

**WORLD 7**  
ARMENIA, AZERBAIJAN AGREE ON  
CEASEFIRE IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

**MONEY 8**  
HEALTHY Q2 EXPECTATIONS  
TO KEEP SENTIMENTS HIGH

**SPORT 10**  
KKR BEAT KXIP  
IN IPL THRILLER



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**USUAL SUSPECTS**  
SWAPAN DASGUPTA

## Free & fair polls seem impossible in Bengal

The move away from one-party dominance that took place after the general election of 1967 has meant that nearly all political parties have experienced spells in the Opposition, both nationally and at the regional level. Being the ruling party involves a distinct experience for its members. Apart from normal issues of governance that preoccupies Ministers and a few others, the membership is preoccupied with securing posts that ensures a share of the power the party has secured in Government. This ranges from getting on to the personal staff of Ministers and legislators, securing appointments to Government bodies which can embellish visiting cards and generally basking in reflected glory. The Opposition experience is altogether different. A party in Opposition doesn't have too much to do out of way of patronage. There are, of course, the usual quota of appointments in the personal staff of the MPs and MLAs who managed to get elected. But these are few in number and usually taken up those who have been with a politician for long and acquired his/her trust and demonstrated loyalty. Most of the other active members rush to secure party posts of one description or another. I have often been struck by the sheer desperation of people to find a place — however meaningless — in the party's organisational wing. More than anything else it adds to their self-esteem and makes them feel extremely relevant in their own localities. It makes them wait for the next election, when there is another shy at winning power, more bearable. Opposition politics also involves an additional experience that may not be all that forthcoming when in Government: street politics. Mobilising people for demonstrations and dharnas against the ruling party is the bread and butter of Opposition politics. The belief is that unless an Opposition party is seen to be active on the streets, it will lose its relevance. The conviction may not hold good in an age of 24x7 television and social media. But it would be fair to say that this is conventional wisdom. Parties often act according to this belief. A natural concomitant of street politics is frequent encounters with the local police at dharnas and demonstrations. Some of these encounters can be good humoured and experienced policemen know that the Opposition can be 'managed' through some accommodation. However, inescapably, no agreement is possible either because the demands are so outrageous or because the police are under instruction from the 'top' to come down hard on the Opposition. Ironically, even this serves a purpose. I know of party apparatchiks who insist that a member is unworthy of assuming responsibilities unless they have experienced lathi blows on the streets. In their world, cerebral politics has no relevance in a political party. This narration of the political culture that prevails in Indian politics is useful to bear in mind when assessing the widespread disturbances in Kolkata on October 8. The State Yuva Morcha of the BJP had given a call for a mass march on Nabanna, the seat of the West Bengal Government, located just across the second Howrah bridge. Street politics has a long pedigree in Bengal, having been practised at different point by the Left, the Congress and the Trinamool Congress. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made her political mark through street agitations and even now she is most comfortable leading marches or encouraging her party members to fight the Opposition on the streets. The BJP is a relative newcomer to this culture of street protests in Bengal, but in a very short span of time it has learnt the ropes. There is another reason why the State BJP feels the need to be visible on the streets. The local electronic and print media is so tightly in the grip of the ruling dispensation in Kolkata that to attract widespread attention to its challenge to Mamata Banerjee, it has to do things that are dramatic and spectacular. The march on the Government headquarters was precisely such an exercise. However, to me, a more important question centres on the reaction of the State Government to this street politics. Last Thursday, Mamata Banerjee declared war. She shut the headquarters down, allegedly for fumigation purposes, and instructed the police that the demonstrators must be dealt with as harshly as possible. In simple language it meant that the police were under instructions to beat the BJP workers black and blue and break up every gathering. The police followed these instructions faithfully, closed down important arterial roads and showed no tact or restraint in breaking up the four major gatherings in different parts of the city. The beatings were crude and there are video shots of a policeman mercilessly thrashing an elderly man as he tried to shield two children. There is disturbing footage of a Sikh security guard of a politician having his turban pulled off. And there are hospital shots of people with horrible bruises on their backs and legs. As someone who witnessed a section of the protest march, I can say with certainty that the use of force was disproportionate and aimed almost entirely at teaching the BJP a lesson. I fear the results will be quite the opposite. What the administration's over-reaction has done is made the BJP raise the ante. There was little prospect that the Assembly election in summer 2021 would be a gentlemanly affair. The spate of political murders and the attacks on BJP leaders has ruled that out. After last Thursday, there is compelling evidence that Mamata Banerjee is over-dependent on the police and administration to exercise political control. This will trigger an appropriate BJP response in the coming days. But more important, she has signalled to her party faithful that their political battle with the BJP will have the full backing of the Government machinery. If this pattern persists, the prospects of a free and fair poll in 2021 will be seriously jeopardised.

# Finish rape probe in 2 months: MHA

Advisory to States/UTs on crime against women: Dying declaration can't be discarded

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid criticism of the Uttar Pradesh Police for its handling of the Hathras case, the Union Home Ministry on Saturday issued a fresh advisory to States and UTs on the mandatory action to be taken in cases of crimes against women.



Activists hold placards during a protest demanding justice for the 19-year-old Dalit woman, who died after four men allegedly gangraped and assaulted her last month, at Ambedkar Bhawan in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

It outlined that the probe in rape cases should be completed within two months, that the dying declaration of a victim can't be discarded merely because it has not been recorded by a Magistrate and that there has to be a mandatory medical examination, with the individual's consent, by a qualified medical professional within 24 hours of receipt of information of such a crime.

The detailed three-page advisory of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) also said there should be compulsory registration of an FIR in case of a cognisable offence under the CrPC, and any failure of police to adhere to laid down rules does not augur well for the delivery of justice.

The law also enables the police to register an FIR or a 'Zero FIR', in case the crime is committed outside the jurisdiction of police station, in the event of receipt of information on commission of a cognisable

offence, which includes cases of sexual assault on women, said the detailed MHA advisory.

"However, even with stringent provisions in law and several capacity building measures undertaken, any failure of police to adhere to these mandatory requirements may not augur well for the delivery of criminal justice in the country, especially in the context of women safety," said the advisory, adding that stringent action and investigation must be initiated against the officers responsible for the lapses in handling crimes against the women.

The MHA told the States that the Section 173 of CrPC

provides for completion of police investigation in relation to rape in two months and Section 164-A of CrPC provides that in rape or sexual assault investigation, the victim should be examined by a registered medical practitioner under consent within 24 hours from the time of receiving the information. The advisory said the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, provides that the statement, written or verbal by a person, who is dead, shall be treated as relevant fact in the investigation when the statement is made by a person as to the cause of his (or her) death or as to any of the circumstances of the transaction

which resulted in his (or her) death.

The advisory pointed out that the Supreme Court in a order dated January 7, 2020 said that "that a particular statement, when being offered as dying declaration and satisfies all the requirements of judicial scrutiny, cannot be discarded merely because it has not been recorded by a Magistrate or that the police officer did not obtain attestation by any person present at the time of making of the statement".

It is necessary to use the Sexual Assault Evidence

Collection (SAEC) kits in every case of sexual assault reported for which the Home Ministry has been regularly conducting training and Training of Trainers (TOT) programmes on procedure for collection, preservation and handling of forensic evidence for police and prosecutors and medical officers respectively.

In order to facilitate the State police to monitor compliance, the Home Ministry said, an online portal called Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO) for monitoring the

same has been available exclusively to law enforcement officers.

### CENTRAL GOVT ISSUES NOTIFICATION FOR CBI PROBE INTO HATHRAS

New Delhi: The Central Government has issued a notification for the CBI to take over probe into the alleged gangrape and death of a 19-year-old woman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Saturday. Detailed report on P4

## UP Govt to launch spl drive on women safety during Navratri

PREETAM SRIVASTAVA ■ LUCKNOW

As the season of festivals is approaching, the Uttar Pradesh Police on directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday announced it will carry out a special campaign on the safety of women and girls during the Navratri festival that will begin from October 17.

Additional Chief Secretary Home, Awinish Awasthi held

a meeting with top officials on the preparations for Durga Puja and Navratri. During the meeting he directed the officials concerned to ensure the safety of women and to follow the Covid-19 guidelines during festival season.

Awasthi said that a campaign for the empowerment of women will be organised from October 17 to October 25 in the State. The awareness campaign will aim to strengthen the safety of the women and

children, he said. He said under the directions of the Chief Minister a special police team will be deployed for the safety of women. Orders have also been issued to the officials in this regard.

Awasthi has directed the Anti-Romeo Squad to remain active at crowded and sensitive places. "The mere presence of police helps in controlling crimes," he said. Turn to Page 4

## Mamata has signalled to her party faithful that their political battle with the BJP will have the full backing of the Government machinery. If this pattern persists, the prospects of a free and fair poll in 2021 will be seriously jeopardised

either because the demands are so outrageous or because the police are under instruction from the 'top' to come down hard on the Opposition. Ironically, even this serves a purpose. I know of party apparatchiks who insist that a member is unworthy of assuming responsibilities unless they have experienced lathi blows on the streets. In their world, cerebral politics has no relevance in a political party. This narration of the political culture that prevails in Indian politics is useful to bear in mind when assessing the widespread disturbances in Kolkata on October 8. The State Yuva Morcha of the BJP had given a call for a mass march on Nabanna, the seat of the West Bengal Government, located just across the second Howrah bridge. Street politics has a long pedigree in Bengal, having been practised at different point by the Left, the Congress and the Trinamool Congress. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made her political mark through street agitations and even now she is most comfortable leading marches or encouraging her party members to fight the Opposition on the streets. The BJP is a relative newcomer to this culture of street protests in Bengal, but in a very short span of time it has learnt the ropes. There is another reason why the State BJP feels the need to be visible on the streets. The local electronic and print media is so tightly in the grip of the ruling dispensation in Kolkata that to attract widespread attention to its challenge to Mamata Banerjee, it has to do things that are dramatic and spectacular. The march on the Government headquarters was precisely such an exercise. However, to me, a more important question centres on the reaction of the State Government to this street politics. Last Thursday, Mamata Banerjee declared war. She shut the headquarters down, allegedly for fumigation purposes, and instructed the police that the demonstrators must be dealt with as harshly as possible. In simple language it meant that the police were under instructions to beat the BJP workers black and blue and break up every gathering. The police followed these instructions faithfully, closed down important arterial roads and showed no tact or restraint in breaking up the four major gatherings in different parts of the city. The beatings were crude and there are video shots of a policeman mercilessly thrashing an elderly man as he tried to shield two children. There is disturbing footage of a Sikh security guard of a politician having his turban pulled off. And there are hospital shots of people with horrible bruises on their backs and legs. As someone who witnessed a section of the protest march, I can say with certainty that the use of force was disproportionate and aimed almost entirely at teaching the BJP a lesson. I fear the results will be quite the opposite. What the administration's over-reaction has done is made the BJP raise the ante. There was little prospect that the Assembly election in summer 2021 would be a gentlemanly affair. The spate of political murders and the attacks on BJP leaders has ruled that out. After last Thursday, there is compelling evidence that Mamata Banerjee is over-dependent on the police and administration to exercise political control. This will trigger an appropriate BJP response in the coming days. But more important, she has signalled to her party faithful that their political battle with the BJP will have the full backing of the Government machinery. If this pattern persists, the prospects of a free and fair poll in 2021 will be seriously jeopardised.

## Protesting family cremate body of slain priest after Raj assures aid

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a day-long protest with the slain priest Babul Vaishnav's dead body, his family finally performed his last rites after two days on Saturday when the Rajasthan Government assured it of ₹10 lakh financial assistance, a Government job and a house under PM Awas Yojana.

Taking to micro-blogging site Twitter, BJP MP Kirori Lal Meena announced that the aggrieved family has ended the protest and agreed to cremate his body after Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot announced a compensation of ₹10 lakh, job for a family member and a house under the PM Awas Yojana. The local SHO was transferred from the area, he added.

Earlier, the family had refused to perform the last rites of the victim priest until their demands of ₹50 lakh and a Government job for a family member were met by the Rajasthan Government. Turn to Page 4

## India's daily recoveries surpass fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seeking to send a positive signal amid all-round despair due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Centre on Saturday showcased how for the second consecutive day after a month India's active Covid-19 cases remained below the 9-lakh mark as the number of recoveries continued to surpass the fresh infections' tally.

There are 8,83,185 active cases of Covid-19 which constitute merely 12.65 per cent of the total cases of the country, the Ministry said, adding these are nearly 1/8th of the total cases in the country.

In the last 24 hours, 82,753 patients recovered while there were 73,272 fresh infections. The total Covid-19 recoveries stand at 59,88,822 now while India's Covid-19 caseload mounted to 69,79,423 by early Saturday. The death toll climbed to 1,07,416 with 926 people succumbing to the disease, as per the Centre's data.

"For the second day after the active cases dropped below the 9-lakh mark after a month, the progressive decline continues," it said adding that the national Covid-19 recovery rate has progressed to 85.81 per cent.

As many as 18 States and Union Territories have recorded recovery rates more than the national average, said the Ministry.

"This is the result of a collaborative action by States and UTs under the Centre's strategy of comprehensive testing, tracking, quick hospitalisation and adherence to the standard

treatment protocol," it said.

As many as 76 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States and UTs namely Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Delhi, West Bengal and Chhattisgarh, the Ministry added. Maharashtra continues

to contribute the maximum with more than 17,000 single-day recoveries.

The second-most-affected country by active and total cases, and third by fatality, India's coronavirus cases has crossed over 70 lakh on Saturday. India now accounts for 10.84 per cent of all active cases globally.

## Total soars to whopping 70 lakh

**Covid-19 IN INDIA**  
**TOTAL**  
CASES: 70,37,766  
DEATHS: 1,08,048  
RECOVERED: 60,46,113  
ACTIVE: 8,82,542

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	15,06,018	39,732	12,29,339
Andhra Pradesh	7,50,517	6,194	6,97,699
Karnataka	7,00,786	9,891	5,69,947
Tamil Nadu	6,51,370	10,187	5,97,033
Uttar Pradesh	4,33,712	6,353	3,87,149
Delhi	3,06,559	5,740	2,78,812
West Bengal	2,91,194	5,563	2,55,838
Kerala	2,79,856	979	1,82,874
Odisha	2,49,693	1,059	2,24,273
Telangana	2,10,346	1,208	1,83,025
Bihar	1,94,966	944	1,83,007
Assam	1,93,387	811	1,63,352
Rajasthan	1,54,785	1,621	1,31,766
Gujarat	1,50,414	3,560	1,30,997
Madhya Pradesh	1,45,245	2,599	1,27,034
Haryana	1,41,090	1,572	1,28,841



## China has 60K soldiers along LAC: Pompeo

### Talks won't make China change its aggressive stance: US NSA

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

China has amassed 60,000 troops on India's northern border, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said as he hit out at Beijing for its "bad behaviour" and the threats it poses to the Quad countries. US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said China has attempted to "seize" control of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India by force as part of its territorial aggression. The foreign ministers from the Indo-Pacific nations known as the Quad group - the US, Japan, India and Australia - met in Tokyo on Tuesday in what was their first in-person talks



since the coronavirus pandemic began. The meeting took place against the backdrop of China's aggressive military behaviour in the Indo-Pacific, South China Sea and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. "The Indians are seeing 60,000 Chinese soldiers on their northern border," Pompeo told The Guy Benson Show in an interview on Friday after his return from Tokyo wherein he attended the second Quad ministerial with his counterparts from India, Japan and Australia. "They see, the people of their (Quad) nations understanding that we all slept on this for too long. For decades, the West allowed the Chinese Communist Party to walk all over us. The previous administration bent a knee, too often allowed China to steal our intellectual properties and the millions of jobs that came along with it. They see that in their country too," he said in the interview. "CCP's (Chinese Communist Party) territorial aggression is also apparent on its Indian border where China has attempted to seize control of the Line of Actual Control by force," US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said in a remark on China early this week in Utah. The Chinese territorial aggression is also true in the Taiwan Strait where the PLA (People's Liberation Army) Navy and Air Force continue to conduct threatening military drills, O'Brien said. "Beijing's signature international development programme, One Belt One Road (OBOR), involves impoverished companies taking on opaque and unsustainable Chinese loans to pay Chinese firms employing Chinese labourers to build their infrastructure," he said. Turn to Page 4

## Delhi's air likely to improve today

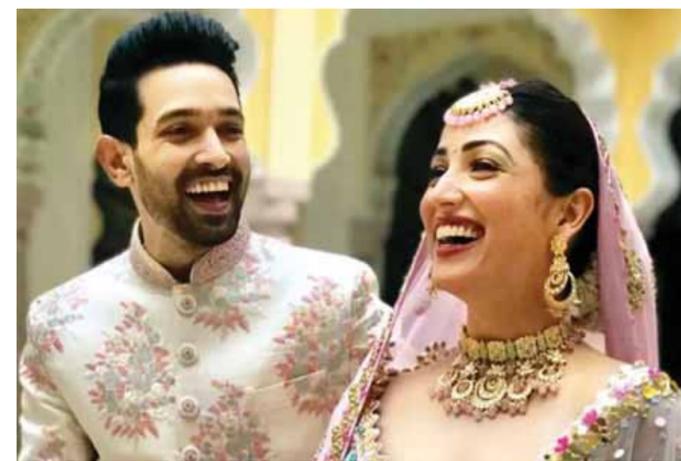
STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The national Capital's air quality was recorded in the higher end of the "moderate" category on Saturday, but a Government forecasting agency said it is likely to improve marginally on October 11. The city's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 197, which falls in the higher end of the "moderate" category. It was in "poor" category at 204 on Friday. The Ministry of earth sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said PM 2.5 is the lead pollutant in Saturday's AQI and is likely to improve to the "moderate" category by Sunday. "The overall Delhi AQI is in the higher end of 'moderate' and at the edge of the 'poor' category, with PM 2.5 as the lead pollutant," SAFAR said.

It said the AQI is forecast to marginally improve but remain in the 'moderate' category for Sunday while further AQI is forecast to improve by October 12, which will also remain in the moderate category. It said the low pressure formed over the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify to depression and move west-northwestwards and influence the circulations in the north and central India. "A shift in Delhi surface wind direction, northwesterly to southeasterly by October 12 is forecast. This could influence air quality positively in the coming week," it said. Due to stubble burning around Punjab, Haryana, and neighbouring border regions, the fire count was found at 253 on Saturday, SAFAR said.

HOME THEATRE

# Peppy and fun



**GINNY WEDS SUNNY**  
Netflix  
\*ing: Yami Gautam, Vikrant Massey, Suhail Nayyar, Rajiv Gupta, Ayesha Raza Mishra  
Rated: 5.5/10

If one is looking for a movie that is not thought provoking or makes one to an introspection, then *Ginny Weds Sunny* is the perfect film to watch. Sit back and enjoy the lighter moments that it touches upon — Punjabi people who believe that there are only two things that they have to call their own — emotions and *paneer*. Directed by debutant Puneet Khanna, *Ginny Weds Sunny* is sweet, peppy and fun for most of the time. Other times, there is confusion — whom to marry. Definitely a big problem for our hero played by Vikrant Massey (Sunny) who is desperate to get married so that he can open his restaurant. Go figure this one out and unravel it. But then, the film is set in Delhi-NCR. People living here will understand the dilemma, our protagonists face. While the film has a few drawbacks, there are plenty of laughs. Take this for example. Ginny's real name is Princess Simran — not that she is from the royal

family. But they are Punjabis and what more can be expected of them Or the Jonty Weds Rimpji sign or the fun interaction between Rajiv Gupta (Sunny's father) and Ayesha Raza Mishra (Ginny's mother). Their dialogues are funny and entertaining. Unfortunately, their screen presence is limited and hence one doesn't get to see much of their rather great performance here. Massey and Gautam are brilliant as well. Though Ginny's character lacks the conviction she wants to portray. She says she doesn't need a man in her life, but she wants to get married. She gets angry when she feels that Sunny has betrayed her, yet when he is all set to marry another, she wants to marry him. And which man spends an entire day with a woman, when he is getting married to another the next day? But then the title of the movie gives the entire plot away. No guesses what happens in the end despite the twists and turns. The soundtracks and the songs are peppy and one will hum them for the next few weeks and Mika and Badshah's *Sawan Mein Lag Gayi Aag* is bound to be played by almost all DJs in the coming weeks. Overall, the movie is a light entertainment.

— Shalini Sakseena

# Nice, sweet & funny

**HUBIE HALLOWEEN**  
Netflix  
\*ing: Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Julie Bowen, Ray Liotta, Rob Schneider, June Squibb  
Rated: 5/10

Since Halloween is an alien concept for us here in India, we really don't understand what the hullabaloo is all about. But that doesn't mean we don't understand how big this is world over with some of the witchery magic ending up in our backyard. Most of us have grown up listening to stories about how people were executed between 15th and 18th centuries. We have also heard of Salem, Massachusetts, US, a town for its witch trials. Now, bring the two together and one has *Hubie Halloween* even though it is not one till October 31. Why would the makers want to release the movie at least three weeks in

advance, makes one scratch one's head. The sad part is that the movie is sad for the most part. Imagine a grown 40-something man, still continues to be bullied and not just by people his age but kids too. Why? Because of his way of talking or because he is too nice or because he gets spooked easily? Apparently, it is all three. But if one can get past this, *Hubie Halloween* is a nice, sweet and funny film to watch. Sandler with his funny accent, sometimes difficult to follow what he is saying is entertaining as he rides through the Salem streets ducking things that are thrown at him by people and kids alike. For most part, one will end laughing till something happens to make you cringe. But these are far between and one can enjoy Sandler's goofiness and part stupidity. While nothing here is original, nobody said that stupidity can't be funny and make one laugh.

— Shalini Sakseena



# Plan Your Day



Amazon Prime Video on October 9 announced a brand new slate of nine highly-anticipated movies that will premiere directly on the streaming service. Spanning five Indian languages, the diverse line-up features titles such as *Coolaie No 1* starring Varun Dhawan (*Judwa 2*, *Street Dancer 3D*) and Sara Ali Khan (*Simmba*), *Chhalaang* starring Rajkummar Rao (*Trapped*, *Stree*) and Nushrat Bharucha (*Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti*), *Durgavati* starring Bhumi Pednekar (*Shubh Mangal Savdhaan*, *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*), *Bheema Sena Nala Maharaja* (Kannada) starring Aravinnd Iyer, *Middle Class Melodies* (Telugu) starring Anand Devarakonda, *Maara* (Tamil) starring R Madhavan, and *Manne Number 13* (Kannada) starring Varsha Bollamma (*Bigil*), Chetan Gandharva (*Melody*) along with previously announced Zakariya Mohammed's *Hala! Love Story* (Malayalam) and Suriya starrer *Soorara! Pottru* (Tamil). The movies will premiere exclusively on Prime Video within 2020 and will be available in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide. The new slate follows the successful launch of the first wave of direct-to-service premieres of 10 films across five languages, which led to Amazon Prime Video expanding its footprint in India with viewership for these movies coming from over 4000 cities and towns, across the country. Viewership titles in languages such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam received more than 50 percent viewership from customers outside the home states, with customers from Lucknow, Kolkata, Pune and beyond streaming *Penguin*, *Ponmagal Vandhal*, *Law*, *French Biriyani*, *Sufiyum Sujatayum*, *CU Soon V* and *Nishabdham*. The movies were also streamed and enjoyed by TV audiences in 180 countries and territories, allowing Indian filmmakers to reach a wider audience through Prime Video's global presence. Hindi titles *Gulabo Sitabo* & *Shakuntala Devi* emerged as the two most watched movies since the launch of Prime Video in India. *Gulabo Sitabo* and *Shakuntala Devi* were also the most watched Hindi movie on Prime Video globally! "Gripping content transcends geographical boundaries. The audience are always on the look-out for great entertainment, and good content will always find an audience. The resounding success of our first wave of direct-to-service movie premieres is a testament to that. This further reinforces our commitment to offering our customers a selection of riveting movies, cinematically produced, across a wide range of genres and languages," Vijay Subramaniam, Director and Head, Content, Amazon Prime Video, India, said.

# 'Proud of what I have achieved thus far'

KRITI VERMA, a GST Inspector with Mumbai who was last seen in *Bigg Boss 12* and given the Young Achiever Award by Dadasaheb Phalke Film Foundation Award, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA how she ended up on TV, her association with #vocalforlocal and upcoming projects

**How did you get into TV?**  
I love watching the *Roadies Xtreme* show. My job in Mumbai meant that I was able to go for an audition with my friend. Everyone, since I was a child, would tell me that I exuded confidence. I am also health conscious and work out but am not a fitness freak. People think that *Roadies* is all about being fit but this is not the case. One just has to follow a healthy lifestyle. What the show is looking for is how confident one is and the 360-degree dimensional personality. This made me an ideal candidate for the show.  
**From a GST Officer to Bigg Boss 12. How did that happen?**  
*Bigg Boss 12* was offered to me after *Roadies Xtreme*. In that show, I was the most popular contestant. That is how the *Bigg Boss* team contacted me. I saw no reason to turn it down. After all, it is a Salman Khan show. I am sure there are very few people who would turn down the opportunity to be part of a show where he is the host.  
**How have the two shows changed your life?**  
The shows have definitely changed my life for the better. Before I was on TV, I was a GST officer and the girl next door. People in the neighbourhood don't recognise you apart from those with whom you work. After these two shows, people on the street stop and acknowledge me and greet me and shower so much love and warmth sometimes it is overwhelming. I get gifts from people (fans).  
**Was it tough to be in front of the camera for the first time?**  
It was not that tough. I have always been a confident person. I used to participate in extra-curricular activities in school. I represented India in Pakistan at the International Theatre and Dance Festival. Facing the camera was not as challenging.  
**You are a GST officer and**



**Bigg Boss as a show is different. Was it tough to perform for the House and yet be within the ambit fit for an Inspector?**  
My being a GST Inspector actually helped me when I was in the House. I was clear when I entered the show that I would not compromise on the reputation that I have to maintain because I am a Government servant primarily. I have to at all times uphold my dignity and dignity of my

office. The GST was introduced in India right before I entered *Roadies Xtreme*. Because of that people came to know more about GST, the rules and how it works. There was an article in a newspaper that said that I have taken GST on a national level. This made me proud.  
**What was your family's reaction when you told them you would be on TV?**  
Actually, my family has always been supportive of

whatever I have wanted to do. They were proud when I became a GST Inspector. Almost 32 lakh people took this exam and only 3,000 were chosen. I was one of them. My parents were thrilled for me. Doing a TV show was a feather in cap. Due to my popularity, people now recognise my parents too. They are happy that I have met Salman Khan and Rannvijay Singh.  
**Do your colleagues see you in a different light now?**  
I have not changed. I am the same with my friends. I am a grounded person. But people who don't know me, think that I am a celebrity. But that is not the case. Of course, fans send me gifts or just land up to get a selfie at the office address. People at the office smile and look at me a bit differently.  
**Is it difficult to do your job when you are out in the field?**  
Sometimes, it does. It does become difficult to do the work that I am supposed to do. *Bigg Boss* as a format is so different for the other shows on TV. Also, it is not always possible to get leave to be on TV. My department has been very kind to me but it is not fair to keep asking for leave all the time. I try to either push the work over the weekend or do it after office hours.  
**How did you get associated with #vocalforlocal?**  
I take pride in being an Indian. I support Indian products and services. This initiative is taking things on a much larger platform to the public. This is a great app and each Indian must subscribe to it.  
**Are there any upcoming projects?**  
I have signed a film as a lead. The shoot was to begin in April but now it has been postponed for November-December. I have done a web series as well. There is a music video that I am part of. The lockdown has put things on a slow burner but things will get back on track soon.

