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**SPORT 12**  
AUS WIN OD SERIES AGAINST ENGLAND

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# The Pioneer

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**BHUMI CELEBRATES SISTERHOOD 10 VIVACITY**

## Harsimrat quits over farm Bills

With the resignation, SAD aims at consolidating its stronghold in Punjab's farming community

MONIKA MALIK/PNS ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

Faced with massive unrest among the farmers, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday distanced itself from its alliance partner BJP on the issue of a set of agriculture Bills by "sacrificing" the Cabinet berth in the NDA-led Central Government.

Strongly opposing the farm Bills, Union Food Processing Minister and SAD's lone representative in the Union Cabinet Harsimrat Kaur Badal resigned from the Ministry "in protest against anti-farmer Ordinances and legislation".

The three Bills — Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020, the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 — were passed by the Lok Sabha on Thursday night.

Led by the Congress nearly all the Opposition parties opposed the Bill, calling it "anti-farmer".

"We stand with the farmers and will do anything for them. Next course of action will be taken by our party for which there will be a meeting shortly," said Shiromani Akali Dal



president Sukhbir Singh Badal, leaving open the possibility of walking out of the NDA.

The BJP has a few allies left after Shiv Sena walked out of the NDA.

"I have resigned from the Union Cabinet in protest against anti-farmer Ordinances and legislation. Proud to stand with farmers as their daughter & sister," Harsimrat tweeted ahead of the passage of the Bills in the Lok Sabha.

Farmers form a sizable chunk of the voting population in the agrarian State of Punjab and political parties have all along made attempts to have agriculturalists by their side. SAD's rivals, including the



Women raise slogan during a protest against three ordinances passed by the Centre at Badal village in Sri Muktsar Sahib on Thursday

Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), have all along been accusing the Badal family of indulging in "double speak". They have been targeting the SAD for opposing the farm Bills while enjoining the Cabinet berth at the same time.

The SAD has been at loggerheads with its ally BJP over the farm Bills, which has triggered massive protests in Punjab and the neighbouring Haryana by farmer organisations, apprehending that the new laws would bring to an end the assured minimum support price (MSP) regime for agri-

culture produce, and would also benefit the corporates.

The Badal husband-wife couple represents the SAD in the Lok Sabha, while the Upper House has three MPs. On Tuesday, Sukhbir voted against the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, saying that the proposed legislation is against the interests of farmers. Later, it was passed by Parliament by voice vote.

Initially defending the Ordinances, and even persuading the farmers that it would have no bearing on

existing procurement policy and the MSP regime, SAD, in a complete volte-face, claimed that the party was "not consulted" over the controversial farm Ordinances, and it would "destroy the food grain production system establishment painstakingly over a period of 50 years".

With Harsimrat's resignation, the SAD would aim at consolidating its stronghold in the State's farming community in an apparent attempt to stage a comeback in the Assembly polls in 2022.

## No power can prevent Army patrols in Ladakh: Rajnath

India will not allow China to unilaterally change status quo on LAC, says Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said "no power on the earth can prevent" the Indian Army from patrolling its area in Ladakh and India will not allow China to unilaterally change the status quo on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Minister made these observations while briefing the Rajya Sabha about the current situation on the volatile border where stand-offs are on for the past four months. Cutting across party lines, the entire House expressed solidarity with the Government and the armed forces in handling the ongoing tense situation at the border.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said the entire House should send out a message that the country is united in this crisis. It will be an apt rebuff to "propaganda" in a section of the international media that there are differences in India on the LAC issue, he said. Naidu also said India for centuries has followed the path of peace and has never attacked another country.

Updating the House, Rajnath said India has asked China to refrain from making aggressive efforts to unilaterally change the LAC. He also referred to his recent meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe in Moscow where this point was conveyed. China was also asked to honour all the oaths as a Rajya Sabha member on July 22.

Earlier in the day there was confusion about the condition of the MP and before the hospital issued the clarifications that Gaste was still critical, President of India Ram Nath Kovind, Home Minister Amit Shah, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and many leaders tweeted condolences to mourn Gaste's demise. Later they all deleted their tweets.

Others in the top 10 list include Auckland (4th), Oslo (5th), Copenhagen (6th),



and sovereignty, the Minister said.

Repeatedly underlining New Delhi's stand that it wanted to solve the complex issue through political and military level dialogue, Rajnath cautioned "war can be started by anyone but no one is sure about the end result".

Replying to questions by the former Defence Minister and senior Congress leader AK Antony and his colleague Anand Sharma about China obstructing Indian patrols, he said "no power on earth can prevent the Indian patrols. The patrolling pattern is traditional and well-defined."

He also said the stand-offs take place as the Chinese try to stop the Indian patrols. The first face-off in May this year also started after the Chinese intruded five km into India in the north bank of the Pangong Tso (lake) and obstructed an Indian patrol near 'Finger 4'. This led to exchange of blows between the two sides leaving scores of soldiers injured.

The Defence Minister said he will not be able to share much more because these were sensitive operational issues. "I hope the House will under-

stand the sensitivity of the matter," he said.

Appreciating the issue, Naidu urged Rajnath to call select leaders for a separate meeting to address deeper issues and answer their questions. The meeting could be attended by senior defence officials, the chairman suggested.

Rajnath did not deviate much from his statement given in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday. In the Rajya Sabha, he said the LAC in the past too had seen face-offs and they were ultimately resolved through dialogue.

However, this time the situation is very different both in terms of the scale of troops involved and the number of friction points, the Minister said adding India remains committed to a peaceful resolution. "Starting war is in our hands but the end is not in our hands. I am astonished at times that peace is compromised. I want to tell our 130 crore countrymen that we will not let the country down. Neither will we bow before anyone, nor is it our intention to make anyone bow before us," he said.

### Covid-19 IN INDIA

**TOTAL CASES: 52,07,111**  
**DEATHS: 84,376**  
**RECOVERED: 41,02,138**  
**ACTIVE: 10,19,861**

| STATES         | TOTAL CASES | DEATHS | RECOVERED |
|----------------|-------------|--------|-----------|
| Maharashtra    | 11,45,840   | 31,351 | 8,12,354  |
| Andhra Pradesh | 6,01,462    | 5,177  | 5,08,088  |
| Tamil Nadu     | 5,25,420    | 8,618  | 4,70,192  |
| Karnataka      | 4,94,356    | 7,629  | 3,83,077  |
| Uttar Pradesh  | 3,36,294    | 4,771  | 2,63,288  |
| Delhi          | 2,34,701    | 4,877  | 1,98,103  |
| West Bengal    | 2,15,580    | 4,183  | 1,87,061  |
| Odisha         | 1,67,161    | 722    | 1,33,466  |
| Telangana      | 1,65,003    | 1,005  | 1,33,555  |
| Bihar          | 1,64,224    | 855    | 1,49,722  |
| Assam          | 1,48,969    | 528    | 1,19,364  |
| Kerala         | 1,22,216    | 490    | 87,341    |
| Gujarat        | 1,19,088    | 3,271  | 99,908    |
| Rajasthan      | 1,09,473    | 1,293  | 90,685    |
| Haryana        | 1,03,773    | 1,069  | 81,690    |
| Madhya Pradesh | 97,906      | 1,877  | 74,398    |

## Rich nations with just 13% global population to secure half of Covid-19 vaccines

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

A group of wealthy nations representing 13 per cent of the global population have already bought up more than half of the promised doses of future Covid-19 vaccines, according to a report by Oxfam on Wednesday.

The non-governmental organisation analysed deals struck by pharmaceuticals and vaccine producers for the five leading vaccine candidates currently in late-stage trials, based on data collected by the analytics company Airfinity.

"Access to a life-saving vaccine shouldn't depend on where you live or how much money you have," said Robert Silverman of Oxfam America.

"The development and approval of a safe and effective vaccine is crucial, but equally important is making sure the vaccines are available and affordable to everyone. Covid-19 anywhere is Covid-19 everywhere."

The five vaccines analysed were from AstraZeneca, Gamaleya/Sputnik, Moderna, Pfizer and Sinovac.

Oxfam calculated the combined production capacity of



these five vaccine candidates at 5.9 billion doses, enough for three billion people given that all five future vaccines will or are highly likely to require two doses. Supply deals have so far been agreed for 5.3 billion doses, of which 2.7 billion have been bought by developed countries/union like the US, the UK, EU, Australia, Hong Kong and Macau, Japan, Switzerland and Israel.

The remaining 2.6 billion doses have been bought by or promised to developing countries, including India, Bangladesh, China, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico.

The non-profit added that one of the leading candidates, developed by Moderna, has received \$2.5 billion in committed taxpayers' money, but has said it intends to make a profit and has sold the options for all its supply to rich nations.



## Amit Shah discharged from AIIMS

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who recently recovered from Covid-19 and was admitted to AIIMS for a complete medical check-up, was discharged on Thursday evening, officials said.

He was admitted to the premier hospital on September 12. Earlier in the day, the Union Home Minister had addressed an event in his constituency Gandhinagar in through video conference.

### IMMUNE SYSTEM'S T CELLS PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN REDUCING COVID-19 SEVERITY: STUDY

Los Angeles: Vaccine candidates for COVID-19 should elicit a broad immune response that includes antibodies, and the body's helper and killer T cells, according to a study which says weak or uncoordinated immunity may lead to a poor disease outcome. The research, published in the journal Cell, confirms that a multi-layered, virus-specific immune response is important for controlling the novel coronavirus during the acute phase of the infection.

### CAPSULE

**MODI TURNS 70, WISHES IN FROM ACROSS WORLD**  
New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi turned 70 on Thursday, a landmark birthday that saw greetings pour in from across the world.

## US court refuses to stay Trump's move to cut H-1B visas

Washington: A US court has declined to bar the Donald Trump administration's move in US to curtail H-1B visas widely used by foreign technology workers.

The ruling on Wednesday was the second time this month that US District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington has denied a request to suspend the proclamation.

Trump's June 22 proclamation declaring foreign workers a risk to the US labour market amid the coronavirus pandemic triggered pushback from workers and business groups. An array of the nation's biggest tech companies have warned that the policy will do "irreparable harm on businesses and the US economy".

## 4 Indian cities slip in Global Smart City rankings

Respondents from Indian cities highlight air pollution, road congestion as main problems

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four Indian cities — Mumbai, New Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru — have seen a significant fall in the ranking of Global Smart City Index 2020 released on Thursday. Singapore is the top in the list, followed by Helsinki and Zurich in the second and third places respectively. Beijing is ranked 82 (down from 60 in 2019) while Lagos is at the bottom (109) in the list.

As per the Global Smart City Index 2020, Hyderabad was placed at the 85th position (down from 67 in 2019), New Delhi at 86 (down from 68 in 2019), Mumbai was at 93rd place (in 2019 it was at 78) and Bengaluru at 95th (79 in 2019).



The report said cities in India suffer significant drops this year due to the detrimental effect of the pandemic, where technological advancement was not up to date. Indian cities have suffered more from the pandemic because they were not prepared, the report added.

The report was prepared by

the Institute for Management Development (IMD), in collaboration with Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD). Respondents from Indian cities highlighted air pollution, road congestion as main problems.

Others in the top 10 list include Auckland (4th), Oslo (5th), Copenhagen (6th),

Geneva (7th), Taipei City (8th), Amsterdam (9th) and New York at the 10th place. Dubai ranked 43th while Abu Dhabi 42th.

The IMD in collaboration with Singapore University of Technology and Design has released the 2020 Smart City Index, with key findings on how technology is playing a role in the Covid-19 era.

Hundreds of citizens from 109 cities were surveyed in April and May 2020 in the second edition of Global Smart City Index 2020 and asked questions on the technological provisions of their city across five key areas — health and safety, mobility, activities, opportunities, and governance.

## Indict ex-Min Shourie for selling off Palace Hotel for trifle: Court

AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

A special CBI court wants to file a case of one of the grandest palace-hotels in Rajasthan, Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel in Udaipur, to be reopened and former Union Minister Arun Shourie, former bureaucrat Pradeep Bajaj and hotelier Jyotsna Suri to be charged as it claimed that it was grossly sold at a huge loss to the taxpayer in 2002.

The court has asked for criminal cases against the three. "Unknown officers and private persons indulged in this conspiracy from 1999 to

2002 to cause loss of money to the government. The land was sold at ₹45 per square feet. Even a spoon in the hotel would be costlier than that," said a special CBI judge.

Hotel Laxmi Vilas was valued at over ₹252 crore but was sold for ₹7.5 crore to hotelier Lalit Suri, said the special CBI court. Jyotsna Suri took charge of the Lalit group of hotels after her husband Lalit Suri's death.

Shourie, a veteran journalist who was Disinvestment Minister at the time, said he would file a revision petition in the Rajasthan High Court.

Sisodia misleading people on DU funds: Association

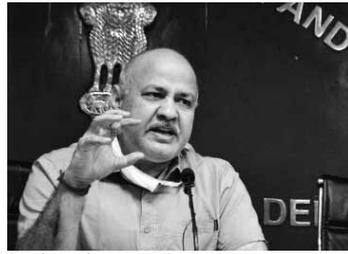
STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that some colleges of Delhi University are depositing their funds in FDs and incessantly demanding money from the Delhi Government.

ing salary from students society account.

Terminating the incident unfortunate, the association in a statement said that it is very unfortunate that the Deputy CM is misleading people by saying that enough funds have been provided in the current financial year.

"The Delhi Government gives grant under two heads—plan and non-plan. It is clearly mentioned in every sanction letter that funds cannot be transferred from one head to the other. How come the Deputy CM is asking the colleges to pay the salaries from the Student's Society Fund, which is collected from the stu-



Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that some colleges of Delhi University are depositing their funds in FDs and incessantly demanding money from the Delhi Government.

fyng the six colleges for special audit — is it because the Members of their choice could not be elected as Chairperson in the governing body of these colleges? — If that is so, it amounts to scuttling the democratic process," it added. "The DUPA strongly demands the Delhi government to refrain from issuing sweeping statements and immediately release 75per cent of the grant i.e. Rs. 202.5 crores of their annual budget requirement (Rs. 270 crores), so that the salaries and pension (pending and current) of the staff members of these colleges could be paid," it said. Meanwhile, replying to the

statement, Sisodia said that some colleges of Delhi University are depositing their funds in FDs and incessantly demanding money from the Delhi Government. According to the rules regarding pattern of assistance, these colleges need to meet all their expenses from the funds they get from various other sources and only after that, if there is any shortage, they will be compensated by the Delhi government, he said. Unfortunately, when the Delhi government asked for the accounts for sources of income from these colleges, they denied presenting accounts, he said, adding that the Delhi

government has increased the budget for these colleges by two-three times already. "On one hand, these colleges have failed to pay the salaries of their staff. If these colleges do not disclose how they have spent their money, on what basis can the Delhi government release funds?" he said. "On the other hand, these colleges have been saying that they do not have sufficient funds to pay the salaries of their staff, and on the other hand, the money in their FDs is consistently increasing. This money is not provided by the Delhi government to deposit in the FD. Some colleges have FDs that have up to Rs. 15 to 30

crores," he said. Sisodia further asked "What portion of the money has come from which sources? How is it being used? This needs to be investigated by the audit team. I hope that the Delhi University Administration will cooperate with the audit team in investigating the possibility of corruption in the college funds." "Delhi University is a university with a proud history. I hope that the DU administration will take stern action instead of making political statements. We believe that the transparency and clean image of the university should be upheld," he said.

AAP attacks BJP for 'anti-farmer' laws

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday launched a fresh attack against the Delhi Janata Party for bringing 'anti-farmer' laws like Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on

Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020.

Party senior leader and Member of Parliament Bhagwant Mann and AAP MLA Jarnail Singh Mann said that after AAP and farmer protest, Akali Dal and Congress have taken U-turn on the MSP

ordinance bills and this is our victory. Mann said that both Punjab CM Captain Amarinder Singh and Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal from Congress supported these bills in the preparatory stage. "These anti-farmer bills should have been stopped when they were in the preparatory stage only and

Alkali Dal Cabinet Minister Shrimati Harsimrat Kaur should have resigned on the day when these bills were tabled for Cabinet nod," he said. Singh said that AAP will continue its protest inside and outside the Parliament, and apprise people that both in SAD and Congress are anti-farmer. Mann said, "I want to say

that whatever these parties do the BJP will pass these bills in Lok Sabha as they have the majority but in Rajya Sabha, if the opposition comes together then there might be a chance to stop these bills. AAP is protesting against these bills inside the Parliament and in Punjab also we are protesting on the roads against these bills.

Govt to set up 200 public charging, battery swapping stations soon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government will soon roll out a coordinated strategy to set up 200 public charging and battery swapping stations at prominent locations in the city. All Delhi Government agencies in Delhi including three municipal corporations, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Delhi Development Agency (DDA), Public Works Department (PWD), transport department, Delhi Transport Corporation, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation and DSIID will carry out a comprehensive planning exercise in the next two weeks to identify concessional locations within their jurisdictions for the purpose of setting up public charging stations.

This move was among the key decisions taken at the first meeting of the Charging Infrastructure Working Group of Delhi Government that met on Thursday under the Chairmanship of Jasmine Shah, Vice Chairperson of Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi. The Delhi electronics vehicles policy 2020 which is being implemented by the transport department lays a special emphasis on accelerated rollout of public charging infrastructure as a key enabler in rapid adoption of EVs in Delhi.

devising and implementing a coordinated strategy for setting up 200 public charging and battery swapping stations at prominent locations in Delhi has been entrusted to the charging infrastructure working group. "Delhi government will soon be rolling out financial incentives promised under the EV policy. By creating a charging infrastructure working group, Delhi government has brought on board all the different agencies and discoms of Delhi to initiate work on accelerated rollout of charging infrastructure in a collaborative manner," Shah said. "This is critical to realizing Arvind Kejriwal's vision of making Delhi the EV capital of India and among the top cities globally in terms of EV penetration," he said. "In three months, EESL, DMRC, Delhi Transco Ltd, NDMC, East MCD and North MCD gave a detailed presentation of their proposals for rapidly augmenting the public charging infrastructure as well as battery swapping infrastructure in the city. "It was agreed at the meeting that given the emphasis of Delhi EV Policy on mass adoption of EVs in the two-wheeler and three-wheeler category, the charging infrastructure should focus primarily on setting up a large number of slow-charging stations consisting of AC-001 charging points (3.3 kW each) and limited number of DC-001 chargers (15 kW each), instead of setting up a few

6 cycle-mounted tea/coffee selling units distributed to mark PM's birthday

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To celebrate Sewa Diwas, which marks the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed 6 innovative cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee Selling units under Project DignITEA in New Delhi on Thursday.



Each cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee selling unit costs Rs 18,000 and has the provision for gas stove, gas cylinder, an umbrella, utensils and separate containers to keep tea, sugar, cups and snacks properly.

The cycle-mounted tea/coffee selling units were distributed to 6 unemployed local youths by Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and BJP General Secretary, Arun Singh, at the New Delhi, Meenakshi Lekhi in presence of KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena. These units will enable tea-sellers earn a respectable livelihood while selling the beverages hygienically.

Each cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee selling unit costs Rs 18,000 and has the provision for gas stove, gas cylinder, an umbrella, utensils and separate containers to keep tea, sugar, cups and snacks properly. On Thursday, KVIC also distributed 17 such units in different cities like Varanasi, Jaipur and Chandigarh.

Each cycle-mounted Tea/Coffee selling unit costs Rs 18,000 and has the provision for gas stove, gas cylinder, an umbrella, utensils and separate containers to keep tea, sugar, cups and snacks properly. On Thursday, KVIC also distributed 17 such units in different cities like Varanasi, Jaipur and Chandigarh.

expensive fast-charging stations that cater primarily for commercial vehicles. Additionally, developing a wide network of battery swapping stations was also identified as a key priority," the government said in a statement. "It is expected that local bodies will take a lead in identifying locations at each of their parking lots for developing EV charging stations, which is also mandatory under Section 12 of the Delhi Parking Rules 2019," it said. Once this mapping exercise is completed, Delhi Transco, Ltd, which is the State nodal agency for setting up charging infrastructure, will implement a coordinated plan for setting up of 200 charging stations at the most prominent places in Delhi, with subsidy support from Delhi government, it added. In addition to public charging stations, establishing charging facilities in restricted public spaces such as malls, schools, colleges, group housing societies, hotels, education institutions, hospitals etc. was also identified as a priority at the meeting. Given these premises have high capacity commercial centres, the charging infrastructure should focus primarily on setting up a large number of slow-charging points at these facilities would be inexpensive and a quick way of setting up thousands of additional charging points in the city and reducing range anxiety, it said.

