



# THE SUNDAY STANDARD

**ASK PRABHU**

Post your questions on website [www.newindianexpress.com](http://www.newindianexpress.com), and Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Director, The New Indian Express, will answer them.

**IPL in Desert THE SHOW MUST GO ON**

**The Age of Antiviral Apparel**

**PLUS: 12 PAGES MAGAZINE EXCLUSIVE VOICES**

Prabhu Chawla  
TJS George  
Paul Zacharia  
Anirban Ganguly

Ravi Shankar  
Anand Neelakantan  
Anuja Chandramouli  
Siddharth Dasgupta

**DELECTABLE DISCARDS**

**The Greys in Black and White**

Ode to the Painter Prince

**FROM BOLLYWOOD WITH LOVE**

**AMMA SPEAKS**

Let's Open Our Hearts

## 'Judges victims of unfair criticism'

CJI SA Bobde, Justice NV Ramana blame social media for judiciary coming under attack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

JUDGES have become soft targets of slanderous social media posts and "juicy gossips" in the garb of criticism, Supreme Court judge N V Ramana said on Saturday.

"As judges are self-restrained from speaking out in their own defence, they are now being construed as soft targets for criticism," said Justice Ramana, who is next in line to become the Chief Justice of India April 2021 after incumbent S A Bobde retires. He added the proliferation of social media is to blame for the sudden spike in attacks against judges.

Concurring with Justice Ramana, CJI Bobde said the freedom of speech of judges "is curtailed by the same laws which prevent people from saying whatever they feel like, adverse to the independence of the judiciary". They were



**Freedom of speech of the judges is curtailed by the same laws and machinery that uphold the freedom for others who use it to criticise the judiciary and judges**

S A Bobde, Chief Justice of India

**Judges are self-restrained from speaking out in their own defence... Today, judges have become soft target of criticism and especially with social media advent, judges have become subject to juicy gossip**

Justice N V Ramana

speaking at the launch of a book authored by former SC judge Justice R Banumathi.

CJI Bobde stressed the importance of an independent judiciary is not just limited to independence from executive powers, but from other pres-

ures and prejudices as well. "The judicial independence is not for the personal benefit of the judges, but for the nature of power vested with the judiciary."

Justice Ramana said there seems to be a misconception

that judges lead a luxurious life. "From my own experience, I can state that the life of a judge is not a bed of roses," he said, adding that the reality was quite different from what people comprehend. "Best judges of the same are the family members, who are usually torn between restraints and relationships."

He pointed to the self-imposed restrictions judges follow in social life to remain independent. "I believe judgeship in the present day requires sacrifices unparalleled in any other profession, and the same is required to be made as the country's future is dependent on strong independent judges."

For judges, the CJI said, the biggest challenge is to ensure the "country inches towards the goals set in the Constitution". To achieve the same, he asserted, an independent judiciary is essential.



## Yechury, Yogendra Yadav named in Delhi riots

NEW DELHI: CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, Swaraj Abhiyan leader Yogendra Yadav, economist Jayati Ghosh, Delhi University professor Apoorvanand and documentary filmmaker Rahul Roy were named by the Delhi Police as co-conspirators in the February riots.

They have been accused of asking anti-CAA protesters to go to "any extreme", spreading discontent in the community by calling CAA/NRC anti-Muslim, and organise demonstrations to 'malign the image of the Government of India'. The names appeared in a supplementary charge sheet, a copy of which is with the PTI, filed by the police on the riots in North East District between February 23 and 26, which claimed 53 lives and left 581 injured, 97 of them having gunshot wounds.

These eminent personalities have been made accused based on the confessions of three students — women's collective Pinjra Tod members and JNU students De-

vanga Kalita and Natasha Narwal, and Gulfisha Fathima of Jamia Milia Islamia — in the Jafraabad violence, from where the riots spread to other parts of north-east Delhi. All three are facing charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

In the charge sheet, which was made public just

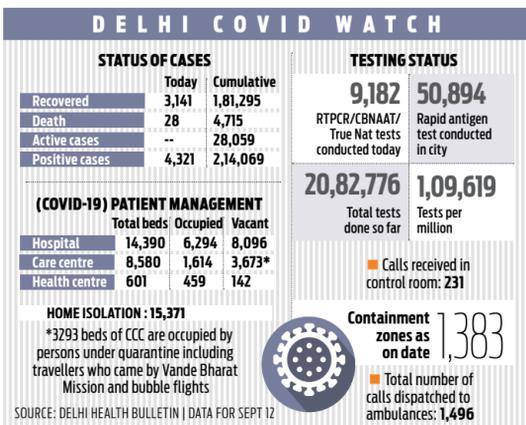
### In trouble

Bhim Army chief Chandrasekhar, United Against Hate activist Umar Khalid, ex-MLA Mateen Ahmed, and MLA Amanatullah Khan were also named by a student in her statement

the Citizenship Amendment Act and go to 'any extreme'.

Their similarly-worded disclosure statements mentioned in the charge sheet claim the two JNU students said they organised the Daryaganj protest in December and the Jafraabad road block against the CAA on February 22, at the behest of Ghosh, Apoorvanand and Roy.

PTI



## LIGHTS J&K VILLAGE'S TRYST WITH POWER

After 73 years, electricity finally reached Dunnadi Asthan in Shopian, whose residents see a much better future for their children | PS

## Hate content: Panel summons FB India chief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Peace and Harmony Committee of the Delhi Assembly on Saturday summoned Facebook India MD Ajit Mohan following complaints that the social media giant allegedly bent rules on hate content to benefit the BJP.

The committee, headed by AAP MLA Raghav Chadha, has prima facie found Facebook "complicit in Delhi riots of February 2020" on the premise of incriminatory material produced on record by the witnesses.

The committee proceedings have been held live twice during which Chadha has talked to various domain experts and activists over the complaints. A report was published in



The committee has prima facie found Facebook "complicit" in Delhi riots | PTI

the international media about the social media platform allegedly bending its rules on hate contents for the ruling BJP leaders.

According to the chairman of the committee, the proceedings were initiated after he received multiple complaints alleging that despite Facebook's

comprehensive policies and regulations, it turned a blind eye to "mass manufacturing and propagation of vile, hateful communal content."

"Taking into account the gravity of the allegations, the Delhi Assembly's committee has decided to delve into the issue to unravel plans of rabble-

rousers who want to wreak havoc in the country, particularly in the NCT of Delhi," the statement said.

Last month, Facebook had said its platform prohibits hate speech and content that incites violence and these policies are enforced globally without regard to political affiliation.

## Big gender divide in India's premier educational, scientific institutions

RICHA SHARMA @ New Delhi

REPRESENTATION of women in India's top scientific and educational institutions such as IITs, NITs and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research showed a wide gap in gender equality. The IITs showed the steepest divide with average number of women faculty being 11.24%, says a study.

The study by the Institute of Bioinformatics and Biotechnology, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, observed the recruitment pattern in various

science-related streams of various prominent institutions/universities over the years. The study was published in the latest edition of the scientific journal Current Science.

"It is clear that irrespective of the year of establishment, eminence and geographical distribution, all research and teaching institutions in India show a similar pattern in employing women faculty/researchers, merely 10-20 per cent of the total strength, with very few exceptions," said authors Akanksha Swarup and

### Contrasting tales

While IISc-Bengaluru was most male-dominated with 8.6% female faculty, Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham (45.8%) and Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune (40.53%) had most balanced distribution of gender

Tuli Dey.

The first group of seven IITs established between 1951 and 2001 showed an average of 10.74% women faculty in the Science and Technology stream, followed by 11.6% in

the second set (2008-09; eight IITs) and 11.33% in the third set (2012-16; eight IITs).

"It can be assumed that the dearth of qualified women candidates remained the same (in IITs) from 1951 to 2018," the study noted.

However, the profile of the faculty in the top 20 universities of the country differed significantly, as the average number of women faculty was 27.11%. "This can be probably explained by the fact that these universities handle teaching and research mostly related to

basic sciences rather than technical subjects," it said.

Among the universities, Indian Institute of Sciences, Bengaluru was most male-dominated with 8.6% female faculty, while Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham (45.8%) and Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune (40.53%) stood out with most balanced distribution of gender within India.

The NITs (National Institute of Technology) showed an average of 17.75% women faculty and the CSIR had 4,600 active scientists, of which only

18.48% were women. The gender-wise distribution in IISERs (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) throughout the country was 15.47% and 84.52% male.

Different research institutions (mainly focused on biological sciences), such as National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) and Indian Institute of Chemical Biology (IICB) exhibited a similar profile with 23.12% women scientists compared to 77.49% male scientists.

### COVID FIGHT

## STATES GASP TO FILL UP OXYGEN STOCKS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

WITH India's single-day Covid-19 tally set to hit the 1 lakh mark, availability of oxygen for medical use has become the latest worry for the Centre and the states, particularly those where the cases are still surging.

Struggling to meet the rising demand from hospitals for Covid-19 patients, some states are resorting to measures like capping the use of oxygen for industrial purposes and restricting inter-state supply. Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab are among the states facing oxygen shortage while almost the states have seen a big increase in demand. The Centre, on its part, has put the onus on the states to ensure the availability of oxygen and has directed them to remove the restrictions on its supply to other states.

A Union health ministry directive to this regard came on Friday in the wake of the Maharashtra government ordering restrictions on use of oxygen so that patients do not suffer. The Uddhav Thackeray government recently put a cap on use of oxygen for industrial purpose under the Epidemic Act. It directed all producing units in the state to supply 80% of their oxygen for medical use and remaining 20% for industrial use in Maharashtra only.

The state, where the coronavirus cases have crossed the 1 million mark, hit the panic mode after a few deaths were attributed to poor oxygen supply in hospitals, even though authorities refused to confirm the same. Private hospitals in Navi Mumbai, Nasik and Dhule have reportedly pressed the alarm button and reduced the flow of



Some states are resorting to measures like capping the use of oxygen | PTI

**Demand for oxygen from hospitals has increased significantly, but the patients are not suffering not because of a shortage of oxygen**

Arun Unhale, FDA Commissioner, Maharashtra

the oxygen to Covid-19 patients so that they do not run out of supply. Seven people died at a Jogeshari hospital and the families of the deceased alleged non-availability of oxygen.

In Maharashtra, 24 manufacturers produce a total of about 1,000 metric tonnes (MTs) of oxygen per day. With the pandemic raging on, the demand for health purposes alone has gone up to 900 MTs per day as against 400 MTs earlier. There are 66 oxygen refilling units in state.

Arun Unhale, Commissioner of Food and Drugs Administration, admitted that the demand for oxygen from hospitals had increased significantly, but added that "the

patients are not suffering not because of a shortage of oxygen... We have sufficient stock... is no need to panic".

The Maharashtra government's decision restricting supply of oxygen to other states made Madhya Pradesh jitter, with CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan dialling his counterpart to reconsider the decision. MP, too, reported a few Covid-19 deaths, allegedly due to lack of oxygen, though the authorities denied the same. At least three patients were reported to have died at a private hospital in Dewas district on September 8. The district's chief medical officer, however, said upon inspection, 400 oxygen cylinders were found to be available at the hospital, where 156 patients were admitted.

The Chouhan government, however, is not depending on Maharashtra and has taken steps to augment oxygen supply. The CM had said 120 tonnes of oxygen per day was available to the state and the supply would be increased to 150 tonnes by September 30.

CONTINUED ON P7

### RELIEF

## China hands over Arunachal youths to Army

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

CHINA on Saturday morning handed over five youths of Arunachal Pradesh to Indian authorities near Kibithu border post in Anjaw district.

Toch Singkam, Prasat Ringling, Dongtu Ebiya, Tanu Baker and Ngaru Diri — all of them hailing from Arunachal's Upper Subansiri district — went missing from Tungdara Mountain near the LAC since September 2.

"Indian Army took over all five individuals at Kibithu on September 12 after completing all the formalities. Individuals will now be quarantined for 14 days as per COVID-19 protocol and will thereafter be handed over to their family members," defence spokesperson Lt Col Harsh Wardhan Pande said.

This is the third such incident in Arunachal this year. China had handed over individuals in the previous two incidents as well. "Army approached PLA on hotline to trace them. On September 8, response on the hotline confirmed that the missing individuals had been traced."

Arunachal CM Pema Khandu thanked the Central government and the Army for ensuring the return.



On this day in 1916 British author Roald Dahl was born in Cardiff, Wales. Known for his children's writings such as, *Charlie and the*

*Chocolate Factory*, *The BFG*, and *Matilda* among others, Dahl's books have sold more than 250 copies worldwide.

## QUICK FIX

What's cooking **IN YOUR KITCHEN DURING THIS LOCKDOWN?**

We are hungry for recipes with minimum ingredients and maximum flavours. Share your quick-fix with us, along with step-by-step photos, at [tmsfeature@newindianexpress.com](mailto:tmsfeature@newindianexpress.com).



### MUSHROOM PATE

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 packets mushrooms, roughly chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2-3 garlic cloves, grated
- Salt and pepper
- One cup ricotta/cream cheese

#### METHOD

■ To a large sauté pan over medium heat, add the oil and heat until it starts to slightly ripple. Add the mushrooms and cook until they start to brown, stirring. Add the onion and sauté, until they begin to soften, 3-4 minutes. Add the garlic, salt and pepper stir and cook for 2 minutes. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes. Add the mushroom mix to a food processor along with the cheese and blend until smooth, taste for seasoning. Transfer to a container with a lid and refrigerate for 30 minutes until set.

— by Poonam Aggarwal, Lado Sarai

## SPACE WATCH

### BEYOND THE FINAL FRONTIER

NASA astronaut and biologist Kate Rubins is participating on Friday, Sept. 25, in a final round of media interviews before her October launch to the International Space Station, the second space mission of her NASA career. The first person to sequence DNA in space (during her 2016 mission), Rubins will work on a cardiovascular experiment that builds on an investigation she completed during her first space mission and conduct research using the space station's Cold Atom Lab. She'll also be aboard the station for the arrival of NASA's SpaceX Crew-1 mission and Boeing Orbital Flight Test-2. On November 2, Rubins will celebrate with her crewmates the 20th anniversary of continuous human habitation of the space station - two decades of science and technology research and breakthroughs that are furthering America's return to the Moon and human exploration of Mars.

Source: NASA



## BRIGHT SPOT

### THE AIRPORT ANGEL

While traveling for work, a local woman has been giving homemade cards to strangers who might need a pick-me-up at the Houston airport. "I just want somebody's day to be better. I really want to make the world a better place," she said. Flyer Heidi Botkin was flying solo with her three kids when Knight approached her. "I was super stressed," she said. "So, yeah, that [card] was a nice little pick-me-up." While travelers are being uplifted by these friendly cards more than ever during the pandemic, spreading random acts of kindness isn't a new thing for Knight. She and her son Parker have been writing messages for strangers for three years now. To date they have written 25,000 notes to uplift others.

Source: Good News Network



## APPSMART



### BlackPlayer

A highlight: The Discover option shuffles through 10-second previews of seldom-played tracks in your library continuously. **Available on:** Android



### IFTTT

IFTTT stands for 'if this, then that,' creates automations between online services and devices without any coding experience. **Available on:** Android



### Todoist

If you have many to-do lists, then the app keep track of the tasks and assigns them different priorities. **Available on:** Android & iOS

## FIT BIT

### MERUDANDASANA

(SPINAL COLUMN POSE)

In Sanskrit, *Merudanda* means 'spine' and *asana* means 'pose'. It is an intermediate seated *asana* that requires balance and flexibility. The spine is the most important part of the human body as almost all the nerves and blood vessels of our body are connected to it. A person can stay happy, strong, clean and healthy depending on how flexible and stress-free their spine is. It activates the *Svadisthana* (spleen or sacral) *chakra*, which opens the yogi's creative energy and stimulates feelings of pleasure, abundance and joy. It is a great stretch for the hips and hamstrings. It stretches the legs, adductors and the glutes. This helps in opening the hips and lengthening the thigh muscles.

#### STEPS

- Sit with the legs outstretched on both sides.
- Now, bend your knees and place the feet flat on the floor in front of the buttocks, about half a metre apart.
- Holding the big toes, inhale slowly and lean backward, balancing on the coccyx.
- Straighten the legs and arms, inhale deeply and raise them upward. Keep your body steady. Keeping the spine straight, separate the legs as wide as possible. Do not strain.
- Now, retain the breath inside and hold the final position, keeping the gaze focused on a fixed point. If holding the pose for some time, breathe normally.
- Repeat for up to 5 rounds, holding the breath in the final position for as long as is comfortable.
- Bring the legs together at the centre, bend the knees and lower the feet to the floor with an exhale.

#### BENEFITS

- This *asana* tones the abdominal organs, especially the liver, and strengthens the abdominal muscles.
- It helps to stimulate intestinal peristalsis, alleviating constipation.
- It tones the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, strengthens core muscles of the back and helps to realign the spine.
- It helps to remove tiredness from the legs, giving a feeling of lightness and balance; is good for the knees.
- It also gives the optimal place for the organs to function effectively.

#### LIMITATIONS

- It should not be practised by people with high blood pressure, heart ailments, slipped disc, sacral infections or sciatica.
- Pregnant women should not practise this.
- People with injured or weak knees should not practise it.
- Beginners should do it under the supervision of a yoga expert.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

## SOUND BOARD

### A STATE OF MIND

From mindfulness to sustainability, the podcast features provocative, in-depth conversations with people on topics they are passionate about and want to share with the world.

- On Spotify

### REAL LIFE GHOST STORIES

The hosts discuss hauntings, ghosts, death, aliens, psychology, skeptics and everything in between. In each episode, they review their favourite paranormal shows and movies.

- On Spotify

### MATERS OF SCALE

From Nike to Netflix, Starbucks to Slack - CEOs share the stories and strategies that helped them grow from start-ups into global brands with entrepreneur Reid Hoffman in this business podcast.

- On Apple Podcast

### THE TONY ROBBIN PODCAST

American author shares proven strategies and tactics for you to achieve massive results in your business, relationships, health and finances. You'll also find insightful interviews with the most prominent masterminds and experts on the global stage.

- On Stitcher

### 30 FOR 30 PODCASTS

30 for 30 offers captivating storytelling for sports fans and general interest listeners alike, going beyond the field to explore how sports, competition, athleticism and adventure that affect our lives and our world.

- On Apple Podcasts

## POPULAR ON YOUTUBE

### LORIE

Geeta, who gets married to her lover Bhupinder against the wishes of her family. Tragedy strikes her happy married life when, Geeta suffers a miscarriage, rendering her with the disability to beget a child in the future.

- Cast: Shabana Azmi, Farooq Shaikh

### ANNADATA

A rich man wanders off from his affluent life when he gets disillusioned by his greedy relatives. He finds true happiness after meeting a poor woman in a small town amidst simple folks.

- Cast: Jaya Bhaduri, Anil Dhawan

### SUBAH

The film is a story of a woman's dream to step outside her four walled home and bring change in the society. Facing opposition from her family, Savitri accepts an important post at a women's reformatory.

