

**WORLD 6**  
WOMAN WITH KNIFE  
SHOT DEAD IN WEST BANK

**MONEY 7**  
CAIT ASKS GOYAL TO DIRECT CCI  
PROBE INTO AMAZON, FLIPKART

**SPORT 8**  
BARBORA WINS  
FRENCH OPEN TITLE

CHANDIGARH, SUNDAY JUNE 13, 2021; PAGES 8-4 ₹3

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## 'One earth, one health' united bid: Modi to G7

PM calls for equitable distribution of resources to fight Covid; US for G7 efforts to compete with China on developing world infra outreach

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the world battles the Covid-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday called for "One Earth, One Health," in apparent reference to collective effort to meet the challenge and equitable distribution of resources. He made this appeal while participating in the virtual ongoing G-7 summit in United Kingdom.

With the world now urgently needing vaccine to combat the pandemic, French President Emmanuel Macron favoured unhindered raw material supplies to countries like India to produce vaccine in large numbers, sources said.

Chancellor Angela Merkel specifically referred to PM's mantra and conveyed strong support, news agency ANI quoted Gol sources as saying. Australian PM Scott Morrison referred to his discussions with PM Modi earlier about TRIPS waiver and conveyed strong support of Australia.

Modi also spoke on ways to come out of the pandemic at the earliest. He addressed the



outreach session on Saturday and will speak again on Sunday morning.

He was invited to attend the summit by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Given the situation at home, Modi opted to participate in the prestigious meet virtually.

Modi had taken part in this event in 2019 when France chaired the G-7. India participated then as a "Goodwill Partner" and Modi participated in the sessions on "Climate, Biodiversity and Oceans" and "Digital Transformation".

During the ongoing summit at Cromwell, Modi will virtually take part in three sessions

on the themes "Building Back Stronger", "Building Back Together" and "Building Back Greener".

Meanwhile, according to news agency AP, the United States plans to push democratic allies to publicly call out China for forced labour practices as the Group of Seven leaders gathered at a summit where they will also unveil an infrastructure plan meant to compete with Beijing's efforts in the developing world.

The provocative proposal is part of President Joe Biden's escalating campaign to get fellow democratic leaders to present a more unified front to compete economically with China in the century ahead, according to two senior administration officials who briefed reporters on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to discuss the plans for the seaside summit publicly.

The officials said Biden wanted G-7 leaders to speak out in a single voice against forced labour practices targeting Uyghur Muslims and other ethnic minorities. Biden hopes the denunciation will be part of

the joint communique released at the summit's end, but some European allies have been reluctant to so forcefully split with Beijing. It may not be clear until the three-day summit ends on Sunday whether the leaders will take that step.

The wealthy nations' leaders were all smiles and unity as they were welcomed to the summit on Friday by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on the freshly raked sand of Carbis Bay in southwest England for their first gathering since 2019.

Last year's gathering was cancelled because of Covid-19, and recovery from the pandemic is dominating this year's discussions, with members of the wealthy democracies' club expected to commit to sharing at least 1 billion vaccine shots with struggling countries.

China also loomed large over the meeting on the craggy coast of Cornwall. Biden's proposed critique of China's labour practices was to be raised as the allies unveil an infrastructure proposal dubbed "Build Back Better for the World," a name that echoes the slogan of Biden's poll campaign.

## PIO journalist wins Pulitzer for exposing China's vast infra for detaining Muslims

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Megha Rajagopalan, an Indian-origin journalist, along with two contributors has won the Pulitzer Prize for innovative investigative reports that exposed a vast infrastructure of prisons and mass internment camps secretly built by China for detaining hundreds of thousands of Muslims in its restive Xinjiang region.

Rajagopalan from BuzzFeed News is among two Indian-origin journalists who won the US' top journalism award on Friday.

Tampa Bay Times' Neil Bedi won for local reporting. Bedi along with Kathleen McGrory has been awarded the prize for the series exposing a Sheriff's Office initiative that used computer modelling to identify people believed to be future crime suspects.

About 1,000 people were monitored under the programme, including children. Bedi is an investigative reporter for the Tampa Bay Times.

"What Kathleen and Neil unearthed in Pasco County has had a profound impact on the community," said Mark Katches, Times executive editor. "This is what the best investigative journalism can do and why it is so essential."

Rajagopalan's Xinjiang series won the Pulitzer Prize in the International category.

## No GST on key drugs for Covid, black fungus

### Tax rates on 14 Covid relief items slashed from 12% to 5%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has been waived for two critical drugs against Covid-19 and black fungus Tocilizumab and Amphotericin B. Tax rates have been reduced to 5 per cent on 14 major pandemic relief goods, including testing kits and hand sanitisers, from prevailing rates in the range of 12 per cent and 18 per cent.

The 44th GST Council meeting on Saturday also decided to slash tax rates on medicines and equipment used for the treatment of Covid-19. A notification to this effect will be issued within a day or two. The 5 per cent GST levied on vaccines was left unchanged, following the recent changes in the country's vaccine procurement strategy that puts the Union government in charge of augmenting supplies.

The reduced rates, which Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj said were aimed at providing some succour to the people amid the pandemic, will remain effective till September 30, but could be extended fur-

Medicine and equipment's used in Covid-19 treatment	Existing GST rate	Reduction in GST rate
Tocilizumab, Amphotericin B	5 %	Nil
Anti Coagulants like Heparin, Remdesivir (Any other drug recommended by the health ministry and department of pharma for covid treatment)	12 %	5 %
Medical Grade Oxygen, Oxygen Concentrator/ Generator including personal imports, Ventilators, Ventilator Masks/Canula/Helmet, BiPAP Machine, High flow nasal canula (HFNC) device	12 %	5 %
COVID testing kits, Specified Inflammatory Diagnostic Kits namely D-Dimer, IL-6 and LDH	12 %	5 %
Hand Sanitiser, Temperature check equipment, Gas/Electric furnaces for crematorium including their installation	18 %	5 %
Pulse Oximeters including personal imports,	12 %	5 %
Ambulances	28 %	12 %

ther based on later assessments. The decision to slash tax rates was based on a recommendation of a Group of Ministers, headed by Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, and would remain effective till September 30, 2021.

The GST rate on COVID-19 drug Tocilizumab and black fungus medicine Amphotericin B will be reduced to nil from the existing 5 per cent. The

GST rate on Remdesivir and anticoagulants like Heparin is lowered from 12 per cent to 5 per cent.

The GST rate on ambulances has been cut to 12 per cent from 28 per cent. Tax on medical grade oxygen, oxygen concentrator (including personal imports), ventilators, BiPAP machines and high flow nasal cannula (HFNC) devices has been cut to 5 per cent from 12 per cent.

## CAPSULE

### TERRORISTS KILL 2 COPS, 2 CIVILIANS IN SOPORE

**Jammu:** Two policemen and an equal number of civilians were killed while three cops and another civilian received critical injuries in a daring strike by a group of three motorcycle borne terrorists in the Arampora area of Sopore town of North Kashmir's Baramulla district on Saturday. According to police, two local and one foreign terrorist belonging to the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba terrorist outfit were suspected to be behind the attack.

### 5 SHOWROOMS DAMAGED IN FIRE AT DELHI MARKET

**New Delhi:** Five showrooms were damaged in a fire that broke out in a market area here, officials said, adding no injuries were reported.

### AIMPLB MOVES HC OVER DEMOLITION OF MASJID

**Lucknow:** The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has moved the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court over the demolition of Masjid in Barabanki, the advocate for the board said.

## Pvt hospitals used 17% of 1.85 cr jab doses in May: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

At a time when the people, at least in the urban areas are hankering for the Covid-19 vaccines to protect themselves from deadly virus, Government data shows that only 17 per cent of the 1.85 crore doses were utilised by private hospitals last month, leaving a massive stock unused.

As per the Union Health Ministry statement issued earlier this month, a total of 7.4 crore doses were made available across the country in May, out of which 1.85 crore doses were earmarked for private hospitals. However, the Government data showed that only 22 lakh doses were utilised.

Experts feel that the huge stock lying with the private hospitals could be due to the high prices of vaccinations

Covid-19 IN INDIA	
TOTAL CASES:	2,94,24,006 (+65,455)
DEATHS:	3,70,168 (+3,061)
RECOVERED:	2,80,15,044 (+1,11,734)
ACTIVE:	10,27,271
MAHA:	58,98,550 (+10,697)
K'TAKA:	27,57,324 (+9,785)
KERALA:	26,86,630 (+13,832)
TN:	23,39,705 (+15,108)
DELHI:	14,30,884 (+213)

and vaccine hesitancy.

## SAD, BSP reignite ties to fight Punjab Assembly elections

### BSP to contest 20 of 117 seats

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Sand Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) on Saturday announced an alliance to contest the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections together. An announcement was made jointly by SAD President Sukhbir Badal and BSP national General Secretary Satish Chandra Mishra at SAD head office in Chandigarh.

The SAD-BSP had entered into an alliance long back for the 1996 Lok Sabha polls and won 11 out of 13 seats in Punjab.

Terming the alliance as historic, the SAD chief Sukhbir Badal said it is not just limited to the 2022 Assembly elections, but would continue in future also. Both the SAD and the BSP have the same ideology and have always worked for the welfare of the farmers, poor and labourers.

Badal announced that BSP

would contest 20 out of the 117 seats under its alliance with the SAD, including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha region. The seats are -- Kartarpur, Jalandhar West, Jalandhar North, Phagwara, Nawanshahr, Hoshiarpur City, Tanda, Dasuya, Chamkaur Sahib, Bassi Pathana, Mehal Kalan, Ludhiana North, Sujanpur, Boha, Pathankot, Anandpur Sahib, Mohali, Amritsar North, Amritsar Central and Payal.

"A coordination committee of leaders from both the parties would be formed soon to ensure seamless working in all the constituencies," he added.

Mishra said BSP supremo Mayawati has approved the alliance, and added that both the parties would strive to form the next Government in Punjab under the leadership of Sukhbir Badal. The BSP General Secretary appealed to the Dalits and disadvantaged sections of the society to support the alliance wholeheartedly. He also said that Mayawati



SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal felicitates BSP secretary general Satish Chandra Mishra during a joint Press conference at the SAD head office in Chandigarh on Saturday.

wanted to come and announce the alliance herself, but was not able to make it due to the Covid restrictions. Mishra also visit-

ed five-time Chief Minister and SAD patron Parkash Singh Badal along with BSP Punjab coordinator Randhir Singh

Beniwal and Punjab BSP chief Jasbir Singh Garhi.

He also alleged that the Congress Government in Punjab is discriminating against Dalits by not releasing funds reserved for Scheduled Castes, deleting lakhs of old-age pension cards, not filling SC and OBC vacancies, not releasing SC scholarship fee to students and not implementing the 'Shagun' scheme and the houses for houseless' scheme. He also criticised the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for praising the contentious farm laws and for going back on its stand due to pressure from the farmers.

Punjab has 31 per cent Dalit votes which the new alliance is looking at. The concentration of these votes is mainly on 23 seats in the Doaba region. Earlier, the BJP used to contest 23 seats in Punjab in alliance with the SAD. The SAD-BJP alliance had come to power in 2007 before being ousted by Congress in 2017. Punjab is scheduled to go to the polls in February-March 2022.

Detailed report on Page 3

## BJP seeks Sonia, Rahul's replies on Digvijaya's 'Art 370 rethink' remark

### Cong 1st love is Pak, both share same views on Kashmir: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the controversy over the Congress "Clubhouse" chat of former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, the BJP on Saturday said the Congress' first love is Pakistan and "both share same views on Kashmir".

The BJP demanded answers from Congress leaders Sonia and Rahul Gandhi on Singh's comment on the restoration of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.



Singh conveyed Rahul's message to Pakistan. The Congress will help Pakistan in grabbing Kashmir.

Lashing out at the Congress, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said the Congress should change its name from Indian National Congress to Anti-national Congress which he alleged "not only siding with Pakistan but also with China to show India down."

"What do Sonia and Rahul think about Digvijaya's Clubhouse statement? Is this Congress' stand too? We

demand Rahul to hold a Press conference and clarify," Patra said.

He alleged the Congress and Pakistan are in the same page on the Kashmir issue and article 370.

"Today an important topic going on in TV channels is 'Clubhouse'. We all have seen through TV channels how the veteran leader of the clubhouse -- Singh is spewing venom against India outside and how he is agreeing with Pakistan's demands. This is the same Singh, who had called the Pulwama attack just an accident, he had called the 26/11 attack a conspiracy of RSS and also tried to give clean chit to Pakistan at that time," said Patra.

As the BJP attacked him, Singh posted a tweet in Hindi in an apparent jibe at the ruling party.

"This bunch of illiterate people cannot probably differentiate between 'shall' and 'consider'," he said.

## Pilot lands in Delhi, Cong says all well

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Disgruntled Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Saturday met Rajasthan incharge Ajay Maken and AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal in an effort to iron out the differences between him and the party for over a year now against Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

While Pilot has remained tightlipped since he landed in Delhi on Friday evening, Maken ruled out any differences and that both have been talking and meeting regularly. "I am speaking to Pilotji on a regular basis. Had he been angry, he would not be speaking to me," Maken, a former Union Minister, said.

Maken mentioned that vacant positions in the Rajasthan Cabinet, boards and commissions would be filled soon and leaders of the party



are engaged in resolving the issues.

### Wider anti-BJP alliance must: NCP

**Mumbai:** A day after election strategist Prashant Kishor met NCP chief Sharad Pawar, a spokesperson of the party on Saturday said there is a need to have a "wider alliance" of political parties against the ruling BJP ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

## None from outside Saudi can perform Haj this season

AP ■ DUBAI

Saudi Arabia announced on Saturday this year's Haj pilgrimage will be limited to no more than 60,000 people, all of them from within the kingdom, due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The announcement by the kingdom comes after it ran an incredibly pared-down pilgrimage last year over the virus, but still allowed a small number of the faithful to take part in the annual ceremony.

A statement on the state-run Saudi Press Agency quoted the kingdom's Haj and Umrah Ministry making the announcement. It said this year's Haj, which will begin in mid-July, will be limited to those ages 18 to 65. Those taking part must be vaccinated as well, the ministry said.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is honoured to host pilgrims every year, con-



firms that this arrangement comes out of its constant concern for the health, safety and security of pilgrims as well as the safety of their countries," the statement said.

In last year's Haj, as few as 1,000 people already residing in Saudi Arabia were selected to take part in the Haj. Two-thirds were foreign residents from among the 160 different nationalities that would have normally been represented at the Haj.

## JDU looks for respectable share for it in Modi Cabinet

PNS ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

Amid the buzz of a Cabinet reshuffle in the Narendra Modi Government, the Janata Dal(U), which is part of the NDA at Centre and in the Bihar Government, on Saturday expected a "respectable" share in the Union Council of Ministers.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) had opted out from a Cabinet berth when the NDA retained power in 2019.

"We are a part of the NDA... All constituents deserve a respectable share (in the Modi Government)," JD(U) chief RCP Singh told the media in Patna on Saturday.

After the exit of 18 MP-strong Shiv Sena, JD(U) has become the largest of BJP's allies in Parliament — 5 in the the Rajya Sabha, and 16 in the Lok Sabha.

# 'Our responsibility was to land right with the sequel'

JD METHEJIA, producer of Sony SAB TV's *Wagle Ki Duniya* – Nayi Peedhi, Naye Kisse, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA how this series is different from the original, the challenge he is facing and why he chose the same starcast

**I understand that you are reading a script. Is it for a new project?**

No-no. *Wagle Ki Duniya- Nayi Peedhi, Naye Kisse* requires that we come up with a new storyline every day. We have tried to ensure that none of the stories in the series go beyond one episode. Out of the 78 episodes that have aired till now, there have been only a couple that have run into the second part. At the end of the day the creative writer has to send the storyline for the next day. That is what keeps me busy in the evenings.

**What are the challenges you are facing having to shoot outside of Mumbai?**

*Wagle...* as a show is all about daily trials and tribulations of the common man, we never expected to be at the resort, where we are shooting, for more than 15-29 days; it has now been 49 days. Then there is the whole thing of creating daily stories. We have based our show on real-life issues of the common man. To put out stories every day is not an easy task. Also, it is not possible for a middle-class family to afford to stay in the resort for such a long time. We have to work around these constraints and bring out the essence of the show that is all about morals, values, emotions and principles.

**What makes *Wagle Ki Duniya* so popular?**

The series is all about the common man and his trials and travails. People sitting at home identify with what is happening in *Wagle's* world. People find a connection with the actors and feel that what the characters are going through in reel life is something that they face everyday – problems at the workplace, kids have problems at home and the wife having to deal with household issues. These are small things but it makes what we call life – a common man's life. The show is about how a middle-class man thinks and people find a connection with the thinking that has been shown.

**How is this series different from the 1988-90 show?**

Here, the series takes a leap. While some of the cast is the same, there are new characters. This adds a new dimension to the show while keeping the essence of the original show that had 18 episodes. We wanted to showcase *Wagle's duniya* in the new setting. I call this show TV-web – a combination of TV show and web series.

**How did the idea to revisit the show come up?**

A few of us were working for a new show for the channel keeping in mind middle and higher middle class. Neeraj Vyas, business head of SAB TV called me at night and asked me what I thought of *Wagle Ki Duniya* of 1988. I told him it is an excellent idea. The next morning, I called Usha Laxman. She told me that she was about to call me with regard to 18 episodes that she had. I told her that why not do new episodes. She asked how we would do it without RK Laxman. I told her that we will begin with zero.

**Why choose the same cast?**

There was no way that we could have not taken Anjan Srivastav and Bharti Achrekar; they are the original *Wagles*. There was no reason not to take them. Since there is a leap, we couldn't take Dushyant Nagpal instead opted for two kids – Chinmayee Salvi and Sheehan Kapahi. Then there is Sumeet Raghavan; we wanted him to be there; then there is Pariva Pranati.

**Were there any apprehensions since the series takes a leap and is set in present times?**

No, we had no apprehensions. We have a wonderful team and we knew that this new series would work as well. We have worked on so many shows that talk about middle-class issues, we knew people would love this too. The only thing that we had to do was to act responsibly. The original show was directed by Kundan Shah; we had to land right.

**You are an actor. How did you get into production and directing?**

It was always on the cards. I am an MBA and when I left my job, I gave myself time as an actor. I had written a letter to myself where I had planned my life. Production and directing was already there on the cards. I am glad that I have managed to remain true to the letter. I am glad that I formed Hats Off Productions with my friend and now business partner, Aatish Kapadia.



## PLAN YOUR STAY AT HOME SUNDAY

### SWEET MOMENTS

Coffee mousse without cream, as good as that of the bar. Soft, creamy and tasty. The mousse coffee without cream is a pudding perfect for those little pauses in mid-afternoon or a cold dessert after lunch on a stay at home Sunday. Easy to make, ready in less than five minutes and as good as that of the bar. Do not you believe it? Let us move on to the recipe immediately.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 200 ml of soluble iced coffee
  - 100 ml of cold water
  - 200 ml of semi-skimmed milk
  - 5 teaspoons of sugar
  - Coffee

**METHOD**

Prepare the coffee and pour it into a bowl. Add sugar and water, mix. Put the mixture in the freezer to cool, remember that it must be well frozen.

