

**OPINION 6**  
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GLOBAL CITIZEN

**WORLD 8**  
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CAN BE BACK TO LONDON

**SPORT 12**  
AT 34, MY DAYS ARE  
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RANCHI, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 24, 2020; PAGES 12-13

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# SC raises concerns over Covid relapse

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"In Gujarat, the situation is going out of control," said the Bench, also comprising Justices RS Reddy and MR Shah.

"There is spike in cases and this is only November. Prepare for the worst in December. You have to take steps," the Bench told the lawyer appearing for Maharashtra. The Bench was hearing a matter regarding the need for proper treatment of Covid-19 patients and dignified handling of dead bodies in the hospitals. It has posted the matter for further hearing on November 27.

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

Jain told the Bench that as per earlier order of the SC, an

## Experts warn against fresh wave in J'khand

'Ignoring corona guidelines could be fatal'

PNS ■ RANCHI

Even after 951 deaths and over 1,07,469 Covid-19 cases in Jharkhand people of the State do not seem to be following life saving guidelines issued by authorities. A large number of people oblivious of the new wave of coronavirus infections are flocking markets, workplaces and several other crowded places without following social distancing and putting on facemasks.

At the time when several states in the country have witnessed sudden surge in the Covid-19 cases, renowned doctors and medical experts have warned of a sudden increase in the cases if people of the State continue violating Covid guidelines issued by the health department.

Former HOD, Medicine at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Ranchi, Dr RK Jha said, "Next round has already come, north and north west Indian States, including Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi and

bordering areas of UP are witnessing a sudden surge in the cases. The PM is already talking to all CMs. During winters all home cases will multiply. So many festivals, marriages, will compound the cases."

"Covid-19 is there and it will stay, not end, less increase, Europe and America are the worst hit, where cases have increased. Unluck was necessitated to boost the drowning economy, but no minimum caution is being taken. People need to understand and change their living practice. People keep windows open and most people have their nose exposed despite wearing their masks. No new wave, but cases will increase. During winters, the virus will circulate in the house," Dr Jha said.

IMA State coordinator and former national IMA vice president Dr Ajay Kumar Singh said, "When the Covid era started and lockdown was imposed on March 27, there was more fear among people than the prevalence of the disease itself.

Now, the ratio reversed with 10 per cent fear and 90 per cent disease. People have started using it as a Government order, just like using a helmet and seat belt, which are for self protection, but masks are for protecting society too."

"In today's situation 60 per cent people use masks symbolically, where the nose is exposed. Due to the economy, finance, festivals, marriages and other get-togethers, vulnerability has increased. Only proper use of masks, three layers, without valves and social distancing can save people.

There should be a number cap on social gatherings and unnecessary moving should be stopped. Outside goods need to be washed, cleaned and then used. Don't eat raw fruits. The Government can only alert people, it can enforce masks too. Government can challenge people with the help of CCTV cameras just like they do while penalising traffic violators. Also, 60 plus people should not move out and marriages should be done with minimum people maintaining social distancing. I am not



People flock markets amid coronavirus in Ranchi on Monday

Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

being infected, but I can spread the infection," Dr Singh said. He added that even cured patients need to take care because they have been affected. "We are not scaring people, but asking them to be careful.

Next 90 days are very critical so everyone needs to be careful," he added. Chief Medical Officer, CGHS, Ranchi Dr SS Harsh said, "Though one year has already been passed since the

first case of Covid-19 surfaced in the world, we still have no definite solutions or remedy despite regular research and work of scholars and scientist across the globe. At present only way to stay safe

is to follow Government guidelines and maintaining social distancing, wearing mask and follow proper hand-wash/sanitisation."

"India is a land of cultures and many festivals and we are reluctant to follow the norms in a proper way, worsening the present scenario. I humbly request everyone to follow the Covid-19 guidelines to defeat corona," added Dr Harsh.

Notably, when there are chances of a second wave of the pandemic in the State the number of Covid-19 tests has also gone down in the last few weeks. On Sunday, the government collected swab samples of only 8,014 people, which is a quarter of the number of samples collected every day in September. In the past fortnight, the government has tested around 10,000 swab samples every day on an average, which is not even half of the number of tests conducted every day in the month of October. Once the intensity of testing increases, the number of cases is likely to witness an unprecedented spike, fear health experts.