# Sambhavna is back

After a hiatus, SAMBHAVNA SETH is back on TV with &TV's *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari*. She speaks with MUSBA HASHMI about her role, YouTube channel and how has her life changed after she started vlogging

She is known for her straightforward attitude and doesn't believe in sugar coating things at all. Not to mention her passion towards whatever work she takes up, be it playing her true self in *Bigg Boss* or Shah Turkan in *Razia Sultan* or Mahua in *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari* of late. Meet Sambhavna Seth, an actor, dancer and also a vlogger, who is creating waves on social media with her YouTube channel, Sambhavna Seth Entertainment, that has recently reached the 1M milestone. Ask Seth of what attracted her to play Mahua and she is quick to reply — the quirkiness and lots of shades in the character. "Mahua is neither a negative nor a positive character. There are many shades to it. This was one of the reasons that I said yes to the role. Also I haven't done a comedy show before, so I got to do something different in this show. The character does have grey shades but then there's a reason behind it, otherwise Mahua is a very good and loving person," she tells you. The role, she says, gave her space to not just act but also show her groovy moves with a pinch of comedy. "I have only played out and out negative roles till date. Mahua was something different and I was very excited to play it," she adds. During *Corona*, this is Seth's first outing and her experience, she says, has been good. "One can't just stay cooped up in his house. Yes, things are not too good, but then we don't have an option. *Corona* is for real and it can happen to anyone anywhere. In such a situation, there are only two options — one, live with the constant fear of catching infection and two, take precautions and face things. But this doesn't mean one has to go out for no reason. We have to accept the fact that this virus is not going anywhere till the mid of 2021 at least. Hence, we can't live with the constant fear. Also, work is just as important," Seth explains. Apart from her work in the industry, what earned Seth much love and fame is vlogging. So much so that she is often stopped by her fans on road to click a picture or two. "I call myself an accidental vlogger. Vlogging was not on my cards at all, it was my husband Avinash, who encouraged me to take this up. And once I stepped into this, there was no

**I call myself an accidental vlogger. Vlogging was not on my cards at all, it was my husband Avinash who encouraged me to take this up. And once I stepped into this, there was no looking back. It has become a hobby now**



looking back. It has become a hobby now," she tells you. It is because of vlogging, she says, that she is able to showcase her true self and change people's perspective towards her. "I was misunderstood for all these years. It was only when I started vlogging that I was able to show people how actually Sambhavna is. The audience got to know about the real me. The way people perceived I was, did bother me a lot. It felt bad when people said something negative about me," she says. While vlogging is not everyone's cup of tea, Seth feels that it is not that difficult. However everything has its pros and cons. "If you are showing your true self in your vlogs than vlogging is not tough. The challenge comes in when people try to act differently in front of the camera. But yes, now people come to my house and at my shoots, even during the pandemic I have people waiting outside my building. It becomes a bit difficult to stop them and ask them not to. People recognise me whenever I am out on the road and come to meet me. It does feel that our lives are quite public but then it's fine. It is because of their love that I am here. And it is much better from the days when people didn't know me and spoke rubbish about me. Now they atleast know me and love me for who I am," she says. She tells you that out of dancing, acting and vlogging, dancing comes naturally to her and vlogging is where her heart is. "I am a born dancer. I can dance with my eyes closed. Dancing comes easy to me. Even on the sets of *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari*, there was no assigned choreographer. They just played the song and I started dancing. As far as acting is concerned, it doesn't come naturally to me, but if others can do it, I can do it too. A dancer can definitely be a good actor, but an actor is not always a good dancer. And vlogging is something very new to me, but I enjoy doing it. I switch on the camera and start talking, that is all. So both dancing and vlogging actually come naturally to me," she tells you. For all those aspiring vloggers, Seth has a piece of advice to share. "Be true to your self. Don't imitate others, it won't help you in the long run. Come up with your original content. Be inspired from popular vloggers but don't become one if you don't want it from all your heart," she tells you.

# Sisodia reviews Deshbhakti curriculum, focuses on simple learning

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

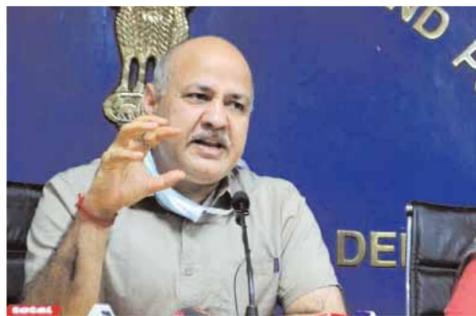
Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia reviewed the content of Deshbhakti curriculum and emphasised that the proposed learning goals should be simple and clear enough for the parents to understand and be an active participant in their child's learning.

The Deputy Chief Minister chaired the third joint review meeting of the board and new

curriculum committee on Saturday to take stock of the progress so far.

The Curriculum and board committees were constituted in July 2020 to recommend new curriculum for children upto the age of 14 years and setting up of Delhi Examination Board. Both committees are likely to submit their recommendations by mid November.

The work on introducing the Deshbhakti curriculum started last year after the announcement of Chief



Minister Arvind Kejriwal. Explaining the key features of Deshbhakti, Sisodia said that assessment would be the basis of Deshbhakti Curriculum.

"Issues like inclusiveness, gender, different forms of discrimination, integrity, care for public property and natural resources, etc would be the key to enable the child to become true Deshbhakt," he said.

Moving further, the new curriculum committee is mandated to recommend new cur-

riculum for children below 14 years presented the curricular design for enabling children in the age group of 3-8 years with diversity of knowledge, competencies, values and attitudes.

Along the similar lines, the committee will recommend curriculum for children in the age group of 8-11 and 11-14 as well, the government said in a statement.

Sisodia appreciated the approach of the Curriculum Committee which seeks to

connect the curriculum with real life situations.

The deputy chief minister said "During the parent teacher meetings, I have often seen teachers and parents talking only about the subjects and marks obtained by the students. Through our new curriculum and assessment practice, the conversation between the parents and teachers should shift to overall growth of the child".

Sisodia said, "Assessment is an integral part of Curriculum. Learning does not happen only

inside the schools; a child learns from his/her environment outside school also. A robust assessment system should capture every aspect of a child's growth".

Sisodia asked the committee members to create tools for parents also by which they can see the progress of their child.

He appreciated the efforts of the committee members and said that their work is very critical in transforming the education system of Delhi.

## Anti-dengue campaign enters sixth week

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Following huge participation from the children of Delhi in the fifth week of the 10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute anti-dengue campaign has entered into its sixth week.

The campaign this week seeks to encourage families to come together to defeat dengue by inspecting their houses every Sunday for 10 minutes for stagnant clean water and draining it.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said "We will stop the breeding of dengue mosquitoes with active participation and protect our family and all of Delhi from dengue," he added.

Last week, Kejriwal tweeted, "Delhi's campaign against dengue continues. Today, on the fifth Sunday of the campaign, I replaced the water at home and eliminated the possibility of breeding of dengue mosquitoes. I urge everyone to be a part of this campaign every Sunday. #10Hafte10Baje10MinuteHarRavivaar,DengueParVaar."

This year, the Delhi government has also launched a Dengue helpline - 01123300012 and WhatsApp helpline - 8595920530 to assist the general public with dengue.

## SDMC Mayor: AAP Govt playing politics over health trade licence

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Mayor of South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) Anamika said that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is playing politics over the issue of health trade license as it is very necessary to issue such license to ensure safety and security of people visiting eateries in the city.

The statement came a day after AAP alleged the Corporations of non-corporation over the issue. "The allegation of corruption in granting license is baseless as the whole process of granting license is online and the applicant does not need to visit physically to Corporation offices," she said.

Mayor said that according to the provision of DMC act 1957, license is issued under proper rules and guild lines to eating establishment under jurisdiction of SDMC.

## Shift Covid patients from Hindu Rao to Govt hospitals: Jain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the resident doctors of the north Corporation run Hindu Rao Hospital went on a "symbolic indefinite strike" over non-payment of their due salaries for the last three months, the Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain on Saturday ordered shifting of all coronavirus patients from Hindu

Rao to its own hospitals. Jain said that the MCD must release the salaries of the doctors and staff of these hospitals.

"If the Corporation is unable to pay then it should hand over hospitals to the Delhi government. They can go to any of the government hospitals treating Covid-19 patients. There are currently 20 COVID patients admitted to

Hindurao and they will be shifted to the Delhi government hospitals by Sunday," he said.

Jain said, "The positive cases were 2807 and around 50000 tests were conducted yesterday. The positivity ratio is 5.82 per cent. There were 39 deaths and 3098 people were discharged from the hospitals yesterday. The net positive cases in Delhi are less than

22000, which were 32000 at one point."

"I want to request the MCD to pay the salaries of the MCD as soon as possible and if the North MCD cannot pay the salaries of Kasturba Gandhi Hospital and Hindu Rao hospital, it can handover these hospitals under the Delhi government. We will run these hospitals better than them and release all the salaries to the

staff," he said.

BJP is doing politics over the issue, they earn through several taxes, and if they can't run their hospitals, then they should hand them over to the Delhi government," Jain said.

Hindu Rao Hospital is the largest municipal hospital in Delhi with 900 beds, and is currently a dedicated COVID-19 facility.

## Wanted criminal with ₹10,000 award arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ GURUGRAM

The Crime Investigation Agency of the Haryana Police has nabbed a wanted criminal, carrying a reward of Rs 10,000, from Metro Vihar Phase-1, Holambi Kalan in New Delhi on Thursday.

A police spokesperson said on Friday, the arrested accused had been identified as Prabhat Kumar alias Sonu alias Shakal alias Bengali.

The dreaded criminals were involved in more than two dozen cases of attempt to murder, theft, robbery, house trespass and Arms Act which he had committed in Delhi and NCR region for the past 7 years.

The Gurugram police had announced a cash reward of Rs 10,000 on his head, in a case of theft which the accused had committed at Sushant Lok area in 2013 since then he was absconding.

A case in this regard had been filed at the Sushant Lok police station in 2013.

A team of the crime

branch sector-40 of the district police nabbed the accused following a tip-off.

ACP (crime) Preet Pal Sangwan informed the media on Friday that the police will seek police custody of the accused for further questioning.

"During preliminary interrogation, the accused confessed involvement into the two dozens of cases which he had committed in the past 7 years. To avoid police arrest the accused had changed his name around 11 times," Sangwan said, adding that the culprit was also a bed element of the Morya Enclave, Pitampura police station of Delhi.

He was also included in the most wanted criminal list of the Gurugram police since 2014, he said.

"We will seek police custody of the accused from the court for further questioning. During the remand period we will gather more information about his accomplice. Further investigation is on," Sangwan added.

## Shifting of Covid patients Jain's political ploy, says Jai Prakash

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Responding to charges by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), Mayor of North Delhi Jai Prakash said that the Health Minister of Delhi Government Satyendra Jain is doing politics by saying that Covid patients admitted in Hindu Rao Hospital will be shifted to Delhi Government hospitals.

DDMA has instructed the North Delhi Municipal Corporation via phone to transfer the patients to Delhi Government hospitals in view of the low number of patients at Hindurao Hospital and restore normal services at Hindurao Hospital," he said.

Mayor said that ever since the Hindu Rao Hospital has been converted into a Covid-19 hospital, till date the Delhi government has not given a single penny for the Hindu Rao Hospital. He said that Corporation officials also said in a meeting held with the Delhi Disaster Management Authority that the number of Corona patients in Hindu Rao Hospital is very less.

Jai Prakash further said that the Delhi government wants to financially cripple the corporation by continuously cutting the funds of the Corporation or by not giving the outstanding funds.

## 2 stab tea shop worker after he refused to give them cigarette

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 24 year old, tea shop worker was stabbed allegedly by two in southeast Delhi's Kalindi Kunj area after he refused to give them a cigarette. The incident occurred on Friday.

Police said that the victim, identified as Ezaz, was taken to a hospital where his condition is stated to be stable.

Meanwhile, both the accused identified as Mohammad Sakib Khan (19) and Abdul Hannan (30), who stabbed the victim with a blade-cutter, have been arrested.

According to R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast, on

Friday, when police were at a check post during a routine checking of vehicles, they heard a quarrel and rushed to the spot, where they found Ezaz lying with stab injuries.

"Police apprehended one of the accused and shifted the injured to AIIMS Trauma Centre while another accused was nabbed after a short span of time. Ezaz told the police that he works with his brother-in-law Aamir at a tea shop. On Friday, Hannan came to their shop and took a cigarette," said the DCP.

"After some time, he along with his friend again came to the shop and asked for another cigarette but by then the vic-

tim had closed the shop. When Ezaz refused to give cigarette to the accused, they started beating him and Aamir," said the DCP.

"Khan took out a blade-cutter and stabbed Ezaz in his abdomen. He also inflicted injuries on the victim's forearm. A case was registered at Shaheen Bagh police station and both the accused were arrested, the DCP said.

"During interrogation, the accused disclosed that on Friday, they asked for a cigarette and when Ezaz refused, they lost their temper and thrashed him and his brother-in-law while Khan stabbed Ezaz," he said.



Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava on Saturday held a Crime and Covid-19 Review meeting in the national Capital. The CP during the meeting briefed the staff of all the police stations, traffic, security, PCR and communications units and emphasised them to take precautions against Covid 19 and follow three mantras, mask, distancing and hand hygiene, which should be given wide publicity also

## African man held for supplying drugs

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested a 34 year old African national for allegedly supplying drugs in the country. Police also recovered 340 gram of heroin from his possession. Police said that the accused identified as Gnakpa Nestor was held on Friday night when the police had deployed its technical and manual surveillance to nab drug peddlers.

According to Deepak

Purohit, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), West district, police had laid a trap after receiving specific information that an African national involved in drug peddling will come to Janakpuri area to deliver a consignment. The accused came there on a scooter and was soon overpowered by the police team. "On checking, the police recovered 340 gram of high-quality heroin from the accused. During interrogation, the

accused told police that he is a narcotic drug peddler and operates in India, Nepal and Bangladesh," said the DCP.

Nestor came to India last year and had been living in Tilak Nagar area posing as a businessman. He had been selling and supplying heroin and other drugs since last year. Police are trying to ascertain the source of the contraband substance seized and arrest other members of the drug cartel," the DCP added.

## Goyal holds meet to boost automobile loading through Rly

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday met automobile Industry leaders to give boost to automobile loading through Railways.

Representatives of SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers), Tata Motors, Hyundai Motors, Ford Motors, Mahindra and Mahindra, Honda India, and Maruti Suzuki Ltd, The Automobile Freight Train Operators (AFTOs), Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA), attended the meeting and lauded the initiative and committed to work in partnership with Indian Railways to facilitate transportation of automobiles through railways.

"Indian Railways is attaining new heights in transportation of automobiles. The total loading of automobiles through



Railway was only 429 rakes in 2013-14, which has increased to 1,595 rakes 2019-20. And in the first six months of the current year (Apr to Sep), Indian Railway has loaded 836 rakes of automobiles against 731 rakes in the previous year (despite almost negligible loading in the first two months)," the ministry said in a statement.

Railways are aiming to

achieve a modal share of 20 per cent by the end of 2021-22, and a modal share of 30% by 2023-24, it said.

The participants in the interaction were informed about the steps taken by Railways to promote loading of automobiles, which has led to this quantum jump and were asked to bring more loading to Rail.

The ministry said that slew of steps have been taken to facilitate automobile loading.

Representatives of the industry were all praise for the Railways for the help and support being extended to them and confirmed that efforts will be on to bring more and more loading towards Railway, it said. Participant were informed that more terminals being opened up for Automobile traffic (as per demands of the industry) Charodi (WR), Bakshi Ka Talab (NER), Mesra (ECR). Also, export to Bangladesh in BCACBM rakes being planned in coordination with Bangladesh Railway, it added.

The ministry further said that participants were assured that all possible help will be extended to them and all their concerns and issues will be addressed on priority.

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# Shayara Bano joins BJP

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The original petitioner against triple talaq in the Supreme Court, Shayara Bano joined the Bharatiya Janata Party in the presence of the BJP state president Banshidhar Bhagat and other party leaders here on Saturday.

Welcoming her to the party, Bhagat expressed hope that just like the determined manner in which Bano fought against triple talaq in the Supreme Court, she will also work to take forward the ide-

ology of the party. Her role will be especially important in the minority community, he said.

The BJP state general secretary (organisation) Ajey Kumar, vice president Devendra Bhasin and other office bearers of the party were also present on the occasion.

A resident of Kashipur, Bano had approached the Supreme Court in 2016 asking it to hold the practices of talaq-e-biddat, polygamy and nikah-halala unconstitutional.

# Bihar's political strongmen feel heat

**Patna:** Bihar's political strongmen are feeling the heat ahead of the Assembly polls. Political potshots in Bihar are being aimed at leaders such as Anant Kumar Singh and Ram Kishor Singh alias Rama Singh.

These two are considered as strongmen ('Bahubalis') of central and north Bihar and face a number of criminal cases and both recently joined the RJD.

Following their inclusion, the opposition party is facing huge criticism especially by the ruling NDA leaders.

Chitranjan Gagan, state spokesperson of RJD however took a dig at Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi and said that when these two

**Anant Singh has won three elections on the ticket of JD-U. Rama Singh was also elected as MP from Vaishali constituency in 2014 and was part of Narendra Modi Government**

strongmen were with the NDA, they were considered clean but as soon as they joined the RJD, they have become "extortionists and criminals".

Gagan's statement came a day after Sushil Modi attacked the RJD and said that the RJD's socialist leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh fought against such leaders till

his last breath.

Despite that RJD has given tickets to Rama Singh's wife Bina Singh to contest election from Mahanar seat in Vaishali district.

"RJD has used 'bulldozer' on the ideology of Raghuvansh Babu as well as on poor people of Bihar," Sushil Modi said.

"Anant Singh has won three elections on the ticket of JD-U. Rama Singh was also elected as MP from Vaishali constituency in 2014 on the ticket of LJP and was part of Narendra Modi government. Did they not face criminal charges then? And now, they become tainted as soon as they joined RJD?" Gagan said.

"They were saints when

they stayed in NDA and when they leave, the NDA leaders started calling them extortionists and criminals. NDA does not have any policies and principles," Gagan said.

"The BJP leaders have already claimed that Rama Singh was part of Narendra Modi government and it is in public domain. Besides, Anant Singh is also associated with Nitish Kumar. Now, I want to ask leaders of both the parties to clarify whom they are calling extortionists, strongmen and criminals?" Gagan asked.

"If Anant Singh and Rama Singh are extortionists and criminals then Nitish Kumar and Narendra Modi shielded them," Gagan alleged. IANS

# Fake stamp paper scam comes back to haunt Bengaluru, 4 nabbed

**Bengaluru:** The Bengaluru Police busted a fake stamp paper racket and recovered Rs 2.71 crore worth of banned stamp papers from four persons who were arrested in this connection on Saturday.

According to the police, the arrested are identified as Hassain Modi Babu alias 'Chhota Telgi', aged 53, resident of Vivek Nagar and Harish Subbaraya, aged 55, resident of Basaveswara Nagar.

The other two accused Shavar alias Seema, 42, and Nazma Fathima, 35, are typists working in Kandaya (Revenue) Bhavan in the city, the police said.

Speaking to IANS, the Additional Commissioner of Police, West, Bengaluru City, Soumendru Mukherjee said that Hassain Modi Babu is known as 'Chhota Telgi' among his associates for running this racket for several years.

"He used to operate in a very busy area where City Civil Court premises and Revenue Bhavan are situated. Here thousands come to get their documents registered and signed from notary," he said.

According to Mukherjee, Babu used to look for gullible customers through his associates like Seema, Nazma and Harish who work as typists in

shops near these offices.

He further added that Babu had been operating like this for the last two decades. "After gaining experience in printing, he has procured fake framing machines, embossing machines and computers as well. The prime accused is just class 7 pass," he said.

The police official further said that Babu had also allegedly forged seals of sub-registrar offices of Shivajinagar, Kengeri, Bommanahalli besides seals of Treasury officers were also recovered. Apart from this, he was also possessing a forged seal of Vishwa Bharati Co-Operative Housing Society as well, the police declared in their note released to the media.

The police added that Babu allegedly used to print fake stamp papers on A4 size sheets with all the watermarking to avoid getting caught by customers.

"His prime targets used to be those who had come to register their lease deeds, rent deeds, contract deeds and other documents, which generally do not attract much attention as customers do not go into the details," the note read further.

The police registered a case and further investigations are on. IANS

# As DU cut-offs touch 100%, students' bodies raise concerns

**New Delhi:** Delhi University on Saturday announced the cut-off for 2020 admissions at a dozen of its colleges, with the cut-off percentage touching 100% at certain colleges. Lady Sri Ram (LSR) College for Women, for instance, is offering admission to BA (H) Economics, BA (H) Political Science, and BA (H) Psychology programmes to students who have got 100% as their best of four subjects score.

100% is the requirement of marks for each of the three courses under the first list and if seats are vacant then the required marks can be lowered in the second list. Meanwhile, Kirori Mal College set the cut off at 99% for admission to BA (Hons) in Political Science.

For B. Com (H), the college is accepting admission at and above 99.75% marks.

At Hindu College, the cut-off marks for admission to BA (H) Economics is 99.25%.

On the other hand, the cut-off for evening colleges as well as lesser-known off-campus colleges has gone higher than last year. BA (H) Economics, Political science are among the top courses this year.

While the unrealistic high cut-off has ensued panic among students and their parents, the Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) has stated that every student will get opportunity despite the high cut off.

"Delhi University has always been very particular about its cut-off. However, in these difficult times of the pandemic, we completely understand that students all over the country are in a state of panic. I assure you that the University is entirely considerate about every child's future and admission process. The university has an instilled admission trend with a display of high cut-offs going up to 97% and above in the first cut off. Even if so, only 10% of the seats are fulfilled by this cut-off, leaving a 90% room for the cut-offs released later which generally prove to be less and convenient. With the coming of the second cut-off itself, students will be made at ease with a slight fall in the percentage which will gradually allow more students to be eligible," said Akshith Dahiya, president, DUSU.

"I request students and their parents not to panic and to believe in the administration

of the University. The welfare of every deserving student is a definite priority to the Delhi University," he appealed.

Meanwhile, the Students' Federation of India showed its concern about the trend of high cut-offs in DU. Sumit Kataria, Delhi-state president of the student body stated that the colleges purportedly release high cut-offs to maintain their "high track record" leading to peer pressure among students.

"It has been a trend by varsity's colleges to give priority to the creamy layer of students. It creates unnecessary psychological pressure over students. Those who don't make to the cut-off list, feel dejected and also feel less worthy of themselves. However, the percentage does not reflect the true intelligence of students," said Kataria.

"We need to set straight the mechanism of admissions where each student gets a fair chance to explore one of the premier educational institutes the country offers. A holistic approach must be adopted in the admission processes," he added. DU officials had earlier said that Delhi University admission cut-off marks will increase this year as many CBSE students have scored more than 95% in their Class 12 board exams.

The list is expected to be released at the official website, du.ac.in as well as at the official websites of the respective colleges. The entire admission process is being held online and students have been asked not to through the colleges due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year, a record-high number of applications have been received. A total of 3,54,003 students have applied for the 64,000 undergraduate seats. The number is 1.5 lakh higher than last year. Academics are claiming it to be an indicator of higher cut-offs.

The cut-off for DU is decided by calculating the best of four subjects marks scored in class 12 board exams. This year, 1,57,934 students scored over 90 per cent marks, while 38,686 got more than 95 per cent marks in CBSE class 12 results. According to the data, most of the applications for DU come from CBSE. Several other boards too declared result based on the average of highest marks and hence, got more 90% scorers.

# AAP to gherao Khattar's Karnal residence today

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To protest against the anti-farmer and anti-labour laws passed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ruled Central government, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP and Haryana in-charge Sushil Gupta on Saturday said that the party's farmers' cell will hold a "gherao" of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar's Karnal residence on Sunday.

Gupta said that BJP Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar always takes antifarmer stand when the time of harvesting comes.

"The party is fighting against the anti-farmer and anti-labour laws passed by the BJP ruled central government.

**FARM LAWS**

We are fighting on the streets and also fighting against these bills inside the Parliament. The Haryana chief minister always takes anti-farmer stands when the time of harvesting comes. Farmers are facing difficulties in selling paddy crops. In Haryana, around 1500 to 2000 kg millet is produced in one acre of land but the farmers are not getting more than Rs 850 kg due to the

portal, e-payment, registration, gate pass of mandi and other ways. In the last 15 days, farmers had to take the streets," he said.

Haryana and Punjab are agrarian states where more than 70 percent people are directly and indirectly connected to agriculture. These are the only states where the farmers get 60 percent of the MSP on the

anti-farmer policies of the BJP," he said.

"Farmers are constantly being harassed in the name of

crop. At the same time, in other states only six percent of the grain is sold at MSP," he , adding that now through these ordinances, the Central government wants to end the mandi system of Haryana and Punjab.

"Farmers in Bihar have good land, get good water for farming and also produce good crops. But due to the lack of MSP on their crop, the farmers have to come to Haryana and Punjab to work. The BJP-ruled central government also wants to bring a similar situation inside Haryana and Punjab," he said.

# Two BSF troopers hurt in Pak ceasefire violation in Poonch

**Jammu:** Two Border Security Force (BSF) troopers were injured on Saturday in repeated ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

Police sources said two BSF jawans identified as constables Riyaz Ahmad and C.H. Manohar of 72 Battalion were injured after they sustained splinter injuries in Pakistan shelling on the LoC

in Mendhar sector of Poonch district.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said that Pakistan violated ceasefire in Khari Karmara sector of LoC in Poonch district at about 8.30 p.m. after violating ceasefire in Mendhar and Mankote sectors of the same district earlier in the day.

During Saturday's repeated ceasefire violations,

Pakistan has targeted civilian areas in which one woman was also injured.

Since the beginning of this year, Pakistan has violated the bilateral ceasefire agreement signed by the two countries in 1999 with impunity.

Since January 2020, Pakistan has violated ceasefire 3,190 times, killing 24 civilians and injuring over 100 others. IANS

# 'Being chosen to unveil K'taka Dasara celebrations is an honour'

**Bengaluru:** Elated over Karnataka's decision to pick him to inaugurate the Dasara festivities, famous cardiologist and Director, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, C.N. Manjunath, asserted that he considers it as a lifetime honour to inaugurate the Dasara festivities.

Manjunath (63) is one of the most reputed doctors in the country. He did his MBBS from the Mysore Medical College (MMC) in 1982, MD

(general medicine) from Bangalore Medical College in 1985, and DM (cardiology) from the Kasturba Medical College in 1988.

Under his leadership, Sri Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research has recorded 300 per cent overall growth and the bed strength has increased from 330 to 640, exclusively for cardiac care.

Besides introducing the "Treatment First Payment Next" concept, Manjunath has also

implemented the idea of "every needy patient should be given quality treatment irrespective of financial affordability".

The Karnataka government picks noted personalities from various fields to inaugurate the Dasara festivities. Last year, the gala event was inaugurated by noted Kannada writer S.L. Byrappa.

Speaking to IANS, Manjunath said that this is also a true honour for several Covid warriors unknown to the world. IANS

# T Cabinet clears amendments to GHMC Act

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana cabinet on Saturday gave its nod for amendments to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Act to provide 50 per cent reservation to women in the urban body.

The Cabinet meeting, presided over by Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu, accepted the amendments to the GHMC Act of 1955 for providing 50 per cent reservation to women in GHMC Council.

The Cabinet also gave green signal to the small amendments to be made to the Registration Act.

The Cabinet has approved some amendments to be made to the New Revenue Act so that there would not be any human interference while converting agriculture land to the non-agriculture category.

Amendments to the Non-Agricultural Land Assessment (NALA) Act also received the cabinet's approval.

The Bills for amendments to GHMC Act and other Acts will be tabled during the two-day special session of the State Legislature, beginning on October 13.

The State Cabinet also decided to extend the online registration of properties till October 20. It also discussed the Integrated Township Policy under the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA).

The Cabinet decided that the government will procure paddy from farmers in villages

**The Cabinet has approved some amendments to be made to the New Revenue Act so that there would not be any human interference while converting agriculture land to the non-agriculture category**

as was done earlier in view of COVID-19 pandemic. It decided to set up 6,000 paddy purchasing centres and ensure that every grain of paddy is purchased.

It was also decided that the paddy would be purchased for any number of days. There is no need for the Farmers to get anxious about the paddy purchase. The Cabinet also urged the farmers to ensure that the moisture percentage of the Paddy should not be more than 17 percent and bring it to the centres. The Cabinet expressed its concern over maize not getting the MSP and the Centre's policy decisions that played havoc with the maize farmers. It felt that that the Centre's policy on agriculture and its produce are severely damaging the agriculture sector.

According to the Chief Minister's Office, the Cabinet expressed its shock and dismay over the way the Centre had allowed the import of maize, reduced the import duty despite the fact that the country had enough reserve stocks of the maize in the country. IANS

# Chirag Paswan collapses after lighting father's funeral pyre

**Patna:** While performing the last rites of his father Ram Vilas Paswan here on Saturday, Chirag Paswan fainted soon after lighting the funeral pyre.

In a video that surfaced soon afterwards, Chirag could be seen fainting after lighting the funeral pyre even as his

cousins tried to prevent him from falling down.

Veteran politician and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan passed away at a Delhi hospital on Thursday.

Paswan's last rites were performed at the Janardan Ghat on the banks of Ganga in

Patna's Digha neighbourhood.

Chirag Paswan, who was accompanied by his mother and other relatives, suddenly fainted on the ground soon after lighting his father's funeral pyre. People around him immediately came to his rescue and help him to the ground.

People from different sections of the society attended the funeral, raising slogans like "Dharti Gunje Asman, Ram Vilas Paswan" and "Ram Vilas Paswan Amar Rahe" during the procession from the Paswan residence in Sri Krishnapuri to the Janardan Ghat.

Many people from different parts of the state turn up in Patna to pay their last respect to the popular Dalit leader.

The body of Ram Vilas Paswan reached Patna from Delhi at around 7.55 p.m. on Friday. Top leaders, including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, leader of opposition Tejaswi Yadav, and Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, among many others, paid their last respect to Paswan. IANS



# Centre issues notification for CBI to take over Hathras case probe

**New Delhi:** The central government has issued a notification for the CBI to take over probe into the alleged gang-rape and death of a 19-year-old woman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Saturday.

The notification has been marked to a suitable branch of the premier agency, and probe teams will be dispatched to the crime scene along with forensic experts immediately after the registration of an FIR, they said.