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IPL '20: Police to tighten noose on bookies in G'gram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

With the 2020 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL) starting on September 19 senior officials of the Gurugram police have issued necessary directions to the Intelligence wing, crime branch units and the station house officers (SHOs) of the concerned police stations of the district to keep an eye on bookie who run illicit betting rackets and start gathering information about such offenders. According to sources, several bookies, including Agra's prominent bookie Shyam Vohra and his son Vatsal Vohra have taken shelter in Gurugram due to the strictness of police in Delhi and Noida. A senior officer of the Haryana police on the condition of anonymity said that "Bookie Shyam Vohra has a network in UP and Rajasthan. The Father-Son duo is hiding in the city to run the illicit network of betting rackets during IPL. Apart from this, there is a possibility of betting around Rs 35 crore on the IPL cricket matches". On the basis of these inputs, the Gurugram Police are on high alert and have asked the police incharge of the Intelligence wing to increase surveillance in their respective areas. According to an official data, a total of 148 cases of Gambling Act have been registered and around 235 people have been arrested in this year till now. While in the previous year around 446 cases were registered and a number of 700 people were arrested in the Gambling Act. Nitika Gahlaut, DCP (headquarter) of Gurugram police, said that even though cops were busy because of the Covid-19 pandemic, units of the force were keeping a close watch on such illegal networks and activities. "We have alerted our force to keep an eye on syndicates who run illicit betting rackets. Our teams are monitoring all cyber operations to check for any illegal activity. Also, necessary directions have been passed to all police unit to prevent gathering more people in a same place during IPL, adding strict action would be initiated against those caught indulging in anti-social activities. The DCP further said, along with the police units we have instructed our patrolling team to cross check and search the secluded place building premises, hotels, restaurants, farmhouse, guest house, PG accommodations and recently rented-out flats as the bookies usually stay in these places after work and engages in betting". A crime branch official, who did not wish to be named, said that the police generally rely on information collected from a network of sources to nail bookies because it is difficult to monitor their operations. Meanwhile, the sources said that many gamblers were eagerly waiting for the IPL, previously scheduled to begin from March 29, but the announcement on the postponement of the matches came as a jolt to them. "IPL is a major event for us and our clients, and that being cancelled is a big blow. Many arrange for money to bet on these matches from different sources so that they can repay debts or pump this money into their businesses," said a bookie. "Mumbai Indians are currently priced at Rs 4.90 on the IPL. This is followed by Hyderabad's Rs 5.60, Chennai Super king Rs 5, RCB Rs 6.20, Delhi Rs 6.40, KKR Rs 7.80, Kings XI Punjab Rs 9.50 and Rajasthan Royals Rs 10. This means, the team that has the lowest price is considered a strong contender for victory. If right now someone bet 1000 rupees that the Mumbai Indians will win the IPL, they will get 4900 rupees. Match rates may go up and down," said a bookie on the condition of anonymity.

GDA seals illegal constructions in Pandav Nagar

ASHOK NIRWAN ■ GHAZIABAD

Illegal construction of about a dozen commercial institutions in Pandav Nagar. After this Vikram Farm House, Havell Farm House, Salivation Farm House, Devdham Farm House and Naydham Restoration, were sealed by the GDA mobile squad. GDA Secretary Santosh Rai told here this evening that these institutions have been constructed illegally above the law. In this connection, the GDA also issued show cause notices to the heads of these institutes, yet the illegal constructions were not dropped.

MCD sweeper attacked with knife in Jamia Nagar over cleaning scuffle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old sweeper, working with Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was injured when a man attacked him with a knife after an argument broke out between them in southeast Delhi's Jamia Nagar area. The incident occurred on Wednesday. The victim, Sonpal, a resident of Nehru Nagar, works as a sweeper with MCD on contract basis in Jamia Nagar. Police said they have arrested the accused identified as Mohammad Shiraz (28), also a resident of Jamia Nagar. According to R P Meena, the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Southeast district, around 7 am on Wednesday morning, when Sonpal was on duty, the accused Shiraz, attacked him with a knife after an argument broke out between them over cleaning. "The accused told the victim that he was not cleaning properly, after which the argument escalated. Sonpal sustained injuries on his neck and right arm. He was rushed to the Holy Family Hospital for treatment," the DCP said. "Based on the statement of Sonpal, a case under relevant sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Jamia Nagar police station and the accused have been arrested," the DCP added.

FARM ORDINANCES

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday lashed out the opposition for "unnecessarily politicizing support prices (MSP)" over New Farm Ordinances recently introduced by the Central Government, saying the State Government was committed to procure every single grain of farmers crops on Minimum Support Price (MSP) and there will be no change in the functioning of Mandis. Khattar said even with the introduction of these Ordinances,

KHATTAR LASHES AT OPP FOR MISLEADING FARMERS

Government Mandis will not be closed and procurement of crops on MSP will continue and with no chance the procurement will be done below MSP. Addressing a Digital Press Conference here, Khattar sought to put an end to the rumours being spread by the opposition regarding New Farm Ordinances, saying that Haryana Government is a farmer-friendly Government as it has consistently taken farmer-friendly decisions whether it is about giving compensation, launching new farmer welfare schemes like Bhavantar Bhaarpai Yojana, Meri Fasal Mera Byora

etc. "Even now the government will not back down in taking any special decision in the interest of farmers. If any farmer organization or individual wishes to give any suggestion or has any query regarding these Ordinances then they can come forward to share the same and I assure that their suggestions and grievances will be considered by the Government. I appeal to the farmers to remain vigilant about double standard politics of Congress," the chief minister said. Responding to a query regarding State Government's strategy to make the farmers

aware about the Ordinances, Khattar announced that special "Krishi Adaalat" will be set up in each district to effectively redress the agriculture related issues and queries of the farmers of the state so as to ensure that every grievance raised by farmers is resolved on priority basis. He said that the Ordinances introduced by the Central Government have only given a facility to farmers that if a private agency wants to purchase from outside government Mandis at a price higher than Minimum Support Price, then the farmers can sell their crops at a higher price. The chief minister

said that as per the Contract Farming, no contract will be signed with the farmers below MSP Price. About 333 contract farming have been undertaken in Haryana, out of which contract farming on 1100 acres is being done in Sirsa, 350 acres in Fatehabad, 900 acres in Bhiwani and 321 acres in Gurugram. Taking a dig at Congress, Khattar said, "The 'so called' farmer friendly leaders are prodding the farmers by misguiding them, but the farmers are now beginning to understand the benefits of these Ordinances". He said that if the opposition is

so farmer friendly then they should ask the Congress led Rajasthan and Punjab Governments to start the procurement of Millet and Maize like Haryana is doing. This time we have decided that Haryana will not be procuring a single grain coming from other states including Rajasthan and Punjab. Whereas grains produced by each farmer of Haryana will be procured by the State Government at Minimum Support Price". He said these political parties have nothing to do with the inter-

est of farmers rather they are just deceiving them. However the farmers' especially progressive farmers and Farmer Producer Organizations have now understood that the State Government is committed for the welfare of farmers and procurement will be done on Minimum Support Price only, he asserted. On the plans for Kharif procurement, Khattar said Haryana is geared up for the Kharif season and for this the State Government has even wrote a letter to Central Government for seeking permission for allowing the procurement of paddy which is pro-

cedure for the Public Food Distribution System to start from September 25 instead of October 1. "Even in the difficult times arisen due to COVID-19, the number of Mandis and procurement centres were increased to facilitate the farmers and for hassle free procurement of Wheat and Mustard and likewise, this time too for the procurement of Paddy, as many as 200 new Mandis will be opened in rice mills for procurement of paddy starting from September 25, 2020 this year so as to ensure that social distancing and other norms are followed," he said.

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# 13 deaths, 1,192 cases reported on Thursday

### Patient tally climbs to 37,149; death toll 460 in State

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The contagion of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) is showing no signs of any let off in Uttarakhand. The State health department reported 1,192 fresh cases of the disease on Thursday which increased the tally of patients to 37,139 on the day. Apart from becoming more intensive, the virus is becoming fatal with each passing day. On Thursday, 13 deaths due to the Covid-19 were reported. The death toll from the disease has mounted to 460 in the State.

The authorities discharged 533 patients of the disease from different hospitals of the state on Thursday. A total of 24,810 patients have so far got cured from the disease. The percentage recovery from the Covid-19 now stands at 66.80 per cent in Uttarakhand with a doubling rate of 20.23 days. Out of the

total samples tested 6.84 per cent have tested positive for the disease.

Eight patients of Covid-19 were reported dead at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh on Thursday. Similarly two persons expired in Sushila Tiwari government hospital, Haridwar. One person each was reported dead from Mahant Indir Hospital, Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) Dehradun and HNB base hospital, Srinagar on Thursday.

Out of the 533 patients cured on Thursday, 166 are from Dehradun, 132 from Nainital, 67 from Haridwar, 42 from Rudrapur, 36 from Uttarkashi, 29 from Pauri, 24 from Tehri, 14 from Champawat and 10 from Udham Singh Nagar district.

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## Under Secretary Hari Singh dies of Covid

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Under secretary and former Officer on Special Duty (OSD) of Cabinet Minister Satpal Maharaj, Hari Singh succumbed to Covid-19 on Thursday. He breathed his last at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh on Thursday morning. A soft spoken and very popular officer, Singh was admitted at AIIMS- Rishikesh on September 9. Subsequently

his condition deteriorated. He was associated with cabinet minister Satpal Maharaj for a long time. He also served as Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Amrita Rawat (Wife of Satpal Maharaj) when she was the cabinet minister in Congress Government.

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, cabinet minister Satpal Maharaj and many colleagues of Hari Singh have expressed their condolences on his death.

were reported on the day. Fifteen patients were reported in Rudrapur, 13 in Bageshwar and nine in Champawat were reported on Thursday.

Uttarakhand now has 11714 active patients of the disease with Dehradun maintaining 2300, 52 in Bageshwar with 3882 active patients of the disease. Dehradun is followed

by Haridwar with 2397 active patients while Nainital is at 1416 active patients. Udham Singh Nagar has 1364, Pauri 548, Tehri 372, Uttarkashi 336, Pithoragarh 328 and Champawat 239 active patients of the disease. Chamoli has 244, Almora has 215, Rudrapur 190, and Bageshwar district has 183 active patients of the disease.

## CM, Speaker inspect secretariat hall for Monsoon Session

### Covid-19 regulations force authorities to exercise many options for the venue of session

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat and Speaker of Uttarakhand Vidhan Sabha Prerna Chandra Singh Garhwali inspected the state secretariat on Thursday and explored the possibilities of holding monsoon session of Assembly there. The speaker said that different options are being explored for the session of the Uttarakhand assembly is slated to start from

September in Dehradun. The shortage of space in the assembly hall of the Vidhan Sabha has forced the authorities to weigh different options. It is learnt that options like holding session in the assembly building while using the space of galleries for seating the MLAs, holding the monsoon session in a tent within the assembly

building and holding the session in some other building like secretariat are being considered.



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The three monsoon session of the Uttarakhand assembly is slated to start from

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## Qazi against holding session outside Assembly building

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Congress MLA from Manglaur Qazi Nizamuddin has said that the monsoon session of Uttarakhand assembly should be held in the assembly building only and any attempt to hold session in any building would be inappropriate. In a letter written to the speaker Prerna Chandra Singh Garhwali, the Congress MLA suggested that in case of a space constraint the session should be held in a tent inside the Vidhan Sabha premises. Nizamuddin questioned the state government's decision of converting the assembly building of Bhardaisan into a Covid-19 care centre.

"The Assembly building at Bhardaisan has been converted into Covid centre. Now we want to impose strict lockdown and all activities of summer capital be held? Why did the Rajbhawan in Nainital or the building of Garhwal commissioner office in Pauri were not converted into Covid centres? These buildings remain vacant for a large part of the year," he said.

## Cabinet discusses possibility of one-day Assembly session

### Various decisions taken in Cabinet meeting presided over by CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Considering the situations resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, the possibility of holding the monsoon session of the Vidhan Sabha on a one-day only was also discussed in the cabinet meeting presided over by Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat here on Thursday. It was stated that a one-day Assembly session had been held in various states. However, a decision in this regard will be taken on Friday. The cabinet discussed various proposals and granted its approval to 30 of them.

The cabinet approved the proposal for the assembly

speaker and deputy speaker to file their own income tax returns themselves. Further, the cabinet also approved the decision to introduce a bill in the assembly regarding the director general in public places and provision of penalty for those wearing masks in public. In another decision taken considering the impact of Covid-19, the cabinet has approved extending tax rebate for three months on motor buses and goods carriers. Apart from these decisions, the cabinet also approved naming the Uttarakhand technical university after Madho Singh Bhandari, creation of the post of director general in public works, raising the salary of about 350 contract junior engineer in Public Works Department from Rs 15,000 to Rs 24,000 and granting house tax exemption to widows of ex-servicemen below the rank of



JCO under urban local bodies. In another important decision, the cabinet also approved bringing enterprises with up to Rs one crore investment under the purview of the MSME policy. The cabinet rejected the proposal for acquiring the Radha Bhawan in Mussoorie for making the state guest

house. Further, the cabinet also approved the proposal to table bills related to labour reforms in the Vidhan Sabha. Apart from this, the division of work for construction of canals and flood protection works under the Irrigation department into four smaller parts was also approved by the cabinet.

## Business bodies clash over weekend closure plan in Doon

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Two business associations in Dehradun support the idea of shut down on weekends for which they have met the officials and the Ministers of the State Government too, but both of them have different opinions about its implementation.

On Thursday, the members of the association, Doon Udyog Vyapar Mandal (DUMV) announced that they will keep all the shops closed in the market for the next three Saturdays and Sundays observing a complete shut down. They said that they also met Dehradun mayor, Sunil Uniyal 'Gama' to ask the corporation to sanitise market areas on these weekends and claimed that 'Gama' has ensured that all the marketplaces will be sanitised on the said weekends.

However, the members of Doon Valley Mahanagar Udyog Vyapar Mandal (DVMVM), who earlier demanded the same thing, stated that they will close their shops for the next three weekends only if the

state administration issues any order to this effect and not because of the orders of some selected businessmen of an association. According to the president of DVMVM, Pankaj Masson, those who want to impose a shut down of the market for the next three weekends are the businessmen who operate big shopping malls, stores and shopping complexes who are trying to influence the officials for the lockdown but have no interest in small and poor shopkeepers.

"If a shopkeeper wants to close a shop as per his own will, we have no issues with it but we will not tolerate if any association will force any shopkeeper to shut down their shops on a working day due to their self-imposed lockdown."

"We will observe weekend lockdowns only on the directions of the government," stated Masson. A faction of the businessmen and shopkeepers in Dehradun are consistently trying to convince the State Government to impose the lockdown for at least on weekends supposedly to minimise the risk

of Covid-19 contagion in the market places. However, Masson said that if the government wants to impose strict lockdown and wants it to be effective, it should be done for at least two weeks though he refused to follow any association's imposition of the idea of lockdown on poor shopkeepers.

"It is not required to announce that the whole market will remain closed on weekends on your own when the administration has not said anything. Such rumours will cause serious damage to poor shopkeepers if people will not arrive in the market on Saturdays thinking every shopkeeper and vendor is keeping business shut. The shopkeepers will consider a lockdown to be valid only after the government imposes it," added Masson. However, Sunil Masson, a member of DUMV stated that they want lockdown so that the rate of increasing cases of Covid-19 can be regulated and besides this, the association will not compel anyone to shut down their shops.

## NSUI observes 'National Unemployment Day'

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The National Students Union of India (NSUI) celebrated the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as 'National Unemployment day' on Thursday. The activists of the student wing of Congress party assembled at the Rajbhawan and marched to the office of district magistrate of Dehradun. However the march was stopped by the police near the Darshan Lal Chowk.

The agitated NSUI workers sat on a Dharna there and shouted slogans against the government. Later they submitted a memorandum directed to the governor of Uttarakhand to the Tehsildar. In the memorandum the NSUI said that unemployed are still waiting for the long pending process of appointments in the posts of Licensed Teachers

(LT), headmaster, Group C, Headmaster, Review Officer, group D and PCS examinations to complete.

Speaking on the occasion, the president of the state unit of NSUI, Mohan Bhandari said that the PM Modi gave a dream of jobs to the youth but now unemployment is at all time high in the country. In Uttarakhand the rate of unemployment has become seven times more than the rate of year 2003. He said that the Uttarakhand government should complete the pending process of recruitment examinations failing which the NSUI would be forced to start a massive agitation.

The district president of NSUI, Saurabh Mangam said that unemployment is the fastest growing and the state government should act without delay to address the issue of unemployment.

## PM Modi a selfless Karma Yogi, says CM

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a selfless Karma Yogi who has dedicated his every moment to the motherland. Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said this in a programme organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party to mark the birthday of the PM here on Thursday. Rawat said that due to his efforts and service, Modi's fame had spread across the world.

Referring to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the CM said that the virus does not differentiate between the rich and poor. He stressed on the need for observing all necessary precautions for protection from the disease. "The government is fighting against the pandemic with all its force which is why the mortality rate is quite low



and people are also recovering. However, the pandemic is yet to reach its peak. Us party workers are having to maintain distance now but I am waiting for the day when we'll be able to embrace and that day will come soon too," said the CM. Stating that his govern-

ment is completing three and a half years in office, Rawat said that an attempt has been made to ensure that no allegation is levelled at the government. Up to 80 per cent of the announcements made have also been fulfilled or are being worked upon on the ground, he

added. The BJP State president Bansidhar Bhagat said that it is due to Modi's leadership that the nation is moving towards self-reliance. An exhibition depicting Modi's life and works related to his term as the PM was also held.

## MCD to seal shops for encroachment after 3 warnings from Oct end

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The Corporation of Dehradun (MCD) will seal shops in the marketplaces if the owners will not remove their encroachments after three warnings issued by the corporation.

Informing about it, the Dehradun municipal commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey said that there are several shopkeepers in the marketplaces like Paltan Chowk and Rajbhawan who have extended their establishments on public space, causing nuisance to the public.

He said that the corporation will initially give shopkeepers three warnings to remove their encroachments on their own within a given time and if even after that they do not comply, MCD will seal their shops. On the question of when the corporation will begin the process of removing encroachments from market places, Pandey said that it will likely begin by the end of October but the purpose of announcing this plan at this time is to give shopkeepers sufficient time to clear their encroachments from the marketplaces in the city.

## Business slump in wedding points affecting livelihood of 30K in Doon

PURNIMA BISHT ■ DEHRADUN

The livelihood of about 30,000 people of the city is getting affected due to the slump in business of the wedding points this year. Adding to this, the secretary of Dehradun Mandap Keeper Association, Alok Mittal said that the government should restrict the number of guests in a wedding venue as per the size of the place instead of keeping it same for everybody irrespective of the size of the space they possess. With the wedding season starting from the next month, several banquet halls and wedding venues would have been booked several months ago in advance if this year had been anything like the previous pandemic times. According to the owners of the wedding venues in Dehradun, booking a date for a function is currently a secondary issue

for them as most of the people are not even approaching them. "We used to receive bookings seven to eight months in advance every year but this time, we do not have a single booking till March. The main issue is not that people are not coming to us but the issue is people are hosting the functions at their homes with limited guests. If this will go on for a little longer, the new generation might start to question the practice of inviting hundreds of people to celebrate in a lavish venue if a function can be done within limited means," said Rajesh Gupta, owner of a wedding hall on Saharanpur Road. Some wedding point owners also stated that they were also asked to return the advance deposit by some customers but since they could not do so, some clients kept putting pressure through some local ministers and other influential per-



sonalities to intimidate them in order to get their deposit money back. We received partial advance payments from some clients but they need to understand that even if the functions did not happen, we have to pay our staff and other bills too. We are not refusing to pay them back their money. All we are saying is that when the situation gets normal, they can use that advance money to organise any function they

want in our hall," added Gupta. ParaS Aggarwal, the owner of the wedding hall on Saharanpur Road stated that this wedding season, he only has 20 per cent of the wedding bookings in comparison to last year. He said that the situation is about what they expect the it will continue to be the same in the future, the business of wedding venues will get destroyed soon. According to some operators of banquet halls, the owners of several hotels and resorts are putting them up for sale because of this Covid-19 situation will continue to exist the next year too, these owners might go bankrupt by then. On being asked about what they expect the State Government to do in this matter, the wedding venue owners stated that when the government has allowed

unhindered entry of people in temples and Gurudwaras, then we will allow a few more guests in functions like weddings. "There are about 150 wedding venues in the city and directly and indirectly, the livelihood of about 25,000 to 30,000 people is linked with the wedding business. The government should at least restrict the number of guests according to the size of the venue because some venues are quite huge and can easily accommodate more than 700 to 800 people while maintaining physical distance and other necessary measures to minimise the risk of contagion," stated Mittal. Moreover, some members of the association also stated that they are trying to approach the chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat to make him aware about these issues but they have not been able to reach him so far.

# India can get Covid vaccine by early '21, Parliament told



**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Centre on Thursday informed the Parliament that the COVID-19 vaccine will be made available in India by the beginning of 2021.

Addressing the Rajya Sabha over the coronavirus situation in the country, Health Minister Dr. Harshvardhan said that India is also making efforts like other nations and three vaccine candidates are in different phases of clinical trials. "Three vaccine candidates (Zydcus Cadila, Bharat Biotech, and the Serum Institute of India) are in different phases. Under Prime Minister's guidance, an expert group is looking at it and there is advanced planning in place. We are hopeful that by the start of next year a vaccine will be available in India," the Health Minister informed the upper



**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

house after a total of four hours of debate during the last three days in the Rajya Sabha. Harshvardhan's remarks came at a time when India has reported over 50 lakh cases and people are expecting a vaccine at the earliest.

On the criticism that Government made no effort to tackle the pandemic menace at early signals, Harshvardhan stated that the PM, the ministers, and state health ministers have been addressing the situation since January 8 fighting this battle together.

He said that detailed advisories had been circulated even before the first COVID-19 case was detected in India on January 30.

