to rope-in NGOs working in the mental health sector for home delivery of medicines for mental patients, the press release added.

The guideline said that mental patients or their caretakers should come to mental health centres only in emergency situations.

'Deforestation is responsible for India's pollution crisis'

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Deforestation is responsible for India's pollution crisis and so is the negligence of the citizens, AIPC West Zone Coordinator Rajeev Arora said on Sunday during an in-depth discussion on environmental challenges in the present context.

India has invited this problem by ignoring the natural resources for years, other experts said at the virtual conference.

The All India Professional Congress organized the meeting which discussed the aggravating environmental pollution.



Initiating the video meet, Arora said today a large section of India does not have clean water to drink and sewage system is not efficient in big cities.

He said that if the government works by focusing

on these main problems, then half of the problems will be solved.

Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor said that after Covid, environmental pollution can increase at an even faster pace as dependence on

industries will increase, resulting in a harsh treatment of the environment.

He pointed out that unseasonal rains and wastage of crops were major problems now. Cutting trees also affects India's GDP, he warned.

Chhattisgarh Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo said that no serious steps have been taken although there has been a huge damage to the environment since the Industrial Revolution. Just banning industries or farmers will not lead to a solution.

He said that most industries in central India are coal-operated. Raigarh in

Chhattisgarh has been the most affected by these industries and mines, leading to diseases. "We need to create awareness among the people for environmental protection."

Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Aditya Thackeray said that today the environmental change is not limited to the glacier seas but has reached our roads and fields.

He said: "We are not accepting natural calamities like storms, unseasonal rains as an environment change... Greenery also comes under development, we need to understand this seriously and take the message to the people."

Man arrested for trying to sell leopard skin



STAFF REPORTER ■
DHAMTARI

A 40-year-old man was arrested for allegedly possessing a leopard skin and trying to sell it in Chhattisgarh's Dhamtari district, police said on Sunday.

Dhamtari Superintendent of Police B.P. Rajbhanu said Kumbh Lal Netam was apprehended from Kotbharri road in Nagri police station area on Saturday and the skin was found in a bag in the luggage side box of his motorcycle.

The police are investigating where the accused got the skin. "We have registered a case under the Wildlife Protection Act," Rajbhanu said.



On the eve of Guru Nanak Jayanti, the Gurudwara at Telibandha in the Chhattisgarh capital Raipur was illuminated on Sunday.
Pioneer Photo

SHO, GRP In-charge suspended in Durg

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

In a move to improve image and make police accountable towards the public, the Chhattisgarh Police on Sunday suspended of Station House Officer (SHO) and the In-charge of Government Railway Police (GRP) outpost in Durg district.

According to the suspension order, Dhamdha SHO Shailendra Thakur and Ramesh Pandey of Charoda GRP post have been suspended, a press note said.

As per the complaints received, Thakur was involved in bribery to settle illegal acts, corruption and suspicious conduct while Pandey failed to control gambling, satta and other such acts, it added.

Thakur was involved in bribery to settle illegal acts, corruption and suspicious conduct while Pandey failed to control gambling, satta

Both Thakur and Pandey would be attached at Durg Police Line until further orders.

Chhattisgarh Director General of Police D.M. Awasthi had ordered the Durg Superintendent of Police and the Raipur Railway Superintendent of Police to take strict action against both the officials.

21.29 lakh farmers registered to sell paddy, total up by 6.38 lakh

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh's festival of paddy purchase on support price starts from December 1, with 21.29,764 farmers registered to this year. The area under which paddy is sown is more than 27 lakh hectares.

Due to the farmer-friendly policies of the Chhattisgarh government, both the area under farming and number of farmers have increased during the two years, an official communication said on Sunday.

In two years, the area under paddy has increased from 19.36 lakh hectare to 22.68 lakh hectare and the number of farmers has risen from 12,06,000 to 18,38,000.

In this way, there is an increase of 3.32 lakh hectares in area and 6.32 lakh in the number of farmers. This year, the number of farmers registering for selling paddy has crossed 21.29 lakh and the area of paddy registration has crossed 27.59 lakh hectare.

In 2017-18, 56.85 lakh tonnes of paddy was purchased in the state at the

support price. During two years, this figure of paddy procurement has reached 83.94 lakh metric tonnes. Considering the number of farmers registered to sell paddy this year and the area under paddy, the support price is estimated to be higher than last year.

Despite the lack of gunny bags to procure paddy, the government is engaged in its management. All arrangements are being made for the convenience of the farmers, the statement said.

The Chhattisgarh government bought 80.38 lakh tonnes of paddy from 15.71

lakh farmers in 2018-19. In 2019-20, a record 83.94 lakh tonnes of paddy was purchased from 18.38 lakh farmers.

In 2017-18, 76.47 percent farmers sold paddy. In marketing year 2019-20, 94.02 percent farmers in the state sold paddy at the support price.

Chhattisgarh launched the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana from May 21, 2020 to provide the farmers their right and fair price for their produce. Under this scheme 19 lakh farmers are being given in four installments an amount of ₹5,750 crores.

छत्तीसगढ़ लोक सेवा आयोग, रायपुर

क्रमांक 3455/07/परीक्षा/2020

रायपुर, दिनांक 27/NOV/2020

राज्य अभियांत्रिकी सेवा परीक्षा - 2020

के संबंध में महत्वपूर्ण सूचना

छत्तीसगढ़ लोक सेवा आयोग के विज्ञापन क्रमांक 01/2020/परीक्षा/दिनांक 07/01/2020 के अंतर्गत राज्य अभियांत्रिकी सेवा परीक्षा-2020 के रिक्त 89 पदों हेतु विज्ञापन जारी किया गया था।

उक्त पदों की पूर्ति हेतु आयोग द्वारा लिखित परीक्षा दिनांक 15.01.2021 (शुक्रवार) को जिला-अम्बिकापुर, बिलासपुर, दुर्ग-भिलाई, जगदलपुर एवं रायपुर के परीक्षा केन्द्रों पर आयोजित की जाएगी, जिसकी समय-सारिणी निम्नानुसार है :-

Name of Exam.	DATE	DAY	TIME	SUBJECT
State Engineering Service Exam-2020	15-01-2021	Friday	10:00 A.M. TO 12:30 P.M.	Paper 1- General Studies
			02:00 FM TO 04.30 PM	Paper 2- Engineering (Civil/ Mechanical/ Electrical)

सचिव

छ.ग. लोक सेवा आयोग,

रायपुर

G- 85267/3 Ryp/Dtd 28.11.20

Over 88L recovered from Covid in India



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In just three months after crossing the 20 lakh mark on August 7, India has added whooping 70 lakhs Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to nearly touch 94 lakh on Sunday while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 88 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 93.71 per cent. The total coronavirus cases mounted to 93,92,919 with 41,810 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,36,696 with 496 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

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

the 19th consecutive day. There are 4,53,956 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 4.83 per cent of the total caseload. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 88,02,267 pushing the national recovery rate to 93.71 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.46 per cent. India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20. According to the ICMR,

over 13.95 crore samples have been tested up to November 28 with 12,83,449 samples being tested on Saturday. The 496 new fatalities include 89 from Delhi, 88 from Maharashtra 52 from West Bengal, 30 from Haryana, 28 from Punjab, 25 from Kerala and 21 from Uttar Pradesh. A total of 1,36,696 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 46,986 from Maharashtra followed by 11,750 from Karnataka, 11,694 from Tamil Nadu, 8,998 from Delhi, 8,322 from West Bengal, 7,718 from Uttar Pradesh, 6,981 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,765 from Punjab, 3,953 from Gujarat and 3,237 from Madhya Pradesh.