Pour the cold milk into a bowl, start mixing, with the help of an electric whisk, until you get a very frothy mixture. Take the coffee from the fridge, shake it hard to make it super creamy. Add the frothy coffee to the frothed milk. Keep stirring for a few minutes until everything is smooth. Store the coffee cream in a container and place it in the freezer to freeze.

### GO FOR NO-BAKE TART

The no-bake tart with berries is the ideal dessert for a tasty snack, to end the meal with a sweet flavor and to surprise someone on the most refined occasions. Find out how to prepare a no-bake tart, and make a good impression in no time with your guests.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 500 gram wild berries
  - 220 gram chocolate biscuit
  - 150 gram white chocolate
  - 100 gram butter
  - 200 ml fresh cream
  - 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
  - 2 tablespoons powdered sugar

**METHOD**

Crumble 220 g of chocolate biscuits, put them in the mixer, blend them and pour 100 g of melted butter over a very low heat. Blend for a few seconds until you get a homogeneous mixture (if you do not have the mixer on hand, collect the cookies in a paper bag and pound them with a meat mallet). Now, line a mold with baking paper, pour the biscuit and butter mixture, compact it with the back of a spoon to cover the bottom and part of the walls. Put everything in the freezer,



and prepare the cream for the filling. Chop 150 g of white chocolate, melt it in a double boiler, turn off and let it cool. Whip 200 ml of fresh cream with a spoon full of icing sugar. Then add the melted chocolate cream with soft movements from the bottom up. Pour the white chocolate mousse into the chocolate chip cookie shell. Spread it with a spatula; place the washed berries on top. Then put the no-bake tart with berries in the fridge for at least a couple of hours, so that the chocolate mousse is slightly firmer. When serving, distribute the fruit with the remaining icing sugar. — By Girish Chandra, Beverage Training Manager, Lavazza India

## TELLY TALE

### SHOCKING TWIST

Trouble knocks at the doorsteps of Garima and Susheela again, with their father getting missing suspiciously. Sony SAB's show *Kaatelal & Sons* is gearing towards a shocking twist where Garima and Susheela's Mama would kidnap Dharampal so that the girls' dream to open their salon comes to a halt again. The audience would see how the girls will put their entire energy to find their father in the upcoming episodes.

Garima and Susheela try their best to seal the deal for their salon, but the problems are not coming to an end. Both the sisters had to return before signing the agreement as they are informed that their father is missing. Both begin the investigation and start questioning everyone before finding out



their Mama is involved in their father's kidnapping. They get furious and try to come up with a plan to save their father.

However, when Mama gets to know the girls have an idea about his mission, he plans a brutal attack on them.

Will Garima and Susheela find their father and how will they get out of this troubled situation?

Jiya Shankar who essays the role of Susheela said: "The upcoming track would be very interesting for the viewers to watch how Garima and I leave no stone unturned to find our father. We might fight with our parents, but we put our entire energy to get them out of those situations whenever they are in difficult situations, and that's what makes a father and a daughter relationship so special."

Megha Chakraborty who essays the role of Garima said: "The upcoming track has all the right ingredients to make you excited as well as anxious. Susheela and I do everything possible to find our kidnapped father in a terrific sequence of events that promise to be full of excitement."

### TWENTY YEARS OF GADAR AND LAGAAN



20 years ago, two truly path-breaking films of Indian Cinema, *Lagaan* and *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*, released at the box office on the same day. 20 years later, the viewers will witness that historic moment again as Zee Bollywood celebrates the glorious two decades of Ashutosh Gowariker's spirited *Lagaan* and Anil Sharma's fearless *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha*, films that created a legacy with their record-breaking footfalls. *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* was the first movie produced by Zee Studios. These movies shaped the face of Indian cinema with their unabashed stories, iconic characters, remarkable music and unmatched dialogues. These movies have been proudly passed down generations as two of the most exceptional entertainers of all times. Along with Zee Bollywood, Zee Hindi movie cluster has come together to relive the nostalgia of these two epic movies. On June 15, *Gadar: Ek Prem Katha* will simulcast on

Zee Bollywood and Zee Cinema HD at 7:30 pm. On the same day, *Lagaan* will simulcast on Zee Bollywood and Pictures HD at 11 am. Additionally, the documentary *Chale Chalo* (Making of *Lagaan*) will be showcased on Explorer HD and Zee Classic, June 15 at 2 pm and 5 pm respectively.

*Lagaan* was a movie that made its mark in not just Hindi Cinema, but World Cinema too. The National Award-winning documentary *Chale Chalo* highlights the making of this masterpiece, showing us the struggle and belief that went behind Ashutosh Gowariker's dream project. The Oscar-nominated, *Lagaan*, is an imposing success story laced with the director's unwavering vision and Aamir Khan's faith. Made on a then-unprecedented budget of approximately 25 crores, *Lagaan* is a story of perseverance and inspiration which also reflects through its team's conviction. The movie production went through multiple challenges like gathering a crowd of 10 thousand local people for the cricket match sequence, shooting under severe weather conditions, limited supply of water-electricity, transforming a building into a hotel in a small village in Gujarat for accommodation of the cast, A.K. Hangal braving his injury to finish shooting his part, and even Ashutosh Gowariker directing from a cot after suffering a slipped disc. All this brought out the warriors in each one who were part of the movie and pushed them forward with clear focus. A lot of such interesting tables will be unravelled in the documentary.

### RUN POOJA RUN



Zee TV's popular fiction show, *Kumkum Bhagya* has been an audience favourite courtesy its intriguing plot and the authentic portrayal of relatable characters like Abhi (Shabbir Ahluwalia), Pragya (Sriti Jha), Rhea (Pooja Banerjee), Ranbir (Krishna Kaul) and Prachi (Mugdha Chapekar). While the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown 2.0 continues, the whole wedding drama between Abhi and Tanu has kept the viewers at the edge of their seats. However, it looks like there are more interesting twists coming up with Ranbir and Prachi's wedding being finalised.

During the upcoming episodes, you will see Rhea dressing up as a bride for her wedding with Ranbir. Like every bride, she will dress up elegantly in a beautiful red *lehenga*. While

dressing up wasn't hard, Pooja found it difficult to run in a 25 kg *lehenga*. For a sequence, the actress had to run in her wedding outfit and seems like she was exhausted after the whole day of shoot. While, the team could have opted for cheat shots, Pooja wanted the sequence to look genuine and shot for it with full vigour and excitement.

Talking about the difficulties she faced, Pooja Banerjee who plays the role of Rhea in *Kumkum Bhagya* revealed: "For the wedding sequence, I had to dress up as a bride. While I was excited about wearing the designer red *lehenga*, getting into the dress and running in it was tough. To be honest, the outfit was very heavy, it was almost 25 kgs. On top of it, there was the wedding jewellery. In fact, it also took me nearly two to three hours every day to get in and out of the look. To climb up and down the stairs to go to the *Kumkum Bhagya* set and then having to run for several sequences was a task, but I wanted it to look real and hence, I gave my best. I feel all my hardwork was worth it and I have to say, I felt wonderful and pretty in the bridal outfit. The whole wedding sequence was fantastic to shoot, and I can't wait for our fans to see the twists and turns that will take place."

While Pooja seems very excited for the wedding sequence of her on screen character Rhea, will it be a happily ever after for Ranbir and Rhea? Or is there a new twist in the tale?

## WATCH OUT FOR

IMDb (www.imdb.com), the world's most popular and authoritative source for movie, TV and celebrity content, today unveiled the most popular Indian films and web series of the year so far. Rather than base its rankings on box office, small statistical samplings or reviews from professional critics, IMDb determines its list based on IMDbPro data on the page views of IMDb users in India. IMDb Most Popular Indian Movies and Shows of 2021, so far\*

**Master (streaming on Prime Video):** An alcoholic professor is sent to a juvenile school, where he clashes with a gangster who uses the school children for criminal activities.



**Aspirants (streaming on TVF):** It is the story of the journey of three UPSC (public service competitive exams in India) aspirants and their friendship against all odds.

**The White Tiger (streaming on Netflix):** An ambitious Indian driver uses his wit and cunning to escape from poverty and rise to the top. An epic journey based on the New York Times bestseller.



**Drishyam 2 (streaming on Prime Video):** A gripping tale of an investigation and a family which is threatened by it. Will Georgekutty be able to protect his family this time?

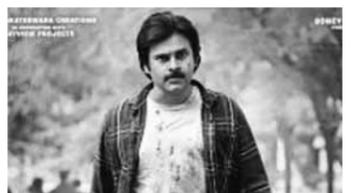


**November Story (streaming on Disney Plus Hotstar):** A celebrated crime novelist suffering from Alzheimer's is found at a murder scene with no memory of what happened. Now, it is up to his daughter to save him.



**Karnan (streaming on Prime Video):** Karnan, a fearless village youth, must fight for the rights of the conservative people of his village, due to the torture given by a police officer.

**Vakeel Saab (streaming on Prime Video):** Three girls find themselves accused of attempt to murder after escaping molestation. Their only hope is an alcoholic lawyer who agrees to take up the case.



**Maharani (streaming on Sony Liv):** A political drama set in Bihar of 1990's.

**Krack (streaming on Aha):** Krack is an action film which follows Veera Shankar, a hot headed police sergeant, who forms a vicious rivalry with notorious crime figure, Katari Krishna.

**The Great Indian Kitchen (streaming on Prime Video):** After marriage, a woman struggles to be the submissive wife that her husband and his family expect her to be. The story follows her journey, as she changes herself and, even more so, changes the household.



\*These 10 movies and web series released theatrically and/or online in India between January 1 and June 3, 2021 generated the most IMDb page views in India within a four-week post release window, based on IMDbPro data. All of the titles have an IMDb user rating of 7 or higher and are available to stream online, based on data from June 7, 2021. IMDb users can add these and other titles to their IMDb Watchlist at <https://www.imdb.com/watchlist>.

# New alliance partners SAD, BSP term their seat sharing as new beginning

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The political temperature in Punjab warmed up ahead of the 2022 Assembly polls with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) announcing the alliance almost 8 months before the polls on Saturday.

BSP chief Mayawati, who was not present in the official announcement, termed the alliance as a new political and social initiative which will usher in progress and prosperity in Punjab. SAD patron and five-time chief minister Parkash Singh Badal described the formation of the SAD-BSP alliance as "the beginning of a secular, federal democratic revolution in the state and the country for a total socio-economic and political revamp of

polity".

The BSP will fight 20 of the 117 Assembly seats in Punjab, while the rest will be contested by the SAD. After the announcement of the alliance, Badal congratulated Mayawati over the phone and invited her to visit Punjab. He also told her to contest from Punjab.

Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayawati appealed to the people of Punjab to support the "historic" alliance between the SAD and the BSP. "The alliance announced by SAD and BSP in Punjab today is a new political and social initiative, which will surely usher in a new era of much-awaited development, progress and prosperity of the people in the state. Hearty congratulations and best wishes to the people for this historic step," said



Mayawati in a tweet in Hindi. BSP supremo attacked the Congress-led government in

Punjab, alleging that every section of the society was "suffering" in the state. "Although

every section of the society in Punjab is suffering from poverty, corruption and unemploy-

ment, etc. under the Congress party's rule, it is the Dalits, farmers, youth and women who have been hit the most. It is very important for us to make this alliance a success," she said in another tweet.

In another tweet, Mayawati said, "This is an appeal to all the people of Punjab to support the historic alliance between Akali Dal and BSP and start working wholeheartedly to form the government of this alliance during the elections to be held early 2022."

Meanwhile, Akali stalwart and former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal said with this alliance, the process of justice and equality for the poor, the down trodden and the minorities will also get a boost. "In Punjab, the wheels of progress, prosperity and social

welfare which had been brought to a grinding halt in 2017 will start moving again with added momentum," said Badal in a statement here. Badal said, "The new development (alliance) will ensure welfare of all Punjabis, especially of down trodden and exploited segments of society including the farmers, the farm labour, the dalits, the unemployed youth, small and medium traders, entrepreneurs etc."

The Akali stalwart said that peace and communal harmony will continue to be top priority for the alliance.

"The alliance is a tribute to the composite vision of Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Ravidas and Bhagvan Balmiki and great saints and seers. That makes today the happiest day of my

long political career as it marks the triumph of the concept of "Sarv Saanjhivalta", "Sanman te Smajik Insaaf" (fraternity, equality and dignity) based on the ideal of "Sarbat da Bhala" (welfare of all)."

Badal recalled how during the governments he headed, special attention was paid to the fulfilment of the dream of social justice with the introduction of path breaking schemes for justice and social welfare.

"I urge both SAD and BSP leaders to work tirelessly and selflessly to begin a new era in Punjab and eventually in the country in which every citizen has access to basic necessities and comforts of life and create conditions in which every citizen can live in dignity and honour" said Badal.

## GST Council's GoM should stop acting like autocrat: Manpreet Badal

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Stating that the COVID-19 crisis is a once in a century calamity, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal on Saturday stated that the GST's Group of Ministers (GoM) should stop acting like a shahenshah of yesteryears and instead let compassion speak through its decisions.

Asserting that all COVID-related goods must be zero-rated during the pandemic, the Punjab Finance Minister, along with other Finance Ministers representing the Indian National Congress (INC), opposed the imposition of GST on COVID related

items at this time of a national crisis, and recorded their note of dissent. The other alternative is to charge 0.1 percent, which is well within the powers of the GST Council, and this measure should be in place till the pandemic is over.

Releasing his remarks and interventions made at the 44th meeting of the GST Council, the Punjab Finance Minister urged the ruling government to include representatives of the Congress in the Group of Ministers (GoM). "It is preposterous that the principal opposition party of India in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha has been excluded in the GoM," Manpreet

Badal said.

He regretted that the GoM is not acting with compassion, and it is parroting the Union Government, perhaps out of the fear that they may not be included from a future GoM. He also called upon the look at the entire GST issue holistically so that a due, considerate and humane approach is adopted to help ameliorate the sufferings of the people of India.

Manpreet reminded the GoM that health care services, including all recognized systems of medicine (Allopathy, Ayurveda, Unani, Homoeopathy, Yoga), are already exempt under GST. The supply of medicine that is

a part of the treatment package is also exempt since the entire transaction is considered a service.

He criticised the discussion for restricting GST on government hospitals versus private hospitals stating that both treat the people of India. The idea that we need GST registration and billing and later file returns are farcical. What would a consumer feel seeing GST reflected on an invoice, the Punjab Finance Minister asked?

Manpreet vehemently criticised the attempt to garner revenues from furnaces from crematoriums stating that this category should be even above

the exemption category. Is this how the Union Government wishes to collect revenues, he asked?

It may be recalled that the GoM was deliberating on granting a concession in the tax rate to furnaces from 18% to 12%. Similarly, the RT-PCR machine is already purchased at a concessional rate, and practically all states also regulate the price of a COVID test. Hence, the recommendation to retain a tax rate of 18 percent is senseless, he added.

The imposition of GST on Covid preventive materials, starting with GST on vaccines and items like masks, PPEs, hand sanitizers, Medical Grade

Oxygen, testing kits, ventilators, Bipap Machine, and pulse oximeters among others reflect an insensitivity and lack of compassion.

He cautioned that the attempt to pick and choose exemptions on the grounds of inverted duty structure or cheaper imports would end up destroying the very foundation of GST. Finally, the Punjab Finance Minister stated that COVID-19 related exemptions should not be over by August 31, 2021. Is Covid going to be over by then, he asked? We need to have a more realistic and reasonable time frame and one which is based on compassion, Manpreet added.

## Man, whose ID used to rent flat for slain gangsters' in Kolkata arrested by Punjab Police

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Police on Saturday arrested the Haryana-based man whose credentials and documents were used to hire a flat for the hideout of slain gangsters-turned-drug smugglers Jaipal Bhullar and Jaspreet Singh alias Jassi in Kolkata. The arrested person has been identified as Sumit Kumar, a resident of Meham in Haryana.

The development came three days after Jaipal Bhullar and Jaspreet Jassi were neutralised by the STF West Bengal Police, after they fired on the West Bengal Police party when they raided their flat in Kolkata.

ADGP Counter Intelligence and Organised Crime Control Unit (OCCU) Amit Prasad said that they have managed to nab Sumit, a close associate cum business partner of Bharat Kumar, who helped Jaipal Bhullar and Jassi in escaping from Morena, Gwalior and arranged hideout for them in Kolkata, after they killed two ASIs Bhagwan Singh and Dalwinderjit Singh of Jagraon Police at grain market, Jagraon on May 15.

Bharat was arrested with .30 bore pistol and Honda Accord car from near Shambhu Border in Rajpura area on June 9 and on his disclosures, Punjab Police gave information to the West Bengal Police that the gangsters duo, Jaipal and

The development came three days after Jaipal Bhullar and Jaspreet Jassi were neutralised by the STF West Bengal Police

Jassi, that they were holed up in a rented apartment in Kolkata.

The ADGP said that preliminary investigations had found that both Sumit Kumar and Bharat Kumar, who were business partners since 2015, were involved in illegal sale of fancy mobile numbers, including mobile numbers of foreign based telecoms, purchased from different countries and other states, and they used to sell them across Punjab, Haryana at exorbitant rates.

He said that Bharat was also found to be in possession of an official ID of Constable Amarjit Singh, which was being used to evade toll plazas while escaping from Gwalior. "Although, Bharat claimed that Constable Amarjit is his and Sumit's mutual friend, the Police are investigating why he was in possession of Amarjit's official ID and if the latter had any knowledge about his official ID being misused by Bharat," said ADGP Amit Prasad.

Meanwhile, further investigations are being carried out to investigate the role of Bharat and Sumit in criminal actions and activities.

## Haryana Govt asserts it aims to vaccinate each and every eligible beneficiary at the earliest

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Government aims to vaccinate each and every eligible beneficiary at the earliest and has formulated plans for the same, an official spokesperson of the Health Department asserted on Saturday.

He said the state has administered the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to 82 per cent of Health Care Workers (HCWs) and 82 per cent of Frontline Workers (FLWs) which is even higher than the national average of 81 per cent. On the status of vaccine administered to priority groups the spokesperson said that 2,15,077 HCWs have been administered the first dose while 1,36,945 HCWs have

been administered the second dose and 1,97,014 FLWs have been administered the first dose and 81,163 FLWs have been administered the second dose. Sharing information on vaccine administered to beneficiaries above 18 years of age, the spokesperson said that 49,23,914 beneficiaries have been administered the first dose of vaccine and 8,58,986 beneficiaries have been administered the second dose of the vaccine.

The spokesperson said the state has a high percentage of administration of first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to priority groups - HCWs and FLWs - while the percentage of administration of second dose of the vaccine for HCWs is 50 per cent and for FLWs it

is 37 per cent.