## Covid-19 recovery rate jumps above 97%

2 more die, 219 found infected

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Covid-19 recovery rate in Jharkhand jumped above 97 per cent on Monday after at least 304 patients recovered in the State against 219 people found infected in 24, figures compiled by the health department stated.

As per a bulletin released by the National Health Mission (NHM) on Monday late evening, of the 1,07,688 people infected by the lethal virus in Jharkhand at least 1,04,533 have recovered, taking the recovery rate in the State up at 97.07 per cent.

After testing around 10,000 swab samples in the past two days, the Government intensified its Covid testing drive on Monday and tested at least 16,591 people. More than 1,4 per cent of the ones tested were found infected.

However, casualties caused by Covid-19 infection continued to haunt Jharkhand on Monday as two more patients, one each from Ranchi and Dhanbad, died during treatment on the day. In the past three days, at least 13 people have died of Covid-19 infection in the tribal State.

While Khunti and Pakur did not report even a single



A medic collects swab samples from a person for Covid-19 test in Ranchi on Monday

Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

case of Covid-19 infection on Monday, Ranchi reported 68 fresh cases, the highest among all the 24 districts in Jharkhand. The number of active cases of infection, however, dropped in Ranchi as the district also reported 109 recoveries on the day. Government data highlighted, as per the NHM bulletin, at least 839 people were battling the infection in Ranchi on Monday night.

Among other districts, East Singhbhum reported 27 cases against 47 recoveries, while

Dhanbad reported 13 cases against the same number of recoveries. As many as 29 people were found infection in Bokaro and 25 patients recovered there. At least 15 districts reported a single-digit spike in the cases on Monday.

The Government has so far collected swab samples of 39,40 lakh people and tested 39,24 lakh of them. On Monday, health workers collected swab samples of 14,106 people. While the Covid-19 tally in the State was above 1 lakh, only

2,202 people were battling the infection in Jharkhand on Monday evening.

As per the latest figures shared by the NHM, the growth rate of the virus in Jharkhand was 0.16 per cent against the national average of 0.42 per cent. The doubling rate of the infection in Jharkhand was 434.08 days against the national doubling rate of 164.20 days. The Covid mortality rate in Jharkhand was 0.88 per cent against the national average of 1.50 per cent.

## China's mad infra push along LAC alarms India

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



Indian security establishment.

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

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

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

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

High-resolution images from Maxar Technologies indicate road access from the site of the bunkers to the Sinche-La pass, which is then connected to an all-weather road constructed by Chinese workers that stretches across the 5 kilometre-wide Doklam plateau.

The new bunkers and construction of the road on the Doklam plateau after the stand-off in 2017, the construction of a "village" and 9-kilometre track adjacent to the plateau are strong indications that China has no hesitation in construction activity in territory which Bhutan claims to be its own.

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

## Kerala puts on hold changes in Police Act after criticism

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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

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

Further action would be

taken after detailed discussions in the Assembly and hearing views from various quarters, he said, with the announcement coming amid widespread criticism of the amendment and protests by Congress and threat by BJP to legally challenge it.

While the Government has said it brought the amendment through an ordinance to check cyberbullying, opposition parties and even Left sympathisers have slammed it, saying it was against the freedom of speech and media.

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

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

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

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

The veteran Congress leader was first admitted to the hospital on August 26 after testing positive for Covid-19 and was discharged for a brief period before being admitted again on November 2.

His condition deteriorated on November 21, following multi-organ failure and was put



**TARUN GOGOI**  
APRIL 1, 1936 — NOVEMBER 23, 2020

on invasive ventilation. Gogoi was given dialysis on Sunday. His condition deteriorated further over the past few hours and the hospital where he was admitted said he was "very, very critical".