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Air India is planning to operate non-stop flights on the Chennai-London route from January next year, making Tamil Nadu's Capital the ninth city to be connected with London. Air India is currently operating non-stop flights to London from Delhi (seven flights a week), Mumbai (four flights a week), Kochi (three flights a week), Ahmedabad (two flights a week), Bengaluru (two flights a week), Goa (two flights a week), Kolkata (one flight a week) and Amritsar (one flight a week). Asked how has been the occupancy rate in its London flights after the coronavirus-induced lockdown, the spokesperson said the "load factors have been generally good". "Some of the stations like Delhi, Kochi, Goa and Ahmedabad have seen quite a heavy demand (for London flights)," the spokesperson said. "We have plans to com-

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

mence direct operations between Chennai and London from January, 2021," the spokesperson said. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in India since March 23 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, airlines have been permitted to operate special international flights under the Vande Bharat Mission since May and under the bilateral air bubble pacts since July. Flights between India and the UK have been operating under an air bubble pact only post the lockdown.

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

not have access to education". Along with his tweet attacking the government, Gandhi tagged the media report which said a key central scholarship scheme to help over 60 lakh Scheduled Caste students of classes 11 and 12 to complete their schooling has nearly shut down across more than 14 states after the Centre ended

funding to states under a 2017 formula. "In BJP/RSS vision of India, Adivasis and Dalits should not have access to education," Gandhi alleged. "Stopping scholarships for SC-ST students is their way of ends justifying their means," the former Congress chief said in the tweet.

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

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Sunday said he was not in favour of having cells in a political party on the basis of castes, religions or communities, and added that talent was more important than these factors. He was referring to the cells formed within political parties to represent different castes or communities, like the minority community and Scheduled Caste (SC). The minister was addressing a rally for Sandip Joshi, BJP's graduates' constituency candidate from East Vidarbha. "I have a clear opinion that a man is not great by his caste, but by his talent. In BJP also we have different cells...When I was the party president, I had expe-

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

rienced this," he said. "I am of the opinion that no cell should be formed on the basis of caste and religion, as there is no use of such units. The representatives of such cells ask how many tickets people from their caste have got from the party," he said. "I always say that our party, our workers are our family. We have never done politics on the basis of caste and community. We stand behind those party workers who work hard, considering them as the members

of the family...This is the speciality of the BJP," the Minister of Road Transport and Highways said. Gadkari said that while carrying out any social work or helping the needy, he never considered someone's caste or religion. "We have never done politics of caste and community. Our party has never done it and will never do it. Caste is only in the minds of the leaders, caste is not in the in the mind of public or party workers," he said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA on Sunday denied reports that it recovered straw and sipper from Elgar Parishad case accused Stan Swamy and sought 20 days' time from the court to respond to his plea to allow him a straw and sipper in Talaja Central Jail. These are false, incorrect and mischievous reports as the agency neither recovered any straw and sipper from the accused nor sought 20 days time to file reply in the said application before the court, the NIA said. Swamy was arrested by NIA on October 8 for his involvement in the activities of CPI (Maoist) and for furtherance of the agenda of the banned terrorist organisation as one of the conspirators in Bhima Koregaon Elgar parishad case. The case relates to widespread violence, arson and stone-pelting resulting in loss of lives and property near Bhima Koregaon, as a result of the provocative speeches during organisation of Elgar Parishad programme at Shaniwarwada, Pune on December 31, 2017. After arresting accused Swamy, the NIA had produced him before the Special Court in

Mumbai along with chargesheet on October 9 and never took his police custody, the agency said. "All the necessary legal formalities such as his medical examination etc. were duly observed. Since then, accused Stan Swamy has been in judicial custody at Talaja Central Jail. Nearly after a month, i.e. on 6/11/2020, accused Stan Swamy filed an application in the NIA Court at Mumbai for getting back his straw and sipper, (which he falsely claimed to have been kept by NIA)," it said. The court asked the agency to file its reply on next date, which was scheduled on November 26. The NIA filed its reply in the court on the scheduled date stating therein that it had conducted his personal search in presence of independent witnesses and no such straw and sipper were found. The court rejected Swamy's application but issued direction to the jail authorities to provide straw and sipper to Swamy. As the accused was in judicial custody, the matter was between him and the jail authorities which come under the Maharashtra State Administration, the NIA said in a statement.

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the Union Health Ministry advised the States and Union Territories to reopen medical colleges, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has issued guidelines to the educational institutes enlisting do's and don'ts to ensure safety of the staff and students from Covid-19 infection. It has also asked the colleges administration to take extra care of the anxiety, mental health and psychological issues of students developed during the lockdown period and fear of infection after the opening of the campuses. The colleges have also been asked to set up helplines for mental health, psychological concerns and well-being of students in their campus which "need to be regularly monitored by Counsellors and

other identified faculty." As directed by the NMC, the ministry has advised all medical colleges to re-open on or before December 1, 2020 to maintain uniformity in academic sessions. Sanitisation of premises, thermal screening, ensuring physical distancing, face-cover/mask wearing, respiratory hygiene and hand-hygiene etc, are some of the day-to-day basic Covid-19 preventive measures that the colleges/Universities have to follow regularly, as per guidelines. The universities/colleges have been advised to re-open in phase-wise manner with such activities where they can easily adhere to social distancing, use of face masks and other protective measures. This may include administrative offices, research laboratories and libraries etc.

Institutions should have a plan ready for students who cannot join the programme due to travel restrictions. Online teaching-learning arrangements should also be made for them, it said. Cultural activities, meeting etc. may be avoided. However, such extra-curricular and sports activities may be allowed where physical distancing is feasible and is in accordance with the Union Home Ministry, it said. All Students must bring all a RT-PCR report that is negative at the time of re-joining the hostels and they must be re-called in batches. "However, the sharing of rooms may not be allowed in hostels. Symptomatic students should not be permitted to stay in the hostels under any circumstances," said the guidelines. Also, noting that residential students may be coming from different locations, the guideline document said that "they shall remain in quarantine and self-monitor their health for a period of 14 days before being allowed to attend classes or as per the policy opted by the State Government for quarantine (even if they bring a negative test report or the university/college plan to test them on arrival)".

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Acknowledging India's role as the "pharmacy to the world", leading European nation Sweden said it is focusing on expanding bilateral cooperation in the areas of health and life sciences in view of the coronavirus pandemic. Swedish Ambassador Klas Molin also said Sweden and India stand "firmly and unequivocally" in the fight against terrorism even as he noted the growing Indian role in the Indo-Pacific region. On the long-pending free-trade agreement between India and the European Union, the envoy said there is still some work to be done in calibrating expectations and scope on both sides, noting that it will be mutually beneficial for both sides. Molin told PTI that over-all bilateral ties between India and Sweden have been excellent and that both sides are looking at broader cooperation in eight key areas including innovation, trade and investments, health and defence. "The pandemic has focused our thinking, and our cooperation in health and in

life sciences has increased. "India is the pharmacy to the world and some of our companies, some already established here, some venturing here now, are looking for new matchups," the ambassador said. "AstraZeneca is a well-known example, currently in phase three trials for a COVID-vaccine, but also researching and developing in India in other areas," he said. India has supplied medicines and other medical assistance to over 150 countries in the last few months to help them deal with the coronavirus pandemic at a time when the country itself was reeling under its impact. India's medical assistance has drawn recognition from several countries as well as multilateral fora. As the world anxiously waits for a COVID-19 vaccine, British-Sweden pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca Plc and the University of Oxford are holding trials of a vaccine candidate. In India, AstraZeneca is partnering with the Serum Institute of India (SII) for the potential vaccine. To a question on security

