

# INDIA NEWS

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July 16-31, 2020, Vol 1 Issue 2

## GREATER SPRINGFIELD MEDICAL & OFFICE SUITES

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### India, China agree that differences should not become disputes after key phone call



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Ladakh to review the ground security situation, amid ongoing tension at borders with China in Eastern Ladakh on July 3, 2020

Beijing/IANS: With Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting the forward areas in Ladakh over the weekend coupled with

Continued on P 3

### Aus seeks long-range missiles in Indo-Pacific defence shift

Canberra/IANS: Australia on July 1 said that it will significantly increase military spending and focus on the Indo-Pacific region amid rising tensions between the US and China. Prime Minister Scott Morrison pledged A\$270 billion (\$186 billion) to Australia's arms budget over 10 years, a 40 per cent boost,

the BBC reported.

The new defence capability budget, about 2 per cent of the GDP, replaces a previous decade-long strategy, set only in 2016, which had set aside A\$195 billion.

Morrison said that Australia would acquire long-range

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Prime Minister Scott Morrison

### “Aatmanirbhar Bharat not self-containment”: PM Modi’s big assurance to global investors

New Delhi/IANS: Inviting global companies and investors to India amid his government’s push for import substitution and a

self-reliant India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 9 said that the call for an ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’ is not about being self-

contained or being closed to the world.

Continued on P 3

ATTENTION: Australia's small and medium businesses

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# “Launch of India News is very timely and innovative”

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In spite of number of newspapers and local community news' existence, there is not a single newspaper that is covering issues, problems and challenges of Australian Indians. The launch of India News is very timely and innovative to support Australian Indians living in this great nation. In particular I am very pleased to see that this initiative is coming the great city of Brisbane, Queensland. At present both India and Australia are in similar situation in terms of economic impact due to as current COVID-19 related issues. In addition, both countries are also facing currently strained bilateral relationship with China.

Hence launch of India News in Australia is very timely in promoting both the commonwealth and democratic nations to strengthen their relationship and work towards serving people of these two great nations.

Some of the joint research

collaborations already started few years ago through Australia India Strategic Research Funds and similar schools, which are jointly established by Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India and Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Australian government. These partnerships will be further strengthened in years to come due to likeminded and acceptable nature of both the countries.

I, on behalf of The Australia India House Charitable Foundation Trust (AIHCF), congratulate Dr. Ram Mohan and his team for this great initiative and look forward to working with India News group to enhance and further strengthen the Australia India relationship in various areas including science, technology, healthcare and other sectors. In addition, AIHCF would like to play bigger role jointly with India News to serve the Indian community



**Prof Prasad KDV Yarlagadda**

living in Australia as well as the international students from Indian sub-continent and number of other countries.

Prof Prasad KDV Yarlagadda  
Chairman, Australia India House Foundation  
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# India, China agree that differences should not become disputes after key phone call

Continued from P 1

sustained diplomatic pressure, the India-China border face-off appears to have reached some sort of settlement. This disclosure comes day after a disengagement process began in three of the four friction points along the LAC in Ladakh.

On July 5 evening, Chinese Foreign Minister, State Councillor and Special Representative on the Sino-Indian Boundary Issue Wang Yi spoke to Indian National Security Advisor and Special Representative Ajit Doval over phone.

However, the Chinese statement on the talks, released on Monday, doesn't appear to be a climbdown from its stated position, even as it sought both sides adhere to strategic judgments and crucially not allow differences to become disputes.

Wang said that this year is the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and India. China-India relations have withstood the test of ups and downs, and it is not easy to achieve today's development, he said.

"Not long ago, what happened in the western part of the border between China and India in the Galwan Valley is very clear. China will continue to effectively defend its territorial sovereignty and the border area and peace," it said.

The Chinese Minister emphasised that the realisation of development and revitalisation is the first priority of China and India, and China and India share long-term common strategic interests in this general direction. The two sides should always adhere to strategic judgments that do not pose threats to each other and provide opportunities for development, attach great importance to the complex situation facing the current relationship between the two countries, and work together to overcome and reverse them as soon as possible, the statement said.

It is hoped that India and China

will act in the same direction, correctly guide public opinion and public opinion, maintain and promote normal exchanges and cooperation between the two countries, avoid adopting practices that expand and complicate disputes, and jointly safeguard the overall situation of China-India relations, it added.

The two sides exchanged frank and in-depth views on easing the current state of affairs between the two countries' borders and reached a positive consensus, the statement said.

1. The two sides agree to follow the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries and believe that maintaining peace and tranquility in the border area is crucial to the long-term development of bilateral relations. The border issue should be placed in an appropriate position in bilateral relations to avoid the rise of differences into disputes.

2. The two sides reaffirmed their observance of a series of agreements signed by the two countries on the border issue and worked together to ease the situation in the border areas.

3. The two sides agreed to strengthen communication through the special representative meeting mechanism, hold non-stop meetings on the China-India Border Affairs Consultation and Coordination Working Mechanism, and constantly improve and strengthen confidence-building measures in the border area to avoid recurring incidents that affect peace and tranquility in the border area.

4. The two sides welcome the progress made in the recent military and diplomatic meeting between the two countries and agree to continue the dialogue and consultations, and emphasize that the consensus reached at the level of the two border defence forces at the military level should be implemented as quickly as possible to complete the disengagement process of the front-line forces of both sides as soon as possible.

# Aus seeks long-range missiles in Indo-Pacific defence shift

Continued from P 1

missiles and other capabilities to "deter" future conflicts.