"Extremely sad to know of the demise of Shri Tarun Gogoi, former Chief Minister

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

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

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

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

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

## AIMIM leaders join TMC to stop minority votes' division

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In a sudden development, a number of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) men, including their senior leader Anwar Pasha, on Monday joined the Trinamool Congress in an apparent bid to stop division of minority votes in Bengal by claiming Asaduddin Owaisi-led party was only acting as a "polariser of votes" to help the BJP.

The AIMIM, however, claimed, Pasha was just a "party worker", and the TMC leadership was trying to fool the masses.

Alleging that a few people are trying to steer the country towards destruction using religion, Pasha said those who are eyeing Bengal at present, whether "wearing saffron or green", should know that there is no place for creating religious

divisions in the State.

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

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

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

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

In the wake of a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic hitting several parts of the country, the district administration has started proactively measures to deal with such a scenario.

Though the cases have come down rapidly but as part of the preventive measures, the administration has come up with 10 new checkpoints to keep entering the city. These check posts have come up at entry points like Dobo-Kanderbera road that links to the steel city through Domuhani Bridge, Adityapur Bridge on river Kharkai to name a few.

SDO Nitish Kumar Singh said that the district administration has come up with a strategy to deal with any extreme situation. "We have come up with 10 fresh checkpoints. People returning to the city or those visiting will have to undergo mandatory Antigen tests. The administration has deployed its team at Tatanagar railway station and bus stands," informed the SDO.

He said that those found without masks are taken into custody. Hotels, shopping centres and market places are under surveillance by scanner. "We have to be vigilant and make meticulous plans to prevent a second wave of the disease. Action is being taken against those guilty of moving around in public places without masks," said Singh.

Another official said the number of Covid patients in the district had reduced and mortality numbers were under control. However, considering the possibility of a second wave, more beds are being planned. The number of tests to prevent

## Former Min OP Lal cremated with State honour

**PNS ■ DHANBAD**

Senior Congress leader and trade union leader OP Lal, who was minister of mines in 1985 in Bihar Cabinet died on Saturday at RIMS Ranchi and was cremated at Lilori Asthan cremation ghat in Dhanbad on Monday with State honour.

Minister for Agricultural  
Badal Patralekh represented  
the government during the  
ceremony.

Lal was admitted to Medica- Ranchi about a fortnight ago and after being discharged from there when he

charged from there when he developed respiratory problems was once again admitted to RIMS Trauma Centre where he breathed his last on Saturday evening. His body was brought to his Katras residence late on Saturday night and on Monday he was cremated.

Lal (79) had represented Baghmara Assembly constituency thrice from 1985, 1990 and 1995 in Bihar assembly and also was minister for mines under different chief ministers then.

the spread of the virus is being increased.

"We have increased the level of surveillance by the district health department and taken stricter measures to check the spread of the deadly virus, the count of the COVID cases might increase," said the official.

Meanwhile, a team from district administration conducted raids at different shops and shopping centres to act against those violating social distancing guidelines.

During the inspection, the team checked the commuters on the streets and instructions were issued on spot directing bike riders to follow social distancing norms.

## Social activist spreads awareness

**Jamshedpur:** Amidst fear of second wave of COVID-19 outbreak looms large in Jamshedpur, ardent fan of Bollywood star Madhuri Dixit and Jamshedpur Notified Area Committee (JNAC) brand ambassador has launched awareness campaign requesting the citizens of Jamshedpur to follow COVID norms to help fight coronavirus. He has come up with awareness posters at Sakchi urging people to wear masks, maintain social distance and don't let Jamshedpur become Delhi which is struggling to contain the epidemic.

1,258 new TB patients  
identified in Bokaro

PNS ■ BOKARC

Amidst sturdy initiatives and a rapid awareness program, cases of Tuberculosis (TB) in Bokaro district have been escalating rapidly not only among the urban or semi-urban population but among the innocent tribal

Health officials opine that there is a need for awareness among people, especially when they are in public spaces.

According to the reports a total 5152 people were screened during January to October 2020 in which 1258 new TB patients were identified. While TB claimed 17 lived during the same tenure in the district, the report reveals

Few of those who died from TB had reportedly discontinued to intake medicines during the middle of the treatment due to several reasons including due to lockdown of Coronavirus pandemic, said Dr NP Singh, District TB Officer Bokaro.