issues, Molin said that India and Sweden stand together firmly and unequivocally in the fight against terrorism. He also noted that "India is taking on a growing role in the Indo-Pacific and is deepening its cooperation with other countries, both regional and from outside, in order to protect its interests and guarantee free navigation of and safe maritime passage in international waters." "The international community has an interest in protecting these common goods as well as in combating terrorism," he added. On the border row between India and China in eastern Ladakh, the said tensions of "this kind" that lead to the loss of lives are "naturally very serious." "I think it's safe to say that there have already been some repercussions and consequences, for instance in the economic and tech fields. "Hopefully, the talks underway will lead to a de-escalation and a more stable situation," he said. Asked about the proposed India-EU FTA, Molin hoped that the decisions taken at this

year's summit between the two sides will pave the way for the resumption of negotiations. "We firmly believe that an FTA would be mutually very beneficial. There is still some work to be done in calibrating expectations and scope on both sides. "This year's EU-India Summit opened on a high-level economic dialogue. Hopefully, this will pave the way for resumption of negotiations," he said. The FTA talks have been stalled since May 2013, when both sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including data security status for the IT sector. Launched in June 2007, negotiations for the proposed agreement have witnessed many hurdles. Asked how the overall ties progressed after the visit of Swedish King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia to India last year, the ambassador said the relations have been "excellent" and it was reflected in the visit. "The pandemic has meant that some of the con-

tacts have been focused on new areas as we try to help each other cope with this unprecedented challenge. The ties between India and Sweden are on an upswing in the last few years. In April 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Stockholm during which both sides agreed to further deepen innovation partnership for a sustainable future. It was a visit to Sweden by an Indian prime minister after nearly three decades. Asked about Sweden-India Nobel memorial week, Molin said this year the programme comprised several elements "which strengthen the synergies our two countries share as partners with complementarities." "We are also envisaging a virtual interaction between Swedish Trade Minister Anna Hallberg and the 200 plus Swedish companies in India, where the minister would give her outlook on global trade and investment scenarios, and more specifically trends for Sweden and Swedish industry in the ongoing pandemic," he said.

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

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Tea will be sold in environment-friendly 'Kulhads' (earthen cups) in place of plastic cups at all railway stations in the country, Railway minister Piyush Goyal saidSpeaking at an event organised at the Digawara railway station in Rajasthan's Alwar district, the minister said the initiative will be the contribution of the Railways towards a plastic-free India. "Tea is given in 'Kulhads' at nearly 400 railway stations in the country today, and in future, it is our planning that tea will be sold only in 'Kulhads' at all the railway stations in the country. This will be the contribution of the Railways towards a plastic-free India," he said. The minister said before addressing this gathering, he was having tea in a 'Kulhad' and the taste was really different. 'Kulhad' saves the environment and lakhs of people get employment from it, he

said. The minister was speaking at an event to mark the inauguration of the newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section under north-western Railways. The minister said before the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, the railway sector was ignored in Rajasthan as electrification had not been taken up in the last 30 years after the electrification of Delhi-Mumbai route. He said the investment by Railways and infrastructure development projects in Rajasthan have increased multiple times between 2014-2020 as compared to that between 2009-2014. Goyal said 65 underpasses were constructed from 2009-14 while 378 underpasses have been constructed from 2014- September 2020. He said only four overbridges were constructed in five years till 2014 whereas 30 such bridges have been constructed from 2014 to September 2020.

The minister said electrification of railway lines across the country will save the environment as engines will run on electricity produced in the country, saving fuel, money and time. Also, the speed of trains will also be increased, he said. "This will also help farmers who will be able to take their crops to any part of the country (through rail freight transport) in less time," he added. Goyal said the prime minister is very concerned about the environment and therefore emphasis is being given on electrification. The minister flagged off the first train on the newly electrified 34 km-long Dhigawara-Bandikui rail section. He said after the entire line from Rewari to Ajmer has now been electrified with the electrification of this stretch. Dausa MP Jaskaur Meena, GM-NWR Anand Prakash and other public representatives and railway officials were present in the function.

Polls no solution to Kashmir problem, hold dialogue with Pak: Mehbooba

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Struggling to revive fortunes of her own party in the electoral politics of Jammu & Kashmir, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Chief Mehbooba Mufti Sunday claimed elections were not the solution to the “Kashmir problem”.

She also battled for holding a dialogue with the people of Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan to resolve the issue.

Angry PDP Chief also accused the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) government of muzzling dissent and building an ecosystem in which “there is no place for democracy.”

Addressing a press conference at her residence in Srinagar, a day after more than 50 percent voters participated in the first phase of the DDC polls in Jammu and Kashmir, PDP Chief asked a question, “if Abrogation of Article 370 has resolved all the issues then

why 9 lakh troops are still stationed in kashmir and why they have not been sent to the borders”.

Referring to the heavy turnout of voters, the former Chief Minister said, “In the past, the polling percentage has been higher than this (DDC polls) but it is no solution to the Kashmir problem. Kashmir problem is still there as long as there are nine lakh soldiers in our state. She asked, “Which state of India has so many sol-

diers that too in civilian areas”.

She added: “In an election, how many people participate and how many don’t has nothing to do with the Kashmir issue. Kashmir issue is going to be there as long as there is no resolution through a dialogue with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and with Pakistan.”

Cornering the Bharatiya Janta Party led government at the Centre PDP Chief said they had “made a mockery of

democracy”.

“Black laws prevail in the country and the weapon which they use is UAPA. Muslims are being called Pakistani. Sardars are called Khalistani. Activists are called Urban Naxals. Kashmiris are called terrorists. The students are called tukde-tukde gang. Women who protest are called anti-national. If everyone is a Khalistani, Pakistani and anti-national then who is Hindustani in this country? Only Bharatiya Janata

Party workers?” she said.

Referring to the 25000 crore Roshni scam, Mehbooba Mufti said, The Jammu and Kashmir government had cancelled all land transfers that took place under the Roshni Act.

“The Roshni scheme was a law passed during the time of the National Conference and implemented during the time of (Ghulam Nabi) Azad sahab.

It was a law, it was made by our assembly If anyone legalised

their land in that law, how is it a scam? If they think rich people have taken a lot of land, go after that. Why are they going after poor people who have 2 marla, 5 marla land?” she noted.

Mufti also accused the BJP government of silencing her voice. I am being told “directly and indirectly” not to talk about Article 370.

“Why do they get rattled by what I say when their own leaders talk about Article 370.

They want to go after me because I raise my voice. They want to get to me. They want to ban my party,” she said.

She said, “After we decided to participate in the DDC election, the degree of oppression has increased in Jammu & Kashmir. Candidates of PAGD are confined and are not allowed to go out for campaigning. How candidates will contest if they are not allowed to organise their campaign meetings?”

UP registers 1st case under new anti-conversion law in Bareilly

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh has registered its first case under the new anti-conversion law in Bareilly district based on a complaint from the father of a young woman.

The case was registered at the Devarniyani police station in Bareilly district on Saturday, officials said.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi said a case was registered by Tikaram, a resident of Sharif Nagar village under Devarniyani police station (in Bareilly), who accused a man — Uvaish Ahmed — of the same village of trying to convert his daughter through “allurement” (bahla-phas-laakar).

The case was registered against Uvaish Ahmed under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the new anti-conversion law.

Senior Superintendent of Police Rohit Singh Sajwan said four police teams have been formed to arrest the accused.

According to the complaint, Tikaram’s daughter and Ahmed studied together in Class 12.