The Dalit woman had died of grievous injuries at a Delhi hospital on September 29, a fortnight after she was allegedly raped at her village by four upper caste men.

Besides the alleged gang-rape case, the Uttar Pradesh government has sought a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) into the FIR related to the alleged criminal conspiracy to spread caste conflict, instigating violence, incidents of vicious propaganda by sections of media and political interests, they said. PTI

# China has 60K soldiers...

**From Page 1**

Many of these projects are unnecessary, shoddily built and are "white elephants", the national security advisor said. "And now these countries' dependence on the Chinese debt leaves their sovereignty eroded and with no choice but to hue to the party's line on UN votes or any other issue that the Chinese Communist Party considers a red line," he said.

O'Brien also noted that China's other international aid efforts include selling surveillance systems and similar tools of repression to "pariah regimes" around the world, including Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro.

# UP Govt to launch spl drive on women safety during Navratri

**From Page 1**

The DGP added that directions have been issued to all the police stations to put up posters of the campaign at various

schools and colleges, and also hold programmes making people aware about this campaign.

While giving instructions to make the patrolling system more effective, he said that foot patrolling should be done continuously. The police department with the help of other agencies would also run campaigns for the security of females and children.

"UP has a policy of zero-tolerance against crimes and due to continuous action by the State Government, there has been a significant reduction in crimes against girls/women," said the DGP.

He has also directed the police to take prompt action in cases involving women and girls and deal with such matters sensitively. Officials have also been instructed that strict action will be taken against them if they do not pay attention to such matters.

# Protesting family cremate body of slain priest after Raj assures aid

**From Page 1**

It had refused Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Om Prakash Meena's request to the family to perform the last rites. The priest's death had created national outrage.

Earlier in the day, Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra spoke to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot about the situa-

tion as thousands of villagers protested in Rajasthan's Bukna village in Karauli against the brutal murder.

After the family refused to perform last rites, the Rajasthan government approached the family and announced that it would give the monetary compensation, a house, a job on contract to one of the family

members and an assurance that all the absconding accused will be arrested at the earliest.

The Government also transferred the police station in-charge of the area.

BJP MP Meena, who met the aggrieved family in Bukna, sat on dharna with protesting family members, said the decision was taken after an 11-

member delegation from the State Government held talks with the family members, who had earlier refused to perform the priest's last rites, demanding arrest of the guilty and compensation from the Government.

A three-member committee constituted by the BJP also reached the village to prepare

a factual report on the incident.

Vaishnav's hut in Bukna village in Karauli district was set on fire on Wednesday after he stopped five men who were seeking to encroach lands which were part of the temple where he worked as a priest. In his dying testimony, Vaishnav named six people.

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY**  
E-Tendering Tender Notice No.: 19/2020  
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.) N.E. Railways Iztanagar (Engg.) for and behalf of President of India invites "Open" e-tender through on Line (E-tendering) for the following work:  
S.No.1-Description of works: Zone No. 26 LKU (Inc.) to KGM (Inc.).  
Approx. Value: ₹ 69.48,197.41, E.M.D. Money: ₹ 1,39,000/-. Cost of Tender Forms: ₹ 5,000/-.  
Completion time/period from the date of issue of acceptance letter: 30.06.2021. Note: 1. On line e-tender can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs. of dated 06.11.2020. 2. For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in  
Divl. Ry. Manager (Engg.) CPROW-112 Iztanagar  
About any passenger amenity complain SMS on Mobile No. 09794845955  
"DO NOT TRAVEL WITH INFLAMMABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN"

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This notice is hereby given to public at large that Smt. Priya Kapoor W/o. Mr. Rajesh Kapoor, is reported to have lost her original share certificate issued by Aashiana CGHS Ltd. (allottee of D105) Aashiana CGHS Ltd. Plot No.5, Mayur Vihar Extn. Phase-I, Delhi-110091. An application for issuance of a duplicate share certificate has been filed on 25.08.2020. Any person or persons having objections against issuance of duplicate share certificate to Smt. Priya Kapoor, may file objections, within one month from the publication of this Public Notice in the office of Aashiana CGHS Ltd, failing which the duplicate share certificate will be issued after fulfilling other obligations by the Managing Committee of Aashiana CGHS Ltd.  
For Aashiana CGHS Ltd, President

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# Army vice chief for self-reliance in making spl winter clothing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) continuing, the armed forces are preparing for a long haul and digging in for the fast approaching winter months in Ladakh. In this backdrop, Army Vice Chief Lt General S K Saini on Saturday called for attaining self-reliance in manufacturing special winter clothing and mountaineering equipment.

His observation here came as the army is gearing up for sustaining thousands of troops in Ladakh where temperature will dip to minus 30 in the next few weeks. Realising the gravity of the situation, the Government has relaxed some procurement rules to enable the army to buy prefabricated huts and additional sets of winter clothing including boots.

A parliamentary committee was also recently apprised of the army's preparedness and assured that more than adequate stocks of winter clothing are available.

Addressing a webinar organised by the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies, the Vice Chief said "A large number of our troops are deployed in super high altitude areas where

the temperature touches -50 degrees Celsius. However, we are still importing cold-weather equipment, mainly due to the lack of viable indigenous solutions. A collaborative effort needs to be put in this field to fulfil our vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'."

At present, the Indian troops are deployed at heights of more than 13,000 to 14,000 feet at most of the stand-off sites in eastern Ladakh.

With no signs of the situation improving in the near future, the Indian security establishment has ramped up its logistical support to the front line troops, sources said.

Despite the volatile situation and military build up by both the sides, India has all along favoured talks to resolve the complex issue. The seventh round of Corps Commander level talks are scheduled for Monday next.

After the sixth round on September 21, the two commanders decided not to send more troops to the border. Relative calm prevails since then, sources said.

Meanwhile, Saini also highlighted security of defence establishments and vital installations and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) and drones as major threats. On the

security of defence establishments and vital installations, he said efforts have been focussed on this in the last few years as these present "lucrative and high profile targets."

"Though the industry has stepped up to the challenge, the solutions provided, however, lack innovation and integration," he said calling for efforts to ensure reduction in manpower commitment by integrating physical and electronic surveillance and incorporating automation and innovation.

The IEDs are emerging as the favoured tool for terrorists and anti-national elements. "It ends up causing both physical and psychological trauma and seriously impairs own readiness, by forcing us to commit scarce resources for own protection," he said stating technological innovation is key to combating this threat.

The Vice Chief said amongst other threats, drones and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) stand out in their innovative employment and destructive potential. Considering their low cost, multi-use and dense proliferation, he said "both hard kill and soft kill counter-drone solutions including swarm technology are the need of the hour".

# Higher awareness, investment needed to tackle mental illness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As World Mental Health Day is observed on Saturday this year against the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic, organizations like WHO and health experts in the sector have stressed on increasing awareness and higher investments to deal with the looming mental health crisis.

"The vast social and economic impact of COVID-19 highlights the critical need for all countries in the Region to invest in quality mental health care, which must be part of an overall increase in health spending," Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia said on Saturday.

The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day campaign is 'Move for mental health: let's invest'.

Dr Smita Deshpande, senior psychiatrist from Delhi-based RML Hospital pointed out that even under normal circumstances, good mental health is crucial to the functioning of society. During a pandemic like Covid-19, however, it can affect how we respond and recover. "It is high time that we give importance to this area," she added.

Dr RC Jiloha, ex-psychiatrist from GB Pant Hospital, Delhi pointed out that even people who are not directly impacted with Covid-19 are facing depression and anxiety due to financial stress and disruption in social lives.

He echoed the WHO survey released recently that reveals that most countries are experiencing some disruption to mental health services, with the greatest impact on community-based and prevention and promotion services. Back home, various organizations including educational institutions have started focusing on this long-neglected mental health arena.

For instance, IIM Bodh Gaya's mindfulness center 'Samatvam' which aims to hone future leaders to be more



## Submit complete safety, immunogenicity data of phase-2 trial of 'Covaxin' trial, Bharat Biotech told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's top drug regulator has asked the Hyderabad-based drug manufacturer Bharat Biotech to submit complete safety and immunogenicity data of the ongoing phase-2 trial of its vaccine candidate 'Covaxin' besides providing some clarifications, before proceeding for the next stage ie phase-3 clinical trials for the vaccine.

The pharma firm had sought the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) nod for carrying out third phase trials.

The vaccine candidate is being indigenously developed by the Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

According to officials, the Hyderabad-based vaccine maker applied to the DCGI on October 2, seeking its permission to conduct

mindful and grow holistically, partnered with 'YourDost' - an online counseling and emotional wellness coach with an aim to normalize the conversation around seeking professional help to attain mental well-being.



phase-3 randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multicentre trial of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate.

The firm in its application said that the study would cover 28,500 subjects aged 18 years and above and would be conducted in 19 sites — including Delhi, Mumbai, Patna and Lucknow -- across 10 states.

The phase-2 trial of the Covaxin is going on and the second dose is yet to be given to volunteers at some sites. "The company presented phase-3 clinical trial protocol along with interim data of phase 1 and 2 clinical trials," an official said.

'Bodhi Pravaah' which will host a spectrum of activities such as 'Music therapies', 'ASMR meditation', 'Five sense meditation, and much more every Sunday. IIM Bodh Gaya Director Dr Vinita Sahay spoke on the importance of mental health. On the occasion, a small film, 'What makes you

# Covid-19 pandemic provides opportunity to reset global economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 pandemic provides an opportunity to reset the global economy and reverse decades of ecosystem and species losses, but most countries are failing to invest in nature-related economic reforms or investments, according to researchers.

Indeed, some countries, including the United States, Brazil and Australia, are backtracking on existing laws and relaxing regulations and enforcement actions aimed at protecting nature but not much is happening, according to lead author Pamela McElwee, an associate professor in the Department of Human Ecology in the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

"Just last week at the United Nations, more than 60 heads of state spoke at a virtual summit and pledged their support to tackle the biodiversity crisis. But when we look at what countries are doing, either in their prior budget and policies or especially in their post-Covid planning and recovery packages, very few governments are putting their money where

happy' was also showcased, in which students spoke about the things or people that make them beam in joy.

"The purpose behind this video was to highlight the fact that often, the things that make us the happiest are very trivial - something which everyone needs to ponder upon," said Dr Nidhi Mishra, Chairperson- Mental Health & Well-being committee, IIM Bodh Gaya.

Similarly, on the occasion of the World Mental Health Day, Shri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce in Delhi organized a Mental Health Therapy Webinar in collaboration with its International Cell, SGGSCC wherein Kartik Naidu, transpersonal therapist and trainer, Green Aura Holistic talked about importance of mental health and how the students can help understand and tackle their anxieties.

their mouths are," McElwee pointed out.

"We still see huge amounts of financial support for harmful practices, such as subsidizing overfishing or fossil fuel production or building infrastructure that will harm ecological integrity. Only a small number of countries are addressing the biodiversity crisis in the serious manner it deserves."

The paper, by economists, anthropologists and environmental scientists at many institutions on three continents, is published in the journal One Earth. It explores the changes in global economic systems - including incentives, regulations, fiscal policy and employment programs - that are necessary to shift away from activities that damage biodiversity and move toward those supporting ecosystem resilience.

The paper observations hold importance in the backdrop of the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resources which says that unless action is taken, around 1 million species face extinction, many within decades, and the global rate of species extinction will accelerate.

# India agri exports boom during Covid-induced lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite the on-going coronavirus pandemic and the nationwide lockdown till June, India agricultural exports have been booming the past six months, while many sectors of the economy suffered. Export of essential agricultural commodities between April and

September, 2020 has increased by 43.4 percent to ₹53,626.6 crore as compared to ₹37,397.3 crore in the same period last year. As per the data, wheat export growth recorded to 206 percent, followed by non-Basmati rice 105 percent, refined sugar 104 percent, and groundnut 35 percent.

According to agriculture ministry's data, farm exports

stood at ₹37,397.3 crore during the April-September period of 2019-20. In September 2020, agri exports rose by 81.7 percent to ₹9,296 crore from ₹5,114 crore in September 2019. The balance of trade during April-September 2020 has been significantly positive at ₹9,002 Crore as against trade deficit of ₹2,133 during the same period in 2019.



## Creating a Roadmap for Better Future

# Ensuring the Right to Education as a Treasure

**Bhupesh Baghel**  
H'ble Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



**Swami Atmanand English Medium School Scheme**

- 53 new school buildings to be ready in the current financial year
- 27,431 students admitted in the govt run English medium schools
- Robotics, computer and linguistic equipped labs
- Recruitment of teaching staff through rigorous process

**Teachers Recruitment**

- Recruitment process for 14.58 thousand teacher underway

**Free Textbooks and Uniform**

- 45.43 lakh students provided free textbooks
- 48.19 lakh students given two sets of free uniform

**Ensuring Mid-day Meal amid Covid-19**

- Chhattisgarh has become one of the leading states in providing dry ration under Mid-day Meal Scheme to 28.29 lakh children covering 97.31% of the eligible number

**Padhai Tuhar Dwar**

- Two models of online and offline classes
- 39.57 lakh online classes conducted on www.cgschool.in web portal



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# BJP worker killed in Kerala, CPM blamed

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Nidhin (28), a local BJP leader was murdered by a group of persons on Saturday in Kerala's Thrissur district. Nidhin was travelling in a car when he was waylaid by a group of persons alleged to be CPI(M) workers.

The incident comes a day after an unsuccessful attempt on the life of AP Abdullakutty, BJP's national vice president at Malappuram.

Nidhin was an accused in the murder of Aadarsh in July 2020. The charge against Nidhin was that he had tried to help the killers of Aadarsh to escape from the scene of the murder.

K Surendran, president of Kerala

BJP, demanded a thorough probe on the role of Minister for Local Self Government A C Moideen in Nidhin's murder.

"Modieen was camping at Thrissur, travelling all over the district and conspiring with CPI(M) workers to annihilate Sangh Parivar leaders. He had unleashed a fake campaign that Sanoop, a CPI(M) worker, was murdered by RSS activists whereas it was the result of turf war between various goonda gangs," said Surendran.

He also pointed out that Moideen was a suspect in the multi-crore LIFE Mission scam which is under probe by the CBI. The Minister was not available for comments.

# Temple priest murder: Raj Guv speaks to CM as villagers protest

**Jaipur:** Taking cognisance of the incident where a temple priest was burnt alive by the land mafia, Rajasthan Governor Kalraj Mishra on Saturday spoke to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on the phone about the situation.

Meanwhile, thousands of villagers protested in Rajasthan's Bukna village in Karauli district against the brutal murder of temple priest Babulal Vaishnav while the victim's family refused to perform the last rites, seeking action and financial assistance. Expressing worry about such incidents, Mishra spoke with Gehlot at length and also discussed a minor's rape case reported from Barmer. He voiced his worry about the deteriorating law and order situation in the state.

The Chief Minister said that the state government has taken cognisance of the matter and the police are carrying out a thorough investigation. The accused will not be spared he said, according to a press

note issued by the Governor's office. Gehlot said the government is keeping a vigilant eye on the law and order arrangement and officials have been directed to take strict action, said the press note.

On Saturday, thousands of people gathered in Bukna village to protest against the murder of the temple priest. The priest was burnt alive by the land mafia while he was trying to stop them from encroaching upon the temple land.

The victim's family has demanded financial aid of Rs 50 lakh, a government job, security to them and the immediate arrest of the accused. The villagers have threatened that the last rites of the priest will not be performed till the demands are met.

At the time of filing this report, Rajya Sabha MP Kirori Lal Meena had reached Bukna village and was sitting on dharna in support of the villagers' demands, seeking justice for the victim's family. IANS

# Two top commanders of JeM, LeT neutralised in 2 separate encounters

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A foreign terrorist from Pakistan and a top Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) commander were among four terrorists neutralised by the joint team of security forces in two separate operations in Kulgam and Pulwama districts of South Kashmir on Saturday while alert jawans of the Indian Army foiled a weapon smuggling bid in Kishanganga river in North Kashmir's Keran sector.

In Jammu region, Pakistan resorted to 'unprovoked' ceasefire violations in Mankote and Mendhar sectors of Poonch at different intervals of the day. The Pakistan army resorted to intense mortar shelling in the forward areas prompting India to hit back in equal measure.

Meanwhile, General Officer Commanding 15 Corps, Lt General B S Raju on Saturday observed that the recruitment of local terrorists has gone up in Kashmir since last one month. Interacting with the media on the sidelines of a passing out parade of newly recruited jawans of Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (JAKLI) in Srinagar, Lt Gen BS Raju said "In the past six months the recruitment of local terrorists had come down but now it has again seen a rise in the last one month".

He said that there are inputs that about 250-300 terrorists are waiting to cross to this side of Line of Control. "But we have been successful to

some extent in blocking their infiltrations," he said.

Referring to the weapon smuggling bid in the Keran sector Lt-Gen Raju said, "the Army foiled a weapon smuggling bid in Kishanganga river in north Kashmir's Keran sector this morning and recovered a huge cache of arms and ammunition. It included 4 AK-47 rifles, 8 magazines and 240 rounds. The transportation bid was foiled across the Kishanganga river, he added.

Srinagar based Chinara Corps in a separate tweet said, "Alert troops foil Pak attempt to push in arms across LoC. Army noticed 2-3 men transporting some items in a tube tied to a rope across Kishanganga river. Troops immediately reached location and recovered the following- 04 x AK 74 Rifles - 08 x Magazines - 240 rounds".

Sharing his assessment about the prevailing security situation in the region, Lt Gen Raju said "last year around 130 terrorists infiltrated but this year the number was reduced to less than 30".

He said that the situation on LoC is under control and only a few ceasefire violations are being done by Pakistan to initiate the infiltration.

On the other hand, sharing details of two operations in which four terrorists were neutralised, a Jammu and Kashmir police spokesman said, "a joint cordon and search operation was launched by Police, IRR and 18 BN CRPF in Chinigam

area of Kulgam late Friday night after receiving reports about the presence of terrorists in the area".

A Defence spokesman in Srinagar said, "after zeroing on the area located in the close vicinity of a religious place a tight cordon was maintained". He said, "terrorists fired grenades using under barrel grenade launchers (UBGL) and also fired several rounds while attempting to breach the cordon. At first light, civilians were safely evacuated from the area and in the ensuing encounter two terrorists including one Pakistani terrorist were eliminated. One M4 Rifle & one Pistol was recovered".

According to a police spokesman, the JeM terrorists were identified as Tariq Ahmad Mir son of Abdul Rahman Mir resident of Zangalpora Divisar Kulgam and a Pakistani national identified as Sameer Bhai @Usman resident of Punjab Pakistan ('A' category terrorist).

In the second operation which was launched in Dadoora area of Pulwama two more terrorists were gunned down by the joint team of security forces. According to Jammu and Kashmir police, "One of the top commanders of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba identified as Zahid Nazir Bhat alias Zahid Tiger was killed in the encounter along with his associate". Security forces also recovered two AK rifles from the encounter site.

# All is not well: Problems brewing in AIADMK Steering Committee

**CHENNAI:** The announcement that Edappadi Palaniswami would be the Chief Minister candidate of the AIADMK in the upcoming election to Tamil Nadu Assembly has been widely accepted by the party cadre. Though everything looks fine outwardly, resentment is brewing up in AIADMK leadership.

The 11-member steering committee announced on Wednesday to lead the party in the absence of a strong and tall leader like late Jayalalitha has caused heartburn and discontent among loyalists of late MG Ramachandran, party founder and late Jayalalitha.

"This is not a fairly represented body," was the comment by KC Palaniswami, former party MP and a confidante of Jayalalitha. He pointed out that party loyalists who stood throughout with MGR and Jayalalitha had not been accommodated in the committee.

In the land of EV Ramasami Naicker, founder of Dravida

Kazhagam which stands for a casteless society, it is castes that determine winners and losers. The steering committee has been constituted as per strength of castes.

Ministers P Thangamani and S P Velumani (Vellala Gounder), ministers Dindigal Srinivasan and R Kamaraj (Mukkulathoor/Thevar), minister C Ve Shanmugham (Vanniyar), JCD Prabhakar (Christian), PH Manoj Pandian (Nadar Christian), K Manickam (Devendra Kula Vellalar), minister D Jayakumar (fishermen), P Mohan (Pillai) and R Gopalakrishnan (Yadava) are the members.

The non-inclusion of ministers KA Sengottaiyan, RB Udhayakumar and Sellur Raju is a major topic of discussion. KC Palaniswami said he was shocked by the non inclusion of Sengottaiyan and Dr Mythreyan, a four term MP in the committee. The steering committee was one of the pre-conditions set for

merger by O Panneerselvam in August 2017.

Palaniswami said most of the members in the committee that would lead the party are junior persons in the party hierarchy. "There are no Muslims or women in this committee. And problems are certain to erupt in the near future itself," said KCP.

VK Sasikala, serving a four-year long prison sentence in the disproportionate asset case may soon be released from jail. Palaniswami said he does not want to speculate about eventualities that may happen in the AIADMK once Sasikala was released prematurely.

"We will cross the bridge when we come there," said Palaniswami.

Sources close to Panneerselvam said on Saturday that the former chief minister has not been happy with the announcement about the declaration. "Issues are getting ready to break out at the time of election," said Palaniswami. PMS

# Maha youth Cong decries online abuse of Dhoni's kid

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Condemning the online abuse and misogyny directed at Chennai Super Kings (CSK) skipper MS Dhoni and his child, the Maharashtra Youth Congress (MYC) on Saturday asked the television channels to stop immediately broadcasting the minor's name and pictures to protect her privacy.

In a statement issued here, MYC president Satyajee Tambe said: "Maharashtra Youth Congress stands against the reprehensible online abuse and misogyny directed at Mr. MS Dhoni and his child".

"In this case as well in other incidents, the criminal threat of rape is being used as a weapon to intimidate and humiliate a professional and his family by targeting the most vulnerable member, a young girl," Tambe said.

Tambe went on to request that she immediately stop broadcasting the minor's name and pictures to protect her privacy. "The fact that her name and pictures feature on her parent's instagram accounts does not give the media the licence to broadcast it on national TV," he said.

The MYC chief said that the disclosure of the minor girl's identity was absolutely prohibited as per the absolute bar put on the media revealing a victim's name as per the Supreme Court Judgment in Nipun Saxena & Anr v. Union of India & Ors delivered on December 11, 2018.

It may be recalled that the threats to Dhoni's 5-year-old daughter appeared on Dhoni and his wife Sakshi's Instagram accounts after CSK was defeated by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in an IPL fixture held on Wednesday last.

# J&K: 635 more test Covid positive; tally is 83,064

**Srinagar:** As many as 635 more people tested Covid-19 positive in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, taking the total tally in the Union Territory to 83,064.

A statement issued by the information and public relations department said: Of the 635 fresh infections, 235 are from Jammu division and 400 from Kashmir division.

So far 1,313 patients have succumbed to the disease in the region. The number of active cases is now 10,796 out of which 4,712 are from Jammu division and 6,084 from Kashmir division. IANS

# Police admin should also bring us back home safely from HC: Family of victim

**Hathras:** The family members of the girl have been summoned to Lucknow on October 12. The family members of the victim girl said that they were informed of this by the judicial authorities.

At the same time, the family members of the victim girl also said that the security arrangements under which the police will take them to the High Court should also have left them back home under the same protection.

The family became enraged at the question asked about the letter sent from jail, they said that all this is a conspiracy to twist the case, friend-

ship is not possible among high and low caste people, they are fighting for justice and will continue to fight.

High Court of Lucknow bench has taken suo Motu cognizance of this case. The High Court had also summoned SP and DM of the district besides several high officials and the victim's family. The hearing will be on 12th October.

The information of this order of the High Court was given by the in-charge District Judge to the victim's family. Administrative officials also informed about this. PMS

# Hathras case: Aligarh Admin trying to reduce caste-based tension

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

In the Hathras rape case, the district administration is trying its best to reduce caste-based tensions and not allowing to organize a panchayat. The intelligence department is constantly active and monitoring this, but some people are gathering in the village in a group of 8-10 people. The intelligence department has also become alert after getting this information.

The state government has claimed that under the cover of this matter, there was a conspiracy to inflict caste-based riots in the state. After this, the

government dealt strictly, and a dozen of cases were filed in this district itself. The cases have been filed against many big and small and some leaders are now being identified. Due to this strictness, big panchayats are not organized but groups of 8-10 people are gathering at different places on both sides. After the restriction on big panchayats, the administration is also alert about small panchayats in the form of such groups. Intelligence agencies are also active. Officers and administration are monitoring closely the suspected people who can disturb the peace of the environment.

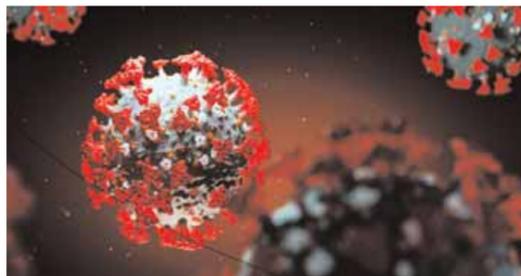
# Andhra Covid tally crosses 7.5 lakh with 5,000 new cases

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh's Covid tally crossed 7.5 lakh on Saturday with 5,653 new infections, even as 6,659 more patients recovered from the virus.

With the new additions, the southern state's tally rose to 7,50,517 cases.

West Godavari accounted for the highest number of cases on Saturday, 823, followed by Chittoor and East Godavari (706 each), Prakasam (538), Kadapa (504) and Guntur (470) among others.

On adding the new cases, Chittoor's tally is just 400 cases shy of 70,000 and Guntur is 600 cases



short of 60,000.

In the past 24 hours, 34 more patients succumbed to the virus, swelling the statewide Covid pan-

demic toll to 6,194.

Prakasam reported the highest deaths, 6, followed by Chittoor (5), East Godavari and Krishna (4

each), Nellore and Visakhapatnam (3 each), Anantapur, Guntur, Kurnool and West Godavari (2 each) and Kadapa and Srikakulam (1 each).

Meanwhile, the positive trend of recoveries outnumbering infections continues in Andhra Pradesh with 6,659 more recoveries. Total recoveries rose to 6.9 lakh. Of the 7.5 lakh cases, active cases currently stand at 46,624, even as the state has completed 64.9 lakh Covid tests.

On Saturday, Andhra Pradesh tested 73,625 samples for Covid with a positivity rate of 11.56 per cent. IANS

# Bihar polls: Cong prepares star campaigners list

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Congress has prepared a list of 30 star campaigners ahead of the first phase of Bihar elections scheduled on October 28, which includes party chief Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and actor turned politician Shatrughan Sinha.

According to party sources, the Congress has shared the list with the Election Commission of India.

Others on the list are senior Congress leaders like Ghulam Nabi Azad, Shaktisinh Gohil, Shakeel Ahmed, and Randeep Singh Surjewala, apart from Congress Chief Ministers

like Bhupesh Baghel, Ashok Gehlot, Captain Amarinder Singh, former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar, Raj Babbar, Pramod Tiwari, Sachin Pilot, Madan Mohan Jha, and Tariq Anwar.

Former Governor Nikhil Kumar, Sadanand Singh, Akhilesh Prasad Singh, Kirti Azad, Sanjay Nirupam, Udit Raj, Imran Pratapgarhi, Prem Chand Mishra, Anil Sharma, Ajay Kapoor, and Virender Singh Rathore are also on the list.

The Congress, as part of the Grand Alliance along with the RJD and the Left, will contest 70 seats in the 243-member Assembly.

Keeping in mind the pandemic and the need to limit gatherings for the upcoming polls in Bihar and by-elec-

tions to 56 assembly constituencies, the Election Commission of India early this week decided to restrict the number of star campaigners.

After a full commission meeting on Wednesday, the poll panel revised the norms concerning Star Campaigners. It has ruled that a recognised national/state party shall not wield more than 30 star campaigners instead of 40. For unrecognized parties, the number of star campaigners has been reduced to 15 from 20.

In the first phase, the Congress will contest 21 seats. The Bihar elections are scheduled to be held on October 28, November 3 and November 7. Counting of votes will take place on November 10 and results out the same day.

# Aligarh contractor held for faking as DIG of CBI

**Aligarh:** The police arrested the contractors of Aligarh, who had been pretending to be a DIG of CBI to visit Maa Vidhyavasini with VIP facility. A case of cheating has been registered against him.

Rajiv Singh, a resident of Shivpuri of Bannadevi police station area of Aligarh district is a contractor of Municipal Corporation. He had phoned the Superintendent of Police Mirzapur as a DIG of the CBI for a VIP pass of Maa Vidhyavasini.

The accused called Aligarh RI to arrange a vehicle for the railway station drop and then he further phoned GRP to book the ticket for Mirzapur. He reached Mirzapur railway

station accompanied by his mother, wife and daughter. Seeing no car there, he called SP in charge and expressed his anger.

On this, in-charge SP Sanjay Kumar sent the car of CO Sadar and brought Rajiv along with the family to a lodge in Putlighar. From there Rajeev and family started for Vidhyanchal visit with full security.