### 45 DEATHS, 426 NEW CASES IN HARYANA

Haryana on Saturday reported 45 Covid-related deaths taking the cumulative toll to 8,949 while 426 fresh infections pushed the total case count to 765,522. According to the health department's daily bulletin, the latest deaths include eight from Hisar, six from Panipat, five from Jind and four each from Sirsa, Jhajjar districts. Meanwhile, Hisar reported 40 new cases while 36 were from Sirsa, 34 from Fatehabad. The total active cases are 5186, the bulletin said. The total recoveries so far are 751,387 while the recovery rate is 98.15 per cent.

## 979 new cases, 56 Covid deaths in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Fifty six more people died from coronavirus in Punjab on Saturday as 979 fresh cases pushed the state's infection tally to 586,947, according to a medical bulletin. So far, the infection has killed 15,503 people in the State. Six deaths were reported from Amritsar, five each from Fazilka, Ferozepur, Gurudaspur, Patiala; four from Faridkot; three each from Bathinda, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and SAS Nagar in the past 24 hours. Amritsar reported 99 infections, followed by 92 in Ludhiana and 91 in Jalandhar. The number of active cases dropped to 14, 064 on Saturday. With 2,135 recoveries, the number of cured persons reached 5,57,380, as per the bulletin. There are 195 critical patients who are on ventilator support while 2,659 are on oxygen support. A total of 99,96,859 samples have been collected for testing so far in the state, it said.

### 3 DEATHS, 58 CASES IN CHANDIGARH

Chandigarh on Saturday reported 58 new Covid-19 cases, taking the infection tally to 61,056. Three more deaths were registered on the day, taking the toll to 789, a health bulletin from the administration said. The union territory has 540 active cases now. It showed 2,408 tests were conducted over the last 24 hours. The UT also recorded 79 recoveries, taking the number of cured people to 59,727. Moreover, 5518 more people were vaccinated on Saturday, taking the total count to 400,546.

## Capt attacks Sisodia on 'atrocious allegation' on school ranking

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Ridiculing the Delhi deputy RCM's atrocious allegation of a political conspiracy of the Centre and the Punjab government in the matter of school education ranking, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Saturday termed it a clear case of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) crying foul in the face of its imminent wipeout from Punjab in the 2022 Assembly polls.

Reacting to Manisha Sisodia's allegation of a 'secret pact' between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and him (Capt Amarinder), the Chief Minister said the AAP leadership was so obsessed with electoral politics that it saw poll conspiracies even in something as basic as school education.

"Come to Punjab and I will show you around our schools," said Capt Amarinder to Sisodia, adding that the revamp of the state's schools was an exercise undertaken by his government as a top priority, and the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 released by the Union Education Minister recently reflected the success of those efforts. "If you are really interested in improving the education system of Delhi, maybe you should do a jugalbandi with me, and I will teach you how to manage things better," the Chief Minister said, responding to Sisodia's charge of 'jugalbandi' between Modi and him (Capt).

From a ranking of 22 on the earlier index that was in place when he took over as Chief Minister, to Number 1 on PGI scale, Punjab's school education has undergone a massive transformation, said Capt Amarinder. "Your political dialogues cannot undermine this success," he said, terming Sisodia's comments as

an obvious case of "sour grapes" since NCR Delhi had scored a poor 6th ranking in the list.

Expressing shock at the AAP leader's shameful attempt to give a political colour to the excellent outcomes of the hard work and commitment of thousands of school teachers, administrators, education officials etc, Capt Amarinder said it was evident that Arvind Kejriwal's party was used to seeing everything from the telescope of politics.

The CM said his government had invested in the development of key sectors like education and health in a consistent manner over the past four years. As many as 14000 schools had been converted into smart schools, as part of a focused strategy, comprising launch of pre-primary education, best-in-class digital education infrastructure, innovative teaching methods, administrative reforms, transparency in recruitment and transfer of teachers, etc. Increase in government school enrolment and extraordinary improvement in results were a clear reflection of the success of these measures, he added.

Punjab has topped all the states and UTs by securing 929 marks out of 1000 in the 70 parameters laid down by the Union Government in the PGI ranking. Punjab got cent per cent points (150/150) in the domain of infrastructure and facilities, which included availability of classrooms, labs, toilets, drinking water, and libraries. Punjab has also performed very well in equity (228/230) and access (79/80) domains, comprising inclusion of children from weaker sections in the mainstream, appliances to the special children, enrolment ratio, retention rate, transmission rate and availability of schools.

## 1996 SLUM HOUSEHOLDS GET PROPRIETARY RIGHTS IN PUNJAB

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

To help slum dwellers have their own home, Punjab Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan on Saturday approved

granting proprietary rights to 1996 slum households in six districts under the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh's flagship slum development programme - 'Basera'.

The approval was given at the third meeting of the steering committee under the Basera scheme, chaired by the Chief Secretary, here. With this, Punjab has become the first

state in the country to launch a scheme for granting proprietary rights to the slum dwellers occupying state government's land in the slums of urban areas.

The 1996 households, who have been given the proprietary rights, were located at 24 slum sites in Patiala, Ludhiana, Mansa, Ferozepur, Barnala and Kapurthala districts.

The people of Haryana Salute  
**Maharana Pratap Ji**  
on his  
**Birth Anniversary**  
13th June, 2021

"Maharana Pratap Ji was an eternal patriot, symbol of valor and courage who died for the motherland. He was a great warrior and ruler who sacrificed his life to protect his homeland. The strength and bravery of Maharana Pratap Ji will inspire generations to come."  
- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @Cmohry | @DiprHaryana



# Diggy's clubhouse remarks on Art 370 draw BJP's ire

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Not new to controversies, senior Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh on Saturday triggered yet another one with his comments in a clubhouse conversation that the revocation of Article 370 and stripping Jammu and Kashmir of statehood was an "extremely sad" decision and his party will have a "relook" at the issue.

The BJP came out hard, saying the Congress' first love is Pakistan and "both share same views on Kashmir." The BJP also demanded answers from Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on the comment of Singh, considered close to the Congress first family.

Replying to a query from a Pakistani journalist, Singh said: "Democracy was not there in Kashmir when they revoked article 370. Then 'insaniyat' was not there because they had put everyone behind bars. And Kashmiriyat is something, which is basically the fundamental of secularism. Because in a Muslim majority state, there was a Hindu king, and both worked together. In fact, reservation in government services was given to Kashmiri Pandits." The conversation leaked leading to a full blown attack by the BJP.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh tweeted saying: "Congress' first love is Pakistan. Digvijaya Singh conveyed



Rahul Gandhi's message to Pakistan. Congress will help Pakistan in grabbing Kashmir."

The BJP conducted a presser and its spokesperson Sambit Patra said the Congress should change its name from Indian National Congress to Anti-national Congress which, he alleged, is "not only siding with Pakistan but also with China to show India down."

"What do Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi think about Digvijaya's Clubhouse statement? Is this Congress' stand too? We demand Rahul Gandhi to hold a press conference and clarify," Patra said. He alleged the Congress and Pakistan are in the same page on the Kashmir issue and Article 370.

Patra referred to the past comments of Congress leaders Rahul, P Chidambaram, Shashi Tharoor and Hari Prasad to say that Congress was always backing Pakistan's stand and "in its hate for Modi, Congress has turned anti-national."

"Today an important topic going on in TV channels is 'Clubhouse'. We all have seen

through TV channels how the veteran leader of the clubhouse — Digvijaya Singh is spewing venom against India outside and how he is agreeing with Pakistan's demands. This is the same Digvijaya Singh, who had told the Pulwama attack just an accident, he had called the 26/11 attack a conspiracy of RSS and also tried to give clean chit to Pakistan at that time," said Patra.

"In the clubhouse, a Pakistani journalist asks this question that after the removal of Narendra Modi, what will be the Kashmir policy. Digvijaya ji thanks that journalist on such a question and says that if Modi ji is removed from power and Congress government comes then he will re-establish Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Patra claimed that Digvijaya Singh was a 'stage-manager' for the discussion, alleging that the Congress leader had himself asked the Pakistani journalist to ask such a question. "It's all part of that toolkit. I request the Congress party to change its name and change INC to ANC (Anti National Club House). People who hate Modi ji have also, in turn, started hating India," he said.

BJP IT Cell chief Amit Malviya shared a clip of the alleged clubhouse chat of the Congress, wherein Singh is purportedly hinting at a possible return of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, when his party returns to power.

# CBI, MEA launch legal battle against Choksi in Dominica High Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) have sought to implead in the habeas corpus petition filed by fugitive Mehul Choksi's lawyers by filing two affidavits in the Dominica High Court. Choksi is an accused in the multi-crore PNB Scam.

According to officials, the CBI will focus on establishing criminal culpability of Choksi, his fugitive status, the pending warrants, Interpol Red Notice and the charge sheets against him. The External Affairs Ministry will argue that Choksi continues to be an Indian citizen.

The affidavits, if admitted, will pave the way for noted lawyer Harish Salve to plead India's case in Dominica, they said.

The Dominica High Court has denied bail to fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi in the case of illegal entry into the island country after his mysterious disappearance from neighbouring Antigua and Barbuda where he is staying as a citizen since 2018, local Caribbean media reported.

The high court on Friday (local time) gave the ruling by



concluding that Choksi was a "flight risk", did not have any ties with Dominica and the court could not impose any conditions which will stop him from leaving the country, news outlet AntiguaNewsroom said. Choksi had approached the high court after the magistrate had rejected his bail petition.

Choksi's lawyers had filed a habeas corpus petition calling his arrest illegal and alleging that he was abducted, tortured and handed over to Dominica authority to deny him rights available to him in Antigua and Barbuda as a citizen. CBI and External Affairs Ministry is going to implead in this petition by claiming India's demands to hand over the fugitive.

The 62-year-old diamondaire, who has an Interpol Red Notice against him, had mysteriously gone missing on May 23 from Antigua and Barbuda where he has been staying since 2018 as a citizen after fleeing from India.

He was detained in the neighbouring island country of Dominica for illegal entry after a possible romantic escapade with his rumoured girlfriend.

# Covid Delta variant spreads fast in household setting: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Infectious Delta variant (B.1.617.2) first discovered in India and now making rounds across the countries, particularly the UK, spreads fast in a household setting, according to a study by Public Health England, a UK Government health organisation, thus decoding why several households have reported multiple cases of Covid-19 infection this time as compared to mostly single cases in families in the earlier wave.

The report noted that the Delta variant is fueling the Covid-19 second wave in many parts of India including south Indian states and spurt in cases in some countries like the UK. However, the report said that those vaccinated do not show severity of infections, thus calling for an increase in global vaccinations.

While other variants mostly infect one person in a household, the Delta infects more than one. This explains why several members in many families were down with Covid-19 this time. The Public Health England has compared the transmission rate of the Delta variant in a household setting with that of the Alpha variant (B.1.1.7), which is also a variant of concern. The Alpha variant was first discovered in the UK.

"Overall, we found increased household transmission of Covid-19 associated

with B.1.617.2 compared to B.1.1.7. These findings show households are important settings for rapid transmission of the lineage B.1.617.2. With household settings being an important factor in wider community spread, strategies to prevent transmission in these settings are vital to control the Covid-19 pandemic," the PHE study said.

It noted that there is a 64 percent increase in the odds of household transmission associated with infection with B.1.617.2 variant compared to B.1.1.7. "This study provides early real-world evidence of the effect B.1.617.2 variant on household transmission. The findings support existing evidence that B.1.617.2 has a substantially increased transmissibility advantage over the B.1.1.7 variant," the PHE researchers said.

This study also found evidence of increased household transmission among households with an index case of Asian ethnicity," the researchers added. They said households are high risk settings for transmission of Covid-19 and are an important factor in wider community spread. "By assessing the extent to which B.1.617.2 results in onward transmission to household members compared to B.1.1.7, we can assess the relative transmissibility of this variant, and provide information vital to the national and international pandemic response," they added.

# Amity varsity scientist gets DRDO award



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A senior scientist from Amity University has bagged the first prize in the Dare to Dream 2.0 innovation contest organized by Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). Dr. Shivani Verma of Amity Institute of Space Science & Technology (AISST) submitted an innovative concept "AI Based detection of a person based on physiological parameters" based on identification of a person using physiological parameters with innovative way of data and information fusion. The concept was submitted under Life Science Technology Domain.

The DRDO launched a Dare to Dream 2.0 innovation contest under "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" in August 2020 where in participants were invited to submit innovative ideas on emerging technologies to promote the individuals and startups for innovation in defence and aerospace technologies.

Verma under the guidance of Dr M.S. Prasad, Director (AISST) has developed an intelligent inferring recognition system based on physiological parameters of a person with built-in high accuracy of recognition.

# Covid 3rd wave may not hit kids hard: Lancet



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There appears to be no substantial evidence to suggest that children will be more affected or have greater illness severity due to Covid-19 in the anticipated third wave, according to a new report prepared by the Lancet Covid-19 Commission India Task Force after convening an experts group comprising leading paediatricians to examine the issue of 'paediatric Covid-19' in India.

However, it cautioned, the health system needs to gear up for a paediatric case load with adequate infrastructure, earmarked facilities at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of care, oxygen availability, appropriate equipment, trained manpower, drugs and injectables among others, all of which are specific to children.

The report authors, which included three doctors from AIIMS, Delhi including Shefali Gulati, Sushil K Kabra and Rakesh Lodha said the infection's symptomatology in children in India appears to be globally comparable.

"Most children with Covid-19 are asymptomatic, and amongst those sympto-

# DCGI OK's trial of Colchicine on Covid patients

New Delhi: The Drugs Controller General of India has given green signal to the CSIR and Laxai Life Sciences Private Limited to conduct clinical trials of Colchicine on Covid-19 patients. Colchicine in combination with standard care is seen as an important therapeutic intervention for Covid infected patients with cardiac co-morbidities and also for reducing pro-inflammatory cytokines, leading to faster recovery. PNS

matic mild infections are predominant. Most children have fever with respiratory symptoms, and often present with gastrointestinal symptoms (such as diarrhoea, vomiting, pain in abdomen) and atypical manifestation compared to adults. The proportion of symptomatic children increases as age increases as does the severity in such age groups," the report stated.

In the absence of a national database on clinical pre-

# IMA to hold stir on June 18 over attacks on doctors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) will hold a protest on June 18 against assault on doctors, with the slogan 'Save the saviours'. This comes days after the apex medical body had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his personal intervention in ensuring 'optimum milieu' for medical professionals so that they can work without any fear.

Citing incidents of doctors and other healthcare professionals being assaulted by the family members and relatives of patients, the IMA, in a statement, asked all its state and local branches across the country to observe the protest by wearing black badges, masks, ribbons, shirts and running an awareness

campaign against violence targeting healthcare professionals. However, no hospital will be closed, it said.

The IMA said press conferences will also be organised and they will also meet local NGOs and voluntary service leaders.

It termed "extremely disturbing" a series of violence against doctors in the last two weeks in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and other places.

It demanded the implementation of central hospital and Health Care Professionals Protection Act with IPC and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc), standardisation and augmentation of security in each hospital, and declaring hospitals as protected zones among others.

sentation and outcomes of infected children during the two surges noted thus far, the data of approximately 2,600 hospitalised children, below the age of 10 years (excluding neonates), from 10 hospitals (both public and private), in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra and Delhi-NCR region, was collected and analysed.

According to the data, mortality rates amongst these surveyed hospitalised Covid-19 positive children below the age of 10 years was 2.4 per cent and about 40 per cent of the children who died had comorbidities.

"Nine per cent of all hospitalised COVID-19 positive children presented with severe illness, under 10 years of age. The above observations were similar during the two surges of COVID-19 infections India has experienced," the Lancet document said.

On multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C) in children, the report said, risk factors for this condition include obesity, asthma, compromised breathing, developmental disorders, cardiac disease, cancers or immunocompromised children as well as those who have undergone surgeries.

# Twitter account of BKU Ekta Ugrahan 'restricted' on Sat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Twitter account of Punjab's biggest farmers union Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) Ekta Ugrahan, protesting at Delhi's border, was restricted on Saturday. The US-based social media giant also sent notices to cartoonist Manjul, fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair and others to take down certain tweets.

Sources said the Ministry of Electronics and IT was not involved in sending these legal requests to Twitter. It wasn't clear which agencies have flagged these tweets by and for what violations.

Restricting the BKU Ekta Ugrahan handle, Twitter said "Caution: This account is temporarily restricted." "You're seeing this warning because there has been some unusual activity from this account," it said.

Ugrahan had sparked controversy last year by commemorating the International Human Rights Day on December 10 by holding up posters of detained activists such as Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Sudha Bhardwaj and Gautam Navlakha, among others.

Meanwhile, the screenshot shared by Manjul showed Twitter as saying: "In the interest of transparency, we are writing to inform you that

Twitter has received a request from Indian law enforcement regarding your Twitter account @MANJULToons... that claims the content violates the law(s) of India."

It further stated that Twitter has "not taken any action on the reported content at this time as a result of this request."

Mails sent to Manjul, and others do not mention the details of the law enforcement agency that had raised the legal request.

Twitter, in its notice, said it is the company's policy to notify users if it receives a legal request from an authorised entity (such as law enforcement or a government agency) to remove content from their account. Twitter further informed the account holders that while the platform is unable to provide legal advice, "We want you to have an opportunity to evaluate the request and, if you wish, take appropriate action to protect your interests."

"This may include seeking legal counsel and challenging the request in court, contacting relevant civil society organisations, voluntarily deleting the content (if applicable), or finding some other resolution," Twitter added.

Twitter has been facing heat for delay in complying with the IT rules that mandate large digital platforms to undertake greater due diligence.

# Yoga buffs to again celebrate int'l Yoga Day from confines of homes



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Like last year, this time too, Yoga and health enthusiasts across the world will be celebrating the International Yoga Day, the seventh in the series, on June 21, within the confines of their homes as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to disrupt normal life.

Various Ministries, organisations in the private and government sector and State Governments are holding events to mark the D-Day in a big way, with the Union Ayush Ministry

taking the lead by marking the beginning of a 10-episode series on various aspects of the protocol to be telecast on Doordarshan India from June 11 to June 21. The Ministry also announced launching of a mobile application, "Namaste Yoga", devoted to Yoga, at the curtain raiser event organised online on Friday here.

At the event, Union Ayush Minister Kiren Rijiju said that the series' central message will be "Be with Yoga, Be at Home", which is relevant in these times of health emergency while Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar talked in details about how yoga can become a way to a healthy and happy life.

The series is produced by Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY).

# Online crossword contest in Patna

PNS ■ PATNA

With cities across the country making a determined fight-back in the face of Covid-19 and the resulting lockdown, it is time to celebrate the indomitable human spirit. To mark a determined progress on the way to normalcy and pay tribute to the resilience of the human mind, an online crossword challenge is being organised on Sunday.

According to a Press statement by the organiser Extra-C, a civil society initiative based in Patna, there will be two categories in the contest - Student

Category and Open Category. A participant may play in only one of the two categories. The day coincides with its eighth anniversary and is named Extra-C Anniversary Crossword test (ExACT).