Three years ago, the accused started exerting pres-

sure on her to undergo religious conversion and perform nikaah (marriage). But when the woman opposed, he threatened to kidnap her, Tikaram alleged.

The complainant’s daughter married someone else in June this year. However, Ahmed continued to harass her family members, he said.

According to the complaint, Ahmed went to Tikaram’s house on Saturday and asked him to bring his daughter back from her in-laws’ house.

Threatening her family, the accused told Tikaram that the woman will have to undergo religious conversion and marry him, according to the complaint.

Tikaram subsequently approached the police, and a case was registered against the accused.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Bareilly range, Rajesh Kumar Pandey told reporters that the case was being investigated.

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on Saturday gave assent to an ordinance against forcible or fraudulent religious conversions that provides for imprisonment up to

10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 under different categories.

The promulgation of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, came four days after the Yogi Adityanath government approved the draft of the legislation which also curbs religious conversions only for the sake of marriage.

Under the law which deals with different categories of offences, a marriage will be declared “null and void” if the conversion of a woman is solely for that purpose, and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate.

The ordinance mainly envisages that no person shall convert, either directly or indirectly from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion.

The onus to prove that the conversion has not been done forcibly will lie on the person accused of the act and the convert, it said. **PTI**

Puducherry logs 33 new Covid-19 cases

Puducherry: The Union Territory of Puducherry logged 33 fresh coronavirus cases during the last 24 hours pushing the overall tally to 36,935, a top Health department official said on Sunday.

Meanwhile, no fresh fatality was reported for the 10th day in succession, a release from Director of Health and Family Welfare S Mohan Kumar said.

The 33 fresh cases were identified at the end of the examination of 2,926 samples of which 21 were reported in the Puducherry region, six in Karaikal, five in Mahe and one in Yanam.

The Health department Director said 72 patients were discharged during the last 24 hours ending 10 AM Sunday. **PTI**



A man leads his herd of sheep on a road in Kolkata on Sunday

Maha records 85 deaths, 5,544 fresh infections

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The Covid-19 toll in Maharashtra crossed 47,000 mark on Sunday, as the State recorded 85 fresh deaths, while the number of infections rose to 5,544.

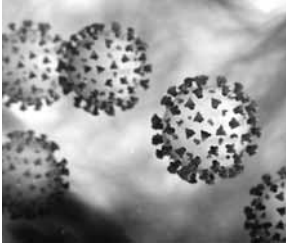
A day after Maharashtra logged 75 deaths and 5965 infections, the number of deaths rose by 10, while the number of daily infections went up by 421.

With 85 fresh deaths, the total number in Maharashtra climbed 46,986 to 47071. Similarly, with 5544 new infections, the total infections jumped from 18,14,515. to 18,20,059.

As 4362 more people were discharged from various hospitals the number of people discharged from the hospitals on Sunday after full recovery since the second week of March this year went up to 16,80,926. The recovery rate in the state dropped marginally from 92.40 per cent to 92.36 per cent.

The Covid-19 toll in Mumbai climbed from 10,847 to 10,865, while the infected cases went up by 940 to trigger a jump in the total infections from 2,82,821.

Meanwhile, the number of



“active cases” total cases in the state went up from 89,905 to 90,997. The fatality rate in the state stood at 2.59 per cent.

Pune district, which continued to be the worst-affected city-district in Maharashtra, saw the total number of cases increase from 3,51,784 to 3,52,565, while the total number of deaths in Pune increased to 7418 to 7443.

Thane district remained in the third spot --after Pune and Mumbai -- after the total number of infections rose from 2,39,598 to 240323, while the total deaths climbed from 5303 to 5310.

Of the 1,08,04,422 samples sent to laboratories, 18,20,059 have tested positive (16.85 per cent) for COVID-19 until Sunday.

Currently, 5,26, 555 people are in home quarantine while 6,814 people are in institutional quarantine.

8 TMC leaders including Mins, MPs to join BJP soon: Soumitra

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Close on the heels of senior TMC leader and Bengal Minister Suwendu Adhikari resigning his post sparking speculations of his joining the BJP the saffron outfit on Sunday claimed that at least eight Trinamool Congress Ministers were preparing to join it.

BJP MP from Bankura Soumitra Khan said that eight TMC leaders including ministers and MPs were in touch with the BJP and would soon that party. Hours after State BJP president Dilip Ghosh said December was going to be a disheartening month for the TMC as the Bengal ruling outfit would find people leaving a sinking boat.

Khan was more direct in taking the names of senior TMC leaders even as he said ministers “Subroto Mukherjee, Rabindra Ghosh and Gautam Deb will leave the TMC soon.” Besides he also named senior leader and MP Saugato Roy among the list

of possible deserters.

Though Ghosh, Deb and Roy said they had no intentions of quitting the Trinamool Congress, sources said that the leadership was keeping close watch on them and many others. “We respect our ideology of tri-colour and so will never accept a communal ideology,” Deb said.

Other TMC MLAs who have openly rebelled against the party and have dropped hints of quitting it are Singur Legislator and veteran farm leader Rabindranath Bhattacharya, Sitai MLA Jagdish Basunia, Barrackpore and Diamond Harbour MLAs Silbhadra Dutta and DipakHalder.

“Wait till December there are many TMC leaders who are in touch with us and would soon be with us... We will take all of them provided they have a clean record and are willing to work for our ideology and the people,” Ghosh said.

Meanwhile, the TMC tried

to put a brave face on Sunday with party MP and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew Abhishek Banerjee taking powerful East Midnapore satrap Suwendu Adhikari head on saying “those who talk of not taking the lift but breaking the stair cases to rise up in their careers should know that I also have taken the stair case and not taken a parachute or lift to rise up in life”

Adhikari had a few days ago said that he had been with the people and taken the stair case and not taken a lift like many others to rise up in his political career. He was apparently indicating Banerjee who has replaced him as the Trinamool youth wing chief.

Daring the BJP leadership for referring to him innuendo Banerjee said “these BJP leaders are cowards and so they do not take my name directly... they only refer to me as the Bhaipo (nephew)... I dare them to take my name... but they will not do that because Prime Minister

Narendra Mod, Amit Shah, Mukul Roy earlier tried to put allegations against my name and I gave them a legal reply in the High Court ... they know that if they do that again I will drag them to the court”

The immediate reference of his speech was apparently remarks from Modi who during a poll campaign had said that, “Vhatija ka batti gul ho jaiga (nephew’s power will go).” Banerjee also referred to Kailash

Vijaybargiya’s recent speech in which he said that TMC which used to be people’s party, its leaders’ and workers’ party; Mamata Banerjee’s had been reduced to the party of the “nephew” and his alleged syndicate.

TMC’s time is gone, it’s our time to be goonda: Ghosh

Kolkata: Earlier the Trinamool Congress perpetrated the goonda raj but now it was the BJP’s turn to unleash the same, Bengal BJP leader Dilip Ghosh on Sunday said giving a sharp reply to TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee’s remark that the State BJP president was a goonda.

“Yes if he thinks that I am a goonda ... so be it ... I am a goonda and would act as one ... there is no harm in becoming a goonda to tame the other goondas... till today TMC had unleashed the goonda raj... now it is our turn to do the same and will do the same if it is needed,” Ghosh said daring Banerjee to stop him if he could.

“I again say that I will act like a goonda and dare him to stop me ... stop me if you can,” he said adding the TMC will soon see a big ruf-

fle in the party. “Let December come and they will see some big changes taking place their party... they will stop talking loud ... Instead of attacking us and calling us goonda they should instead take care of their own house and save it from collapse. The TMC will vanish in a few months time,” Ghosh said.