- Cast: Smita Patil, Girish Karnad

### MEERA

Meera, traces the devotion of Princess Meera for her beloved deity, Lord Krishna. Meera is married to Prince Bhojraj to cement political ties within two warring dynasties of Rajputana.

- Cast: Hema Malini, Vinod Khanna



Scan this QR code to find out how your favourite celebs are coping with the lockdown.

## WHAT'S ON TED TALKS



### 1 WHY SPECIALISING EARLY DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN CAREER SUCCESS BY DAVID EPSTEIN

A head start doesn't always... well, help you get ahead. With examples from sports, technology and economics, journalist David Epstein shares how specializing in a particular skill too early in life may undermine your long-term development.



### 2 HOW FACEBOOK PROFITS FROM POLARISATION BY YAËL EISENSTAT

In this bold talk, Eisenstat explores how social media companies like Facebook incentivise inflammatory content, contributing to a culture of political polarisation and mistrust - and calls on governments to hold these platforms accountable.



### 3 ARE ALL OF OUR MEMORIES REAL? BY DANIEL L SCHACTER

In a 1990's study, participants recalled getting lost in a shopping mall as children. Some shared these memories in vivid detail, but there was one problem: none of these people had actually gotten lost in a mall. They produced these false memories.



### 4 WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE CHANGE BY JACQUELINE NOVOGRATZ

What can you do to build a better world? Sharing stories from her pioneering career dedicated to tackling poverty, Jacqueline Novogratz offers three principles to spark and sustain a moral revolution.



### 5 HOW THE US MEDICAL COMMUNITY FAILS BLACK MOTHERS BY WANDA IRVING

In the US, Black women are nearly 300 per cent more likely to die as a result of childbirth than white women. Wanda Irving shares appalling statistics on maternal mortality as well as her own tragic story of loss.

## REGIONAL



### DUM DUM DUMROO (Hindi)

A scary peon Dumroo tries to repeatedly play around with a new doctor at the hospital. Will she dance to his beats?

- Cast: Sanaya Irani, Anil Charanjeet
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar
- Registration: ₹ 299 per month

### C U SOON (Hindi)

Jimmy meets Anu and decides to marry her. His mother entrusts his cousin Kevin to get details about Anu, and he discovers dark, shocking truths about her, including a missing fiancée.

- Cast: Fahadh Faasil, Darshana Rajendran, Roshan Mathew
- Watch on: Amazon Prime
- Registration: ₹ 129 per month



### BANGALORE DAYS (Malayalam)

The story revolves around three cousins, Divya Prakash aka 'Kunju', Krishnan PP aka 'Kuttan' and Arjun aka 'Aju', who have shared a close bond since their childhood.

- Cast: Nazriya Nazim, Nivin Pauly, Dulquer Salmaan
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar
- Registration: ₹ 299 per month



### BROCHEVAREVARURA (Telugu)

Three students, who fail their exams and waste their time, befriend Mitra in their college. They devise a plan to help her but it leads to various problems.

- Cast: Sree Vishnu, Nivetha Thomas, Satyadev Kancharana, Nivetha Pethuraj
- Watch on: Amazon Prime
- Registration: ₹ 129 per month

All the streaming apps can be accessed on smartphones and smart TVs with internet connection.

### VEERE DI WEDDING (Hindi)

Kalindi's friends Anvi, Sakshi and Meera come to meet her after they learn about her wedding with her boyfriend, Rishabh. Sakshi takes her girls to Thailand and they rediscover themselves.

- Cast: Sonam K Ahuja, Kareena Kapoor, Swara Bhaskar, Shikha Talsania
- Watch on: Zee5
- Registration: ₹ 99 per month



### MEHENDI CIRCUS (Tamil)

A music shop owner falls in love with a girl from a circus troupe that visits his village, but caste and class stand in the way.

- Cast: Shweta Tripathi, Madhampatty Rangaraj, Vela Ramamoorthy, RJ Vigneshkanth
- Watch on: Netflix
- Registration: ₹ 199 per month

## FOREIGN

### BIG LITTLE LIES (English)

Madeline, Celeste and Jane are a trio of wealthy young women in Monterey, California. Their lives are shattered when a murder takes place in their idyllic town, unravelling a can of worms.

- Cast: Reese Witherspoon, Nicole Kidman, Shailene Woodley, Zoë Kravitz, Laura Dern
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

### ATONEMENT (English)

Briony Tallis falsely accuses her sister's lover, Robbie, of a crime, after she catches them in a compromising position.

- Cast: Keira Knightley, James McAvoy, Saoirse Ronan
- Watch on: Netflix



### PRIDE AND PREJUDICE (English)

Mrs Bennet insists that her daughters find rich husbands and settle down. When a wealthy bachelor starts living near them, Mrs Bennet's happiness knows no bounds.

- Cast: Keira Knightley, Matthew Macfadyen, Rosamund Pike
- Watch on: Netflix



### LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE (English)

Following the intertwined fates of the picture-perfect Richardson family and an enigmatic mother and daughter who upend their lives. Set in Shaker Heights, Ohio in the 1990s.

- Cast: Kerry Washington, Reese Witherspoon, Lexi Underwood, Joshua Jackson
- Watch on: Disney+Hotstar

# NOW STREAMING

- Amazon Prime: ₹ 129/month
- Netflix: ₹ 199/month
- Disney+Hotstar: ₹ 399/year



Did you know

This Australian cricket personality (born on this day in 1969) captained the Australian national team in One Day Internationals,

and is one of the greatest bowlers in the history of the game. He was named one of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 1994.

Two's Company

# 'I AM THE BRAIN HE IS THE HEART'

RADHIKA AND TUSHAR GARG, CO-FOUNDERS OF THE YUMMY IDEA, ON LOVE, LIFE AND WORK

ANGELA PALJOR

**T**HEIRS was an arranged match, but ever since Radhika and Tushar Garg first met in February 2015, something clicked, and by April 2015, the two were married!

"I am the brain and he is the heart. Each one calms the other during anxious situations, and this is the biggest trait you need to have to be partners for life and in business," says Radhika. The two launched a new application in May called 'The Yummy Idea' that delivers hygienic home-cooked meals.

The couple and their three-year-old baby live in a joint family, and even at home, says Radhika, planning is quintessential. "That is the key. Of course, there are expectations from the family, business to be run, and trust me nobody comes forward to guide you. Finding the interstices in between tasks and leveraging these to our best of ability has helped us utilise time to our maximum benefit."

The Gargs worked on the concept of 'The Yummy Idea' for almost two years. "In January 2019, while looking to explore new options, we saw an emerging trend on all social media platforms of many home chefs and home bakers promoting their business. We realised that there was no formal digital platform to list these home-chefs, and their visibility was only limited to friends and family. This is where we thought of a prototype, made a website and designed our idea into a virtual video format explaining what we had in our mind. To our surprise, we got over 150 enquiries in just two days," shares Tushar. The two decided to leverage technology, and bridge the decades long gap for home-chefs to make their business more organised and take the lead from the front.

"Both marriage and professional partnership work on the foundation of trust and belief," says Tushar, who didn't experience any



Rose Gold Mango Cream Cake by Firdous

major difference in transitioning from being life partners to also business partners. "We were always partners in duties, fun and now business. Now, we have definitely become much more organised, planning our day's schedule well in advance, handling work/office and new additional responsibilities. But we need to spend more time together, and that's why we do a 'victory hour' every morning. This has been a game changer, and the most powerful agent for our growth and success," adds Tushar.

Today, The Yummy Idea has over 1,500 registered home chefs and more than 200 subscribed chefs across 20 Indian cities. "We aim to expand our pool of home chefs to 700 by the end of this financial year. We are present in 20 major food markets and take our reach in Tier-II cities as these have enormous hidden talents that are yet to see the light of the day. The Yummy Idea is proud to be India's first national platform for home chefs," concludes Radhika.



Cheesy Delight by Kapil Sahajiwani



Radhika and Tushar Garg



Finding the interstices in between tasks and leveraging these to our best of ability has helped us utilise time to our maximum benefit

Radhika Garg

We need to spend more time together, and that's why we do a 'victory hour' every morning. This has been a game changer, and the most powerful agent for our growth and success

Tushar Garg

The road ahead

The Yummy Idea has over 1,500 registered home chefs and over 200 subscribed chefs. "We aim to expand our pool of home chefs to 700 by the end of this financial year, and take our reach in Tier-II cities as these have enormous hidden talents that are yet to see the light of the day," says Radhika.

Process the process

# 'Writing anchors me between both worlds'

BHUMIKA POPLI

**P**RATYAKSHA writes and paints. Her English poems have been published in *Pyrta*, *Kritya* and *Everyday Poets*. Her poems, included in the anthology *The Unsettled Winter* had been longlisted for RLP Award 2013. She has authored *Rain Song* – a collection of stories, and *Meet Me Tomorrow* – a novella. She also writes in Hindi and has published *Jungle ka Jadoo Til Til*, *Pahar Dopahar Thumri* and *Ek Din Marrakech*, *Taimur Tumhara Ghoda Kidhar Hai*, *Barishgar*, and *Globe Ke Bahar Ladki*. Her new collection of erotic stories, *Mistress of Phoolpur*, is to be published soon by Speaking Tiger. She has won the Sonbhadra Katha Samman award 2011, Indo Norwegian prize for her story in 2013, Krishna Baldev Vaid fellowship in 2013 and has been a fellow of the Sangam House Residency in May 2015. In 2018, she won the Hans Katha Samman for her story *Barish ke Devta*.



Pratyaksha



The list is long. There are beloved authors and their books. I love Qurratalain Hyder (*Gardish e Rang e Chaman*), Renu (Juloos and all his works), Rahi Masoom Raza (*Aadha Gaanv*), Paul Auster (*Invention of Solitude*), Bruce Chatwin (*Songlines*), Helen MacDonald (*H is for hawk*). These are few that come to mind almost instantly.

What is your writing schedule?

I write mostly on weekends, early mornings and late nights.

Does writing energise or exhaust you?

Writing is therapeutic, almost like meditation. It keeps me on a creative high at one level and at another, detaches me from the surrounding world, and thus anchors me in a way between both worlds.

Writing advice you'd like to give your younger self?

You should have started writing early.

What are your favourite books?

Literary success vs number of copies sold?

Always literary success.

Favourite spot/s in Delhi you used to write at?

Mostly at my home. Though there are places where I have spent time, if not exactly for writing but mostly thinking about writing and plots, such as Triveni Kala Sangam and cafes at Hauz Khas.



## THE DISCIPLE WINS FIPRESCI AWARD

EXPRESS FEATURES

COURT director Chaitanya Tamhane's new feature, *The Disciple*, has won the FIPRESCI Prize at the 77th Venice International Film Festival. The last Indian film to win the FIPRESCI Award was *Mathilukal* in 1990.

*The Disciple* follows a young classical singer, who, after years of devoted learning, starts experiencing existential doubts about his craft. The film is produced by Vivek Gomber with Alfonso Cuarón as executive producer. Chaitanya said, "This is a special honour for us given that the jury for this award comprises film critics and journalists from around the world. We are all quite thrilled and excited with this fantastic start to the journey of *The Disciple*."

# A Michelin plate that redefines the Indian palate

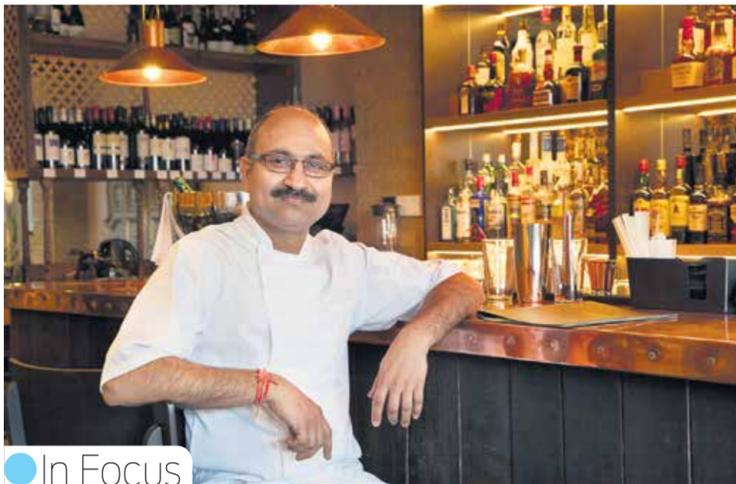
SHANTANU DAVID

**A**LL chefs have the same story. It begins in the kitchens of their mothers and grandmothers. My own mother was a wonderful cook and she is the one who sparked my lifelong interest in food," says Chef Dayanshakar Sharma, whose London restaurant, Grand Trunk Road, was recently awarded a Michelin Plate, a fairly good indicator that the eatery is well on its way to getting those coveted stars.

Growing up, Sharma dabbled in culinary experimentation before going on to graduate with a culinary diploma from Udaipur in 1991. While hotel management is seen as a viable career for poor students, Sharma was a science student with good grades. However, after being unable to secure a place in medical school, he decided to pursue his passion as a career, and after his diploma he went on to work at various Oberoi and Taj properties, becoming the youngest chef to be sent to Sri Lanka for a food festival by the latter.

These food festivals continued to propagate, with Sharma having to re-encapsulate the glory of Indian cuisine and the varied regional tastes that define it. "From France to Singapore and Malaysia to Switzerland, my food has always been about India. There are no gimmicks or alterations. I present Indian food in its complete historic entirety."

That being said, Chef Sharma is not someone who feels the need to keep up with fads. "I don't believe in the idea of contemporary Indian. Our various cuisines, no matter their original geography, are specific and, to put it simply, serious. India has so many cui-



In Focus



I don't believe in the idea of contemporary Indian. Our cuisines, no matter their original geography, are specific and, to put it simply, serious. India has so many cuisines that are not easy to replicate

Chef Dayanshakar Sharma

sines that are not easy to replicate," he says.

By Indian being a serious cuisine, he means there are more steps to creating a representative meal of the sub-continent than of an xyz dish somewhere from our current borders.

"No offense to the Bangladeshis, but when they created and then started to promote *Chicken Tikka Masala* in London, peo-

ple had no idea what actually defined Indian food, and so thought that that dish was representative of our cuisine," says Sharma, who has since gone on to educate London's global palate on Indian flavours through his restaurants.

Since then, diners in London have come to appreciate the varied palates and plates of regional cuisines that come together to define an "Indian" menu.

Under his command Grand Trunk Road has won 11 awards over the last three years since opening. As for-

mer head chef of the critically acclaimed Imli, (now known as Tamarind Kitchen in Soho) and of the Mayfair institution that is Zaika, as well as chef of Tamarind (the first ever Michelin Starred Indian Restaurant) and from leading teams of 12-14 chefs, his previous position as the Indian Food Consultant for a number of major airline catering companies has seen him continue to develop his understanding of flavour and execution.

With more than 32 years of knowledge and experience, his work has helped to establish the image of a range of high-profile names and outlets in Middle East, while his time at India's Taj and The Oberoi Hotel saw him design and complete a host of events and state banquets for foreign presidents, diplomats, and celebrities. Now, he's one of them.



Lamb Shank



Mustard & Honey Duck

CINEMA EXPRESS

TIME PASS

CHILL. CHERISH. CELEBRATE

NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI

Actor

The Outsider

IN CONVERSATION WITH

KAVEREE BAMZAI

Author and Journalist

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 8 PM

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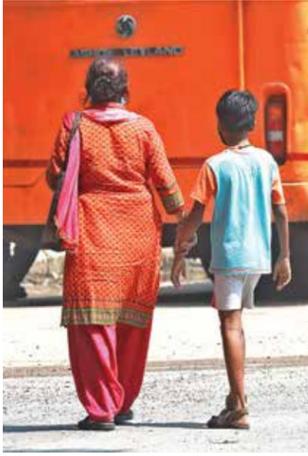
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**SOCIAL DISTANCING GOES FOR A TOSS**

As people continue to flout social distancing norms, cases in the city continue to rise at an alarming rate. The national capital on Saturday registered 4,321 fresh cases | SHEKHAR YADAV



**'Give us alternative house or we will die on rly tracks'**

Slum dwellers plan to protest outside CM's house over demolition

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

RESIDENTS of jhuggies in the city held are planning to stage a protest outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence against the Supreme Court's recent order to remove 48,000 slum clusters located along railway tracks in the national capital.

Panicked and anguished over the demolition order, residents asked where they are supposed to go now. *The Sunday Standard* on Saturday visited slum areas on the railways land in Anand Parbat, Naraina Vihar, Jal Vihar and Nizamuddin to interact with residents who said they will not vacate unless given alternative.

"First, give us an alternative house to stay and then, demolish this house, or we will take our lives on these railway tracks," said Anandi, a slum-dweller of Madarasi Colony situated across the railways lines of Jal Vihar in Lajpat Nagar.

Anandi, who lives with her husband and two children in the slum, added: "I born and brought up here. Even we don't want to live in this area surrounded by garbage but where are we supposed to go during this pandemic. If the government assures and give us an alternative land, we are ready to move out."

Seema, another Lajpat Nagar slum dweller, said: "During the Congress government, too, slums were demolished in the city, and people were shifted to Jangpura, then to Trilokpuri. The government had assured us they would provide us with food, shelter and other amenities, but nothing happened. In



Residents of a slum near Azadpur Railway Station on Saturday | SHEKHAR YADAV

the next three months, there will be winter: here Where will we go with small children?."

Seema works as a housemaid and her husband is a cab driver. The apex court has also barred other courts from passing a stay order on the demolition of the slums. The AAP government, however, has said it will file a review petition in the matter. The Delhi government has also asked the railways not to demolish slums without providing alternative accommodation to the inhabitants in accordance with provisions of the Delhi Slum Rehabilitation Policy.

"The court should at least think of the pandemic. Many have died due to the Covid-19. These slums have protected us the deadly virus, so far," said Indrani, who lives in a slum along the railway line of Nizamuddin. The 45-year-old housemaid in the locality is the sole earner of her family of five — three children, an octogenarian mother-in-law. With no earnings during the lockdown, Amudha had to sell her earrings and even 'mangalsutra' for survival.



We voted for the AAP and none from the party visited us. BJP leaders came but only taunted us saying 'you voted for the AAP'. We will stage a protest outside the CM's house soon

Krishna, Shakur Basti slum dweller

**Large number of migrants from Tamil Nadu**

Slum clusters situated on the railways land in Nizamuddin accommodate a large number of migrants are from Tamil Nadu. They have been living here for more than four decades. According to the slum dwellers of Nizamuddin, Madras Colony and Shakur Basti and Naraina Vihar, more 1.5 lakh migrants from Tamil Nadu live in these clusters. According to the government, of 140 km-long railway track, 70 km of these tracks are occupied by 37 number of large jhuggi clusters. In total, there 48,000 JJ clusters situated along railways lines in the city.

**Flood-hit villagers of Rawta wait for govt promised compensation**

SIDDHANTA MISHRA @ New Delhi

IT has been more than two weeks since the villagers of Rawta, situated in the outskirts of Delhi, were promised compensation from the government for their crops that were completely submerged due to heavy spells of rain last month.