Chief Operating Officer of Extra-C, Amitabh Ranjan, informed that the challenge will be hosted for an hour on the website www.crypticsingh.com from 11 am on June 13. The Student Category will allow students from schools and institutes of higher education to enter the game while the Open Category with a higher level of difficulty will be open to seniors.

# Smriti urges citizens to report about child labour



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On World Day Against Child Labour, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani on Saturday appealed to every citizen to report instances of child labour on PENCIL portal or call on Childline 1098.

Reaffirming her commitment towards combatting child labour, Irani said it is with people's participation that it can be ensured that children get a childhood they deserve.



"Every child has a right to education and a happy childhood. On World Day Against Child Labour, let us reaffirm our commitment towards combatting child labour. It is with people's participation that we can ensure our children get a childhood they deserve," Irani tweeted.

"I appeal to every citizen to

report instances of child labour on PENCIL Portal <http://pencil.gov.in> or call on Childline - 1098. Because... We owe it to our children - the future of our Nation," she said in another tweet. World Day Against Child Labour observed on June 12 every year aims to raise awareness and activism to prevent child labour.

# North India to soon get relief from sizzling heat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Mumbai continues to be lashed with heavy to very heavy rains for the last four days, north India is expected to get relief from the scorching heat soon as the southwest monsoon is expected to cover it in the next two three days except south Rajasthan and Kutch region of Gujarat.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the southwest monsoon will arrive in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi by June 14-15. The southwest monsoon has advanced into the northwest Bay of Bengal and some parts of Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar on Saturday.

The IMD said that under the influence of east-west trough, heavy to very heavy

rainfall might occur over Odisha, Chhattisgarh, East Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Telangana, coastal and adjoining Ghats's districts of Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka during the next 3-4 days. The weather department has also ruled out any heat wave conditions over the country during the next five days.

IMD senior scientist RK Jenamani said the southwest monsoon has already advanced into remaining parts of NW Bay of Bengal, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar and it will cover Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh by Sunday.

The IMD said that Mumbai has measured a total of 641.3mm rainfall so far, thereby surpassing its monthly normal of 493.1mm. Over



500mm of rain occurred over Mumbai in the last four days. Base station Santacruz recorded 107mm in the 24 hours. Mumbai completed a hat trick of century rainfall by registering three digits in the 24 hours rainfall

on 10th June (231mm), 11th June (107mm) and 12th June (107mm).

In Delhi, the expected arrival date of monsoon this time is around June 15 as per the IMD and it should cover the entire country in the next

two-three days except south Rajasthan and Kutch region of Gujarat. The normal onset date of monsoon in Delhi is June 27, however, this time it is likely to arrive about two weeks early due to a number of meteorological factors.

# UK-EU Brexit spat over N Ireland clouds G7 leaders summit

AP ■ FALMOUTH

Turbulence from the divorce between the UK and the European Union provided an unwanted distraction at the Group of Seven summit taking place in southwest England, with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson saying on Saturday that post-Brexit agreements will fail if the EU continues to take a "theologically draconian" approach to the rules.

Johnson held meetings with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and the bloc's top officials on the sidelines of the summit he is hosting. Afterwards, the prime minister claimed the EU was not taking a "sensible or pragmatic" approach to post-Brexit arrangements, and he threatened to use an emergency clause to suspend agreed upon rules if the bloc did not compromise.

Britain and the EU are locked in an escalating diplomatic feud over Northern Ireland, the only part of the UK that borders the 27-nation bloc. The EU is angry over the British government's delay in implementing new checks on some goods coming into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, while Britain says the checks are imposing a big burden on businesses and destabilizing Northern Ireland's hard-won peace.

US President Joe Biden



Britain's PM Boris Johnson, right, greets German Chancellor Angela Merkel ahead of a bilateral meeting during the G7 summit in Cornwall, England on Saturday. AP

has gotten drawn into the spat, raising concerns about the potential threat to Northern Ireland's peace accord.

The new arrangements, designed to keep an open border between Ireland and its northern neighbor, have angered Northern Ireland's British unionists, who say they weaken ties with the rest of the UK. Tensions over the new trade rules were a contributing factor to a week of street violence in April, largely in unionist areas of Northern Ireland, that saw youths pelt police with bricks, fireworks and firebombs.

European Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen tweeted after meeting Johnson that Northern Ireland peace was "paramount," and the binding Brexit agreement protected it.

"We want the best possible

relations with the UK. Both sides must implement what we agreed on. There is complete EU unity on this," she said.

Johnson told Sky News at the summit site in Carbis Bay, Cornwall, that "the treaty we signed, I signed, is perfectly reasonable," but he added: "I don't think that the interpretation or application of the protocol (by the EU) is sensible or pragmatic."

The EU says Britain must fully implement the agreement, known as the Northern Ireland Protocol, that the two sides agreed and ratified. It is threatening legal action if the UK does not fully bring in the checks, which include a ban on chilled meats such as sausages from England, Scotland and Wales going to Northern Ireland from next month.

# Biden sells G-7 on global tax, but US Congress is a hurdle

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden might have persuaded some of the world's largest economies to hike taxes on corporations, but the US Congress could be a far tougher sell.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said on Friday that leaders of the Group of Seven — which also includes the United Kingdom, France, Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan — agreed with Biden on placing a global minimum tax of at least 15 per cent on large companies. The G-7 leaders, participating in a three-day summit in England, affirmed their finance ministers who earlier this month endorsed the global tax minimum.

"America is rallying the world to make big multinational corporations pay their fair share so we can invest in our middle class at home," Jake Sullivan, the president's national security adviser, said Friday on Twitter.

A minimum tax is supposed to halt an international race to the bottom for corporate taxation that has led multinational businesses to book their profits in countries with low tax rates. This enables them to avoid taxes and encourages countries to slash rates. The minimum rate would make it tougher for companies

to avoid taxes, and could possibly supplant a digital services tax that many European nations are imposing on US tech firms that pay at low rates. Biden administration officials believe the use of overseas tax havens has discouraged companies from investing domestically, at a cost to the middle class.

The President hopes a G-7 endorsement can serve as a springboard for getting buy-in from the larger Group of 20 complement of nations.

The agreement is not a finished deal, as the terms would need to be agreed upon by countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and implemented by each of them. The President needs other countries to back a global minimum tax to ensure that his own plans for an enhanced one in the US don't hurt American businesses.

"It has the potential to stop the race to the bottom," said Thornton Matheson, a senior fellow at the Tax Policy Center.

"It would be a huge sea change in the way things have been going in corporate taxes for the last three decades."

The idea of an enhanced global minimum tax is also an integral part of Biden's domestic agenda, but it faces resistance in Congress.

# China says opposed to US plans to deploy missiles in neighbouring countries

PTI ■ BEIJING

China is opposed to US plans to deploy missiles and defensive systems in neighbouring countries that could undermine strategic stability and has called for advancing international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes.

Addressing the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva via video link on Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed jointly maintaining global strategic stability, abiding by international arms control treaties, addressing the non-proliferation issue via negotiations and improving global security governance in new frontiers.

"China opposes the development and deployment of regional and global missile defence systems by a certain country that undermine strategic stability, and China opposes the deployment of land-based intermediate-range ballistic missiles in the neighbourhood of other countries," Wang said.

Though Wang has not named the US, China in the past has threatened to take countermeasures if the US deploys intermediate-range missiles in Asia opposed Washington's move to deploy the high tech Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) in South Korea over concerns that the American

system will monitor China's missile movements.

In the text of his address posted on the Chinese Foreign Ministry website, Wang said the five permanent members of the UN Security Council should reaffirm the important formula that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, strengthen cooperation in strategic risk reduction and deepen strategic dialogue on a broader range of strategic security issues to enhance strategic trust.

He said China is committed to a policy of not using or threatening to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon states and nuclear-weapon-free zones unconditionally.

Without disclosing the numbers of China's arsenal of nuclear weapons, he called on the US and Russia to reduce their nuclear weapons.

"China always keeps its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for national security, and does not compete with any other country in the size or scale of nuclear force," he said.

China so far has not disclosed how many warheads it has, but an assessment by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute put the number at 320, in comparison to Russia's 54,000 or the 70,000 US warheads, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

## GLOBE TROTTER

### BOMBS HIT 2 MINIVANS IN KABUL, 7 DEAD

Kabul: Separate bombs hit two minivans in a mostly Shia neighbourhood in the Afghan capital Saturday, killing at least seven people and wounding six others, the Interior Ministry said. The attacks targeted minivans on the same road about 2 km apart in a neighbourhood in western Kabul, Interior Ministry deputy spokesman Ahmad Zia Zia, said. It wasn't immediately clear what type of bombs were used and no one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks. The Islamic State group has carried out similar bombings in the area, including four attacks on four minivans earlier this month that killed at least 18 people.

### BRAZIL CRIME GANG LEADER KILLED

Rio De Janeiro: One of Brazil's most wanted criminal suspects was killed in a police operation Saturday in Rio de Janeiro, police said. Wellington da Silva Braga, better known as Ecco, was believed to command so-called militia groups in more than 20 neighbourhoods. The police communications office said a confrontation erupted when officers arrived at a house to try to arrest Braga.

### MAN WOUNDS 13 IN AUSTIN SHOOTING AND ESCAPES

Austin: Someone opened fire in a busy entertainment district in downtown Austin early Saturday, wounding 13 people, including two critically, before getting away, authorities said.

### 5 KILLED; 6 HURT IN RAIN RELATED INCIDENTS IN PAK

Peshawar: At least five people were killed and six others injured in rain related incidents in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Saturday, officials said. The Provincial Disasters Management Authority (PDMA) said that rain along with heavy storm hit many parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa killing five people and injuring six others besides inflicting damages to eight houses. The PDMA also issued travel advisory restraining the people from visiting the hilly areas during the current rainy spell.

# France's Macron says US again Europe's partner

AP ■ CARBIS BAY

French President Emmanuel Macron says it's good that US President Joe Biden is able to lead through cooperation, adding that the United States is "definitely" back as Europe's partner.

Biden and Macron met Saturday as part of the Group of Seven summit in southwest England, where they and other leaders of the world's wealthy democracies are discussing the coronavirus pandemic, the environment, national security, relations with China and economic issues.

Former US President Donald Trump took an adversarial approach with NATO allies, but Macron said Biden has shown that "leadership is partnership."

The desire for cooperation cuts both ways. Biden described the European Union as "incredibly strong and vibrant," which he said not only helps with tackling economic challenges but also provides a backbone for NATO.

# Biden to return diverted border wall money, spend down rest

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Former President Donald Trump's signature border wall project would lose much of its funding as well as the fast-track status that enabled it to bypass environmental regulations under a Biden administration plan announced Friday.

President Joe Biden suspended construction of the wall upon taking office while his administration reviewed the project. That angered Republicans in Congress eager to see it go forward amid an increase in apprehensions of migrants along the southwest border.

The new plan does not cancel the wall project outright, but it's still likely to face opposition in Congress, where many Republicans are eager to promote a project closely associated with the former president.

Biden plans to return more than \$2 billion that the Trump administration diverted from the Pentagon to help pay for the wall and use other money appropriated by Congress to address "urgent life, safety, and environmental issues" created by the construction. It also asks lawmakers not to provide any additional funding for what the Biden team believes is an unnecessary effort.

"Building a massive wall



A pair of migrant families from Brazil pass through a gap in the border wall to reach the United States after crossing from Mexico in Yuma, Ariz., Thursday to seek asylum. AP

that spans the entire southern border and costs American taxpayers billions of dollars is not a serious policy solution or responsible use of federal funds," the Office of Management and Budget said in a statement outlining the plan.

The government has built walls and other barriers along the 2,000-mile (3,200-kilometer) US-Mexico border for decades to eliminate some of the easier routes of avoiding checkpoints. Trump turned the issue into a centerpiece of his political identity.

Trump vowed to build a

"virtually impenetrable" wall, insisting it would be paid for by Mexico, which never happened. Instead, his administration set aside about \$15 billion through a combination of congressional appropriations and taking the money from the Pentagon and other parts of the government.

The Trump administration built about 725 kilometres of wall, moving quickly and waiving requirements for environmental reviews and mediation, though only about 52.84 kilometres were in areas where no barrier previously existed.

# Iran nuclear talks aimed at reset, face major challenges

AP ■ VIENNA

Talks between Iran and global powers restarted Saturday with the goal of trying to restore a landmark agreement to contain Iranian nuclear development that the Trump administration abandoned in 2018. Senior diplomats from China, Germany, France, Russia, and

Britain planned to meet at a hotel in the Austrian capital.

Top Russian representative Mikhail Ulyanov said in a tweet that the talks would allow the participants to "exchange views on how to arrange further work in order to complete the negotiations successfully and expeditiously."

The United States is not

formally part of meetings that launched in Vienna earlier this year. But the administration of President Joe Biden has signaled willingness to rejoin the deal under terms that would broadly see the United States scale back sanctions and Iran return to abiding by the limits on its nuclear activity contained in the 2015 agreement.

# China, US diplomats clash over human rights, pandemic origin

AP ■ BEIJING

Top US and Chinese diplomats appear to have had another sharply worded exchange, with Beijing saying it told the US to cease interfering in its internal affairs and accusing Washington of politicizing the search for the origin of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi and Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a phone call Friday that revealed wide divisions in a number of contentious areas, including the curtailing of freedoms in Hong Kong and the mass detention of Muslims in the northwestern Xinjiang

region. Calls for a more thorough investigation into the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19 are particularly sensitive for China because of suggestions that it might have escaped from a laboratory in the central city of Wuhan, where cases were first discovered.

Yang said China was "gravely concerned" over what he called "absurd" stories that the virus escaped from the Wuhan lab. China "firmly opposes any despicable acts that use the epidemic as an excuse to slander China and to shift blames," Yang was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency.

# Oli displaying 'ugly form of lust for power', say Nepal's five former Prime Ministers

Kathmandu: Condemning beleaguered Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's "undemocratic acts" and his "lust for power," five former prime ministers on Saturday appealed to the country's administration and security agencies to not be involved in such wrong activities that have long term effect on the nation. The former premiers — Sher Bahadur Deuba, Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Madhav Kumar Nepal, Jhala Nath Khanal and Baburam Bhattarai made the joint appeal in a statement.

Prime minister Oli, currently heading a minority government, has continuously been attacking the Constitution of Nepal and undermining the long and arduous struggle of the Nepali people to achieve the federal republic and its rule of law, the Kathmandu Post reported, citing the statement.

"We warn the caretaker government not to do anything or direct others to do anything that would have a long-term impact on the country and people and appeal to the administration and security agencies not to be involved in such wrong activities," they said in the statement.

"He has displayed the ugly form of lust for power that has never existed in Nepal's political history. We condemn such undemocratic acts by Oli," they said.

The statement comes at a time when the Supreme Court started hearing on the case regarding the reinstatement of the House of Representatives, which was dissolved by President Bidya Devi Bhandari on May 22 at the recommendation of Prime Minister Oli, who lost a trust vote in the House last month. PTI

# Iran hard-liners target sole moderate in Presidential debate

Tehran: Iran's seven presidential candidates offered starkly different views on Saturday in the country's final debate, with hard-liners describing those seeking ties with the West as "infiltrators" and the race's sole moderate warning a hard-line government would only bring more sanctions for the Islamic Republic.

Analysts and state-linked polling put hard-line judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi as the clear front-runner in Friday's upcoming vote, with the public now largely hostile to the relative moderate President Hassan Rouhani after the collapse of Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

But that didn't stop Rouhani's former Central Bank chief Abdolnasser Hemmati from harshly criticizing Raisi, at one point getting up from his chair to hand him a list he described as naming individuals who haven't paid back huge loans from state banks. He again tried to link Raisi to former President Donald Trump, whose decision to unilaterally withdraw America from Iran's nuclear deal has seen the country crushed by sanctions.

"Mr. Raisi, you and your friends have played in Trump's ground with your extremist policies," Hemmati said. For his part, Raisi said he'd make sure the government returns to the nuclear deal.

The deal "would not be executed by you, it needs a powerful government to do this," Raisi said. The election Friday will see voters pick a candidate to replace Rouhani, who is term limited from running again. The vote comes amid tensions with the West as negotiations continue to try and resuscitate the nuclear deal, which saw Iran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. AP

# Moscow orders new restrictions as coronavirus infections soar

Moscow: Moscow's mayor on Saturday ordered a week off for some workplaces and imposed restrictions on many businesses to fight coronavirus infections that have more than doubled in the past week.

The national coronavirus taskforce reported 6,701 new cases of infection in Moscow, compared with 2,936 on June 6. Nationally, the daily infection tally has spiked by nearly half over the past week, to 13,510. After several weeks of lockdown as the pandemic spread in the spring of 2020, Moscow eased restrictions and did not reimpose any during subsequent case increases.

But because of the recent sharp rise, "it is impossible not to react to such a situation," Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

He ordered that enterprises that do not normally work on weekends remain closed for the next week while continuing to pay employees. In addition, food courts and children's play areas in shopping centers are to close for a week beginning Sunday, and restaurants and bars must limit their service to takeout from 11 pm to 6 am. AP

# Israeli police say woman with knife shot dead in West Bank

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli police say a private security guard at a checkpoint near Jerusalem shot and killed a woman on Saturday who allegedly planned to carry out a stabbing attack.

The police said in a statement that the guard at the Qalandia checkpoint north of Jerusalem saw the woman with a knife and shot her. Several amateur videos captured by Palestinians at the crossing showed the woman lying on the ground at the Israeli side of the crossing. Police later said she was a 28-year old Palestinian woman.

Qalandia is the main crossing point for Palestinian residents of the West Bank entering Israel, especially those bound for Jerusalem. The checkpoint is operated by private security firms, but Israeli police deploy after violent incidents. The official Palestinian news agency, Wafa, reported that Israeli forces closed the crossing point on both sides.

Starting five years ago, Palestinians launched stabbing and car-ramming attacks against Israelis in the occupied West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem, but the attacks have waned in recent years. The Palestinians seek the West Bank, where the Palestinian Authority exerts limited self-rule, as part of a future state alongside Gaza and east Jerusalem. Israel says Jerusalem is indivisible. Peace negotiations have stalled for many years.

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AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021 (Rs. in Lakhs)

Particulars	Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
	31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Dec-20 (Unaudited)	31-Mar-21 (Audited)	31-Mar-20 (Audited)
1. Total Income from operations	6.75	8.64	31.95	37.45
2. Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-1.57	0.59	23.57	7.19
3. Net Profit for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-1.57	0.59	23.57	7.19
4. Net Profit for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	-4.66	0.49	24.50	2.73
5. Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	154.48	86.74	-206.18	482.70
6. Equity Share Capital	338.04	338.04	338.04	338.04
7. Earnings Per Share (Face Value of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinuing operations)				
-Basic	-0.14	0.01	0.72	0.08
-Diluted	-0.14	0.01	0.72	0.08

Notes:  
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Audited Financial Results for the Quarter and Year ended March 31st, 2021 which have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by Board of Directors and filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the aforesaid Audited Financial Results for the Quarter and Year ended March 31st, 2021 is available on the Stock Exchange website (www.bseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.bbinvestments.in).  
2. The above Audited Financial Results have been prepared in accordance with Ind AS notified under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with relevant rule made thereunder and other accounting principles to the extent applicable.  
3. The above financial results were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 12.06.2021.  
4. The figures of the previous period have been regrouped/reclassified, wherever considered necessary.  
5. The figures of the last quarter of the current year and of the previous year are the balancing figures between the audited figures for the full financial year and the published year to date figures up to the third quarter of the respective financial year.  
6. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 globally and in India, the Company's management has made an initial assessment of likely adverse impact on the economic environment in general, business, and financial risks up to the date of financial statements and conclude that there is no material impact on the long-term performance of the Company. However, the Company will continue to monitor any material changes to the future economic conditions.