The Union Minister further noted that "extensive contact-tracing was undertaken" with 162 contacts being traced to the first case.

Harshvardhan said the PM has handled Covid-19 "meticulously". History will remember Prime Minister Narendra Modi for meticulously monitoring the entire situation himself," he said.

Responding to Congress MP Anand Sharma's query on how large number of people was prevented from being infected, Harshvardhan said that six scientific agencies gave scientific data on the basis of which it was stated the 14-29 lakh cases were prevented by the coronavirus lockdown.

While the vaccine candidates undertaken by Zydcus Cadila and Bharat Biotech have completed phase 1 of human tests, SII has resumed its trials after getting clearance from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

SII is the manufacturing partner of the vaccine candidate being developed jointly by AstraZeneca and University of Oxford.

The Pune-based company is looking after the human tests being conducted at 17 trial sites across the country.

## IMA flays Govt over hiding data on Covid fatalities among healthcare staff

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has slammed the Government for failing to reveal the data on the number of healthcare staff who have been affected and who died from Covid-19, when the Parliament debated the issue.

It said that at least 382 doctors across the country have lost their lives in the line of duty so far, but Union Health Minister Harshvardhan could not come up with the number of fatalities occurred in the medical fraternity when asked by MP Binoy Viswan in Parliament recently.

Besides, the IMA, which represents private doctors from across the country, also released the data of the doctors who died due to

Covid-19. Such data is not maintained at Central level," Vardhan had told Viswan in a written reply.

In a reaction to Vardhan's statement, the IMA said, "If a government does not maintain the statistics of total number of doctors and health care workers infected by Covid-19 and the statistics of how many of them sacrificed their life due to the pandemic, it loses the moral authority to administer the Epidemic Act 1897 and the Disaster Management Act."

The IMA also stated that the reply by the Union Minister also exposes the hypocrisy of calling the healthcare workers 'corona warriors' while denying them and their families the status and benefits of martyrdom.

The IMA also expressed concerns at the huge number

of deaths of doctors and health care workers.

Doctors suffered four times mortality of ordinary citizens, and private practitioners suffered eight times mortality on the same scale. To feign that this information does not merit the attention of the nation is abominable," said the IMA.

The doctors' body also objected to the statement made by Ashwini Kumar Chaudhary, Minister of State (MoS) for Health, that insurance compensation data is not available with the Union Government in Parliament.

"IMA finds it strange that after having formulated an unfriendly partial insurance scheme for the bereaved families, it struggles with the ideology of the Government disowning them altogether as them," it added.

## Amit Shah recuperates, discharged from AIIMS



**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was on Thursday discharged from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). Earlier in the day, Shah attended the inauguration of a water work scheme under smart city programme for his Gandhinagar constituency through video conferencing from the Hospital. He also spoke for more than 10 minutes.

Shah was admitted in the hospital on Saturday night fol-

lowing breathing trouble. The AIIMS bulletin said that Shah was admitted for a "complete medical checkup before the Parliament Session for 1-2 days." On August 2, he was admitted to Medanta Hospital for Covid-19 treatment and discharged on August 13. But on August 17, he was admitted to AIIMS following post-Covid-19 ailments and discharged on August 30. The Home Minister is expected to attend the Parliament Session in the coming days.

## CBI files case against software cos for sending pop-up malwares on PCs

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The CBI has registered a case against six private companies based at New Delhi, Jaipur (Rajasthan), Noida (UP) and Gurugram (Haryana) and other unknown persons. The complaint alleging that these companies have transmitted pop-ups to the victims' personal computers with warnings/bogus messages about serious technical problems including malware infection in their Microsoft Windows Systems.

The agency on Thursday conducted searches at 10 locations including Jaipur, Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad and Mainpuri (Uttar Pradesh)

at the premises of the accused companies and the residential premises of other related persons.

"The employees of these companies allegedly advised the victims to install certain anti-malware software, which are essentially PUPs (Potentially Unwanted Programs). The victims were allegedly given the option to activate PUPs by paying the fee online or by calling a support number advertised in the interface of the program. The victims are fraudulently influenced in this manner and allegedly fall in their trap to maintain their systems properly," the CBI said in a statement.

It was also alleged that the victims were made to pay online by clicking the link on the interface for resolving the non-existent problem or when they ask the call centres to seek resolution of the fake problems, it further said.

The accused firms are Softwill Infotech Private Limited, New Delhi, Innovava Thinklabs Limited, Jaipur, Benovellent Technologies Private Limited, Noida, Systweak Software Pvt. Ltd. Limited, Jaipur, Saburi TLC Worldwide Services Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi and Saburi Global Services Pvt. Ltd, Gurugram. Some other unknown persons have also been mentioned as accused in the FIR.

## India rejects Pak's 'Absurd Assertions' in orchestrated map

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Two days after National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval walked out of a virtual meeting when his Pakistani counterpart showed a wrong political map of India, the Government on Thursday rejected the so-called 'political map' of Pakistan was unveiled by its Prime Minister on August 4. It made absurd assertions and laid untenable claims to territories in Gujarat and the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, the minister said.

The Government has rejected Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross border terrorism, he said.

It has also been emphasized that Pakistan should desist from laying untenable claims to Indian territories, which have neither legal validity nor international credibility, he said.

The Minister also said the government continues to respond appropriately to Pakistan's malicious actions and propaganda, including on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, an arduous international effort. The question was asked by BJP MP Jyotiradha Scindia.

Taking strong exception to the provocative act by Pakistan, India had on Tuesday walked out of a meeting in the National Security Advisors (NSA) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

The Ministry of External Affairs said what Pakistan did was "blatant disregard to the host Russia's advisory".

## Delhi Metro incurs ₹1,609 revenue loss during lockdown

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Metro reported a revenue loss of ₹1,609 crore due to the lockdown followed by Bangalore metro with ₹170 crore, Lucknow (₹100 crore) and Kochi metros have incurred losses of ₹ 90 crore, ₹80 crore and ₹34 crore respectively.

As per the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs data tabled in the Upper House on Thursday, a total loss of ₹1,983 crore was incurred in five cities due to closure of metro rail services amid the coronavirus pandemic. Metro services, which were shut on March 22 to contain the spread of novel coronavirus, resumed on September 7 in a phased manner. Full-fledged normal operations resumed on September 12.

Replying to impact on loan repayment by various metro



rail networks due to the lockdown, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Puri said that loan was paid as per their schedule. During the lockdown period, he said, preparatory work like detailed designing, preparation of tender schedule and finalisation of tenders, among other things, had been carried out by the Delhi metro.

According to metro rail officials, metro projects have two sources of steady revenue - farebox, which accounts for almost 80 to 90 per cent of the revenue-ticketing, passes, sales,

## 35 judges in SC, 557 new judges & 483 addl judges made permanent in 2014 to 2020, Govt informs RS

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

As many as 35 judges were appointed to the Supreme Court while 557 new judges were appointed and 483 additional judges made permanent in the country between 2014 to 2020, the government informed the Rajya Sabha.

In a written reply to a question, Minister for Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad said the number of computerized District and Subordinate courts has increased from 13,672 in 2014 to 16,845 as on September 14, 2020, registering an increase of 3,173.

He said a new user-friendly version of Case Information Software has been developed and deployed at all the computerized District and Subordinate Courts.

All stakeholders including Judicial Officers can access information relating to judicial proceedings/decisions of computerized District & Subordinate Courts and High Courts on the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) as on September 14, 2020. The minister informed

that eCourt services such as details of case registration, cause lists, case status, daily orders and final judgments are available to litigants and advocates through the eCourts web portal. Judicial Service Commission (JSC) in all computerized courts, eCourts Mobile App, email service, SMS push and pull services.

"Video conferencing facility has been enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails," he said. "From May 1, 2014 to September 14, 2020, 35 Judges were appointed in Supreme Court. 557 new Judges were appointed and 483 Additional Judges made permanent in the High Courts. Sanctioned strength of Judges of High Courts has been increased from 906 in May, 2014 to 1079 currently," he said.

The sanctioned and working strength of Judicial Officers in District and Subordinate Courts has increased from 19,518 and 15,115 respectively as on December 31, 2013, while the sanctioned strength of judges on September 15, 2020 is 24,205 and the working strength is 19,171.

## Bangladesh seeks lifting of ban on onion export by Modi Govt

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Worried over skyrocketing onion prices in the retail market, Bangladesh has requested the Modi Government to withdraw the ban imposed on its export as soon as possible.

The Government had on Monday banned the export of all varieties of onions with immediate effect to ensure availability and curb prices of the commodity in the domestic market. Onion prices in Bangladesh have touched 200 taka per kg while it is being sold at ₹40-45 per kg across India. Onion traders and industrial parties including Congress and NCP are demanding reversal of the ban order while retailers expect a ₹2.5 per kg drop in the rate due to the export ban.

Expressing deep concern over the sudden ban on the

export of onions as it directly affects the supply of essential food items in market, the Bangladesh government in a letter dated September 15, requested the Indian High Commission to convey the message to authorities in New Delhi and take necessary measures to resume onion exports taking into consideration the excellent ties between the neighbours.

It pointed out that a secretary-level meeting between the commerce ministries of the two countries held on January 15-16, 2020 in Dhaka requested India not to impose export restriction on essential food items required by Bangladesh. The letter said the Bangladesh side also requested India to inform Dhaka ahead of time in case of any event necessitating such a restriction.

During April-June period,

onion exports to Bangladesh, India's largest overseas market for the key kitchen ingredient, shot up 147.5% to 1.9 lakh metric tonne. Overall, onion exports grew 23% during the same period to 6.8 lakh metric tonne.

During her visit to India in October last year after the onion export ban, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina had said, "We are facing some issues because of the ban on onion exports from India. I don't know why you banned export of onions. It would have been better if you had alerted us in advance so that we could have sourced onions from other countries. You banned it suddenly and it became a problem for us."

Hasina had then said in jest that she had asked her cook not to use onions in the kitchen.

## Regulate digital media first, Centre tells SC

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre has said that if the Supreme Court decides on the issue of media regulation then such an exercise should be undertaken with the digital media first as it has faster reach and information has the potential to go viral due to applications like WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook.

The Government told the apex court that sufficient framework and judicial pronouncements exist for the electronic and the print media.

"Considering the serious impact and the potential, it is desirable that if this court decides to undertake the exercise, it should first be undertaken with regard to digital media as there already exists sufficient framework and judicial pronouncements with regard to electronic media and print media," said the counter affidavit, filed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. **PTI**

## KVIC employment gifts on PM's birthday

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) extended the benefits of various employment generating schemes to nearly 3,500 persons in 10 Indian states to celebrate "Sewa Diwas" on Thursday, marking the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

From Arunachal Pradesh on the North Eastern Frontier to Bihar on the Western Border and from Chandigarh and New Delhi in the North to Madurai and Coimbatore 14 programs to expand the

ambit of its welfare projects to create local employment.

Minister of State for MSME Pratap Chandra Sarangi inaugurated a SFURTI Cluster of 500 artisans for making hand-knotted carpets in Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. Sarangi lauded the initiatives of KVIC for empowering artisans and said this would help realise the dream of resurgent India. He said Khadi is playing a big role in making India "Atmanirbhar".

KVIC Chairman VK Saxena launched six different programs in Varanasi, the Parliamentary constituency of the Prime Minister. These

include the first Footwear Training cum Production Center in Varanasi for leather artisans (Mochi) in collaboration with Central Footwear Training Institute (CFTI), Agra.

Saxena distributed electric potter wheels to 300 Kumbhar families under Kumbhar Sashaktikaran Yojana and 200 bee boxes to 20 farmers families under Honey Mission. The KVIC Chairman also distributed six hand-operated Agarbatti making machines at Sewapuri Block in Varanasi under the Khadi Agarbatti Atmanirbhar Mission while also launching the plantation

of 100 saplings of Bambusa Tulda, a bamboo species used for making Agarbatti sticks. This will lead to local availability of raw material for Agarbatti.

In Delhi, Rajya Sabha MP and BJP General Secretary Arun Singh, and MP from New Delhi Meenakshi Levki distributed six innovative coffee-mounted Tea/Coffee Selling units under Project Dignity of the KVIC. The KVIC Chairman said these coffee-mounted tea/coffee selling units will enable tea-sellers to earn a respectable livelihood while selling the beverages hygienically.

**SC AGROTECH LIMITED**  
(FORMERLY KNOWN AS SHEEL INTERNATIONAL LIMITED)  
CIN: L01122DL1990PLC042207

Regd Address: RZ-1484/28, Ground Floor, Tughlakabad Ext. New Delhi-110019  
Email: sheel102@gmail.com, Web: www.scagrotech.com, Ph: 9654056649

**EXTRACT FROM THE STANDALONE UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED ON 30.06.2020** (Rs. in Lakhs)

| S. No. | Particulars   | Quarter Ended |            | Year Ended |            |
|--------|---|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
|        |   | 30.06.2020    | 30.06.2019 | 31.03.2020 | 31.03.2019 |
|        |   | Unaudited     | Unaudited  | Audited    | Audited    |
| I      | Revenue from operations   | 12.42         | -          | -          | 72.10      |
| II     | Other income  | 0.00          | -          | -          | 0.00       |
| III    | Total Income  | 30.45         | 18.00      | 18.10      | 72.10      |
| IV     | Expenses  |               |            |            |            |
| a)     | Cost of materials consumed  | -             | -          | -          | -          |
| b)     | Purchases of stock-in-trade   | 12.25         | -          | -          | -          |
| c)     | Changes in inventories of finished goods, work-in-progress and stock-in-trade | -             | -          | -          | -          |
| d)     | Employee benefit expense  | 4.89          | 4.58       | 5.81       | 19.29      |
| e)     | Finance cost  | 0.01          | -          | 0.01       | 0.04       |
| f)     | Depreciation and amortisation expense   | 0.25          | 0.35       | 0.35       | 1.41       |
| g)     | Other Expenditure   | 11.75         | 11.53      | 11.37      | 48.28      |
|        | TOTAL EXPENDITURE (IV)  | 29.06         | 16.46      | 17.54      | 67.02      |
| V      | Profit before Exceptional Items and Tax/(Iv)                                  | 1.39          | 1.54       | 0.56       | 5.08       |
| VI     | Exceptional Items   | -             | -          | -          | -          |
| VII    | Profit before tax (VI)  | 1.39          | 1.54       | 0.56       | 5.08       |
| VIII   | Tax on Comprehensive Income for the period                                    | 1.39          | 1.54       | 0.56       | 5.08       |
| IX     | Profit after equity share capital   | 599.50        | 599.50     | 599.50     | 599.50     |
| XI     | Face value of NR 10/- per equity share capital                                |               |            |            |            |
| a)     | Basic   | 0.00          | 0.00       | 0.00       | 0.01       |
| b)     | Diluted   | -             | -          | -          | -          |

Note: The above is an Extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial result filed with Stock Exchange under reg. 33 of the SEBI (ICR) 2015. The full format of the Quarterly and half yearly financial results are available on the website of the Stock Exchange (i) viz www.bseindia.com and the listed entity (ii) www.scagrotech.com

By order of the Board for SC AGROTECH Limited  
(Nitin Maheshwari)  
Executive Director

Place: New Delhi  
Date: 15.09.2020

## Cong holds protest on Modi's 70th b'day

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Shashi Tharoor wished Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday on Thursday but at the same time their party also launched a scathing attack on the PM over the growing unemployment in India and held protests over the issue at several places across the country.

The Congress celebrated the day as 'National Unemployment Day' to highlight the jobs lost since the COVID-19 struck the country earlier this year. Youth Congress workers in Bhopal demonstrated by firing crackers and holding banners such as "I am a young unemployed". In the national capital, party workers waved huge banners with Modi's

image and mentioning 'Bereavement Day'.

"Massive unemployment has forced the youth to call today #NationalUnemploymentDay. Employment is dignity. For how long will the Govt deny it?" Rahul, who is currently out of the country for treatment of his mother and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, tweeted.

Priyanka said the youth of the country wants that the Government must hold exams for Government jobs on time and the results should be declared in a fix time frame. She added that the Government must create more job opportunities and if the Centre will fail to address the concerns of the youth call then they will change the Government.

The Great Personality was born on 17th September 1950

Women make rangoli from flower petals on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 70th birthday at a school in Ahmedabad on Thursday

But Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala made certain derogatory remarks against the PM likening him to certain keys. Surjewala tweeted from his official Twitter handle, "Aab Ki Baar Bandar Ke Hath

Me Ustra Sarkar." This is not the first time that the Congress has made derogatory statements against PM Modi. Congress leader Arjun Modwadia had also once compared Modi to a monkey.

3 TERRORISTS KILLED IN J&K

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Three terrorists belonging to a pro-Pakistan terror outfit Hizbul Mujahideen were neutralised by the joint teams of security forces in the congested area of Batmaloo in Srinagar early Thursday morning.

Two CRPF personnel, including a Deputy commandant identified as Anwarul Muthur leading one of the search parties, received bullet injuries during initial exchange of fire while one civilian woman was also killed in the crossfire. So far 16 terrorists have been neutralised in seven different operations in Srinagar this year.

Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh said in the area.

all the three terrorists were locals from South Kashmir and were heavily armed.

Since January 1, a total number of 177 terrorists have been neutralised in 72 operations across J&K. Out of these 22 were foreign terrorists from Pakistan.

DGP termed the killing of a 45-year-old kousar Jan in a crossfire as an unfortunate and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family.

Addressing a Press conference at Police Control Room (PCR) Srinagar, DGP Singh said, "the operations were launched during few hours in the Batmaloo area after receiving a tip off about the presence of heavily armed terrorists in the area."

In a separate statement a police spokesman said, "The killed terrorists have been identified as Zakir Ahmad Pund of Batopora Chertsoo Awantipora at Nowganga, before that, they had killed two BSF men at Pandach on city outskirts. And then they made another attempt at Pantha Chowk where we lost a brave SoG man," the DGP Singh said.

He said police and CRPF teams are alert and whenever they get a lead about presence of terrorists in Srinagar, efforts are always put in to ensure zero collateral damage. "Today's operation was seventh one in Srinagar in the recent past, but biggest success was the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Junaid Sghrai," the J&K Police chief said.

Responding to a question related to frequent encounters taking place in and around Srinagar DGP said, "terrorists from other districts of South and north Kashmir keep on visiting Srinagar to carry out attacks on security forces."

Another Pulwama-type terror strike averted

PNS ■ JAMMU

Another Pulwama type terror strike was averted by the joint teams of security forces after they stumbled upon 52 kgs of explosive material which included over 400 packets of explosives weighing 125 gm and 50 detonators during search operations near Karewa forest area of Gadhikhal in Awantipora on Thursday.

According to official sources, during a joint search operation in the Karewa forest area security forces spotted a syntax tank. "On detailed search, a total of 52 kgs of explosives were recovered. There were 416 packets of explosives with each pkt of 125gm. In another such syntax tank 50 detonators were also recovered."



The Karewa is located very close to the National Highway, 9 km South east of Lethpora and in general area where Pulwama attack happened.

According to a police spokesman, "acting on tip off about the presence of Jem terrorists, police along with 42 NRI and 130 BN CRPF conducted a joint search of the nursery area near forests of village Gadhikhal Awantipora. During search of the said forest area, 02

explosive dumps were found which were concealed underground in 02 different 250 litres plastic tanks."

In one plastic tank, 416 high explosive gelatine sticks have been recovered while in another plastic tank, 50 detonators were recovered, a police spokesman said.

"The detonators were

destroyed by the Bomb Disposal Squad on the spot, due to their risk of carrying/transporting," the spokesman added.

Meanwhile, a case FIR number 126/2020 under relevant sections of law has been registered in Police Station Awantipora and investigation has been taken up.

Chief of Army Staff takes stock of LoC situation



PNS ■ JAMMU

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General MM Naravane Thursday conducted his first hand assessment of the prevailing security situation along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir.

Immediately after landing in Srinagar General Naravane proceeded to the forward areas along top brass of the Northern Command.

Later in the day, the COAS reviewed the overall security situation along with the Northern Army Commander and Chinara Corps Commander. He was also briefed by the spokesmen in Srinagar Col Rajesh Kalra said,

"During his interaction with the soldiers deployed in high altitude areas, General MM Naravane appreciated their high morale and complimented them on their response to Pakistan ceasefire violations."

He also commended use of technology to ensure effective day and night surveillance across the LoC which has resulted in many successful operations to foil infiltration bids from POK in the recent past.

The COAS reinforced the need to extend all possible support to civilians residing in the border areas who are victims of targeted ceasefire violations by Pakistan Army and are facing hardships due to the pandemic.

Political disaster stares at CPM: Kerala watchers

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The gold smuggling scam, the LIFE Mission corruption case and the drug trafficking case with its origin in Bangalore in which the CPI(M) ministers and leaders stand accused have rejuvenated the opposition BJP and to a certain extent the Muslim League in Kerala.

The resignation or sacking of K T Jaleel, the higher education minister and E P Jayarajan, the industries minister from the council of ministers will not solve the political impasse in the State. Things have gone out of control and there is no guarantee that the name of a third minister would not crop up in the next two-three days, said Jayashankar, Kerala's leading political commentator who says that the situation looks like a political disaster for the CPI(M).

Swapna Suresh has been well established. Same is the case with Jayarajan and his son Jaison. What I see is total darkness at the end of the tunnel. A section of the CPI(M) leaders are also upset with the actions of Vijayan and they remain incommunicado," said Jayashankar.