Around August 21, due to heavy rains, many acres of land with standing crop were submerged in rainwater mixed with sewage from the open Najafgarh drain. The situation got so bad that water started entering the villager's houses as well.

Later on, officials from the South West Delhi's District Magistrate office reached the village and conducted a survey to take stock of the situation and promised the villagers compensation for their losses.

The Bhartiya Kisan Union - an umbrella organisation of several farmer unions across

the country expressed their solidarity with the farmers and threatened to

launch a protest against the Delhi government if it fails to solve the problems faced by the residents of Rawta village soon.

According to the farmers, the government wants a committee to be formed at a local level which can take up the issue on how to distribute the compensation.

Parth Tyagi, a member of an NGO, is helping the villagers in forming their own Resident Welfare Association (RWA).

"Panchayat system was ended in Delhi back in 1990, so there is no managing committee representing the villagers collectively. There is a requirement of forming a team of residents that can take up the issue with the government. So I have decided to help them in getting an RWA registered in the name of the village," Tyagi said.

Villages in the India do not have a RWA system, but as Delhi does not come under the category of agriculture state, it does not have a village Panchayat system either.



**No gram panchayat**

As Delhi is not categorised as an agriculture state, it does not have a village Panchayat system in place



There is a requirement of forming a team of residents that can take up the issue with the government. So I have decided to help them in getting an RWA registered

Parth Tyagi, member of an NGO

**20% of cases in Noida reported in Sept**

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

WITH the rise in the number of daily sample testing, Noida in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar is witnessing another surge in Covid cases.

The first 11 days of September, have contributed to around 20 per cent of the total cases surfaced in the district so far.

As per the data, of a total of 9,808 cases in the district till September 11, of which 1,909 are active cases, 2,063 cases were reported from September 1 to 11. Not only that, the number of patients discharged after the treatment also went down



A patient interacts with family via a robot at Yatharth Hospital in Noida | PTI

to 1,071 in the first 11 days of the current month.

On Friday, September 11, 204 people had tested positive for

the deadly virus in the NCR and 114 people were discharged after recovery. There has been no death for the last two days.

On the contrary, 2,864 new cases were reported in August and 2,174 patients were discharged last month showing a higher recovery rate.

The data report reveals that the daily figure of active cases in the district has gone up six times in September so far, which up to August 31, had crossed the 200-mark only three times since March 8, when the first case was reported in the district. Till September 11, the cases breached the 200-mark at least six times. However, district health authorities attributed the recent surge to the ramped-up testing of samples.

**All city metro lines now fully operational**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

DELHI Metro resumed its full services on Saturday with the Airport Express Line reopening after a hiatus of over 170 days due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All corridors of the Metro network are now operational and timing of services will follow the pre-Covid-19 schedule of 6 am to 11 pm.

"With the resumption of service on Airport Express Line, all lines of the Delhi Metro network are now open! Remember to follow the guidelines when travelling. #Metro-BackOnTrack," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) tweeted.

On Monday, the Delhi Metro had resumed services with curtailed operation of the Yellow Line and Rapid Metro.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had recently issued guidelines allowing the Delhi Metro to resume operations in a graded manner, following which the DMRC had said it would be done in three stages from September 7-12.

**EXPRESS READ**

**'Give Markaz keys to Maulana Saad's family'**

New Delhi: A city court directed Delhi Police to hand over to the family of Tablighi Jamaat chief Maulana Saad the keys of the residential portion of the Nizamuddin Markaz, which was locked after a case was registered against several people attending a religious congregation in violation of Covid-19 guidelines. The court was hearing an application filed by Saad's mother Khalida seeking unlocking of the premises. It directed Khalida and her family members to give an undertaking on an affidavit that they would not obstruct the investigation in any manner and that they would only stay in the residential portion of the property.

**Govt doctors show their support for '10 Hafte-10 Baje-10 Minute' campaign**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

DOCTORS working with Delhi government hospitals have come forward to support the state's campaign against vector-borne diseases '10 Hafte-10 Baje-10 Minute' which will enter its second week on Sunday.

"It is a great initiative to combat the deadly dengue illness which was uncontrollable in the past few years and was the main cause of morbidity and mortality in Delhi during the post-monsoon season. The government has also said that dengue testing and treatment

facilities are available free of cost in government hospitals of Delhi, which I think is the most commendable approach to reach more and more people who cannot afford high-cost treatments," said Dr Chhavi Gupta of Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital.

The campaign was launched last year and as per government claims, it was successful in bringing down the death owing to vector-borne diseases to zero.

"It ultimately becomes the duty of every citizen to check

their homes for water stagnation. If they make it a habit to spend just a few minutes once a week to do it, we will be able to control Dengue to a huge extent. It just needs us to come together to fight

Dengue, just like we are fighting Covid together," noted Dr Ritu Saxena, Chief Medical Officer at LNJP Hospital.

Dr Ashish Goel, Medical Superintendent, Burari Hospital said that the best part of the campaign is the fact that Delhi CM himself leading and participating in it actively.

**DIAL launches first Covid testing facility at airport for passengers**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), has launched India's first on-site coronavirus testing laboratory today at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA).

DIAL has collaborated with Genestrings Diagnostic Centre - a Delhi-based laboratory, which is currently associated with Delhi government to test Covid-19 samples. The facility ensures a safe journey of all passengers entering the city or scheduled for domestic con-

necting flights. The laboratory will have walk-in option to get the test conducted after landing at the Airport. However, International arrival passengers who would travel without a valid Covid negative certificate can opt for this facility online and book a slot in advance.

Passengers will have to provide with their details such as name, contact details and valid ID proof while applying online for this facility. They will also have an option to modify the slot in case they are not able to reach at the scheduled appoint-

ment time. Passengers belonging to the same family can book a single slot together online.

Results of samples collected at the laboratory will be declared within 4-6 hours to the incoming passengers.

Until passengers are provided their test report, they will be isolated at the waiting lounge or may opt to stay in a hotel. In case of a positive result, passengers will be processed in line with applicable ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research) protocols by the state authorities.



Passengers can now get tested for Covid-19 at the Delhi airport | FILE



Dunnadi Asthan in Shopian was electrified recently after a 63 KVA transformer was installed in the village. The electrification would save the villagers from spending extra on charging their solar batteries | ZAHOR PUNJABI

hagya scheme but not in use now." Deputy Commissioner of Pulwama Yasin Choudhary. Choudhary, however, could not use the poles because of the ongoing probe. "I took up the matter with the J&K Power Development Corporation (JKPDC) and sought special permission for using the poles brought under the Saubhagya scheme. The JKPDC accepted our request and gave a special approval," he said.

The main hurdle removed, the DC took yet another un-bureaucratic step: Instead of going for tenders, Choudhary brought other equipment through other sources. "In order to speed up the work, we deployed our field staff and the locals. We managed to extend the pole network coverage in over one-and-a-half km area," the DC said. The task of laying 35-40 poles, he said, was completed within two days.

"It took the men seven days to electrify the village with a 63 KVA transformer installed to light the village. "It is a new life for us. We had been living in darkness and lit our homes with candles, torch lights or kerosene and solar lights," said a local youth, Zubair Ahmad Tove.

"It has given us a new hope of a better tomorrow," said Nahida, a mother of three. She said she wants her kids (two sons and a daughter) to pursue higher education. The electrification would also save the villagers from spending extra on charging their solar batteries.

Mushtaq Ahmad, a resident, says electricity would bring empowerment to the village and "will widen our scope of thinking".

SUCCESS STORY



In order to speed up the work, we deployed our field staff and the locals. We managed to extend the pole network coverage in over one-and-a-half km area

Yasin Choudhary, Pulwama deputy commissioner

+ve JAMMU & KASHMIR

THE darkness at Dunnadi Asthan, a village in south Kashmir's Shopian district, was inexplicable — 73 years after the country's independence. After all, the village just a small hill away from Dunnadi Asthan was electrified much earlier.

Today, the lights are on, — the village got electricity just last month. Dunnadi Asthan is smiling, its decades-old despair giving way to countless dreams. Besides their frustrating struggle, the residents would not forget how corruption — whether hidden or under investigation — can cripple everything. Take a look at the village. Dunnadi is the remotest and

# VILLAGE BEGINS TRYST WITH LIGHT AND HOPE

After 73 years, last month, electricity reached Dunnadi Asthan in Shopian, whose residents not only celebrate but also see a much better future for their children, reports **Fayaz Wani**

backward village of Shopian district, around 80 km from Srinagar; the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. It lies on the edge of the district and towards the Yarvan forest range and Peer Panjal connecting the Valley with Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu prov-

ince. The village comprises about 30-40 families comprising a mix of Gujjars and Bakerwals, Paharis and locals.

The work on electrifying the village was initially started under the Saubhagya scheme a few years back. When almost everything, the poles and other

material, was ready, the entire work came under the scanner of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB). The result was the village remained without electricity as the probe got under way.

"We decided to electrify the village and make use of the poles brought under the Saub-

**CAMPAIGN FOR PUNJABI AS LANGUAGE IN J&K**  
**Jammu:** A Sikh organisation on Saturday launched a signature campaign here to press for the inclusion of Punjabi in the list of official languages in Jammu and Kashmir. The campaign by Sikh Youth Sewa Trust started outside a gurdwara in Gandhi Nagar as part of its efforts to mobilise support for fulfillment of their demand. On September 2, the Union Cabinet approved a bill under which Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi, apart from the existing Urdu and English, will be the official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The bill is likely to be tabled in Parliament during the monsoon session next week.

At the time of an 'Act of God', the government's role according to the Constitution should be that of a welfare state. The governments should cut down their royal expenses —Mayawati

# IAS officer helps wrestlers' city SPORT A NEW LOOK

In just 18 months, this bureaucrat transformed Etawah with model parks, multipurpose stadiums, schools, reports **Namita Bajpai**

+ve UTTAR PRADESH

ON a lazy winter morning in February 2019, as the newly appointed chief development officer (CDO) of Etawah, Raja Ganapathy Ramasamy, went out to take stock of the issues in the district, he spotted a few youngsters running along the road in Badpura block. He had noticed a similar sight while coming to the city to assume charge — when many were running and working out along the highway.

Etawah is famous for its wrestlers — almost every family here has a wrestler or two. A fitness freak himself, Ramasamy reached the Manikpur Visu village under Badpura block to interact with villagers, who told him that despite having an expansive piece of land, aspiring athletes had no place to work out or practice as it was under illegal possession of land sharks. The CDO came to know that this was the case in many places in the district.

In a short period



of just 18 months, the 2015-batch IAS officer from Tamil Nadu transformed barren lands into 25 parks with an open gym Etawah area, 80 open gyms at the village panchayat level, 11 rural multipurpose stadiums, 180 children's parks at schools, 125 herbal gardens, 80 work sheds for self-help group women in the district.

Besides, he worked on the beautification of 1,400 schools under 'Operation Kayakalp', rejuvenation of four rivers — Senger, Pura, Anaiyah, Sirsa — with a total length of 250 km, raised 30 RO plants in semi-urban areas being run by SHG women under the Prerna Jal drive. Took over as the Etawah CDO in February last, Ramasamy didn't seek any extra funds or manpower for these projects. It was

all managed through existing schemes and allocations under the MGNREGS, village panchayat funds and public representatives' local area development funds. In several cases, he had to get the land vacated from illegal possessions. His initiatives, clearly, traverse a vast array of areas, but his special focus has been on health and fitness. Instead of getting the usual drains and roads constructed, Ramasamy prepared a plan to get a model park developed on 4,000 square metres, using this land after getting it vacated from an illegal possession within a month's time.

"We used the funds available under the MNREGS and started work on the model park on the expansive piece of land," the IAS officer says. The first model park came up in a over a month's time in Manikpura Visu village at a cost of ₹25 lakh. The Manikpur Visu model park became such a fad that other village heads started approaching the CDO with applications for getting similar facilities built in other villages as well.

Now, all eight blocks under Etawah have three model parks each.

BEYOND OFFICIAL BRIEF



Manikpura Visu model park is equipped with a jogging track, a separate playing area, a gym with high-end instruments, a separate place for yoga, etc. | EXPRESS



Geeta Solanki (left) with her students at Rajkiya Shikshakarmi Prathmik Vidyalaya. Since 2015, about 80 students have taken admission in the school | EXPRESS

+ve RAJASTHAN

UNTIL some years ago, in the village of Geeta Solanki in Barmer, the desert zone of Rajasthan, girls were not expected to study beyond 8th standard. In Kawas village, about 30 km from Barmer city, things were made very clear for Geeta: she would get married after school.

Each time Geeta wished her teacher-father, she'd imagine herself in his position. She should study further, but how? The question lingered on, even as she got married.

It all flashed through her mind as she got up to receive the Teachers' Day award from President Kovind a week ago.

"I invited a lot of snide remarks when I tried to study further. My husband, a matriculate, stood by me," recalls Geeta, who belongs to an OBC community. Bound by social norms, she had to do all the house chores and study in secret.

"From cooking and cleaning to walking miles for getting drinking water, to grazing the cattle — I did all the work that my in-laws expected me to do. Since I had to study in secret, I would spare some time and go to our farmland to study," says Geeta. In 2004, she passed the 10th exams and got a job under the Shiksha Karmi scheme of the Rajasthan government — at a time when she was expecting her first child.

Then she completed her Senior Teaching Certificate degree, and was made a permanent teacher to educate children of her area. That was the bold new beginning.

Initially, she taught children under the shade of trees. In her village in the first year itself, she had 55 students in her

# In desert's nothingness, she WRITES LESSONS OF LIFE

Despite facing tough social norms, Barmer's Geeta Solanki studied hard to become a teacher. Awarded this Teachers' Day, she set up her school where half of the students are girls, reports **Rajesh Asnani**

flooded for more than a year, I started teaching my students in some Army tents gifted to our village," she recalls.

"Since we had no books, I used to collect the wrappers of Parle-G biscuit packets to help my students learn the alphabets. The Unicef then stepped in to help us with books," says Geeta. Today, her school — the Rajkiya Shikshakarmi Prathmik Vidyalaya — is a living monument to her efforts, perseverance and courage. Since 2015, about 80 students have taken admission every year and nearly half of them are girls.

Geeta has won the national award for 'Innovation in Education'. She had to face three interviews in three different cities before she was finally chosen for the award.

"In government schools, we hardly have any funds for creative activities. To overcome this, I keep telling my students that 'waste is best'. I encourage students to use the waste all around. We train them to create something useful out of waste material. Once they create something, students also learn to value and care for those things," says Geeta.

Geeta now earns a monthly salary of ₹52,000, but her larger struggle continues. Since 2012, she has been demanding a road for her school, but has been unable to get one.

Her greatest consolation is that she is not alone.



CONQUERING ADVERSITY



school. Finally, Geeta gathered courage to ask her father-in-law to provide her some land to set up a school. By then, Geeta earned a monthly salary of ₹1,200, and she gave her three-month wages to her father-in-law. In return, he agreed to give her 3-bigha land which the family owned to set up her school.

In 2006, when Barmer suffered freak floods and Kawas was one of the worst-affected villages, Geeta faced her toughest challenge. "At least 15 of my students died in those floods and we all were devastated. Though my school remained

In government schools, we hardly have any funds for creative activities. To overcome this, I keep telling my students that 'waste is best'. I encourage students to use the waste all around — Geeta Solanki



When I started counting my blessings, my whole life turned around.

Willie Nelson

## ANYONE FOR A 'PRO-NATIONAL'?

**A**NTI-NATIONAL' is a much sought-after word today. It has been with us almost from the birth of the republic. Dr BR Ambedkar used it in his concluding speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949. He said, "The castes are anti-national. In the first place because they bring about separation in social life. They are anti-national also because they generate jealousy and antipathy between caste and caste." He is very clear about what, in the Indian context, is anti-national.

Later, the word took its place in the Constitution during Emergency through the notorious Article 31D introduced via Section 5 of the 42nd Constitution (Amendment Act) 1976. Indira Gandhi used the Article to wipe the Constitution clean of fundamental rights during Emergency. It also defined 'anti-national' activity as any action taken with the intention to (1) bring about cession or secession of a part of the territory of India; (2) disclaim, question, threaten or disrupt the sovereignty and integrity or the security or the unity of India; (3) overthrow by force the Govt; (4) create internal disturbances or disrupt public services and (5) threaten or disrupt the harmony between different religious, racial, regional groups or castes or communities.



**OPINION**  
**PAUL ZACHARIA**  
award-winning fiction writer

To be fair to Indira, it was not a bad attempt, considering the nefarious intentions behind it. What she used it for proved more deadly to the nation than to her targets. Though Article 31D was repealed, the phrase found a permanent place in the mainstream political discourse.

Today 'anti-national' is a catchphrase of the governing classes, many editors, anchors and reporters across the media, leaders and spokespersons of various Hindu groups, and even the police and the secret services — perhaps, also the lower echelons of the judiciary. It has come a long way from Ambedkar and Indira. In terms of criminal investigation procedure, it seems to translate mainly into Section 124A of the IPC which deals with sedition, and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) which is concerned with terrorism. The first is part of the colonial legacy and the second, of the Congress legacy. The simplicity of Section 124A takes one's breath away: the bare text is just 71 words. Interestingly, the word 'sedition' does not appear anywhere in it. It was used by the British to arrest freedom fighters including Gandhi, Tilak, and Lajpat Rai.

Gandhi called the Section 'the prince among the political sections of the IPC designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen.' Nehru called it 'objectionable and obnoxious' but it was his government that re-armed Section 124A through the first Amendment to the Constitution in 1951. The ink on the Constitution was hardly dry when the Amendment established curbs on 'abuse' of freedom of speech and of the press, bestowing upon Section 124A pride of place as the tool best suited, in Gandhi's earlier words, "to suppress the liberty of the citizen."

The UAPA was enacted under Indira. It had no pretensions of simplicity. It concretised into law the provisions of the 16th Amendment, effected in 1963 under Nehru, empowering 'Parliament to impose, by law, reasonable restrictions in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India on the (i) freedom of speech and expression; (ii) right to assemble peacefully and without arms; and right to form associations or unions'. The UAPA also spelt out in elaborate detail the nature of a 'terrorist act'. It is interesting that in both the Amendments that abridged fundamental rights in India, the hand of fate belonged to Nehru. It was left to his daughter to remove fundamental rights altogether from the Constitution — at least for a while.

Today, we are presented with a ubiquitous 'anti-national-for-all-seasons'. The traditional terrorist and seditionist described in the law book and a lot more are re-packaged into the new 'anti-national' whose footprint is discovered everywhere — from the university to the media; from cinema to literature; from the urban to the rural; and the stand-alone activist. We hear of many arrests. Though the new 'anti-national' has come to wield so much power, there appears to be no icon of a 'pro-national' to counter it; no shining model to hold up before the citizenry. But doesn't the nation need a 'pro-national' as well? How long can the 'anti-national' remain the principal deity, the touchstone for nationalism? Can that old workhorse, the patriot, stand up to the 'anti-national'? It seems doubtful because patriotism has suffered so much abuse at the hands of politics in post-independence India that its soul is nearly comatose. Also, a patriot, by definition, is one who loves her/his country so much that she/he is ready to die fighting for it. That is a tall order when one can comfortably earn patriotic badge by the degree of frenzy with which one waves the Tricolour at IPL.