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
Sd/-  
Vijay Bhushan  
Director  
DIN: 0002421  
Place : New Delhi  
Date : 12.06.2021

# Govt asks Ministries to target 20% cut in controllable expenditure

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has asked all Ministries and government departments to target 20 per cent reduction in expenditures like domestic and foreign travel, overtime allowance, rent and office expenses, in the current fiscal year as it tightens its purse strings amid the second wave of the pandemic.

The Department of Expenditure under the Finance Ministry issued an office memorandum in this regard on June 10.

"All the Ministries/ departments are requested to take steps to curtail all avoidable, non-scheme expenditure and aim for 20 per cent reduction in controllable expenditure... Expenditure in 2019-20 may be taken as the baseline for this purpose," the memorandum said. However, expenditure related to containment of the pandemic is excluded from the scope of this order.

**The memorandum said, Ministries should aim to control expenditures like overtime allowance, rewards, domestic and foreign travel, office expenses, rents, rates and taxes, royalty**

ministries should aim to control expenditures like overtime allowance, rewards, domestic and foreign travel, office expenses, rents, rates and taxes, royalty.

Besides, expenditures related to publications, other administrative expenses, supplies and materials, cost of ration, clothing and tentage, advertising and publicity, minor works and maintenance, service or commitment



charges, grants-in-aid general, contribution and other charges, should also be cut.

The Savings that would accrue to the Government due to this move cannot be exactly ascertained. This is the second year in a row that the government has come out with measures to rationalise expenditure. Last year, the expenditure department had asked all ministries /departments to review appointments of consultants, curtail functions and ban use of imported paper for printing as part of measures to rationalise non-priority expenditure.

Government is staring at an additional expenditure of up to Rs 1.45 lakh crore to provide free vaccines and foodgrains to people devastated by the deadly second wave of covid infections.

Reversing a policy where states competed for vaccine supplies for certain age categories, the government earlier this week announced that the central government will procure vaccines for all adults.

All above 18 years of age would get free vaccines from June 21. Also, the free food-grain scheme that was to end in June has been extended till November 2021.

As per estimates, the gov-

# Higher subsidy under FAME II to be game changer in adoption of EVs, say makers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Electric two-wheeler makers on Saturday termed as "a phenomenal move" by the Government to increase subsidy for such vehicles by 50 per cent under the FAME II scheme saying it would be a game changer in the adoption of eco-friendly vehicles.

The Government on Friday made a partial modification of the scheme for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II), including increasing the demand incentive for electric two-wheelers to ₹15,000 per KWh from the earlier uniform subsidy of ₹10,000 per KWh for all EVs, including plug in hybrids and strong hybrids except buses.

In the latest modification, the department of heavy industries also capped incentives for electric two-wheelers at 40 per cent of the cost of vehicles, up from 20 per cent earlier.

"The revision in the FAME (II) policy, increasing

**In the latest modification, the department of heavy industries also capped incentives for electric two-wheelers at 40 per cent of the cost of vehicles, up from 20 per cent earlier**

the subsidy by 50 per cent per KWh is a phenomenal move. Sales of electric two-wheelers have grown despite the pandemic and with this additional subsidy, we expect electric two-wheeler sales to disrupt the market, and clock 6 million-plus units by 2025," Ather Energy CEO and Co-founder Tarun Mehta said in a statement. The Government's continued support to drive adoption of EVs, with a keen focus on locally built electric two-wheelers will make India the manufacturing hub of EVs, he added.

Welcoming the "government's continued support to EVs", TVS Motor Company Joint Managing Director

Sudarshan Venu said, "Sustainable mobility solutions are very important for the future and TVS is investing significantly behind this. The improved incentives for electric two-wheelers will increase penetration." He further said, "Such policy direction should lead to indigenous development of future technology."

Expressing similar views, Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) Director General Sohinder Gill said, "It's an important and an admirable decision taken by the government, a move that will bring down the prices of electric two-wheelers nearer to the IC (internal combustion engine) vehicles and remove one of the biggest blockade of the high sticker price of electric two-wheelers."

Elaborating further, he said a "city speed electric scooter" with a range of 100km/charge will now cost less than Rs 60,000 and a high-speed scooter with a range of 80 km will come nearer to the price tag of Rs 1 lakh.

India to require 400k charging stations for 2 mn EVs by 2026, says report

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs about 400,000 charging stations to meet the requirement for two million Electric Vehicles (EV) that could potentially ply on its roads by 2026, said a report on Saturday.

The Grant Thornton Bharat-Ficci report said for India to reach its vision of 100 per cent EVs by 2030, factors such as increasing government support, decreasing cost of technology, and distressing pollution levels, would be key to accelerate this transition.

As per EV industry body - Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles - there are 1,800 charging stations in India as of March 2021 for approximately 16,200 electric cars, including the fleet segment.

"Overall, the EV infrastructure is tightly coupled with the EV and charging station characteristics, battery technologies, and electricity markets," the report said.

# G7: Why major economies are delaying a break with the fossil fuel industry

Cardiff (UK): The climate crisis is certain to be a hot topic at the G7 summit in Cornwall.

While the leaders of the world's richest countries agree in theory on the need to reach net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, they remain faithful to the fossil fuel industry reluctant to substantively change its business model.

A recent report by the International Energy Agency, a typically conservative advisory body, argued for an immediate ban on new fossil fuel projects. But investments by oil, gas and coal companies into finding new sources continue, as does industry lobbying to undermine regulation.

The environment ministers of the G7 countries committed to end funding for new overseas coal projects by the end of 2021.

But 51 per cent of their Covid-19 economic recovery funds - a total of USD 189 billion - paid between January 2020 and March 2021 were earmarked as financial aid for the fossil fuel industry. Worse, USD 8 of every USD 10 dedicated to non-renewable energy was paid with no conditions on these companies to reduce their emissions.

Why does it seem so hard for G7 leaders to match their words with action when it comes to the fossil fuel industry?

Betting on the long-term business case. Despite setbacks in volatile markets and oversupply risks, there is still a lot of money to be made from extracting, producing and selling hydrocarbons. Demand for coal has plateaued, but oil and



gas demand is predicted to rise at least for the next 15 to 20 years, particularly in emerging economies such as China and India. This puts G7 leaders in an awkward position. On the one hand, governments need to reboot economic growth after the pandemic slowdown - a profitable energy sector nourished by rising demand abroad is welcome, even though hydrocarbon extraction can be especially polluting in developing countries.

Governmental support for the industry in the form of subsidies or tax breaks artificially inflates the profitability of fossil fuels, in turn making renewables a less attractive investment. Put simply, it is less risky and more profitable to - at least for now - invest in oil and gas. Carbon lock-in

The fossil fuel industry continues to shed public support, but it can rely on the fact that it's embedded within a complex system of consumers, suppliers and contractors, politicians and the media.

The cause-and-effect relations that define such an intricate system often produce unintended outcomes.

This interdependency is

referred to as carbon lock-in. Economies have evolved in such a way that they perpetuate an energy landscape dominated by fossil fuels and plagued by an inability to radically change.

Not only does carbon lock-in result in inertia, it causes a tragedy of the commons-type problem.

Big oil companies such as BP, Exxon Mobil and Shell are unlikely to make meaningful changes until the rest of the system acts in unison. National oil companies and smaller privately owned fossil fuel companies comprise the bulk of known fossil fuel reserves.

But they often evade the spotlight and so can operate with more freedom. For a big oil company to make high-risk changes to its business model while others enjoy a free ride would be seen as a bad business decision.

Lock-in, as the name suggests, is very difficult to break. That said, G7 members are powerful nodes within this complex network. Strong leadership - such as divestment from fossil fuels and strong support for renewables - would cause reverberations throughout the whole system.

# Low base: India's pharma sector growth accelerates in May

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Low base effect accelerated the growth of India's pharma sector in May, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said. The ratings agency opined that the 47.8 per cent YoY growth in India's pharmaceutical market (IPM) during May 2021 was led by a low base effect.

Last year, the IPM declined by 8.5 per cent YoY in May 2020 due to the lockdown.

"IPM growth would have been stronger on an adjusted basis," Ind-Ra said in a statement.

"Acute therapies namely anti-infective, analgesics and vitamins benefited significantly due to the second Covid wave as these therapies have a direct/indirect role in the treatment of Covid patients. Acute therapy growth was also aided by the low base in May 2020."

Besides, it cited that acute therapies such as anti-infectives, analgesic and vitamins witnessed sales growth of 141.19 per cent YoY, 50.3 per



As per the report, during May 2021, volumes grew 31.5 per cent YoY, price growth was 7 per cent and products launches were at 9.3 per cent, attributed to acute therapy products.

"Ind-Ra estimates the market to grow 8-10 per cent YoY in size during FY22."

"However, on a moving average total (MAT) May 2021 basis, a growth out-performance was observed across these therapies."

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India Power Corporation Ltd on Saturday said its profit after tax (PAT) jumped 60 per cent to ₹26.66 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021. In 2019-20, it recorded a profit of ₹16.69 crore, a company statement said.

The Kolkata-headquartered company is an integrated power utility with distribution licence covering 618 square kilometres in Asansol-Raniganj region of West Bengal. It provides power to industrial, commercial and domestic consumers.

Total income for the year was at ₹518.37 crore, it said without disclosing the comparative figure.

India Power further said its sales increased by 2 million units in 2020-21 despite the impact of the pandemic and

# India Power clocks ₹27 cr profit in FY21

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

lockdown during the first two quarters of the financial year. "We were able to overcome the setback of the coronavirus pandemic by adding a large number of consumers across voltage levels, which resulted in accelerated sales growth from second quarter onwards.

Our ability to procure power at competitive prices led to cost savings and further improved our earnings," India Power Whole-time Director Somesh Dasgupta said.



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Our ability to procure power at competitive prices led to cost savings and further improved our earnings," India Power Whole-time Director Somesh Dasgupta said.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of Rail Passengers that Railways have decided to divert the route of Train no. 09805/09806 Kota - Udhampur - Kota Special Express with revised timings and stoppages.

09805/09806 Kota - Udhampur - Kota Special Express (Weekly)					
Train No. 09805			Train No. 09806		
ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS
--	16.40	KOTA JN	12.40	--	
12:10	--	UDHAMPUR	--	18.40	

Days of Run : 09805 Ex. Kota on Every Wednesday from 16.06.2021 to till further advice & 09806 Ex. Udhampur on Every Thursday from 17.06.2021 to till further advice.

Accommodation : AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Reserved Second Seating.

Stoppages : Indargarh, Sawai Madhopur, Gangapur City, Hindaun City, Bayana Jn., Bharatpur Jn., Mathura Jn., Faridabad, Hazrat Nizamuddin Jn., New Delhi, Rohtak Jn., Jakhhal Jn., Dhuri Jn., Ludhiana Jn., Jalandhar Cantt, Pathankot Cantt, Kathua and Jammu Tawi Stations.

For any kind information such as timings and stoppages enroute passengers are advised to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTEs App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Visit RailMadad website: [www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in) & Download Railmadad app.

1285/21 Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY** Visit us at: [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General public that my client Ms Khyati Singh R/O 7B Doctors Lane Gole Market New Delhi 110001 is owner of all Movable and Immovable Properties owned by Late Mr Matang Singh by virtue of his Last Will dated 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021. All persons are hereby informed that as per the above will of Late Mr. Matang Singh she is absolute owner of all movable and immovable properties, if anybody has any kind of objections upon the above will and my ownership / Title its sale etc, kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 15 days of the present.

Advocate, Mukesh Kumar Jha Ch. No. 9 DDA Vikas Sadan INA New Delhi-110023. Contact No: 7299900095

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client has entered into an Agreement to Sell for the purchase of Entire DDA MIG freehold flat bearing No. H-271, Situated at Naraina Vihar, New Delhi-28 from Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Kaushal (hereinafter called the Seller) that the Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Kaushal named above declare that she is the absolute owner and in possession of the aforesaid flat under sale and there is no legal flaws & she is fully competent and have full power, absolute authority and unshaken title to sell and transfer the same, and the same is free from all sorts of encumbrances, burden, sale, mortgage, gift, lien, decree, charges, court injunction orders, stay orders, liability, transfer, attachment, litigation, legal flaws, dispute, notices, surety, security, notifications, acquisition etc. Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Kaushal also declare that there is no Court case/civil/criminal suit/litigation still pending before any Competent Courts. Any other person's/institution's having any sort of rights, claims, titles or interests of any kind whatsoever in the said property or any part thereof, under any deeds or documents or otherwise is required to put forth his/its claim in writing with documentary proof with the undersigned within 7 days of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that the aforesaid owner have clear and remarkable title to the said entire flat and my client shall proceed to complete the transaction as it is free from all encumbrances whatsoever.

Sumit Mehta (Advocate) D/3157/2009 B-80, Inderpuri, ND-12, Ph: 9868001948

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client Anoop Sehrawat S/O Late Kundan Singh and Suresh Devi W/O Anoop Sehrawat. R/O Plot No-A-76, Nangal Dewat, Vasant kunj New Delhi-110070. Disowned their son Vikas Sehrawat and Daughter in-law Poonam Sehrawat D/O Joginder Singh. From All their movable and immovable properties. Due to disobedience, misconduct towards my client. My client shall not be responsible for any acts of them in future.

Prem Prakash, Advocate Legalphat Competent Lawyers LLP 207, Plot No. 1, MLU Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075 Phone: 9871268399

## United Textiles Limited

Regd. Office 7<sup>th</sup> K.M. Stone, Barwala Road, Hisar - 125001 (Haryana) CIN: L17115HR1993PLC032092

Notice Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that the Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 29th June, 2021 at 11.00 AM at the Regd. Office of the Company to consider the Audited Financial Results for the Quarter/Year Ended 31st March, 2021. Further as per the Company's Code of Conduct for Prevention of Insider Trading, the trading window for dealing with securities of the Company will remain close from 31.03.2021 to 48 hours after the declaration of the Financial Results. The said information is also available on Company's Website [www.unitedtextileslimited.com](http://www.unitedtextileslimited.com) & also on the website of stock exchanges at [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com).

For United Textiles Limited (Amit Kumar Aggarwal) Director Dated 10.06.2021 (DIN 07079171)

# CAIT asks Goyal to direct CCI probe into Amazon, Flipkart

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Karnataka High Court judgement dismissing the petition of Amazon & Flipkart, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) on Saturday sent a communication to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal urging him to direct the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to immediately initiate investigation proceedings against Amazon and Flipkart without any further ado.

The CAIT has also urged Goyal to immediately issue a



fresh Press Note replacing Press Note 2 of the FDI policy with a Monitoring mechanism to ensure that law of the land prevails and no one should dare to violate the policy, law or the rules. The CAIT has also pro-

posed that to bring greater transparency in e-commerce business, every company indulging into any e-commerce activity through any type of electronic mode should have to take a Registration Number from the DPIIT.

# CG Power plans ₹135 cr capex, to close some overseas subsidiaries

IANIS ■ CHENNAI

CG Power Industrial Power Solutions Ltd has planned a capex of ₹135 crore this fiscal, the company said.

The capex to be funded out of internal accruals will be on balancing, debottlenecking and modernising the facilities at the plants for productivity improvement.

CG Power also said barring four wholly owned overseas operating subsidiary companies in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and the US, rest of the subsidiaries are being closed or in the process of being wound up.

Entities which are under investigation, would be closed after obtaining necessary approvals of the authorities, the company said.

CG Power said it is ensuring business continuity during Covid-19 pandemic by working with extended and staggered shifts in the plants and digital transformation through online customer inspections, online service advice, sharing pictorial procedures with onsite customer personnel, remote support for testing equipment.

The company closed last fiscal with a total income of ₹2,568.06 crore and a net loss of ₹208.93 crore down from a total income of ₹3,226.36 crore and a loss of ₹1,799.20 crore registered in FY20.

However CG Power has posted a net profit of ₹673.77 crore during the last quarter of last year.

Last year CG Power was acquired by Murugappa Group's Tube Investments of India Ltd.

Under the one time settlement scheme, the entire debt of ₹2,160 crores were settled at ₹1,000 crore - (₹650 crore in cash and the rest by recognising a new debt of ₹150 crore and issue of zero coupon non-convertible debentures aggregating to ₹200 crore).

# Results of Vellore Institute of Technology Engineering Entrance Exam Declared

Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) declared the results for VIT Engineering Entrance Examination (VITEEE) on Saturday (June 12, 2021).

VITEEE, the entrance examination for various B.Tech programmes offered by VIT was conducted on May 28, 29, 31 and June 10, 2021 as online remote proctored examination. This mode enabled applicants to take VITEEE in the safety and comfort of their home. The results are available in <https://admissionresults.vit.ac.in/viteee>.

Applicants from 31 Indian states and 8 union territories and more than 15 foreign countries participated in VITEEE. Applicants within 1 lakh ranks are eligible to participate in the counselling scheduled from 21st June to 16th July 2021 in 4 phases.

Counselling for ranks 1 to 20,000 will be conducted from 21 to 22 June; 20,001 to 45,000 from 30th June to 1st July, 2021; 45,001 to 70,000 from 8th to 9th July 2021 and 70,001 to

# IPO-bound LIC warns against misuse of its iconic logo

IANIS ■ MUMBAI

The country's largest public sector insurer, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has issued a public warning over the unauthorised use or misuse of its iconic logo by anybody.

According to its Twitter handle, the LIC has barred any websites, publishing houses or digital entities from publishing its logo without the prior permission. The 65-year-old LIC, which is soon going for its IPO, has warned stringent legal or civil action against any person found misusing its official logo, in a post on Friday.

The simple but logo consists of a flame symbolizing 'life' with two shielding hands of 'life insurance' indicating its protection, with the Sanskrit legend below it - "Yogakshemam Vahmayham", derived from the Bhagwad Gita, and the LIC headquarters at Nariman Point in south Mumbai is also named 'Yogakshema'.

# Impossible achieved

Novak defeats 13-time champion Nadal in French Open semis, will face Tsitsipas for title today

AFP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic handed 13-time champion Rafael Nadal only his third defeat in 16 years and 108 matches at the French Open on Friday to reach his sixth Roland Garros final after an epic showdown which even beat the country's Covid-19 curfew.

In their 58th career clash, Djokovic triumphed 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 and stays on course to capture a 19th major and become the first man in over 50 years to win all four Slams twice.

Djokovic, the 2016 champion in Paris who had also beaten Nadal at the 2015 tournament, will face Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final in what will be his 29th championship match at the Slams.