P Rajan, septuagenarian journalist and former senior editor of Mathrubhumi said Jaleel could be dropped by the Chief Minister in the backdrop of Thursday morning's questioning of the minister by the NIA. "As such there is no situation mandating the dismissal of Jaleel," he said.

Though the CPI(M) tried to communalize the Quran import scam, it didn't materialize because of the intervention of a section of Muslim League led by its youthful leader P K Feroze, Jayashankar told the Pioneer.

Jayashankar said Vijayan stands exposed in front of the people of Kerala. "The links his secretary had with gold smuggling syndicates in Kerala and minister Jaleel's liaison with

Minister Jaleel grilled by NIA for 8 hrs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

K T Jaleel, Minister for Higher Education, was interrogated by the NIA in the backdrop of its front organizations like Mahila Morcha, BJYM and ABVP and the Congress workers staged demonstrations and rallies across the State. Most of these rallies saw the demonstrators clashing with the police resulting in water cannon and lathi charge. Many BJP leaders were injured in police action.

The Opposition upped the ante with K Surendran, BJP State chief demanding the immediate resignation of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led Government. "This is the first time in the history of Kerala a minister is being interrogated by an investigation agency in connection with anti-national activities. The NIA has clear evidence about the role of the minister in smuggling activities. There is no way out for the minister other than resignation. The attitude of Chief Minister Vijayan is also ridiculous. Vijayan knows that if Jaleel is asked to quit because they too are involved in smuggling and other anti-national activities," said Surendran.

Leaders of Muslim League P K Kunhalikutty MP and TPA Majeed, took strong objection to Jaleel dragging the name of party chief Hyder Ali Shihab Thangal into the case, and warned the minister to desist from such actions. Kunhalikutty said that the minister has no moral rights to be in the government as all the premier investigation agencies are probing him.

ED files Prosecution Complaint against Shabir Shah's wife

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a Prosecution Complaint (chargesheet in police parlance) under Prevention of Money Laundering Act against Bilquesha Shah, wife of Shabir Ahmad Shah, before a Special Court here in a terror funding case.

This is a Supplementary Prosecution Complaint to an earlier one filed against Shabir Ahmad Shah, Bilquesha Mohammad Aslam Wani on September 23, 2017.

"In this complaint, Dr. Bilquesha Shah has been accused for her role in the commission of offence of money laundering in terms of Section 3 of PMLA. ED had attached the proceeds of crime in the form of property, located in posh area of Srinagar, belonging to Shabir Ahmad Shah being held in the name of his wife and daughters. Shabir

TN SEES 5,600 NEW PATIENTS

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu is limping back to normalcy as the number of Covid-19 patients is coming down in all districts but Chennai and Coimbatore. On Thursday the State diagnosed 5,600 positive cases while 59 persons succumbed to the pandemic. The death toll in the State reached 8,618 on Thursday.

There were 46,610 patients all over the State by Thursday evening. Chennai district had 992 new cases while Coimbatore had 530 patients. The three cluster districts of Tirunelveli, Kanyakumaram and Tiruvarur showed considerable decrease in the number of new persons identified with Covid-19.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI, A PUBLIC SERVANT DEDICATED TO PUBLIC SENTIMENT

ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY, UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

It is the responsibility of any Government to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the people and bring positive changes in the lives of the poor. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been efficiently discharging this responsibility through his hard work for the last six years. On September 17, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is going to complete 70 years of his life. This is the best time to observe his great personality and the many works of public welfare that are taking place under his leadership.

Since independence, governments have formulated their own policy from time to time on basic amenities like health and education in India.

Kerala registers 4,351 cases on single day, CM blames Opp

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday blamed the Opposition parties for the steep hike in Covid-19 patients seen in Kerala over the last few days. On Thursday the State diagnosed 4,351 Covid-19 cases, the highest number of patients identified on a single day till date, said Vijayan in his daily media briefing.

The chief minister said that the National Institute of Virology at Alappuzha had confirmed the deaths of ten persons due to the pandemic.

This has taken the tally till date to 489.

While Thiruvananthapuram topped the table of 14 districts with 820 positive cases, Idukki, the hilly district in the Western Ghats recorded the lowest figure with 104 new cases.

Vijayan blamed the opposition for the steep hike in the number of patients in the State. "They are bent upon derailing all the good works being done by the government with the sole aim of increasing the transmission of the disease," said the Chief Minister.

1,467 fresh coronavirus cases in J&K

JAMMU: Nineteen patients died in Jammu & Kashmir while 1,467 fresh cases of coronavirus were detected taking the tally of active positive cases to over 20,000 on Thursday.

With constant increase in number of cases the health care machinery especially in Government Medical College, Jammu is crumbling. Patients and their caretakers have been raising hue and cry for past several days as the hospital authorities have failed to ensure uninterrupted supply of oxygen to the patients admitted in the isolation ward. In the absence of adequate health care workers several patients have been left unattended in the wards.

A video footage shot by one of the patients attending viral late Thursday evening on various social media platforms painting the grim picture of medical facilities. Some of the doctors and other staff members were seen jumping from the windows to avoid getting filmed.

Meanwhile, a high-level team of doctors from the Union Health Ministry is expected to visit Jammu to review the measures being adopted to contain the spread of the virus and improve health care delivery in the Covid hospitals. PNS

PARADIP PORT TRUST e-TENDER CALL NOTICE 1D/TM-DENR-225(VII)-20/2519 dtd. 14.09.2020

Babasaheb memorial: Uddhav to lay foundation stone of 350 ft tall Ambedkar statue today

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will lay the foundation stone for the 350 ft statue of late Babasaheb Ambedkar raised as part of the grand memorial for the late architect of Indian Constitution being developed at the Indu Mills compound at Dadar in north-central Mumbai, on Friday.

Five years after Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of late Ambedkar's grand memorial, Uddhav will kick-start the work on building of a statue of the iconic Dalit leader.

Friday's will be the biggest construction.

Excavation and piling work has been completed, while the work on the auditorium basement comprising two-floors below its framework has been completed.

The height of Dr Ambedkar's statue, which was earlier proposed to be of the height of 250 feet, will now be 350 feet. The statue will be erected on a pedestal of the height of 100 feet. In essence, the collective height of the bronze statue will be 450 feet.

There will be elements of the Buddhist architecture in the Ambedkar memorial, which is coming up on a 12 acre plot of land.

On its part, the MMRDA has already started the

RLF LIMITED CIN: L74999-HR1979PL-C032747 Regd. Office: 14 Kms, Gurugram Pataudi Road, Village Jhurd Sarai Veeran, Sector-95Gurugram, Haryana

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the 40th Annual General Meeting of the Company will be held on Friday, 09th October, 2020 at 12:00 Noon at the Registered office of the Company at 14 Kms, Pataudi Road, Village Jhurd Sarai Veeran, Sector-95Gurugram, Haryana, to transact the businesses as set out in the Notice of the AGM.

Members are hereby informed that the Notice of the Meeting and aforesaid documents are available on the Company's Website (www.rfltd.com) and the copies of the said documents are also available for inspection at the Registered Office of the Company on all working days (except Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays) during business hours up to the date of the Meeting.

A member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on a poll instead of him and the proxy need not be the member of the Company. The instrument appointing the proxy should however be deposited at the Registered Office of the Company not less than 48 hours before the Commencement of Meeting.

Members are informed that pursuant to the provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended, and Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is providing to its members facility to exercise their right to vote by electronic means on Resolutions proposed to be passed at the meeting.

The Register of Members and Share Transfer Book in respect of Equity Shares of the Company will remain closed from 03rd October, 2020 to 09th October, 2020 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

The e-voting will be open from 9.00 a.m. (IST) on 06th October, 2020 to 5.00 p.m (IST) on 08th October, 2020 in terms of Rule 20(3)(iv) of Companies (Management and Administrative Rules) 2014. During this period shareholders of the Company, holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut-off date (record date) of 02nd October, 2020, may cast their vote electronically.

Shareholders are requested to visit https://investor.rfltd.com for E-Voting and the manner for casting vote through E-Voting is prescribed in the Notice of AGM.

By order of the Board RLF Limited Sd/- Ginni Chhabra Company Secretary & Compliance Officer Place: Gurugram, Haryana Date: 17/09/2020

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER Name of work and its location 30-Elect-16-T-R1-20-21-E3 Running and commissioning of submersible pumps over Delhi Division

Government of India Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in

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PUBLIC NOTICE Sarv Priya Mahajan Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. 202, Vardaman Market Shopping Plaza, LSC, C-Block Market, Sarawati Vihar, Patambara, Delhi-110034

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority E-Tender notice inviting from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned.

## Who will regulate TV?

If the SC has to intervene every time on mala fide content on channels, it will be flooded with petitions. We need a neutral code



It is said that the fourth estate, which ought to be a thriving institution in its own right — showing a mirror to society and advocating rights and issues that politics ignores — now needs regulation or correction by other institutions. Weaponised as a tool of governance and propaganda for long, it took the Supreme Court to stop it from destroying the social fabric instead of mending it. The top court restrained a channel from telecasting a controversial programme that sought to “expose” a “conspiracy and jihad to infiltrate Muslims” into the Indian civil services. The court was right to see through the agenda to vilify a certain community on the pretext

of an investigation and perpetuate a narrative suited to the political climate of the day. It had to halt broadcast that would have aggravated an already prejudiced sentiment in the country and, as it said, challenged the constitutionally mandated plurality of India. But then how many broadcasts will it stop given the partisan nature of the hundreds of news channels in India today, some of them owned and funded by political parties themselves? How will it manage the whataboutery and a slew of counter-petitions of why a certain programme doesn't deserve to be aired while others do? What is divisive and what is not? The court also deliberated on national debates on television channels, which the bench felt required regulation. To bolster its argument, it cited parallel investigations being carried out in criminal investigations, quite clearly implying how motivated interests were manufacturing a national mindset that would go by a heave of emotion rather than facts. Given these observations, the court would then have to become a media watchdog, too, stretching its resources no end. As it is, the Government, a day after the verdict on the channel perceived as friendly to it, filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court, arguing that if the latter desired to undertake the exercise to regulate the media, then it should first do so for digital media, and not electronic media, because social platforms have a faster and wider reach. That is indeed another problem, as given their dependence on open traffic, digital platforms have often been the purveyors of hate speeches and campaigns that have fuelled unrest on the ground. There are more than 50 documented cases of mob violence triggered by misinformation spread over social media in India over the last two years. Many platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, have only to upload an uncensored clip that swiftly becomes credible headlines when picked up by TV media. Facebook and Twitter are too big and have become influencers in their own right, embedding themselves in policies of the regime that is crucial to their business plans in respective countries. Facebook, with over 2.3 billion monthly users across its family of networks, has become too much of a behemoth to be democratic. But its subsidiary messaging board, WhatsApp, is by far the most popular of the platforms. With India accounting for 400 million of its global base of 1.5 billion users, it ends up being the focus of discussions on the spread of misinformation. It has become as much an information propagator as it has a disseminator.

The court mentioned setting up a committee of five citizens who can come up with standards for electronic media but what about existing frameworks, which are toothless at the moment? There is no statutory regulatory mechanism but self-regulatory bodies like the News Broadcasters' Association (NBA), Broadcast Editors' Association and News Broadcasters' Federation have failed to rise to the occasion and ensure a modicum of professionalism. Besides, this multiplicity of authorities generates its own politics and lobbies. The NBA does take up broadcast complaints seriously and has a code of ethics but because it is in the nature of just guidelines and not mandatory, there is no bold, punitive action. Usually, errands are left off with an apology or a minor rap on the knuckles. Besides, members of the NBA are from channels themselves and their hands are somewhat tied up by the prevalent business model of journalism, the kind that links coverage and pitches to revenue and funding. Till we have a singular code that's trustworthy, neutral or effective or till we have a legally empowered regulatory body, there will always be conflict of interest. Of course, the best regulation would be if broadcast media stuck to sensible rather than sensational journalism. Our Constitution has guaranteed the right to freedom but it implies we follow our duties, too. In a democracy, the media is as much accountable to citizens as are other institutions. It cannot be a self-serving clique but has to call out its own and self-cleanse in the interest of holding up its institutional integrity. Or it could content itself with scripting doggerel.

## No country for children

The World Bank's human capital index shows the potential development of kids slid to 50 per cent in pandemic times



As expected, the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has not just been on health and global economies; its multi-pronged effect is now threatening to erase the gains made in improving child education and health in the years before the outbreak. This fallout of the contagion is the most evident in the poor and Third World nations, the World Bank said while commenting on the Human Capital Index for 2020, which ranks countries on how well children are prepared for the future, with an emphasis on factors like schooling and healthcare. Despite the fact that most countries made steady gains in improving health and education prior to

the pandemic, the virus has dealt a body blow to all these efforts. Children in a low-income country will likely achieve only 56 per cent of their human capital compared to ones with access to a complete education and full healthcare. This is alarming as human capital is absolutely vital to the financial and economic future of any country as well as its social well-being. And as World Bank President David Malpass has warned, “inequalities among children are set to increase” and as “more than one billion children have been out of school due to COVID, they could lose as much as \$10 trillion in lifetime earnings.” In our case, the girl child would be the first victim as her education is the first casualty in poor households forced to choose between feeding the family and reserving knowledge pursuit as a rare privilege. Besides, while the education of children from well-heeled families will not face so much disruption, students from marginalised families and in rural areas will suffer, both due to lack of smartphones, computers, laptops and the lack of infrastructure and knowhow on how to use these enablers. Though both teachers and students have adapted to online classes to a large extent in urban areas, teachers themselves are not satisfied because they feel that the learning experience can never compete with brick and mortar classrooms. In an online setting, students may have more distractions and less supervision, which can reduce their motivation to do well academically. First there is the issue of keeping them engaged. Then how do you teach subjects which require live experiments and demonstrations? What of personal attention to struggling students? Research shows that students who struggle in physical classes are likely to struggle even more online. Also, being in school/college in person with teachers and friends creates social pressures and benefits that can help motivate the young to engage.

On the health front, too, there is cause for concern as the lockdown impacted programmes tackling malnutrition. With schools closed, children from impoverished families have been deprived of their one, daily nutritious food in the form of free mid-day meals. Immunisation programmes have been hit by the lockdown as has the community vigilance by the ASHAs and ANMs, who were the first point of contact for parents with sick children. If the world had to work hard to provide an equitable world for children, it will have to work doubly hard to mend the damage caused by the contagion in the years to come.

## The tale of two IPLs

IPL is one of the rarest sports spectacles which completely subverts otherwise ubiquitous nationalist and parochial discourses



SUMANYU SATPATHY

After months of uncertainty and speculation, the Indian Premier League (IPL) is all set to start outside the country of its origin and minus the shrieking fans. Everyone, even its critics and detractors, admits to its stupendous popularity. For most of its supporters and fans, it is an event almost of national importance, no less than the General Elections. In fact, a year ago, a large majority of Indians were simultaneously subjected to two kinds of spectacles: one in the sports arena and the other in the political playing field.

The dates for the two overlapped for a period of one month as the grand spectacle of the IPL (March 23-May 12, 2019) coincided with the heat and dust generated by the General Elections. The Code of Conduct was immediately effective after the dates for the elections were announced on March 10, 2019. In between the elections, the din over the IPL rose to a crescendo and climaxed with the final in which the Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings at a “neutral” venue in Hyderabad. As the great excitement over IPL subsided, all hell broke loose over the no-holds-barred election campaigns. There is no doubt about the ephemeral and inconsequentiality of the first, nor about the epochal nature of the second. And yet, many cricket fans think otherwise.

With the pandemic and economy playing havoc, and none of the venues in India playing host, the event may have already lost its usual sheen. Also, the forthcoming elections in Bihar are no match for the national polls last year. Yet, now, both the events are round the corner, it is a good time to reflect on how both affect the public psyche. For cricket has always been seen, at least in the former colonies, as a weapon for political dominance or as a means to restore right back dominance; any reader of CLR James' *Beyond the Boundary* would know that. Until the advent of IPL, cricket was about national teams and races. As James says, “Cricket... had plunged 'him' into politics long before [he] was aware of it. When [he] did turn to politics, [he] did not have too much to learn. What lessons in politics does the IPL proffer?”

The Election Commission lays down the rules of the game in the Model Code of Conduct. The IPL

“THE ONE PUZZLE THAT SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGISTS NEED TO SORT OUT AND EXPLAIN IS HOW THE SAME PEOPLE CAN BE SO DEEPLY INVOLVED IN TWO KINDS OF SPECTACLES, ONE ENTRENCHED IN RABID NATIONALIST DISCOURSE AND ANOTHER WHICH IS AGGRESSIVELY INTERNATIONALIST. SOME OF THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE TESTED AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF BIHAR POLLS”

made merry with increased TRPs and phenomenal commercial gains. In the backdrop of both, the Bholokot airstrikes fed the emotions directly and indirectly: directly in the political arena of elections, and indirectly by the absence of cricketers from Pakistan.

For one thing, the IPL is not about national teams. No one cares which country the players come from. The jerseys are of individual franchises and one looks in vain for the nationalism behind the jersey in case the player happens to be one of the lesser-known. No, IPL is not about nations and nationalism. Nor is it about parochialism. The teams are named after cities but the Indian players are not from these cities. They could well be from the city of the rival team. Sourav Ganguly can be the coach of Delhi Daredevils playing against the Kolkata Knight Riders for whom he had earlier played and whose coach he had eventually become. Shah Rukh Khan (a Delhiite) living in Mumbai is the owner of Kolkata Knight Riders. The same kind of fuzzing of identities is seen even among spectators.

Talking of Shah Rukh Khan brings to mind the two sets of affiliation leading to a triangular bonding. Politics and Bollywood, politics and cricket, and cricket and Bollywood. For decades, Prime Ministers have made it a point to pose with winning cricket teams and cricketing heroes. But these are about winning international tournaments like the World Cup. Seldom does one see politicians in IPL events. Last year, around the time of the General

Elections, many actors posed with major politicians. One of the X-factors in popularising IPL was that popular film stars like Shah Rukh Khan and Preity Zinta owned franchises. Whereas communal-based politics is the order of the day, cricket and Bollywood, at least superficially seen, symbolise communal unity. Last year, exactly at a time when communal identities were dominating electoral arithmetic, and politicians were busy dividing and stereotyping people with a certain kind of facial hair, Indian cricketers had broken down this identity divide by almost all of them flaunting facial hair.

Such is the privileging of cricket over other sports. The one cricketing spectacle that the spectators in the subcontinent look forward to is the Indo-Pak encounter during which rabid nationalism rises to the fore. IPL, in contrast, is one of the rarest sports spectacles which completely subverts otherwise ubiquitous nationalist and parochial discourses. The one puzzle that social psychologists need to sort out and explain is how the same people can be so deeply involved in two kinds of spectacles, one entrenched in rabid nationalist discourse and another which is aggressively internationalist. This year, some of these questions will be tested against the backdrop of the Assembly elections in Bihar.

(The writer is a well-known scholar; he is the former head of Dept. Of English, Delhi University and author of books such as Tenth Rasa and The Will to Argue)

## SOUNDBITE

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>We must show unity like never before to overcome today's emergency, get the world moving and working and prospering again, and uphold the vision of the Charter.</p> <p><b>UN Secretary-General</b><br/>—Antonio Guterres</p> | <p>Three vaccine candidates are in different phases. We are hopeful that by the end of 2020, a vaccine will be available in India.</p> <p><b>Union Health Minister</b><br/>—Harsh Vardhan</p> | <p>It's an absolute delight to welcome back Indian cricket with the Dream 11 IPL, and I hope this tournament can infuse positive energy into the lives of millions.</p> <p><b>Former cricketer</b><br/>—Sunil Gavaskar</p> | <p>Our biggest threat to this election is Governors from opposing parties controlling ballots, millions of students, to me, that's a much bigger threat than foreign countries.</p> <p><b>US President</b><br/>—Donald Trump</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Export agro-produce

Sir — India must prepare to export agricultural products to meet the two aspirational goals set by Prime Minister Narendra Modi: double the income of farmers and achieve the aim of a \$5 trillion economy, which seem rather far-fetched now. Indian traders encounter several hurdles in exporting agricultural products and need the Government's diligent intervention and support. India needs to chalk out a strategic plan and ensure increased percentage from 2.2 per cent to 5 per cent in global trade before 2025.

**Rahul Chouhan**  
Ujjain

### The five million mark

Sir — The rapid progression of COVID-19 has sent India's confirmed cases beyond the sombre five million mark. It now accounts for about one-sixth of the total global cases. This also means that one in every 260 people in India is infected with the virus. The exponential growth is borne out by the fact that it has taken just 11 days for the cases to rise from four to five million.

### Pakistan violates norms of NSAs' meeting

After Nepal's Cabinet endorsed a new political map showing Nepal, Kalgapani and Limpiyadhura under its territory, amidst a border dispute with India, Pakistan has come out with a new map of its own. The new political map includes territories of Jammu and Kashmir and a part of Ladakh, claiming these territories as belonging to Pakistan. The map also claims Junagadh, Manavadar and Sir Creek in Gujarat as part of Pakistan.