There he visited Maa Vidhyavasini. Meanwhile, the police suspected him and called to the Delhi CBI headquarter and asked about Rajiv Singh, it came to know that there is no person with this name in the CBI on the post of DIG. PMS

# Telangana's 1,811 new cases take its tally to 2.10 lakh

**Hyderabad:** The number of coronavirus cases in Telangana climbed to 2,10,346 as 1,811 new infections were reported during the last 24 hours, officials said on Saturday.

For the third day in a row, the daily count was below 2,000 mark even as nine more COVID-19 fatalities took the cumulative death toll to 1,217.

The fatality rate stands at 0.57 per cent as against the national average of 1.5 per cent.

Officials said the percentage of deaths due to COVID-19 was 44.96 while the remaining 55.04 had co-morbidities.

Telangana saw more recoveries than new cases in the last 24 hours ending 8 pm on Friday.

With 2,072 more patients getting cured, the total recov-

eries jumped to 1,83,025. The state's recovery rate crossed 87 per cent while the national average is 85.7 per cent.

The state now has 26,104 active cases, including 21,551 in home or institutional isolation.

The case load continues to show a declining trend both in the state capital and in districts. Greater Hyderabad reported 291 new cases. For the sixth day in the last one week, the state capital saw a daily count of less than 300.

Medchal Malkajgiri district recorded the second highest number of cases at 171, followed by Rangareddy (138), Nalgonda (108), Karimnagar (100), Bhadradri Kothagudem (81), Khammam (75), and Suryapet (71).

During the last 24 hours,

50,469 tests were conducted to take the total to 35,00,394.

Seventeen government-run laboratories, 44 private laboratories and 1,076 rapid antigen test centres are conducting the tests.

The Public Health and Family Welfare Director's office said that of the 50,469 samples tested during the last 24 hours, 47,123 were tested in government-run laboratories and 3,346 in private. Of the total samples, 22,206 were primary and 6,056 were secondary.

Sample testing per million population ratio rose further to 94,046. The daily testing target for the state is 5,600 per day as compared with the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 per million per day.

Out of 2,10,346 positive

# Classmate rapes MBBS student on pretext of marriage

**Aligarh:** A student of MBBS from an institute in Lucknow has accused her classmate of rape on pretext of marriage and making videos. The case has been registered in Bannadevi police station on the instruction of SP Shubham Patel.

The girl visited the SSP office with her mother and told SP that she met a youth named Vijay, a resident of Khair, and this meeting turned into a friendship.

Classmates made physical relations in the name of marriage and made videos and later refused to marry. This matter started in 2018.

After a complaint to the then SSP, the accused had promised a court marriage to avoid the case but later turned

back. The victim has accused on the basis of SP village that he raised questions on her character in the name of helping. Steno tempered her mobile and delete video clips and evidence. The SP village said that the student had complained to the SSP about a month ago, which he himself was investigating.

The student was called for the statement. The allegations against Steno are baseless.

Inspector Bannadevi police station Dharendra Mohan Sharma said that a case has been filed against Vijay on behalf of the girl student at Bannadevi police station and an investigation is going on. Attempt to pull the teenager, torn her clothes in Khair. PMS

**TRUMP VS BIDEN**

# 2nd presidential debate cancelled

**Washington:** The second presidential debate between Donald Trump and Joe Biden set for October 15 has been cancelled, the organisers have announced, after the incumbent US President refused to do a virtual face-off with his Democratic challenger despite concerns over his COVID-19 diagnosis.



In a statement, the non-partisan (CPD) confirmed on Friday that the second virtual debate scheduled to be held in Miami, Florida, would be scrapped. The CPD said it was preparing for the next debate to be held on October 22 in Nashville, Tennessee, less than two weeks ahead of the November 3 presidential election.

The first presidential debate between Trump and Biden was held on September 29 in Cleveland, Ohio. The one-off debate between the vice presidential candidates Mike Pence and Kamala Harris took place on October 7 in Salt Lake City, Utah.

"On October 8, CPD announced that for the health and safety of all involved, the second presidential debate,

scheduled for October 15 in Miami, would be conducted virtually," the CPD said in a statement, officially announcing the cancellation of the second debate.

"Subsequently, the campaigns of the two candidates who qualified for participation in the debate made a series of statements concerning their respective positions regarding their willingness to participate in a virtual debate on October 15, and each now has announced alternate plans for that date."

"It is now apparent there will be no debate on October 15, and the CPD will turn its attention to preparations for the final presidential debate scheduled for October 22," the CPD added.

Trump swiftly rejected that plan, saying he would not show up and setting off a series of events that put the future of all general election debates into question.

The Trump campaign has alleged that the commission was "biased" towards Biden, while the Democrat's team accused the president of ducking the debate.

Trump has been accused of downplaying the seriousness of COVID-19, which has killed more than 213,000 people in the US where 7,664,000 confirmed cases have been reported, making the country the world's worst-hit nation.

Biden has reacted to the cancellation of the second presidential debate in a statement through a spokesperson, calling it "shameful" that President Trump "ducked the only debate in which the voters get to ask questions."

"Vice President Biden looks forward to making his case to the American people about how to overcome this pandemic, restore American leadership and our alliances in

the world, and bring the American people together," his campaign spokesman Andrew Bates said.

"It's shameful that Donald Trump ducked the only debate in which the voters get to ask the questions -- but it's no surprise. Everyone knows that Donald Trump likes to bully reporters, but obviously he doesn't have the guts to answer for his record to voters at the same time as Vice President Biden."

Trump's communications director Tim Murtaugh criticised the "biased" commission for cancelling the second debate, saying "there's no medical reason to stop it".

The primary mission of the Commission on Presidential Debates is to ensure, for the benefit of the American electorate, that general election debates are held every four years between and among the leading candidates for the offices of President and Vice President of the United States.

The CPD has sponsored general election presidential debates in every election since 1988, according to the commission's website. **PTI**

# 'Any peace deal with Taliban will not be detrimental to India's nat'l security'

**New Delhi:** Any peace deal with the Taliban "will not and should not be detrimental" to the national security of any country including India, and it is for New Delhi to decide whether to engage with the militant outfit, top Afghan peace negotiator Abdullah Abdullah said on Saturday.

In an interview to PTI, Abdullah, the chairman of the powerful High Council for National Reconciliation, also dispelled India's apprehensions that a prominent role for the Taliban as part of a possible outcome to the ongoing intra-Afghan peace talks could be detrimental to its strategic interests.

"It is not in our interest if any terrorist group has any foothold in Afghanistan. The agreement should be one which is acceptable to people of Afghanistan. It should be dignified, sustainable and durable," Abdullah said.

The influential Afghan leader also said if a peace deal is struck with Taliban, then all other terror groups "freelancing in mountains and deserts of Afghanistan and launching

attacks on us or any other nation" will have to cease their activities.

"Peaceful settlement will not be and should not be detrimental to any country's national security including India. India is a country which has helped Afghanistan, contributed to Afghanistan. It is a friend of Afghanistan," he said when asked whether he can assure that the outcome of the peace talks will not be detrimental to India's security interests.

There have been apprehensions in New Delhi that Pakistan might leverage its influence over the Taliban to step up cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir if the militant group regains political prominence after a possible peace deal between it and the Afghan government.

Abdullah arrived here on Tuesday on a five-day visit as part of his efforts to build a regional consensus and support for the historic Afghan peace process.

During his stay, he briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the peace talks, and held

meetings with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

Asked whether he got any indication of India's willingness to engage with the Taliban, Abdullah said, "personally, I encourage engagement of India in the peace process. I did not make the suggestion. It is for India to decide how to engage with a group or not engage with a group. I did not pursue it," he said.

The Taliban and the Afghan government are holding direct talks, aimed at ending decades of war that has killed tens of thousands of people and ravaged various parts of Afghanistan.

On September 12, an Indian delegation attended the inaugural ceremony marking the launch of direct talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government in Doha. Jaishankar joined it through a video conference which was attended by a number of key leaders from several countries including US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. **PTI**

# Nearly 50,000 voters received wrong ballots: Ohio county

**Columbus:** Nearly 50,000 voters received incorrect absentee ballots in the county that is home to Ohio's capital and largest city, elections officials said Friday as they promised corrected ballots would be mailed within 72 hours.

With about 240,000 ballots mailed, that meant one in five voters received a wrong ballot. The error happened Saturday afternoon when someone changed a setting on a machine that places absentee ballots into mailing envelopes, Franklin County elections officials said Thursday.

Some ballots had an incorrect congressional race, while others had the correct information but were sent to voters in a different precinct. The Franklin County Elections Board said 49,669 voters received incorrect ballots out of 237,498 that were mailed.

That represents 6 per cent of Franklin County's approximately 880,000 registered voters, and 0.6 per cent of the 8 million voters registered statewide in the presidential battleground.

The process to print, stuff the replacement ballots in envelopes and mail them was underway Friday, the Franklin County Elections Board announced.

The board also said it will mail postcards to all affected voters detailing the situation and highlighting voters' options moving forward. Those options include voting in-person at the board's offices on the city's north side.

The elections board said multiple checks are in place to ensure only one voter can cast a ballot, including rejecting any replacement ballots if someone went ahead and voted in person.

The news of the incorrect ballots brought renewed focus on an election seeing an unprecedented number of absentee ballot requests, spurred by the coronavirus pandemic and concerns about in-person voting. On Tuesday, Ohio's elections chief announced that Ohio's 88 elections boards received a record number of absentee ballot applications. **AP**

# Armenia, Azerbaijan agree on ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh

**Moscow:** With Russia's mediation, Armenia and Azerbaijan agreed to a cease-fire in Nagorno-Karabakh starting Saturday following two weeks of heavy fighting that marked the worst outbreak of hostilities in more than a quarter-century.

The countries' foreign ministers said in a statement that the truce is intended to exchange prisoners and recover the dead, adding that specific details will be agreed on later. Minutes after it entered force at noon (0800 GMT), Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of breaching the cease-fire with new attacks. The claims could not be independently verified.

The announcement of the truce followed 10 hours of talks in Moscow sponsored by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who read the statement. It stipulated that the cease-fire should pave the way for talks on settling the conflict.

If the truce holds, it would mark a major diplomatic coup for Russia, which has a security pact with Armenia but also cultivated warm ties with Azerbaijan.

The latest outburst of fight-



ing between Azerbaijani and Armenian forces began September 27 and left hundreds of people dead in the biggest escalation of the decades-old conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh since a separatist war there ended in 1994. The region lies in Azerbaijan but has been under control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia.

The talks between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were held on invitation from Russian President Vladimir Putin, who brokered the cease-fire in a series of calls with President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian.

Since the start of the latest

fighting, Armenia said it was open to a cease-fire, while Azerbaijan insisted that it should be conditional on the Armenian forces' withdrawal from Nagorno-Karabakh, arguing that the failure of international efforts to negotiate a political settlement left it no other choice but to resort to force.

Russia has co-sponsored peace talks on Nagorno-Karabakh together with the United States and France as co-chairs of the so-called Minsk Group, which is working under the auspices of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. They haven't produced any deal, leaving Azerbaijan increasingly exasperated. **AP**

# Taiwan's leader hopes for reduced tensions with China

**Taipei:** Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen said on Saturday she has hopes for less tensions with China and in the region if Beijing will listen to Taipei's concerns, alter its approach and restart dialogue with the self-ruled island democracy.

Speaking at Taiwan's National Day celebrations on Saturday, Tsai took note of recent remarks by Chinese leader Xi Jinping in a video message to the UN General Assembly that China would never seek hegemony, expansion or to establish a sphere of influence.

"As countries in the region and around the world are now concerned about China's expanding hegemony, we hope this is the beginning of genuine change," Tsai said in her annual address at the Presidential Office in downtown Taipei.

If Beijing can "heed Taiwan's voice, change the way it handles cross-strait relations, and jointly facilitate cross-strait reconciliation and peaceful dialogue, I believe that regional tension can surely

be resolved," Tsai said. China's ruling Communist Party claims the self-governing island as Chinese territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

Beijing cut contacts with Tsai's government following her election to a first term in 2016 and has steadily increased diplomatic, military and economic pressure on the island of 23 million people to compel her to endorse its contention that Taiwan and the mainland constitute a single Chinese nation, which it refers to as the "1992 Consensus."

In Beijing, a spokesperson for the Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office responded to Tsai's address by renewing China's demand for concessions and accusing her of "disrupting the exchanges and cooperation" between the sides, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

Zhu Fenglian also accused Tsai of "deliberately misleading the people of Taiwan" and "warning the Taiwan authorities to adhere to the 1992 Consensus." **AP**

# Nepal records highest single day spike of over 5,000 new COVID cases



**Kathmandu:** Nepal on Saturday reported the highest single day spike of 5,008 new COVID-19 cases, taking the national tally to 105,684, the health ministry said.

A total of 19,320 PCR tests were conducted in the last 24 hours across the country.

This is the highest single-day COVID-19 spike in the country since the first case was reported on January 23 this year.

As many as 1,229 people were discharged during the period from hospitals after recovery. With this, the number of total recovered patients has reached 74,252.

A total of 1164,557 PCR tests have been conducted across the country so far, it said.

At present, there are 30,818 COVID-19 active people across the country.

The total number of COVID-19 deaths in the country has reached 614. **PTI**

# Israel to 'immediately' bring over 2,000 Ethiopian Jews

**Addis Ababa:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has told his Ethiopian counterpart that his country has the intention to "immediately" bring over some 2,000 Ethiopian Jews.

The announcement came Friday after a phone call with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Netanyahu's office said the decision comes "out of his commitment to the continued aliyah of Jews to Israel." Some 13,000 Ethiopian Jews are in the capital, Addis Ababa, and in Gondar, most of them waiting to be taken to Israel, which they call home.

Most live in dire conditions and have threatened to

stage a hunger strike if they're not allowed to travel to their "homeland." Many say they have family members who have settled in Israel.

"Some 250 people have left for Israel within the past year until COVID-19 came. Now the travel has stopped, but Israeli officials are conducting interviews online," Nigisue Alemu Eyasu, program director for the Ethiopian Jews Community, told The Associated Press. **AP**

# Pak Opposition parties come out openly against powerful military

**Karachi:** For the first time, Pakistan's two major Opposition parties have come out openly against the country's powerful military, accusing it of rigging the 2018 elections that brought Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party to power.

In the past, political leaders have only indirectly pointed to the involvement of the military establishment in the country's political affairs but this is the first time that the leaders of the two main Opposition parties - the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim

League Nawaz (PML-N) have openly criticised the military.

Former prime minister and PML-N supreme Sharif, who is in London since November last year and facing a number of corruption cases, fired the first salvo at the inaugural meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Movement, an alliance formed by Opposition parties last month to oust Prime Minister Khan.

Sharif alleged that the military rigged the 2018 elections to bring Prime Minister Khan to power.

He said interfering in politics in uniform amounts to treason under the country's Constitution.

His allegations sparked an angry response from Khan, who said Sharif was "playing a very dangerous game" by humiliating the military and intelligence services. He dismissed the allegations of rigged elections as baseless.

Sharif served as Pakistan's prime minister three times, first removed by a president in 1993, then by military ruler Pervez Musharraf in 1999. A

court in 2017 ousted him from power over corruption allegations. Khan, a former cricketer, came to power in 2018.

After Sharif, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday accused the military of rigging the 2018 elections.

Bilawal warned that any interference in the coming legislative assembly elections in Gilgit-Baltistan would lead to a strong reaction from his party, including a siege of Islamabad and a sit-in in the city.

"Such things were never witnessed even in dictatorships

of General Zia and Gen Musharraf," Bilawal was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

"I wonder how you deploy a soldier inside and another outside the polling station. That was so strange. Even if you (military establishment) have done something wrong or not, you would be blamed either way. This should not happen," he said.

He said the "PPP would not allow anyone to steal the peoples mandate in the coming elections in Gilgit-Baltistan." **PTI**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is general information that I, Jispa Arora w/o Amit Yadav r/o House no. H-25, Street No. 16, Jagat puri Krishna Nagar Delhi 110051 declare that the name of mine has been wrongly written as Simran Yadav in my minor daughter Yuvika Yadav in her school Records. The actual name of mine is Jispa Arora. Which may be amended accordingly.

**WESTERN RAILWAY**

**TENDER FOR VARIOUS WORKS**  
Divisional Railway Manager(WA), Western Railway,6th floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008. Invites e-tender as per details given as follows. Sr. No. : 1. Executive - DEN(ES)/S/BCT. Tender Notice No. & Date : BCT-20-21-218 dtd 09-10-2020. Work and location : Mumbai Central - (DRM Office) Internal to engineering department office Electrical department office with AMM/BCT office and Sr.DEE (Train Operation) office at BCT. Approx. cost of work in Rs. : Rs. 3,23,82,836.78. EMD Rs. : 311900.00. Sr. No. : 2. Executive - DEN(ES)/S/BCT. Tender Notice No. & Date : BCT-20-21-219 dtd 09-10-2020. Work and location : Chughate - Repairs to station headquarter(HQ) building ground floor to 7th floor for common passages and chambers. Approx. cost of work in Rs. : Rs. 2,72,81,047.85. EMD Rs. : 286400.00. Date & Time of Submission : On 03-11-2020 till 15:00 hrs., Date & Time of Opening : On 03-11-2020 at 15.30 hrs. for above both tenders. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions please visit www.irps.gov.in. Manual offers will not be considered. 344 Like us: www.facebook.com/WesternRly

# Report: 29 million girls, women victims of modern slavery

**AP ■ UNITED NATIONS**

A new report estimates that 29 million women and girls are victims of modern slavery, exploited by practices including forced labour, forced marriage, debt-bondage and domestic servitude.

Grace Forrest, co-founder of the Walk Free anti-slavery organisation, said Friday that means one in every 130 women and girls is living in modern slavery today, more than the population of Australia.

"The reality is that there are more people living in slavery today than any other time in human history," she told a UN news conference.

Walk Free defines modern slavery "as the systematic removal of a person's freedom,

where one person is exploited by another for personal or financial gain," she said.

Forrest said the global estimate of one in 130 women and girls living in modern slavery was made based on work by Walk Free, the International Labour Organisation and the International Organisation for Migration, both UN agencies. "What this report has shown is that gender stacks the odds against girls from conception throughout their lives," she said.

According to the report, titled "Stacked Odds," women account for 99 per cent of all victims of forced sexual exploitation, 84 per cent of all victims of forced marriage, and 58 per cent of all victims of forced labour.

# JUDGE ORDERS EX-COLOMBIAN PREZ FREED FROM HOUSE ARREST

**Bogota (Colombia):** Powerful ex-Colombia President Álvaro Uribe was ordered freed from house arrest Saturday while he is investigated for possible witness tampering.

A judge ordered Uribe's release in a case that has divided this South American nation and exposed lingering tensions over Colombia's peace

accord for ending a half-century conflict with leftist guerrillas. The Court ordered Uribe detained in August during the investigation, shocking Colombians and unleashing protests in favour and against the decision. He was the first president in Colombia's recent history to be ordered placed on house arrest. **AP**

# GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE (QC&PD) DIVISION, HMT, SRINAGAR.

Phone: - 0194- 2496307, E-Mail:- xenmandp@gmail.com  
**Dates-Corrigendum**  
Subject:- Extension of dates for Supply of various types of assorted size Consumable items (As per BIS Code with latest Amendments/Manufacturers Test Certificates, as the case may be), for Electro Mechanical Workshop of Jai Shakti (PHE) Mechanical Division (North) Soppore.  
Ref: 1. This office NIT No: (PHE/QC&PD/12/2020-21/e-Tender Dated: 22-09-2020. Due to poor response, the above referred e-tender is hereby re-scheduled as follows:  
1. Tender Notice No. :- PHE/M&P/12 of 2020-21/ e-Tender Dated: 22-09-2020.  
2. Date of Inviting Tender :- 22-09-2020.....10.00AM  
3. Clarification End Date :- 15-10-2020.....04.00PM  
4. Document Downloading End Date :- 16-10-2020.....02.00PM  
5. On Line Document Submission End Date :- 16-10-2020.....4.00PM.  
6. Date of opening of Cover 1st. :- 17-10-2020.....2.00PM  
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jai Shakti PHE (QC&PD), HMT Srinagar  
No. DIPP-7115/20 Dated: 09.10.2020

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HARYANA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF ARCH-SHAPED GALVALUME SHEET ROOFING 1.09 MM THICK (TCT) FOR CONSTRUCTION OF 12166 MTS CAPACITY GODOWNS AT SWH, NASIRPUR (DISTRICT AMBALA + 27 OTHER WORKS.	12.10.2020 28.10.2020	As per Individual tender	etenders.hry.nic.in.	0172-2587200 secyhw@hry.nic.in
2	HARYANA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF PORTA WEIGHBRIDGE 80 MT CAPACITY & PORTA CABIN AT SWH, GUMTHALA GARHU. (DISTT. KURUKSHETRA) + 17 OTHER WORKS.	12.10.2020 27.10.2020	As per Individual tender	etenders.hry.nic.in.	0172-2587200 secyhw@hry.nic.in
3	HARYANA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION	ENGAGEMENT OF TRANSPORTERS FOR TRANSPORTATION OF 4500 JUTE GUNNY BALES FROM VARIOUS JUTE MILLS OF WEST BENGAL TO DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS IN THE STATE OF HARYANA	10.10.2020 16.10.2020	-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2584200 secyhw@hry.nic.in
4	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF BUCKET ELEVATOR FOR RICE HUSK WITH FUEL (RICE HUSK) STORAGE BUNKER	12.10.2020 05.11.2020	RS. 12000/-	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9729875323 milkplant@vitaambala.com
5	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	PURCHASE OF SPARE PART OF 500 KVA DG SET OF KILOSKER MAKE	12.10.2020 05.11.2020	RS. 15000/-	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9729875323 milkplant@vitaambala.com
6	THE AMBALA DISTT. COOP. MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF VACUUM PACKING MACHINE FOR PANNEER PACKING IN PACK SIZE OF 200G AND 1000G	12.10.2020 05.11.2020	RS. 5000/-	http://vitaindia.etenders.hry.nic.in www.vitaindia.org.in	0171-2540614, 9729875323 milkplant@vitaambala.com

# Stimulus hopes Healthy Q2 expectations to keep sentiments high

■ NEW DELHI

The accelerated rise in equities will continue at least in the near future, as investors expect a stimulus bonanza for the economy right before the start of the festive season.

Accordingly, traders are also expected to remain invested on the back of anticipated healthy quarterly results and the Reserve Bank's decision to continue with the accommodative policy.

However, volatility might rise on account of profit booking due to expensive propositions along with the upcoming macro-economic inflation and industrial data points.

"After a large weekly gain, the Nifty is close to a resistance band of 12,113-12,246. Hence the Index may inch up gradually, we may see a lot of stock and sector performances based on results and other announcements," Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities, told IANS.

"For traders this is a good period for short term flipping. The support from RBI in its recently concluded MPC meet

removes one macro concern."

"Hence the correction in terms of index also may be limited as and when it begins. Banks seem to have some more upside in store."

The Reserve Bank made an expected move last Friday by retaining key lending rates, but cheered investors and home buyers by giving a liquidity boost and an optimistic outlook. The RBI said it will resort to on-tap long-term repo operations and open market bond purchases to ensure liquidity in the banking system. It has also eased capital requirements on home loans to spur lending to the real estate sector.

"Developments around stimulus package both from the US and the Indian government would keep the sentiments positive," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Going ahead, market is expected to remain positive but with very sector or stock specific actions. Investors would now track earnings season and watch out for management commentaries."

A positive outlook guidance from IT majors might also trigger fresh buying, cited analysts.

Next week, IT firms Wipro, HCL Tech and Infosys may give some guidance on the outlook.

"Markets are expected to continue their rally in the short-term in anticipation of further measures from the Indian government to provide a bonanza of stimulus," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

"Upcoming hearing of moratorium is also expected to drive the domestic market next week."

According to S. Hariharan, Head - Sales Trading, Emkay Global Financial Services: "As Nifty approaches lifetime highs, we can expect rotation of performance among sectors with sideways movement in broader indices and a consolidation of strong market performance."

"Defensive sectors can be expected to outperform in the near-term in such a scenario. Overall fund flow picture remains strong with DIIs and FIs net buyers incrementally over the last few sessions."

# On path to recovery: Sept tendering and awarding grows 43%

■ NEW DELHI

Economic activity hit by Covid-19 pandemic may be gradually returning back to normal levels of last year as tendering activity, a good barometer to gauge the level of economic activity, growing by a staggering 43 per cent in September as compared to same month last year.

Though the high growth during the month is largely on the back of low base YoY, still tendering in September has reached the highest level since March 2019, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a research report.

With the gradual lifting of the lockdown, tendering and awarding activity had picked up in July but slipped again modestly in August and was still below the normal run-rate despite a low base, it has

licked up now in September. The bulk of the pick-up in tendering during the month was driven by Water Supply (up 24 per cent yoy) and Roadways (up 57 per cent yoy) while Irrigation (down 34 per cent yoy) was weaker than recent run-rate.

Average monthly run-rate of tender value after FY19 has been around Rs 45,000 crore as

compared to which September 2020 was at Rs 74,100 crore. The September 2020 tendering activity is still down 15 per cent yoy despite a low base in the second half of the previous comparable period.

Emkay said that despite signs of a pick-up, in FY21 with the fiscal situation of both the Centre and State governments already under pressure and further worsening likely due to Covid-19, tendering and awarding activity should remain subdued.

The awarding activity in September 2020, in value terms, was up 25 per cent yoy. The total awards stood at Rs28700 crore for the month which compares with a monthly run-rate of Rs 30,000 crore until FY19 and

L&T has so far reported an order inflow (ex-services) of only Rs 17,500 crore for the entire Q2FY21 as compared to a normalized run-rate of more than Rs 30,000 crore, the broker said. The breakdown of the orders suggests that bulk of the increase is due to orders such as a charter lease of FPSO from ONGC and renewable energy sector orders bagged by Sterling & Wilson, some of which may not be relevant or sustainable.

# Bank credit offtake remained poor in Apr-Sept: RBI report

■ MUMBAI

Although the banks remain flush with liquidity and interest rates lowered significantly, credit offtake from banks was very low and "anaemic" during the first half of the current financial year (2020-21).

The low credit offtake can be attributed to the weak demand and persistent uncertainty amid the pandemic.

"During H1 2020-21, bank credit offtake was anaemic, reflecting weak demand and uncertainty in the wake of the pandemic," showed the Monetary Policy Report for the October 2020 released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It showed that non-food credit growth (y-o-y) was 5.1 per cent as of September 25, 2020, lower than 8.6 per cent a year ago, driven by weak momentum and base effects.

It noted that the slowdown in credit growth was spread across all bank groups, especially foreign banks.

Credit growth of the public sector banks remained modest, although with some uptick since March 2020.

"Of the incremental credit extended by the scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) on a

**Personal loans and credit to agriculture registered some improvement in July 2020, the momentum could not be sustained in August**

year-on-year basis (September 27, 2019 to September 25, 2020), 62.3 per cent was provided by the public sector banks and 41.2 per cent by the private sector banks, while the share of the foreign banks turned negative," said the report.

The deceleration in non-food credit growth was broad-based, with credit offtake slowing down in all the major sectors.

Though personal loans and credit to agriculture registered some improvement in July 2020, the momentum could not be sustained in August.

Credit growth to services and industrial sectors has also tapered off after showing some promise in the Q1 of FY21.

Personal loans accounted for the largest share of total credit flow in August 2020, followed by services. While the share of personal loans, services and agriculture increased in August 2020 vis-a-vis the previous year, the share of industry contracted.

# Goyal reviews progress of Pragati Maidan convention centre

■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday reviewed the progress of construction activities at Pragati Maidan which is being redeveloped into an Integrated Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC).

Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs H.S.Puri, Principal Advisor to the Prime Minister, P K Sinha, Officers from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, ITPO, NBCC, and other agencies involved in the activity took part in the virtual meeting, an official release said.

After going through the presentations and videos on the status of the construction activities, Goyal expressed satisfaction over the progress, as all the critical activities are under control.

Construction activities, which had suffered earlier due to lockdown and subsequent migration of labour, gained momentum in June, and the same is being maintained. About 4800 workers are presently engaged in various activities at the site. The complete project is likely to be handed over by October 2021.

# Despite odds, fund raising via equity issues jumps 28% in Apr-Sept

■ MUMBAI

The pandemic may have brought economic activities to a standstill but fund raising through public and rights of issue of equities increased nearly 28 per cent to Rs 76,830 crore during the first half of financial year 2020-21.

During the same period last year, last fiscal, funds worth Rs 60,133 crore were raised through issue of equity shares.

"Resource mobilisation through public and rights issues of equity increased to Rs 76,830 crore during H1 2020-21 from Rs 60,133 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year," said the Monetary Policy Report for October 2020 released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

It also showed that Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) turned net buyers in the Indian equity market after panic sales in March due to flight to safety.

Mutual funds, however, were net sellers to the tune of

**During the same period last year, last fiscal, funds worth ₹60,133 crore were raised through issue of equity shares**

Rs 24,801 crore during first half of the FY21.