Where patriotism is a by-product of rhetoric and fetish, the patriot model may not help to build a meaningful 'pro-national' model. Perhaps such a 'pro-national' is akin to the idea of a patriot projected by the man who imagined India to begin with, Gandhi. He said, "For me patriotism is the same as humanity. I am patriotic because I am human and humane."

Perhaps, Ambedkar too was imagining a 'pro-national' when he said, "I do not want that our loyalty as Indians should be in the slightest way affected by any competitive loyalty whether that loyalty arises out of our religion, out of our culture or out of our language. I want all people to be Indians first, Indians last and nothing else but Indians." Perhaps, they were just dreamers. But, perhaps, they still make it possible for Indians to say: 'I've a dream!' — a beautiful dream of an India of patriots who are human and humane and are nothing else but Indians.

## REALITIES BEYOND THE PEACOCK MOMENT

### POINT OF VIEW

T J S GEORGE

**N**O prime minister has imprinted himself on Indian history as effectively as Narendra Modi has done. Such has been his dominance that when history comes to be written, his years in power will be known as the Modi Period, not the BJP Period.

One reason he will outshine his party is the importance he has always attached to projecting himself as a leader unlike any other. Self-projection always runs the risk of over-doing. Fortunately for Modi, he has no rival in his party or outside it. This naturally works to his advantage politically. But it also prevents him from realising where to draw the line in terms of public relations. This is a serious handicap as became evident on two occasions recently. The first may be called the Peacock Moment and the other the Laptop Moment.

The Peacock Moment was a photographic triumph. How could it not be when peacocks are around? There they were, strutting about as Modi walked through his garden, spreading their spectacular plumage, dancing and pirouetting, hopping and swaying as if inspired by the Prime Minister's presence.

With the ever-appreciative media circulating the photographs widely, the effect was dramatic.

The Laptop Moment was less spectacular, but the message it conveyed was important. The pictures left nothing unsaid. We could see him sitting under a tree in a verdant garden. Around him were two white ducks, an open laptop, two books in English, both open, suggesting that they were being read simultaneously, and a newspaper being scanned keenly, not any newspaper but a pink one. Our Prime Minister is of course a multi-tasker; but even a BJP child could see that this was a stage-managed photograph, except the ducks who carried conviction as they tried to look disciplined to suit the occasion.

We live in unusual times when everything must fit into the scheme of a successful leader. A failed leader is dismissed from public memory if he is lucky, humiliated if he is not. A successful leader has all his failures erased from memory. Who remembers that demonetisation was a blunder the consequences of which are still plaguing us? Who recalls the spectacle of 450 million people, rendered jobless overnight, walking from the big cities to their native hinterlands where only misery awaited them? That migration of March-April 2020 will remain etched in the collective memory of India for

generations to come.

Some decisions hurt the country so badly that they will be remembered for long even if they are not discussed in public. The most scandalous of these was the decision to scrap the original agreement with France for the purchase of Rafale fighter jets. A new agreement was signed to buy fewer Rafales at three times the original agreed price. India lost heavily for the sake of

benefiting a private party who appeared on the scene with no previous experience of aircraft deals. This was one deal where there was not even an attempt to hide the personal interest that superceded the national interest.

All governments do hanky-panky with the national interest. Mahatma Gandhi himself did not try to stop G D Birla from using their personal friend-

ship for business advantage. But earlier governments tried to give the impression that they were not unduly influenced by personal loyalties. They were keen that their actions were seen by the people as fair. It is only now that we see a disregard for public approval of that kind. The Adani-Ambani culture is very different in style from the Birla-Bajaj culture.

That this difference can impact on the foundations of democracy itself must make us pause and look at where we are going. The Modi Government has taken a step to undermine Parliament itself. Taking advantage of the coronavirus scare, it decided to cancel Question Hour in Parliament. This means a Parliament with its front teeth gone. Front teeth have a unique impact. They are important even in a country where Parliament has already lost its molars. All kinds of symbols and signals are clicking around us all the time. Peacocks and ducks appear up front. Unseen behind are hyenas and jackals. They all convey a single message: Yesterday is dead. There was a time when Indian democracy was an inspiration for the rest of Asia. The way things are happening now, it is beginning to look like democracy is shrinking and the distance between India and Pakistan is getting reduced. As the pop lyricist said: We are waiting here for something to save us.



**A failed leader is dismissed from public memory if he is lucky, humiliated if he is not. A successful leader has all his failures erased from memory. Who remembers that demonetisation was a blunder the consequences of which are still plaguing us?**

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All governments do hanky-panky with the national interest. Mahatma Gandhi himself did not try to stop G D Birla from using their personal friend-

## REPLACE SATTABHOGIS WITH KARAMAYOGIS



### POWER & POLITICS

**PRABHU CHAWLA**  
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Follow him on Twitter @PrabhuChawla

**T**HERE is no solution to death. But bureaucratic cryonics keeps India in deep freeze. Our pachydermatous panjandrums have no intentions to perish. Albert Einstein made a profound and prophetic statement saying, "Bureaucracy is the death of any achievement." Yet Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to believe that bulging bumbledom can be transformed into a productive asset. Taking forward his penchant for novel innovative initiatives, he has given babudom spiritual indemnity. Recently, he launched yet another digital mission named iGOT-Karmayogi. According to the government, "Mission Karmayogi aims to prepare the Indian Civil Servant for the future by making him more creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled. Empowered with specific role-competencies, the civil servant will be able to ensure efficient service delivery of the highest quality standards." It has been billed as the new administrative architecture known as "National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)."

Excessive corporate jargon only reflects the government's ultimate objective. It expects civil servants to adopt the corporate culture and its tools. Though the Mission is expected to enhance capacity, it creates more posts and institutions. For converting a Sattabhogi (power hungry) civil servant into Karmayogi, the new ordinance envisages multiple new agencies such as the PM-led HR Council, a capacity building commission and a government-owned Special Purpose Vehicle

for data collection and management as well as a coordination unit headed by the Cabinet Secretary. This mandarin mantra reflects the government's resolve to ensure a role-based and not a rule-based delivery system. Ample infrastructure and financial support has been made available so that the process moves faster than the files. The NPCSCB's intent and content is quite laudable.

However, Mission Karmayogi suffers from the same defects as India's economic policy. For the past 40 years, the country's monetary and fiscal policies have been driven by supply side economics. Since 1991, almost all the parties, barring the Left, have been blindly endorsing excessive capacity building. Four decades later, the economy is in doldrums due to a lack of demand. By over-emphasising the need for capacity enhancement of the existing humungous establishment, the NDA government has fallen into the trap of the nefarious civil service. The new framework hardly expects accountability and a time-bound delivery system.

Sadly, the survival of the Indian economy and its efficient administration depends on the quality and commitment of its 20 million public officials, who are controlled by around 15,000 IAS officers. Though babus report to the Prime Minister, Union ministers, Chief Ministers and other democratically chosen representatives, they are rarely held accountable for the full and honest implementation of policies and projects finalised by the elected executive.

Even if PMs and CMs are ousted by voters for perceived non-performance, the DMs get promoted. The Indian bureaucracy has been magnanimously rewarded not for its sanguine success but for its failure. Since they are first to access any information, they often use it against the political leadership to retain their posts. Nicknamed the Indian Automatic Service, its members are assured of not only time-bound promotion but also protection against punitive action for inefficiency.

India is already burdened with an avaricious babudom. A wily public servant is always opposed to any change or constructive disruption that restricts his power play and forces him to pay for his follies. The Prime Minister struck

the right cord when he promised that his government would ensure maximum governance with minimum government since he knew that India has a bloated establishment. As Gujarat's chief minister, he was aware of the damage they could do to his dream projects. Five years later, he has been advised to concentrate more on enhancement rather than contraction. If rural India, after 75 years of de-colonisation, lacks an all-weather road, a primary health centre, a properly equipped school and clean potable water supply, who should be held responsible? The fault isn't the politician's alone. Enough funds have been allotted in successive state and central budgets. But no answerability from bureaucrats for the non-utilisation of funds is demanded.

Rajiv Gandhi had revealed that out of a rupee allocated for development, only



**In fact, India would get better officials if the offices of the PM and CM are manned by outside professionals who can tame the insiders. Unless the pernicious character of the bulky bureaucracy is altered, no mission with even a vision can bring about better governance**

15 paisa reaches the people. When the CAG points out financial irregularities in projects and purchases, why should elected representatives alone face judicial wrath and punishment? The file pushers, who habitually concur with every word written on the files that move from one table to the next, seem to get away scot free.

The British left behind an administrative architecture that reports to none other than itself. Only an IAS officer is entitled to select other IAS officers and decide on their posting. Mostly, it's an IAS officer who leads the UPSC, which is responsible for holding examinations and selecting All India Services officers. The Secretary of the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet is always from the IAS. RBI Governors and other directors as well as heads of banks,

chiefs of the Intelligence agencies and bosses of PSUs are drawn from this lofty pantheon.

It's an irony that an ordinary graduate or post graduate is considered superior to those with superlative professional qualifications. It was a cruel joke that an IAS officer was chosen to draft the first New Education Policy. Yet another retired IAS officer is picked up to decide on the fiscal and other implications of loan interest waivers, while the professionals are mere members. An IAS officer has often been chosen to lead Air India but never has a pilot become the Civil Aviation Secretary. As part of the reform process, India accepted the international practice of setting up regulatory bodies to protect consumer interests. A majority of these regulators are retired civil servants who rarely favour the consumer.

Under the Right to Information Act, both the Centre and the states have created Information Commissions with a total annual outlay of ₹5,000 cr. Again, a large majority of the members are from either the IAS or other Central Services. According to available records, the numbers of secretary-level posts have tripled during the past two decades. Over 100 retired desk jockeys found better re-employment. Even the current format of Mission Karmayogi has been crafted in such a way that it opens up more opportunities for the mighty babus.

The bureaucracy has sabotaged yet another attempt to ensure the selection of the best officer for a post. Modi introduced a 360-degree selection process to select outsiders and insiders to handle sensitive posts. But the IAS lobby ensured that most of the selectors were from their fraternity.

In fact, India would get better officials if the offices of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister are manned by outside professionals who can tame the insiders. Unless the pernicious character of the bulky bureaucracy is altered, no mission with even a vision can bring about better governance. The taming and training of the men in safari suits needs an iron hand. Indian beadlehood needs de-humiliation and not enhancement of the bureaucratic clout to operate a responsive conveyor belt of karma yogis.

### QUOTE CORNER

What happened at Juukan was wrong and we are determined to ensure that the destruction of a heritage site of such exceptional archaeological and cultural significance never occurs again at a Rio Tinto operation

Simon Thompson, Rio Tinto chairman

The debate is over around climate change. Just come to the state of California. Observe it with your own eyes. It's not an intellectual debate. It's not even debatable any longer.

Gavin Newsom, California Governor

Protocol tricks have become one of the techniques that American officials regularly go to artificially create the visibility of their own exclusivity. And this is unacceptable

Maria Zakharova, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman



### MAILBAG WRITE TO

**Let court decide Periya case**  
People respect investigation by the CBI for its reliability, impartiality, and depth. That is the general norm. Exceptions may be there. Why is the Kerala government opposing a CBI probe into the Periya twin murder case allegedly involving the CPM? The government has now appealed to the apex court against the Kerala High Court order handing over the case to the CBI. The LDF government is spending millions in advocates' remuneration only to see that the case is investigated by Kerala Police! Why is the government afraid of the CBI? Is not the court more competent to decide who should investigate a case?

P Mangalachandran, Kannur

**Bail out troubled loan takers**  
When failed crop/agriculture loans are written off, why not the loans of industry or any other venture? Similarly on failure of any non-agricultural ven-

ture, write-off loans or have constructive alternatives. No need of any blame game to bankers and farmers or others. Failure makes the loan taker economically disabled to pay it back (in most of the cases). Even government shuts down its failed venture / sells it off to others. Every thing is "trial & error", not in human hands. Hence by common-sense, write-off failure-venture loans or show constructive alternatives without troubling bank employees and loan takers.

PV Srinivas, Secunderabad

**Pranab's death leaves a void**  
Pranab Mukherjee was a quintessential political titan (Two Indian leadership styles: citizen Pranab vs. pratham sevak Modi, Sept. 12). Had he become the Prime Minister of the country in 2004, the histories of India and the Congress would have been quite different. The composure, grace and poise that he had shown to work under Manmohan Singh were exceptional and remarkable. He brought exposure, dignity and grace to every office that he occupied. He was indeed a great store of experi-

ence, knowledge and versatility. Pranab-da virtually earned and eminently deserved the Bharat Ratna.

CG Kuriakose, Kothamangalam

### Time for thinking, not fighting

Kerala health minister's endorsement of homeopathy for Covid treatment has kick started a row in the medical fraternity. The hope of a cure was shattered when the AstraZeneca-Oxford suspended its phase III trial across the world. Meanwhile the Indian Council of Medical Research's confirmation of plasma therapy ineffective was a double shock. Incidentally, the Chinese testimony of treating 92 percent of the Covid patients there with Traditional Chinese Medicine is a case in point we have to keep in mind before triggering controversies.

Bijumon PN, Idukki

### Azad should take the lead

Like American Democratic politician W Averell Harriman, Ghulam Nabi Azad became the byword of a skillful politician who could negotiate and bring

people to the table as to give Congress a stability in conducting parleys with regional parties like DMK and to give a stable government at the Centre. The time has come for Azad to take over the Congress leadership and give a respectful image to the party.

PS Sundaram, Tuticorin

### Rights are not absolute

Freedom of media in India is indeed manifestation of constitutional fundamental right of freedom of expression. This right was unreasonably curtailed by Congress rule during Emergency period while Indira Gandhi was then PM. (TJS George's Point of View - Sept.6). Perhaps India is the only country which is enjoying maximum such freedom. In fact, the writer has projected uncharitably by exaggerating certain aberrations visible during the present rule by the Modi government. Moreover, it is pertinent to point out that no fundamental right is absolute. However, courts have upheld reasonable restrictions necessary for ensuring smooth conduct of democracy in our grand country.

BV Thampi, Thiruvananthapuram



**Rahul Gandhi @rahulgandhi**  
Centre's 'well planned fight' against coronavirus has put India in 'abysms of GDP reduction'

**Mayawati @mayawati**  
Following lockdown, people who were already facing unemployment crisis, are now facing the challenge of depositing the school fees. It is very sad

**Umar Khalid @UmarKhalidJNU**  
It was an honour having known you, Swami Agnivesh ji. We will take forward your fight against inequality, bigotry, superstition

# Nadda says NDA in Bihar united as Chirag mellows

Chirag Paswan criticism of the Chief Minister had raised doubts about the BJP fighting the election under Nitish Kumar's leadership

RAJESH THAKUR @Patna

THE BJP has said it will contest the Bihar polls along with its allies, including Chirag Paswan-led LJP, under the leadership of JD-U chief Nitish Kumar.

The remarks from BJP chief JP Nadda came on a day when Chirag Paswan tried to play down his party's differences with JD-U. "There is no rift between the JD-U and LJP," Chirag told a news channel, adding what he has been saying all along meant that the people's problems should be brought to the knowledge of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

The tone and tenor of Chirag sought to clear the wrinkles within the NDA as Nadda led a team of party seniors to a meeting with Nitish, which lasted around 40 minutes and focused on the tricky question of seat-sharing. Nadda went to the party office and launched the party's *Atmanirbhar* campaign. He said all NDA allies — the BJP, JD-U, LJP and HAM — are united and will fight the polls without any differences.

"The NDA under the leadership of Nitish Kumar will form the government again as the people have trust in the alliance. The Opposition has lost the people's trust", he said, adding there were no differ-



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar greets Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President JP Nadda at his official residence in Patna | PTI

ences in the NDA over seat-sharing. He said the 'culture of politics' in the country changed after 2014 with Narendra Modi becoming the Prime Minister. It has shifted from 'politics of preaching' to 'politics of performances'. "Gone are the days when politics was being done for the sake of politics. Now, a new era of development politics has begun through *atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant India)," he said.

Nadda said India cannot be self-reliant unless Bihar be-

comes one. "The NDA has a set of leaders who would do good not only for the state but also for the nation. When the people of Bihar can be achievers outside the state, why can't they develop their own state given the right opportunities?" he said.

He also launched a theme song of the party for the Assembly elections and asked party leaders and workers to act as a bridge between the people and the NDA government.

## PM cautions against carelessness on Covid

Cautioning against lowering guard till an anti-corona medicine is developed, PM Modi on Saturday came up with a slogan to drive home his point. He said, 'Jab tak dawai nahi, tab tak dhilani nahi, do gaj ki doori, mask hai jaroori' (No carelessness till a medicine is found. Face mask and maintaining distance of two yards is necessary.) He said while inaugurating 1.75L houses under PMAY in Madhya Pradesh.

## Raghuvansh open letter targets Lalu's family

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @Patna

RAGHUVANSH Prasad Singh, who recently resigned from the Rashtriya Janta Dal (RJD), has written another emotional letter expressing his anguish and agony over the situation.

In the letter written on Thursday, Singh obliquely slammed the family of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav without naming him. The hand-written letter is being widely shared on social media.

Singh, who was put on life support system by doctors at AIIMS Delhi on Friday, has quit the party via a hand-written letter couple of days ago.

"Politics means fighting against evils and religion means doing good. There has been such a decline in the present-day politics that poses a threat to democracy," the letter begins. Singh says that the names and ideologies of Mahatma Gandhi, Jay Prakash

Narayan, Dr. RM Lohia, Baba Saheb and Jananayak Karpoori Thakur have gone missing.

"Instead of pictures of these five great men, the images of five members of a family are being printed now," he adds in an indirect shot at the Lalu family.

"Now feudalism, casteism, dynasty, nepotism, communalism have come in place of socialism. These are all the same evils against which socialism was born", he writes.

"To earn money by getting a position and to find a position of higher profit by earning money has become a way in politics. According to the definition of politics, all these evils have to be fought", he says. Singh adds that some parties are denying the rights of their workers due to horse-trading of tickets and voters. "When the system of votes collapses, how can democracy be saved?" Singh questions.

**Instead of pictures of these five great men, the images of five members of a family are being printed now**  
Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, former RJD leader



## Bhushan moves SC, seeks right to appeal in contempt case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

ADVOCATE Prashant Bhushan on Saturday filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking a declaration that a person convicted by the Supreme Court for criminal contempt, including Bhushan, has a right to intra-Court appeal.

Bhushan was convicted by a three-Judge bench of the Supreme Court in August for criminal contempt of Court in relation to two of his tweets where Bhushan had criticized the Chief Justice of India and former CJs. After he was held guilty for contempt, Bhushan was fined Re 1 as punishment for this offence.