At the online meeting of the National Security Advisers (NSA) at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Pakistan used the map as a backdrop for its representative. Indian NSA Ajit Doval raised strong objection to Pakistan using the illegal map and walked out of the meeting, saying such an act was a blatant violation of the SCO Charter.

Despite the fact that for a long time, SCO did not allow bilateral issues to be brought to the table, Pakistan tried to use the platform to internationalise the Kashmir issue. The provocative action of Pakistan is in violation of the



norms of the NSAs meeting, Pakistan seems to be emboldened by China's attempt to alter the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Instead of showing the territories of other countries as its own, Pakistan tends to save Sabha MP and stop violating human rights in these areas.

**KV Seetharamiah**  
Hassan, Karnataka

### Voice of dissent

Sir — Member of Parliament and veteran actor Jaya Bachchan was praised by many in Bollywood for raising her voice against those defaming the Hindi film industry. Her remarks came a day after BJP's Lok Sabha MP and Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishan said that there was a problem of drug addiction in the film indus-

try. Bachchan disagreed with these claims. She said that the film industry had been ridiculed by social media and the Central Government must protect and support it. While many within the industry praised the actor for speaking up against the negativity surrounding the industry since Sushant Singh Rajput's death, fact is they didn't collectively campaign against mindless vilification or try to restore their credibility. Had not Bachchan raised her voice, the industry would have kept silent.

**Bhagwan Thadani**  
Mumbai

### Irresponsible media

Sir — The Supreme Court has strictly prohibited showing the remaining episodes of *Sudharshan TV's Bindas Bol* programme as its objective was to “vilify Muslims.” The claims made by the channel also question the credibility of UPSC examinations. The media must be responsible and take appropriate measures to not promote oligarchy.

**M N Alam**  
Sahanapur

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

**The intelligent future is here**

Events of 2020 have hugely accelerated the human civilisation's race towards finding an alternative to its own organic intelligent brain



**KUMARDEEP BANERJEE**

Now that most of us are becoming video-conferencing experts, innovating on every call with a new virtual background, while also ordering groceries online and keeping an eye on the latest news updates popping up on our phone and computer screen, will it be too early to crystal gaze into a not-so-distant future, say 2021? Yes, it may be too early to call 2020 a "gap year", specially when each new day has its own set of surprises. But there is no harm in peeping a little into next year's trends. First, there is no escaping the fact that technology will tremendously impact the way we live, work, exercise, eat or buy next year, too. If the pandemic has thrown us into an ocean of uncertainties, if we look around carefully, it is an ocean of data. Those that learn to swim through pretty quickly and get a raft or something to latch on to will soon realise the potential of this ocean of opportunities. It has already started happening but a new technology called Artificial Intelligence (AI) will take over most of what is today relegated to a digital world.

To start with, algorithms would be put to use for early detection or even prediction of pandemics, assessment and even solutions for traffic patterns in a city, incremental/severe weather forecasts, healthcare, care for the most vulnerable and so on. But soon, like everything else, it will be all-pervasive in every little life decision. I am not sticking my neck out to say it will happen by next year but events of 2020 have hugely accelerated the human civilisation's race towards finding an alternative to its own organic intelligent brains. The world is already flush with examples on how AI will have multiples of applications from that which is already available across the web. In short, we are on the verge of entering a new technological era which is predictive, sophisticated and has an eerie inorganic intelligence almost running into infinity (it is not enough to cut the cord and think that an AI system has switched off, remember there are thousands of machines crunching data points from multiple sources to predict simple buying behaviour). This will definitely have a deep impact on the human race.

Next will come an age of extreme speeds of data access over the air or 5G. The world would have already been piloting cutting-edge 5G or fifth-generation mobile technology across large geographies and would have been near phase-wise national rollouts, had the pandemic not hit. India definitely has lost a year in the 5G race. However, the protocols and network vendor partner solutions may have been made more secure as a result of the delay.

In fact, 5G is likely to see the first level of deployment in urban areas (where the revenues are) and besides helping you download (at say five times the speeds of your current streaming action) social media videos/your favourite films and cricket matches, will also prove to be a great tool for remote and risky jobs. If some of the arterial sewer lines in a city are fitted with 5G chips, there could be a possibility of completely eradicating the need for human intervention in maintenance of a city's drainage system. If the data coming in and also fed into the chips are analysed at the back-end by smart machines (think AI), who, then takes decisions to deploy little machine worms into the sludge to clean a choke or fix a leakage or even defuse a toxic gas emission, it would mean saving a few thousand precious lives each year. Together with this will come the ultra-smart homes (the protocols for which are already in advanced stages of negotiation by big tech companies) where perhaps your cooking burner will decide the menu and your bar may order itself a few of your favourite wines in case you aren't stocked for the weekend. While robotic surgeries performed over the network specially for remote terrains (read rural) are already happening outside India, a self-driving car in Chandni Chowk may be the other way.

Now that the all-pervasive technology has started to co-exist with us in our altered carbon realities, the threats to humanity will also increase. These threats would be increasingly cyber and 2021 will likely see digital security attacks (small, big, macro) than all of these years of more cyber revolution put together. The tell-tale volumes of these cyber security attacks (think SIM cloning, phishing attacks, stealing of bank passwords and OTPs) are already giving consumers and lawmakers a nightmare with the mass adoption of the digital world during these work from home times. Think of the manifold increase of these forces as the technology world starts getting more complex with evolving protocols and appendages. You are more likely to hear the word cyber security in almost every important public forum and ministerial dialogues than you have ever heard in your life. Along with these, and one can only wish, multilateral solutions to tackling emerging threats will also emerge, which prevent anti-State forces from manipulating users of emerging technology. There will be new policy regimes, language and grammar for embracing these brave new lands we are heading towards, but let's keep those for a later piece.

*(The writer is a policy analyst)*

**SHE (URMILA) WAS MAKING A MOCKERY OUT OF MY STRUGGLES. SHE IS JUST A SOFT PORN STAR NOT KNOWN FOR HER ACTING SKILLS FOR SURE**  
—ACTOR  
KANGANA RANAUT



**IT'S DISHEARTENING TO SEE SOMEONE TALKING ILL NOT ONLY ABOUT ME, BUT ALSO JAYA JI, WHO IS AN MP AND HAS RAISED HER VOICE ON SO MANY ISSUES.**  
—ACTOR  
URMILA MATONDKAR

**Spare a thought for our kids**

Let our children, including those at the margins of territory, identity, services, social and economic interventions, find themselves future-ready



**SUMITRA MISHRA**

Infants and children — naked, hungry, crying, sleeping in overcast trucks, on the shoulders of their tired parents and caretakers. These were some of the heart-breaking pictures that emerged as everyday lives were disrupted following the COVID lockdown put in place in March across India. The multiple fault lines of our societal order were more visible than ever as migrant workers and their families were thrown out on the roads across major cities, while the rest of us took to working from home. This was not "a long walk to freedom". It was a walk back home through a terrain that was as indifferent as it was strange. It was reverse migration, a story of lost livelihoods and ever-increasing struggles. For some, it was a walk to their deaths.

As we battle the Coronavirus and its varied impacts on our lives, it is important that we do not lose sight of these fault lines. It has especially hit the families of workers in the unorganised sector, who do not have adequate social protection, support and additionally find it hard to provide adequate care to their children.

One of the casualties of the lockdown was the slow of programmes tackling malnutrition. As per the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-16), 21 per cent children below the age of five in India were undernourished, 91.4 per cent of the children aged six to 23 months did not receive an adequate diet, one in three (38 per cent) of children under five years of age was stunted, one in five (21 per cent) of the children was wasted, 36 per cent were underweight. The lockdown resulted in a more dire situation where the resulting socio-economic impacts, the closing down of anganwadi centres and the resource crunch minimised the likelihood of availability of food to counter malnutrition.

These intersecting impacts of poverty, gender discrimination, caste and class differences, violence, issues of availability and accessibility of services to the young child and lack of professionalisation of childcare workers are brought to the fore in the *State of the Young Child in India* (SOYC) report, that Mobile Creches, an organisation working for early childhood development (ECD), released recently. While the report was finalised before the pandemic hit the world, it nevertheless offers important insights into the status of India's children under six years of age — who form over 13 per cent of the country's population — in addition to a critical examination of legislative frameworks designed to address their needs. The report also goes beyond a homogenising understanding of the child, as it emphasises various disadvantaged categories within this age group and the dire situation they are in. It calls for specific interventions for each vulnerable category, otherwise it results in a risk of lifelong consequences of deprivation.

The results emerging from the indexing can be used to draw out good practices from top performers like Kerala and Goa and turning more attention towards the poor-performing regions and States like Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. While recommendations stem from an exhaustive analysis, it can also enable in envisioning a post-pandemic world where the issues of marginalisation and neglect receive due attention and policy intervention. The Integrated Child Development Services

“THE PER CHILD EXPENDITURE IN THE COUNTRY FOR 2018-19 WAS AN ABYSMALLY LOW FIGURE OF ₹1,723. THIS MUST BE ENHANCED TO ₹1.25 TRILLION ANNUALLY TO COVER FUNDING GAPS AND ENSURE HOLISTIC INTERVENTIONS. THIS APPROACH HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BRING IN RETURNS THAT WOULD EXCEED BUDGETARY SPEND ON ANY ALTERNATIVE WELFARE PROGRAMME”



scheme (ICDS), the world's largest programme catering to children, the State steps in as an enabler. As the sole scheme to cater to the needs of children of women engaged in the informal sector, the Government-sponsored National Crèche Scheme has actually seen a reduction in the number of creches, with only 7,930 of them functional across the country in 2019, which translates into one creche per 21,000 children. The scheme needs to be re-imagined and strengthened with serious revision of the budget, and this can also be supplemented by a phased conversion of anganwadis into anganwadi-centres.

The pandemic-induced lockdown witnessed a rare visibility of anganwadi and ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers as they emerged to be the first line of defence in dealing with the contagion. However, as the SOYC report notes, they are otherwise marginalised — not seen as a professional cadre, treated as part-time workers, paid well below the minimum wages in most States. There is a pressing need for their critical role in the childcare ecosystem to be recognised, acknowledged, professionalised and for their remuneration to be in line with their responsibilities. The professionalisation of this service will also mean adequate training of these workers and can strengthen the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) component, which remains a weak focus of the ICDS. All children in the ages of three to six should have a right to quality ECCE, irrespective of whether they are located at anganwadi centres, pre-pri-

vide due childcare, compounded by their multiple issues, the State steps in as an enabler. As the sole scheme to cater to the needs of children of women engaged in the informal sector, the Government-sponsored National Crèche Scheme has actually seen a reduction in the number of creches, with only 7,930 of them functional across the country in 2019, which translates into one creche per 21,000 children. The scheme needs to be re-imagined and strengthened with serious revision of the budget, and this can also be supplemented by a phased conversion of anganwadis into anganwadi-centres.

Coronavirus has significantly altered the way we thought of our lives, our work and our very support systems. It has taught us lessons, tragic ones at that. Yet, it is in this moment that we must recognise the deprivations, neglect and exclusion that mar equitable access of various vulnerable groups, including children, to essential services. Let our children, including those at the margins of territory, identity, services, social and economic interventions, find themselves capable for the future. *(The writer is Executive Director at Mobile Creches and an early childhood development activist)*

**We are being sucked into an ash pond**

Fly ash is inevitable while producing thermal power. However, leaving it to pollute the environment is not desirable



**KOTA SRIRAJ**

Fly ash, a by-product of coal-fired electricity-generating power plants, has always been a predominant challenge for the environment, as its unsafe disposal or ineffective recycling can pose a direct threat to the quality of the air we breathe. Such is our dependence on thermal power plants for energy that apart from the air pollution caused by these behemoths causing health and environmental issues, fly ash is also compromising other aspects of our environment.

For instance, the breach of the fly ash dyke at the Vindhyacl NTPC Super Thermal Power Station in Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh in October 2019 led to the seeping of nearly 35 lakh metric tonnes of fly ash into the Govind Vallabh Pant Sagar, popularly known as the Rihand water reservoir. The Essar power plant at Mahan

in the same district, too, saw breaches in its fly ash dykes leading to its seepage into the environment.

The huge level of water pollution triggered by the seepage of fly ash into the Rihand reservoir has caused health and environmental issues. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) imposed an interim penalty of ₹10 crore on the NTPC and Essar after reviewing the ground report filed by its committee. Additionally, the NGT also rapped the Lanco-Anpara power plant to stem the excess ash pond flow into the reservoir. The fly ash caused soil pollution, too, due to which agricultural land became infertile and standing crops suffled.

Thanks to the fly ash pollution, the levels of mercury in the soil, air and water spiked besides causing health complications for local communities as the Rihand reservoir is a source of drinking water for many. All these adverse developments took place despite the existence of statutory notifications from the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) under the Environment Protection Act (EPA) that mandates a 100 per cent utilisation of fly ash.



However, the full extent of the damage caused by the fly ash pond breach has come to light now thanks to a new report submitted recently by the joint committee comprising the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee. The report estimated that the fly ash breach by Essar Power Limited caused damages worth ₹7.35 crore while the damage inflicted by the fly ash dyke breach at the NTPC plant was pegged at a whopping ₹104 crore. The committee based its damage estimations on two parameters: One was the Green House

Gas (GHG) emissions caused by the clean-up operations and two the extent of water pollution due to ash overflow.

The use of diesel during the clean-up operations caused the carbon footprints, besides mixing of the mandatory estimation spiking as well. Similarly, the fly ash infusion into the water bodies led to heavy metals and suspended solids leaching into the water. This, too, was translated into cost and added to the damages.

Thermal power stations are still the mainstay of our power sector with renewable sources of energy being nowhere near the required potential to take over as primary sources of our needs. Moreover, the opening up of the coal sector for mining to private players, besides mixing of the mandatory coal-washing requirements, is set to increase the production of fly ash in the future.

Already the ash ponds are overflowing across the nation due to increasing output and decreasing utilisation. As a result, the dykes are frequently breaking, leading to the ash polluting the nearby fields and water bodies.

The last 10 years saw the ash ponds

contain a humongous 627 million tonnes of unused material. This is three times the fly ash being generated per year, which is 200 million tonnes per annum. The close of 2019 saw an open violation of the Government's million tonnes in India, which is eight times the annual generation quantity.

This is despite the fact that India has the regulations in place that mandate 100 per cent usage of fly ash and there is technology available to put this into action. Yet we are still far from a "full utilisation status". The Government-driven initiative to promote the use of fly ash in the construction material industry has not been a spectacular success as red bricks continue to be sold and used in open violation of the Government's rules that ban them. Bricks are made out of top soil which is a precious part of our environment. An inch of top soil takes 500,000 years to form as it essentially involves the breaking down and erosion of rock.

If the Government cannot shut the countless red brick kilns that can be seen dotting the countryside, it cannot promote the use of fly ash in the building material industry. The buyer will

have no option but to continue with the traditional red brick, which is easily available. Once the red brick production and supply chain is broken, it will not only save the top soil but also stem the pollution caused by these kilns as they use diesel and sugarcane waste as fuel.

Fly ash can be successfully used to produce bricks in combination with gypsum or lime. The resultant brick is not only eco-friendly but lighter and stronger. Technologies are available today that use compressed natural gas (CNG), an eco-friendly fuel, to fire autoclaves or huff ovens to manufacture fly ash bricks. Each autoclave can manufacture 22,000 fly ash-lime bricks in an eight-hour span.

So, if the thermal power plants in the country were mandated with a target to produce a certain quantity of bricks using the autoclave technology, then the problem of excess fly ash would disappear. There are ways to ensure full utilisation of fly ash: only a strong political will is required to implement the rules that have been put in place for this.

*(The writer is an environmental journalist)*



**FOREIGN EYE**



**LANKA NO THREAT TO INDIA**  
Sri Lanka's 'India First' strategic security policy, outlined by the new Foreign Secretary, Colombo, is a timely reiteration of a policy of past 20 plus years, but seldom understood in the northern neighbourhood. In doing so, Colombo, a former Navy chief, becomes the first Sri Lankan official or politician to articulate the nation's foreign policy so comprehensively and cogently, that too in a well-articulated manner, publicly. *(Ceylon Today editorial)*

US envoy begins second high-level visit to Taiwan

China condemns US visit, warns of retaliation

Taipei: US Undersecretary of State Keith Krach arrived in Taiwan on Thursday for the second visit by a high-level American official in two months...



US Under Secretary of State Keith Krach, centre, gestures after disembarking from a plane upon arrival at the air force base airport in Taipei, Taiwan on Thursday AP

Beijing considers Taiwan its own and opposes all official contacts between other countries and the self-governing island.

State Department official to visit the island in decades, to meet Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen and other senior officials, the island's foreign ministry said.

The visit by Krach, who is undersecretary for economic growth, energy and the envi-

ronment, follows a high-profile trip in August by U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar, the highest-level U.S. Cabinet official to visit since the U.S. switched formal relations from Taiwan to China in 1979.

However, the U.S. has maintained unofficial ties with

Taiwan since the official diplomatic break and is the island's most important ally and provider of defense equipment.

Craft said her lunch with James K.J. Lee, director of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in New York, was the first meeting between a top Taiwanese official and a U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations since 1971, when the China seat at the U.N. was passed from Taipei to Beijing.

I'm looking to do the right thing with my president, and I feel that he has sought to

strengthen and deepen this bilateral relationship with Taiwan and I want to continue that on behalf of the administration," she told The Associated Press.

In Taipei, Krach is to attend a banquet hosted by Tsai on Friday and hold discussions on the creation of a new economic and commercial dialogue, according to Taiwan's de facto ambassador in the U.S., Hsiao Bi-khim.

China condemned the visit on Thursday and warned it could retaliate.

At a daily briefing Thursday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said Krach's visit violates U.S. commitments to China and "bolsters the separatist forces of Taiwan independence and undermines China-U.S. Relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," adding that Beijing had "logged solemn complaints" with Washington over the matter.

"We urge the U.S. to fully recognize the high sensitivity of the Taiwan issue, immediately stop official exchanges and actions of improving substantial relations with Taiwan, and handle Taiwan-related issues cautiously," Wang said. "China will make necessary responses in the future with the development of the situation." AP

Poison was on water bottle in Navalny's hotel room: His team

Moscow: The nerve agent used to poison Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny was detected on an empty water bottle from his hotel room in the Siberian city of Tomsk, suggesting he was poisoned there and not at the airport as previously thought, his team said on Thursday.



Navalny fell violently ill on a domestic flight in Russia last month and was subsequently airlifted to Berlin for treatment. Germany says he was poisoned by a Novichok nerve agent. Russia says it has seen no evidence he was poisoned.

A video posted on Navalny's Instagram account showed members of his team searching the room he had just left in the Xander Hotel in Tomsk on Aug. 20, an hour after they learned he had fallen sick in suspicious circumstances.

"It was decided to gather up everything that could even hypothetically be useful and hand it to the doctors in Germany. The fact that the case would not be investigated in Russia was quite obvious," the post said. It showed his team bagging

several empty bottles of "Holy Spring" mineral water, among other items, while wearing protective gloves. "Two weeks later, a German laboratory found traces of Novichok, precisely on the bottle of water from the Tomsk hotel room," the post said. "And then more laboratories that took analyses from Alexei confirmed that that was what poisoned Navalny. Now we understand: it was done before he left his hotel room to go to the airport." Russia has carried out pre-investigation checks, but said it needs to see more medical analysis before it can open a formal criminal investigation into the case. AFP

Outgoing US ambassador to China to help Republican campaigns

Beijing: Outgoing U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad said he will help out Republicans campaigning in his native Iowa after returning home next month.

Branstad also told Hong Kong's Phoenix TV that he considered the phase one trade deal between China and the U.S. as the biggest achievement of his three years in China. Branstad, 73, said he would be working on behalf of President Donald Trump, Senator Joni Ernst and others, but not in any official role.

"My son is very involved in (Trump's) campaign, and I will be a volunteer to help him, to help Joni Ernst and other friends for the election in Iowa. But I will strictly be a volunteer," Branstad told the station in a report broadcast Thursday.

Ernst, the state's junior senator, is locked in a tight race, with Democrats hoping to capture her seat on the way to flipping the Senate.

Branstad was governor of Iowa. Branstad was an early Trump supporter and has served as his top envoy to China during the most tempestuous period in relations since diplomatic ties were established in 1979.

Branstad will leave at a time when tensions between the sides are also running high over Taiwan, the South China Sea, the coronavirus pandemic and allegations of spying and technology theft. In July, the U.S. Ordered the closure of China's consulate in Houston, calling it a "center of malign activity." China retaliated by ordering the shuttering of its consulate in Washington.

Spain court considers removal of Catalan chief from office

AP ■ MADRID

Spain's Supreme Court is hearing lawyers' closing arguments over whether to bar Catalonia's separatist-minded regional leader from public office.

Catalan regional president Quim Torra is attending the final court hearing in his appeal of a ruling by a lower court last year. That court, in Barcelona, ruled that Torra was unfit to hold public office for 18 months for having violated electoral law.

Torra had refused to remove a banner reading "Free Political Prisoners and Exiles" during an official election campaign period, during which public officials are prohibited from using public buildings to display political propaganda.

Former model accuses Trump of sexually assaulting her in 1997

Washington: A former model has accused US President Donald Trump of groping and forcibly kissing her in 1997 — the latest allegation made against the Republican incumbent just weeks before he seeks reelection.