Earlier from a public rally Banerjee said that unlike the BJP leaders he would not talk in innuendo. Rather “I will openly say that Kailash Vijaybargiya, Amit Shah, Sunil Deodar are outsiders to Bengal... I will openly say that the president of Bengal BJP is a goonda and I repeat he is a goonda... I will openly say that Akaash Vijaybargiya the son of Kailash Vijaybargiya is a goonda ... let them take action against me if they can,” he said.

UP reports 24 more Covid-19 deaths, 2,036 new cases

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh reported 24 more COVID-19 fatalities on Sunday, taking the death toll to 7,742, while 2,036 new cases pushed the state’s infection tally to 5,41,873.

Seven deaths were reported from state capital Lucknow and two from Gorakhpur, a Health department bulletin issued here said.

As far as new infections are concerned, Lucknow recorded 342 followed by 230 in Meerut, 123 in Gautam Buddh Nagar, 113 in Ghaziabad and 108 in Kanpur.

As many as 2,618 patients have been discharged from hospitals since Saturday after recuperating from the disease, taking the total number of recoveries in the state to 5,09,556.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in the state now stands at 24,575, the bulletin stated.

Over 1.75 lakh samples were tested in a span of 24 hours in the state, and the number of tests conducted so far is more than 1.91 crore, it added.

Chairing a review meeting at his official residence here during the day, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said the public should be continuously made aware about ways to prevent the infection, an official statement said.

No plans to begin classes in Bengal colleges, varsities immediately: Edu Min

Kolkata: West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee on Sunday said there was no plan to start classes in colleges and universities across the State immediately.

After a virtual meeting with Vice-Chancellors of state universities, the minister said, at present campuses cannot be opened for students due to the pandemic.

“Classes will continue to be held online. The higher education department is of the view, after eliciting the opinion of VCs, that classes cannot take place on the campuses in the present situation as the pandemic is still continuing,” Chatterjee said.

Higher educational institutions can also extend the admission process by another 15 days at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels, the minister said.

The UG and PG curriculum will be curtailed in consultation with the respective university authorities, he said.

To a question, Chatterjee said, the first semester may also be conducted online if the situation warrants.

The government had earlier said in October that it was mulling to start on campus activities in various state-run higher educational institutions from December 1 depending on the pandemic situation. **PTI**

32 more test positive for Covid-19 in Tripura, tally rises to 32,674

PTI ■ AGARTALA

Thirty-two more people tested positive for COVID-19 in Tripura on Sunday, pushing the state’s tally to 32,674, a health department official said.

The death toll remained at 367 as no new fatality due to the contagion was reported.

West Tripura district, comprising state capital Agartala, has accounted for 185 of the COVID-19 deaths, the official said.

Tripura now has 652 active cases, while 31,632 people have recovered from the disease, including 72 in the last 24 hours. Twenty-three patients have migrated to other states.

As many as 5,25,212 samples have been tested for COVID-19 in the state so far, he said.

Deceased journalist’s wife threatens self-immolation in UP’s Balrampur

Balrampur (UP): The wife of a journalist, who was charred to death along with his friend in a fire that broke out in his house in Balrampur district, threatened to immolate herself on Sunday if police failed to arrest the accused.

Vibha Singh, wife of the deceased journalist, on Sunday told reporters that if the police is unable to arrest the accused persons responsible for the death of her husband, she will immolate herself along with her children.

She also said the police had assured her that the case will be resolved in a couple of days, but now she is unable to have faith in the police.

Rakesh Singh, 35, working for a local newspaper, and his friend Pintu Sahu, 32, suffered serious burns in the fire at the house in Kalwari village. Balrampur Superintendent of Police Dev Ranjan Verma had said on Saturday.

While Sahu died on the spot, Singh suffered 90 per cent burns and was referred to a Lucknow hospital where he succumbed to the injuries, the SP said.

The father of the deceased journalist, Munna Singh, has demanded action apprehending that his son was murdered.

According to the police, Rakesh Singh’s wife and children had gone to a relative’s house two days ago following some dispute between the couple. On Friday night, there was an explosion in the house after which one of the walls collapsed and one of the rooms caught fire, police said. The SP said investigations are on and two people have been detained for questioning. **PTI**

Missing girl’s body found stuffed in jute bag at desolate place: Police

Barabanki (UP): The body of a 19-year-old girl gone missing two days ago was found stuffed in a jute bag dumped at a desolate place in the Ramnagar police station area of the district, police said on Sunday.

Barabanki Superintendent of Police Arvind Chaturvedi said the body was recovered on Saturday a day after she had gone missing from her home. On the girl’s father complaint, the police lodged a case of abduction and murder on Saturday, said the SP. “Whether the girl was raped after her abduction will be known after the post mortem. The case is being probed from angles,” said the SP adding stern action will be initiated against the person found guilty in the case. **PTI**

28-yr-old pregnant woman found murdered in her home in Chitrakoot

Chitrakoot (UP): A 28-year-old pregnant woman was killed with a sharp-edged weapon in a village in Uttar Pradesh’s Chitrakoot on Sunday morning, police said here.

The body of the woman, who was four-month pregnant, was found lying on a cot in a room of her home by her

husband, SHO, Raipura police station, Sushilchandra Sharma said, adding that the incident took place in Khajuriha Kala village.

The SHO said the husband of the deceased has lodged a complaint against a woman and a young man of the same village, and a case was regis-

tered.

However, no reason for murder has been mentioned in the police complaint, he added.

The body of the deceased has been sent for a post-mortem examination, the police said, and added that no one has been detained so far. **PTI**

Baptism by fire

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



Nobody had any expectations of Uddhav Thackeray. Not even as a descendant of Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray, who always had a wish of one of his own becoming the Chief Minister. But Balasaheb had probably not bargained for the circumstances under which Uddhav became one. Or imagined him to stand out with quietude and resolve in a hostile environment of competitive politics. For years after tamely acquiescing to its bigger partner, the BJP, the Shiv Sena stood up to it following its improved performance in the Assembly elections last November and demanded chief ministership on that basis. The BJP, the single largest party, thought it could rustle up the numbers to form its own Government and was surprised when Uddhav snapped ties with it, engineered a coalition with the opposition Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)-Congress combine and negotiated the chief ministership. A manoeuvre that was so not expected from a man who was hardly thought capable of the aggression of Thackeray senior. But one year down the line, he is on a steady course, walking with ideologically divergent partners, not overstepping the ego of the Maratha strongman and NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who is believed to have been the architect of the alliance based on a shared pursuit of power. Apart from a few creases here and there, Uddhav hasn't been an embarrassment for the Congress despite his avowed commitment to Hindutva causes and that party's to its minority plank. The BJP, not quite accustomed to the Sena's revolt yet, has expectedly been placing hurdles along the way of the coalition government, be it through gubernatorial interference, by thrusting Central probes or generally shaming Uddhav's lack of administrative experience. As for the last, Uddhav had no time to settle in as the State recorded its first COVID-19 case on March 9, posing a severe challenge to the healthcare system. And before he could get a grip on it, Maharashtra became the State with the highest number of cases across India. Then the exodus of migrant labourers caught him by surprise, a fact played up by the BJP as an example of his ineptitude and lack of foresight. Still, Uddhav did not lose his cool and went in for aggressive containment measures, testing and medical protocols as Asia's biggest slum, Dharavi, put him on trial. Today, Mumbai is doing better than Delhi in handling the pandemic despite infrastructural weaknesses. Its caseload is going down, it is going for a graded reopening of sectors — unlike other States giving in to populist and commercial pressure — and is the first State in the country to have introduced international-style travel protocols to control the spiral of imported infection. The management of the Dharavi outbreak is a model example of how effective community engagement, awareness and deployment can tame the virus in resource-scarce and congested clusters. As the worst-hit State with a spiralling death count, Maharashtra seems to be finally getting there. And Uddhav, who may be borrowing lessons from the governance heft of the NCP-Congress, must be credited with having the will to deliver without drawing attention to himself. In fact, given his administrative inexperience, he has empowered efficient bureaucrats and shunted out the slackers, clearly emphasising that performance would be the only qualifier of assessment. The best part is he hasn't failed to call a spade a spade. He publicly admonished the police for indiscriminate use of force during the lockdown and in matters religious has taken an apolitical stand despite his Hindutva moorings. So when Maharashtra Governor B G Koshiyari prodded him on opening temples, wondering if he was delaying because of his "secular" partners, Uddhav shot back, asking if Hindutva meant simply opening religious places and as someone who had sworn on the Constitution, was he denying the secularism enshrined in it? Besides, he managed the festival season with reason. By confining the Ganesh Mahotsav to a largely indoor celebration, he avoided a super spreader event. In an editorial in *Saamna*, he even questioned the utility of all shrines in a pandemic. At the same time, he calibrated his response to Muslims, considering the Sena's stand on the Babri masjid and the Ram temple. He used the Congress to urge the community not to congregate in mosques and stayed away from fanning the fire on the Tablighi Jamaat. In fact, Uddhav, in his own way is trying to posit his Hindutva as nationalism rather than the BJP kind of communalism so that he can justify his togetherness with the NCP-Congress. And given the Sena's history of rowdiness, he is trying to split his politics from bogeyism.