In his plea, Bhushan has prayed for a direction declaring that persons convicted by the Supreme Court have a right to an intra-Court appeal to be heard by a larger and different Bench.

He also prayed for a direction for framing of rules and guidelines providing for intra-court appeal against conviction in original criminal contempt cases.

Alternatively though, Bhushan has prayed that a review petition filed against such conviction orders may be heard by a different bench in open court.

This petition, Bhushan's plea says, has been filed seeking enforcement of fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India and stated, "Laying down of such guidelines would bring in procedural safeguards."

Criminal contempt of Court also involves having an effect on the contemnor's liberty and as such, it is pertinent that such guidelines be formulated, the petition stated.

## NGT wants e-retailers fined for plastic use

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE National Green Tribunal has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to conduct environmental audit and recover fine from Amazon and Flipkart for violation of environmental norms and expressed its displeasure at lack of action against excessive use of plastic in packaging by the companies.

NGT noted that the authorities concerned were not following the dictum of polluter pays even as there were statutory norms prescribing this. The NGT then asked the CPCB to take necessary steps in the matter and file an action taken report by October 14.

"A report has been filed by the CPCB, which again mentions one or other reasons for not enforcing the law but does not mention the coercive measures adopted either directly by the CPCB or in coordination with the state pollution control boards," a bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice A K Goel said.

The CPCB has earlier told the NGT that e-commerce giants need to fulfil their extended producer responsibility under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, and need to establish a system for collecting back the plastic waste generated due to the packaging of their products, the CPCB had earlier told the NGT.

# In-flight rules: DGCA double standards slammed

KUMAR VIKRAM @ New Delhi

TAKING into cognisance the unruly scenes witnessed in an IndiGo aircraft that flew actor Kangana Ranaut from Chandigarh to Mumbai, aviation regulator DGCA on Saturday said that the schedule of the flight to a particular route will be suspended for two weeks if anyone is found doing photography inside it.

"It has been decided that from now on, in case any violation (photography) occurs on any scheduled passenger aircraft — the schedule of flight for that particular route shall be suspended for a period of two weeks from the next day (of the incident)," the DGCA said in a statement Saturday.

## 3 Uttarakhand districts to get air defence radars

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dehradun

AMID the border tensions with China and Nepal, the Indian Air Force (IAF) plans to set up air defence radars in three districts of Uttarakhand, including Chamoli, Pithoragarh and Uttarkashi. Air Marshal Rajesh Kumar, AOC-in-C, Central Air-Command, discussed the land transfer for setting up the radars with Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat in Dehradun on Friday.

A statement released by the Chief Minister's office said:

"The Air Marshal requested the Chief Minister to make the land available for extension of airports in Pantnagar, Jolly Grant and Pithoragarh along with a new airport in Chaukhutia."

Following this, the government and the IAF have decided to appoint their respective nodal officers, who will work jointly, to identify the land.

The Air Marshal added that the facilities for the radars and airstrips at appropriate sites in Uttarakhand were essential in view of the current situation at the



Another expert, Captain Shakti Lumba took to the Twitter to react and said, "Why have all these television reporters not been put on the 'no fly list' you did it in a

flash like "Sudden" (in the old westerns) in an earlier now famous case & that too before a complaint was filed by anybody." The DGCA order on Satur-

day stated that as per Rule 13 of the Aircraft Rules 1937, no person is allowed to take photographs inside a flight, except when permission is granted by the DGCA or the Civil Aviation Ministry.

It said that this permission is not applicable when the aircraft is landing or taking off at a defence aerodrome. "In spite of these regulations, it has been noted that at times, airlines have failed to follow stipulations primarily because of lack of diligence on their part," the order noted.

"Needless to say that such deviations result in compromise in maintaining the highest standards of safety and therefore, is not to be allowed," it mentioned.

## States struggling to meet rising demand for oxygen

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MP is making arrangements for supply from Gujarat and UP. In Indore, the worst-hit district in MP, the administration on Friday directed all oxygen producing plants to operate on full capacity and supply the entire oxygen for medical use. A 200-tonne oxygen plant will be operational in six months in Hoshangabad district.

In Punjab, per day demand for medical oxygen has gone up from 15-20 MTs before pandemic to 100 MTs now and is expected to increase to 165 MTs daily by September 30, with positive cases estimated to touch one lakh in a few days.

To meet the demand, the state's Principal Secretary (Industries and Commerce), Alok Shekhar, has shot off letters to his counterparts in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, requesting them to di-

rect the manufacturing plants in their respective states to increase the supply to Punjab. Manufacturers and re-filling units in the state, too, have been told to scale up production. The industries department has asked all 16 oxygen manufacturers and suppliers in Punjab, who were earlier supplying only 20 per cent of their oxygen for hospitals, to utilise the production capacity mainly for medical-grade oxygen.

Uttar Pradesh, a few districts like Agra and Jhansi have reported shortage. In Agra the shortage has been attributed to the high demand in Delhi as both the national capital and the city of Taj Mahal source their supply from NCR-based units. Similarly, Jhansi depends on neighbouring MP which itself is facing shortage.

With inputs from our bureau in Mumbai, Bhopal, Chandigarh and Lucknow.

## Muraleedharan participates in ASEAN Regional Forum meeting

New Delhi: MoS for External Affairs V. Muraleedharan participated in the meeting of the FMs of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) held virtually. The leaders exchanged views on international and regional issues. The leaders adopted three statements, namely, 'Enhancing Cooperation to Prevent and Respond to Infectious Disease Outbreaks among others.

## Centre paves way for 50% unemployment benefit to ESIC

New Delhi: The Labour ministry has notified payment under the Atal Beemid Vyakti Kalyan Yojana, which helps unemployed persons under the ESIC to avail 50% unemployment benefits. The unemployment scheme provides an unemployment allowance till June 30, 2021. According to the estimates, the scheme is likely to benefit around 41.9 lakh subscribers.

# Ex-CBI chief faces flak for remarks on Swami Agnivesh's death

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

SEVERAL prominent personalities, including IPS officers and police associations, condemned the shocking remarks made by former CBI Director Nageswara Rao on the death of social worker Swami Agnivesh. The Indian Police Foundation (IPF), a multidisciplinary think-tank based in Delhi, said Rao 'desecrated' the police uniform and 'embarrassed' the government with his 'hate messages'.

Even as Rao's tweets came under heavy criticism, the retired IPS officer continued to defend his remarks on Saturday.

"The IPF said, 'Tweeting such hate messages by a retired officer posing as an IPS officer — he has desecrated the police uniform which he wore and embarrassed the government. He demoralises the entire police force in the country, especially the

young officers.'

On Friday night, just hours after Agnivesh's death, Rao put out a tweet that the death of activist Swami Agnivesh as 'good riddance' and claimed he did 'enormous damage to Hinduism'. "My grievance against Yamaraj is why did he wait this long," Rao further wrote.

ADG of Police in Chhatisgarh RK Vij criticised Rao's tweet and said, "Insult to hu-

man life. Sad". Another IPS officer Rakesh Balwal expressed shock over Rao's tweet and wondered if Rao's Twitter account had been hacked. Balwal, posted with the National Investigation Agency in Jammu and Kashmir said, "No sane person can ever celebrate death, even if it's of his worst adversary."

Many called out Rao for spreading 'hate' and for misrepresenting Hinduism. Activist Rahul Easwar tweeted, "May Bhagwan Krishna save

#Hindu & #Hindustan from #Hate Virus."

Historian Irfan Habib said Rao is a 'disgrace' and questioned what he would have done as a police officer. "Can imagine what all you must have done as a police officer? Abusing the dead may be Hindutva but is certainly not Hinduism. Better late than never. Get yourself treated," Habib said.

Congress national spokesperson Pawan Khera also disapproved of Rao's tweet.



OFFICER KILLED

Maoists hacked a forest ranger to death in Biljapur district of Chhattisgarh, police said on Saturday. Rathram Patel, 56, had gone to the Kondri village to distribute payment for the labourers

3 PEOPLE

KILLED BY LIGHTNING IN UTTAR PRADESH



INDIA	Max	Min	Mumbai	Max	Min
Ahmedabad	35	26	Panaji	28	25
Bhopal	30	22	Patna	28	24
Jaipur	38	27	Lucknow	33	28
Amritsar	36	26	Port Blair	29	25
Chennai	32	24	Imphal	30	22
Kolkata	32	26	Chandigarh	36	23
Srinagar	29	21			

# IS SHIV SENA GOING BACK TO ITS HOOLIGAN WAYS?

Recent incidents suggest that the party is back to its old politics of 'threat and intimidation'

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

WHEN Aadiya Thackeray, the third scion of the Thackerays, entered politics and walked inside the Assembly as an MLA from Worli last year, many thought the Shiv Sena had transformed itself. The old style of threatening opponents and the *Marathi Manos* exclusivist agenda appeared a thing of the past. But the recent incidents involving an assault on a retired naval officer and part-demolition of Kanganana Ranaut's office have belied those hopes. The Sena is back to its game, analysts say.

Sena strongman Bal Thackeray had built his political career and expanded his party on hate and bigotry. Thackeray first targeted south Indians with a slogan of *Bajao pungli, Bhagavo lungi*, then north Indians, Muslims, Dalits and others to consolidate his position among staunch Marathi and Hindu voters in Mumbai and elsewhere in Maharashtra.

Vaibhav Purandare, the author of 'Bal Thackeray and the rise of Shiv Sena,' says Shiv Sena remains stuck in its old mirror image at a time when an emerging Maharashtra gives precedence to jobs, health and environment. The basic idea behind bringing in Aadiya and sewing up an alliance with secular parties was to project an appearance of reinvention.

"Bal Thackeray was a charismatic leader who would get away with his controversial statements. But the current leadership is neither as much charismatic nor in the Opposition," says Purandare.

"The Sena has to realize that it is the ruling party, and that it cannot create a law and order problem. "It is not always necessary to react to every statement and action directed against you. During Bal Thackeray's time, Sena's hooliganism was of a different kind—the Sainiks would threaten the government or a local corporation on popular issues".



Next generation, same Sena!

- The BMC, controlled by Shiv Sena, razed down 'illegal construction at' actor Kanganana Ranaut's office at Pali Hill, in Bandra (top)
- A retired Navy officer was beaten by some goons on Friday for allegedly sharing a cartoon on CM Uddhav Thackeray (above left)
- Multiple FIRs were filed against Sunaina Holey for allegedly making derogatory comments against Uddhav and Aadiya Thackeray
- In December, a man from Wadala claimed that his head was shaved by Sena workers for posts against Uddhav Thackeray (above right)

eray's time, Sena's hooliganism was of a different kind—the Sainiks would threaten the government or a local corporation on popular issues".

Shiv Sena's image problem

The problem, he says, is that Shiv Sena is stuck with the image issue. "If they stop reacting strongly, the people would say the party is losing its grip over Mumbai. And if they react strongly as they did in the Kanganana Ranaut case, then they have to face public criticism.

They have to carefully decide the way forward," Purandare pointed out.

Raju Parulekar, senior journalist and writer who has seen the rise and fall and rise of the Shiv Sena, says the current approach of the leadership will surely help the party to remain in the dominant position.

He says political party workers need catharsis. "Sena workers achieve it by showing off power and doing something openly. Then, Sena's cadre is different from the Congress'

and the NCP's. They need to be charged up. They have a history of bouncing back by their street smart politics," Parulekar said.

A former Shiv Sena minister who is a close aide of CM Uddhav Thackeray says the party never starts a showdown, "but if some comes its way, then it doesn't spare". "Kangna Ranaut is a film actor. No sane person would tolerate her remarks against the Mumbai city and Maharashtra. She called Mumbai Pak occupied Kashmir (PoK), Pakistan, and even called the BMC workers as Babur's army. There is a limit. So we decided to give it back. Those who stay in glass houses should not throw stones at others, simple," he said.

Kanganana part of BJP's design

Marathi writer and blogger Avinash Usha Vasant says the BJP wants to snatch Sena's dominance over Mumbai and Bollywood by exploiting the Sushant Singh Rajput case. "Kanganana Ranaut is one of the persons who are a part of this design. Shiv Sena has the strongest union in Bollywood which can make or break any film. The BJP is trying to make inroads into the film world by targeting a few Bollywood people," said Avinash.

But he says the demography of Mumbai is changing fast. "Some decades back, Marathas accounted for nearly 60 per cent of voters. Today that number is only 28 per cent. A cursory glance at the name plates of big housing societies can give us the real picture of Mumbai."

"So, Shiv Sena has to not only project itself in the reinvention mode, but it has to reinvent itself in reality—and quickly before the people's trust in it evaporates and the Congress and NCP pull the plug," Purandare said.

UNIFORM CODE

# Raj govt changes school dress again, parents face the burden

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

AFTER changing the school curriculum and colour of the 'saffron' bicycles awarded to the students, the Ashok Gehlot government has changed the uniforms for government school students in Rajasthan. About 77 lakh students will now have to get new uniforms as the state government claimed that the colours of previous uniform, decided three year ago by the Vasundhara Raje government, had a political intent to divide the community. While it is not certain when schools will re-open due to the pandemic, the government's decision to junk the earlier uniform will cost parents a huge sum of over ₹450 crores collectively.

In 2017, the BJP government had introduced new school uniforms after a gap of almost 20 years which were identical to the RSS uniform.

State Education Minister Govind Singh Dotasara claimed that many parents

and students had complained that the uniform was intended to divide the community.

"We have decided to change these uniforms as students should be kept away from any reflection of political ideology. But final decision on the recommendation of the Committee will be taken after consulting the chief minister," he added.

Education experts feel that there is lack of rules for school uniforms. Under normal circumstances, parents should be informed at least one year in advance for any change in uniform.

Rajasthan has 75 lakh students in Government schools of which 41 lakhs are girls. According to estimates, the dress of each girl costs around 650 Rupees as a result 266 crores will have to be spent if these new dresses are to be created for the students.

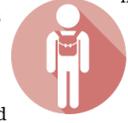
Many have questioned that when private schools are not allowed to change uniform in

less than five years, why is the state government insisting on changing it within three years.

"The government should be focusing more on improving the quality of education and ensuring better online education," an expert said.

However, the real problem is for the parents who will have to get these new uniforms made. The parents had already been forced to spend a lot of money due to constant change in books, uniforms and other aspects of school education in the last few years due to political decisions. The change in school uniforms will add to that burden.

"At a time when students are worried about missing classes because of lack of infrastructure for online education, a discussion on the colour of uniforms is untimely and inappropriate," said Vipin Sharma, the Vice President of Rajasthan Primary and Secondary Teacher's Union.



# Soldier detained with 2 girls at Srinagar airport

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

AN army man posted in north Kashmir Bandipora district was on Saturday arrested along with two reportedly minor girls by police at Srinagar airport while on way to Delhi. A Lance Naik of 13 Rashtrita Rifles Ashok Kumar posted at Ajas, Bandipora and was detained on his way to Delhi at Srinagar airport on Saturday, sources said.

They said the soldier was detained along with two girls, who also hailed from Ajas. The trio were later handed over to nearby Police Station Humhama for further investigation.

"The parents of the girls were also brought to the police station by police officials to ascertain the motive of the trio travelling to Delhi," sources said.

The arrested soldier may be handed over to the army for further investigations. The Army spokesperson has not commented about the incident so far.



# BSF seizes AK-47s, M-16s near border in Punjab

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

THE Border Security Force (BSF) troopers of 124 Battalion stationed in the Abohar sector thwarted another attempt to push consignment of contraband into India on Saturday and seized a cache of arms and ammunition.

The cache, containing three AK-47s, two M-16 rifles and ammunition, was recovered from near the Indo-Pak international border in the Ferozepur district of Punjab. The search operation is still

going on in the area.

According to sources, BSF troopers seized the arms and ammunition from a bag lying in a field during a search operation around 7 am along the international border on the Indian side. It had three AK-47s, two M-16 rifles, six magazines of AK-47 and 91 rounds, four magazines of M-16 rifles and 57 rounds, two pistols with four magazines and 20 rounds.

This consignment of arms and ammunition were sent from across the border through Abohar in Ferozepur.

# UP: Rape-accused former minister arrested for fraud

NAMITA BAJPAI @Lucknow

FORMER minister and Samajwadi Party leader Gayatri Prajapati, who is accused of rape, was arrested by the Lucknow Police on Friday, in another case of cheating, criminal intimidation and forgery. The former minister is believed to be conniving with the rape survivor in getting the rape charges dropped against him.

The fresh case of cheating and fraud was lodged against Prajapati, the rape survivor, her daughter, and her unidentified accomplices by the woman's former lawyer Dinesh Chandra Tripathi on Thursday. Tripathi had filed a complaint under charges of criminal intimidation, dishonesty, forgery for the purpose of cheating and fraudulently using a document.

The lawyer had also mentioned the connivance of the rape survivor with the rape accused leader in the case. He had alleged that Chitrakoot-based woman had accused Prajapati of raping her and molesting her daughter but later she turned hostile after allegedly receiving money, plots and houses from Prajapati.

# Ex-Punjab DGP faces arrest in murder case

HARPREET BAJWA @Chandigarh

A Mohali court on Saturday issued arrest warrants against Sumedh Singh Saini, the former Director General of Police (DGP) of Punjab, in connection with disappearance and murder case of 29-year-old Balwant Singh Multani.

Judicial magistrate Ravtresh Inderjit Singh directed the police to arrest Saini and produce him in court by September 25. The orders were issued after the special investigation team (SIT) of Punjab Police failed to arrest Saini despite conducting raids at several places including Shimla, Delhi and Chandigarh in last few days.

On Tuesday, the Punjab and Haryana high court had dismissed Saini's anticipatory bail plea and his second petition seeking the quashing of a FIR in the case or the transfer of investigation to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Saini on Friday had moved the Supreme Court after the High

Court dismissed his bail petition. A Mohali court had dismissed his bail plea on September 1.

On September 3, the Punjab Police had claimed that Saini absconded leaving behind the Z-plus security provided to him. He had left his house in Chandigarh without security personnel and vehicles, including a bullet proof vehicle in which he used to travel, jammer vehicle and other security vehicles.

The former DGP and six other police officers were booked in May this year for the alleged kidnapping, torture and elimination of Balwant Singh Multani, a junior engineer at the Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Corporation (Citco) and son of former Punjab cadre IAS officer Darshan Singh Multani, in 1991.

Last month, police had added the murder to list of charges in the case after two former Chandigarh Police personnel, who were co-accused, turned approvers in the case.

# EXPRESS READ 15 leopards to get radio collars in view of Kumbh

Dehradun: In the wake of upcoming Mahakumbh 2021, Uttarakhand state forest department has decided to radio collar 15 leopards in selected locations to check human-animal conflict. The event in Haridwar is expected to witness congregation of over 10 crore people.

# WB: Left eyes alliance as Adhir takes Cong charge

PRANAB MONDAL @ Kolkata

WITH Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury taking charge as the Bengal Congress chief, the Left Front parties are gearing up for an alliance ahead of the 2021 Assembly elections to battle against both the ruling TMC and the BJP. Chowdhury, known to be a bitter critic of CM Mamata Banerjee, was one of those in favour of an alliance with CPI(M) in 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He has said that Congress is ready to join hands with the Left Front.