As far as the drug is considered we provide quality drugs, free of charge. The main reason behind the increase in cases is lack of awareness among the public.

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COVID-19

# Solution to virus elimination lies in rapid testing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But twice-weekly testing with a more sensitive PCR

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

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

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



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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## India Covid-19 caseload breaches 91-lakh mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

A total of 44,059 people were found infected with Covid-19 in a span of 24 hours with 254 states and UTs contributing to 78.74 per cent of the new infections.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PM: Constructed key buildings within time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The Dorner Associates International Centre was built by this government after a long wait of 23 years. The new building of the Central Information Commission was completed by this Government. The Dorner Associates International Centre was built by this government after a long wait of 23 years. The new building of the Central Information Commission was completed by this Government.

memory of the country's martyrs. Thousands of policemen in our country have sacrificed their lives to maintain law and order. Thousands of policemen have been martyred.

The country was, for decades, discussing a proposal of the War Memorial. The brave soldiers of our country were expecting and demanding this for a long time. Our Government also had the privilege of constructing a war memorial near India Gate in

## CBI books UP resident for impersonating agency official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case against a UP resident, who impersonated himself as an official of Jwal Khera, Bulandshahr and Shivpur Chhara, Tehsil Koi, Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh) on the allegations that he has been impersonating himself as RR Singh, DIG, CBI, Delhi for his personal gain.

The agency also conducted searches on Monday at the premises of the accused which led to recovery of two country made firearms and some incriminating documents in connection with the alleged crime.

The accused Rajiv Singh was impersonating as the CBI DIG for personal gains, officials said, adding investigation is continuing in the case.

Meanwhile, the agency on Monday arrested an absconding accused in an ongoing investigation of a case against a Kolkata-based Ponzi company.

A case was registered

against the Ponzi company) and others.

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

## Nivar likely to make landfall along TN coast tomorrow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

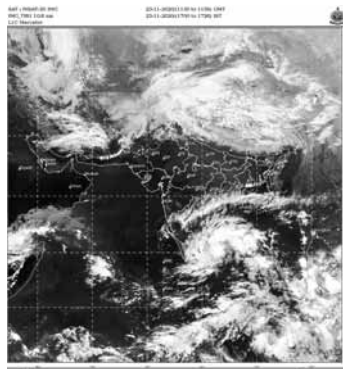
Cyclone Nivar is brewing in the Bay of Bengal and might make landfall along the Tamil Nadu coast between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram on the afternoon of November 25. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has upgraded the tropical threat to Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry coastal to a severe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

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

According to the IMD, Nivar currently lies as a depression some 600 km south south east of Puducherry in the Bay of Bengal. It is expected to intensify in the next 24 hours and make landfall on the Indian coast in 2020 and the second to form in the North Indian Ocean region after severe cyclone Gati in the Arabian Sea in 2020. The months from October to December are the most intense in the region and see several originate in the Bay of Bengal.

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

The sea condition was 'rough to very rough' (wave heights of 8-20 ft) over South-



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

## Union Cabinet Secy chairs meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

tioned that the impending Cyclone is going to affect coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry between 24th to 26th November, 2020.

"The Cabinet Secretary mentioned that we all are aiming at zero loss of life and early restoration of normalcy in the affected areas. He mentioned that the advisories to fishermen not to go into the sea should be strictly implemented. People living in 'katcha' houses may be advised suitably according to the situation, he added," said Cabinet Secretariat in a statement.