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

Bubble trouble

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



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

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

opinion

06

A DBT for manufacturers

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



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

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

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

The Government expects that it may be called upon to pay about ₹2 lakh crore, which means a total sale/export of about ₹40 lakh crore (assuming five per cent PLI rate) during the next five years. This PLI will increase local manufacturing of eligible goods by an output equal to about 20 per cent of the current GDP.

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

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

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



the cost disadvantage in India remains to be seen. One plus point in favour of the new manufacturing units is 15 per cent corporation tax that was announced last year. For them, manufacturers of highly branded products like Apple iPhones, the PLI scheme and reduced corporate tax are major incentives.

Since such manufacturers face little competition for their products, they can set prices of their products on their own. The PLI benefit may or may not be fully passed on to the retail buyers in this particular case.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thus, ₹1,97,291 crore of cash incentive has been promised in the next five years to manufacturers of automobiles and auto components (₹57,042 crore); mobile manufacturing and specified electronics/technology products (₹45,951 crore); advance chemistry cell batteries (₹18,100 crore); pharmaceuticals and drugs (₹21,940 crore); medical devices (₹3,420 crore); telecom and networking products (₹12,195 crore); processed food (₹10,900 crore); man-made fibres

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUNDBITE

I honestly don't believe anyone could pull off a *Coolie Number 1* redux other than Varun Dhavan. This is gonna be the massive, commercial blockbuster 2020 has been waiting for.

Musician
—Vishal Dadlani



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

Prime Minister
—Narendra Modi



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

Historian
—S Irfan Habib



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

CEO, Serum Institute
—Adar Poonawalla



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Farmers have the right to protest

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

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

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



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

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

G. David Milton
Maruthancode

BJP's desperation

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

been appointed to oversee the December 1 election.

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

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

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

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

What of India's 'Act East' policy?

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



SANJIB POHIT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER
MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR



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

—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER
CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH

A wake-up call

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



ANIL GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

resources, professionalism or sincerity?

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

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

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

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

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

There is a valuable asset of ex-servicemen in these areas. A Border Defence Volunteer Force to strengthen the depth area surveillance and patrolling should be raised for utilising the services of these ex-servicemen. They should be deployed on either side of the NH, up to a depth of five-10 km, depending on the distance of the IB from the NH. It will strengthen the hands of the local police.

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

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

Through the eyes of 'the other'

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



NADEEM PARACHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet, in response, Khomeini intensified this image of him as a way to differentiate "Islamic Iran" from the secular West. He moulded a collective Islamic self in Iran in contrast to a Western secular other. This often

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

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

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

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

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

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

nial and authentic (as in being non-Western, or more spiritual), they are usually overtly conscious of how the West is perceiving them. During the 2013 elections in Pakistan, campaign commercials of Imran Khan's Centre-Right party, the PTI, showed a Pakistani being gladly welcomed by an immigration officer (in a blonde wig), presumably in a European country. Here the post-colonial self was seeking validation from a post-colonial Western other.

Sometimes indigenous acts are performed just to gain traction from Westerners. In 2003, the former chief of Jamaat-i-Islami, the late Qazi Hussain Ahmad, said there was nothing wrong in behaving or looking religious "because the West is more appreciative of this." This is an example of how self-Orientalism looks towards the West for validation. An image was adopted (of religiosity) to attract attention (and maybe praise) of "the others" by confirming to the perceptions of a "pious Muslim."

(Courtesy: Dawn)

‘Chinese activities along Indian border provocative’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

“If it (reports) turns out to be true, it would be yet another provocative measure by the Chinese military to change the facts on the ground,” Democratic Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi told PTI.

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

China claims almost all of

the 1.3 million square mile South China Sea as its sovereign territory. It has been building military bases on artificial islands in the region also claimed by Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

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

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

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

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

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

Responding to a question,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strike Haifa if Israel killed scientist: Iran newspaper

AP ■ TEHRAN

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

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

Israel, suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thailand in exchange for a detained British-Australian academic.

UN CALLS FOR RESTRAINT AFTER KILLING OF IRANIAN NUCLEAR SCIENTIST

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

Iran has blamed Israel for Friday’s killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and vowed revenge.

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

Kathmandu: China’s Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe on Sunday met Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and held talks with Nepal Army chief Gen Purna Chandra Thapa on various issues of bilateral interest, aimed at bolstering military cooperation and take the existing friendly ties to a new height.

Gen Wei, who is also a State Councillor, held bilateral talks with Army chief Gen Thapa at the army headquarters here during his day-long “working visit” to Nepal, said a statement issued by the Nepal Army.

PTI

Boris defends tier-based lockdown in letter to rebel colleagues

PTI ■ LONDON

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

In an attempt to curb a growing rebellion within his own ranks against the new measures which face a House of Commons vote next Tuesday, Johnson wrote on Saturday evening that the tiers will be reviewed every two weeks, and areas can move down the tiers from mid-December.

“Regulations have a sunset

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

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

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

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

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

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

Only three regions of the

34 killed in separate suicide bombings in Af

AP ■ GHAZNI

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

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

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

Afghanistan’s Defense Ministry released a statement claiming 10 soldiers were killed and nine wounded. The ministry also offered a different account of what happened than the official at the National Security Council, saying the vehicle exploded near the army base after security forces opened fire on the car. It was not immediately clear why there was a discrepancy.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Arian said a suicide bombing took place, though he did not provide further details. The soldiers stationed at the base were responsible for conducting night raids, providing support to the army and police forces under siege, and taking part in large-scale operations against the Taliban and Islamic State group in eastern and southern provinces of Afghanistan.

Thai pro-democracy protesters rally outside Army base

AP ■ BANGKOK

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Mysterious metal monolith in US desert reportedly disappears

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

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

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



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

AP

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

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

“My doctor says I have transferred my COVID-19 antibodies to him during my

pregnancy,” Celine Ng-Chan told the paper.