Tsitsipas had earlier become the first Greek to reach a Grand Slam final with a 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Alexander Zverev.

Nadal, 35, remains tied on 20 majors with Roger Federer.

"It was a privilege to face Rafa in such an incredible match," said Djokovic after four hours and 11 minutes of intense action. "Tonight it was my greatest ever match in Paris."

He now leads Nadal 30-28 in their career rivalry.

"It's hard to find words for Rafa's achievements at Roland Garros. The amount of wins on this court is incredible," he added.

"You have to climb Mount Everest when you meet him here."

It was Djokovic's second win in eight meetings in Paris with Nadal, a sequence which also included three losses in finals.

It was Nadal's first defeat

Men's Final  
Live from 6:30 pm IST  
STAR SPORTS 1 & SELECT 1

**Djokovic will play Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final with the chance to not only add to his 2016 French Open title but also move to 19 Grand Slam titles, just one behind the men's record 20 held by Nadal and Roger Federer**



in 14 semi-finals in the French capital.

"Probably it was not my best day today, even if I fought," said Nadal. "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. I had a big chance. There were some crazy points but there was fatigue there."

Djokovic finished with 50 winners; Nadal committed 55 unforced errors under the relentless assault.

Djokovic had two break points in the opening game of the first set which stretched to 10 minutes but was unable to convert.

Nadal made him pay, sprinting away for a 5-0 lead before the top seed got on the board.

Djokovic clung on, retrieving one break to get to 2-5 but Nadal eventually prevailed after one hour on court even if he required seven set points to edge ahead.

The old rivals exchanged breaks in the second and third games of a big-hitting second set but it was Djokovic who repeated the feat for a 4-2 lead before levelling the tie.

Twice in the third set Djokovic edged ahead, only to be reeled back in by Nadal who broke back in the 10th game as the world number one served for the set.

Djokovic then saved a set point with an ice-cool drop shot in the 12th game.

"You cannot play better clay court tennis than this. It's perfect," tweeted Andy Murray.

A 92-minute third set ended with Djokovic taking the tiebreak. Nadal then broke in the first game of the fourth set but Djokovic levelled for 2-2 and broke again for 4-2.

He finished it off on a second match point when Nadal hit wide and long to conclude a match on the same court where they first met in 2006.

AFP ■ PARIS

Barbora Krejčíková won her maiden Grand Slam singles title at the French Open on Saturday, beating Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova to become the first Czech woman in 40 years to conquer Roland Garros.

Krejčíková, ranked 33 in the world and playing just her fifth main draw in a Slams singles event, triumphed 6-1, 2-6, 6-4 for a second career title.

The 25-year-old emulates compatriot Hana Mandlíková who claimed the trophy in Paris in 1981.

The 25-year-old Krejčíková dedicated her victory to her mentor, the former Wimbledon champion Jana Novotná who died of cancer at the age of 49 in 2017.

"It's hard to put into words. I cannot believe I have just won a Grand Slam," said Krejčíková who was still outside the top 100 when she won the 2020 French Open title last October.

"I spent a lot of time with Jana before she died. Her last words to me were 'enjoy tennis and try and win a Grand Slam'."

"I know she's looking after me. All this is pretty much because she is looking after me."

"It was amazing that I got the chance to meet her. She was such an inspiration. I miss her and I hope she's really happy."

In a nervy start to the final, Krejčíková was broken in the first game, serving up two double faults.

However, the 29-year-old Russian was unable to capitalise and dropped

# CZECHMATE

Barbora beats Anastasia in three sets to join Hana Mandlíková as the second Czech women's singles champion at Roland Garros

the next six games as her Czech opponent grabbed three breaks and raced away with the opener inside half an hour.

Krejčíková was rewarded for her bold attacking, hitting 13 winners to the Russian's seven.

Pavlyuchenkova, who made her Slam debut back in 2007, was the more composed player in the second set, stretching out to 5-1.

A medical timeout at 5-2, during which she was seen munching Haribo gummy bears, merely delayed the Russian levelling the final.

In the decider, the players exchanged breaks in the third and fourth games, before the Czech broke to love for 4-3 on the back of a 10-shot rally.

Pavlyuchenkova saved two championship points in the ninth game and a third in the 10th but Krejčíková became champion on the fourth when the Russian hit long.

Both women capitalised on a draw in which the top seeds fell and just kept falling.

World number one and 2019 champion Ashleigh Barty hobbled out in the second round.

Serena Williams was knocked out in the fourth round, world number two Naomi Osaka withdrew after one match, while 2018 champion Simona Halep never even made it to Paris.



# Sehwag looking forward to Boult vs Rohit contest

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Opening Trent Boult's incoming deliveries will make for a fascinating contest, something that Virender Sehwag will be looking forward to during the World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand, starting in Southampton on June 18.

Sehwag, who redefined the art of opening batting in Test cricket, feels that Rohit's qualities and recent form at the top of the order certainly makes him a candidate to succeed during the six Test matches in England this summer.

"No doubt Trent Boult-Tim Southee combination will pose a lot of challenge for Indians. They can move the ball both ways and are brilliant while bowling in partnerships also," Sehwag said.

"Boult vs Rohit Sharma will be a contest that I would



be looking forward to. If Rohit gets set and see off Boult's opening spell, it will be a treat to watch," feels one of India's greatest match winners.

While this would be Rohit's first shot at opening in English conditions, the experience of playing Tests in 2014 will certainly help him.

"Rohit is a fantastic batsman and he has played Test cricket in England earlier also (2014) so I think he can manage well as we have seen in recent times when he has opened the batting. I have no doubt that he will score runs in England this time."

"Obviously, as it is for any opener, he would have to be careful for the first 10 overs and see off that new ball to understand the conditions first. I am sure he will get a chance to show his range of strokes," said the man, who has scored more than 8000 Test runs.

Sehwag also believes that

rather than going in with four pacers, India should go with two spinners in their five-man bowling line-up as it would also strengthen their lower middle-order batting.

"I don't know how the wicket would look like on June 18th but one thing I have always believed is that you need to play to your strengths. If India can play with five specialist bowlers that will be great thing because I still believe that two spinners will come into effect on fourth and fifth day."

"Two spinners will be good for India because both Ashwin and Jadeja are capable all-rounders. That also adds depth to your batting. You don't need a sixth batsman with both of them around."

Sehwag also wants Pant to bat the way he knows and not get bogged down by too much analysis and dissection about technique and temperament needed to be successful in England.

# Boult hopes playing Edgbaston Test will put him in 'good stead'

**Birmingham:** Initially not expecting to feature in the ongoing second Test against England, New Zealand pacer Trent Boult is hopeful that achieving game fitness rather than bowling in the nets will put him in 'good stead' in the upcoming World Test Championship final against India.

"Initially I wasn't expecting to play this game but everything fell into line, and I gave myself that chance to get out there and I think I'll definitely be better off for that head out," Boult was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"It's one thing loading and getting through numbers in the nets but to simulate that kind of game fitness and having to come back three, four or five times in a day ... there's no real other



way to do that. So I'm hoping it puts me in good stead (for the WTC final)."

New Zealand have plenty of bowling options ahead of the marquee Test next week with pacers Tim Southee, Kyle Jamieson, Neil Wagner and Matt Henry performing well in ongoing series but Boult feels some 'hard calls' are on the cards.

"Healthy competition," Boult said about their pace-bowling options for the WTC final.

"The boys are very excited about the prospect, but they've put in a lot of hard yards not just over the last couple of weeks but over a couple of years of a Test Championship cycle."

"Some hard calls will have to be made but the big picture is the collective goal of lifting the world title," he added. PTI

# PCB to bid for 5 major ICC events

**Karachi:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will bid for five major events of the International Cricket Council (ICC) during the 2024-2031 cycle, including an edition of the Champions Trophy and World T20 Cup.

According to an official source, the PCB is in the process of preparing its bids for the ICC events which have to be submitted soon. "The ICC had asked for the expression of interest from its member countries. Once the Boards submit their bids, an independent committee of the ICC will assess the bids in December this year to give its report for a final decision next year," the source said.

The source said Pakistan has already held talks with the Emirates Cricket Board to jointly host some ICC events.

It was 24 years ago when Pakistan last hosted an ICC event — 1996 World Cup — jointly with India and Sri Lanka. PTI

# India's SL bound squad to have 14-day quarantine in Mumbai

**New Delhi:** India's white ball squad, led by Shikhar Dhawan, will quarantine in Mumbai from June 14 to 28 and undergo six RT-PCR tests on alternate days before flying off to Colombo for the six-match series against Sri Lanka, starting on July 13.

It is understood that all the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that will be followed by the Lanka-bound squad will be same as those of the first team currently in the United Kingdom for the World Test Championship final and five-match series against England.

"All the rules will be same like we followed in England. The outstanding players will come by charter flight and some fly business class of commercial airline," a BCCI source privy to development said.

"They will do seven days of room quarantine and

then can meet in common areas inside the bio-bubble. The players will do gym sessions in staggered manner."

While the three-match ODI series starts on July 13, it is expected that Indian team will have match simulation practice (situational training) after individual sessions, following three days of room quarantine at the team hotel in Colombo.

"It will be just like what's happening in England. Match situations will be created and that's how the intra-squad training will be held."

"You can't have your main players get out off the first ball and not bat again or bat for the whole innings. Everyone needs training so it won't be practice games as such," the source said. The Indian teams over the years have always stayed at the Taj Samudra Hotel in Colombo.



# Pant smashes ton, Gill 85 in intra-squad game



**Southampton:** The flamboyant Rishabh Pant took his senior bowling colleagues to the cleaners with an unbeaten century while opener Shubman Gill also warmed up with a polished 85 during the Indian team's intra-squad match simulation over the last two days.

The two teams are being led by Virat Kohli and KL Rahul with all the first team batsmen packed in one side and the regular bowlers on the other, with reserves like Wriddhiman Saha and Hanuma Vihari.

Pant, who has been in the form of his life, hammered every bowler including the spinners in his unbeaten 121 off 94 balls. Opening the batting with Rohit Sharma, Gill scored 85 off 135 balls.

Kohli's team was only troubled by veteran pacer Ishant Sharma who returned the best figures of 3 for 36. PTI

# Taylor helps NZ gain first-innings lead



AFP ■ BIRMINGHAM

**London:** The England and Wales Cricket Board is to launch a 'social media review' that could lead to disciplinary action following the fall-out from Ollie Robinson's Twitter posts.

The Sussex seamer was suspended from England duty pending an investigation after historic racist and sexist posts made in 2012 and 2013 re-emerged during his Test debut against New Zealand at Lord's last week.

Since Robinson's posts re-emerged, the social media feeds

last week's first Test at Lord's, was unbeaten on three.

New Zealand resumed on 229-3, a deficit of 74, after Will Young had been dismissed for 82 off the last ball of Friday's play when part-time off-spinner Dan Lawrence had him caught at short leg.

Taylor, who was 46 not out after opener Devon Conway had followed his stunning 200 on debut in last week's drawn first Test at Lord's with 80.

The experienced Taylor completed just his second fifty in 15 Test innings when he swept Lawrence for four, his seventh boundary in 101 balls faced.

# ECB to review players' social media

of a number of Internationals have been scrutinised, with an unnamed player found to have sent offensive tweets while under the age of 16.

Meanwhile, the experienced England trio of James Anderson, Jos Buttler and limited overs captain Eoin Morgan have all faced accusations of publishing potentially offensive messages.

The ECB board met on Wednesday and have decided to look into the issue in more detail, with a statement issued on Saturday saying: "The board

despite taking the new ball, with Bracey, fresh from his second duck in as many Tests, conceding nine byes.

Taylor's impressive innings ended, however, with New Zealand in sight of a first-innings lead, when he tried to attack Olly Stone but succeeded only in edging to Bracey.

New Zealand were then 292-4, with Taylor having missed out on a fourth Test century in England.

agreed to the executive's recommendation for a social media review to address any historical issues, remind individuals of their personal responsibilities going forward, and help them learn lessons along the way.

"The board was clear that this process would not prevent further disciplinary action in the future, should that be required, under the applicable processes, but it is hoped that the game can emerge from this difficult period stronger and determined to be more inclusive and welcoming to all." AFP

But Bracey's joy turned to despair three balls later when the relatively novice gloveman dropped new batsman Blundell after failing to hang to a low one-handed chance off Stone as he dived to his right.

But Bracey's see-saw match continued when Henry Nicholls a ball after being hit on the helmet by a Mark Wood bouncer, gloved down the legside on 21 and was well caught by the keeper.

# the pioneer agenda

I always knew that saying the unsayable was going to be a powerful thing  
— Phoebe Waller-Bridge



FROM THE INSIDE

## The vaccine solution

As the Maldives tourism industry faces the brunt of rising Covid-19 cases, it is time cut the losses & buy effective vaccines



## Need based use of Shakti

Shakti ought to be applied intelligently, with all the care and caution, and focused towards serving need based aspirations

# THE WORLD WIDE WEB OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI can be great to increase the wealth and happiness of humans but we must be making more intelligent choices about when to let it in, writes AKSHAT TYAGI as he warns against the manipulation/misuse of knowledge engineering

Narendra Modi has shown the people of India that he is the only leader who can lead India to become a developed country. The first thing he did in his reign was to eliminate the corruption that was rampant all over India. The corrupt bureaucrats were fired and the black money that was stashed away was brought back to India. The people were fed up of the scams that were taking place in the country. Modi has made sure that the corrupt people are punished and put behind the bars. Modi has shown that the country is secure in his hands. He has made sure that no terrorist would be able to penetrate into the country and destroy the peace that we have in India. He has also made sure that the Chinese are not able to cross the border and conquer any of the Indian territory.

The passage above is neither my opinion nor my writing. In fact, it was not written by a human being at all. It was generated using one of the most advanced language models ever — OpenAI's GPT3. The instruction I gave the model was: Write an essay about Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ideology. Using publicly available information it can generate coherent thoughts best resembling a human writer. The model can create new ideas, classify information like moods and intentions, summarise content, chat like an empathetic friend and even write basic computer code. It can often ramble and throw meaningless sentences too, like most humans, I guess.

The model is so good at producing human-like sentences that the company which built it has decided to not give out access to this tool to the general public. They sell the right to use GPT3 to a selected group of people and strongly review what you do with it. They do not permit its use for political campaigns, spam, hateful content, content that incites violence, or other uses that may cause social harm.

Whether the paragraph above is for a political campaign or not is for you to judge, or might depend on where it is published. It can easily qualify as public awareness advertising with some skilful explanation.

Absurd, isn't it? A company limits its customer size when so many others are waiting in line to give them their money. It doesn't have to market its product, it has to keep it quiet and control what you do with it. Imagine you go to buy a new car, and you first have to submit an application describing where you're going to drive it and the car manufacturer says they can anytime decide you're a bad driver and take the car back. You would probably think the car ain't worth the fuss.

And you'd mostly be right. You can do pretty horrible things with a car if you want but the damage is still going to be limited. When you start crashing into other cars and killing pedestrians, the car would either break down or you will soon enough hit a police barrier. This level of insanity is pretty rare not because of the policing by Hyundai or Suzuki, but because there are real-life consequences to such behaviour. You'll land up in jail and the rest of your life would get very difficult.

OpenAI has got out of its way to make

sure you are not a bad person with ill intentions because the kind of damage AI can do to our democracies, relationships, health and communities are far more severe than we currently understand. And this damage is going to be deeper and more nuanced, like murder without a murderer, a fountain of blood but no knife.

It is the closest we have come to the sci-fi dystopia feared for so many decades. AI doesn't need to be a conscious entity with a desire for power, nor does it need an Iron Man suit to do real damage to real people. When we talk about not-yet-possible AI in anthropomorphic form, we forget a form of it is already here. And until we understand how it can hurt us, we will not know how governments and companies can use it to manipulate common people for greater power.

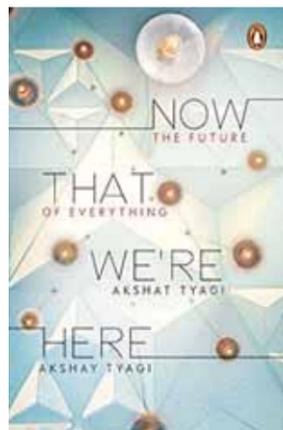
Stuck at homes we are spending more time on social media and the internet than ever. It means more of our beliefs are shaped by a virtual world that we would never verify and experience personally. AI may have had the distant potential to disrupt our lives for years, but now more than ever it has an immediate chance to touch us as we scroll our timelines for sharing SOS messages and distracting ourselves from the horror outside.

### WHY DOES AI CONTENT MATTER?

Let's look at the anatomy of a conversation on social media. For example, you hear about a report of political corruption at the highest levels of government. You create a hashtag like #CorruptionHurts. Your friends and their friends share it, popular pages use the same hashtag and some big celebrities also join in. Twitter picks up your chatter and features it in the 'Trending' section.

The leader in question is of course threatened by this public mobilisation. So they get their own troll army to use the same hashtag to either tweet gibberish, highlighting the corruption of the Opposition or calling the dissenters a gang of hooligans. When the next person tries to click on the hashtag to learn more or search the trend, it will appear to be a partisan issue where one can pick their monster or declare the whole thing a hoax. Unimaginable? We don't know if this was government-sponsored obfuscation but this is what happened during the Russian protests of 2011 when people came out against ballot stuffing and voting irregularities in the elections. After the Russian police detained protestors at Moscow's Triumphal Square, activists created a massive tweetstorm with the hashtag #Triumfalnaya (in Russian). It wasn't much later that the same anti-government hashtag was polluted by pro-Kremlin messages. If you never heard about it, they did a good job.

Scholars call this censorship by noise. AI with its ease of believable content generation at scale will make this problem almost impossible to tackle. Every time that the powerful need to change the narrative and get away with their failings, they wouldn't even have to summon an army of trolls to that. A few skilled employees with access to advanced language models will take care of millions of disgruntled citi-



“THE ONLY BULWARK AGAINST AI IS TO BE BETTER-INFORMED CITIZENS. WE SHOULDN'T BE OKAY WITH OUR GOVERNMENT BOASTING ABOUT SELLING OUR DRIVING LICENSE DATA IN THE PARLIAMENT OR USING FACIAL RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY TO IDENTIFY PROTESTORS. NEITHER SHOULD WE NAIVELY GET EXCITED EVERY TIME A COMPANY TALKS ABOUT A 'PERSONALISED' DIET, MUSIC PLAYLIST, BOOK RECOMMENDATION, CAREER COUNSELLING OR THE NEXT SHINY THING MADE JUST FOR US

zens. Detecting bot accounts and misinformation is already hard for social media companies. What happens when they have to distinguish between the thoughts of flesh beings and silicon avatars?

Even when the political moment is over, imagine how it changes people. If AI can tweet and talk like a person, would you be more alarmed about the account which replied to your post yesterday? Would you be sure they actually agreed with you, are they genuine allies? Suspicion and mistrust can be lethal weapons to make us doubt the reality around us.