Secretaries from Home, Power, Telecommunication, Health, Education, Shipping, Health Ministry, Chairman Railway Board, Member Secretary, NDMA, DG, NDRF and representative of Ministry of Defence also informed the NCMC about the arrangements and assistance to the concerned States.

and avoid the above sea areas. Throughout August, the Arabian Sea was warmer than usual by two-three degrees Celsius. While the normal sea surface temperatures here are about 28-29°C, the temperatures this August reached up to 29-31°C. The sea surface tem-

peratures in the Bay of Bengal are also in the range of 29-30°C, according to IMD's latest cyclone update. A deep depression in October had also carried much more rainfall than normal, causing extremely heavy rainfall in many parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

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

New Delhi: The Supreme Court dismissed the plea of the Delhi Police challenging the bail granted to a man, who has been accused of selling a SIM card on a fake ID to a Jamia Millia Islamia University student, in which was allegedly used for inciting violence during the protests here in February. The Delhi Police had sought against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan rejected the appeal of the police against the October 23 order of the Delhi High Court granting bail to the accused, observing that the police have not shown that he was party to a conspiracy to organise protests against the CAA.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A bench comprising Justices L. Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and Ajay Rastogi also directed the Tamil Nadu Government to provide police escort to Perarivalan during his visit to the hospital.

The parole, granted to the convict by the Madras High Court, was ending on Monday and was extended by one more week. "As prayed for, further extend the parole of the petitioner by one week from today and direct the respondent — State of Tamil Nadu to provide the necessary police escort to the petitioner to enable him to visit the hospital for treatment. List the matter on January 19, 2021, for final disposal," the bench said. PTI





## Good enough?

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



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

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

## Putin's nyet to Biden

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



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

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

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

# Educating a global citizen

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



J.S. RAJPUT

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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



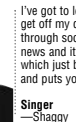
You just cannot create the right atmospheres in a virtual concert. There is no instant feedback and no interaction with the audience. Singer — Pankaj Udhass



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



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



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Will Cong ever act?

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

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

This, in turn, will help build a strong Opposition, which is essential for the growth of a healthy and vital democracy in the country. Any nation that does not have a strong Opposition to keep the ruling Government in check is in trouble and can become totalitarian. Krishnan Malhotra Ambala Cantt

### No room for divisive politics in TN

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

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

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



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

### Help others in need

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

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

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

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

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

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



## FIRST COLUMN

### Shape the future at cyber speed

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



ALOK OHRIE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## POINT COUNTERPOINT



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

# Fertiliser DBT an illusion

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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

Under it, the Government has made disbursement of 100 per cent of the subsidy to producers conditional upon actual sales to farmers, getting registered on point-of-sale (POS) machines at the dealer's shop (prior to this, they were getting 95 per cent of subsidy on receipt of material at a district's railhead point or approved godown and the balance five per cent on confirmation of sales to farmers by States). But this is not DBT as subsidy is to be routed through the retailers, not directly to farmers. The Government has cleared all subsidy dues to manufacturers, it gives no clue that this will happen soon. In fact, there are major roadblocks on the way — some explicit and others not so. To understand these, let us look at how the extant sys-

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unless the above roadblocks are cleared, the transition to DBT will be next to impossible. But this is doable provided Modi sheds his plan of linking development of eastern India with the revival of Sindri, Gorakhpur, Barauni (alternatively, their production cost needs to be cut drastically), pledges to fully fund subsidy requirement (if it can be done for 2020-21, why not every year then); ruthlessly applies his dictum of "naa khaoonga, naa khane doonga (neither will I take bribe nor will I let anyone else take it)"; and does away with bureaucratic red tape by removing all land tilled by her/him. The Government should garner data on all 140 million farm households and put it on a web portal. This is an absolute must to ensure that no one is left out. At present, there is a void as even under PM Kisan, just about 80 million farmers are receiving the eligible amount of ₹6,000. Under a business as usual scenario, leaving out 60 million from subsidy payments could be catastrophic.

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

# BJP yet to consolidate Hindu votes down South

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a senior journalist)



## FOREIGN EYE



### THE TIME TO THINK IS NOW

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

# 'Biden to pick Antony Blinken as State Secy'

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

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

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

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

sion," The Wall Street Journal reported.

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

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

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

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

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

Ardern said the tone of the 20-minute phone call was expected to be very positive, and she was very favorably about how New Zealand was handling the pandemic.

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

## US TROOP WITHDRAWAL China worried Afghan may become hotbed for Uighur militants

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

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

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

He also condemned the recent Islamic State attack on

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to national security."

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

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

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

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

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

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

## First Americans could be vaccinated next month: House vaccine chief

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

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

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

(December 11).