Ng-Chan had been mildly ill from the disease and was discharged from hospital after two-and-a-half weeks, the Straits Times said. Ng-Chan and the National University Hospital (NUH), where she gave birth, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The World Health Organisation says it is not yet known whether a pregnant woman with COVID-19 can pass the virus to her foetus or baby during pregnancy or delivery.

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

AP ■ LONDON



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

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

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

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

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

Prowse later told the BBC he chose Darth Vader because

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

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

He expressed some regret that, thanks to Vader’s mask, “I can walk around with complete anonymity.”

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

Press in 1980. “Fortune tends to follow fame.”

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

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

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

Mark Hamill, who played Luke Skywalker in the “Star

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

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

GLOBE TROTTER

PANDEMIC CALLS OFF X'MAS MARKETS IN EUROPE

Berlin: The European plazas where people would usually gather at crowded stalls to partake in hot mulled wine, gingerbread, sausages and other delicacies are just empty squares. Christmas markets, a cherished tradition in Germany and neighbouring countries, have joined the long list of annual traditions that were cancelled or diminished this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

SWISS VOTES TO BOOST LIABILITY OF BIG FIRMS

Geneva: Swiss voters are casting final ballots in a referendum on a measure that could stiffen penalties against companies that are based Switzerland if they violate human rights or harm the environment abroad.

HK TO CLOSE SCHOOLS AMID VIRUS SURGE

Hong Kong: Hong Kong has reported 115 new coronavirus infections, the first time it has seen cases in the triple digits since August 2. The government on Sunday also announced that classes at kindergarten, primary and secondary schools will be shut for the rest of the year in light of the worsening coronavirus situation in the city.

MAN HELD FOR NOT WEARING MASK ON FLIGHT

New York: A 44-year-old man was arrested after refusing to wear a face mask on a Delta Airlines flight heading from Salt Lake City to San Francisco in the US, a media report said. The man, identified as Joshua Colby Council, was rushing to board his flight at Salt Lake City International Airport on Wednesday night when a gate agent stopped and asked him to put on a face mask, the New York Post reported.

CENTRE-RIGHT MAYOR FACES SOCIALIST

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

N KOREA TOUGHENS RULES OF ENTRY TO SEA

Seoul: North Korea is further toughening restrictions on entering seawaters as part of elevated steps to fight the coronavirus pandemic, state media said Sunday, two days after South Korea said the North had banned sea fishing. The Korean Central News Agency reported the country is mobilising more anti-virus units and establishing strong steps to “completely remove uncleanliness and unhygienic elements that could help make room for the spread of an epidemic” at winter.

TrendBlazer

'Will shoot once I deliver my child'

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

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

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





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

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

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

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

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



Not surprised by COVID-19: Jude

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

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

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



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

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

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

Practice relaxation techniques: While sensory input can release

Put your mind at ease

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

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

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

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



In order to achieve an optimal brain functioning, you must increase the intake of wholefoods like green vegetables, grains, legumes, seafood and lean meat in your diet. These foods encompass magnesium, folate, zinc and vital fatty acids which accelerate cerebral function

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

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

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

—IANS

POWER OF THE PALETTE

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

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

LAWYER-TURNED ARTIST

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

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

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

CHURCH (1907)

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

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

Kandinsky's woodcuts are experi-



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

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

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

IN 1907, KANDINSKY HAD PRODUCED NUMEROUS ORIGINAL WOODCUTS FEATURING WOMEN IN TRADITIONAL RUSSIAN COSTUMES, EMBODYING THE ROMANTIC, FAIRYTALE IMAGERY HE FAVOURED EARLY IN HIS CAREER

Photo: Guggenheim Museum, NY



Nirvana Inn set for digital premiere

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

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

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

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

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

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

W E B B E D



ALIEN WORLDS

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



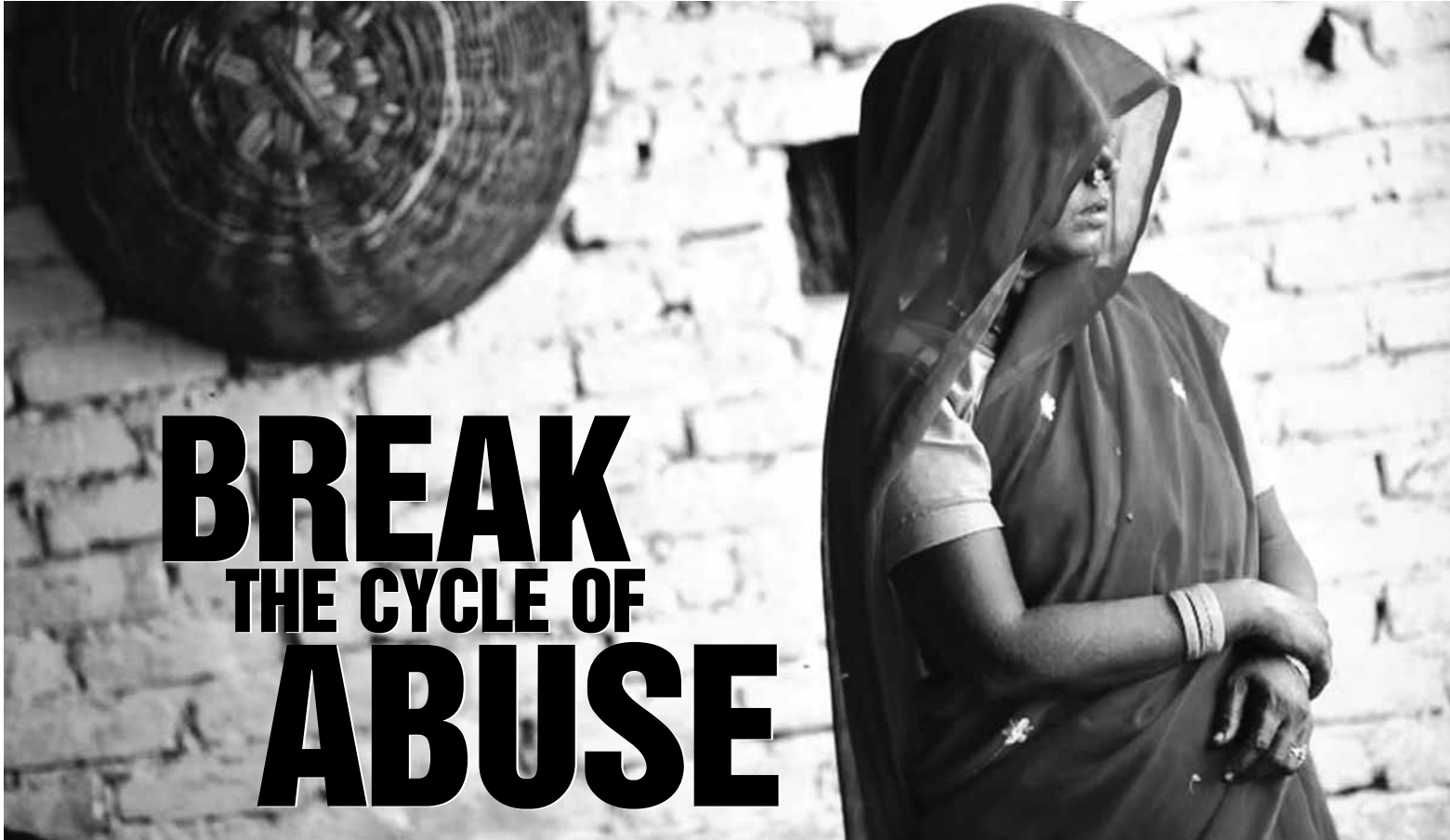
THE SURGEON'S CUT

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



THE MIDNIGHT SKY

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



BREAK THE CYCLE OF ABUSE

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

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

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

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

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

—Charkha Features

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

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

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

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

look in the office tomorrow."