### MANY LIVES OF AI

Even though an AI program has a pre-defined objective, we don't quite know how it will go around achieving that objective. There is no simple mathematical function AI follows to get the outputs from the inputs, even though it has been designed purposefully to get those specific outputs. We can observe and study how it behaves by adjusting levers in a controlled environment, but we still don't know what kind of relation it develops between the input and output and whether these relations can be translated into real-world properties at all.

Many traditionally human-intensive jobs are already being augmented by tech, making people's skills less central to the equation. Ever had a bad day and a worse Uber driver who wouldn't pay any heed to the Google Maps' traffic-congestion warnings? He thinks he knows these streets better than any American corporation ever will. He knows which route is shorter and quicker because driving is what he has spent his life doing. There's no point fighting to persuade each other when confirming both his and Google's hypothesis that the traffic will cost you more time than taking a bad option. Even when he surrenders to your arguments about Google Map's algorithm and takes that unintuitive path to drop you at the destination on time, he still cribs about the path not taken. In any case, he is always right.

Of course, the algorithm is not always right. We selectively remember the times it didn't alert us about the diversion, but there is a logic behind its accuracy that we generally trust. It gathers data from millions of other cars, analyses the historical traffic-movement patterns of a neighbourhood and predicts the soon-to-be congestion on your path.

Even though this sophisticated synthesis of data has been around for a while, it has gained increasing traction in the past decade. Never before have we had the capacity to collect these many data points nor the computing power to make any meaning of them. Just fifteen years ago, the best way to predict the shortest and quickest path to a destination was individual human intelligence. And that largely meant you were a frequent commuter of that route to have formed at least a stable opinion of traffic movement. The more outgoing you were, the more personal data you had, the smarter your decisions turned out to be.

In this pre-Google Maps era, individuals with greater social freedom turned out to be better decision-makers. To be clear, this wasn't

a difference of intelligence or any other genetic advantage; it was merely a case of a larger pool of data. The compounded benefit of better decision-making strengthened their position as better deserving of making important decisions. It created a self-serving cycle that kept improving the decisions made by them, earning them even greater power. These pocket machines work the same way but have the data of all the earth's drivers combined and augmented drivers to be much better at their jobs.

That's just one example of how a combination of AI and algorithms changes our lives every day right now. It impacts who has the power to lead and who is left behind.

### NOW THAT WE'RE HERE

When a breakthrough in AI happens, it can be deployed before any government can blink an eyelid. There limits to how we can regulate a technology the creation of which doesn't even need an office building let alone a registered GST address. It doesn't come asking for environmental and labour permits. Governments can attempt to control big corporations from following some ethical principles and defining what's okay. Sadly, Indian politicians and bureaucrats are highly unlikely to lose sleep over the design and data of AI anytime soon.

The transport ministry will be better off beginning the work of mitigation now rather than after all the driving jobs in transportation are lost. Transport minister Gadkari may or may not be around to defend his position of not letting autonomous driving happen in the country. India spent a lot of effort wooing Tesla to India when the car maker's ultimate pitch is vehicles that can drive themselves. We want Tesla's factory jobs but fear its main product. India is like a man in his midlife crisis who likes looking at children but not spending time with them.

The only bulwark against AI is to be better-informed citizens. We shouldn't be okay with our government boasting about selling our driving license data in the parliament or using facial recognition technology to identify protestors. Neither should we naively get excited every time a company talks about a 'personalised' diet, music playlist, book recommendation, career counselling or the next shiny thing made just for us.

AI can be great to increase the wealth and happiness of humans but we must be making more intelligent choices about when to let it in. Exciting technology solutions should not steal our attention from things that matter and make life worthwhile. If there are no vaccines in a country, talking about a facial authentication system for efficient distribution is like talking about interior design for cloud castles. Sounds fancy but is pretty useless. Or even deadly.

The writer is the founder of WorkHack and a Rajeev Circle Fellow. AI and Automation is one of the ideas in his book, Now That We're Here: The future of everything (published by Penguin), amongst Design, Data, Behavioural Economics and so much more



SUSTAINABILITY IS NO LONGER ABOUT DOING LESS HARM. IT'S ABOUT DOING MORE GOOD  
—JOCHEN ZEITZ

# THE VACCINE SOLUTION

As tourism industry faces the brunt of rising Covid-19 cases in the Maldives, now might be the time cut the losses and buy the more expensive, but more effective, vaccines, writes SONU SHIVDASANI

The Maldives, along with Dubai, the Seychelles, the United Kingdom, and Israel, are counted among the most vaccinated countries as of now. But while Israel and the UK are seeing the virus almost disappear, the Maldives, Dubai, and the Seychelles are witnessing the opposite, with cases skyrocketing.

In the Maldives, the number of cases has risen from a low of 19 per day in December to over 2,000 in late May, the number of deaths, 45, represents one third of all deaths that we have suffered since the beginning of the pandemic. This is in spite of the fact that 58% of the population has received one vaccine shot, and 30% has received both.

## THE HUMAN AND ECONOMIC TOLL

The recent rise in cases in Male led to hospitals overflowing with patients, and a tragic rise in deaths. Out of the 125 Covid-19 deaths in the Maldives, 45 occurred during the past month. While the fatality rate remains extremely low (0.2% of people who caught Covid-19 in the Maldives have died), that statistic doesn't provide much solace to those who have lost loved ones.

The high case load in recent weeks has also inflicted economic damage. Out of the top ten markets this year, four are no longer able to travel. Indians (the number two market this year) are no longer permitted to visit the Maldives. Germany, the UK, and France (markets number three, seven, and nine) have put the Maldives on their red lists. In the UK, citizens returning home from the Maldives have to quarantine in a miserable hotel for 14 days.

According to the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA), US Dollar revenues collected in January 2021 were USD 46 million — just 1% down on January 2020. But in January, things were looking good. Now as many countries' citizens cannot travel here, and revenues in May and June are likely to be similar to October 2020 — 58% down on the year earlier. On an annualised basis, this could cost the Government as much as USD 250 million in lost revenues.

## THE UNDERLYING REASON

One reason could be the choice of vaccine. The first vaccine Israel used was the Pfizer-BioNTech. They also have an excess supply of Moderna. Dubai and the Maldives had a similar vaccination program using a combination of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine and Sinopharm. The Seychelles is the most vaccinated country in the world but has relied almost exclusively on Sinopharm.

At Soneva, we consulted six leading infectious disease experts from around the world to assist us with our Covid strategy. Unfortunately, the feedback on the Chinese vaccine was not great.



According to one of the experts: "The mRNA vaccines (Moderna and Pfizer) are the only ones with published data showing high performance even against the new virus variants. The Chinese vaccines that are being used in many parts of the world appear to be only weakly protective, from the limited amount of information available... The problem is that we do not have reliable data on the Chinese vaccines."

Shared another expert: "Sinopharm, unlike the vaccines noted above, is more of a 'classical' vaccine design (i.e. inactivated whole virus) — the kind of vaccines which have been tried (and failed) for decades for combating seasonal Coronavirus. Although the Sinopharm licensing studies suggest the vaccine has 80% effectiveness, the trials had very few people over 60 years and I have concerns about Sinopharm's effectiveness in older individuals in particular. Whether Sinopharm will provide more or less resilience to emerging Covid variants, such as the new strain found in India remains unclear."

When one considers the relative performance of countries using different vac-

cines, as well as the feedback of these experts, it would seem that Sinopharm may not be as effective as we have been led to believe.

## PROTECTING A PATIENT FROM CATCHING THE VIRUS V/S PROTECTING THE PATIENT FROM GETTING SERIOUSLY ILL

All data shows that while some vaccines are more effective in preventing you from catching the virus, all the vaccines are generally effective in preventing serious illness and, most importantly, death. As one of the experts consulted said: "Even the weakly protective vaccines may be quite helpful in preventing serious disease or death."

While the number of cases have spiked, and last month, 5 out of 45 fatalities were from people who had already received a second dose of the vaccine, the performance in the Maldives in terms of fatalities is amongst the best in the world. A few months ago, the survival rate here was 99.7%. It is now 99.8%. This is second to Singapore at 99.95%. It is also a commendable performance when compared to India (98.88%), the U.S. (98.21%), Germany (97.6%), and the U.K. (97.16%). The Seychelles at 99.65% is slightly behind

ACCORDING TO MIRA, US DOLLAR REVENUES COLLECTED IN JANUARY 2021 WERE JUST 1% DOWN ON JANUARY 2020. NOW AS MANY COUNTRIES' CITIZENS CANNOT TRAVEL TO THE MALDIVES, REVENUES IN MAY AND JUNE ARE LIKELY BE SIMILAR TO OCTOBER 2020 — 58% DOWN ON THE YEAR EARLIER

the Maldives. So, whilst the vaccines might be less effective in preventing one from getting the virus, they are generally protective against serious disease and death. There are more deaths in Male at the moment simply because there are many, many more cases.]

## A NEED FOR PERSPECTIVE

As we discuss the benefits and drawbacks of different vaccines, it is important to remember that the experience in the Maldives, is that if one gets Covid, one has a 99.8% chance of survival.

Furthermore, it is important to remember to boost one's immunity. Immune-boosting diet, rich in foods including garlic, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, and red onions is considered to be of great help. As is popular Ayurvedic herb, Andrographis paniculata. Fortunately, we have had no fatalities among the people who tested positive at our resort.

Dr. Abdul Slocum, a Turkish Oncologist, who treated his cancer patients that caught Covid recently shared: "We used anti-coagulants, anti-biotics, antivirals as conventional therapeutics togeth-

er with high dose vitamin C, Andrographis, Thyme extract etc. as complementary therapies and all of our patients have gotten better with such treatment." So, irrespective of whether one has had the vaccines or not, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is still very important to ensure that one does not succumb to this disease.

## MIXING AND MATCHING VACCINES

Call it the way forward, but if the Maldives wants to get both the health and economic long-term benefits of its vaccine roll-out, it might consider changing the brand of vaccines it uses for second shots. There is little information on the effects of combining Sinopharm with other vaccines. However, a recent article in the Lancet finds that pairing the Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca vaccines appears to increase the likelihood of mild to moderate side effects, but no serious outcomes were reported. In fact, the article goes on to say that:

"MIT Technology Review reports that such an approach could become more common if mixing and matching Covid-19 vaccines is proven to boost the overall level or duration of immunity — as tantalizing, early evidence suggests might be the case."

"Several trials ..... have been launched to examine the question MIT Technology Review reports, including a study in Spain assessing the viability of mixing a first doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine with a second dose of Pfizer-BioNTech, as well as a study between AstraZeneca and Russia's Gamaleya Institute examining how AstraZeneca's vaccine works in combination with Russia's Sputnik V vaccine."

Early evidence suggests that it is possible to combine vaccines and change course. The Pfizer vaccine is considerably more expensive than other options. Covishield is generally available for somewhere between USD 2-4 per vaccine (if you can get hold of the shots, that is). The cost of the Pfizer vaccine is approximately USD 25. Israel was the first to receive a large amount of Pfizer because they offered the company 23 Euros vis-a-vis the 12 Euros the E.U. countries were offering. It is my understanding that Dr Reddy's Laboratories, the Indian manufacturer of the Sputnik V vaccine, proposed a price of USD 14 for the vaccine.

However, as I mentioned earlier, we are starting to see a big drop in tourism as a result of the spike in cases. The economic consequences could affect MIRA's revenues by as much as USD 10 million to USD 20 million per month — considerably more than the cost of more expensive vaccines. Now might be the time cut our losses and buy the more expensive, but more effective, vaccines.

The writer is the CEO and Joint Creative Director of Soneva

# The low hanging fruit of agroforestry

India was the first country to adopt a national agroforestry policy in 2014. However, most farmers are reluctant to embrace this ecologically and socially sound practice due to lack of policy support, write ELISA VALLETTE & SIJO ABRAHAM

Agroforestry designates land-use systems that deliberately integrate woody perennials (trees, shrubs, palms, bamboo, etc.) with crops or animals. The "forest" within the "agroforestry" can be an existing native forest, the edge of a forest or a planted forest by the land's owner. But agroforestry should not be reduced to the addition of trees. Agroforestry is a regenerative agricultural practice which, through topsoil regeneration, enables biosequestration that is the capture and storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Moreover, agroforestry seeks to optimise the vibrant interplays within local ecosystems to make farms more productive, self-sustained and resilient without a lot of external human inputs. Indeed, the dynamic ecological equilibrium between trees and crops increases biodiversity while improving natural water cycles and enhancing ecosystem services.

Despite its ancient origins, the practice of agroforestry declined at the expense of intensive agriculture promoted during the green revolution in the 1970s. Today, the agriculture sector suffers from climate change while still largely contributing to it. Indeed, agriculture is responsible for 16% of India's annual greenhouse gases emissions, making it the second most polluting sector. However, the flip side of the coin is that climate change threatens agriculture, on which about 58% of India's

population depend on as their primary source of livelihood. Thus, increased socio-environmental concerns have sparked renewed interests for agroforestry practises. Agroforestry provides the opportunity to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions from agriculture, capturing atmospheric carbon, while simultaneously helping farmers to adapt to harsher climate conditions. Already practised on 13.5 million hectares in India, the potential to expand is enormous, especially for the 80% of small-holders farmers in the country with two hectares of land or less. Numerous low-hanging fruits stem from tapping into this potential.

While at first glance agroforestry did not seem profitable, today's socio-environmental crisis makes this long-neglected practice an undeniable solution. According to the Restoration Opportunities Atlas, India has 87 million hectares of land that could benefit from agroforestry. 952.5 million tons of above-ground carbon could be sequestered by just a 20% increase in tree cover. Beyond climate change mitigation, agroforestry farmers are better equipped against climate variations. Although decades of intensive agriculture have depleted soils and threatened natural ecosystem services, regenerative agriculture could repair these damages and conserve soils.

For instance, while agriculture devours and tends to contaminate



water, agroforestry favours and takes advantage of natural water cycles. Also, scientific evidence shows that trees stimulate evaporation and transpiration thereby increasing local rainfalls. Then, as the roots of trees extend deeper than annual crops, water can more easily infiltrate into the ground, preventing floods and making communities resilient in the face of natural disasters.

Roots also take up nutrients from deeper layers of soil that otherwise cannot be reached by the crops and prevent the groundwa-

ter from being contaminated by excess fertilizers or manures. In addition to efficient water management, a forest's inherent native biodiversity helps prevent pest attacks and soil erosion. Therefore, agroforestry allows restoration of depleted soils, maintenance of biodiversity and climate resilience.

These environmental benefits coincide with socio-cultural positive externalities for farmers and consumers. Indeed, agroforestry diversifies types of crops, makes harvests more resilient, and there-

fore secures farmers' livelihood. It also boosts agricultural productivity since, on smaller plots of land, agroforestry grows more food than mono-crops per hectare, alleviating the current pressure on land. This maximisation of potential yields is all the more pleasing as harvests prove to be more nutritious. Therefore, agroforestry provides hope for long-term food security to a growing nation. However, several barriers prevent agroforestry from becoming a mainstream practice. First, since 2014, the policy

rather than alleviating political obstacles has added confusion. Indeed, the creation of a national agroforestry board, which aimed at aligning existing programmes and providing better coordination between the ministries of agriculture, forest and rural development, never gained enough authority. Therefore, despite successfully simplifying regulations, the enabling legal environment is shadowed by an ambiguous governance system.

Secondly, the policy offers farmers extension services and capacity-building training. However, inadequate awareness failed to popularise these policy initiatives. Non-governmental organisations such as Saytrees, who have helped more than 700 farmers, planting 1500 fruit trees over the past 4 years, act as useful bridges between national programs and on-the-ground realities.

Wider local-knowledge dissemination might still be insufficient to overcome farmers' reluctance since at first sight, agroforestry might not seem profitable. Indeed, yields might decrease in the first few years until the soil quality has fully recovered. To countervail perceived risks during the transition phase, the policy should provide safety nets so the farmers can change without risking their livelihood in addition to information about agroforestry's longer-term benefits. Another major obstacle the policy failed to address is the lack

of clear land ownership rights which discourages farmers from planting trees, perceived as a long term investment. Social discriminations along with gender, caste or tribal lines further force farmers to focus on short term yields and profits. Therefore, for the agroforestry policy to be successful, it is essential to first clarify land tenure rights while subsidising access to land, water, technology and credit across caste and communal barriers.

Finally, despite the stated objective of the policy to boost market linkages, rural farmers still encounter difficulties to find outlets for these products. However, the growing demand given the popularity to buy local, organic and nutritious indigenous varieties, should incentivise farmers to overcome these supply-chain gaps.

To conclude, despite the agroforestry policy seeking to extract agroforestry's tremendous benefits, farmers still face many challenges to make the transition. Therefore, complementary services and additional support, especially during the transition phase, should work in synergy with the agroforestry policy. India has already established itself to be a global agricultural powerhouse and by the successful implementation of agroforestry, it could champion sustainable agriculture and inspire other nations to adopt and implement similar policies.

The writers are Fellow, Anant Fellowship for Climate Action

# China's new population policy a long shot

China's current demographic structure is bringing a new reality to the forefront. The seventh National Census conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC) in 2020 records the slowest population growth in decades since 1950s. As per the census, China's population stands at 1.41 billion. It's an increase of 5.8 per cent that is 72 million people over the population of 2010. The NBSC reports that Chinese mothers gave birth to 12 million babies in 2020, whereas it was 14.65 million in 2019. This indicates that there is a straight fall of 18 per cent birth rate. The fact of the matter is that this is the fourth consecutive drop in the annual birth rate across China. However, these figures do not include the population of Hong Kong and Macau.

The national demographic data released by the Chinese Government in May will have long-term social and economic policy implications across the country. If the current trend of population growth continues, the number of young people will start decreasing and the older generation would increase.

Eventually, at one point, the population will stabilise and start declining.

The thrust of the census is that the country is ageing fast. It also highlighted that the overall population growth of the country is at its lowest in generations and its fertility rate has gone down to 1.3 children per woman.

This is the lowest among countries with similar incomes. Also, it is right below 2.1 that is required to sustain a stable population in such countries. Interestingly, this is a level lower than Japan, which has been experiencing population decline and very rapid ageing.

In a crucial meeting of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China (CPC), chaired by President Xi Jinping, the country declared the historic three-child policy. It announced that it will allow each couple in the country to have up to three children. It's a marked departure from its two-child policy announced in 2016.

China's population control dates back to post-Mao party state controlled by legendary Deng Xiaoping in the 1970s. The primary motivations behind coercive population



A child holds a dinosaur balloon during Children's Day at a mall in Beijing on June 1, 2021

AP

control in China emerged from alarmist writings of the 1970s, mostly published in Europe and America. One such fundamental and acclaimed work was the Club of Rome's Report called "The Limits to Growth" (1972) authored by Donella H Meadows, Dennis L Meadows, Jorgen Randers and William W Behrens. Also, the historic findings of the study were first presented to the global audience in Moscow and in Rio de Janeiro in the year 1971. The other was the Stanford University biologist Paul Ehrlich's book known as "The Population Bomb" (1968). Professor Ehrlich cautioned the international community about the high growth of population. He even opined that it was too late to prevent a doomsday apocalypse emerging from the rapid growth of population around the world. The book predicted the coming of famine in the 1970s and 1980s due to overpopulation and other unusual societal upheavals around the same period.