Describing the TMC and the BJP are two sides of the same coin, Chowdhury said, "Given the present political situation in the state, Left Front is a natural ally of the Congress. The fight in 2021 election will be pri-

marily between secularism and communalism. Secular ideology of the Congress will defeat the communal rhetoric of BJP and TMC. In alliance with the Left parties, Congress wants to put up a spirited battle against the misrule in the state."

The Congress and Left Front had fought together in 2016 assembly polls but the tie-up fell apart during the Lok Sabha elections polls over the Raiganj seat. While the CPI(M) wanted to field the then sitting MP Mohammad Selim, Congress insisted on Deepa Dasmunshi.

In 2016, Congress had emerged as the main opposition party in the assembly. Though, the 2016 alliance did not help the party to get its de-

sired seats, the CPI(M) was keen to fight with Congress in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

"In 2019, we suffered a drop of around 13 per cent in out vote bank and the BJP enjoyed a gain of same vote share. A large section of our supporters, who were against Mamata, shifted their allegiance to the BJP. So alliance with the Congress will definitely help to bring back a section of our supporters," said a CPI(M) leader.

Welcoming Chowdhury's induction, CPI(M) politburo member Mohammad Selim said, "His appointment would ensure our alliance. The unity of the Congress and the Left is essential to protect the secular fabric of the state."

# 'Rhea a victim of BJP's vote politics'

KOLKATA: Congress workers took out a protest march against the alleged politically motivated attack on actor Rhea Chakraborty in Kolkata on Saturday. Earlier, state Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury had criticised the Centre for targeting Rhea. The decision to support Rhea is said to be a move to woo Bengali sentiments ahead of the assembly elections. A senior Congress leader said that it was clear how Rhea is a victim of BJP's vote-bank politics using Sushant Singh Rajput's image as 'son of Bihar' to benefit in the state elections.



# Man living in J&K masterminds killing in Panna

A man living in Jammu and Kashmir got a woman murdered by his brothers-in-law in Panna district recently. The woman, whose daughter had gone missing a few months back but returned later, had submitted repetitive complaints to the local police, alleging that two brothers, one of them minor, were behind it. Fed up with his brother-in-law being harassed by cops over the woman's false complaint, the man living in first struck a friendship with the woman over the phone. Later, he called the woman to meet him at a desolate place in Panna, where his two brothers-in-law murdered her.



ANURAAG SINGH

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# BHOPAL DIARY

# Govt school clerk turns out to be 'man of crores'

The Economic Offence Wing (EOW) recovered movable and immovable assets worth over ₹5 crore from the premises of an assistant grade-III clerk of a government high school in Rewa district of Madhya Pradesh on Friday. According to sources in the EOW-Rewa unit, the raids which started early on Friday at the premises of Mahendra Pratap Singh led to the discovery of three tractors, 2 JCB machines, 2 Boleros, one Fortuner, and a motorcycle. The search also led the EOW sleuths to documents which revealed that the clerk had also purchased land plots spread over many hectares. He had also built a private school spread in many acres. Documents of some more land and properties have been seized also. The sleuths also have found many bank passbooks.

# BJP MLA threatens to protest against govt

Veteran BJP legislator and former minister Nagendra Singh has threatened to protest against his own party government in the state over the bad shape of a 26 km long road in his constituency in Rewa district. The four-time MLA from Gurbh stage has threatened to stage a protest against his government, if the work on putting back to shape an incomplete road in his constituency doesn't begin within a week. "I've written several letters and talked to all concerned officials, from Rewa district collector to officials at the PWD and MPRDC, but the issue remains unaddressed. I'm left with no option, but to protest over the issue," said Singh.



# Youth gets ₹60,000 for minister's haircut

It's a haircut any barber won't forget his entire life. A young man who sought help to set up a hair salon was asked by the minister and local BJP MLA Kunwar Vijay Shah to prove his haircutting and shaving skills during a public event in Khandwa district on Friday.

Much to the surprise of the young man Rohidas, the minister asked him to come on the stage and give him a haircut and shave. Wearing the protective mask, Rohidas cut the minister's hair and also gave him a shave. The minister not only appreciated the haircutting and shaving skills but also promptly gave him ₹60,000. The money was paid by the minister from his discretionary fund. The minister also said that the state government will give loans to all those who want to start their small businesses. Only the principal sum will have to be repaid by those getting the loan as the interest on the loan will be paid by the government.



916,372 The pandemic has killed at least 916,372 people worldwide since surfacing in China late last year, as per an AFP count on Saturday based on official sources.



Weather forecast table with columns for city, temperature, and weather conditions.

Ceasefire plea goes unheeded

Abdullah Abdullah, who was previously Afghanistan's chief executive and is heading the peace process for Kabul, called for an immediate ceasefire -- but his plea went unanswered by Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, who made no mention of a truce in his opening remarks.



Taliban negotiator Abbas Stanikzai, fifth on the right, attends the opening session of the peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha on Saturday | AP

HISTORIC AFGHAN PEACE TALKS KICK OFF IN QATAR

Mistrust on both sides, but this may be the best shot at ending war

DOHA

AFGHANISTAN'S warring sides started negotiations for the first time, bringing together the Taliban and delegates appointed by the Afghan government Saturday for historic meetings aimed at ending decades of war.



lowing a meeting with the Taliban on Saturday in Doha, Washington's peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad said the US and every Afghan would like to see a deal "sooner rather than later."

The sides will be tackling tough issues in the negotiations, which will include the terms of a permanent ceasefire, the rights of women and minorities, and the disarming of tens of thousands of Taliban fighters and militias loyal to warlords, some of them aligned with the government.

Khalilzad said a quick, permanent cease-fire is unlikely, but held out hope for a gradual reduction in violence till both sides are ready to end their fighting. Mistrust runs deep on both sides, he said.

The Afghan negotiation teams are also expected to discuss constitutional changes and power sharing during their talks. Subsequent rounds of negotiations could

be held outside Doha. Germany is among nations offering to host future negotiations.

Even seemingly mundane issues like the flag and the name of the country -- the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan or the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, as the Taliban's administration was known when it ruled -- could find their way onto the negotiation table and roil tempers.

Among the government-appointed negotiators are four women, who have vowed to preserve women's rights in any power-sharing deal with the Taliban. This includes the right to work, education and participation in political life, all denied to women when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan for five years.

No women are on the Taliban's negotiation team, led by their chief justice Abdul Hakim. The insurgent movement has said it accepted a woman's right to work, go to school and be in politics but would not accept a woman as president or chief justice. AP

UN Assembly approves virus resolution; US, Israel object

UNITED NATIONS

THE U.N. General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a wide-ranging resolution on tackling the coronavirus pandemic Friday over objections from the United States and Israel, which protested a successful last-minute Cuban amendment that strongly urged countries to oppose any unilateral economic, financial or trade sanctions.

The 193-member world body adopted the resolution by a vote of 169-2, with Ukraine and Hungary abstaining. It was a strong show of unity by the U.N.'s most representative body, though many countries had hoped for adoption by consensus. The resolution included recognition of the WHO's leadership role.

The resolution, which is not legally binding, is the third and most extensive adopted by the General Assembly. A resolution adopted April 2 recognized "the unprecedented effects" of the pandemic and called for "intensified international cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat" the new coronavirus. A Mexico-sponsored resolution approved April 20 urged global action to rapidly scale up development, manufacturing and access to medicine, vaccines and medical equipment to confront the pandemic.

The current text, called an omnibus resolution because it covers multiple aspects of the pandemic, "acknowledges the key leadership role of WHO and the fundamental role of the United Nations system in catalyzing and coordinating the comprehensive global response to the Covid-19 pandemic."

The US withdrew from the WHO this spring, accusing the body of mismanaging the coronavirus pandemic and delaying launch of a global alert.

The text requests nations to maintain food and agricultural supply chains.

PAKISTAN

Anti-Shiite protesters march for a second day

Tens of thousands of anti-Shiite protesters including demonstrators linked to Sunni extremists rallied in Pakistan's Karachi on Saturday, in the second day of protests that have sparked fears of sectarian violence. Vast crowds of men thronged downtown Karachi, many of them waving pro-Sunni flags and chanting Sunni-power slogans. The rallies follow a raft of blasphemy accusations against Shiite leaders in Sunni-majority Pakistan after a broadcast of an Ashura procession last month showed clerics and participants allegedly making disparaging remarks about historic Islamic figures. Ashura commemorates the killing of the Prophet Mohammed's grandson Hussein in 680 AD.

ASIA MATTERS



SINGAPORE

Country reports 42 new cases, mainly in worker dormitories

Singapore on Saturday reported 42 new coronavirus cases, mostly among foreign workers, taking the country's infection count to 57,357. "Based on our investigations, there are four cases in the community, of whom one is a Singapore permanent resident and three are work pass holders," the Ministry of Health (MOH) said in a statement. "There are 10 imported cases, who have been placed on Stay-Home Notice upon arrival in Singapore." The rest were foreign workers living in dormitories.

SRI LANKA

Tanker authorities likely neglected fire warnings from crew, court told

The authorities of the oil tanker that went up in flames off Sri Lanka's eastern waters seemed to have neglected warnings from the crew on possible fire on board, a Sri Lankan court has heard. The MT New Diamond, a Greek-owned vessel, was carrying nearly two million barrels of crude oil from Mina Al Ahmadi port in Kuwait to the Indian port of Paradip when it caught fire off the coast of Sangamankanda on Thursday last. A Filipino crew member died and another was injured. According to the Lankan Navy, a narrow diesel patch, 1 km from the ship, was noticed on Monday evening and an Indian Coast Guard aircraft sprayed dispersants to minimise potential damage to the environment.

State warns of mass deaths as deadly US wildfires rage

SALEM

DIMINISHING winds and rising humidity helped firefighters battling deadly blazes in Oregon and California, but with dozens of people still missing, authorities in both states feared that the receding flames could reveal many more dead across the blackened landscape.

Oregon's emergency management director said officials were preparing for a possible "mass fatality event."

In California, smoke that painted skies orange also helped crews corral the state's deadliest blaze of the year. The smoke helped blocked the sun, reducing temperatures and raising humidity, officials said.

Nine people, including a 16-year-old boy, have been confirmed dead in California since lightning-caused fires that started weeks ago fused into a monster blaze that largely destroyed Berry Creek, a tiny hamlet in the Sierra Nevada foothills northeast of San Francisco.

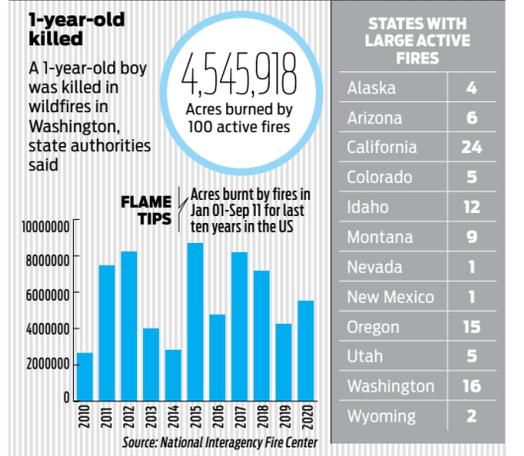
Oregon authorities have not released an exact death count, but at least eight fatalities were reported from the blazes that have taken a toll from one end of the state to the other. Gov. Kate Brown said Friday that tens of thousands of people had been forced to flee their homes.

Two large blazes threatened to merge near the most populated part of Oregon, including Portland's suburbs.

More than 40,000 Oregonians have been evacuated and about 500,000 are in different levels of evacuation zones, having been told to leave or to prepare to do so, Brown said. The governor dialed back a statement late Thursday by the state Office of Emergency Management that said a half-



The Bobcat Fire burns through the Angeles National Forest, north of Monrovia, California, where at least 9 people have died | AFP



million people had been ordered to evacuate statewide.

Scores of people were missing in Jackson County in the southern area of the state and in Marion County east of Salem, the state capital, Brown told a news conference. Authorities also announced that a man had been arrested on two counts of arson in connection with a fire in southern Oregon.

Searchers found two victims of the so-called Beachie

Creek fire near Salem. Improved weather helped efforts on the ground after days of high winds, heat and low humidity. "The wind laid down quite a bit for us yesterday," said Stefan Myers of the state's fire information team.

At least 500 firefighters were working on the fires near Portland, which were just a few kms apart. The rugged terrain between them limited efforts to contain the flames, Myers said. AP

E.U. COULD CARVE UP BRITAIN: JOHNSON

LONDON

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson has strongly defended his government's plan to override sections of the Brexit deal he negotiated with the European Union, arguing that the EU has an "extreme" interpretation of the treaty that could jeopardize the UK's future.

In a column published Saturday in The Daily Telegraph, Johnson said the government's Internal Market Bill is needed to end EU threats to impose a "blockade" in the Irish Sea that the prime minister asserted could "carve up our country."

The legislation, which the British government has conceded violates international law in places, has prompted a furious outcry within the EU and Johnson's Conservative Party. British lawmakers are expected to debate it next week.

With the government showing no sign of changing course, there are real concerns that on-

going talks on a future trade deal between the UK and the EU could collapse within weeks. If that happens, tariffs and other impediments to trade will be imposed by both sides at the start of 2021.

Michael Gove, a senior member of Johnson's Cabinet, told Sky News on Saturday that the government needs to take out an "insurance policy."

The UK left the EU on Jan. 31, but it is in a transition period that effectively sees it benefit from the bloc's tariff-free trade until 2020-end while a future relationship is negotiated. But talks between EU's chief negotiator and his UK counterpart had made very little progress.

Johnson wrote he was "now hearing" that unless his government agrees to the EU's terms in the trade discussions, then the bloc will use "an extreme interpretation of the Northern Ireland protocol to impose a full-scale trade border down the Irish Sea." AP

HOW BRITAIN'S NEW BILL UNDERMINES THE NEGOTIATED BREXIT DEAL

The furor is largely based on the fact that the bill would diminish the EU's previously agreed oversight of trade between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland in the event a trade agreement isn't secured

1 British Ministers can overrule any requirement for declaration for goods being moved from Northern Ireland to Britain

2 Ministers can decide if goods being moved from Britain to Northern Ireland are at risk of going to the Irish Republic, which would call for checks at the border

3 The UK government can decide whether to tell the EU about state aid regarding companies based in Northern Ireland

N. IRELAND PROTOCOL

One major element of the Brexit withdrawal agreement, which allowed for the U.K.'s smooth departure from the EU, is the section related to ensuring an open border on the island of Ireland to protect the peace process in Northern Ireland.



I think Mr. Johnson insists on having his cake and eating it

Luis Garicano, a Spanish member of the European Parliament

Saudi Arabia endorsement seen in Bahrain's normalisation of diplomatic ties with Israel

RIYADH

BAHRAIN'S move to formally establish relations with Israel could not have happened without Saudi Arabia's green light, another step in what observers call Riyadh's "alternative normalisation" of ties with the Jewish state.

Bahrain on Friday became Saudi Arabia's second Gulf ally to announce plans to formalise relations with Israel over the past month, after the United Arab Emirates' landmark agreement.

The move put a spotlight on the potential role of Riyadh, which has so far fended off pressure from US President Donald Trump to follow suit.

The development, billed by Trump as "truly historic", was



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman | AFP

unlikely to have happened without the silent endorsement of Riyadh, which holds enormous leverage over Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia, the Arab world's biggest economy, was among the Gulf powers that pledged \$10 billion in financial aid in 2018 to cash-strapped Bahrain, and it sent troops in

2011 to shore up the ruling family following an Arab Spring uprising.

"I trust that the kingdom of Bahrain consulted with the Saudis on this decision out of respect for them," Marc Schneider, an American rabbi who is an advisor to Bahrain's king, told AFP. "The Bahrain government has been very respectful of the Saudi position throughout this process."

Saudi officials have publicly remained tight-lipped over the development, but a source close to the establishment hinted it was a concession to Trump after he exerted enormous pressure on Riyadh to form diplomatic ties with Israel.

Saudi Arabia is unlikely to make a similar deal with Israel immediately. AFP

1,000s left homeless by Greek refugee protest

MORIA

THOUSANDS of asylum-seekers have spent a fourth night sleeping in the open on the Greek island of Lesbos, after successive fires destroyed a notoriously overcrowded migrant and refugee camp during a coronavirus pandemic lockdown.

Officials have said the Tuesday and Wednesday night blazes were deliberately set by some camp residents angered at quarantine and isolation orders imposed after 35 people in the Moria camp tested positive for Covid-19.

With the camp gutted, Saturday morning found men, women and children sleeping under improvised shelters made of reed stalks, blankets and salvaged tents. Thousands assembled for a



A migrant holds her baby as she runs to avoid a small fire in a field near Mytilene town on the island of Lesbos, Greece, on Saturday | AP

protest demanding to be allowed to leave the island. The gathering on a road blocked by police buses also drew supporters with Black Lives Matter signs.

The demonstration was loud but peaceful, with mainly children and women at the front. Riot police observed nearby as protesters chanted

slogans and held up improvised banners made of pieces of cardboard or sheets.

"We need peace and freedom. Moria kills all lives," read one. A few of the demonstrators wore masks in the tightly packed crowd of people who recently had lived in the camp, which had dozens of confirmed coronavirus cases

before it burned down.

Leaving the island would require a bending of European Union rules, under which asylum-seekers reaching Greece's islands from Turkey must stay there until they are either granted refugee status or deported back to Turkey.

The Moria camp was built to house around 2,750 people but was so overcrowded that this week's fires left over 12,000 in need of emergency shelter on Lesbos. The camp had long been held up by critics as a symbol of Europe's failings in migration policy.

Moria was put under a virus lockdown until mid-September after the first case confirmed there was identified in a Somali man who had been granted asylum and left for Athens but later returned to the camp. AP



\$542 bn

was India's total foreign exchange reserves as of September 4, an increase of \$582 million from the previous week

GURBIR SINGH

IT'S heartening to know that our annual cricket extravaganza, IPL 2020, is finally set to take off in the UAE from September 19. The 53-day jamboree goes all the way till November 10. Hopefully fast-moving cricket will provide wholesome entertainment to a pandemic-hit nation currently being fed bread and circuses by news channels obsessed with Sushant Singh Rajput and Kangana Ranaut.

The Covid lockdown has frozen all sporting events. News channels had an opportunity. Unhappily they squandered it and sank to the basest. They have been garnering flaky viewership on anything but news. Pitched against IPL 2020, it will be interesting to see whether they can hold on to their TRPs; or crumble as petty flash-in-the-pans they have always been. Hope against hope, they might be forced to return to their original domain—reporting news!

Disney Star India chairman Uday Shankar, knowing the magnetism of cricket, is promising a TV viewership of over 550 million, compared to 462 million the Star network achieved last year. That's just under half the nation hooked on cricket! To get this reach, Shankar is rolling out seven broadcast feeds targeting different languages and regions, 90 commentators and 18 hours of live and special programming a day to keep everyone hooked.