After undergoing intense volatility in the fourth quarter of 2019-20, following the COVID-19 outbreak with a massive disruption in business activity, the Indian equity market made a strong V-shaped recovery in the first half of FY21.

The BSE Sensex gained 46.5 per cent in April-September 2020-21 after hitting a low of 25,981 on March 23, 2020. Strong rallies in global equity markets on the back of massive fiscal and monetary stimuli in major countries and the measures undertaken in India boosted domestic market sentiments.

# Trade bodies urge Centre to set up shipping regulator to control surging freight charges

■ KOLKATA

Several trade bodies have urged the Centre to set up a regulator to deal with the rising freight charges, amid the problem of container shortages that exporters are facing.

Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EETPC) claimed that shipping lines are demanding high freight charges as inward traffic from different countries, particularly from China, has declined for which the exporters are required to pay a higher amount for outbound consignments.

"Imports from China have fallen and the liners have increased freight rates. No shipping company likes to sail empty after delivery of export consignments," Sanjay Budhia, chairman of CIH national committee on exports and imports, told PTI.

He said all the exporters across the country are facing

this problem.

"This is leading to a situation where cargo is lying at ports. We urged the government to set up a shipping regulator to control the freight rates," Budhia said, adding that exports have started to pick up despite the coronavirus crisis.

After contracting for six months in a row, the country's exports grew by 5.27 per cent to USD 27.4 billion in September.

The shipping companies have raised freight rates due to falling imports from China as liners do not have much cargo while they are returning, an official of the engineering exporters' body said.

"This is making Indian exports uncompetitive in the global markets," an EETPC official said. After witnessing a sharp fall, engineering exports have somewhat steadied, though the contraction continues, he added.

# No change in petrol, diesel prices for over a week now

■ NEW DELHI

Fuel consumers did not face any change in petrol and diesel prices for the entire week as stable global oil prices ensured that oil marketing companies did not need to go for a revision.

Diesel price has stayed at the same level since last Saturday, completing one full week when the fuel did not see any revision. Petrol prices have been stable for a longer period, completing 18 days on Saturday. With no revision in fuel prices on Saturday, in the national capital, diesel continues to be priced at Rs 70.46 per litre. Similarly, prices of the fuel in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, is also stable at ₹76.86, ₹75.95 and ₹73.99 respectively.

The price of petrol in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata remains at ₹81.06, ₹87.74, ₹84.14 and ₹82.59 per litre respectively.

# Worst is over, economic recovery faster than expected: Keki Mistry

■ NEW DELHI

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd's CEO Keki Mistry on Saturday said the "worst is behind us" and the economic recovery has been faster than expected.

Stating that the December quarter growth could outperform the expansion logged in the corresponding quarter a year ago, Mistry said that the Indian economy has shown its resiliency.

Benign interest rate regime will continue going forward and that rates will go up only after economic activity gathers more pace and inflation pressure rises, Mistry, vice chairman and CEO, HDFC Ltd, said at an online dialogue organised by the All India Management Association (AIMA).

He, however, said that interest rates have bottomed out.

The government should identify the job creating sectors and address their issues on priority, AIMA said in a release quoting him.

Mistry said housing and real estate sector is the biggest employer in the economy after agriculture, and that 80 per cent of the workforce in the sector require minimal skills.

He also sought priority support for the manufacturing sectors. Talking about the repayment issues in the housing and the real estate sector, Mistry said that he expected non-performing loans to be in single digits. The veteran financial sector player also said that most of the job losses during COVID-19 were confined to low-income workers and the job losses for the kind of people who borrow money were not alarming.

The non-performing individual loans could be in the range of 2.5-4 per cent, which is also the extent of loans that the RBI has allowed to restructure, Mistry added.

On the economic condition, Mistry said the Indian economy had proved to be resilient.

"The worst is behind us and the recovery has been faster than expected. By the end

of December, the economy would be at the pre-COVID levels for most sectors. The December quarter growth could be better than the growth in the December quarter last year," he said.

However, Mistry qualified his optimism saying that a lot depended on whether another virus wave hits in the winter. Still, he said, the government was aware that India could not afford another lockdown.

Job creation and leaving money in the hands of the people should be the top two priorities of the government, Mistry said. Consumption being 60 per cent of the Indian economy, the recovery and growth efforts have to be led by boosting consumption, he said.

"The cost of lowering taxes would not be too high whereas the benefits from higher consumption would far outweigh the revenue loss to the government. While the corporate tax rates had gone down, the peak rate for individual tax rate had gone up from 35 per cent to 44 per cent," Mistry said.

**JAMMU & KASHMIR POLICE HEADQUARTERS**  
Phone: 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu), E-mail :- phqjk@nic.in  
(Provision Section)  
**Clarification Notice**  
In partial modification of Amendment Notice issued vide endorsement No. 426 70-78 dated 29.09.2020, please read Annexure A-1 as "e-NIT No. 36 of 2020 dated 29.08.2020 for installation of IP based Video Surveillance System" instead of Inventory Management System".  
The other terms and conditions of the NIT shall remain the same.  
Sd/- Rayees Mohammad Bhat (IPS), AIG (Provision/Transport),  
No: DIPK-7070/20 Dated: 09.10.2020 For Director General of Police, J&K- Srinagar

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

**Whereas**  
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) R/w Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, (on underlying pool assigned to ICICI Bank by Dewan Housing Finance Ltd.) in relation to the enforcement of security in respect of a housing loan facility granted pursuant to a loan agreement entered into between DHFL and the borrower, 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 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 dates. 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.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Number (Loan Account Number (DHFL Old LAN & ICICI New LAN))	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Sanjay Joshi/ Bhuwan Chandra Joshi/ 19600044063 & QZGRN0005040216	RZ C3/120, Second Floor, Without Roof, Khasra No 16/7, Villageage Mirzapur, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi, 110045/ October 06, 2020	November 28, 2019 Rs. 17,32,746/-	Delhi/ Ncr
2.	Sanjay/ Arti Gautam/ 19600044252 & QZGRN0005017454	D-1/140-B, UGF & TF With Roof Right, Gali No-05, KH, No- 692/92, 93 & 94, Vill- Nasirpur, Mahavir Enclave Delhi/ October 06, 2020	February 17, 2020 Rs. 16,72,164/-	Delhi/ Ncr
3.	Sanjeev Kumar/ Soniya/ 19600044282 & QZGRN0005019520	MCD No. 510-B- 2 Upper Ground Floor, LHS Part Of Property No. 510, Kh. No. 93, Gali No. 6, Govindpuri Kalkaji, South Delhi, New Delhi- 110019/ October 06, 2020	November 28, 2019 Rs. 8,52,847/-	Delhi/ Ncr
4.	Subodh Choudhary/ Sunita Devi/ 25500001227 & QZPTU0005064384	House No-E-1304 (Old No. WZ-480-C), LHS 1st Floor Without Roof, Khasra No-659 & 660, Vill. Basai Darapur, Sudershan Park Delhi/ October 06, 2020	December 11, 2019 Rs. 21,59,468/-	Delhi/ Ncr

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

Date : 09-10-2020  
Place: Delhi/ NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited

**CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**

No. GMA/GS/1521(CMP)(3) Dated:08.10.2020  
**ENGAGEMENT OF CONTRACT MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS ON FULL TIME CONTRACT BASIS IN CLW/CHITTARANJAN SPECIALLY FOR COVID-19 SITUATION**

Ref.-:Railway Board's Letter No.2020/(GR)II/COVID-19/WFH/1 Dtd.28.03.2020 & 31.03.2020. CLW Administration A Walk-in-Interview will be conducted to form a panel of doctors for their engagement as 'Contract Medical Practitioners'-COVID-19 on full-time contract basis for period upto 31.12.2020 (liable to be extended by Rly. Board) in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works/Chittaranjan on the terms and conditions available/uploaded in CLW's Website:-1. **Name of the post:** Contract Medical Practitioner (CMP) .2. **No. of Posts:** 15 (Fifteen). Communal break up - UR-08, OBC-03,SC-02 ,ST-01, EWS-01 (In case of non-availability of candidates from Reserved Community & Economically Weaker Section , UR candidates will be engaged as CMP. SN; **Discipline; No. of post :** (1); **Internist specialist; 04. (2); Chest Specialist; 03. (3); GDMO; 08.** In case of non-availability of Specialists as indicated above, the same will be filled up by engaging GDMOs (General Duty Medical Officer). CMPs can be posted anywhere in Health Unit, Dispensary, Hospital etc. in CLW as per requirement. **Doctors [including Retired from Rly./Govt.(Central/State)/ PSU] who are willing for the above engagement and satisfying the requisite qualification and age etc. as given on the notification available/uploaded in CLW's Website are requested to immediately email/WhatsApp their bio-data (as per application format, even in hand written will be accepted ) & relevant documents on contacts provided below before 24.00 hrs. of 15.10.2020. However, candidates may apply even after 15.10.2020 subject to availability of vacancies. APO/GAZ Mobile No. 9163340604. Email ID- apog@clw.railnet.gov.in. On receipt of applications, interview will be organized through video calling/personal interview as per feasibility from 16.10.2020 onwards which shall be indicated to the applicant via WhatsApp or E-mail. After selection process, result will be published on internet / WhatsApp. Selected candidates should be prepared to join on a short notice. **N.B.:- Complete Notification including Application Form available/uploaded in the CLW's website: www.clw.indianrailways.gov.in (Under the link: News & Recruitment-->Recruitment-->Notification for engagement of Contract Medical Practitioner at K.G. Hospital/CLW especially for COVID-19 situation--> Download).** Dy. Chief Personnel Officer(Gaz. & Admn.) CLW/Chittaranjan RDS-133  
Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways**

# Agri exports rise 43.4 pc in Apr-Sept: Govt

■ NEW DELHI

Exports of agri-commodities rose by 43.4 per cent to ₹53,626.6 crore in the first half of the current fiscal notwithstanding the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, the Union Agriculture Ministry said on Saturday.

Farm exports stood at ₹37,397.3 crore during the April-September period of the 2019-20 fiscal, it said.

In September 2020, agri exports rose by 81.7 per cent to ₹9,296 crore from ₹5,114 crore in September 2019.

"The consistent and concerted efforts of the government to boost agricultural exports are bearing fruit as despite of the on-going Covid-19 crisis, the export of essential agri commodities for the cumulative period of April-September, 2020 has increased by 43.4 per cent to ₹53,626.6 crore," the ministry said in a statement.

Positive growth was recorded in export of groundnut (35 per cent), refined sugar (104 per cent), wheat (206 per cent), basmati rice (13 per cent) and non-basmati rice (105 per cent) during the April-September of this fiscal from over the year-ago, it said.

deficit of ₹2,133 crore in the said period, it added.

To boost agri exports, the government announced Agriculture Export Policy, 2018 which inter-alia provides for cluster-based approach for export-centric farming of cash crops like fruits, vegetables, spices, etc.

Whereby clusters for specific agri products are identified across the country and focused interventions are carried out in these clusters.

Eight Export Promotion Forums (EPFs) have been set up under the aegis of agri-export promotion body APEDA to boost export of agriculture/horticulture products.

The EPFs are created on banana, grapes, mango, pomegranate, onion, dairy, rice basmati and rice non-basmati.

The EPF are making concerted efforts to identify, document particulars of, and reach out to stakeholders across the entire production/supply chain of export for increasing these exports significantly to the global market, through various interventions, it said.

That apart, the government has also announced Agri-Infra Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore to improve agri business environment which will promote agri exports in due course, the ministry said.

# I-T dept raids Ahmedabad-based real estate group

■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax (I-T) Department, based on credible intelligence, performed a search and seizure action in Ahmedabad on a group engaged in real estate, construction and land trading business.

The search was conducted at 27 premises on Thursday, which included the offices and residences of some associates of the group.

During the search, unexplained cash of around Rs 69 lakh and jewellery worth around Rs 82 lakh were seized.

Besides, 18 bank lockers have been found and placed under restraint. A large number of incriminating documents and digital data in mobile phones, pen drives and computers have also been found and seized.

The group had around 96 companies at a few common addresses, which were being used for routing money and for land holding. Most of the companies were found to have no real business and very few returns of income have been filed. Many have not filed returns with the ROC. Some directors of these concerns, other than the main family members, have accepted to be dummy directors with mere signing roles. Innovative methods of tax evasion by increasing the cost of properties through intra-group transactions, on which tax is not paid, have been noticed by the department.

No matter how sick one feels, but just when we enter a doctor's clinic and spot the man in a white coat festooned with a stethoscope, all the pain seems to disappear. Such has been our faith in the doctors who are considered nothing less than a God in a country like ours. The pandemic seems to have highlighted the importance of doctors even more, not that they were considered any less before.

However, what can't be ignored is the fact that around 515 doctors have sacrificed their lives in the fight against COVID-19. The question here is why? Perhaps because our fragile healthcare system could have done nothing much to save them, because this is how unprepared we were in the fight, to say the least.

Not only doctors, but several nurses and other healthcare workers have fallen prey to the disease, may be because they didn't have proper safety gears. Whatever the reason may have been, the loss in itself is huge and terrible.

Dr Shuchin Bajaj, Founder-Director, Ujala Cygnus Group of Hospitals, tells you that the scariest part is that more than 2,500 family members of the doctors have lost their lives too.

"Doctors have been at the frontline of the fight against COVID and it's no wonder that more than 500 doctors have been martyred during this war. The scariest part is more than 2,500 family members of the doctors have lost their lives because the doctors had got the infection home. The Government has put healthcare at the bottom of its priority for a long time and no election in India has been fought with healthcare as the main agenda, contrary to the Western countries like the US, UK and the European countries where healthcare is the biggest election manifesto in every polls," Bajaj says.

He adds that the National Health Service has been the topic of every election that has happened in the UK. "The Obama care bill was the biggest issue in the last elections, which the Republicans had fought on. Healthcare has been the biggest issue in all of the countries but in India. The Government has really disregarded it completely and the healthcare expenditure in GDP in India is lower than each and every country in the world. It's worse than countries like Cambodia too. So, nobody is prepared and the poorest of the poor goes to private healthcare facilities and they have to sell their houses and lands to access healthcare. Supply chains were completely broken when pandemic hit. The Government doctors especially had to work without masks, PPEs and that's how they got the infection. The infection load was very high because they were seeing so many patients continuously. That's why there were so many lives lost," he explains.

So, the blame, he says, is completely on the Government. "They are never ready to fight any health challenge. They have outsourced it conveniently to private healthcare. The Government needs to reconsider its priorities and work on the health sector a lot by increasing the expenditure, make sure that the Government healthcare facilities are as good, if not better than the private. We need to protect our doctors and nurses because each doctor treats hundreds and thousands of patients. One loss of a doctor's life is a huge loss for the Government as it spends crores on one doctor's training to treat patients. And, if we lose a doctor at the prime of his life, it's a big loss to the entire community. So, we need to protect them by ensuring good quality masks, PPEs and well-equipped infrastructure. We also need to ensure that there are sufficient doctors so that one doctor doesn't have to work 24x7 and gets enough time to rest in between to rebuild his immunity, which is of utmost importance today," Bajaj tells you.

Commandar Navneet Bali, National Convener, AHPI, tells you that since the pandemic has broken out a huge shift has been witnessed in the healthcare sector. "Since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, a huge shift is witnessed in the private as well as public healthcare sector. Many organisations came forward to help and also many companies started manufacturing ventilators which helped in fighting the pandemic to a great extent. Surely we need to do better as far as the healthcare infrastructure is concerned. We also need more workforce. Hence, the recently launched two-year diploma courses by the Government are much appreciable as our country needs more specialised healthcare workers," he says.

Saving ourselves from this virus and taking care of ourselves and our family members in order to reduce the burden on the healthcare workers, he says, is one of the best ways to convey our regards and to thank them. "Wearing a mask is a must. Remember, our careless attitude has been one of the reasons behind the increasing fatalities. Our society needs to learn several things at different levels. Since the outbreak, we have even come across reports people misbehaving with doctors and assaulting them. This is unfortunate and makes us think that a lot has to be done even now to acknowledge the valuable contribution of our doctors and pay them much needed respect. This is not the first time we have witnessed a pandemic, but now is the time to learn from the past and present as well and be prepared for the future," Bali tells you.

Dr P Venkata Krishnan, Consultant — Internal Medicines, Paras Hospital, Gurugram, tells you that if the infrastructure was in place, we could have been able to save the lives of a lot of doctors. "A lot of doctors could have been saved, if our healthcare system was in place. Our healthcare infrastructure lacks many things. First and foremost, the cost of our healthcare services is very low as compared to the other countries. Secondly, the Government had not put adequate precaution for doctors. The Government should have asked the doctors above 55 years of age at the Government hospital to not to come on active duty till the disease is completely understood. Third, there were not enough

# DEAR DOCTOR

According to the list put out by IMA, at least 500 doctors have lost their lives in the fight against COVID-19. The unfortunate event raises many questions as to who is to be blamed for the loss. MUSBA HASHMI speaks to doctors and experts who analyse the situation and tell you if these could have been saved



## INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Protect the Couple and Single Doctor Setups

IMA dedicates the sacrifice of 515 Indian doctors in the fight against Covid 19 pandemic to the nation. We salute the martyrs. We salute all the nurses and the health care workers who sacrificed their lives as well.



Dr. Manoj K Singh	Dr. Ranajit Mandal	Dr. Dinesh Prakash	Dr. Jagdish Chandra	Dr. M.K. Sarin	Dr. Om Prakash Chaudhary	Dr. Rajesh Shah	Dr. Tarun Kumar
Dr. A. S. Prakash	Dr. Rajendra Kumar	Dr. D. S. Patil	Dr. J. K. Singh	Dr. M. K. Singh	Dr. P. Singh	Dr. S. Singh	Dr. T. Singh
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Dr. Anil Singh							



I'm really happy with the way we came out in the second innings. We thought it was an under par score but it was stopping on the wicket and the bowlers really did well

We are not playing good enough over the 40 overs, and not executing when the pressure is coming on and you can't win many games that way

The pitches in Guyana are pretty similar to what we get here and in the Indian sub continent with regards to spinners. I had no choice but to adjust to it and get better.

When Hetmyer and I were batting, we were thinking to score somewhere around 165-170 because this was a considerably slower wicket than we had played on earlier.

DUGOUT

MOTION PICTURE



Mumbai locals Prithvi Shaw and Yashasvi Jaiswal chat after end of IPL game against Delhi Capitals and Rajasthan Royals  
Rajasthan Royals/Twitter

POREL WILL GET GAME SOON

Kings XI Punjab captain KL Rahul has stated that pacer Ishan Porel "will soon get a game" in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL). "Look, he's been very good, he's bowled well in the nets. I've been impressed with how he's been bowling. He's had a great first class season as well so yeah, some exciting guys in the line-up and one of them being Ishan. Sure at some point, he'll get a game," the official Kings XI website quoted Rahul as saying ahead of their match against Kolkata Knight Riders to be played on Saturday. Alongside Porel, another player who could be spotted in Kings XI colours soon this season could be the Chris Gayle. Head coach Anil Kumble revealed that Gayle was in fact due to play against SunRisers Hyderabad, but couldn't make the cut in the end due to health reasons.

DC UP FOR ANY CHALLENGE

Delhi Capitals head scout Vijay Dahiya has been pleased with the performance of his team so far in the ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League. On Friday, Delhi moved to the top of the points table after beating Rajasthan Royals by 46 runs. Having been invited to bat first on a high-scoring Sharjah pitch, Delhi Capitals posted 184-8, presumably a below-par score at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium. However, the bowlers rose to the occasion and helped the team to bag their fifth victory of the season by a margin of 46 runs. "It was a team game played by the individuals - you play your role, you play your part or sometimes you do something extraordinary, and this is the whole crux of this team," said Dahiya.

PUNTER WORKING ON HETMYER

Learning the art of playing a perfect pull shot from the peerless Ricky Ponting is a dream that Shimron Hetmyer is living during his stint with the Delhi Capitals. "It's been fun to be around Ricky. A very good guy. He is right now working on my pull shot. He has observed that in last few games, people have been bowling short to me. So far he is working on my pulling and he has done one hell of a job with me," Hetmyer sounded like a disciple in awe of his mentor while talking about the Capitals head coach. "He is teaching me the art of being a better finisher and I am getting there gradually."

WE LET DELHI OFF THE HOOK

Rajasthan Royals skipper Steve Smith said they let Delhi Capitals off the hook by conceding an extra 15-20 runs in their Indian Premier League match on a slow Sharjah pitch. "I think the wicket did slow down a bit, probably it was not that good as it was in our first two games, but having said that, we probably let them off the hook in the first innings, we probably let them get 10-15 too many," Smith said. Smith added, "During the chase, we lost wickets again, I got out, we just kept on losing wickets at regular intervals, and chasing 180 odd on a wicket that has slowed up is not easy." "We always knew 180 would be a tough chase, we needed to string together partnerships but we were not able to do that," Smith said.

POINTS TABLE

	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1 DC	6	5	1	+1.267	10
2 MI	6	4	2	+1.488	8
3 KKR	6	4	2	+0.017	8
4 RCB	6	4	2	-0.820	8
5 SRH	5	3	2	-1.355	6
6 CSK	7	2	4	-0.371	4
7 RR	5	2	3	-0.826	4
8 KXIP	7	1	6	-0.381	2

EVERY INCH MATTER

KKR make yet another stunning comeback in late two-run win over Kings XI Punjab

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Sunil Narine and Prasad Krishna displayed ice-cool temperament at the death as Kolkata Knight Riders pulled off a stunning two-run victory over a self-destructive Kings XI Punjab in an IPL game on Saturday. Dinesh Karthik's side pulled off yet another Houdini Act after they were seemingly down and out when KXIP opening pair KL Rahul (74) and Mayank Agarwal (56) had put on 115 runs in 14.2 overs while chasing 165. It looked like it would be only a matter of time when KXIP would wrap up the match and snap their four-match losing streak. But in the end, KXIP made a mess towards the end of their run chase to suffer their sixth defeat from seven matches and fifth on the trot while KKR notched up their fourth win in six matches. KXIP will now need a mathematical miracle to qualify.

The Mohali-based outfit needed 22 from the final three overs but the match turned on its head in the 18th over. Nicholas Pooran (16) gifted his wicket in the over bowled by Narine who conceded just two runs. Needing 20 runs in the last two overs, KXIP lost two wickets in the space of three balls, including that of



Shubman Gill plays a shot during Indian Premier League at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi

BCCI

Rahul, in the penultimate over bowled by pacer Prasad Krishna.

KXIP needed 14 runs from the last over and six of the final delivery to take the match to Super Over but Glenn Maxwell could only score a boundary for KXIP to lose the match by two runs.

Earlier, Rahul and Agarwal, the top two run getters in this IPL, avoided taking undue risk while getting the odd boundaries to keep the asking rate under control. They were 47 for no loss after powerplay with Pat Cummins bowling three of the first six overs.

Rahul was dropped by Andre Russell off the bowling of Prasad Krishna in the second over when he was on two. Russell hurt himself while fielding after a few overs but returned in the 11th over only to leave the field again in the 13th over. KXIP were 76 for no loss at the halfway mark and the duo kept on getting the ones and twos without much trouble with the KKR suddenly finding a death over bowler less without Russell.

KKR finally got the breakthrough with Agarwal holding out to Shubman Gill in the 15th over but new man in Pooran went for an unnecessary shot that led to his and

Pulse was racing inside but I kept calm: Narine

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Sunil Narine said he was feeling the pressure but managed to keep his calm while bowling a successful final over that earned his team a narrow two-run win against Kings XI Punjab in an IPL match here on Saturday.

KKR were seemingly down and out when KXIP needed 22 from the final three overs but Narine tilted the match in his side's favour by dismissing Nicholas Pooran and conceding just two runs in the 18th over. Narine also bowled the final over of which

KXIP needed 14 runs. They needed a six off the final ball to take the match to Super Over but Glenn Maxwell could only score a boundary to hand KKR a two-run win.

"When the last ball went up in the air, I thought I was going to bowl full and wide, I bowled full and wide, but then I thought I had made a mistake," Narine said at the post-match presentation. "It is not ideal (for me to bowling at the death) but someone has to do that. I am used to doing it in the past. Inside the pulse is racing, but this calm is just how I am," the West Indian off-spinner added.

KXIP's downfall.

Opting to bat, a counter-attacking 58 off just 29 balls by skipper Dinesh Karthik and opener Shubman Gill's 57-run knock helped KKR post 164 for 6.

Karthik's decision to bat first seemed to be backfiring as KKR were struggling at 63 for 3 in the 11th over but he changed the

complexion of the innings with a magnificent knock which included eight fours and two sixes.

The KKR captain, who was run out in the last ball of the innings, had some exquisite shots and his placements were brilliant, besides his top-class running between the wicket. His fifty came off just 22 balls.

Virat win for RCB

PTI ■ DUBAI

Virat Kohli's epic skill level complemented by peak fitness proved to be too good for Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings which slumped to its fifth defeat by 37 runs in an Indian Premier League campaign already gone awry.

It was captain Kohli's unbeaten 90 off 52 balls that powered RCB to a competitive 169 for 4 on a slowish track after opting to bat.

The CSK batting, which has been wobbly throughout the first four weeks fared no better after Washington Sundar (2/16 in 3 overs) removed Shane Watson and Faf du Plessis inside the Powerplay overs. In the end, they finished on 132 for 8 in 20 overs.

Ambati Rayudu (42 off 40 balls) and rookie N Jagadeesan (33) added 64 but the partnership never took off on a track where ball wasn't coming onto the bat.

Once the wily Yuzvendra Chahal dismissed MS Dhoni (10) with a brilliantly set-up plan, the match was as good as over. CSK now have four points from seven games and are in danger of missing out on Play-Offs for the first time in 11 seasons.

Dhoni, was in a mood to make amends but Chahal lured him with a few tossed up deliveries on his pads as he shaped for the big hits.

Dhoni tried to pre-empt Chahal's next move as the leg-spinner slid one on the imaginary fifth off-stump and the former India captain was in a tangle as he failed to get required elevation. The catch at long-off was gleefully accepted by Gurkeerat Singh Mann.

Once Rayudu was dismissed by a back of the hand slower from Isuru Udana (1/30 in 4 overs), the match was all over. Special mention for Chris Morris (3/19 in 4 overs), who was brilliant in his first appearance for RCB bowling tight lines with a hint of away movement from right-handers.

Earlier, Kohli, who walked in at the fall of Aaron Finch in the third over, led from the front with a majestic 52-ball knock that was the finest blend of skill and peak fitness.

His innings had four fours and as many sixes but in searing Dubai humidity, ran four twos in the final over, a testament to the hours put in rigorous physical training.



PTI ■ DUBAI

BRUISED AND BATTERED

After a string of defeats, Rajasthan Royals will hope the presence of Ben Stokes gets the adrenaline flowing as they seek a revival of fortunes against a charged-up Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League on Sunday. Rajasthan are struggling at the penultimate spot on the points table after two wins and four straight defeats,

while Sunrisers have won three out of their six games so far and occupy the third position.

The Royals will be relieved to have the services of Stokes who completes his mandatory quarantine on Saturday. His absence has severely impacted the team's campaign, as the inaugural season champions struggled to figure out their best combination.

Stokes had taken compassionate leave in the middle of England's home Test series against Pakistan in August and travelled to New Zealand to attend to his father who had been diagnosed with brain cancer.

It was Stokes' father who reminded the star all-rounder of his duty towards his job and that might be playing in the 29-year-old's mind.

It is to be seen whether the World Cup winner, who has been out of action for some time now, is afforded the luxury of some practice or is played straight up.

"Stokes hasn't had a lot of practice, he gets out of quarantine tomorrow, so we'll see if he plays the day after tomorrow," skipper Steve Smith had said after the match against Delhi Capitals.

Rajasthan, having lost to Delhi Capitals by a big margin of 46 runs, will look to stage a comeback.

An aggressive bowling display coupled with some good fielding saw them restrict Delhi Capitals to 184 for eight. However, the batsmen, save Yashasvi Jaiswal (34) and Rahul Tewatia (38), struggled during the chase.

The top guns — Jos Buttler, Smith and Sanju Samson — will again need to live up to the expectations by contributing in a big way.

Samson (176) and Smith (157) scored runs in their first two matches, twice taking the side past the 200-mark.

Rajasthan's bowling is shouldered by pacer Jofra Archer and spinners Tewatia and Shreyas Gopal.

The Royals were off to a flying start, winning both their games at Sharjah but the former champions have since struggled to replicate those performances.

Having a slightly better season than their beleaguered opponents, Sunrisers were on their way to suffer back-to-back defeats before opener Jonny

Bairstow and star spinner Rashid Khan helped them beat Kings XI Punjab by three wickets on Thursday.

For Sunrisers, Bairstow has been in prime form this season, smashing 97 off 55 balls against KXIP, and the English opener was at his explosive best against the Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore, too.

Skipper David Warner, who has scored 227 runs so far, would like to carry on with his good form after smashing 52 off 40 balls in the last match. Manish Pandey and Kane Williamson are batsmen who can use the long handle to good effect while youngsters Priyam Garg, Abdul Samad and Abhishek Sharma are trying to carve a niche for themselves.