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

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

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

## Burkina Faso counts ballots; extremist threats affected vote

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

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

While the vote was held, no reported incidents of major attacks, threats of violence prevented people from casting ballots in hard-hit parts of the country, in the North, Sahel and East regions. Nearly 3,000 people have been killed in the past year, according to a report from CODEL, a local



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

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

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

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

## HK's Joshua Wong to plead guilty to protest charges

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

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

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

## French ex-Prez Sarkozy stands trial for corruption

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

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

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

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

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

## US provides missiles, renews pledge to defend Philippines

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

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

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

O'Brien expressed condolences to the Philippines after back-to-back typhoons left a trail of death and devastation in the country and outlined US Help to the country battle the coronavirus pandemic.

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

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

## Yemen rebels claim attack on Saudi oil facility in Jiddah

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

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

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

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

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

Online videos appeared to

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

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

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

## Officials: 113 bodies found in secret graves in Mexico

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

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

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

there than in any other state in recent years.

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

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

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

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

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

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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

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

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned date and the borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

S. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ashwajit Singh & Durg Pat Singh/ LBDE00000232267	Flat No- T- 3/13-05, Valley View Estate, Gurgaon, Haryana/ Nov. 18, 2020	January 31, 2020/ 6,83,107.57/-	Delhi NCR
2.	Dayanand Sharma/ Jaidav Kaushik/ LBFB000001181891	Flat No- 207, 2nd Floor, C- II, Belvedere Tower, Chameerod Village, Suraj Kund Road, Faridabad/ Nov. 18, 2020	October 04, 2019/ 23,74,540/-	Delhi NCR
3.	Hastinder Taneja & Rachna Taneja/ LBGR000002382513	Unit No G- 018, Ground Floor Platinum Tower, Sector- 47, Sohna Road, Gurgaon/ Nov. 18, 2020	February 26, 2020/ 15,58,036/-	Delhi NCR
4.	Prashanth Kumar & Sakshi Gera/ LBND00000435898	Flat No CVN- T 10-09/04, 9th Floor, CHD Vansh, Tower 10, Sector- 71, Gurgaon/ Nov. 18, 2020	February 22, 2020/ 90,78,208.78/-	Delhi NCR
5.	Chetna Sharni/ Santosh Gupta/ Sanjay Gupta/ LBDE000001867399	402 A, Tower B- 3, Alpha, E&S Inspirations, Sector- 57, Gurgaon/ 12/20/ Nov. 18, 2020	July 23, 2020/ 90,45,995/-	Delhi NCR

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

Date : November 24, 2020  
Place: Delhi NCR

Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

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

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

Zuma left the commission hearing without permission after Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo dismissed an application asking him to resign as chair of the inquiry. Zuma alleges Zondo is biased against him.

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

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

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

**UJVN LTD** (An Uttarakhand Govt. Enterprise)  
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Telephones: 0135-2763508, 2763808 Fax: 0135-2763507  
CIN No. U40119UR2001SC0202866 Website: www.uttarakhandajvnltd.com

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

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

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

For eligibility criteria and full and further details kindly visit our web site. The tenders can be downloaded from our web site i.e. [www.uttarakhandajvnltd.com](http://www.uttarakhandajvnltd.com) and tender cost shall be paid at the time of submission of the tender.

Executive Engineer (Civil)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

**SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL**

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Anita D/o Pappu R/o House No. CH-4, Gali No. 11, Paras Ram Ka Makar, Sushant Vihar, Delhi**, Age: 15 yrs, Height: 5'2", complexion wheatish, face oval, Build thin. Wearing Blue colour suit and salwar and blue colour hawai chappal in feet is missing since 20.10.2020 from the area of PS Swaroop Nagar, Delhi.