Succinctly, these works issued an urgent call to the international community to limit the growth of population. Also, such writings spread the fear that overpopulation would result in resource depletion and the shortage of the same for all. In the same decade, massive funds released by the UN Population Fund, the World Bank and finally, the Swedish International Development Authority encouraged many countries to adopt strict population control measures.

In totality, the fear of population growth funnelled money, manpower, resources and scientific research towards immediate population control. One such country that immediately stepped into the task was no other the People's Republic of China. Then China's top leader Deng introduced the infamous "One Child Policy" to halt the birth rate in the country.

What led Song Jina, a famous scientist, to rewrite the modern history of popula-

tion science in China was his background in the defence science establishment and his position as an elite scientist of the nation. This gave him the leverage of using cultural, scientific, economic and political resources to redefine the country's population growth. Thus, he was able to create a new and radical framework to fix China's population bomb once for all. And his scientific solution called "One Child Policy for All" was accepted in the power corridors of Beijing as the only way out to take the nation from the mess i.e. "demographic impasse".

However, the reality dawned on the Communist leadership in the middle of the last decade. China officially ended its one child population policy on January 1, 2016. This was done by signing into a Bill allowing all married couples to have a second child. The new policy came into practice in March same year after it was ratified by the Chinese parliament i.e. National People's Congress.

In March 2017, the National Health and Family Planning Commission reported to the 12th National People's Congress that live births in national hospitals reached 18.46 million and fertility rate increased up to 1.7 per cent in 2016. And this was recorded as the highest since the year 2000. Even to encourage couples to have two children, the 18th meeting of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress reviewed the crucial "Amendment to the Population and Family Planning Law of the People's Republic of China".

Afterwards, the new draft of the law brought forth a comprehensive package for the couples to have a second child in the country. Needless to say, in the revised law, the Government "advocated" rather than "allowing" couples to have two children.

The aim of the second child policy was to cope with the country's ageing population and fast shrinking workforce. By 2018, the new National

Health Commission simply took over the responsibility of the task of population management from the National Health and Family Planning Commission. And the once popular phrase "family planning" disappeared from the lexicon of all government transactions.

Today, the new three-child policy is not all about adding up to China's declining labour pool. It has some other aspects as well. Lack of availability of affordable childcare, rising living costs and gruelling work hours have forced many young couples to abandon the thought and efforts of having another child. Housing is not a problem but lack of working opportunities in some parts of China like the ones bordering with Russia is bothering the young couples to have two or more children. There is again huge shortage of live-in helpers as most of them are migrant workers. That is why it is more expensive to hire a domestic help in China than bringing a foreign one in many other

fast-growing and developed Asian metropolis such as Singapore, Hong Kong, etc.

In fact, high labour force participation brings pressure on fertility rates. It has been observed that having a child has a negative impact on women's wage across China. According to China Health and Nutrition Survey of 2014, about 7 per cent of the women's wages were being reduced on the birth of every child.

However, the new three-child policy won't fix China's economic problems. Its demographic crisis cannot be solved by an approach called "go all out on pro-birth policies". It's ridiculous. President Xi Jinping and other powerful leaders in the Communist Party are worried about the country's existential threat and its clout in the power calculus of the world.

It's a new challenge for Xi and his regime. A recent survey of 1938 millennials published in March by the Social Survey Centre of the China Youth Daily reveals that 67.3 per cent young people expressed inability to find domestic helps. And this could be one of the main reasons for them not to opt for another child.

Around 61.7 per cent indicated high financial pressure, followed by a lack of safe and adequate nurseries at 54 per cent, higher demand for housing at 41.6 per cent and finally 24 per cent cited the impact on a woman's career and employment prospects after having one more baby.

At the moment, China needs an adequate and affordable childcare support system to boost its flagging birth rate. And this will encourage young and economically capable parents to think of having more than one child in the days to come. As the country is blighted by a declining fertility rate, the Xi regime needs to think about innovative policy measures to address the woes of the millennials.

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**The aim of the three-child policy is to cope with the country's ageing population and fast shrinking workforce. However, the lack of availability of affordable childcare, rising living costs and gruelling work hours have forced many young couples in China to abandon the thought of having another child. Also, it has been observed that having a child has a negative impact on women's wage. According to China Health and Nutrition Survey of 2014, about 7 per cent of the women's wages were being reduced on the birth of every child**



MAKHAN SAIKIA

## PERSPECTIVE

# Scourge of child labour: No end in sight

**Until a holistic approach is taken where the parents' need to push children into child labour is obviated, the scourge of child labour — aided and abetted by Covid-induced economic slump — is there to remain for long**



BRAJESH KUMAR TIWARI

Childhood is the most beautiful journey of life, and children are the future of the country. The UNICEF emphasises that every long-term plan for human resource investment or human resource creation should begin with children, but this is not the case; today child labour is a worldwide problem.

According to the latest report (June 10, 2021) jointly published by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the UNICEF, the number of child labourers increased to 160 million from 152 million in 2016. The report says that 10 per cent of total children are involved in gainfully employed worldwide.

In India, there are 20 million child labourers, as per the Government statistics; however, the ILO puts it at 30 million, of which about 20 per cent children work as domestic helps. According to the Indian Constitution, a child between 5 years and 14 years is considered a child labourer if s/he does paid work for livelihood or to pay back family debt through labour; while the United Nations considers a worker below the age of 18 years as a child labourer.

The compulsive urge for a child to indulge in menial

labour is primarily driven by family destitution. Children are thrown into risky, back-breaking labour to lend their family a helping hand for sustenance. Unemployed parents send their children to work. And as most of the employers seek cheap labour, children who can't negotiate wage or working conditions are the best workforce.

The child labour class is contributing about 6 per cent to the Gross National Product. Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have the maximum number of child labourers. About 45,000 children are employed in Tamil Nadu's Sivakasi firecracker and matchbox factories. There are 50,000 in the Firozabad glass industry. A large number of children are employed in stone grinding in Jaipur, in the Moradabad brassware industry, in the Aligarh lock making units, in the slate making in Markapura (Andhra Pradesh), and in the carpet industry in Mandsaur (Madhya Pradesh). Apart from this, there are million others employed as domestic helps, restaurant waiters/waitresses and street vendors.

The Government is empowered to make separate laws for children by Article 15(3) of the Constitution.



Sami Ullah, 10 years old, works at an automotive repair shop to earn living for his family in Lahore, Pakistan, on June 12, 2021. The ILO observes June 12 as the World Day Against Child Labour to highlight the plight of child labourers

AP

There were several legal provisions to safeguard the childhood; for example Article 23 prohibits the buying and sell-

ing of children and their doing illegal and immoral acts and Article 24 prohibits employment of children below the age

of 14 in factories, mines and industrial establishments.

In 1986, the Child Labour Prevention and Regulation Act

was enacted. In 1996, child labour in hazardous industries was declared illegal by the Supreme Court. Child labour cells were formed.

The "National Agenda" (1998) announced by the Government demonstrated the commitment of the Government to make special efforts for education, nutrition and medical facilities for children. Programmes like Rashtriya Shishu Sadan Yojana (1994), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (1995), Balika Samadhi Yojana (1997), Udisha Yojana (1997), Kishori Shakti Yojana (2000), etc, aimed to end the scourge of child labour. But all these efforts proved insufficient due to irresponsible administration and the compelling situation of the parents' destitution.

To eliminate the problem of child labour, the Government should provide employment to the parents of children, so that they can maintain their family and children do not need to indulge in paid work. Attention should be given to agricultural development so that the parents of rural children can become self-dependent and the children do not face the lack of job opportunities. Social organisations should spread awareness against child labour.

Some employers abuse child workers, especially girls, mentally and physically. And they continue to break with impunity the laws protecting children because the law enforcers either don't take the child labour seriously, or the child labour has become an established social reality.

The problem of child labour is a problem related to socio-economic background, which can't be eliminated without strong willpower and effective steps.

The study shows that in today's consumerist era, the market forces are increasing day by day. Sensitivity and morality have no place in the market, so the respect for labourers is also decreasing and cheap labour is being promoted in the form of children.

Until a holistic approach is taken where the parents' need to push children into child labour is obviated, the scourge of child labour — aided and abetted by Covid-induced economic slump — is there to remain for long

(The writer is Associate Professor, School of Management and Entrepreneurship, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi)



**YOUR WEEK AHEAD**



MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week your priorities will focus on others such as children, spouse, and any elderly members in the family over your health. For those following an unhealthy diet, this is a wake-up call. A poor level of vitamin and protein will make you feel tired and irritable. The time is not favourable healthwise, you must take care and eat healthy to increase metabolism. Professionally, those who are looking for a job will get hired in a few days that will test their skills and potentials. This will be a very demanding job. Believe in yourself. Some of you will be weighed down with far more responsibilities. On a personal level, you will have concern for others and people around you will be grateful, and reciprocate well.

Lucky number 14  
Lucky colour Green  
Lucky day Thursday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week you may need a medical examination. You are likely to face some confusion regarding health and it will make you feel low. This is the time to lift yourself and transform your life. You must be honest with yourselves and decide what best action should be implemented to rise to the challenges and embrace the good life. Career-wise, this week will be in your favour. You are likely to appreciate your sincere and hard work. Financially the week will be satisfactory but you need to follow a budget to avoid any tough times. Relationship wise, you will experience freshness and a blissful state. This week you will be passionate and energetic and will enjoy a charming personality.

Lucky number 8  
Lucky colour Magenta  
Lucky day Friday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 19

You will spend time in spiritual pursuits to find peace and inner calm. Follow meditation, yoga, and Pranayam to bring balance and gain strength to fight any stress. You will be able to find solutions to most of the issues of life. Don't be in a hurry for any work. Give time to pamper yourself. The divine connection will show you the right path. This week financial worries are indicated. Professionally, you are not happy and some of you feel demotivated. If possible, interact with people to keep up your morale. Do not give up on a temporary low phase. This is the time to wait for the good times. Things are not so good in the relationship area. Your partner will have a long list of accusation; sit and discuss them. Things will move into a lighter phase.

Lucky number 18  
Lucky colour Silver  
Lucky day Wednesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

This week take your time to identify hidden issues that are preventing you from seeing the reality. Some of you may look out for emotional support from a female person to identify the emotional trouble and what can be done about it. Meditation is beneficial at this time. Don't be disappointed about not getting the things done as this would spoil your day or maybe the week. On the career front, investing your time in attending a webinar or any online skill development class will be favourable. These programmes will help you virtually connect with people. This will further provide you unique guiding light and moral force. This week relationship area needs your attention and clear expression. Express yourself before it is too late.

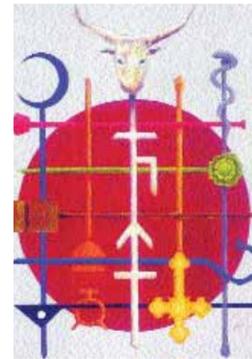
Lucky number 6  
Lucky colour Purple  
Lucky day Friday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

You will feel great about yourself. Overall health remains good. This week is a period of great productivity. You will have a sense of fullness and confidence that will make you feel that you have found your niche. This time is the changing point in your life. Don't get stuck on or be aggressive about things that are not working in your favour. Choose a middle path. On the career front, you will face opposition. Your colleagues might not agree with your thought process. Aggression is indicated. You need to understand the mentality of others and stay away from conflicts. On the personal front, you will use your charm to attract people. Be careful as a complication is indicated in your relationships.

Lucky number 13  
Lucky colour Brown  
Lucky day Saturday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

You can enjoy this week as per your planned out schedule and bring a smile to your face. Your health, wealth and happiness are co-related. It is recommended that you learn some stress-free techniques to keep you healthy. Take some time out for a walk amidst nature that could be a great energy provider and refreshing for you. Career-wise, you need to ease your expectations. Those in business will see a good response and hike in financial matters. Those in the job need to sit down with a financial planner and figure out exactly your needs and plan their finances accordingly. On the personal front, you are likely to feel a tight leash around you. There is a lack of understanding and feelings for each other. Married couples need to communicate well.

Lucky number 7  
Lucky colour Grey  
Lucky day Saturday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

After recovering from certain health issues, you feel recharged with energy and stamina. You will find your self-confidence unharmed. This is your greatest achievement that helped you to regain an inner sense of direction. Be grateful for all the blessings that surround you. You will reflect on the positive influence and will prove to be a motivator for others. Career-wise, you will experience roadblock and feel stagnated in your present job. The current scenario is not bright and this could demoralise you. Those in business will get some monetary gains. Prioritise your expenses and avoid unnecessary spending, this will help you now as well as in the long run. On the personal front, your maturity plays an important role at home.

Lucky number 15  
Lucky colour Sky Blue  
Lucky day Thursday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week brings participation in social activities. You will be shifting the balance in your life from work to social engagements. This will improve your health and give you more energy. You will be of help to your family as well as society. On the career front, you may feel a little confused with your career. Try not to get overworked. Your modest approach and shift to a different track/department would be helpful. This is the time to define yourself; do not let other people's perspective bother you. There will be a time when you might think that everything has come to a standstill. Use this time to enhance your skill. On the personal front, your partner is supportive. You can try and talk to your spouse and relieve yourself from the stress.

Lucky number 11  
Lucky colour Beige  
Lucky day Sunday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This is a good week for your emotional and physical well-being. Your positive approach to things will be of great help. Those waiting on health test results may relax and know all is good. You are likely to enter new realms in your spiritual exploration. You will get attracted to herbal ingredients and homemade remedies for health cures and join some courses. For those in the retail business, this week will be fruitful. Those working from home should not take it as leisure time, otherwise, this might take a negative turn on you. On the personal front, you may be involved in a serious conflict. Feelings of helplessness and lack of understanding are indicated. The situation may be lightened up with the support of a close family member.

Lucky number 2  
Lucky colour Pink  
Lucky day Sunday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week, you must shun any neglect with respect to health. Give extra attention to your diet, and follow physical exercise for at least half an hour daily to stay fit. On the career front, it is time to take a stand and make some tough choices. You need to be straightforward in your communication and to the point. This will bring satisfactory change and improvement to a specific matter in life. You will find happiness in accomplishment. This week, if you implement certain important pending decisions, it will have the potential to change the rhythm of life for the better. On the personal front, you have very forceful energy this week. You are likely to be diplomatic and know how to get things done in your favour.

Lucky number 19  
Lucky colour White  
Lucky day Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week count your blessings and enjoy the good things that life has to offer. Whatever you do, keep it simple and enjoy it. Stay safe and enjoy a good meal with your family. Some of you would like to stay close to nature, therefore, may spend time gardening. Women may feel sensitive and nurturing and would work towards making life meaningful. Professionally, good times are on the cards. Moneywise week is satisfactory, and your generosity will earn you goodwill. Overall, it is an extremely good period in your career life, and you should take full advantage of it. Do not indulge in gossip as it might hurt your image. On the personal front, you will find emotional stability. This is the time to enjoy your relationships.

Lucky number 20  
Lucky colour Mauve  
Lucky day Monday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

This week you will feel charged and ready to take up physical activity. You are focused and goal-oriented. You are well directed and clear on what your hopes and dreams are and what you should do to get there. Your enthusiasm and charismatic personality will impress others. You are optimistic about your future. Your overall health will remain good. On the career front, you are trying your best to be in your senior's good books. Your determination and ambition will make you move forward. You'll need to use both your intellect and your heart to be successful. On the personal front, it is advised not to let small issues blow out of proportion in your mind. Beware that there is someone who does not want your relationship to grow and is working against you.

Lucky number 12  
Lucky colour Peach  
Lucky day Tuesday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Need based use of *Shakti*

We need to be on guard and in a combative mode against the evil forces so as to service the needs of our existential order. To drive home this point, the simile of Demon is used to exemplify and forewarn us about impending dangers. About the demons, it is said that they are inherently conjurers. They are capable of hoodwinking us by making varied illusionary presences and charge us from all possible directions unannounced, to their asking. We, therefore, need to be on full alert to checkmate such evil forces.

Truth is that no such forms exist. It is so characterised to exemplify the danger inherent in the evil forces existing both within and beyond us. The evil forces dwelling within us are no less potent than those from beyond. For, human beings, armed with power of freewill, but also carrying animalistic tendencies, may prove a greater danger than a carnivorous animal, which is why some of the demons are shown with animal heads.

Here again, it may not be out of place to mention that the negative memory implants in our minds and the pre-conditioning thereof, can act a great devil for the self and those around. Such

negative tendencies often overtake our mind to distract our attention from priority preferences, and which foray into uncontrolled and fanciful inconsequential thoughts. We, thus, often misdirect our energies towards unproductive ends. In the process, our creative potential gets restricted from blooming out in full. Trapped into such unproductive voluminous thoughts, we are hardly left with the mind-space necessary to invoke our faculty of discrimination. We, thus, lose our sense of reason and direction, and thereby objectivity. It, thus, becomes imperative upon us to consciously and intelligently strike upon such unbecoming tendencies, for which we are capable. Otherwise, they will keep chasing us from within to our detriment, and with inevitable consequences.

The question now is: how to figure out the true intent and character of varied demonic presences in disguise, well in time? And then, identify the most appropriate weapon to checkmate their assault? Evidently, it calls for being on full mental alert all the time.

The Mother having 10 arms also correspond to the positive and negative implications of human's sensory organs



— five of perception and five of action. Experience suggests that in our flow of life, more often than not, our sensory perceptions get stuck to the illusionary glare and glitter of the seeming world. Ego, further driving one's mind, makes him/her believe that what is apparent has to be taken as an absolute truth. In the process, s/he does not feel the necessity of invoking the indwelling faculty of discrimination necessary to figure out the underlying truths, otherwise eluding him/her. True picture thus missing, one may inadvertently respond unintelligently on instinctive judgment. By the time one realises, the danger would have caught him/her unawares. It, therefore, becomes incumbent upon us to figure out one's limitations of mind through self-reflection, and address them well within time to ensure being in full control of the self.

Now, why a Lion as Mother's mount? A lion is known to be a very intelligent animal and supposedly the king of the jungle. When a lion goes for a hunt to feed itself, it moves strategically, carefully, cautiously, without wasting much of its energy. But its eyes are fixed on its prospective kill. It ensures not being

noticed by its prospective kill. However, once the prey comes within its reach, it extols all its energy and pounces upon it. But, remember, the lion does not go for its next kill till it has become hungry once again after exhausting its feed. The killing too is therefore, need based and not out of greed. The animals, unlike human beings, invariably live in their present moment, and are never tempted to encroach upon other's share to secure their future concerns. Accordingly, *Shakti* too, ought to be applied intelligently, strategically, with all the care and caution, and focused promptly towards serving need based productive aspirations alone.

If these inputs are made to sink in deep in one's mind through continued reflection, it will induce a person to act accordingly, which one could carry on effortlessly. Following which, s/he may be able to successfully steer life with ease and comfort, despite all oddities and hazards coming in the way. Life will then turn into a beautiful experience.

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