TOPPERS MEET

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Many small battles are expected to unfold when the season's two most consistent teams — Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals — cross swords in a clash of equals in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Be it a potent top-order, a strong middle-order or a lethal bowling attack, there is hardly anything that separates the two sides.

If at all one team has a slight upper hand in any department, it's the experience in Mumbai Indians' pace bowling arsenal. Both Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult, with years of experience behind them, could be the difference in the most sought-after contest of this edition.

It means that Shikhar Dhawan will have to strive harder to give the Capitals a solid start. The left-handed batsman has got starts in the last few games but

needs a bigger innings under his belt and if it comes in a big contest, Capitals will have gained a lot.

In a way, young Prithvi Shaw and the in-form Rishabh Pant will face their first stiff test when they face Bumrah and Boult, who can trouble any batsman with their pace and accuracy.

The good news for Capitals is Shimron Hetmyer getting his touch back with the innings against Rajasthan Royals on Friday. He seemed to be the only weak link in Capitals' ranks but

his six-laden knock against Royals has removed that worry. Capitals' skipper Shreyas Iyer has been very impressive so far both as a batsman and as the leader of the pack. It will be interesting to see how he uses his resources against his in-form counterpart Rohit Sharma and his smashing middle-order duo of Hardik Pandya and Kieron Pollard.

They can change the complexion of the game within minutes and handling them will be the key. Krunal Pandya, too, is capable of conjuring up cameos that can turn things around for Mumbai Indians.

Iyer has the exciting South African pace duo of Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortze to do the job in that department. The guile of Ravichandran Ashwin further adds sting to Capitals' attack. Axar Patel has nicely settled into the side after he replaced the injured Amit Mishra. His all-round ability is another plus for the Capitals.

At the big Abu Dhabi ground, a score in the vicinity of 170 is normally par for any other side in the IPL, but for Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals, even 200 may not appear safe.

'I feel uncomfortable on being compared with Rohit'

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's young batsman Haider Ali says while he admires India's Rohit Sharma and wants to play like him but comparisons with the Indian great makes him uncomfortable.

Haider, who made his T20 debut for Pakistan recently on the England tour and scored a blazing half century, said Rohit is a very accomplished player and there was no comparison with him.

Haider insisted he had a long way to go to be recognised as a top batsman.

"He is a top batsman and I feel uncomfortable when anyone compares us. There is no comparison. He has already achieved so much," said Haider.

The youngster said he had learnt a lot just by watching videos of other great batsmen and conceded he loved watching Rohit's innings and taking tips from them.

The youngster said that he would love to be part of Pakistan's team in all three formats and not just be confined to one format.

"I can perform in all three formats as I enjoy playing in them. I had a good first class season and



our coach, Muhammad Wasim had given me good guidance at the Northern side," he said.

Haider, 20, said playing domestic cricket was important for any young player and if a head coach gives confidence to his player at this level it makes a big difference to the development of that player.

"I have always felt that if your coach gives you confidence it makes a big difference to the confidence of a player and he performs to his full potential."

India's short quarantine request likely to be rejected

PTI ■ SYDNEY

BCCI President Sourav Ganguly's request for a shorter than mandated quarantine period for the Indian team in Brisbane, ahead of its tour of Australia, is likely to be rejected, said a report in the Sydney Morning Herald.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the rules of the game, which restarted with the Test series between England and the West Indies in July. Players have to be in quarantine for two weeks and be tested for the virus before they can take the field.

"Queensland health officials are set to make cricket's most powerful nation adhere to strict national protocols, details of which have delayed Cricket Australia announcing a revised schedule for its USD 300 million summer," the daily wrote in its report.

India is keen on a reduced quarantine and wants the players to be allowed to train in a bio-secure bubble instead of being restricted to a hotel

room, which, the BCCI fears, can take a toll on the fitness of its players.

"We just hope the number of quarantine days get reduced a bit. Because we don't want the players to go all that far and sit in hotel rooms for two weeks. It is very, very depressing and disappointing. We are looking at that, the quarantine thing," Ganguly had said in July.

The report added that the BCCI has filed an application, requesting that an extended playing squad, coaches, support staff and families land in Brisbane days after the final of the ongoing Indian Premier League in the UAE on November 10, which is under consideration.

"Queensland Health is currently assessing an application received from the Indian cricket team. We will work directly with the team as the assessment progresses," a QH spokeswoman said.

India are set to travel to Australia with a jumbo squad

comprising 23 to 25 playing members across formats considering the requirements of the series to be played in bio-bubble amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

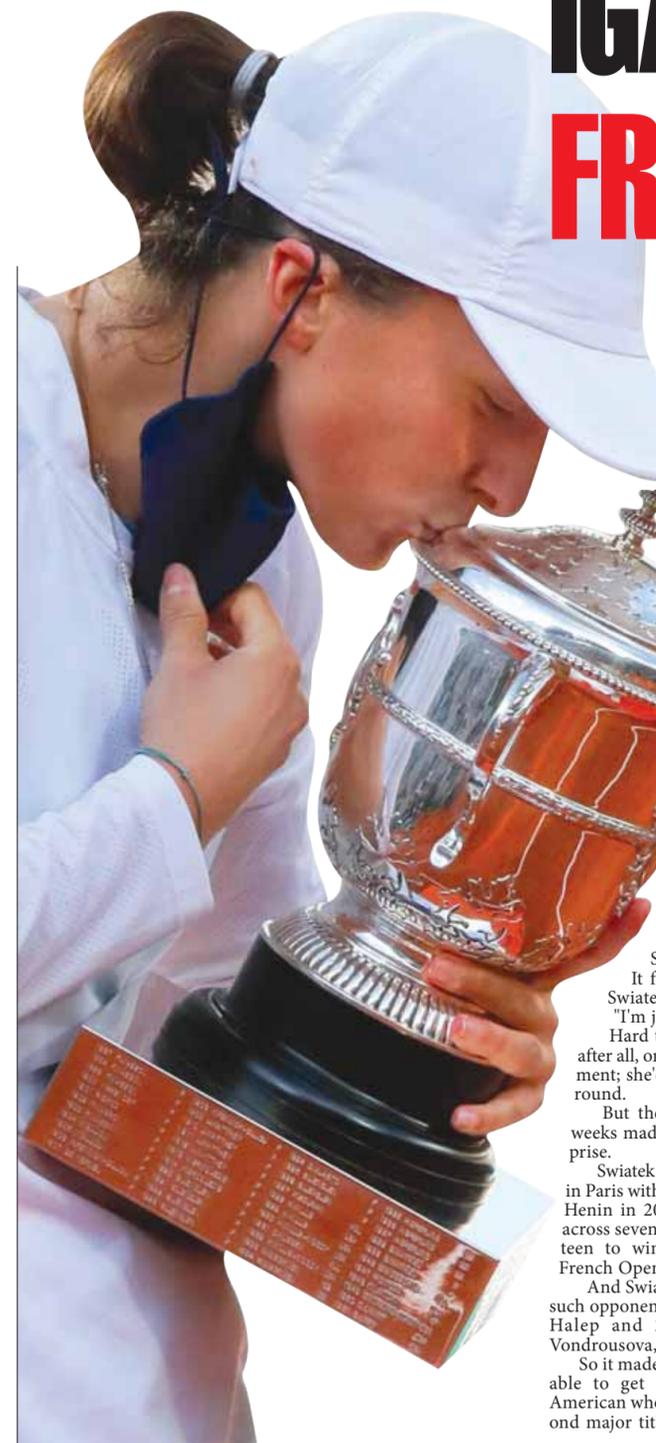
Test specialists Cheteshwar Pujara, Hanuma Vihari and the support staff led by head coach Ravi Shastri are likely to have a six-day quarantine in Dubai during the business end of the IPL, before flying off to Australia.

It is understood that the two-sides will play the white-ball series before the Test with the three-match ODIs in Brisbane (tentatively November 26, 28 and 30), followed by T20s at the Adelaide Oval (December 4, 6, 8).

The four-match Test series is slated to start on December 17.

Recently, the New Zealand's women's team also had to go through a 14-day quarantine in Queensland, where it was allowed to train, before its series against Australia.

# IGA IS NEW FRENCH QUEEN



AP ■ PARIS

With the poise of a veteran and the shots of a champion, 19-year-old Iga Swiatek picked the perfect place for her first tour-level title: the French Open. Unseeded and ranked merely 54th, Swiatek grabbed the last six games to beat Sofia Kenin 6-4, 6-1 in the final at Roland Garros on Saturday, becoming the first Polish tennis player to win a Grand Slam singles trophy. When she smacked one last forehand winner to the corner to end things, Swiatek placed her right hand over her mouth then crouched, shaking her head. "It's crazy. Two years ago, I won a junior Grand Slam, and right now I'm here. It feels like such a short time," Swiatek said, her voice cracking. "I'm just overwhelmed." Hard to believe? Maybe. This was, after all, only her seventh major tournament; she'd never been past the fourth round. But the way she played these two weeks made this outcome less of a surprise. Swiatek is the first woman to triumph in Paris without ceding a set since Justine Henin in 2007. She lost only 28 games across seven matches, too. She is the first teen to win the women's title at the French Open since Iva Majoli in 1997. And Swiatek did it with victories over such opponents as 2018 champion Simona Halep and 2019 runner-up Marketa Vondrousova, both by scores of 6-1, 6-2. So it made sense that Swiatek would be able to get past Kenin, a 21-year-old American who was trying to claim her second major title of 2020 after winning the

Australian Open in February. "A great tournament. A great match," Kenin told Swiatek during the trophy ceremony. Kenin was 16-1 in Grand Slam matches until Saturday. But she dealt with a leg issue in the second set and showed frustration by kicking her red-white-and-blue racket after lost points. And then there was this: She ran into the composed Swiatek, who only recently completed her high school studies, listens to "Welcome to the Jungle" by Guns N' Roses before walking on court, travels with a sports psychologist and meditates during changeovers, breathing slowly with her eyes closed. "I was just mentally consistent," Swiatek said. "I felt like today was really stressful for me, so it was kind of hard." This weekend is the culmination of an unusual two weeks, to say the least. The tournament was postponed from May-June to September-October because of the coronavirus pandemic; the recently rising number of COVID-19 cases in France led the government to limit the number of spectators allowed on the grounds to 1,000 each day. Some top women, including 2019 champion Ash Barty and three-time major champ Naomi Osaka didn't enter the event; 23-time Slam winner Serena Williams withdrew before the second round with an injury. The temperature was in the mid-50s (low teens Celsius), with a slight breeze, and the hundreds of fans scattered in Court Philippe Chatrier were mostly subdued - other than a group that would shout out Swiatek's first name, stretching it out over several seconds each time to sound like "Eeeeeeeeeee-gah." At the changeover after the third game of the second set, Kenin was visited by a trainer and went off the court for a medical timeout, then returned with her left thigh wrapped. Kenin said after her fourth-round match Monday that she had slipped and maybe pulled something during practice the day before. While Kenin was gone, Swiatek tried to stay warm by pulling on a white jacket and hitting some serves, earning applause from spectators. When play resumed, Swiatek needed only 12 more minutes to wrap up the victory, finishing with a 25-10 edge in winners.

# It's Rafa vs Novak

AP ■ PARIS

Go all the way back to June 8, 2006, when Rafael Nadal moved on at the French Open after his 19-year-old, 63rd-ranked opponent in the quarterfinals quit because of a bad back while trailing two sets to none. That opponent's assessment of Nadal after facing him for the first time as pros: "He's the best on this surface, but he's not unbeatable. That's for sure." Hmmm. That foe? Novak Djokovic. Fast-forward to the final at Roland Garros on Sunday, when No. 1 Djokovic and No. 2 Nadal will stand across from each other once again at Court Philippe Chatrier, only this time in October after the tournament was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic. It will be their 56th tour-level meeting - more than any other pair of men in the Open era, which dates to 1968. And let's not forget the big picture: This match carries significant weight in the Grand Slam standings that so many fans, and the players themselves, keep tabs on. Roger Federer, who is 39 and missed most of this season after having two knee operations, owns the men's record of 20 major championships. Nadal, who is 34, is next among men with 19; Djokovic, 33, stands third with 17. After Sunday, either Nadal will pull even with Federer for the first time since they were tied with zero apiece, or Djokovic will gain on the leading duo and the totals will read 20-19-18. For now, this is how each has filled his trophy cabinet: - Djokovic: 8 at the Australian Open, 5 at Wimbledon, 3 at the U.S. Open, 1 at the French Open; - Nadal: 12 at the French Open, 4 at the U.S. Open, 2 at Wimbledon, 1 at the Australian Open; - Federer: 8 at Wimbledon, 6 at the Australian Open, 5 at the U.S. Open, 1 at the French Open. All three are greats of the game, regardless of where the numbers end up, of course. Still, as much as Nadal wouldn't engage in a discussion about his chance to catch Federer after beating Diego Schwartzman 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (0) in the semifinals Friday, he did acknowledge that "it's good for tennis" if others talk about it.



Rafael Nadal clenching his fist after winning the first set AP

Rest assured, they will. Much in the way that for years, people will debate which of the Big Three duos had the most intriguing head-to-head matchup: Federer vs. Nadal, Djokovic vs. Federer, or Nadal vs. Djokovic. "He's definitely my greatest rival," Djokovic said about Nadal on Friday after getting past Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-3, 6-2, 5-7, 4-6, 6-1 in the semifinals. "Playing him in so many great matches, of course the past will have some effect, in terms of respect towards each other, I guess -- motivation to get out on the court and play your best, knowing that we both have to be at our best in order to win against each other." Nadal called Djokovic, who is 37-1 in 2020, the lone loss via disqualification at the U.S. Open last month, "one of the toughest opponents possible." "The only thing I know is: To play against Novak, I need to play my best. Without playing my best tennis, (the) situation is very difficult," Nadal said.

# Fighter Tsitsipas is one of world's best player

AP ■ PARIS

Seventeen-time Grand Slam Champion Novak Djokovic has heaped praise on Stefanos Tsitsipas, saying the Greek is a fighter and one of the best players in the world. On Friday evening, Djokovic survived a fight-back from fifth seed Tsitsipas as he had to battle it out for almost four hours to secure a hard-fought 6-3, 6-2, 5-7, 4-6, 6-1 semi-final win in the ongoing French Open.

"Credit to him (Tsitsipas) for fighting back. He just played terrific tennis, especially in the fourth set when he was facing break points... He's a fighter. He's one of the best players in the world... There was a lot at stake for him," said Djokovic after the match as per the ATP Tour website. "He was motivated to try to turn the match around, which he did very well. But in the end I think he ran out of gas. That's when I stepped it

AP ■ SAO PAULO

# Bobby's back

## Firmino nets twice in Brazil's 5 goal win over Bolivia

Brazil and Colombia had no trouble beating two of the weakest South American teams to score their first wins in the opening round of World Cup qualifiers. The matches took place without fans due to health protocols from the COVID-19 pandemic. Brazil easily beat Bolivia 5-0 in rainy Sao Paulo while Colombia scored all of its goals in a 3-0 victory in the first half in Barranquilla. After the first round, Brazil, Colombia, Uruguay and Argentina lead with three points. Peru and Paraguay have one. Ecuador, Chile, Venezuela and Bolivia have none. All five matches in the second round will be played on Tuesday: Peru vs. Brazil, Bolivia vs. Argentina, Chile vs. Colombia, Ecuador vs. Uruguay and Venezuela vs. Paraguay. Neymar, experiencing back pain

ahead of the match and who was only confirmed in the starting lineup at the last minute, had two assists. He had more trouble with the pouring rain in Sao Paulo than with Bolivia's chaotic defenders who barely touched him during the match. Defender Marquinhos opened the scoring in the 16th minute with a header. Roberto Firmino netted the first of his two goals in the 30th minute, just pushing the ball into an empty goal after a low cross from Renan Lodi. Firmino made it 3-0 in the 49th minute, assisted by Neymar, putting

the ball between the legs of goalkeeper Carlos Lampe. Then 19-year-old striker Rodrigo scored his first for the national team with a header in the 66th minute. Philippe Coutinho ended the rout in the 73rd minute with a header, also assisted by Neymar. "The team took this very seriously, we were very respectful," said Brazil captain Casemiro. "We still need to improve teamwork. Match by match we will get it." Brazil coach Tite said the team will continue to play aggressively.



Brazil's Roberto Firmino, right, fights for the ball with Bolivia's Jose Maria Carrasco during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 AP

Bolivia left some of its players in La Paz, looking towards the clash against Argentina at altitude. The team is in crisis due to a political dispute involving the country's soccer body and major teams. The match in Barranquilla was marked by a serious left-ankle injury to Colombian defender Santiago Arias after he tackled Venezuelan striker Darwin Machis in the first few minutes. Machis was initially sent off, but video review reversed the decision after it became clear the Venezuelan had not touched Arias. Colombia showed why it is one of the favorites for one of the four direct South American berths in the Qatar 2022 World Cup in the 16th minute when Duvan Zapata calmly scored from close range after a low cross by Juan Cuadrado. Ten minutes later Johan Mojica bulldozed through the Venezuelan

defense from the left and assisted Luis Muriel to add a second with a classy right-foot touch. Muriel scored the third Colombian goal in first-half stoppage time. He dribbled past Jhon Chancellor and beat goalkeeper Wuilker Fariñez with a hard left-foot shot. Venezuela coach José Peseiro, who was in charge of the team for the first time, could not do much in the second half - he met most of the players only days ago. His predecessor Rafael Dudamel left the job at the beginning of the year after a dispute with the country's soccer body. "Since the first minute we imposed our game and that's why we won," Zapata said. "Also, a good team is one that defends well. Today that was the key. Holding our lines in the back allowed us to use our talent up front."

# Bottas takes Eifel pole

AP ■ NURBURG

Valtteri Bottas ended Lewis Hamilton's run of five consecutive Formula One pole positions by claiming first place on the grid at the Eifel Grand Prix on Saturday. Hamilton briefly sat atop the time charts after topping Max Verstappen in the third session, but his teammate Bottas sped through seconds later with an unbeatable time, fastest in all three sectors of the Nürburgring track. "It's such a nice feeling when you get it done the last lap," the Finnish driver said, adding his final run was "spot on." Bottas' time beat Hamilton by .256 seconds and Verstappen by .293. Ferrari recovered a little ground after a miserable run of races, with Charles Leclerc qualifying fourth and Sebastian Vettel 11th. Teams with much less information about the track conditions than usual after bad weather wiped out both Friday practices, leaving only one hour on Saturday to perfect the setups. It was especially hard



for teams to get the most grip from their tires in chilly conditions in western Germany. Sunday's race could be held in temperatures of just 8 degrees Celsius (47 F), making it easily one of the coldest races in recent years. "If it's any colder than this, I'm going to have to race with my scarf on," Hamilton joked after qualifying. The cold makes it hard to get heat into the tires, which can cause understeer. Driving slowly behind the safety car if there's an accident will cause the tires to cool down even more.

However, the weather could also allow drivers to use the same set of tires for longer. "We're all in the same boat. I don't really know how far the tires will go, but when it gets a bit cooler, generally they can go a bit further," Hamilton said. Hamilton will have to overtake his teammate on Sunday if he's to match Michael Schumacher's record of 91 wins in F1. Bottas is hoping he can stage a comeback in the title race after cutting Hamilton's lead to 44 points with a win two weeks ago in Russia. Mercedes drivers have taken pole for every race this season, with eight for Hamilton and three for Bottas. Nico Hulkenberg woke up on Saturday expecting to be a pundit on German TV for qualifying. He ended up driving for Racing Point after Lance Stroll felt unwell. He was in the nearby city of Cologne and joked it was like "a heart attack" when he got a call from the team. Hulkenberg missed practice and had just four laps in qualifying as he placed 20th and last.

# All players will be treated equally regardless of their stature: Fowler

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Newly-appointed East Bengal head coach Robbie Fowler on Saturday said they would aim to create a team which dominates ball possession and where all players are treated equally regardless of their stature. With a late inclusion to the top-flight Indian Super League, East Bengal appointed the former English International and Liverpool legend with less than two months left for the scheduled start of the tournament. "We have been working very hard to bring in not only good players but great players. As far as I'm concerned, we have got a team full of marquee players," Fowler said in his first media interaction after his appointment. "Our aim is to try and bring out the best in everyone. We're gonna have a team who will work all the same. No one will be treated differently than anyone else, regardless of whatever stature. "We will create a team

that will work very well with each other. We want to be a possession-based team. We want to get results. Fundamentally football is all about getting the right results." The addition of East Bengal would take the seventh edition of ISL to a new high, Fowler said. "The ISL is a relatively new league as we know. I think it's got better every single season. Hopefully now with the addition of us, we can make the league a little bit better." Fowler will come with a star-studded backroom staff including former Manchester City midfielder Tony Grant and former India captain Renedy Singh as his deputy who are tasked to rope in foreign and Indian players.

"His (Renedy's) stature in Indian football is absolutely great. We know as a coach how good he is. As a player, he was successful. He knows most of the local players. We've been speaking about the players who are right for us. Renedy has been instrumental," the 45-year-old said. Fowler last managed A-League side Brisbane Roar FC and transformed the side from being 10th in the league to fourth position, building a strong defensive side who conceded just 25 goals in 24 matches. "We've had a history where we've built a team that struggled and made them successful in Australia. So you know we could do it again. It is a challenge, but it's a challenge that we've accepted and would look to do very well," he said. "I said before it's about

doing all the preparation right, getting the right methods and ethics into the players. It's a challenge that we can't wait to get started with." "Not only the team, but the competition, a little bit more successful. We want to be as successful as we can. Obviously no other League, no other place is massively important," Fowler said from his home in Liverpool. Before Fowler came on board with his deputy Grant, Brisbane Roar conceded 71 goals from 27 matches in 2018-19 as the duo would look to replicate the same magic. "We know the history between East Bengal and Mohun Bagan. With football, rivalry is healthy. It drives players, fans and football clubs to achieve the very best," he said. "We've been involved in various games throughout our careers, and played various derbies that have been incredibly huge. We know what it means to the football clubs, to the fans," the Premier League's all-time seventh highest goal scorer with 163 goals to his name said.

# Swimming Fraternity welcomes resumption of Olympic training

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian swimming fraternity has welcomed the decision to reopen swimming pools across the country after Sports Ministry issued the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) on Friday. Viradhwal Khade one of six Indian swimmers who have achieved the Olympic qualification B mark and who participated in the 2008 Olympics welcomed the decision. "It is an excellent decision. I am glad the swimmers will get a chance to get back to full form and race again soon. I hope the state governments take decision to fully support the decision taken by the centre at the soonest and 100% of the competitive swimmers can start training again," Khade was quoted as saying in a press release. In August, SAI had sanctioned a two-month training camp in Dubai, attended by swimmers Srihari Nataraj and Kushagra Rawat, both of whom have achieved the B Qualification mark along with Sajjan Prakash. Though he had trained in Dubai, Nataraj is happy to be training in India once again. "I'm very glad that swimming pools are opening up in India, being able to train by staying at home does make me feel a lot better especially due to the fact I have my entire support staff available and the schedule can be designed for maximum efficiency," Nataraj said. Despite the delays brought upon by the Covid-19 pandemic, a postponed Olympics may just help Indian swimmers and Dronacharya awardee coach Nihar Ameen has said the resumption of training is a positive step in this regard. "I am very optimistic that our Olympic B qualifiers will work very hard to attain the A qualifying time and all our swimmers across the country are very enthusiastic about resuming their training," Ameen said.



# 'I am most comfortable doing theatre'

■ How did you get into acting at such an early age?

A friend of my father had a film magazine. He asked my father why he didn't let me act for a role. My father said no. He told my father that it was all clean. There was a bit of back and forth. My father agreed and I was in.

■ What

made you say to *The Gone Game*?

There was a unique factor. Due to the pandemic, everyone was shooting from home. The good thing was that the story was such that it was possible to do the same. This got me interested. Also, the story was well-written. Of course, my family stepped in, my husband and daughter helped a lot. It was not just about shooting but setting up the place, acting and then sending the footage to the makers. I don't think I would have been able to manage all this on my own.

■ I understand that this is your debut with the web series. What was the attraction of venturing into digital space?

Actually, I had done a web series called *Haq Se* in 2018, a take-off on *Little Women* based in Kashmir that streamed on ALTBalaji app. But *The Gone Game* made more noise, hence people think that this is my debut web series. I have been saying this for long, in films, there is a female antag-

## Talktime

RUKHSAR REHMAN

The actor who played Amara Gujral in Voot's *The Gone Game*, speaks with Shalini Saksena about why she said yes to the role, the mantra that keeps her going and upcoming projects

**I would like to explore comedy as a genre. Most people think that I can't pull it off. But I know that I can be good at it. I would also love to play a character in period drama**

onist and not many powerful roles are being written for women. But of late, in Indian web series, a lot of good roles are being written for women of all ages. This has drawn me to it. Then things end in a time-bound manner which is good.

■ Why can't we replicate good content in TV and films?

I think that every maker has a set of ideas. They are of the opinion that if they are making films, it has to be of a certain kind, if it is a web series, it has to be of a certain kind. Having said this, cinema has wider reach and old-age charm to it even if TV and web series are viewed by more people.

■ You have done TV, films and stage shows. Where are you most comfortable?

I am most comfortable when I am on the stage; when I am doing plays. That is where I am at my best.

■ What lesson should we take away from this pandemic?

While there is a huge lesson to take away but unfortunately, nobody is willing to make changes in their lives. There is a need to unite and walk forward as one. While there is bound to be jealousy, there

is a need to move away from this. We need to be more health conscious as well. I have learnt that material things don't give you peace or happiness.

■ Is there a mantra that has kept you going in the industry?

I enjoy my work. Whenever a project comes my way that I know I will love doing, I take it up and it keeps me going. I know that this is my career, this is what I do.

■ Is there a character that you loved playing?

I loved playing the role in *Sarkar* (2005). I played Amrita (Vishnu's wife). I loved doing *D-Underworld* and *PK*. All the three characters I played were so different from each other.

■ Is there a genre that you like to explore?

There is comedy. Most people think that I can't pull it off. But I know that I can be good at it. I would love to play a comic role and also a character in period drama.

■ What are your future plans?

There is another web series. But it got postponed. But hopefully we will start shooting in November.

The pandemic has hit all sectors and film shoots is just one of them. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with SANDEEP A VARMA and RAJESH BUTTA about how they came up with the idea of Filmboard, how will it help and its benefits, among other things

# SET UP THE SETS



Rajesh Butta and Sandeep A Varma

That film shootings or for that matter TV and web series shootings have suffered a hard blow from the pandemic is a no-brainer. Though the industry has started to get back on track gradually, a lot has changed in the process. Not that it has been any easier before, but COVID-19 has definitely added to the woes of the makers.

With limited cast and crew, a mandatory six-foot distance between people and a walk-in sanitising tunnel, a much dramatic movie scene has come to life today, all thanks to COVID-19.

What comes to the rescue during such a time is Filmboard, a brainchild of Sandeep A Varma, filmmaker and Co-Founder and Rajesh Butta, serial entrepreneur and Co-Founder, is sure to help you complete your dream project without much hassle and over-budgeting.

"Rajesh and I are BITS Pilani batchmates. That was 10 years back. After that our paths changed and we went ahead to pursue what we loved. I did a course in advertising and started making ad and feature films. Rajesh on the other hand remained true to his education and became a civil entrepreneur. We were habituated to complete the projects that we were offered on time and within the cost that we had only set for a particular project. So about 95 per cent of the time that did happen and the costs didn't increase much. But when I came into filmmaking, most of my films went over budget. I realised that this didn't both-

er my filmmaker friends much because it happens with most of the projects, but for me it was intolerable," Varma explains.

This hit Varma and he decided to do something about it. "The question that hit my mind was why did this happen and how we can sustain like this considering India is one of the largest film producing countries in the world and also the fastest growing. I had some ideas as to why it is happening and how it can be solved. Then fortunately, I met Rajesh after many years at a college reunion. I spilled all my ideas in front of him. He had different perspectives to my idea and explained how technology and an extensive database can help sort this out. This is how Filmboard, a novel marketplace for filmmaking where one can find everything in their budget, was born in 2017," Varma tells us.

One of the main reasons behind over-budgeting of projects, he says, is lack of professionals in the industry. "When a producer plans a film or a series, he is sure about two-three factors which ultimately helps in the decision making process. One, he knows the director. Two, he knows what the script is about. Three, he knows who are the top actors in the project. But there is much more that goes into the process. This is all Above The Line (ATL) things where the producer is negotiating and making direct payments to the concerned people. Then there is Below The Line (BTL), that is

untrained people, there is no transparency in the finalising of things. Hence, the budget keeps on increasing for several reasons, including poor camera quality, among others," he explains. At Filmboard, he says, they have tied-up with national level brands for catering services, who will supply hygienic food which is untouched by human hands to the shoots, especially during COVID. "The perception will be that the cost of this food will be too high. But, the reality is that the rates are negotiable and are of the same rates as of the local catering *walas*. In short, we are organising this process and putting it on one single platform for everyone to see and decide what to choose and what not," Varma tells us.

Not only catering services, one can find everything from an actor, to spot boys and from producers to camera man at a single destination and at the price of their choice and budget.