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

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

E-mail: [ccib@cgil.gov.in](mailto:ccib@cgil.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-230111334  
Ph: 011-23014046  
011-23015418

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

DP/807/CN/20

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

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

Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and [www.westernrailways.gov.in](http://www.westernrailways.gov.in)

For Principal Chief Materials Manager 0458

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

**UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY**

General Public is hereby informed that an one male person was found lying dead on the footpath of Mahila Park, Chandni Chowk, Delhi dated 19.11.2020. In this regard a vide DD No. 56A, dated 19.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification at Sabzi Mandi Mortuary, Delhi for 72 hrs. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unknown, S/O: Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age: About 35-40 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Build: Thin, Face: Long, Hair: Maximum Black and brown of head and black beard wearing: Black jeans Paint, pink checkdar shirt, meharoon banian and yellow sweater, Bare Footed.

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

SHO  
P.S. Kotwali, Delhi  
DP/740/N/2020 Ph: 011-23977100, 8750870121



# Markets march higher on vaccine progress

RIL, IT STOCKS SPARKLE

PTI | MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

PTI | MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Gold futures gain on spot demand

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for December delivery traded higher by ₹45, or 0.09 per cent, at ₹50,257 per 10 gram in a business turnover of 5,544 lots.

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

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

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

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

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

## Momentum of economic reforms will continue, FM assures industry

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Sitharaman said.

The financial sector is being professionalised and the

government will continue with disinvestment agenda, she added.

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

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

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

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

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

## India exports 11mn smartphones in Jan-Sep

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



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

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

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The prices of onions in onion prices is being attributed to the decrease in imports even as the fresh supply of onions from Rajasthan is in full flow to various parts of the country, including north India.

Traders said that in the last few days due to the increasing supply of locally-produced onions, the pace of onion imports has slowed down.

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



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

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PTI | NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI | SEOUL/NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

**SALE NOTICE**

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

Case Details	Asset Details	Reserve Price	EMD Amount (10% of reserve price)	Place of Auction	Date and Time of auction
225/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. VIKASH	Vehicle no- HR38V6041, Manu yr- 2015, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT BASE CRDI	68000/-	6800/-	Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM
CM (M)- 231/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. ANKIT BHADANA	Vehicle no- HR38V7561, Manu yr- 2015, Make and Model- HYUNDAI XCENT	85000/-	8500/-	Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
FAO 213/ 2015, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. KULVINDER SINGH	Vehicle no- NR- D13C064942, Chassis No- MA381819169179, Manu yr- 2012, Make and Model- Maruti Ertiga	200000/-	20000/-	Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
CM (M) 22/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. CHATURVEDI	Vehicle no- UP14FT7814, Manu yr- 2016, Make and Model- CHEVROLET SAIL UVA LT	68000/-	6800/-	Godara Yard, Khewat No. 166/1, Near Atul Kataria Chock, Behind Gyan Devi, School, Sec-17, Sukhrali, Gurugram-122022	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
229/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. MUNEEB KHAN	Vehicle no- UP16AH0220, Manu yr- 2016, Make and Model- FORD ENDEAVOR XLT	160000/-	16000/-	JCS Financial Services & Parking Service Plot No. 112, Old Rajpur Road Pk, Near Kishan Nagar, Kangpur Nagar, Pin 202034, Uttar Pradesh	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM
222/ 2020, ICICI Bank Ltd. Vs. RAHUL YADAV	Vehicle no- UP16T0642, Manu yr- 2014, Make and Model- TATA ACE HT	70000/-	7000/-	A.N. Motors 14 KM - Stone, Agra - Mathura Road, Runkata Agra- 282007	Dec 10, 2020, from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM

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

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

Terms of Sale

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

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

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

**SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE**

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

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

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

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

**SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE**

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

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

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

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

**SEARCH FOR MISSING**

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

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

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-24368639  
Sd/-  
Tel. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
DP/583/ON/2020 Ph. No.: 011-27787592, 27787593

**Appeal for Identification**

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

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

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

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

## BoneSay

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



## DOCYARD

DR KUSHAL BANERJEE

Consultant Homeopath



DR KALYAN BANERJEE'S CLINIC,  
NEW DELHI

## Take help from Homeopathy



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## WARMFOODS

**BROWN RICE:** Brown rice is rich in proteins, thiamine, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and potassium. For those trying to lose weight or those suffering from diabetes, it can prove a healthy staple given its low glycemic rating which helps reduce insulin spikes. It is rich in selenium which reduces the risk for developing common illnesses such as cancer, heart disease and arthritis. One cup of it provides 80 per cent of our daily manganese requirements. Manganese helps the body synthesise fats. It also benefits our nervous and reproductive systems. The naturally occurring oils are beneficial for the body as they help normalise cholesterol levels. The fiber content of brown rice keeps bowel function at its peak. It's its peak in digestion that makes it so much easier. It is the perfect addition to the daily diet for those seeking bowel regularity. In addition, it also makes the tummy feel full which translates to smaller meal portions.