Amy Dorris told Britain's The Guardian that Trump sexually assaulted her in his VIP suite at the US Open tennis tournament in New York — claims he denied via his lawyers.

"He just shoved his tongue down my throat and I was pushing him off. And then that's when his grip became tighter and his hands were very greasy and all over my butt, my breasts, my back, everything," Ms Dorris said in an interview.

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Poland's president appoints daughter as unpaid advisor

AP ■ WARSAW

Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, has appointed his 25-year-old daughter, Kinga, to be an unpaid advisor on social issues.

The president stressed on Twitter late Wednesday that his daughter was working as a volunteer and "does not receive any remuneration," he appointed nonetheless raised some allegations of nepotism by critics of Duda and the ruling right-wing party that backs him, Law and Justice.

Kinga Duda, a lawyer, has already been dubbed by presi-

dential critics as "Poland's Ivanka Trump," a reference to President Donald Trump's daughter, who plays a key role in the U.S. Administration.

Kinga Duda has for the most part not played a visible role in the presidency of her father, who won his first five-year term in 2015 and was re-elected in July.

However, she seized the nation's attention with an election night speech in July in which she called for all people in society to be respected despite their differences. It was seen as an attempt to soften her father's image.

Belarus activists make list of police from protest crackdown

Kyiv: The main opposition candidate in Belarus' disputed presidential election said Thursday that activists were compiling a list of law enforcement officers who were allegedly involved in violence against protesters denouncing the results of the vote.

Nearly 7,000 people were detained and hundreds were brutally beaten by police during the first several days of post-election protests in Belarus that are now in their sixth week. Opposition supporters claim the Aug. 9 vote was rigged to reelect President Alexander Lukashenko to a

sixth term and are demanding his resignation.

Lukashenko's main challenger, Torm election, former English teacher and political novice Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, said on Thursday that the opposition was drawing up a list of individual officers involved in the police crackdown.

"We have been given the names of those who were beating and torturing people," she said in a statement. "We are preparing a list of officials and law enforcement officers who have taken part in lawless repressions." Human

No, we do not live in forests, Austrians after Trump forest remark

Berlin: The Austrian government has spoken up to correct US President Donald Trump's claim that people in its country live in "forest cities."

Trump recently cited Austria and other European countries as models of good forest management that US states like California, which has seen devastating wildfires lately, should learn from.

Calling in to Fox News on Tuesday, Trump said that "you look at countries, Austria, you look at so many countries. They live in the forest, they're considered forest cities. So many of them. And they don't have fires

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Pak to introduce legislation to curb rape, child abuse

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that his Government will soon introduce a three-tier legislation process for registration of sex offenders, exemplary punishment for rape and child abuse and effective policing.

Khan made the announcement while addressing a joint sitting of parliament after passage of a number of Financial Action Task Force-related bills on Wednesday. "Such incidents ruin the lives of victims and their families also have to suffer," he was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper. Khan was fronting the gangrape of a French-Pakistani woman in Lahore on Sept 9 which sparked widespread outrage. PTI

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SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that a female named Jayanti Swanvi W/o Deepak Kumar R/o H.No. RZ-134, Sayan Goad, Delhi, Age: 34 years, Height: 5'1", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Wearing: Navy blue Kurta-legging and sandal in her feet is missing/kidnapped since 16.08.2020 from the area of P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi. In this regard a vide case DD No. 40A dated 17.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi.

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

E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.nic.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639 P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi. DP/367/OD/2020

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPAD

General Public is hereby informed that one man named Sedu Ram Mahavar S/o Nathu Ram Mahavar, R/o Gali No-6, Harjan Basti, Ghewra, Delhi. Age - 58 Years, Height 5'5", Complexion- Wheatish, Face: Round, Wearing: Sky blue Shirt, Blue Pant and Blue Shoes in Feet has been missing/kidnapped since 18.07.2020 from the area of P.S Paschim Vihar West. In this regard a vide DD No. 41A dated 25.07.2020 has been registered at PS Paschim Vihar West

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

Web-site: http://cbl.nic.in E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax: 011-24368639 P.S. Paschim Vihar West DP/339/OD/2020 Ph. 25280394 25280390

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General Public is hereby informed that one girl named Sonika, D/o: Kalish, R/o Jhuggi C-4, Railway Lane, Keshav Puram, Delhi, Age: 17 years, Height: 4'6", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Normal, wearing Firozi colour Kurti, Black Leggi and chappal, has been missing/kidnapped since 29.01.2020. In this regard a FIR No. 516/20 in 363 IPC, dated 25.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Keshav Puram, Delhi.

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

Web-site: http://cbl.nic.in E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 P.S. Keshav Puram, Delhi DP/385/NW/2020 Ph: 011-27181325, 27156090

Ukraine urges Jewish pilgrims stuck at border to turn back

Kyiv: Ukraine on Thursday strongly warned thousands of Hasidic Jewish pilgrims who have been stuck at its border for days that it won't allow them into the country due to coronavirus restrictions.

Ukrainian authorities said about 2,000 people have gathered at the border with Belarus in hope of traveling to the Ukrainian city of Uman to visit the grave of an important Hasidic rabbi who died in 1810, Nachman of Breslov.

Thousands of the ultra-Orthodox Jews visit the city each September for Rosh Hashana,

the Jewish new year. It's celebrated Sept. 18-20 this year, and some pilgrims had managed to get to Uman before Ukraine closed its borders in late August amid a surge in COVID-19 infections. Thousands of others traveled via Belarus, which hasn't barred foreign visitors from entering. On Thursday, Ukraine official Mykhailo Apostol reaffirmed that the pilgrims will not be allowed to cross the border.

"Ukraine has shut its borders to foreigners, and no exceptions will be made for the Hasidic pilgrims," Apostol told reporters. AP

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) named Kajal D/o Sh. Ashok Kumar R/o T-Huts-60, Water Tank No. 2, Udhog Nagar, Delhi Aged-20 Years has been reported missing/ kidnapped since 06.08.2020 from the area of P.S. Paschim Vihar West, Delhi vide DD No. 33-A Dated 07.08.2020 has been registered at Police Station Paschim Vihar West, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:

Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'0", Face: Round, Wearing: Black coloured shirt, blue coloured jeans and slipper in feet. Any person having any information/Clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, please inform SHO, Paschim Vihar West, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.in or website: http://cbl.nic.in

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL

General Public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo) named Soniya D/o Nirmal R/o NC3/56, Lal Bagh, Azadpur, Delhi Aged-17 Years has been reported kidnapped since 09.09.2020 at 11:00 am from the Jurisdiction of Police Station Adarsh Nagar, Delhi vide FIR No. 619/2020 Dated 09.09.2020 registered at Police Station Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. Her physical description is as under:

Complexion: Fair, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, Built: Slim, Clothing: Black coloured frock, black coloured pajama and pink coloured slippers in feet. Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi at E-mail: cbc@cbl.gov.in or website: http://cbl.nic.in

WESTERN RAILWAY STORES DEPARTMENT

Table with columns: 1st Round, 2nd Round, Depot / Division, Depot/Divisional Officer in Charge, Contact No. Includes dates 13/10/2020 and 27/10/2020.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of UDAY BHARATAM PARTY. The office of the party is located at C-310, Sigma-II, Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.-201308. This Party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 - Name/address of the office-bearers of the Party are as follows:

# Primary markets see revival in second half of 2020

**New Delhi:** The sharp turnaround in the secondary markets with the broader market also participating in the rally, has enlivened the primary markets once again with a slew of initial public offerings (IPOs) from a diverse range of companies set to hit the stock market in the second half of the 2020 calendar year. Market

analysts tracking the development said that a host of promoters are once again rushing to the primary market to make the most of the opportunity where recent IPOs have not only been oversubscribed by several times but it has also brought back retail investors into the market who hold the key to maintain the rally for IPOs.

So in the pipeline now are more IPOs like CAMS, UTI AMC, Angel Broking, Chemcon Specialty Chemicals, etc. that are likely to open in September. Besides, Kalyan Jewellers, NCDEX, Barbeque Nation, Burger King, Bajaj Energy,

Lodha Developers are some of the names likely to hit the market in CY20. Of this CAMS and UTI AMC will be big ticket size IPOs.

LIC could also join the bandwagon later this year and could be one of the largest IPO in the country ever - going by the company's size. The government is looking at offloading 25 per cent stake in LIC in tranches, as it is falling short of its divestment target of Rs 2.1 lakh crore this fiscal. For this, it is likely to incentivise the participation of retail investors/employees/policy holders by providing some discount. **IANS**

## Sensex tumbles 323 pts as global markets reel on Fed outlook

**Mumbai:** Equity indices snapped a two-session rising streak to close with losses on Thursday, in lockstep with global markets which recoiled after sobering economic assessment by the US Federal Reserve.

A weakening rupee and lack of fresh buying triggered further weighed on market mood, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened lower and stayed in the negative zone throughout the session. It finally finished at 38,979.85, down by 323 points or 0.82 per cent.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty shed 88.45 points or 0.76 per cent to close at 11,516.10.

Bajaj Finserv was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, slipping 2.23 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, ITC, ICICI Bank, Kotak Bank, Tata Steel and Bajaj Finance.

On the other hand, HCL Tech, Infosys and Maruti finished with gains of up to 2.36 per cent. **PTI**

## Rollout of SAROD-Ports credit for sector

**Mumbai:** The rollout of SAROD-Ports for affordable and timely credit for the port sector has been a major step for the sector even as its success remains to be seen, ratings agency Ica said on Thursday.

Launched on September 10, 'SAROD-PORTS' (Society for Affordable and Reliable credit for Ports) for dispute resolution in maritime sector, comprising of major ports, the PPP players operating at these ports as well as non-major ports, the initiative is targeted towards attracting more private sector investments, Ica said. The launch of 'SAROD-Ports' is a step to address such disputes through an alternative route to ensure faster resolution and in a cost effective manner and should be positive for the sector, Ica said. **PTI**

## India's electronic component imports for 2019-20 stand at ₹ 1.15 lakh cr: Dhotre

**New Delhi:** The country import of electronic components worth ₹ 1.15 lakh crore in 2019-20, out of which, 37 per cent came from China, Minister of State for Communications and Electronics and IT Sanjay Dhotre said on Thursday. The data was shared by the Minister on the impact on the electronics sector due to shutting down of factories in China. "As per data available from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S), the total electronic component imports in the country for 2019-20 was ₹ 1.15 lakh crore, out of which the import from China was ₹ 42,983 crore, which amounts to about 37 per cent," Dhotre said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. **PTI**

## Advance tax mop-up falls 25.5% in Q2, led by plunge in corporate tax: Source

**Mumbai:** Advance tax collection fell 25.5 per cent to ₹ 1,59,057 crore in the second quarter of the fiscal, an income tax official said on Thursday.

However, there was improvement over the first quarter ended June, when advance tax revenue had plunged 76 per cent to a tepid ₹ 11,714 crore as the whole economy was under a stringent lockdown.

During the year-ago period to September 15, 2019, total advance tax collection had stood at ₹ 2,12,889 crore, down from ₹ 3,70,652 crore a year ago.

"Total advance tax collection in the second quarter fell by 25.5 per cent to ₹ 1,59,057 crore from ₹ 2,12,889 crore y-o-y. While corporates paid only ₹ 1,29,619.6 crore in advance tax, down by 27.3 per cent in the reporting quarter, personal income tax collection stood at ₹ 29,437.5 crore, down 15.5 per cent from ₹ 34,632.9 crore.

"However, TDS (tax deducted at source) fared better at ₹ 1,38,605.2 crore, down by 5.6 per cent from ₹ 1,46,792.4 crore," a senior income tax official from the Mumbai zone told PTI. **PTI**

## BSNL's 44 pc mobile network equipment from ZTE, 9 pc from Huawei

**New Delhi:** More than 44% mobile network equipment of state-run BSNL is sourced from Chinese firm ZTE and 9 per cent from Huawei, Parliament was informed on Thursday. While replying to a question on the market share of Chinese companies ZTE and Huawei in India, Minister of State for Communications Sanjay Dhotre said that the government maintains no data of Chinese telecom gear makers. **PTI**

## 3.2 lakh households remain un-electrified till August-end under Saubhagya scheme

**New Delhi:** The number of un-electrified households stood at 3,20,422 till August-end this year under the Saubhagya Scheme, which is meant for achieving 100 per cent universal electrification of homes in the country, Parliament was informed on Thursday.

These un-electrified households are in Chhattisgarh, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Power Minister R K Singh said in the Lok Sabha, replying to a question, that the

number of un-electrified households identified under the Saubhagya scheme was 3,20,422 as on August 31, 2020. Among the four states with un-electrified households, Uttar Pradesh tops the chart with 2,53,785 households followed by Jharkhand at 60,925, Chhattisgarh at 3,519 and Assam at 2,193 as on August 31, 2020. As per the reply, as many as 2,62,84,350 families were provided electricity connection under the Saubhagya scheme. **PTI**

## GST rate on cars lower than pre-GST regime; auto cost should cut royalty payments: Fin Min sources

**New Delhi:** Auto companies should cut costs by reducing royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST, finance ministry sources said on Thursday, responding to criticism over the last few decades now in the form of allowing foreign investment and incentivising domestic manufacturing. GST rates on automobiles are less than what VAT and excise duty rates used to be in the pre-GST times. All of a sudden, dissent in some quarters looking at further expansion in India due to the country's high

taxes, the firm's vice chairman of India unit Shree Vishwanath had reportedly said in an interview earlier this week. Finance ministry sources said India's tax policy regarding the automobile sector has been consistent for the last few decades now in the form of allowing foreign investment and incentivising domestic manufacturing. GST rates on automobiles are less than what VAT and excise duty rates used to be in the pre-GST times. All of a sudden, dissent in some quarters looking at further expansion in India due to the country's high

In fact, these companies should cut down their costs of manufacturing by cutting down the royalty payments to their parent companies abroad instead of asking the government to reduce GST," a source said. Taxes on automobiles are in the highest bracket across the globe without much exception, the sources said. Japan currently has three types of taxes on automobiles - once on the purchase, then an annual automobile tax based on engine size, and finally a sudden, dissent in some quarters required once every two years. **PTI**

## India ranks 116 in World Bank's human capital index

**Washington:** India has been ranked 116th in the latest edition of the World Bank's annual Human Capital Index that benchmarks key components of human capital across countries.

However, India's score increased to 0.49 from 0.44 in 2018, as per the Human Capital Index report released by the World Bank on Wednesday.

The 2020 Human Capital Index update includes health and education data for 174 countries - covering 98 per cent of the world's population - up to March 2020, providing a pre-pandemic baseline on the

## Relief for Anil Ambani as SC dismisses SBI plea

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed a plea by the State Bank of India (SBI) seeking a vacation of the stay granted by Delhi High Court on personal bankruptcy proceedings against Anil Ambani, chairman of Reliance Group. The court, led by Chief Justice Ranjan G. Gokhale, dismissed the SBI's plea. The bench, also comprising Justices Hima Gupta and S. Ravindra Bhat, gave liberty to SBI to seek modification of the stay order passed by the High Court on August 27. The three-judge bench said, "Why don't you go back to high court to argue the Anil Ambani case?"

The court's decision bench had passed an interim order staying the Mumbai bankruptcy tribunal's order. The bench had said proceedings against corporate debtors will continue and issued notice to the central government, SBI and others. **IANS**

## US company to pay USD 345,000 to resolve H-1B violations

**Washington:** A New Jersey-based staffing company has agreed to pay USD 345,000 to settle allegations that it has violated immigration and employment laws. The company, which has been under scrutiny for continuous employment and wage requirements of workers it had brought to the US on H-1B visas. The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. H-1B visas are most sought-after among Indian IT professionals.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Department of Labour and the US Attorney for the District of New Jersey ordered Savantis Solutions to pay USD 345,000 to resolve allegations against H-1B related violations. Savantis, formerly known as VedcoSoft, has a presence in India as well. The company is involved in consulting, technology and staffing, utilising primarily foreign nationals in the US pursuant to H-1B visas. **PTI**

## Rupee declines by 14 paise on strong dollar after US Fed guidance

**Mumbai:** The rupee depreciated by 14 paise to end at ₹ 73.07 against the US dollar on Thursday following muted domestic equities and stronger greenback in the global markets. Asian currencies weakened after the US Federal Reserve's new forward guidance, analysts said.

The Federal Reserve after its two-day policy meeting on Wednesday signalled to keep interest rates near to zero till 2023 sighting slower economic recovery. **PTI**

## NLC India Ltd celebrates PM's birthday

**New Delhi:** NLC India Limited celebrated the 70th Birth Day of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi, by organizing Blood Donation Camp, Mass Tree Plantation and COVID-19 Screening Campaign in New Delhi. R. Vikram Chandra, Director/Human Resources, NLCIL while inaugurating a Blood Donation Camp at Jawahar Science College, New Delhi on Thursday (17-09-2020) said that the CSR Cell of NLCIL has organized Blood Donation camp in New Delhi.

## Passage of agr bills to empower farmers: Niti VC

**New Delhi:** Welcoming the passage of two bills related to the farm sector in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said the legislation will empower farmers and have a colossal impact on the future of agriculture in the country. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill and the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill were passed by voice vote. **PTI**

## State ownership helps deposit franchise of PSBs; divesting majority stakes a 'credit negative': Ica

**Mumbai:** Divesting majority stake in state-run lenders by the government will be 'credit negative' for such public sector banks (PSBs), a domestic ratings agency warned on Thursday. Many of the entities where the government is mulling selling off majority stake as per reports have a weak credit profile. The ratings agency said a move to reduce the public ownership will be hurtful. These six lenders are primarily supported by sovereign ownership and the ensuing stable deposit base, the agency said. **PTI**

## 'Mithuna' adjudged world 3rd finest whiskey

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI:** Indian brand 'Mithuna', single malt 'whiskey' has been adjudged 'third finest whiskey' in the world by 'Jim Murray's Whisky Bible 2021', making it the first Indian liquor brand to win this coveted award.

Describing 'Mithuna' by Paul John Distillers Pvt Ltd as "a whiskey to devour," whisky reviewer Jim Murray says, "If Mithuna means 'Ultimate', then it is the perfect name. Or maybe Mithuna means 'Perfect', then it is pretty close. It is that very rarest of things. And, if nothing else, announces Paul John Distillery on the world stage of truly great distilleries." Set to be released worldwide in November 2020, Mithuna by Paul John is the second expansion of the Zodiac series of Paul John Indian Single Malt from JDPL.

## MSME lays out new guidelines for pottery, beekkeeping activities

**New Delhi:** The Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ministry on Thursday said it has come out with new guidelines for two schemes - pottery and beekkeeping activities. It said that for pottery activity, the government will provide assistance of pottery wheel, clay blunger, and granulator.

"It will also provide wheel pottery training for traditional pottery artisans and Press Pottery training for pottery as well as non-pottery artisans in Self-Help Groups," it added.

This is being done to enhance the production, technical knowhow of pottery artisans and to develop new products at reduced costs; and to enhance the income of pottery artisans through training and modern / automated equipment. **PTI**

## Petrol demand returns to pre-COVID-19 levels, diesel demand still down

**New Delhi:** India's petrol sales rose for the first time in the first half of September since the country's lockdown in late March, signalling demand may have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Petrol sales between September 1 and 15 rose 2.2 per cent year-on-year and were up 7 per cent over the previous month, according to preliminary industry data. Diesel sales continue to be in negative territory, with demand falling 6 per cent year-on-year. But the demand was 19.3 per cent higher over August 2020.

This is the first time that petrol sales in the world's third-largest oil importer have risen since the March 25 nationwide lockdown crippled economic activity and sent demand plummeting. **PTI**

## Hindi Day organised by Indian Bank

**New Delhi:** Hindi Day was organised by Indian Bank, Zonal Zone, South Delhi. On the occasion of Hindi Day, Area General Manager Vikas Kumar and Rakesh Kumar Agarwal, Zonal Manager, Zonal Office, Delhi, and Himanshu Kasat, Zonal Manager, South Delhi, were presented by Home Minister, Government of India and Finance Minister, Government of India and Chairman of the Bank and addressing all the staff members from the text of messages sent on the occasion of Hindi Day of the Managing Director. The bank organised various competitions Yaksha - Hindi poetry recitation, Hindi story writing, Hindi song, Antakshari, Hindi memoir writing and Hindi Satch competition to encourage staff members to work in Hindi.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Ranjias Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. 10/155, Geeta Colony, New Delhi-110031  
1. In pursuance to rule 19(2) of DCS rules 2007, it is to inform the Membership of Late Ram Duteri (M.No. 323) and Smt. Usha Gupta (M.No.41) have been terminated by the Ranjias Co-operative GH Society Ltd. and their deposits have also been refunded. If anyone has any objection, he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the RCS, Parliament Street, New Delhi or at society office i.e. 10/155 Geeta Colony, New Delhi-110031 within 15 days from the date of publication of the public notice.  
2. Sh. Pratul Singh (M.No.288) is hereby informed through this public notice to contact the society office within 15 days to confirm his resignation, as during scrutiny of his resignation was found to be in the records of the society, but his resignation was not put up before the management committee for acceptance till date. Now we request you through this public notice to contact the society office within 15 days for confirmation of his resignation, otherwise his resignation will be accepted by the Management committee.  
Sd/- President  
Ranjias CGHS Ltd.