Recently, they have also launched the COVID action plan via an app on their website to help simplify the process and not to mention within the allocated budget. "The app allows people to see if proper precautions are being taken at the shoot. There is an assigned officer who visits the shoots to check that all precautions are being followed. He then clicks and uploads a picture of the respective crew member on the app itself to verify it. To enhance the security, the photo option will redirect one to the mobile phone's camera and the picture has to be clicked then and there,

it can't be hampered," Butta tells us. In case of any violations, Butta says, proper actions are taken against the offender. Till date, they have worked with brands like Radio Mirchi, Gaana.com and Rebel Foods. "We have worked with big brands but on comparatively smaller projects. As we go forward, we see us doing larger projects. In 2021, we will be doing feature and animation films and our area of work will be focused towards OTT platforms," Varma tells us.

There is much more on the duo's cards in order to make the website better than ever. "This is the Version 3 of the website, but we will be going up to Version 5 and will revamp the website completely. For this, we have planned few technology-led innovations. One of them is AI-enabled auditions. In any particular audition, there is a queue of around 200 aspirants. From such a huge chunk, it is difficult to select one. Through this feature, AI will be short-listing candidates on defined parameters, including voice clarity and eye contact. About 70 per cent of the audition process can be done through this technology and the process becomes easier and less time consuming. The shortlisted contestants can then be decided accordingly," Butta tells us.

**When I came into filmmaking, most of my films went over budget. I realised that this didn't bother my filmmaker friends much because it happens with most of the projects, but for me it was intolerable. This led to the birth of Filmboard — Sandeep A Varma Filmmaker and Co-Founder, Filmboard**

## SPICE UP YOUR IPL EVENINGS

With the cricket fever taking over the country, it is time to ramp up our snack game too! So, load up on these healthy and flavourful snacks with the added goodness of California Walnuts to keep your energy levels high during matches.

### CALIFORNIA WALNUT NACHOS WITH GUACAMOLE

#### INGREDIENTS:

- Nachos:
  - 140g maize flour
  - 120g sunflower seeds
  - 20g California walnuts
  - 60ml extra virgin olive oil
  - 1 ½ teaspoon salt
  - 125ml water
- Guacamole:
  - 2 avocados
  - 1 medium tomato
  - Half onion
  - Salt to taste
  - 1 tablespoon fresh coriander leaves
  - 1 teaspoon cayenne



#### PREPARATIONS:

- Nachos:
  - Preheat the oven to 220°C.
  - Chop the sunflower seeds and walnuts.
  - Put all the ingredients of the nachos in a big bowl and mix them with a wooden spoon. Add oil and combine it. Add water little by little, until the flour sticks together and forms a nice dough

ball. If it's wet, continue mixing up until it gets dry.

■ Divide the dough in two balls and place one of them between two baking sheets. Using a rolling pin, extend the dough until it has a thickness of 2 mm and mark with a knife the lines to break or separate them.

■ Retire the baking sheet off the top of the dough and place them in an oven tray. Bake around 10 minutes or until it turns gold. Let it cool and chop. Repeat with the same with the other ball.

#### GUACAMOLE:

- Cut tomato and onion in little cubes.
- Cut avocados, retire the filling and place it in a bowl. Using a fork or a wooden spoon, smash the avocado flesh and pour lemon juice so they do not rust.
- Add tomato, onion, salt, cayenne and coriander into the bowl. Mix it until smooth.
- Serve it with the walnut nachos.

—By Chef Sabhyasachi Gorai

### CALIFORNIA WALNUT GARLIC BREAD



#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 French baguette
- 100g butter, softened
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed

- ½ x 25g pack parsley, finely chopped
- 50g California Walnuts, finely chopped

#### PREPARATIONS:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C.
- Cut the baguette in half and with each half, make deep slits diagonally at two cm intervals making sure not to cut all the way through. Place each on a large piece of foil.
- Blend together the butter, garlic, parsley and walnuts, season and spread into the slits. Wrap loosely in foil and place both on a large baking tray.
- Bake for 10 minutes, unwrap the foil to expose the top of the bread and cook for a further 10 minutes until golden and the butter has melted.

—By Chef Neha Deepak Shah

# I don't want to restrict to a genre'

Music composer-director KARAN KULKARNI, who has composed music for *Shakuntala Devi* and background score for *Breathe: Into The Shadows*, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how he got interested in music and if there is a formula for hit music

■ What are you working on at present?

I am working on a lot of TV commercials right now. A lot of shoots are on the cards while not are on the shooting stage but they will get there.

■ What were the challenges that came with *Breathe: Into The Shadows*?

The main challenge about giving music for any web series is the more specific *Breathe: Into The Shadows* is the length of the music. This web series has 12 episodes of 45-50 minutes each. This means creating music for around five-six hours. Compared to a film, this is a lot of work, like doing three-four films. Also, given that this was a web series releasing for me on a big OTT platform we had to keep in mind how it will sound on TV or laptops.

■ Is giving a background score different from composing for a song?

When it comes to composing, it is the same since at the end of the day it is all about making music. There is really no difference here. One can say that songs garner a lot more attention, that is how it has been historically and people sing songs. Background score is music without singing and we are trying to follow the story and support it. In a song, we are just making a song.

■ In Hollywood, background music tends to stay with us and we identify the movie by it, why is it different in Bollywood?

It is the nature of things. People pay more attention to songs since there is a singer — there is a face, there is a voice, they identify with him and sing along. People enjoy it separately too. But when it comes to the score, it is identified and tied with the film. When you listen to it, you listen to it with the film. We do have a lot of musicians who are very talented and give great background scores but we don't pay attention to it and they prefer to remain in the background. We pay more attention to films. So, it is a bit of all the above.

■ How did you get interested in music?

I was 15 when I started to play the guitar. This is probably how things start for many musicians. One thing led to another. I started to study it and got into music with a computer. I did a music production course in Australia. I came back and started getting work and here I am.

■ How was the experience of working on *Shakuntala Devi* and then *Raat Akeli Hai*?

On one hand, *Raat Akeli Hai*, it is dark and is a mystery-thriller. The sound and way you compose is different. *Shakuntala Devi* is brighter and more mainstream. Just the choices, sound, genres and characters you deal with here is slightly different. It is not a major thing to overcome. The industry we work in, requires us to work on all kinds of genres. I have had the opportunity to work on all kinds of music.

■ Is there a formula for hit music?

I don't believe this. Upbeat dance music has been pushed a lot. But there are listeners for all kind of music. Music is so wide. It is not just happy and item numbers and sad. There is melancholy and contemplative. One can make songs on these. There is a reason why certain kinds of music works because they are being promoted since they understand this. They get played a lot. But if you play any kind of music a lot, there will be listeners. If one looks at the history of music, as long as it is good music, it will work.

■ What kind of music would you like to create?

It is to create something new. I don't want to restrict myself to a genre. I want to challenge myself and be interesting.

■ Is it tough to experiment given there is so much competition?

Definitely. Everyone is connected to the Internet. They have heard everything that is coming out of Africa, the US and Japan. One knows all the sounds. It makes it tougher to be innovative. But every human being is unique and what he will create will be different. This will set you apart. Indian listeners have always evolved. There is a misconception. It is the people who are selling us the music who are not evolved.

■ What do you agree that working for digital space is better than working for the industry?

I totally agree with this 100 per cent. When you release something in theatre, there is someone involved and there is a lot of control on what they think is correct and what they think will work or not. All artists believe that the audience is ready if you sell it to them properly. People are watching Netflix, Amazon and stuff on the Internet. They are exposed to a lot of things globally. There is no need pleasing others. People have started to relax a bit since they are competing with global content.



# the pioneer agenda

Our diversity is our strength. What a dull and pointless life it would be if everyone was the same  
— Angelina Jolie



FROM THE INSIDE

## Introspect to sanitise your mind

Introspection is the best way to recognise our imperfections. By meditation and ethical virtues, we can lead a godly life

2



4

## Learn to bear with the truth

Everybody comes to this world with their own Karmic carryover from the past, which they have to bear with



# AGE OF THE FILTER BUBBLE

Creating content that can go viral is the holy grail for most marketing companies today, writes RAJA SAHI, as he advocates careful consumption of what is being thrown at us in the name of entertainment

Don't we love to be entertained. What started many thousands of years ago as cave art and guttural sounds around an evening fire has now become much more refined as endless series of content to see on YouTube, Netflix, Amazon, and the like. We have a near infinity of books that we can read both digitally and physically. We have so many TV channels to choose from that many of us feel like giving up during the selection process itself. And, if you wanted a quick fix, you can go check out the latest gossip on one of the WhatsApp groups you are in or just go to TikTok, make one choice and then let the application take it from there.

Being 46 and having grown up in New Delhi, entertainment for me, when in my teens, consisted of reading the newspaper in the morning and, after that, mostly of visiting someone's house and enjoying playing some board or card games there. The days of cable TV, smartphones and the capability to see whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted to, was still quite a few years away.

Look around you for a second. If you are affluent enough, and at home, chances are there is a TV, with a remote, nearby somewhere and that you are in possession of at least one smart mobile device. You are therefore just one or two button clicks away from choosing whatever form of entertainment you want, right from the luxury of wherever you are sitting right now.

### DEMOCRATISING CONTENT CREATION

We are what we eat and breathe, but we, usually, become what we see. Our brains love learning and we are all sponges when we sit in front of our chosen entertainment medium. Be it a print newspaper or an electronic medium. We enjoy knowing about others and, in turn, we desire to tell others what is happening to us.

Technology has made things much easier. Any one of us, with enough drive, can decide to become an Instagram influencer, a YouTube celebrity or a TikTok personality. No need to purchase an expensive camera rig or procure and learn how to operate a very complex video editing software. Just using a smartphone, you can do whatever you wish.

The near ubiquitousness of mobile devices and the availability of free or really cheap software for the same has allowed for user generated content (UGC) like never before. Furthermore, platforms such as YouTube and TikTok allow for the distribution of such content in a very easy manner. You can even take steps on those, and other, platforms to market the content and make sure that it gets the desired number of eye-

balls on it. At one point, people needed to build bridges and buildings to be remembered. Now, all you need is an Instagram account. If you are an author you can publish and print books on demand. If you are an artist you can go to a website like Etsy and, suddenly, the whole world is your oyster.

### EFFECTS OF COMMUNITY, INFLUENCERS AND MARKETING

A good word from someone you know goes a long way. Content aggregation platforms know this. Most applications and ecosystems are now designed with recommendation engines in mind. You are told what your friend watched or what someone else experienced so that you can be catalysed into taking a similar decision.

Apps and platforms are designed with liking content in mind so that everyone can be a critic. We are provided with the ability to share our experiences and this data is harvested, accumulated and shown to the crowd in a, supposedly, averaged sense. We, as a part of the crowd, are then influenced by this data that we are shown. Would you not go to a place that had a higher Zomato rating than a lower one? Wouldn't you rather buy that brand of clothing that the YouTuber you had subscribed to spoke about? Be careful to separate the wheat from the chaff though. You need to have an understanding as to which endorsement was paid for and which was not.

Chances are quite good that the first few entries you see on Zomato or Google are there because someone paid for them to get that top billing. Entertainment and content ecosystems similarly also allow for audience targeting. Advertisers and promoters can choose data sets that include you based on your geography, your marital state, your economic status, your earlier purchasing activity, the list only goes on and on.

Additionally, content is now being created, keyworded and headlined in ways that are engineered to grab our attention. Something gossipy or scandalous is always more likely to get hits. After all, why should one create content that only thousands will see when you can create something else that hundreds of thousands may be interested in so that you can get a higher rating or more ad revenue from the same? Creating content that can go viral is the holy grail for most marketing companies today.

### DATA DRIVEN CONTENT CREATION AND PROMOTION

When Netflix started, they only shipped DVDs that were created by others. Even when they started streaming content, they had no choice but to license the same from other film and TV studios and related pro-



WE AS CONSUMERS MAY BE GETTING WHAT WE WANT, BUT, THERE IS AN UGLY SIDE TO IT TOO. WE ARE NOW SUSCEPTIBLE TO FILTER BUBBLES. THIS IS WHEN A PLATFORM, IN FILTERING CONTENT THROUGH TO US THAT THEY THINK WE WILL LIKE, ONLY PROMOTES CONTENT TO OUR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION THAT CLOSELY MATCHES WHAT WE HAD CONSUMED IN THE PAST. IN DOING THIS, WE HAVE THE RISK OF GOING INTO A FILTER BUBBLE

duction companies. But Netflix understood that, if they wanted to remain masters of their own destiny, then they needed their own catalog of content. Since Netflix had been shipping discs and streaming for a bit of time now, they had access to a lot of data. Data that we consumers had given them. All the shows we saw, that we stopped and never went back to, the genres of content that we consumed more than others, all gave Netflix a lot of valuable information about our behaviour as consumers.

Using this data, they figured out that actor Kevin Spacey and director David Fincher would be a great sellable combination for their viewers. They also realised that a lot of people liked political dramas. Thus, the US episodic version of *House of Cards* was conceptualised and executed. As the numbers had suggested to them, it was a blockbuster hit for Netflix.

Big data technologies are also being used by platforms like Facebook, YouTube and TikTok in order to promote content that they think we will like. Clearly, it is in their best interest to have us glued to our screens consuming as much content, as is possible, from them. So, they pattern match what we see, what our friends see, what others, as a group see, and then provide recommendations to us. If you have not wanted to leave your screen and, at some point, noticed that what started as a two min viewing session for you, became a two hour marathon, then you can rest in peace with the knowledge that the algorithms and the artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) models that the programmers have created, are doing their job pretty well.

Yes, we as consumers may be getting what we want, but, there is an ugly side to it too. We are now susceptible to filter bubbles. This is when a platform, in filtering content through to us that they think we will like, only promotes content to our immediate attention that closely matches what we had consumed in the past. In doing this, we have the risk of going into a filter bubble. A bubble where we only see what reinforces what we saw before and hardens what philosophies we may hold. In not being showing a diversity of content, and in us choosing not to search for it, we now have the risk of going deeper into a rabbit hole that we may be in. We become more prone to see only our side of an argument and not see the other side, though the other side may be in exactly the same position as we are.

This becomes an endless feedback loop. The more we see something, the more the platforms show it to us, the more they provide information to the creators that the something we saw is what we want and the more, new, closely matching things are created in turn to feed our demand.

### CHANGING REALITY

Of late, newer forms of immersive entertainment experiences like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) have started emerging. AR and VR are still in their nascent stages. As these technologies and platforms develop, how will we adapt to them, sociologically speaking? What sort of content will we create for them? Will we look at them simply as ways to augment our current entertainment experiences? Games and simulations that straddle the digital and real worlds, perhaps making a Minecraft building inside your house or looking at yourself virtually trying on a new lipstick when you visit Sephora. Or, will we use these technologies in ways that tangibly benefit us as a whole? Using them one can create 3D digital art and edifices impossible in the real world. We can attend college with friends and go on vacations with family just as they were right next to us. Will we give up the real world as we know it and accept a digitally enhanced version of the same? Or will we be creative and driven enough to make both the real and the digital worlds as beautiful as we can in lockstep?

### THE FUTURE

Simply put, the future is what we make of it. We, as consumers of all that is presented to us, make active choices, every second of every day. These choices matter. Even if we are not paying attention, the machines are. As are the people that read the reports generated by the machines and take decisions on how to give us more of what we desire.

Yes, we may be knowing, sentient beings. However, we can also be addicts and slaves to our desires. We can choose to consume something just to pass our time. Or we can choose to create something new, something of value. Both of value to us and to others. Something that we create, not just because we desire the celebrity or the money, but because we know that in our creating it and in others viewing it, both parties derive some wholesome benefit from what exists as the end product. Technology should be looked at as a vehicle that we can choose to drive wherever we wish. So please be careful of what you do with that vehicle. There are many paths ahead for our individual and collective journeys that we can choose from. Let us try to head in directions that bring us together, that make us happier, and those that we can look back at proudly many generations later.

The writer is a technologist, entrepreneur, and artist. As the CEO of TSN Group, Inc., he is currently working on a new, safer social networking solution



EVERY MORNING, I DO 10 MINUTES OF MINDFULNESS, WHERE I DO MEDITATION, AND I USE THAT IN COMPETITION AND EVERYDAY LIFE — TOM DALEY

# SANITISE YOUR MIND

By daily meditation and cultivating ethical virtues, we can lead a godly life, writes **SANT RAJINDER SINGH** as he explains the need for introspection

Doctors often prescribe a medication called cortisone to reverse inflammation and swelling of some bodily organs. However, doctors caution to use it only sparingly as over time, cortisone has the effect of breaking down the bodily organs. It ultimately weakens parts of our body. Organs start having trouble. Thus, instead of keeping the body strong, over time we are making weaknesses in the body. We may only use cortisone prescribed by the doctor for extreme circumstances, but what scientists and doctors have come to realise is that we produce our own natural cortisol in the body. We have hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol which are released when we are in fear. These hormones give the body the fight or flight reaction. It either gives the body a burst of strength to fight off a threat to our lives, or to give us the speed to run faster to escape a predator. These are useful hormones for survival. However, in modern times, we no longer face threats such as running away from large elephants, lions, bears, unless in a jungle. Instead, we react to problems that are not life threatening with same fight or flight hormones.

Since people do not know how to deal with problems in a calm way, they deal with them with anger. When angry, we are releasing the cortisol and adrenaline hormones into our system. When we stay in an angry state for a long time, the cortisol rushing through our system begins to cause damage to our organs just as prescribed cortisone can do when administered too frequently to the body. We are causing problems to our physical body, which is supposed to remain sturdy and strong for the work that our mind needs to do to help our soul go back to God.

Similarly, the cortisol in the body affects the mind. When angry, it keeps our attention focused on negativity. Instead of focusing on the true purpose of life which is to know God, we are focused on the problems of the world.

There are many ways our misdirected attention distract us from focusing on God. The saints exhort us to live as if we were godly. By daily meditation and cultivating ethical virtues, we can lead a godly life.

**How can we purify our mind and inculcate ethical virtues in our life?**

Self introspection is a chiseling tool for us. If we are a clay sculpture,



self introspection is a chisel by which we can smooth our rough edges and imperfections so we can be the masterpiece God intended us to be. The imperfections are not just for the sake of beauty. The imperfections are the flaws that the mind uses to keep us from returning to God. The imperfections are the weaknesses we have in which the mind wins over the soul.

For example, if we have the imperfection of anger, the mind uses that to its advantage to keep our

**IF WE RECOGNISE THE IMPERFECTIONS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF INTROSPECTION, WE CAN OVERCOME EGO AND GAIN HUMILITY. WHEN WE GAIN HUMILITY IN LIFE, THEN THE LIGHT WILL POUR AND WE CAN SHIFT OUR AWARENESS TO THE REGIONS OF LIGHT WITHIN US**

mind engaged in thoughts of getting even with someone, feeling hurt by someone, feeling injustice, or wanting to seek revenge. All these thoughts occupy our mind and do not let it be calm. When we are angry, we become absorbed in the reason for the anger, and we feel upset over what someone has done to us. We ruminate in our minds what happened and we obsess over what to do about it. Some people dwell on their thoughts of anger for a few moments and some people

carry their anger over years. Think of how much of our lifespan is spent in anger. Then think of what better use we can make of our time by meditating or remembering God. Self Introspection shows us whether we are wasting our time with useless anger, or whether we can make better use of the time by sitting with a still mind and remembering God. The choice is ours to make. Self introspection helps us to make the correct choice.

Another example of how we can use the tool of self introspection to help us progress spiritually is to weed out greed. Greed keeps us engaged in wanting more and more of the world. The mind finds this easy to use as a way to keep us from finding God. The world has no dearth of offerings that instil in us a desire to have more and more.

Ego is another imperfection that the mind uses to its advantage. It makes us think too much of ourselves instead of thinking about God. Ego makes us think we are intelligent, beautiful, rich, powerful, and gifted and hence better than others. It makes us forget God. We may even think we do not need God. We forget that God is the giver of any gifts we have. When we forget God, the mind fills us with the thoughts of ourselves. We start thinking more about our wealth, our beauty, our intelligence, and our talents. Instead of stilling our mind in meditation, our mind thinks about its vast kingdom of gifts and dwells on them. We may even begin to hurt others who do not have the gifts we have. Then, we begin thinking about not only how great we are but also how insignificant everyone else is. The mind is happy that it has distracted us. If we recognise this imperfection through the process of introspection, we can overcome ego and gain humility. When we gain humility in life, we are like an empty cup waiting to receive God's gifts. Then, the Light will pour forth and we can shift our awareness to the regions of Light within us.

Therefore, we may have received the grace to have a connection to the Light and Sound of God but we need to be careful and vigilant in our introspection to sanitise our mind of any imperfections that it may use to distract us. In this way, we can make choices that will lead us back to God. We can then choose the soul by switching our attention to absorption in God to enjoy the bliss and eternal ecstasy that awaits us within through the practice of meditation.

The writer is a spiritual leader



**HIDDEN SOULS**  
PRAMOD PATHAK

## The Corona Kerfuffle



The one word that describes the global response to coronavirus pandemic is kerfuffle. As confusion, chaos, and cacophony still reign supreme, the considered response is drowned in the din. It is ironic that the human mind is still clueless about a plausible solution to the problem, our reactions largely replicating that of the experimental pigeon in a Skinner's box. Psychologist BF Skinner in his famous operant conditioning experiments on learning had placed a hungry pigeon in an apparatus he had designed and hence it is called the Skinner's box. The box was so designed that there is a button on one side which when pecked by the pigeon would give a food pellet with a tinkering sound. But pigeons are not supposed to peck buttons so the animal has to learn the response. However, it was first important to lead the animal to the button and for this Skinner devised a mechanism called successive approximation. Thus, for every move towards the button, the animal would be rewarded with a food pellet so that it is able to reach to the button in due course. Interestingly, it also made the pigeon acquire a superstitious behaviour, that is, it would link reward with the move it made in the process of reaching the button. So if the button is on the left and the animal takes two steps left and gets a food pellet it would repeat the move thinking that food pellet came as a result of taking those steps to the left. Similar is the global human response to the pandemic. Everyday one new solution is being suggested, and as weird as injecting sanitisers or drinking a few drops of Dettol mixed in water. Despite world level agencies of health, like WHO and others, which spend billions of dollars on health care research, pointing out that the virus can be deactivated by simple soap solution and can be kept at bay by cloth masks. Unfortunately, but the response is a large scale trial and error exercise, a kind of solutioneering rarely seen before. The trillion dollars' pharmaceutical industry is helpless and the all knowing medical fraternity befuddled as governments all over are trying to deal with it with a heavy handed bureaucracy imposing extreme laws. Rather than administrate, there is need to innovate. But amid all this Kerfuffle, the thing that has been proved beyond doubt is that the grandmother's prescriptions had much more science behind them than what medical science touted. Interestingly, many such prescriptions are working too, while so-called well researched medical solutions are not. In these corona times when there are too many questions and too few answers, we now realise how and why our spices exports in ancient times made the subcontinent the prosperous Golden Bird. While corporate hospitals are charging a fortune from the Corona patients, the medicines provided are largely *desi* but for those strong antibiotics and antiviral drugs that work less and damage more. It is time we reconsidered our views on these home made potions which form a part of what the west calls alternate medicine. In fact, we must question why this nomenclature "Alternate Medicine" after all when they are working in many cases.

Pathak is a professor of management, writer, and an acclaimed public speaker. He can be reached at ppathak.ism@gmail.com

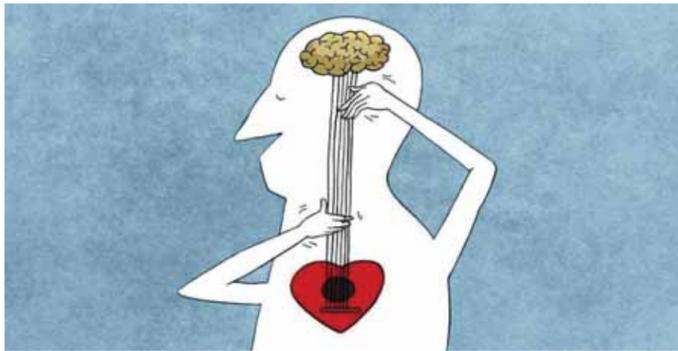
## Music therapy for soul

Music can be healing, energising, reflective, contemplative, expanding, and rewarding in many ways. Try it to discover its benefits, says **NANDAN GAUTAM**

The bigger than the creation of sound, is why living beings prefer some sounds to others. Why do one set of frequencies feel sweeter than another? And how is it possible that just a few notes placed together in a specific way can bring tears to our eyes? Studies have shown that cows produce more milk when they are listening to music. And not just any music. In one study, Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* and Simon & Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water* were their favourites!

Shakespeare was not a scientist, nor a mystic. But he understood human beings—their characters, their motives and the passions that drove them. He had tremendous insight into human psychology. He knew that music was deeply connected to the very essence of the soul. Another revealing fact is that the *Sama Veda*, written around 1200 BC, (considered to be the *Rig Veda* set to music) combined text and philosophy with melodic and rhythmic motifs. And Lord Krishna himself states in Chapter 10, Verse 22 of the *Bhagavad Gita* "I am the *Sama Veda* amongst the Vedas...". The ancient ones knew the power of music.

Why look to others and ancient texts for proof that music can heal and transform us... It's obvious that music can move us, transport us to another dimension. Music is as essential to humans as our own breath. People say music is a language but there is one essential difference — languages point to something else. They refer to something outside of the words. Music refers to itself. It has no inherent meaning other than what we ourselves perceive. The C Major chord is a happy sound. The C Minor is a sadder, more melancholic sound. *Rag Yaman* is a happy raga. *Malikauns raga* creates a sense of longing or sadness. But if one were to ask why, there is no answer. There is simply no logical reason why a certain combination of notes should make us happy and another



make us sad. Even though there is no logical reason for this, does not make it untrue.

Could this be in fact a 'proof' of that fact that we do have something intangible like a soul? So far science has not been able to see it nor capture it or measure it. But then, nor has science been able to measure happiness, joy, a sense of peace or bliss. Children who study some form of music in school have been found to perform much better in all the other subjects. So we have empirical evidence that music is highly effective in not only calming us but even sharpening our other areas of the brain. And yet when we attempt to get the exact formula for which notes can heal us or be therapeutic to us — emotionally and physically, it's impossible.

People are not machines. They are unique. What is pleasing and relaxing for one person may not be for another. So the best way to actually find the truth about something is not to find the absolute truth but to find 'your own' truth. This may look illogical because truth should be common to all. But as often as it is, it also isn't. To find out if anything works, one has to try it. Yoga

has been tremendously effective in helping people with back problems and depression. But if you're searching for a definite proof, you may not find it.

Music can be healing, energising, reflective, contemplative, expanding, and rewarding in many ways. But the only way to discover this is to try. Experiment. The next time you are upset, sad or angry, instead of calling your friend and complaining about what is wrong, try listening to Mozart's 40th symphony. Or try playing the *Raga Malkauns* by Rashid Khan, a melancholic but haunting piece that can literally transform your sadness into meditation. If you're feeling depressed try listening to *Rag Rasiya* by the legendary Pandit Ravi Shankar. And if you're feeling lonely or alone try 'Au Lait' or 'If I could' by the Pat Metheny Group. At the end of the song, you may have made peace with your loneliness and gotten a little bit closer to what the true nature of your soul is — oneness.

The writer is a Baku-based writer and composer. His metaphysical novel *The King of the Sea*, comes with a two-album soundtrack

## We are important to God

No matter what our numbers, being a part of God himself, we will always be of consequence to God, writes **AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI**

Though God is one, and is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, we, small souls, are important to Him. After all, we are parts of Him. (*The Gita 15.7*) This fact never changes, i.e. God always remains the whole and we continue as parts only. This is the Cosmic Design, and this is how it can be.

We are aware that God creates, keeps it functioning till the time of dissolution comes and, then, He activates "pralaya" and the material creation as we see it now is no longer there. These are the major activities of God. Then, He is always busy in doing His duties, which are many. In *Bhagavad Gita*, He makes it quite clear that His eyes, ears, etc. are pervading all. (13.13)

Then, He is privy to everything we think of. As a matter of fact, God and us, individual souls, only know our innermost secrets; nothing is unknown to God. (13.2) Then comes the reward part. All prayers made by whoever are responded to in an appropriate manner, which God and God alone decides. No prayer is ever wasted. (2.40) God must respond but not necessarily the way we want. I have prayed all of my life, but God has invariably given me what turned out to be highly beneficial to me, whereas my prayers were for something else, which were not in my favour. By the way God is never a debtor; He doesn't have to be. Remember whatever we see is owned by Him only; we only get to use them as ordained by our *karmaphalas*.