**A world without sports**

Internationally, the damage in money terms because of sports cancellations has been huge. The International Olympics Committee (IOC) cancelled the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and has rescheduled it to next year from 23 July to 8 August. The cost of the cancelled Olympics is estimated at anything up to \$25.2 billion. Media giant Comcast paid \$4.4 billion for Olympic rights from 2014 to 2020. Much of all these investments will be washed away.

Sports has never had it so bad since World War II. The International Tennis Federation (ITF) has postponed 900 tournaments across all its circuits. The 2020 Wimbledon tennis championships have been cancelled. The Boston Marathon has been dropped for the first time in its 124-year history.

The world's most watched sport, football, too has taken a huge toll. While club league football in Europe and elsewhere is resuming slowly, big tournaments like South America's Copa America and the Euro 2020 Cup have been postponed till next year. FIFA has said it is taking a hit of



TAPAS BANJAN

**NEWSCOPE**

**IPL IS BACK, MUCH TO THE DISMAY OF NEWS CHANNELS!**

\$800 million this year, and is worried about the World Cup scheduled for 2022. European football clubs are expected to lose \$4.5 billion over the next year, according to a European Club Association study. "The results (of the study) demonstrate that the financial impact of COVID-19 on European clubs is already a seismic shock," ECA chief executive officer Charlie Marshall said.

**Too much riding on IPL**

For the Indian Premier League (IPL), the richest of world tournaments, scheduled to start in March this year, cancellation was not an option. To make a comeback, it was fighting not only the pandemic but the fallout with China. Losing a slew of Chinese brands that advertise on IPL platforms hasn't been easy.

For the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), which owns IPL, the stakes are high. It had sold the digital and broadcasting rights to Star India for a humungous ₹3,300 crore, and even collected ₹2,000 crore upfront. Besides this, the title sponsorship had been sold to Chinese handset brand Vivo for ₹440 crore. Other sponsorship deals had been signed for an additional ₹200 crore.

For Disney Star India, too, IPL is big. The broadcasting network had bought digital and broadcast rights for the

T20 game in 2017 for 5 years for a massive ₹16,348 crore or ₹3,270 crore a year. Its strategy for growth in India is now symbiotically linked to cricket, and sports in general.

Now that the tournament is on, Star spokespersons are sounding upbeat. Star Sports CEO Gautam Thakkar says he has sold 75 per cent of his on-air inventory. A week ago he said the network had signed on 15 sponsors including Dream 11, Amazon, PhonePe and Byju's, as well as more than 60 other advertisers. Market chatter says spot sales may be at ₹12.5 lakh for 10-second ads.

It's still not yet clear whether Disney Star will be able to match the returns of IPL 2019. Last year, it had raked in ₹2,200 crore (including robust digital revenue via Disney + Hotstar). This year seems an uphill task considering the IPL brand is considerably dented. It is evident from the re-sale of the title sponsorship, after Vivo backed off, to fantasy sports operator Dream11 for ₹222 crore. This is half of what Vivo had paid for the property. Besides, the UAE is not the coolest of venues, and the impact of matches sans cheering audiences is yet to be seen.

There could be losses, but then the hit would have been larger had IPL been shelved. Just as well too, as it will provide certain relief from the news channels!

**'Govt didn't address NPAs until 2017'**

Former Niti Aayog VC Panagariya says the bad loan crisis is a problem that has not been fixed

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

BLAMING high NPAs for India's slowing growth, Former vice-chairman of NITI Aayog, Arvind Panagariya has said that the government made a mistake by not paying attention to his warnings regarding Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) when he was with the government think tank. He also warned that this remains a challenge since the matter has not been addressed yet.

Panagariya was speaking at a session of *The New Indian Express*' Express Expressions, a series of conversations with people of eminence, and was in conversation with Prabhu Chawla, Editorial Director, The New Indian Express group and author and columnist Shankar Aiyar.

Panagariya noted that despite pushing hard during his stint at Niti Aayog, he could not prevent the slide. "Let's take 4.2 per cent growth (FY2019-20). And that is the result of one key mistake that the government made, and I had rallied for that mistake not to have happened because I was there at Niti Aayog at that time. But I wasn't successful," the Columbia University Professor said. He attributed the mistake to the poor understanding of NPAs by the Department of Financial Services.

"By late 2013, I was convinced

that the NPAs are very large, that they were just hidden as restructured loans and the government needed to move. That was one of the key problems I mentioned that the government needed to solve. After coming to Niti Aayog, I again internally pushed for it, but sadly, you know, the Department of Financial Services had no understanding," he said.

Panagariya also said that then RBI governor Raghuram Rajan just addressed the symptoms. "Then Governor of RBI (Raghuram Rajan) also was playing along, largely. So, he just addressed the symptoms. He did the right things in terms of making the hidden NPAs to become explicit, but then he did not take the actions that were required at the time. He delayed... and action did not actually start till early 2017 when credit growth completely collapsed. And that is when the urgency was felt and then I think that the order was issued from the very top," he noted.

Panagariya thinks the problem has not gone away, especially in light of recent restructuring measures. "I think we have finally paid for that and that weakness remains. So, we went into Covid with significant weakness in the economy and that will still have to be addressed," he said.

However, despite the challenges, he remains bullish



After coming to Niti Aayog, I again internally pushed for (fixing high NPAs), but sadly, you know, the Department of Financial Services had no understanding

Arvind Panagariya, former VC, Niti Aayog

about the Indian growth story. "The onslaught of Covid may colour somebody else's vision, not mine. I think the long term prospects for India is very positive. Covid has brought the growth rate down to negative of almost 24 per cent for the particular quarter for which the latest data have been released. But that is in line with what has happened elsewhere. And if you also look at which sectors have shrunk more and which have not, you can see the footprint of Covid all over. So, I don't read that as saying any-

thing about the long term prospects of the country," he said.

However, he admitted that India could have been a lot better prepared to handle the pandemic. "But unfortunately, you know, we did not prepare ourselves. So, when it began to show up in January, February, we had no masks, we had no PPEs. Some basic preparedness was lacking. So, I would say that that preparedness was a bit of a problem," he said.

With the central bank going ahead with restructuring of bad loans, he added that financial market weakness remains a major challenge. "We will need to fix the stress in the financial markets. I think that will have to be priority number one as we come out of Covid," he said adding that "privatisation of profits and socialisation of losses" needs to stop.

"I think financial sector reforms are very critical, within which I would privatise most public sector banks. If the government is hesitant, keep the State Bank of India, it's a bank that is well run, the government is running it well. It's also the largest bank and that, I think, should suffice for social goals," he noted, adding that reforms in trade and labour were also needed. He also pushed for aggressive asset monetisation. "This was my mission, but at the end of the day, it still has not happened," he said.

**Need for flexible workspaces drives 10% rise in WeWork India's enterprise clients**

BISMAL MALIK @ Bengaluru

IN a biWith enterprises hit by the pandemic looking to cut costs, many are giving up office spaces and instead adopting a flexible workspace model. Co-working major WeWork India, headquartered in Bengaluru, has consequently seen a 10 per cent increase in its enterprise client base since the lockdown. Enterprise clients now comprise 60 per cent of its client base, with the rest spread between startups, freelancers, and SMBs, says **Varun Gopinath, Chief Revenue Officer, WeWork India** in an interview with *The New Indian Express*. Excerpts:

**In a post-pandemic scenario, how important a role will co-working spaces play?**

We are now witnessing several companies adopting flexible work solutions and gravitating towards flexible working schedules through the implementation



of rostered work shifts, de-densification of office spaces, and Work Near Home (WNH). We believe this situation presents a unique opportunity for flexible workspace providers such as WeWork, to support businesses as they reconsider their fixed asset investments in order to bring in flexibility and save on overhead costs. As the economy begins to find its way back to growth, flexible workspaces will play an even more important role in rationalizing costs and maintaining financial ability.

After the recent \$100 million infusion from the

**parent company, what is the strategy in place for India?**

We will be able to efficiently execute our India strategy focused around profitability and great member experience. WeWork is also keen to strengthen conversations and restructure partnerships with landlords via newer formats like revenue sharing leases.

**Has your client base seen any changes?**

We have seen a 10 per cent growth in our enterprise portfolio since the lockdown which itself speaks volume about the kind of traction we are witnessing from enterprise members and how confident they are towards flexible workspaces. WeWork India now consists of 60 per cent enterprise members and the remaining 40 per cent is a healthy mix of startups, freelancers, and SMBs. We have also recently welcomed Khaitan & Co. as members.

**GUIDANCE**

**Capital buffers, liquidity vital for MFIs: RBI**

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

STRESSING on the need to build capital buffers and manage liquidity, the Reserve Bank of India has warned that the pandemic can prove to be the "biggest tail risk event" for microfinance institutions (MFIs) in a long time. At this juncture, MFIs should learn from the past and adopt responsible lending practices to ensure that loan amounts are commensurate with the borrower's ability to repay and that there are no instances of over-lending, it said.

"COVID-19 is perhaps the biggest tail risk event in a long time. The NBFC-MFIs, being specialised institutions extending collateral free loans to low-income groups, are particularly exposed to credit risks in this scenario. Further, repayment rates have dropped significantly, posing liquidity risks. Smaller NBFCs-MFIs are particularly vulnerable to credit rating downgrades, which may hamper their ability to raise fresh capital and access liquidity," the RBI paper warned.

It added, however, that though the pandemic presents new challenges and significant financial risks for the sector, it also presents an opportunity to build long-term resilience.

**Liquidity package for discoms set to be increased to ₹1.2 lakh cr from this month**

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

THE Centre is set to increase the amount set aside for debt-ridden power distribution companies (discoms) as part of its earlier liquidity relief package for the utility firms.

The government's package had allowed discoms to borrow

₹90,000 crore from state-run power sector financiers PFC Ltd., and REC Ltd.. This was to help the companies pay around ₹94,000 crore in dues to power generating companies as of early this year.

However, according to a senior power ministry official, this amount is set to be raised to

₹1.2 lakh crore. Speaking at a webinar on 'Innovation in Renewable Energy' organised by PHDCCI, Power Secretary S N Sahai said that the liquidity package would cover discoms' outstanding dues from April to June this year too, in addition to the rest of the year. The full package would be raised to ₹1.2

lakh crore from ₹90,000 crore in order to reflect the accumulated dues over the pandemic-hit summer, according to sources.

Agency reports also say that an official communication in this regard has already been sent to the two financing companies by the power ministry. According to government

statements, around ₹68,000 crore has been sanctioned from the initial ₹90,000 liquidity package, of which around ₹25,000 crore has already been disbursed to discoms.

Last month, the Union Cabinet had relaxed working capital limit norms for discoms under the UDAY scheme, allowing

many stressed company to avail of the credit offered as part of the liquidity scheme. Under UDAY, banks and financial institutions are restricted to lend working capital up to 25 per cent of a discom's revenue in the previous year. This threshold has now been relaxed to provide relief.

**Powergrid commissions new power infrastructure projects**

Powergrid has commissioned Pole-1 of the Raigarh-Pugalur HVDC Transmission System, the Raigarh HVDC Terminal Station at Chhattisgarh and Pugalur HVDC Terminal Station at Tamil Nadu, along with a 1,765 km long 800 kV HVDC line from Raigarh to Pugalur. It has also operationalised two HVAC lines in TN. According to the company, this system will facilitate a power flow of 1,500 MW from the western to the southern region.

**Aristavault launches UV Cleaner Shuddhi Basket**

Omkar Rai, DG, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) launched "Shuddhi Basket"—which uses UV-C radiation technology to kill germs and other microbes. The product was designed and produced by Aristavault, a company which is presently being incubated at the Electropreneur Park, one of the first ESDM Incubation centres owned and operated by STPI. The Centre is funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India.



**Taparia Tools commands 85% of organised market**

Mumbai-based Taparia Tools Ltd., which has been in existence for 50 years, currently manufactures a wide range of tools in the segment. According to the company, it initially had formidable competition, mainly from tool manufacturers in the unorganised sector and other Indian companies. However, it now commands an almost 80-85 percent market share in the organised sector. "Marketing a high quality hand tool is quite a task," said Harnarayan Tapariaji, CMD of the ₹500 crore TTL.



**Dikshant parade organised by CLW/RPF wing**

The Dikshant Parade of the third batch of the Constable Recruits for the RPF at Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) was held recently. According to the company, PRaveen Kumar Mishra, GM, CLW was the chief guest at the event and received the salute from the 148 new constables. Officers including Tarique Ahmed, PCSO cum IG/RPF/CLW.



**New CCL CMD Prasad takes stock of situation**

After assuming charge as the CMD of Coal India subsidiary Central Coalfields Ltd. (CCL), P M Prasad has visited several company premises across the country in order to take stock of the situation and boost morale, the company said in a statement. Among the visits, was one to the Ashoka open cast-mine of the Ashoka Project, PLR Patch, Conveyor Belt Site. He also planted a sapling at Kayakalp Vatika. Earlier, he had visited the Madadh-Amrapali Project.

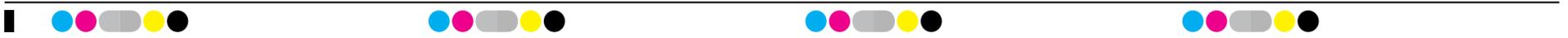


**Ministry of Shipping launches 'SAROD-Ports'**

Union Minister of State for Shipping (I/C) Shri Mansukh Mandaviya launched SAROD-Ports, an Affordable Dispute Redressal Mechanism for all kinds of disputes of maritime sector, earlier this week. According to the ministry, this system will become the pivotal mechanism of ummed (hope), vishwas (trust) and nyaya (justice) in the Port sector of India.

**Govt push to strengthen fantasy sports ecosystem in India**

With the launch of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge by the Government of India's Meity and NITI Aayog, the industry expects more advanced gaming apps to break into the Indian market. This, they say, would drive the growth of the Indian mobile gaming market in the future and boost the sports economy of India. The policy, they add, is creating a conducive scenario for Indian game developers by streamlining the market.





**ALEXANDER ZVEREV**

**2018**  
THE LAST TIME ZVEREV BEAT THIEM

**SEMIS**  
Zverev (GER x5) bt P Carreno-Busta (ESP x20) 3-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-3;

# GRAND ENCOUNTER

At Flushing Meadows on Sunday evening, two of tennis' next generation talents in men's tennis will meet in the US Open final for a chance at winning a maiden Slam. Here's a look at the matchup between Dominic Thiem and Alexander Zverev...

23	Age	26
Germany	Nationality	Austrian
7	Rank	3
2	Head to head	7
11	Titles won	16
0	Majors	0



**DOMINIC THIEM**

**2**  
If he wins, Thiem will become only the second Austrian to win a single title (Thomas Muster)

**SEMIS**  
Thiem (AUT x2) bt Medvedev (RUS x3) 6-2, 7-6 (9/7) 7-6 (7/5).

**ZVEREV'S GRIT**  
There was a time when the German suffered from big stage fear. Infact, before this year, his best was a pair of quarterfinals at the French Open in 2018 and 2019. In 2020, he has followed a semifinal in Australia with at least a final here. What's changed? Apart from improving his overall game, he has also worked in the mental aspect. Consider this: in three of the last four matches, he lost the first set but never panicked. However, that strategy of starting slowly could come back to bite him. That big-booming serve of his is one of the best on tour but it's hit and miss. In the last two matches alone, he has served 20 double faults (42 aces). If it malfunctions, the Austrian will fancy his chances.

**THIEM STARTS FAVOURITE**  
Apart from the Big Three, Thiem has been one of the most consistent performers at Majors. That he has now reached four Slam finals since the 2018 French Open is indicative of that. In New York over the last two weeks, he has only grown in stature. Having lost only one set in six matches, including an impressive straight sets win over Russian Daniil Medvedev in the semifinal, he is also relatively fresher of the two players. The way he has further worked on his main weapon — the one-handed backhand from the baseline — is the key for him to win. That's even before you take into account his reliable service. He may not get too many aces but it does enough damage.

# Curtailed season may disrupt players' income

In case of a curtailed domestic calendar, pay cuts likely in store for cricketers

**ATREYO MUKHOPADHYAY**  
@Chennai

BEYOND IPL, the reality is different. Uncertainty over the 2020-21 domestic calendar spells trouble for those toiling away from the spotlight. No play means no pay for a majority in the senior men's circuit. The BCCI is monitoring the situation and at best, a truncated season looks on the cards. Even though some states are thinking of starting camps, decision on tournaments is unlikely in the next two months.

This is bad news for those who earn a significant part of their livelihood from playing. On average, one who plays all matches in all formats makes around ₹13-14 lakh per season from match fees and players' share of the BCCI's profits. For players from teams reaching semis and finals, this figure is close to ₹20 lakh. A curtailed calendar and the BCCI's profits from TV rights set to dip due to cancellation of ties in India against South Africa and England, domestic players may be in for a slash in income.

"Players who don't have jobs are dependent on earnings from BCCI tournaments and club cricket. Fewer matches will make things difficult for them. But we also have to remember that the situation is uncontrollable. We have heard efforts are being made to stage two tournaments. It will be a relief if that happens," said

Bengal captain and India A opener Abhimanyu Easwaran.

Spread over 38 teams, around 600 players played in domestic competitions last season. Of course, not all of them played all matches. Keeping aside 122 Indian players in the IPL — who earn a minimum of ₹20 lakh from their franchises — over 450 players face the prospect of pay cuts. Some of them have jobs, but most of them depend on domestic cricket for sustenance.

Saurashtra Cricket Association chief Jaydev Shah, who led the team in Ranji Trophy for a record number of matches, feels it won't be possible for BCCI to offer compensation for missing out on match fees. "We are hit by a calamity which is beyond anyone's control. Also, there are practical problems in compensating players. How can we choose only the senior men's teams? There are other teams also. How do you compensate everyone? Maybe in case of emergencies, some provision can be made."

The BCCI is unlikely to take a call until the IPL is over on November 19. Decisions on scrapping tournaments and discussing the aspect of players suffering due to this can only be taken at a general body meeting. This has been postponed. So to know what is in store in terms of pay and play, players have to wait at least two months, if the meeting takes place soon after IPL.

## ARCHERY

# Camp to be extended, few archers yet to join

**AYANTAN CHOWDHURY** @NewDelhi

THE national archery camp, which is currently underway at the Army Sports Institute in Pune, is likely to be extended beyond this month. SAI and ASI had initially notified to all archers that the camp will be till September 30.

Archery Association of India (AAI) confirmed the development and added that the decision was taken keeping in mind the varied arrival dates of the recurve archers currently part of the camp. "Many archers due to complications could not arrive on the starting date. So due to quarantine rules, they got less time. Hence the camp will be extended so as to provide them extra time to get back in the groove," a top official revealed. The plan is to continue with the camp till next year. But that is yet to be confirmed.

However, even after two weeks, four archers are yet to reach the camp. And there are chances that a couple of archers might not even attend the camp. While Riddhi is self-isolating back home, Jayanta Talukdar and Ankita are currently training at the Tata academy in Jamshedpur.