## TEST YOUR LUNGEVITY

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Turn to breathing exercises

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

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

more than just antibiotics  
■ People age 65 and older are at a higher risk, but anyone can catch pneumonia at any age and therefore should consider getting vaccinated  
■ People who are considered healthy have a lower risk, but could still catch pneumonia  
■ If the condition is less severe, treatment may not include hospitalisation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

bacteria from the Mycobacterium family that can cause lung infections.

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

**Aspiration pneumonia:** When one ends up aspirating contents of the stomach into the lungs via breathing pipe — one gets — chemical pneumonitis.  
How is pneumonia diagnosed? When a person reaches a doctor/hospital with above mentioned symptoms and after clinical examination pneumonia is suspected; X-ray of the chest is done to diagnose pneumonia. At times a CT scan of the chest is necessary to see the extent of the infection. Sending sputum for culture test helps in deciding the causative factor of pneumonia.

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

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## DON'T MISS YOUR CHILD'S VACCINATION



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## DadiKa Kehna

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



While we all look forward to winters sitting in front of the fire, drinking tea and talking about everything under the sun; there are some annoying problems that crop up — dry skin and dandruff.

There are many products available in the market but a few home remedies work just as well with long lasting effect.

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

with warm water the next morning. One can do this on the face — the results are amazing.

For cracked heels mix beeswax and mustard oil by heating them together in equal parts. Pour it into a container.

Let it cool. Apply over the cracked heels. Wear socks. Wash feet the next morning. Repeat till you get smooth heels.

Dandruff is another winter problem that many face. Mix orange peel powder and coconut oil to make a mask. Apply this on the scalp. Leave it overnight or at least for an hour. Wash off with shampoo. Do this thrice a week till dandruff disappears.



## Ultrasound is key

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

Nowadays, compact ultrasound machines are increasingly being used to diagnose, monitor and manage patients in ICU, emergency wards and other inpatient services. For patients diagnosed with COVID-19 infection, it is an excellent adjunct tool for performing comprehensive head-to-toe clinical study & is an ideal device for bedside examination of patients in isolation wards.

COVID-19 primarily attacks the lung in the initial stages of the disease and it can also have significant cardiac manifestations in the later stages of the disease.

So, lung ultrasound and focused echocardiography has the potential to aid the diagnosis and management of patients with COVID-19 infection.

Moreover, the patients infected with COVID-19 require airway management, or venous access under ultrasound guidance (to administer essential fluids & medications), or some patients in shock or trauma needs a proper shock assessment where ultrasound plays a vital role in clinical evaluation process.

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

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

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

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

## INBRIEF

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

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

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

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

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



## TrendSlazer

### Sanjana to star opposite Aditya

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

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



**'The beauty is Rajkumar (Rao) has never lost his humility and generosity that he always had as an actor. He has remained that same person. What has changed is that Rajkumar has become really popular. I think the success has brought with it some limitations. But his success makes me happy. I feel like a happy parent.'**

—Hansal Mehta

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

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

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

### Swift wins 'Artist of the Year' at AMAs

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

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

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



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

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

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

# BAFTA comes to India

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



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

progression and network globally with people who can influence their careers.

The programme is a new inter-

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

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

"BAFTA is uniquely placed to facilitate creative partnerships

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

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

The initiative will showcase and support emerging stars of

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

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

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

—IANS

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

## FROM STAGE TO SCREEN

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

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

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



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



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

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

"This digital edition has been months

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

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

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

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

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

Sumeet recalls his defining moment



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

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

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

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

—IANS

## Dhoom 2 turns 14



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