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

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

For those who have the means — and that's no small caveat during this pandemic — feeling good can mean looking good. And the widespread isolation has produced new trends in beauty and clothing.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A deeper importance

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

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

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

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

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

"It is beyond my comprehension as to why the administration allowed a woman to be alone in an isolated quarantine facility. Despite increased presence of police everywhere during the lockdown, the crimes against women increased rapidly," rued Manisha Kukkar who is associated with a non-government women's organization in Rajasthan.

As per Kavita Srivastav, a social activist working in Rajasthan, cases that are reported to police or to women commissions represent only the tip of the iceberg. There are several cases which go unreported, especially from remote areas where women neither have information regarding their rights nor have access to the resources. "As civil society organisations, we have collectively organised many campaigns to end sexual and physical violence against women in the state. To achieve this, the role of police and administration is crucial," said Kavita.

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



A better world

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

Offlately, there has been a lot of buzz around the topic of values in every profession and area of learning. It is being said repeatedly and vociferously that our education should be value-based, science should not neglect values, politics should observe some moral principles, business and industry should follow some

ethics, media should have a code of conduct and administrators should have a set of values to put into practise. Thus, inculcation of values is being stressed upon everywhere. This need for values in all walks of life and human activity emanates from the growing realisation that all conflicts arise from infringement or dissonance of values and that the problems of deterioration in the state of law and order and the lack of harmony have arisen because of violation of values by people. Therefore, we must not miss the essential moral dimension if we want to have peace and happiness in our life and harmony and synchronicity in the society. However, it is little realised that values are derived from our beliefs. Hence, our visions and aspirations determine the set of values necessary to realise our goals and ideals.

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

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

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

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



Celebrate yourself

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

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

ANXIETY LINKED TO ALZHEIMER'S ONSET RISK

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

Anxiety has been frequently observed in patients with mild cognitive impairment, although its role in disease progression is not well documented. "We know that volume loss in certain areas of the brain is a factor that predicts progression to Alzheimer's disease," said study senior author Maria Vittoria Spampinato from the University of South Carolina, US. "In this study, we wanted to see if anxiety had an effect on brain structure, or if the effect of anxiety was independent from brain structure in favouring the progression of disease," Spampinato added. The study group included 339 patients, average age of 72 years, from the Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Initiative 2 cohort.



SEROTONIN ZONES IDENTIFIED

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

The research, published in the journal, *Science Advances*, gains significance in view of the fact that learning to suppress the impulse for instant gratification is often vital for future success, but how patience is regulated in the brain remains poorly understood. "Serotonin is one of the most famous neuromodulators of behaviour, helping to regulate mood, sleep-wake cycles and appetite," said study co-author Katsuhiko Miyazaki from Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University in Japan.

The study on mice showed that serotonin-releasing neurons from dorsal raphe nucleus (DRN) penetrate many other areas of the brain, including the nucleus accumbens (NAc), orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) and medial prefrontal cortex (mPFC).



A PERSON'S ESSENCE REMAINS SAME ALL LIFE

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

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

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

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

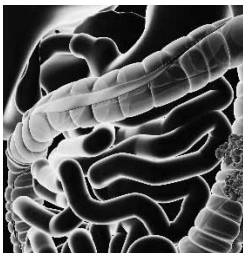


GENUS OF BACTERIA IN THE GUT LINKED TO IBS

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

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

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



EMOTIONAL FLEXIBILITY HELPS RELATIONSHIPS

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

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

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

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



Smith does it again

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

PTI ■ SYDNEY

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

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

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

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

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

If Agarwal found the fence twice in the first over, Dhawan struck Mitchell Starc for three successive fouls to get the Indian innings going.

A magnificent cover drive by Agarwal took the visitors past 50 in 6.1 overs. However, in trying to go for one too many, Dhawan perished.

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

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

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

That brought Hardik Pandya in

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

STEVE SMITH
AFTER SCORING TWO BACK TO BACK HUNDREDS

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

GLENN MAXWELL
ON STEVE SMITH FORM

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

KL RAHUL
ON INDIAN DRESSING ROOM MORALE

We were completely outplayed: Kohli

PTI ■ SYDNEY

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

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

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

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

Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins picked up 3/67 in his 10 overs.

Besides Smith’s 104-run knock, swashbuckling opener David Warner smashed 83 off 77 while skipper Aaron Finch contributed 60 in a first-wicket stand of 142 in under 23 overs.

The duo of Marnus Labuschagne and Glenn Maxwell

Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

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

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

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

game.”

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

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

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

Indian bowlers.

To dislodge Smith, India needed Pandya to bowl for the first time since returning from a back surgery more

than a year ago, and he did the trick in his third over, luring the imperious Australian to slash one straight into Mohammed Shami.



Warner suffers injury, taken to hospital for scans

PTI ■ SYDNEY

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

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



David Warner leaves the field after injury AP

senior player to a nearby hospital for undergoing scans.

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

“No idea. We’ve got to reshuffle it around, I don’t think he’ll be available,” Finch said after the game.

Considering the way Warner grimaced in pain after falling while

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

SINGLES



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



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



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



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

Our bowlers need to adapt to conditions quicker: KL

PTI ■ SYDNEY

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

“We did not adapt quick enough. It’s a learning curve for the bowling group to adapt quicker.”

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

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

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

Waleegn, Yehualaw win ADHM with record times

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Both Waleegn (58.53 seconds) and Yehualaw pocketed \$27,000 first prize and an additional \$10,000 as event record bonus.

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

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

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



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

an additional ₹1 lakh for setting event record among Indians.

According to the Athletics Federation of India’s official records, the earlier national half marathon record stands at 1:03:46 in the name of Kalidas Hirave of Maharashtra.

In the men’s elite race, last year’s Silver medalist Waleegn beat compatriot and defending champion Andamlak Belihu in a nail-biting finish in event record time of 58.53 seconds. Waleegn had won a Bronze at the World Half Marathon

Championships last month.

Belihu, who had won the title in 2018 and 2019, settled for the Silver with a time of 58.54sec in the 21.09km distance. Uganda’s Stephen Kissa was third in 58.56.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Phillips’ record-breaking ton sets up Kiwis win

AFP ■ MOUNT MAUNGANUI

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

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

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

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



and I came into this going ‘let’s go in as hard as I possibly can. I know I can do it,’ Phillips said.

The 23-year-old, who was born in South Africa but moved to New Zealand at the age of five, took just 46 deliveries to reach his century, the 10th fastest in T20Is and one ball faster than the previous New Zealand record held by Colin Munro.

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

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

After winning the toss and sending New Zealand into bat under overcast skies, Pollard believed the West Indies were in control when the Black Caps reached the halfway mark at 84/2.

“But between overs 10 to 15 we sort of lost it there,” Pollard said. “In terms of the energy and feel and erratically in the field, that’s not the standard that we want to set for ourselves, and not the standard anyone wants to see in international cricket.

Messi, Barca remember Maradona in winning style

AFP ■ BARCELONA

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

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

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

Messi played for Newells before he joined Barcelona at age 13. Maradona played five matches for Newell in 1994 near the end of his glorious playing career that made him a legend in his home country.

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

Messi had kept his head bowed during the minute of silence before kickoff at the empty Camp Nou for Maradona. Maradona played for Barcelona from 1982-84.

Martin Braithwaite, Antoine Griezmann and Philippe Coutinho also scored for Barcelona.