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, 201301 (U.P.)  
Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & https://tender.up.nic.in Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum.

A) The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 24.09.2020 upto 5.00 PM shall be opened/downloaded on dated 25.09.2020 at 11.00 AM.

| S. No. | Job No.                          | Name of Work  | Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs) |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1.     | 47/GM/(R)/S/M (EM)-II/2020-21/E1 | Annual Maintenance and Strengthening of street light at FNG road, Noida (Parthlaha Choke to Village-Chajaris NH-24), Noida.           | 37.75                    |
| 2.     | 48/GM/(R)/S/M (EM)-II/2020-21/E1 | Annual Maintenance of Traffic Signals at Various Sectors in Noida. (Zone-2)   | 44.90                    |
| 3.     | 94/GM/(R)/S/M (EM)-II/2020-21    | M/O Authority Building (AMC) of different type of A.C.'s installed in different offices in Main Administrative Office sector-8) Noida | 45.75                    |

General Manager  
Noida  
**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON**

General public is hereby informed that one person named **Raj Kumar S/o Sh. Ram Lal R/O H.No. F-1/31, Budh Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi. Age 62 years, Height 5'5", Complexion shallow, Face round, Built thin, wearing Green colour shirt and Black colour pant has been missing since 29.08.2020 from his house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this person, but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a DD No. 79-A dated 02.09.2020 has been lodged at PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.**

Website: http://cbl.nic.in  
Email: cbl@cbi.gov.in  
Fax: 011-2301334  
Ph: 011-2301446, 2301528  
DP/358/RD/2020

**SHO**  
PS Vijay Vihar, Delhi  
Ph. 011-27061294, 27061295

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one lady named **Rekha W/o Ramesh R/O Bhagwan Singh Ka Makan Pali Wali Gali Village Rajapur Sec. 9 Rohini, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 11.07.2020 from the area of P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi. In this regard, a case DD No. 28-A dated 17.07.2019 has been registered at P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing lady is as under.

Age: 22 Years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 5', Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Yellow Colour Saree and Red Blouse. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped lady then please inform P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi at following Tel No./e-mail: cbl@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbl.nic.in  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O.  
P.S. Prashant Vihar, Delhi  
Ph: 011-27561877  
DP/390/RD/2020

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one girl named **Shivani Kumari D/o Dinesh Kumar, R/O H. No. 17 Ganja Mohalla Jonapur, New Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 05.05.2017 from the area of P.S. Fatehpur Beri, Delhi. In this regard, a case FIR No. 20717, dated 05.05.2017 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Fatehpur Beri, Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under:

Age: 15 Years, Complexion: Shallow, Height: 4'6", Face: Long, Built: Thin, Hair: Black, Wearing: Orange colour T-Shirt and Black Pant. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing/kidnapped person then please inform P.S. Fatehpur Beri, Delhi at following Tel No./ e-mail: cbl@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbl.nic.in  
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639

Sd/- S.H.O.  
P.S. Fatehpur Beri, Delhi  
Ph: 011-2659611, 2659511  
DP/202/SD/2020

**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED BOY**

General public is hereby informed that this boy named **Sudhanshu S/o Sunil Kumar R/O Y-1196, Gali No. 1, Prem Nagar-II, Delhi** Age : 14 years, Height : 4', Complexion : Fair, Face : Round, wearing sky blue colour T-shirt and black colour lower, has been missing/kidnapped since 09.09.2020. In this regard FIR No. 420/20 dated 10.09.2020 U/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped boy may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cbl@cbi.gov.in  
Website: http://cbl.nic.in  
Fax: 24368639  
Tel: 24368638/24368641

**SHO : P.S. Prem Nagar, Delhi**  
Ph. : 011-25489080

**Trend**  
*Slasher*

**Bhumi celebrates sisterhood**

Actor **BHUMI PEDNEKAR** plans to watch her new film, *Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare*, with her sister **Samiksha Pednekar**, and calls it a special sister-screening.

"Samiksha and I will watch the film together once it releases this week. We watched the film together at Busan the first time and for me the film's journey literally started with my sister by my side. We had the best time together there. We've now made a plan to watch the film again and it will be our special sister screening!" she said.



Tourism boards are hopeful that MICE events will be among the early segments to rebound and spur tourism globally, says **SAKSHI SHARMA**

History is evidence of how epidemics have had a direct and an immediate impact on airlines, travel aggregators and agencies. And undoubtedly, the travel and tourism sector is the first and worst hit due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These unprecedented times have forced the tourism boards to re-think radically. Nevertheless, their sight is fixed firmly on the future. Ideas are being floated as to how they will be able to function under such chaotic situations.

Recently, it was demonstrated that events can be held to everyone's satisfaction even under these conditions. Gradually, some progress is being made to hold some exchange events and economic activities as the travel restrictions are being relaxed and participant numbers are increasing.

Alexandra Kaszay, managing director, Vienna's The Hofburg Congress Centre, tells us that meeting one another and communicating face-to-face will come again. "The longing for that is huge, the message we're getting from most conversations. People will have to adjust to events with fewer guests on site and instead more participants joining in externally," she says.

In line with the safe and gradual resumption of events, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) is starting to accept applications for organisers to pilot Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) events of up to 250 attendees from October 1. There will be pilot events taking place under this arrangement such as the Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) Conference, in October.

The move takes into account the importance of the MICE sector and its interest in the business events, and, in turn, a ray of hope for a fresh beginning of travel. This resumption will help MICE retain critical capabilities, while STB-line cars, the one that is unbelievably good. You really have to start nipping at to find a flaw in the cabin of the Sonet. You could argue that it is a bit busy and that the plastic on the bezel of the screen is a bit shiny, but overall in terms of how nice the Sonet feels inside, it really blows the competition away.

Another aspect of this car where it literally beats the competition is in its choice of kit, starting with a huge high-quality 26-centimetre widescreen. With Apple Play enabled, you can use the split screen mode to get other bits of information. On Android Auto, there is an option to use the entire screen. You do not get such screens in cars that cost 50 lakh and you do not get a branded sound system as well unless you are paying 60-70 lakh. The GTX+

specification of the Sonet doesn't just have wireless charging, ventilated seats and a panoramic sunroof but also a BOSE sound system. Then there is an air purifier that Kia claims has a virus shield. You sit inside and you really get amazed at just the level of kit you get on the Sonet. Maybe the top-spec cars will cost a lot, but even if they touch 15 lakh, it is impossible to argue that they are not good value.

But how is it to drive? Quite nice actually! I drove the 1-litre 120PS turbocharged petrol with the intelligent manual transmission and well, my thoughts on the IMT aside, I'm still not quite used to the concept of a clutchless manual. The engine did its job well and once you do figure out the IMT, you realise that the ability to control the torque makes a difference to an AMT gearbox car. This turbo petrol engine powers the Sonet (and venue) at the top of the performance charts for sub 4-metre cars, and it comes with the IMT as well as a seven-speed Dual-Clutch automatic. The Sonet also comes with a naturally aspirated 83PS 1.2 petrol engine available with a five-speed manual transmission as well as a 1.5 CRDi diesel in two power levels, 100PS for the six-speed manual and 115PS for the six-speed automatic. I also got to drive the diesel automatic, but let us get to that later.

The 120PS turbo engine is plenty fast and once you get the hang of it, that is how to ride the turbocharger. It can be extremely great fun to drive since it is a small and relatively light car. Also,

yes, it does feel slightly floaty around the corners at speed. Fortunately, I can't wait for the turbo engines in something like a Hyundai i20, but it is fun on the Sonet. Coming back to the IMT, once you start getting the hang of the car, you can have some fun if you know your empty stretches of tarmac, but it will still take me some time to really get to grips with the fact that while my left hand is working my left foot isn't. The diesel automatic with the 115PS engine also feels nice to drive, and the larger engine block in the front does give the front slightly more bite. While you can have fun and go fast, the Sonet is not a racer but it is a great, comfortable ride.

Toyota make some noises about not expanding in the Indian market earlier this week. While the Innova and Fortuner have done very well in the Indian market thanks to their bulletproof reliability and superb resale value, the world's largest carmaker has failed to crack the meat of the market. The Etios Van is a cop-out and while the Etios sedan was a good reliable car and became very popular with taxi drivers, it got caught out by the four-metre rule. To blame high taxes when your product strategy failed is not exactly fair because you see the Hyundai-Kia group. Both carmakers, neither of them 'well-known' in India when they came, have cracked the market. Toyota executives in India can pay a Kia Sonet and see for themselves where they went wrong in India. The 6,500 plus orders it got on the first day, well those guys bet on a winner before they knew just how good it would be.



Opening up bidding processes for MICE now will help build liquidity across the travel supply chain. It can, hence, spur tourism in India and at large.

Raymond LIM, area director, India & South Asia, STB, says, "Overall, visitor arrivals from India to Singapore have seen good growth in the past few years. This can be attributed to the increased air connectivity between Singapore and India. There is a healthy flow of business travel at both sides due to the well-connected economic exchanges. The leisure destination position that Singapore enjoys among the Indian consumers are also other reasons why it is one of the top MICE source markets for Singapore, particularly for meeting and incentive travel. This is a key sector with quality visitors providing high tourism yield."

He adds, "The evolved Indian MICE traveller tends to seek out more unique experiences. In this aspect, we are home to a diverse range of events and MICE venues, including unconventional destinations, which can provide creative solutions for event owners. Beyond the meeting room, business travellers and delegates can enjoy a wide range of unique and interactive leisure experiences."

Neliswa Nkani, hub head — MEISEA,



South African Tourism, believes that MICE is soon going to be consumer-centric. She says, "Companies and destinations will need to incentivise both corporates and suppliers. We have collaborated with policy-makers, industry leaders and media to educate about travel trade."

According to organisations like UNWTO, WTTC and others, MICE events have wider implications for destinations as wherever events go wider, tourism activities follow attracting a lot more leisure tourists in the ensuing months and years. Prashant Chaudhary, Representative of Russian Union of Travel Industry in India believes that Russian

Tourism will emerge stronger from the COVID-crisis and these events will lead the way. "It has already begun," says he.

It is noteworthy that the country recently hosted one of the leisure shows ODYKH in its original physical format in Moscow. Prashant shares, "The MICE sector of tourism is being opened. It impacted the larger domestic, inbound and outbound of the tourism markets. Russian charter flights are already seeking permissions and landing slots to Goa, probably the most popular destination for Russians in India."

Arzan Khambatta, head, Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO) India, tells us that the convention and exhibition industry has been one of the fastest-growing emerging sectors in the recent years. "Rich cultural background and tourism resources help us meet the needs of different events," he says.

Well, given the current situation, COVID-19 has definitely impacted the industry in many ways. But the tourism boards are hopeful that MICE will be among the early segments to rebound and spur tourism globally. In the coming months, they plan to work extensively with MICE agents and corporates in India to facilitate arrivals once travel restrictions are lifted completely.



**'Completing the film, The Wife was a challenge during this pandemic as**

**we were shooting out of Mumbai. There the major concern was that if someone from the team contracts COVID, then we would need at least 21 days quarantine and keep the shoot on hold. The cycle would keep going if the number of cases increased.'**  
—Gurmeet Choudhary

Superstar **RANVEER SINGH** has been urging authorities to consider and declare Indian Sign Language (ISL) as the 23rd official language of India.



He recently signed a petition to aware people on this cause. Ranveer's independent record label Inclin, which he has formed with Navzar Erance, also released sign language music videos. For the actor's efforts, the deaf community in India wholeheartedly appreciated him by putting out a heartfelt thank you video for him.

**Takes a lot to be a star: Ellie**

**ELLIE GOULDING** is a globally popular singer, who won two BRIT Awards and has been nominated for Grammy and Golden Globe awards in the past. The road to stardom has not been easy for the singer, who admits not always having a huge amount of confidence.

"I wanted to be a singer when I was 14. I think I was always singing, playing the guitar, writing music and imagining myself performing. But I didn't have huge amount of confidence so that was something I had to build and work on. It takes a lot of work on yourself to eventually get used to that kind of attention and spotlight," Ellie said.



**A CLASS APART**

The Kia Sonet blows the competition out of the water. No, really it does!



specification of the Sonet doesn't just have wireless charging, ventilated seats and a panoramic sunroof but also a BOSE sound system. Then there is an air purifier that Kia claims has a virus shield. You sit inside and you really get amazed at just the level of kit you get on the Sonet. Maybe the top-spec cars will cost a lot, but even if they touch 15 lakh, it is impossible to argue that they are not good value.

But how is it to drive? Quite nice actually! I drove the 1-litre 120PS turbocharged petrol with the intelligent manual transmission and well, my thoughts on the IMT aside, I'm still not quite used to the concept of a clutchless manual. The engine did its job well and once you do figure out the IMT, you realise that the ability to control the torque makes a difference to an AMT gearbox car. This turbo petrol engine powers the Sonet (and venue) at the top of the performance charts for sub 4-metre cars, and it comes with the IMT as well as a seven-speed Dual-Clutch automatic. The Sonet also comes with a naturally aspirated 83PS 1.2 petrol engine available with a five-speed manual transmission as well as a 1.5 CRDi diesel in two power levels, 100PS for the six-speed manual and 115PS for the six-speed automatic. I also got to drive the diesel automatic, but let us get to that later.

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KUSHAN MITRA



**A Golf in all but name**

It is very hard to make a case for the Volkswagen T-Roc but it is a really nice car

There is a myth out there, actually a partial fallacy, that it was the Beetle that created the colossus of German manufacturing, the Volkswagen Group. Yes, the Beetle laid the foundations for the post-War II creation of the German carmaker. Some of us know the story really well, that it was British Army engineering corps officer Ivan Hirst, who realised that the British invasion force needed vehicles to move about. He also felt the need to employ the local population. After seeing the production die and tooling at Wolfsburg, he put together a production for the car we know, and some love, as the Beetle. Millions were produced in post-War Germany. In the 60s, along with the Volkswagen Van, the Beetle became a symbol of counterculture in the United States. Now, Germany and even the United States moved on from the Beetle by the 70s but the car remained a best-seller in Mexico through the 90s. Over 21 million were produced giving birth to a popular quiz question of the Beetle being the most sold car in the world.

First, we need to correct that fallacy. If a single brand is considered, it is the Toyota Corolla with over 44 million sold that is the most sold single car brand of all time. Second, a lot of the Beetle's spectacular numbers were thanks to its popularity in Brazil and Mexico. It was the Beetle that created the Volkswagen hegemony that we know and we love today, the corporate overlords of Audi, Bentley, Bugatti, Ducati, Lamborghini, MAN, Porsche, SEAT, Scania and Skoda. But the car that gave it the financial wherewithal to create such an empire was the Golf. And it is the Golf, which through its eight generations, the latest being launched last year, that is the biggest selling Volkswagen of all time with 35 million sold until last year.

The Golf is the car that formed the basis of so many other Volkswagen cars as the carmaker moved to its platform architecture. Even the new MQB architecture that the Group bases its small and mid-sized cars on was essentially designed for the Golf. Many Volkswagen fans I know in India have always

been disappointed that Volkswagen India never brought the Golf into the country. Yes, there was the Jetta, the sedan based on the Golf, but few variants of the new Beetle laid the foundations for the post-War II creation of the German carmaker. Some of us know the story really well, that it was British Army engineering corps officer Ivan Hirst, who realised that the British invasion force needed vehicles to move about. He also felt the need to employ the local population. After seeing the production die and tooling at Wolfsburg, he put together a production for the car we know, and some love, as the Beetle. Millions were produced in post-War Germany. In the 60s, along with the Volkswagen Van, the Beetle became a symbol of counterculture in the United States. Now, Germany and even the United States moved on from the Beetle by the 70s but the car remained a best-seller in Mexico through the 90s. Over 21 million were produced giving birth to a popular quiz question of the Beetle being the most sold car in the world.

But now we have the Volkswagen T-Roc, a twenty lakh crossover car from the German carmaker. Frankly, the T-Roc is the purest expression of the Golf to have ever come to India. While it is nicely kitted out, with twin-tone upholstery and a virtual cockpit display, if you have been in a Golf in the recent past, you know you are somewhere familiar. When you would see the sticker price of the T-Roc, you would understand why Volkswagen never brought the Golf to India. With an ex-showroom price just under twenty lakh, it is very difficult to make a case for this car, no matter how nice it is to drive. While I should write a column on Volkswagen India's dramatic shift away from Diesels — they say it is to do with the government policy. Although I believe it is more of a perception thing since Diesels are equated with Volkswagen, the 150PS 1.5TSI petrol engine on the T-Roc is quite smooth particularly in the seven-speed DSG gearbox on the car.

Frankly, if you do not need the extra rear space afforded by the likes of the Creta and Seltos, say if you are single or a young couple, the T-Roc has more than enough boot space to carry the luggage for a week-long getaway and, drives way nicer than the boot competitor. The interior feel with its usage of light and dark tones is bright and the cabin genuinely feels cheerful. If it is the Golf you have been waiting for, this is as close to one you will get in India for now. I believe the T-Roc will have limited sales but serves a statement. If the forthcoming Taigun in 2021 is built and drives as well as the T-Roc, I will finally believe that the Skoda-Volkswagen group will have a winner on their hands.

Disinfect most-touched spots, stay aware on how to protect yourself and others around, follow physical distancing, wash hands and sanitise frequently, wear masks, step out only when necessary — these are some of the norms which became mandatory in 2020. However, no matter how much precautions we take at our end, there are certain external contacts which can't be avoided. For example, packaged food products, given the fact that footfalls at restaurants have seen a sharp dip and online deliveries are becoming the new and more convenient dine-out. And when the mainstream selling channel went down, delivery did become the only option for food outlets to work on their businesses. And to survive in this competitive market, packaging is one thing food industry has been focussing upon with more creative ideas to build the trust of consumer.

And undeniably, the world of packaging has seen a prominent change. Following the best of safety measures, packaging food properly has become the most important segment in the food industry. However, the fear still lingers that the Coronavirus could reach our homes through home deliveries.

Well, a lack of complete awareness can be an issue here. Recently, a delivery boy tested positive in Delhi, who had delivered food packages to around 70 households. However, the families did not report any cases. It proved how the virus cannot be transferred through food unless one comes directly in contact with an infected person. As the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is highly unlikely that the virus can be transmitted through food.

Lack of this knowledge has impacted several businesses, making it tougher for the industry to survive. While this certainly came as big relief for the industry but it needed to reassure customers of the same. And hence, the process of packaging has become very important. The factors that are given utmost importance are:

**PERSONAL HYGIENE**

Food handlers' personal hygiene is critical to keep food safe for which hygiene measures like washing hands with soap or alcohol-based sanitisers, monitoring of body temperatures are being regularised. Workers are equipped with masks and gloves. Sanitisation norms are being stressed upon in kitchens and grocery stores strictly. It's made sure that cooked food is not touched by bare hands. Right usage and discarding of PPE is being implemented strictly to ensure the safety of food packages. After the food is put into the container, all risks of attracting the virus are eliminated. The packet is sanitised and then put in the carry bag, which is also sanitised.

The cooked food and groceries are packed in an extra outer bag apart from the primary carry bag, which contains the items to add another layer of protection as when they are dispatched. The delivery personnel's temperature is being monitored regularly as a key measure. Downloading Arogya Setu app and marking the personnel green is helping keep a



# IT'S A PACK-UP!

While home deliveries may have seen a surge due to dine-ins seeing sharp dips, AMIT BAGGA points out how innovative and safer food packaging methods are winning the trust of consumers



better track. The order payment is now preferably not collected via cash on delivery but is online or prepaid. As the delivery person reaches a customer's home, it is man-

dated that there will be no close contact. Many food delivery apps have also enabled an option for people to choose if they want their package to be left at their doorstep to avoid any contact with the delivery boy. If

they don't choose it, he will have to maintain a healthy seven meter distance. The customers are also given instructions on how to open a package. This is a very important piece of infor-

mation as it means building consumer faith to accept packaging without any doubts or fear. The customers are informed that their package has reached their doorstep and are advised to use disposable gloves while receiving it. The outer packaging to be discarded right outside. The customer should wear the gloves rightly and discard them after taking the cooked food out of the inner packaging and then sanitise hands to avoid any cross-contamination. It is important to reheat the food, which results in complete elimination of the risk to attract the virus.

Through these steps, customers are being educated. Any packaging would fail if these simple measures were not adopted to build customer trust back.

This is how restaurants and grocery store brands are now changing their positioning and getting more aligned towards safer food packaging and delivery. Social media has become the main channel of this communication. Perception and misinformation is changing the consumer behaviour but soon elimination of the virus transmission fear from packaging will bring a revolution in packaging and a much-needed positive change in the industry.

**LOOK AND FEEL**

The focus is also on the nice, good-looking appearance of the packaging so that it provides a positive feel to the customer.

**TASTE AND TEXTURE**

For restaurants, the material used to prepare food that can retain a dish's taste and texture is equally important. A customer that's used to experience food at a dine-in now has to be given closest experience on delivery. A good and safe packaging will all lose their marks if the food doesn't taste well.

**ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING**

One-time use and Coronavirus-resistant packaging have become the new essentials. While over the last few years, eco-friendly has been the focus in packaging but today, the one-time use packaging is contradicting this concept of sustainability. So keeping this in mind, new eco-friendly, bamboo paper, non-toxic packaging containers are being worked upon. Customers are becoming more aware than before about anything that impacts immunity or raises health and environmental concerns.