Both of them have undergone changes in their shooting technique under the guidance of Lim Chae Wong, an experienced Korean coach. The duo need time to fix certain issues and former national coach Purnima Mahato has even written to the federation and SAI to excuse the duo for the time being. There has been no response as of now.

However, the federation admitted that there was a chance that a few archers might not attend for the time-being and keeping the pandemic in mind, they cannot compel an athlete to attend. "It will be difficult for us to force archers to attend. We have to be sympathetic in this current climate. All of them are either senior archers or part of a promising bunch. We will try to help each and everyone."

AAI had initially planned to hold open selection trials so as to add more archers in the camp but due to the worsening Covid-19 situation in the country, that plan is currently on hold. "We are still exploring all options. For now, holding an open trial will not be feasible."

Plans to conduct national championships is also on hold.

# UAE oasis in India-Australia series

**VENKATA KRISHNA B** @Chennai

WHERE will Team India head after IPL? The straight answer should be Australia, for a full-fledged tour beginning in December. But as of now, it is unclear. Cricket Australia (CA) is yet to confirm venues for the three T20Is, as many ODIs and four Tests. There is a possibility of the series happening in the UAE also, although this is still at an early stage.

Sources in BCCI indicate that CA has sent a tentative schedule with Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney as the venues. On Saturday, CA said that the Australian team returning from the UK after the third ODI on September 16 will be allowed to complete their quarantine period at the onsite hotel in Adelaide Oval. But there is no confirmation whether Brisbane and Sydney will host matches, as CA also has to find a suitable venue for the Big

Bash League that runs parallel with the India series.

CA was supposed to finalise the schedule this week, but following Western Australia's stance to not relax quarantine rules means Perth, which was spoken about as one of the venues, is ruled out. CA was looking at Brisbane for the limited-over ties, with Adelaide hosting the first two Tests including the day/night fixture and the Boxing Day match if the Covid-19 situation doesn't improve in Melbourne. Sydney was talked about as the venue to host the remaining two Tests.

Under the circumstances, the UAE may appear to be a logical choice. An official in the know confirmed that discussions are on, but declined to elaborate. If the series moves to UAE, it would come at a cost for CA. While they can use the bio-secure bubble already in place, operational costs have to be borne by them. Timings will

be more suited to the Indian audience than Australian.

So far, CA has not got confirmation from News South Wales with regards to Sydney Cricket Ground. As for Brisbane, Queensland is going for elections on October 31. Reports from Down Under suggest CA has to wait until November 1 for confirmation on Brisbane. CA has already decided to host the Women's BBL in Sydney and whether they would do the same for BBL, which begins on December 3, also remains to be seen.

CA is caught in a tussle with host broadcaster Channel Seven, which is threatening to pull out of the deal citing lack of clarity. Any threat to India's tour, which usually fetches big money, will be the last thing the broadcaster would want. While there are talks between the boards to finalise the schedule, BCCI officials revealed it would take at least a week.

# No sparring rule irks wrestlers at national camp

**FIROZ MIRZA** @Chennai

THE elite men wrestlers are set to train at the indoor hall of Sports Authority of India Sonepat centre from Tuesday, after completing 14-day quarantine. However, they will not be allowed to train with sparring partners as of now due to SAI protocols, a norm some top players felt could have been relaxed. They will train with specifically assigned dummies till the time permission is granted.

While coaches feel they have to follow instructions, wrestlers are not amused with the decision as they believe camp will not serve the purpose if sparring is not allowed. Also when sparring partners are available in the camp.

"I am not aware that sparring is not allowed. We will complete the quarantine period on Monday. Probably by evening or the next day we will be allowed to train in the hall. But the restriction on sparring is not logical as



Rahul Aware had tested positive recently

we had already undergone Covid-19 test and returned negative," one of the top wrestlers camping at the venue told this daily. "I know it's for our safety but we are already in green zone

with no outsider allowed. Without sparring, the camp will yield nothing for us," opined the grappler. "I don't know when sparring would be allowed but for time being we have been instructed to ensure wrestlers train with dummies only," said a coach, who is part of the camp.

The coach also informed that the campers will not use the gymnasium. They instead will do the weight training either in their respective rooms or training hall. "The freestyle and

Greco-Roman wrestlers will train separately. I think we will be allotted a time period both in the morning and evening to avoid overcrowding. Besides, the gym equipment has to be sanitised before and after use...," the coach added.

Four wrestlers — Deepak Punia (86kg), Navin (65kg), Krishan (125kg) and Rahul Aware (57kg) — had tested Covid positive and left the camp either for the SAI empanelled hospital or their respective homes.

## GLOBAL UPDATE

### Australia beat England in ODI series opener

MANCHESTER: Josh Hazlewood took three wickets as Australia beat England by 19 runs to win the first one-day international at Old Trafford on Friday. Hazlewood posted a miserly haul of 3-26 from his full 10 overs as Australia defeated arch-rivals England for just the third time in 14 ODIs.

**Brief scores:** Australia 294/9 (G Maxwell 77, M Marsh 73; M Wood 3/54, J Archer 3/57) bt England 275/9 (S Billings 118, J Bairstow 84; A Zampa 4/55, J Hazlewood 3/26).

### Munaf among overseas players in LPL auction

COLOMBO: Former India pacer Munaf Patel and West Indians Chris Gayle and Daren Sammy are among overseas players for the inaugural Lanka Premier League auction to be held on October 1. Five franchises will feature in the league which is scheduled to run from November 14 to December 6. Each franchise can buy up to six international players.



# Arsenal begin season with victory over Fulham

LONDON: Arsenal made a flying start to the new Premier League season as **Gabriel Magalhaes (2nd left)** grabbed a debut goal and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a stunner in Saturday's 3-0 win at Fulham. Just 48 days after last season's delayed conclusion, the Premier League is back and Arsenal hit the ground running with the kind of confident display that has become their hallmark since Mikel Arteta took charge. Arsenal's free-flowing attack was too incisive for promoted Fulham and Alexandre Lacazette gave the visitors an early lead at Craven Cottage. Brazilian defender Gabriel scored Arsenal's second after the break in his first appearance since his close-season move from Lille. Aubameyang added the final flourish with a typically eye-catching strike that emphasised why Arsenal are so desperate for the Gabon forward to sign an extension to the contract which expires at the end of the season.

# Olympiad experience has given me big confidence, says Praggnanandhaa

**ASHOK VENUGOPAL** @Chennai

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa was delighted to be part of the Indian team that won the online Olympiad recently. He felt this success will boost his confidence and said that he enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to play alongside living legend Viswanathan Anand. Excerpts:

**How was it being part of the team?**

I was very happy and thrilled to be part of Indian team and play my first Olympiad along with Anand sir and others.

**You scored 5.5/7, how happy were you with your display?**

I was very satisfied with my performance and proud to have contributed to our team!

**How was the experience of playing alongside Viswanathan Anand?**

It's a great feeling to play in the same team as Anand sir; cannot express it in words!

**How happy were you when Humpy won an Armageddon game to put India in the final?**

Before the game, we were tensed, but when we saw Humpy mam in Zoom...cool and composed, we were all confident that Humpy mam will get us through finals.

**Did you prepare with any one of your teammates during the meet?**

Yes, I worked with Aravinth for the finals.

**How was the experience of playing under captain Vidit Gujrathi?**

He is a very cool captain. It is not easy to be captain and also play in such a tournament.

**How was N Srinath's role as non-playing vice-captain?**

I usually talk to Srinath *anna* (brother) if I have any issue and he immediately sees what the issue is and tries to sort it out. Both captain Vidit and vice captain Srinath *anna* did a great job.

**This experience must have been big boost for you...?**

It has given me lot of confidence. It will certainly help me perform better in the coming tournaments.



# Revamped OxyContin did not reduce abuse: Panel

Purdue Pharma claim that their updated tablets are harder to crush and dissolve, making them harder to snort or inject

## OPIOID CRISIS

WASHINGTON: A panel of government health advisers on Friday said there's no clear evidence that a harder-to-crush version of the painkiller OxyContin designed to discourage abuse actually resulted in fewer overdoses or deaths.

The conclusion from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel comes more than a decade after Purdue Pharma revamped its blockbuster opioid, which has long been blamed for sparking a surge in painkiller abuse beginning in the 1990s.

In a series of non-binding votes, the FDA experts said that the updated OxyContin appeared to cut down abuse via snorting and injecting, compared to the original drug. But panelists overwhelmingly ruled that data from Purdue and other researchers did not show that the reformulation curbed abuse overall or led to fewer overdoses.

Panelists said the shortcomings were due, in part, to the challenges of studying overdoses, which often involve multiple drugs.

"I think it's very difficult to tease out cause of death and overdose," said Dr. Lewis Nelson of Rutgers University. "Overall, I think the quality of evidence was fairly poor."

The long-acting OxyContin tablets can still be misused by simply swallowing them, which remains the most frequent route among those with opioid addiction.

The FDA will consider the group's opinions as it weighs whether to revisit OxyContin's terms of approval. That could



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Dr Lewis Nelson, Rutgers University

include scaling back the drug's prescribing labelling, which currently states that it is "expected to" reduce abuse via injecting and snorting.

Purdue's 2010 revamped OxyContin was the first of several opioids developed by drugmakers to help curb abuse. But whether the drugs met that goal remains unclear and the FDA is reviewing their use.

These so-called abuse-deterrent formulations account for just 2 per cent of US opioid prescriptions. The vast majority of opioids prescribed are generic versions of short-acting opioids like hydrocodone.

Purdue representatives said during the meeting that multiple studies showed the updated tablets are harder to crush and dissolve, making them harder

to snort or inject. They said those changes represent a "meaningful incremental improvement," over the original OxyContin launched in 1996.

Data submitted by Purdue showed both prescribing and illegal trafficking of OxyContin decreased after the company pulled and replaced the original version of the drug.

But panelists said it was impossible to decipher whether those positive trends were due to the reformulation or a host of other factors affecting opioid use, including government crackdowns on pill mills and an influx of illegal opioids like heroin and fentanyl.

Several studies suggest many people who abused OxyContin switched to generic pain pills or illicit opioids, but patterns of switching varied widely across the country and populations, further blurring the drug's overall impact.

Purdue said in a statement following the meeting it would continue to work with the FDA as it reviewed the OxyContin studies. The company declared bankruptcy last year in an effort to settle thousands of lawsuits accusing it of over-promoting OxyContin and misleading the public about its risks.

US drug overdose deaths hit a new high last year of 71,000, according to federal data, driven mainly by fentanyl and similar synthetic opioids which were involved in about half of all deaths. Deaths tied to prescription opioid overdoses have plateaued at around 15,000 annually. The slowdown follows years of prescribing restrictions and warnings aimed at physicians.



Researchers have developed a new antibody test for the virus that causes Covid-19 that can handle a much larger number of donor samples at lower overall cost than standard antibody tests currently in use. The new mechanism was described in a study published in the *The Journal of Clinical Investigation*.

## EXFILE •

### Quantifying phosphorus loss due to soil erosion

Phosphorus is essential for agriculture, yet this important plant nutrient is increasingly being lost from soils around the world. In a detailed study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers blamed soil erosion. We take a look

#### CRUCIAL NUTRIENT

The world's food production depends directly on phosphorus. However, this plant nutrient is not unlimited, but comes from finite geological reserves



#### HIGH RESOLUTION DATA

Researchers investigated which continents and regions worldwide are suffering the greatest loss of phosphorus

They combined high-resolution spatially discrete global data on the phosphorus content of soils with local erosion rates

Based on this, they calculated how much phosphorus is lost through erosion in different countries

50% of global phosphorus loss in agriculture is attributable to soil erosion

of global phosphorus loss in agriculture is attributable to soil erosion

**“That erosion plays a role was already known. The extent of that role has never been quantified with this level of spatial resolution”**

Christine Alewell

#### PREVIOUS FINDS

Previously, experts reported losses primarily due to lack of recycling, food and feed waste and general mismanagement of phosphorus resources



#### NUTRIENTS NOT IN FIELDS, BUT WATER

Erosion flushes mineral bound phosphorus out of agricultural soils into wetlands and water bodies

Here, the excess of nutrients (eutrophication) harms the aquatic plant and animal communities

Researchers were able to validate their calculations using globally published measurement data on phosphorus content in rivers: the elevated phosphorus content in waters mirrors the calculated loss of phosphorus in the soil in the respective region



#### AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA AFFECTED MOST

Africa, Eastern Europe and South America register the greatest phosphorus losses

Africa possesses the largest geological phosphorus deposits. But the mined phosphorus is exported and costs many times more for most farmers in Africa than in Europe

In Eastern Europe, economic constraints are also the most crucial factor of phosphorus deficiency

#### MEASURES

Mineral fertilisers can replace the lost phosphorus in the fields, but not all countries are equally able to use them



#### PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS

New large deposits were discovered a few years ago in Western Sahara and Morocco. Europe has practically no phosphorus deposits of its own

#### HOW TO TACKLE SOIL EROSION

A drastic reduction in soil erosion is a major and important step in the right direction

Land managers can reduce erosion by ensuring:

- 1 MULCHING
- 2 GREEN MANURE AND INTERCROPPING
- 3 TOPOGRAPHY-ADAPTED CULTIVATION



## REMEMBERING THE FALLEN ONES

People place flowers on the name plate honoring the fallen during a 9/11 memorial service at the National September 11 Memorial and Museum on Friday in New York City | AFP

## Anti-bacterial graphene masks developed

### 80% EFFICIENT

HONG KONG: To fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, scientists have successfully produced graphene masks with an anti-bacterial efficiency of 80 per cent, which can be enhanced to almost 100 per cent with exposure to sunlight for around 10 minutes.

According to the study, published in *ACS Nano*, initial tests also showed promising

results in the deactivation of two species of coronaviruses.

"The graphene masks are easily produced at low cost and can help to resolve the problems of sourcing raw materials and disposing of non-biodegradable masks," said study authors from the City University of Hong Kong.

The study showed that the anti-bacterial efficiency of graphene material could be improved to 99.998 per cent

within 10 minutes under sunlight, while activated carbon fibre and melt-blown fabrics only showed an efficiency of 67 per cent and 85 per cent respectively.

Researchers revealed that commonly used surgical masks are not anti-bacterial. This may lead to the risk of secondary transmission of bacterial infection when people touch the contaminated surfaces of the used masks.

## China says Mars probe stable, but keeps mum on reusable spacecraft

### MISSION RED PLANET

BEIJING: China's Mars probe Tianwen-1, which blasted into space in July, is now more than 15 million kilometres from Earth en route to the Red Planet, the National Space Administration said on Saturday.

The administration said that Tianwen-1 was in stable condition, having completed its first mid-course orbital correction early last month. It will be about 195 million kilometres from Earth when it arrives at Mars around February, having travelled 470 million kilometres in all to get there.

The administration, however, has yet to release information about a mysterious reusable experimental spacecraft that returned to Earth a week ago after a two-day flight.

The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, a lander and a rover, and marks China's most ambitious Mars mission yet as it seeks to join the US in successfully landing a spacecraft on

the planet. It was blasted into space aboard a Long March-5 on July 23 during a month when the United Arab Emirates and the US also took advantage of a shortened distance between the planets to launch similar missions.

China said the reusable spacecraft returned to its designated landing site last Sunday, calling the flight a breakthrough that will eventually provide convenient round-trip transport to space at a low cost. No other details on the mission or the configuration of the spacecraft have been released.

That is also seen as an attempt to put China on the leading edge of space flight.

China's military-backed space programme has developed rapidly since it became just the third country after Russia and the US to put a man in space in 2003. Last year, China's Chang'e-4 became the first spacecraft from any country to land on the far side of the Moon.



## FACT OF THE MATTER

### Calls create stronger bonds



#### STAY CONNECTED

WHATSAPP users, read on. People too often prefer to send email or text messages in order to save time, but a phone call, even a brief one, is more likely to produce the feeling of connectedness, say researchers. The team found that when they really interacted, people felt significantly more connected when they communicated by talking than by typing. In the study, published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, people chose to type because they believed a phone call would be more awkward — but they were wrong. They found it wasn't more awkward to hear each other's voices. The researchers also found calls took about the same amount of time as reading and responding to email.

### Aerobics for a sharper mind



#### 2 MINS DAILY

RESEARCHERS in Sweden have found that even two minutes of aerobic exercise can have a positive effect on brain function in young adults. According to a recent review published in *Translational Sports Medicine*, just opting for a single exercise workout has positive effects on learning and memory in young adults. Previous studies have shown that physical exercise improves mental health and cognitive function. "Exercise makes you smart. The purpose of this systematic review was to evaluate the current literature examining the acute effects of a single exercise workout on learning and memory functions in young adults," said study author Peter Blomstrand from the Jonkoping University.

## Heart rate can spot depression

### EARLY SIGNAL

FOR the first time, researchers and clinicians have revealed that measuring changes in the heart rate for 24 hours can reliably indicate whether or not someone is depressed. In practical terms, this may give clinicians an objective "early warning" of potential depression, as well as a rapid indication whether or not treatment is working, so opening the way to more rapid and responsive treatment. "Our pilot study suggests that by just measuring your heart rate for 24 hours, we can tell with 90 per cent accuracy if a person is currently depressed or not," said the study's lead author Carmen Schiweck from the Goethe University in Germany. Heart rates were measured using a wearable mini-ECG. The data was fed to an Artificial Intelligence programme, which was able to classify nearly all controls and patients correctly as being depressed or healthy.



## Poor home hygiene contributing to antibiotic resistance: Study

### MOP OFF

NEW YORK: Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, researchers have found that poor home hygiene is contributing to antibiotic resistance and following a risk-based approach is essential to help curb the growing threat of antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way that reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of drugs, chemicals, or other agents designed to cure or prevent infections. The bacteria survive

and continue to multiply causing more harm.

According to the Global Hygiene Council's (GHC) public health experts, it is estimated that rates of resistance to commonly-used antibiotics could exceed 40-60 per cent in some countries by 2030.

The GHC's experts are calling for a review of hygiene practices in homes and everyday life to ensure that they are effective and appropriate to the urgent public health issues we currently face, such as antimicrobial resistance (AMR)



and Covid-19. In the study, published in the *American Journal of Infection Control*, GHC the experts set out the evidence showing that better hy-

giene in our homes and everyday lives plays an essential part in tackling antibiotic resistance.

Good hygiene contributes to the fight against AMR in two ways, by preventing infection, thereby reducing the need for antibiotic prescribing and preventing person to person spread of infections which are antibiotic-resistant.

The paper reviews evidence that to minimise the spread of infections in home and community settings, a more focused approach to hygiene

based on risk assessment is needed.

One intervention study demonstrates that improved hand hygiene amongst a group of children in a day centre can reduce the need for antibiotic use for common respiratory infections by 30 per cent.

"Focusing on the times and places harmful microbes are most likely to spread, to not only help contain the spread of coronavirus now but ongoing to help tackle AMR," said study author Sally Bloomfield from GHC.