God guides if prayed to. There is a catch here though. One must have become purified enough to be able to receive God's guidance. Similarly, God helps when prayed to. There is a difference here also; we must deserve His



help. God supports His devotees as only He can, being omnipotent. Don't we always need support from others? Is God not the best choice? Besides guidance, God also gives intuitions to those connected with Him and are able to receive God's communication. God sometimes forgives our earlier indiscretions if He decides that justice will be served better that way. However, it must be remembered that God always upholds "dharma" and will do nothing against it. Does God not incarnate to re-establish *dharma*? (4.7-8)

Only God can give peace. He, who can really protect, is the one who can give peace. God is that person. God uses human beings as His instruments, as He famously used Arjuna in the *Mahabharata*. However, the responsibility lies with the Lord only. To advanced devotees God begins to respond. Finally, God liberates the best devotees from the painful cycle of birth and death.

Those, who haven't traversed the spiritual path, have no idea what they are missing. The quality of life for them

will be ordinary at best, while a common man may assume that whatever he has achieved is the best possible. How wrong one can be, ask a devotee. In the material world things are changing in many ways like this virus suddenly appeared, though this is rare, i.e. once in a hundred years. We need God's help to navigate through life right now.

Therefore, let us get started, if not already; let us connect with God. There are three stages in our relationship with God. The first is to pray for getting out of trouble or for getting something material. The next stage is to do some rituals, normally not with much love for God. The third and the final stage is to do spiritual practices with love for God. He is always available. We, all, are important to Him, no matter how many we are. We will never become zero, being parts of God, therefore, we will always be of consequence. No one should ever lose hope, even though feeling lost. God is waiting for us to make contact, to link.

Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

# Auditor should not venture into domain of policy auditing

**F**ormer top CAG official **KK Srivastava** the internationally acclaimed poet and author's recent book "Esthetic Blend of Flames of the Minds" on "Mann Ki Baat" programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been well appreciated as it brings out the best features of 60 long episodes of "Mann Ki Baat" in just 4,000 words. Srivastava, before retiring as Additional Deputy CAG last month, had a long career, spanning over 36 years, believes an auditor should not venture into the domain of policy auditing as that means an attempt to usurp the role of a public representative. In a freewheeling conversation with *The Pioneer's* **Swarn Kumar Anand**, **KK Srivastava** talks about his experiences and more...

**The Pioneer:** On Google, I read articles; your conversations with poets/writers about your fourth book *Soliloquy of a Small-Town Uncivil Servant*, and articles you wrote. I want to engage you with some articles and your service experiences. Leading a retired life, is spending time an issue?

**KKS:** No. I spend much time in thinking; I take out books I have not read for decades. Before Covid-19 pandemic, I occasionally used to meet friends from your fraternity over lunch or dinner in Press Club of India. The milieu and discourses with journalists and writers are soothing. I often write articles/reviews. Now retired, I try to spend some time in company of my wife which, for reasons best known to her, she does not seem to relish much.

**The Pioneer:** I understand you wrote your first review in 2011. You analysed a single, short poem, 'I' by a Romanian poetess. It is a long psycho-analysis of a small poem. Please give some background.

**KKS:** I don't remember if it was the first review but certainly it was one of the earliest ones. I knew Veronica's works earlier. She is sober, quiet and perceptive with limited literary output. This poem ran on her imagination of an arriving train at a platform. I analysed it which became longish. In *Soliloquy of a Small-Town Uncivil Servant*, she went through two sample chapters and made suggestions. In 2013, I introduced her to World Poetry, Canada International. They published her. I don't know if she still writes or not.

**The Pioneer:** What prompted you to write 'Esthetic Blend of Flames of the Minds' on "Mann Ki Baat" programme of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a mammoth piece which brings out the best features of sixty long episodes of "Mann Ki Baat" in just four thousand words.

**KKS:** Because it is apolitical and creative. "Mann Ki Baat" is about creativity of not only one mind i.e. of that of the Prime Minister but of minds of millions of Indians. It connects Indians to India and India to Indians. Being collective thoughts of millions of Indians, "Mann Ki Baat" represents an unprecedented oneness between the Prime Minister and the people of the country and vice versa. Listening to "Mann Ki Baat" is a must for all public, including civil servants. They ought to know India, its past glory and emerging NEW INDIA through the minds of millions of Indians. It gives physical, mental and spiritual solace.

**The Pioneer:** You reviewed Vinod Rai's book, *Not Just an Accountant: The Diary of the Nation's Conscience Keeper* in Kitaab Singapore. How did you view the book as a reviewer?

**KKS:** I read a much lesser publicised book by another CAG, late CG Somiah: *The Honest Always Stand Alone*. Somiah's was a complete book: a book of ease, Rai's was a hurried attempt. As a critic, I have to do justice with a book being critiqued. For me the book: its content, themes, influences and temperament matter. The writer stays invisible. I liked Somiah's book. It offered his

holistic life story. You digest complete, not partially covered periods unless you have the second volume. If you read my review in Kitaab Singapore, you will find in second but concluding paragraph my expectations of the same from Vinod Rai. Six years past, I am not sure if second volume came about his whole life experiences.

**The Pioneer:** Who are the writers in India you interact with or living Indian writers whose works you read?

**KKS:** Jayanta Mahapatra, the renowned poet from Cuttack, Odisha. He is above ninety and we have been exchanging hand-written letters for last fifteen years. His mental and intellectual alertness is amazing. Sometimes, I phone him. When he returned Padma Shri in November 2015, I wrote to him why I expected him not to do so. Columnist and writer A Surya Prakash's books and articles interest me. I critiqued Chief Editor of Indian Express Raj Kamal Jha's book *SHE WILL BUILD HIM A CITY* in my fourth book and currently reading his latest book *The CITY AND THE SEA*. I cherish eccentricity of his hallucinating themes in stylish prose. I planned to call on him after retirement but Covid has vitiated everything. I am also reading Vinod Kumar Shukla's Hindi poems.

**The Pioneer:** You had a long career, spanning over thirty-six and half years. You went in capacities from Deputy/Senior Deputy Accountant General, Accountant General, Principal Accountant General, Pondicherry, Allahabad, Bombay, Ranchi, Jaipur, Rajkot, Delhi as Chief Auditor, New Delhi Municipal Corporation, Gwalior, Thiruvananthapuram and at the end CAG office Delhi and superannuated as Additional Deputy CAG. Your vast experience across the country and varied literary background gives you an enviable position to share your experiences with readers and civil service aspirants.

**KKS:** I feel amused you took the trouble of seeing my profile. If I saw India, its people, its cultural and intellectual strength, its different shades, it is through the organisation of CAG of India. Mine being a Central service with all India transfer liability, my postings to so many different places taught me uniqueness of Indian people: the oneness within different shades. I could know life people live. I could handle tough associations in places like Allahabad, Ranchi, Rajkot, Gwalior and Thiruvananthapuram. With my growing experience, I could easily relate to staff, their anxieties and strength. When I got posted as Principal Accountant General, Kerala at Thiruvananthapuram, the very next day of my assuming charge, I visited each section, met and shook hands with each and every member of staff. Towards the end, I visited Association room and met members of the association present there. The depressing atmosphere started becoming diminutive immediately. I did this every station I was posted to. It gave me confidence; it gave the staff confidence; it gave a relationship of ease vitally needed to run a big office. Similarly, I had interaction with Principal Secretaries in various States. In retrospect I feel happy to have an augmented life, courtesy learning from experiences of life of thousands of wonderful people.

**The Pioneer:** Did these transfers never affect your family?

**KKS:** The family stayed with me throughout.

**The Pioneer:** We hear various State Governments don't respond to audit. Which State was most responsive to audit? Please share a few experiences?

**KKS:** I had cordial relationship particularly with Principal Secretaries (Finance) in every State. It facilitated response from the Government. But Gujarat, where I was stationed at Rajkot,



was where officers showed inherent keenness to discuss particularly draft Performance Reviews and that too at very high level. There was an issue. Immediately, after taking over in 2008, I called on the then Chief Secretary who understood issues from me and within a month or so, remedial measures were taken by State Government with detailed work plan for a year in place. Similarly, in 2009, Performance Review on Modernisation of Police Scheme was to be discussed and the then ACS (Home), chaired the meeting spending full half-day in Gandhi Nagar conference room where many senior officers were present. He read each and every line of the draft report himself and requested authorities to respond and give comments/constraints, if any. He wanted me to appreciate and reflect these in the review. I learnt a lot from him during discussion. At the end, both audit and administration were satisfied. I moved from Gujarat but think the review featured in the Audit Report.

Kerala was equally responsive at very high level, though I was heading Accounts Office. Early 2016, perhaps January or February, one evening, ACS (Finance) telephoned me regarding a portion of work of our office and told me to meet Chief Minister without any delay. I sought appointment from him. Next day, it was a State holiday but he called me at his residence. I briefed two other PASG located at the station and urged them to accompany me. They promptly agreed. Next day, we met the Chief Minister and I explained to him how functioning of that work had improved very significantly in our office and showed him data. My two colleagues supported my contention wholeheartedly. Then he came up to the door where I, folding my hands, said, "Namaste, Sir. Kindly keep our office in view. Our office is performing well." He looked at me; it was reassuring. That important portion of work stayed with us. On taking over as DG in CAG office, I called on my earlier boss and told her about that episode saying "Ma'am, I did not bother you. I solved it locally." Appreciating it, she told, "That's why we call you, KK." Unfortunately, we lost her sometime back. Normally, I tried to solve issues without flagging these as big issues.

**The Pioneer:** Recently, when GC Murmu, an IAS officer of 1985 batch, was appointed as CAG, there were talks about his superseding six IA&AS officers (three from 1983 and three from 1984 batch). Is it IAS versus IA&AS

issue? Is it discouraging for the officers and organisation?

**KKS:** When I joined the service at the then Staff College, Shimla, a faculty member explained to us the meaning of the word, "cadre" in the context of IA&AS as a cadre. He clarified that the post of CAG is an ex-cadre post. The post of CAG is not a cadre post for IA&AS. Second issue is IAS versus IA&AS. No doubt IA&AS as a service is an excellent service, but its aspiring members cannot claim a comparison with IAS officers when it comes to appointment of CAG. IAS officers have wide range of experiences from the lowest ebb in a district to the top posts of Secretary to Government of India. They work with different regimes of political leadership which is a big learning opportunity for them. They have public dealings, they meet public, come to grips with people's grievances on day-to-day basis; they are a part of micro and macro socio-economic problem solving process. They prepare groundwork for political leadership in deciding policies and understand the essentials of policy

making. They are certainly better placed as compared to any other service including IA&AS, to occupy the chair of CAG of India. I agree that knowledge of audit and accounts may be beneficial for an outsider CAG, but that knowledge alone is not the sole criterion. Wise people accept immutably universal facts and don't lament over spilt milk at the last moment.

**The Pioneer:** What about the supersession of six IA&AS officers?

**KKS:** My answer is embedded above. I will clarify my understanding once more. Supersession is within a particular service. Supersession is never with reference to other services. It is unbelievable that an IA&AS officer of 1983 batch has been superseded by an IAS officer of 1985 batch, though it is quite possible and a fact an IA&AS officer of 1983 batch being successfully superseded by IA&AS officers of 1985 batch and who knows it better than me. Hence, GC Murmu has superseded no IA&AS officer. The post of CAG is a constitutional post and the Prime



**The post of CAG is not a cadre post for IA&AS. Second issue is IAS versus IA&AS. No doubt IA&AS as a service is an excellent service, but its aspiring members cannot claim a comparison with IAS officers when it comes to appointment of CAG. IAS officers have wide range of experiences from the lowest ebb in a district to the top posts of Secretary to Government of India.**

Minister has the final word on his selection. I visited GC Murmu's Wikipedia page. Though it might seem preposterous on my part to say so, in my view, he is a very suitable selection for the post of present CAG and seems to be a down to earth man. Organisation needs such a CAG.

**The Pioneer:** It is alleged that there is lack of transparency in selection of CAG. How would you react?

**KKS:** First, I have no means to ascertain whether the process is transparent or not. Second, as I understand this issue has also seen judicial scrutiny in the past. Third, if certain individuals and groups think process is non-transparent, they should take timely and appropriate steps to elevate discussion, debates to higher plateau.

**The Pioneer:** Why only IAS officers? Why not other professionals like economists, chartered accountants, academics, scientists or even journalists?

**KKS:** I tend to agree. This should be debated in various forums.

**The Pioneer:** As a writer, your perception of issues will have a more matured interpretative value. A person can draw meaningful conclusions from your views. What are your suggestions to new CAG?

**KKS:** I am not sanguine if others will be so sure of what you say but still I will share my honest views. My point of view is CAG of India means he is CAG for 138 crore Indians. Audit Reports get processed and discussed through Public Accounts Committees and COPU. That is a fine arrangement constitutionally mandated. We chalk out audit plans for both Centre and States. I don't find any say by even a segment of Indian population on their suggestions. There is Audit Advisory Committee where experts are invited but these experts are not substitutes for 138 crore people. Therefore, my first suggestion to new CAG will be to open its website for one month in advance before the process of preparation of Audit Plans begins. During that month, public should be free to offer suggestions for topics to be covered in audit in next audit cycle. It will have two advantages. First, when nation is aiming to become an inclusive society, audit should open its gate to inclusion of nation's population. Let people express themselves. CAG's decision on audit plans will be final. Second, it will increase awareness in public about this august institution which is not there at present as it should be. When Sustainable Development Goals were being

finalised, views were called from across countries through its website.

Second, last month, I wrote an article *Kiran raises hopes for a robust New India*. Late evening of the day article appeared, I got a call from a Professor of Psychiatry, AIIMS who had read the article. He invited me to join as a panelist for a webinar on "India's first Mental Health Access Summit", organised by AIIMS in collaboration with Mental Health Foundation, India. I participated in it on 4th of this month. I shared my little bit with mental health professionals. The picture of mental health issues that came during panel discussion was alarming.

An All India Performance Review on Assessment of extent of mental disorders, population affected, availability of infrastructure and preparedness to handle this invading behemoth is the need of the hour. This report will be very handy to Government, Medical Institutes, and NGOs generating keenness in Public Accounts Committee and public. I am not sure if this exercise was done in recent past. CAG may like to consider it.

**The Pioneer:** I came across an interesting set of statistics. I saw profile of some officers in different batches from 1981 to 1990. There were/are some officers who stayed/are staying in Delhi and adjacent States like Jaipur, Chandigarh, Faridabad or even Noida for 20/25 years, including deputation period in different spells. They had/have repeated postings in Delhi/CAG office. A few of them from this group went abroad for posting. This trend is seen even in case of currently serving officers. There are clusters of some officers having these three commonalities in selected batches spending almost 60 to 70 per cent of their service in Delhi and around places alone? It seems there is an elite group. Does it not affect efficiency?

**KKS:** You remind me of a Hindi proverb, "Haath Kangan ko Arsi Kaya." The same thing has been felt by a majority of IA&AS officers over last so many years, even decades. Statistics is cited and statistics does not tell lie. Your observation is correct. It might affect efficiency at various levels.

**The Pioneer:** What are the expectations from new CAG in this respect?

**KKS:** New CAG may like to look into trends flagged. He may like to consider institutionalising steps as he deems necessary so that these end and corrective measures are taken. The new CAG seems to be a down to earth man.

**The Pioneer:** There have

been media reports about delay in finalisation of audit reports in recent past. Any comments?

**KKS:** During last about three years before retirement, I had nothing to do with processing of audit reports. Therefore, I cannot answer your question.

**The Pioneer:** Any comments on delay in placing the reports in Parliament/Assemblies.

**KKS:** The decision to place the reports has to be taken by the Government. The CAG has no role in it. His role ends with sending the reports to the President and Governors with the request to cause these to be laid in Parliament/State Assembly.

**The Pioneer:** Some audit reports become controversial. Why?

**KKS:** Late ST Kenghe was Director of IA&AS Staff College, Shimla when I was a probationer. He was a scholar. He quoted in Sanskrit from Vedas and Upanishads while talking to probationers. He was fond of saying, "Act as an auditor but don't adopt holier than thou attitude". He wrote the same thing in an article published in a book during late TN Chaturvedi's period.

Two lessons emerge from above. An auditor should never think he is a paragon of virtue. Second his reports should speak, if at all necessary. Controversies arise if an auditor talks about his "achievements". An audit report is a consequence of incessant hard work of more than hundred staff/officers. It should be kept in view. If these two criteria are respected, Reports will be respected.

**The Pioneer:** There were issues in the past weather an auditor can audit policies. What are your views and what role do you envisage for audit in current times?

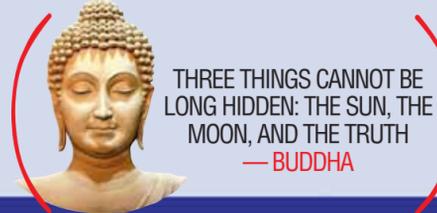
**KKS:** I think an auditor should not venture into domain of policy auditing. Let me explain how I look at it. Political parties when they go to elections, go with their manifesto: a set of promises made to people. When a party comes to power, in order to convert the manifesto into action, they decide policies. Thus, a policy links public representatives and people through manifesto. Once an auditor tries to audit policies, he starts meddling with this link and thereby tries to usurp the role of a public representative which is barred in constitution. But he can always audit the outcome of policy which is normally done. Coming to the role of audit in current times, late CG Somiah, the then CAG's advocacy "Audit as an aid to administration" should be respected and followed. Audit should facilitate reforms undertaken by Government and help in formation of a NEW INDIA.

**The Pioneer:** Any advice to young IA&AS officers?

**KKS:** It is said of the community of auditors they never welcome advice to them but are first to offer unsolicited advice to others. It's in lighter vein. Audit organisation has intelligent and hardworking young officers. They should work for the organisation which has a long, glorious history. They should not suffer from 'fixity and rigidity' and should contribute to 'collective personality' of IA&AS and thereby strengthen the hands of CAG of India. Therefore, they should ponder over and learn from these lines of Salman Rushdie's *THE GOLDEN HOUSE*, "In these our degenerate times, men bent on nothing but vain-glory and personal gain-hollow, bombastic men for whom nothing is off-limits if it advances their pretty cause... and calling all who oppose them liars, envious, little people, stupid people, stiff, and in a precise reversal of the truth, dishonest and corrupt." My best wishes to them.

**The Pioneer:** Do you have any plans to write your autobiography?

**KKS:** The bridge is not visible to me. We will cross it if it ever comes.



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**

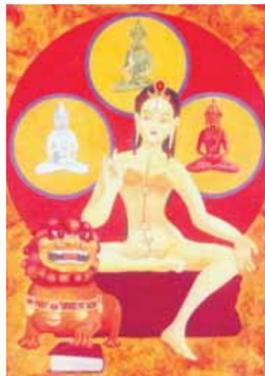
MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week be careful of wishful thinking. You are a dreamer who sees only beauty, outward attraction and excitement. Things will boomerang if you continue to stay in your dreams and fantasies. Stay away from bad habits and bad company. Resist any temptations. Professionally, you are likely to take your business into a partnership where you will experience understanding, harmony and big motives between two people. The seed sown now will blossom into a tree of appreciation. On the personal front, you are rich by heart and your pocket, too. The week just reminds you to appreciate the sensual, luxurious side to life that often makes living more pleasurable. You believe in quality over quantity. Learn to enjoy a full and joyful life.

**Lucky number 2**  
**Lucky colour Pink**  
**Lucky day Sunday**



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week you may find yourself ignoring your health. You consider pleasures in simple traditions and rituals. You need to listen to your body and understand what you are feeding it. Pay attention to any health related needs and take timely action. Home-made remedies will help you in healing. Other modes of healing could make a big hole in the pocket. For the past few weeks, your focus was mainly on your financial security. On the career front, you will need to adapt to the existing set of beliefs that are already in place, instead of being innovative. Personally, this is the time to value the relationships and understand that every bond in life has its meaning. If required, take help from a psychotherapist or a spiritual mentor to whom you turn for wisdom.

**Lucky number 20**  
**Lucky colour Mauve**  
**Lucky day Monday**



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This is a good week for you. You are quick, mentally and physically, and filled with anticipation. Those suffering from an ailment will recover fast. This is the time to indulge in mental activities of all kinds, including learning, exploring, and researching. On the professional front, you are filled with fresh energy and feel like an avid learner and an excellent student. This will lead you to learn various skills. You could prove a smart salesperson for the company. With your skills, you have achieved some unexpected target for the company you are working with. Your appraisal is likely. On the personal front, the time seems to be favourable. Those already in a relationship, it is possible that it will deepen and become better.

**Lucky number 19**  
**Lucky colour White**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week your health will be at its best. You will experience harmony in your thinking and personality. You will be calm, friendly and will support others. You give other people their space and are tolerant of their needs. You can create a safe and trusting environment for them and become their influence. This demonstrates a level of soft control and persuading others to your way of thinking. On the career front, long time challenges will be met. You will be focussed on what you need to do. In this process, you will gain your self-confidence. On the personal front, you beam with happiness and enjoy the relationships. Your dreams have become reality and relationships will find a new meaning. Married couples will experience a stronger bond.

**Lucky number 12**  
**Lucky colour Peach**  
**Lucky day Tuesday**



**VIRO** Aug 23-Sep 22

This week you are filled with imagination and feel physically comfortable. The negativity of the past is fading away and will enjoy high stamina and creativity. You are likely to work hard with a lot of enthusiasm to fulfill your dreams. New interests will draw your attention. Your practical approach will lead you to success. Professionally, work plans held up due to obstacles will start opening up with fruitful results. This week you can afford to take the risk as you shall find takers for your plans. Your past investment of money and energy will start showing dividends now. You will be able to do justice to your professional and personal responsibilities. Married couples will enjoy marital bliss. Couples staying separately are likely to settle their disputes amicably.

**Lucky number 11**  
**Lucky colour Beige**



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

This week you need to listen to your body with great care and compassion. Half of the problems will get sorted with a positive attitude. If you are having health issues like back pain, low energy, or any other problem, do take care. Revisiting your spiritual rituals is on the card. It might be helpful to give you the time and space to get insight that might be healing for you. Career-wise, you seem to be in an offbeat mood and not satisfied in your current job, this is the right to switch the job. Prepare your resume, do research work, which company need your profile and prepare yourself for the interview. You are very sensitive and emotional this week. Even a small matter could make you cry. Your mood swings, over-demanding nature could make your partner irritated.

**Lucky number 15**  
**Lucky colour Sky Blue**  
**Lucky day Thursday**



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Let go of all the past worries and live in the moment. This week depression, isolation and insecurity are likely to cause harm. Try to keep these away from you. Your positive mindset will not only help in making you a successful person but also stay in great health. This week avoid red colour. On the career front, you are likely to discover a skill which was unknown to you all these while. With a new week, you are set on a new path, realising your potentials and weaknesses. Those who are looking to start their career may have to train yourself to specialise in one field. On the personal front, you tend to lose your temper at the slightest provocation and this will affect your relationships with your family and friends.

**Lucky number 17**  
**Lucky colour Grey**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

You are being careless when it comes to your health and will soon suffer the consequences as well. You need to avoid stress and anxiety this week. Relax and take advice from a health professional. Health is the greatest wealth, therefore, take time out for yourself. Make a resolution that you will do some kind of physical exercise for at least 30 minutes. Professionally, cards indicate a good message for you. Your partner and you have a perfect understanding of professional matters and work for the same motive. Balance and determination are the keys to your success. On the personal front, your critical and analytical nature is at its peak. This may cause conflict in your love life. Let your partner grow. Give them a chance to express themselves.

**Lucky number 13**  
**Lucky colour Brown**  
**Lucky day Saturday**



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

There is a sparkling and refreshing factor in your personality that makes you a distinct person this week. Your courage and risk-taking ability will open up new areas in life. You feel healthy and fearless. You have the enthusiasm to experience, to discover and enjoy life. You believe in yourself and follow your heart. Believe in yourself and have no room for fear. Career-wise, you will notice growth in your profession. You will attain the highest potential in your life, reaching a state of renewal and new beginnings. Your emotional strength is your greatest tool to win all challenges in life, be personal or professional. Support of near and dear ones is on the cards. Have blind faith in your relationship.

**Lucky number 6**  
**Lucky colour Purple**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week you will take life as it comes and not be worried about anything. Be cautious in your diet and check unhealthy eating habits, as it may take a toll on your health. You may face health issues like weight gain, lethargy and low stamina. Whatever you want to indulge in, don't compromise on health. Exercise regularly to be on a good track. This week on the career front, work will pick-up speed. It will be important for you to keep your balance in every possible way. Seniors will have high expectations of you. Don't get nervous. Your communication is your tool, use it for everyone's good. On the personal front, you are optimistic. Your networking with people is strong. You will enjoy fulfillment in relationships. With your partner's emotional support, you will feel protected.

**Lucky number 18**  
**Lucky colour Silver**  
**Lucky day Wednesday**



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week your health needs attention. Avoid any kind of physical and mental stress. The balance between body, mind and soul is required at this time. Some external negative forces are working against you. You may feel helpless as something comes to a sudden end, and you feel as if you are being attacked or backstabbed by someone. On the career front, work is satisfactory and you are happy about it. New opportunities and new creative plans are indicated. New projects are likely to open up in front of you. On the personal front, you may feel suffocated with no scope of self-expression in love. Those who are looking for love should have patience. Those facing a rough time in married life should adopt the right attitude towards your marriage and partner.

**Lucky number 8**  
**Lucky colour Magenta**  
**Lucky day Friday**



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

You tend to think with your heart, rather than your mind. You may lack rationality but you are highly intuitive. You are nurturing and caring for others' needs. Women are likely to suffer from hormonal problems, thyroid or menopause issues. If that be the case, get yourself checked and take medication before it aggravates. On the career front, your personal value system and what you believe will bring you the ultimate fulfillment and happiness in your life. An appraisal or a very lucrative offer in on the cards. Try to look for opportunities that make you feel satisfied and are aligned with your values. You have to do what feels right to you. The week is good for your emotional happiness as well. The ultimate satisfaction of a long-term relationship is indicated.

**Lucky number 14**  
**Lucky colour Green**  
**Lucky day Thursday**

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331

**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Learn to bear with the truth

Many a times a counsellor has to bear with unpleasant moments. Taking it as a part of professional hazard, he has to digest it all without any sense of rancour or displeasure. There are people who remain stuck to their own delusory dream perceptions, not keen to look beyond in search of a better option if any. Some of them even lack the will to go on their own. Such people wish to be vetted by some others. So, they meet a counsellor, but not to seek honest opinion. They rather try to put their idea in the consultant's mouth, and just wish confirmation. They can't digest if an honest consultant ever tries to make them aware of truth. Such people vent out their frustration on the consultant.

Recently, I had to digest unsavoury remarks made by such a person, which got communicated by a dear friend who had introduced him to me. This man wanted resolution to some of his concerns: "Sir, although I was financially and otherwise quite comfortable while in USA, but had to bear with frequent job changes — six career changes in four years. I could not bear with

social environment either. So, I quit my job in a state of desperation, with the intent to build up my career here in my native country. Almost a year has gone by, and I am yet to find a job. When do I get a job and where? Recently, I liked a girl, but she doesn't seem to be coming around, as she is stuck to her old boyfriend. I am not able to get along with my parents either. Please show me the way."

Well, everybody comes to this world with their own Karmic carryover from the past, which they have to bear with. A look into your chart reveals that you are running Venus *dasha*, which being 2nd lord identified with earning, is posted in the 10th house identified with career. So, your career has to go strong. But then Venus is combust, and occupies the constellation owned by Moon conjunct Mars, both tenanted in a movable sign. So, you were due for frequent career changes, so long as the sub-periods of planets occupying movable signs were operative. That often proved emotionally upsetting. Those sub-periods being over, you may have long tenure now. But 'change being your nature', you



can't stick to a job for long. In so far as being ignored by a girl already in relationship with someone else is concerned, how can you expect from her to submit to your asking? About your career prospects, it is expected to flourish in a foreign land, and so, you may have to seek a job abroad once again.

The problem with you, however, is that you seem to be stuck to your own self-assumed delusory perceptions, quite distant from ground reality, coming as it may as both the luminaries are placed adverse to mischievous Neptune. You won't look beyond for a reality check. You won't acknowledge truth on its first appearance. You rather prefer to pursue your dream perceptions on hope against hope till pushed to the wall. Given the present direction — the progressed Sun placed adverse to natal Neptune, this attitude is playing out to its full.

You are born in an Aries *lagna*, a fiery and a movable sign, with its lord Mars in debilitation, which is conjunct mind signifying Moon in a watery sign and in another movable sign Cancer. That, in the first place, reflects your impulsive, aggressive, irritable, impatient, intolerant and a domineering

nature. You wish to live in a demanding mode. In fact, 'my way or highway' seems to be your approach. Second, you wish to be always in the lead, and resent subordination, even of your seniors. Third, you are rash and jump into action without applying proper forethought. You apply your mind only when you land into problem. Fourth, you are emotionally volatile, and so get over-exercised even on trivial issues.

Intelligence signifying Mercury is placed adverse to erratic Rahu, which makes you restless, often engaged in conflicting thoughts. Consequently, you fail to look at issues in hand objectively. The result is there to see. You must remember that the world doesn't necessarily move to your asking. You need to work upon your fault lines, particularly inter-personal relationship skill, otherwise it will be difficult to get along with any, and hold on to any relationship for long either.

The man did not like being shown his mirror image, and hence his outburst.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com