For instance, Maharashtra has already banned packaging, which wasn't eco-friendly. The new packaging material contain 51 microns, the ideal quantity. For safety, glass jars for condiments are also helpful as they're eco-friendly, washable and can be brought to use in homes again. And remember, *mitti-handis* (mud containers)?

Thus, while the packaging industry has been evolving, material related to packaging are also finding a new face. Even a few healthcare companies are coming up with sanitisers specifically to be sprayed on delivery packages to ensure the disinfection of the packaged material. Well, one could say, packaging is only getting better! (The author is co-founder, Daryaganj.)

## R E C I P E S

**DRIED ROSE SLAB WITH NUTTY DELIGHT**

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Dried fig, chopped: 1/2 cup
- Dates, chopped: 1 cup
- *Mamra* almonds: 1/3 cup
- Cashew nuts: 1/3 cup
- Walnuts: 1/3 cup
- Pistachios: 1/3 cup
- Raisins: 1/3 cup
- Gulkand: 2 tsp
- Nutmeg powder: 1/4 tsp
- Desi ghee: 2 tsp
- Rose jam: 2 tsp

- Fennel powder: 1/4 tsp
- Cardamom powder: 1/4 cup
- Rose water: 1/2 cup
- Dried rose petals: 1 cup

**METHOD**

- To prepare the nutty delight, soak the chopped figs in warm water for four hours, strain water and pat dry well.
- Granulate figs along with the dates and raisins to smooth paste with the help of rose water.
- Chop *mamra* almonds, cashew nuts, walnut and

- pistachios.
- Heat *desi ghee* in a heavy bottomed pan, add gulkand stir well and saute for a minute.
- Add chopped dates, nut mixture, nutmeg powder, rose water, fig mixture and stir to combine well.
- Cook for a couple of minutes.
- In a bowl, mix rose jam, fennel powder and cardamom powder.
- Take a tray with a height of four inches, grease it with *desi ghee* and rose jam mixture.

- Sprinkle dried rose over it and pour nutty delight mixture into the tray.
- Level it well with a spatula.
- On the top side of nutty delight, again grease some *desi ghee* and a thin layer of rose jam mixture generously sprinkle with dried rose petals and allow it to get set.
- Once set, spray *desi ghee* on knife and cut neatly into slabs.

Courtesy: Saffron Gourmet Food.



**TANDOORI CHICKEN**

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Chicken (whole): 2
- Hung yoghurt: 1 kg
- Kashmiri red chilli powder: 80 gm
- Salt to taste
- *Garam* masala: 15 gm
- Cumin powder: 5 gm
- Lemon juice: 5 ml

- Ginger garlic paste: 20 gm
- *Kebab* masala to taste

**METHOD**

- Marinate the chicken with salt, ginger garlic paste, red chilli powder, beaten curd, cumin powder, and *garam* masala.
- Keep aside for one

- hour.
- Place on seekh and cook till done.
- Take out the chicken from the seekh and sprinkle with *kebab* masala and lemon juice.
- Serve hot.

Courtesy: Zohab Ali Qureshi, Executive Chef, Cross Border Kitchens.

**COTTAGE CHEESE WALNUT CAPRESE TOAST**

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Walnuts, chopped: 1/2 cup
- Whole-grain toast: 4
- Cottage cheese: 1/3 cup
- Multi-coloured cherry tomatoes, halved: 1 cup
- Thinly-sliced basil: 1 tsp
- Freshly-ground black pepper to taste
- Balsamic syrup: 1 tsp

- degree C and arrange walnuts evenly on a small baking sheet.
- Bake for eight to 10 minutes.
- Check frequently until toasted.
- Spread cottage cheese evenly over each slice of toast.
- Layer with tomatoes, roasted walnuts, fresh basil, black pepper, and a drizzle of balsamic syrup.
- Serve and enjoy.

**METHOD**

- Pre-heat oven to 180

Courtesy: Chef Satyashachi Gorai.



**CHEESY VADA PAV**

**WHAT YOU NEED**

- Pav/bread: 2
- Butter: 2 tsp
- Paneer: 1/2 cup
- Potato: 1/8 cup
- Jeera powder: 1 tsp
- Britannia Cheese slice
- Salt to taste
- Chilli powder: 1 tsp
- Coriander powder: 1 tsp
- Chaat masala: 1

- tsp
- Green chilli: 1 tsp
- Fresh coriander: 1 tsp
- Oil for frying
- Besan
- Mint chutney
- Britannia cheese cubes

**METHOD**

- In a mixing bowl, add paneer, potato, all the powders, green chillies and coriander, and mix well.
- Place the cheese cubes inside the patty.

- In a bowl, add besan, all the powders to prepare the batter.
- Dip the patty in the batter. Then dip the patty in the oil and fry till it turns golden brown.
- Assemble the vada pav.
- On the bun, spread mint chutney, place the patty and then the cheese slice.
- Serve with ketchup/tomato sauce.

Courtesy: Britannia Cheese Starchef.



# MAXWELL CAREY OZ TO SERIES WIN



Glenn Maxwell and Alex Carey pose with Royal London ODI series trophy after the duo helped Australia win third game AP

**AP ■ MANCHESTER**  
Glenn Maxwell and Alex Carey struck centuries in a 212-run stand to help Australia reach a total target of 303 at Old Trafford with two balls remaining and secure a ODI series win over England. Mitchell Starc started the third and deciding game on Wednesday by taking wickets from the first two balls of the match, and ended it by sweeping a four for the winning runs under lights as the Australians consigned England to its first loss in a bilateral ODI series since 2015.

It was a record ODI chase at the Manchester venue — bettering England's 286-4 against New Zealand in 1986 in a 60-over match — and gave Australia a famous series win over the world champions to take back Down Under from their white-ball loss that included a 2-1 loss in a T20 series. Replying to 302-7, Australia slumped to 73-5 only for Carey

and Maxwell to produce Australia's highest sixth-wicket partnership in ODIs and turn the tide. While Carey was the steadier of the pair with his 106 off 114 balls, Maxwell delivered some trademark big hits — he had seven sixes all over the short boundary on one side of the ground — for his 90-ball 108. "Maxy is in the team to do a specific role, and that's to be able to take the game away from opposition but also be that guy to counterattack and swing momentum in changing runs," Australia captain Aaron Finch said. "What makes him so damaging is he can play all around the ground. I don't think there's many bowlers in the world that can trouble him when he is having one of those days. The way he navigated that innings and took it deeper and deeper... He did that perfectly."

Maxwell eventually fell with 15 balls left and Australia needed 14 off the last two overs. Carey couldn't see the tourists

home, either, departing for 106 to a fabulous diving catch by Mark Wood off the seventh-to-last ball. "It probably wasn't the ideal situation when I came in, but being the last batter, I suppose I had a bit of license to go for it right from the start," Maxwell told Sky Sports. "We thought if we could take it as deep as we could, myself and Alex, we might be a chance at the back end." Starc entered, with Australia needing 10 off the last over bowled by legspinner Adil Rashid, and smashed his first

ball down the ground for six. After two singles, Starc swept Rashid round the corner and the ball sped to the boundary rope, sealing a three-wicket win and sparking cheers from his teammates on the balcony. England captain Eoin Morgan said Australia were "too good for us," adding, "To lose two wickets for no runs and then post over 300 is a huge positive for us. I think Jonny Bairstow was outstanding today. Carey and Maxwell played outstandingly well."

Playing without Steve Smith for a third straight game this series after the star batsman failed to recover from a knock to the head, the Aussies looked in big trouble after Marcus Labuschagne's sloppy run-out left them five down, with just bowlers to follow Maxwell. "England will regret a no-ball by Archer — his first in ODI cricket — off which he had Carey caught at third man when on 9. Wicketkeeper Jos Buttler also dropped a tough chance off a no-ball by Maxwell when 44."

"Small opportunities that we might have taken advantage of might have changed the game," Morgan said, "but when you've been beaten by a better side, you have to put your hand up." "This was England's only series loss of its international summer — during which all of its games have been played in a bio-secure bubble without fans — after taking on the West Indies, Ireland, Pakistan and Australia in various formats." **Brief scores:** England 302/7 (Jonny Bairstow 112, Sam Billings 57; Adam Zampa 3/51) lose to Australia 305/7

## 36-hour quarantine for Eng, Aus players

**New Delhi:** The Indian Premier League franchises will be heaving a sigh of relief as all the 21 Australian and English players arriving to the UAE from the United Kingdom will have to undergo just 36 hours of quarantine instead of the earlier prescribed six days.

All the franchises which have English and Australian players arriving after the white ball series in the UK had appealed for reducing the quarantine period and the BCCI under Sourav Ganguly's leadership has been able to successfully sort the issue out with local authorities in the UAE. "Yes, I can confirm that all the English and Australian players have to now undergo 36-hour quarantine instead of six days. The matter has been sorted and most of the teams will now have their big stars available from the first game itself," a senior IPL functionary privy to development told PTI.

The likes of Steve Smith, David Warner, Jofra Archer, Jos Buttler will arrive in the UAE late on Thursday night (UAE time) and on arrival will undergo RT-PCR test for Covid-19.

"The BCCI did a great job in reducing the quarantine period to 36 hours. This means teams like Chennai Super Kings (Glenn Maxwell, Alex Carey, Tom Curran), Rajasthan Royals (Smith, Buttler, Archer) will have all their players available from their first game. Ditto for Kings XI Punjab that has Glenn Maxwell in its roster and Delhi Capitals that has Alex Carey," a franchise official said. **PTI**

(Glenn Maxwell 108, Alex Carey 106; Chris Woakes 2/46) by three wickets.

# MI will miss Malinga's experience: Rohit

**PTI ■ ABU DHABI**

Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma on Thursday conceded that "incomparable" Sri Lankan pace bowler Lasith Malinga, who has opted out of this year's IPL, will be severely missed by his defending champion team given his "unbelievable" past performances.

The 37-year-old Malinga, who has taken 170 scalps in his career, has pulled out citing personal reasons in a major blow to the four-time champions. "I don't think it is easy to come and fill his boots. He has been an exceptional player for Mumbai. I have said it many times, whenever we sort of find ourselves in trouble, Malinga was the one to bail us out from that," Rohit said in a pre-season online press conference.

"His experience will be missed, what he did with MI is unbelievable and it is unfortunate that he is not a part of the team this year."

"We have got likes — (James) Pattinson, Dhawal Kulkarni, Mohit Sharma and these are the names that we are looking to replace Malinga with. But obviously what Malinga did for Mumbai, it is not just comparable," he added.

Talking about his own role, Rohit said he will continue to open.

"I opened the entire tournament last year and I will continue to do that. Again I keep all the options open, whatever the team wants, happy to do that."

"Even when I play for India, message to all that correct recs to the management has always been the same 'do not close any doors' keep all the options open and I will do the same here as well," he said.

India's white-ball vice-captain said he will continue to be a part of the team's fortunes. "The challenge for us will be



to adapt to these conditions here which probably none of us are used to, because not a lot of cricketers from our group have

played here," Rohit said. "I think mentally it is about going out there and understanding what the pitch is doing, and based on that, you need to plan your game — whether it is your batting or bowling. So we have had a good chat around the group about that," he elaborated. Talking about the opening match against the Chennai Super Kings, he said Mumbai is ready for the challenge.

"CSK are probably one of the successful IPL teams and you can't take them for granted... They will come out all guns blazing. None of us have played cricket for months now, so obviously everybody wants to start on a high. "So, we will be expecting a great contest between the two and we need to focus on what we need to do as team and all our bases are covered," Rohit signed off.

## Need to be mindful of Hardik's workload: Jayawardene

**Abu Dhabi:** Monitoring comeback man Hardik Pandya's workload is paramount for Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene as he intends to grow a "few more finishers" for the upcoming edition of IPL.

Hardik will play his first game in a year on Saturday having undergone back surgery for stress fracture last year.

"Hardik is coming back from an injury. So we will have to be mindful of that but he is looking very good in the nets. Both the players (Pandya brothers) have been fantastic for MI over the last three or four years. It brings a lot of energy to the group, Jayawardene said during

MI's virtual media conference. The Sri Lankan legend was asked whether Hardik will again be assigned the finisher's job. "We have used him (Hardik) in different roles in the past and we will look into that. We will have quite a number of other players who can fit into that role as well, so whenever the opportunity is there we ask anyone to finish the game off," said the former Sri Lanka captain.

"It doesn't just fall on Hardik but it is one of his responsibilities, so we want to try and challenge players in different ways in this camp, so we will continue to do that," he said. **PTI**

## Nitish hopes to learn from Morgan's leadership qualities

**PTI ■ ABU DHABI**

Kolkata Knight Riders left-arm spinner Nitish Rana is expected to play alongside Eoin Morgan and hopes that he will imbibe some of reigning World Cup-winning skipper's leadership qualities. "The England limited-overs skipper was bought at the auction for ₹5.25 crore as he's set to reunite with the franchise after his stint from 2011-2013.

The 34-year-old will be joining the side after leading England to their maiden World Cup glory in 2019 and Rana, who led Delhi to a domestic level, is excited. "I hope I also have that sort of leadership quality so that it helps my domestic team. I grow as a player," Rana said in a media interaction.

limited spin resources in Sunil Narine and Kuldeep Yadav. Rana, who bowls part-time off-spin, is also looking forward to get some more overs under his belt this time. "Bowling is not a new thing to me. I've been bowling in domestic cricket. It's good that spinners will get an advantage here so that I also will get some grip. I've improved as a player and a bowler. Hope I get more overs and help the team."

The left-hander said he does not have a fixed batting slot and is ready to serve the team at any position. "I will be in the team demand. I don't have a fixed batting slot. I'm available to serve the team at any spot."

Having served injury lay-offs respectively, the 2018 U-19 World Cup winning duo of Kamlesh Nagarkoti and Shivam Mavi are back in full throttle. "Nagarkoti was unfortunate to be injured for two years. He's back strong. But this time, both of them are back in full rhythm and clocking 140kph plus consistently. It will be challenging for any batsman. I hope they will do well," he added.

# Virat not fazed by empty stands at IPL

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli on Thursday said his teammates have become "acceptive" to the IPL bio-bubble and there is "desperation" for a change of environment as they approach the tournament proper from September 19.

RCB landed in Dubai on August 21 and have been training for more than two weeks, including some intra-squad practice games. "To be honest we have become more acceptive of the situation around us. Acceptance is the biggest change I have experienced (since I am here)," said Kohli in a virtual media conference organised to honour citizens who are working in tandem with RCB to ensure his smooth return to competitive action after missing the entire England ODI

for the first time, we discussed about appreciating the things we have and the situation. All of us have become very relaxed in that environment.

It will be the first time that IPL matches will be held in the absence of a packed crowd but Kohli said it is the need of the hour.

"All of us have thought about it (initially) and it would be a strange feeling and I won't deny that. But the feeling has changed little bit after the training sessions and practice games," he said. "At the end of the day

you just need to understand why you started playing the game, you started playing for the love of it. Crowds are main part of the game but that is not what you play for.

"I can only say that our intensity levels will not drop. I can assure you. There is a larger reason why all this is happening."

Kohli was joined by teammates Parthiv Patel and the young Devdutt Padikal in the interaction. "It has sunk in (staying in bio-bubble). We did not put saliva on the bat during practice games and taking care of ourselves. It is very important to be safe,"

## RCB to honour Covid heroes by wearing tribute jersey

**New Delhi:** Royal Challengers Bangalore players will sport their jerseys with the "My COVID Heroes" written on them all through the IPL, to pay tribute to all those on the frontline in the battle against the pandemic.

The slogan honouring the "COVID Heroes" will be printed on the back of the playing as well as the training jerseys, the team announced on Thursday. **PNS**

Honestly, it is my third year with the team, I have never seen this kind of environment before in my career. Everyone is smiling and that is what is important," he added.

# CA working in tandem with Royals over Smith's concussion

**PTI ■ DUBAI**

Cricknet Australia on Thursday revealed that Steve Smith is following "concussion protocols" which are crucial for his return to cricket in the IPL and asserted that it is "not willing" to compromise with the fitness of the Rajasthan Royals skipper. "CA said it is working in tandem with RR to ensure his smooth return to competitive action after missing the entire England ODI series due to the concussion suffered during training.

Cricknet Australia has strict protocols when it comes to head impacts and concussions and, as we've seen over the last 12 months, we're not willing to compromise on those," CA's head of sports science Alex Kountouris said in a statement. "Steve is making progress and working with our medical team through the concussion protocols required to return to play," he added.

Smith was hit on the head during a net session prior to the first ODI in Manchester and since then entered the field but not enough to play a competitive cricket.

Kountouris said the franchise and CA will be working together to monitor Smith's fitness upon his arrival in the UAE. Smith had also endured a concussion during last year's Ashes game at the Lord's and subsequently missed a Test match.



Rafael Nadal returns the ball to Pablo Carreno Busta during their second round match, at the Italian Open tournament AP

# Messi nets 2 in friendly win

**AP ■ BARCELONA**

Lionel Messi scored his first goals of Barcelona's pre-season as coach Ronald Koeman left Luis Suarez and Arturo Vidal off his team for a second friendly match.

Messi netted two goals and set up one more in a 3-1 victory over second-tier Girona, Barcelona's second training match since Koeman took over as coach. The goals were also Messi's first since his failed attempt to leave the club this offseason. Barcelona posted a photo on Twitter of Messi and Koeman clapping hands when the star forward was substituted along with most of his teammates with half an hour to go. It

seemed meant to deliver a message of unity between the player and manager amid one of the most tumultuous periods in the club's recent history. Girona offered little resistance to Barcelona's attack, formed by new signing Francisco Trincao, Philippe Coutinho, Antoine Griezmann and Messi. Messi's perfectly placed pass sent Trincao clear for the Portugal forward to square the ball to Coutinho, who only had time to scoop in the 20th-minute opener. Messi doubled the lead in the 45th with a shot from outside the area that went in off the upright. Samuel Saiz got Girona back on the scoreboard after half-time before Messi got his brace with a shot that took a deflection off a defender to fool the Girona goalkeeper.



Liverpool edged closer to landing the services of their coveted asset as Bayern Munich officials on Thursday said the club has agreed a transfer for Spain midfielder Thiago Alcantara. Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick praised Thiago while confirming he has bid goodbye FC Bayern/Twitter

# Draxler wins for PSG at the death

**AP ■ PARIS**

Julian Draxler's header deep into stoppage time gave Paris Saint-Germain a 1-0 home win against Metz and spared the defending champion a fourth straight match without scoring.

After losing the Champions League final 1-0 to Bayern Munich last month, PSG opened its league campaign with a 1-0 defeat at Lens followed by a 1-0 loss at home to Marseille on Sunday in which three PSG players were sent off.

PSG finished this game with nine men after center half Abdou Diallo was red carded for a second yellow midway through the second half and left back Juan Bernat limped off injured near the end.

After missing a host of chances, another embarrassing setback looked likely for PSG until Metz goalkeeper Alexandre Oukidja failed to properly clear Angel Di Maria's cross from the left.



The opportunist Draxler headed home in the 93rd minute to save coach Thomas Tuchel from more pressure. "We had chances to score in the first

## SINGLES

### INDIA DROP TO 101 IN FIFA RANKINGS

**ZURICH:** The Indian men's football team have dropped by one place and are placed at the 101st position in the latest FIFA rankings. India has 1187 points and have not lost or gained any since the last update which took place in July. Meanwhile, Belgium remain at the summit ahead of France and Brazil, while England continued to occupy fourth place. Portugal (5th-2) have moved into the top five thanks to victories over Croatia (8th-2) and Sweden (18th-1).

### LEEDS, SOUTHAMPTON ELIMINATED IN CUP

**LONDON:** Premier League teams Leeds and Southampton lost to lower-tier opposition in the second round of the League Cup. After a second-round Leeds team lost a penalty shootout 9-8 to third-tier Hull after a 1-1 draw in regulation, Southampton fielded a full-strength lineup but still lost 2-0 at home to second-tier Brentford. Everton passed fourth-tier Salford 3-0 thanks to goals by Michael Keane, Gylfi Sigurdsson and Mose Keane, while Aleksandar Mitrovic scored Fulham's goal in a 1-0 win in Ipswich.

### FANS BARRED FROM BUNDESLIGA OPENER

**MUNICH:** Fans will not be allowed into the stadium when Bayern Munich hosts the opening game of the Bundesliga season because of a local spike in coronavirus cases, the mayor of Munich said on Thursday. But games in other cities scheduled to proceed with fans on Saturday and Sunday.

### HARIKRISHNA SLIPS WITH 2 LOSSES

**CHENNAI:** Indian Grandmaster P Harikrishna slipped to fifth spot from a share of lead after a win-less day at the Saint Louis Rapid and Blitz online chess tournament, where he lost to Ian Nepomniachtch and world number one Magnus Carlsen. Harikrishna, who shared the lead with Lev Aronian after three rounds, lost the fourth round of the Rapid event to Nepomniachtch, then drew with Armenian Aronian before losing the sixth to Carlsen.

### BAIRSTOW ENTERS TOP-10 IN ODI RANKINGS

**DUBAI:** Englishman Jonny Bairstow broke into the top-10 following a string of good performances against Australia. Bairstow topped the series aggregate with 196 runs to re-enter the top 10. The previous best for him was ninth position in October 2018. **Agencies**