It was necessary because the region was the "focus of the dominant global contest of our age", he added.

The Prime Minister named several areas of tension including the border between India and China, and conflict over the South China Sea and East China Sea.

It follows deteriorating relations

between Australia and China - which are widely seen to be at their worst in decades.

Morrison said much spending would go to upgrading arms and equipment.

Australia will purchase from the US Navy up to 200 long-range anti-ship missiles, which can travel up to 370 km.

It will also invest in developing a hypersonic weapons system

- missiles which can travel thousands of kilometres, said the BBC.

Up to A\$15 billion would be spent on cyber warfare tools - which the Prime Minister noted "says a lot about where the threats are coming from".

Last month, he warned that Australian institutions and businesses were being targeted by cyberattacks from a "sophisticated state actor".

# "Aatmanirbhar Bharat not self-containment": PM Modi's big assurance to global investors

Continued from P 1

Delivering the inaugural speech at the India Global Week 2020, he said that the concept of Aatmanirbhar Bharat merges domestic production and consumption with global supply chains.

Inviting global investments in agriculture, logistics, defence and space, the Prime Minister said: "We are laying a red carpet to come and establish presence in India."

"Aatmanirbhar Bharat is not about being self-contained or being closed to the world, it is about being self-sustaining and self-generating. We will pursue policies that promote efficiency, equity and resilience," he said.

The Prime Minister first used the term Aatmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India, during an address to the nation in May, wherein he had asked citizens to purchase Indian and India-made goods and called upon India Inc to produce all the products imported by the country and become self-sufficient. Since then, it has become a catchphrase among industry participants and traders along with government

representatives.

Talking of market liberalising reforms, he said that India is one of the most open economies in the world.

He also outlined several "reform" measures taken by the government in the past six years including "total financial inclusion", "record" housing and infrastructure projects, tax reforms including the Goods and Services Tax among others.

Further as the world goes through a recession amid the pandemic, Modi said that India will play a leading role in the global economic revival.

He also said that India has already started seeing "green shoots of recovery".

Noting that Indian technology industry and tech professionals along with contributions in other sectors by Indians, including healthcare, banking and scientific research, have always played a major role globally, he said: "There is faith that the story of global revival will have India playing a leading role."

Modi also said the ability of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Indians to reform and rejuvenate would be significant in this regard.

As on one hand, India is fighting the pandemic with stress on healthcare, it has also given equal importance on economic revival and reform, he added.

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## Covid-19: Students arrange income prospects for jobless workers



Akshat Mittal

**New Delhi/IANS:** With the world maintaining social distancing and facing financial turbulence and economic de-growth amid the coronavirus pandemic, some students have brought hope to the workers, especially those who lost their livelihoods during the Covid-19-induced lockdown and the subsequent disruptions, and have rolled out a promising digital service to help them find relevant jobs and employment.

Akshat Mittal (17), who solved the odd-even problem for Delhiites through his innovative carpool app, odd-even.com, in 2016 has set up a website -- Bharatshramik.in -- to link unemployed workers with prospective employers.

"I was touched by the news of migrant workers starving and dying due to hunger. While there are jobs and unemployed workers, there is no mechanism to link them together. Bharat Shramik is trying to fill that gap and provide a platform of hope and livelihood," said Akshat.



Atipriya Dev Sinha

During the lockdown, he started working on the design of this platform and took the help of his friends Atipriya Dev Sinha, Ashish Agarwal and Mihir Soni to give shape to the novel idea.

Bharat Shramik uses matchmaking technology to help unemployed workers, especially blue-collar workers, who migrated closer to their homes to find jobs.

The multi-lingual helpline number involves a simple three-step process. The workers start off by selecting their language, then, click the job they want to work in, and proceed to type in the pin code of the area where they want to find work.

This data is stored on a database and presented to suitable employers through the web portal. More than 18,000 workers and big employers have already registered at the website which is gaining traction at a fast pace.

## Japan offers strong support to India on Ladakh

**New Delhi/IANS:** In a strong show of support for India, Japan on July 3 hit out at China, saying that it opposes any unilateral attempts to change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh where the Chinese aggression led to the killing of 20 Indian soldiers in June.

Tokyo's envoy in New Delhi, Satoshi Suzuki revealed that he had a conversation with Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla about the government's efforts at peaceful resolution of the Indo-China face-off in Ladakh.

Suzuki later tweeted: "Had a good talk with FS Shringla. Appreciated his briefing on the situation along LAC, including GOI's policy to pursue peaceful resolution. Japan also hopes for peaceful resolution through dialogues. Japan opposes any unilateral attempts to change the status quo."

The statement came weeks after Japan revised a certain legislation



which allows it to share defence intelligence with India, Australia and the UK. Until now, the legislation covered only its closest ally, the US.

The move will facilitate joint exercises, tie-ups for developing equipment and sharing data on Chinese troop movements -- strategically significant issue -- for Tokyo as it's finding harder to

keep a track of Beijing's activities in East China Sea.

Chinese Coast Guard vessels, as per media reports from Tokyo, have been sailing through waters in the East China Sea around the Japan-administered Senkaku Islands for the last 80 days continuously. China disputes Japan's sovereignty over Senkaku islands.

## Job reservation for residents at International Border: Indian Minister

**New Delhi/IANS:** Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office and for Personnel Jitendra Singh has said that residents at the International Border (IB) will get reservation in jobs advertised by the Jammu Kashmir Service Selection Board.

Jitendra Singh said that he wanted to clear apprehensions about this and the Union Territory (UT) administration will issue a clarification about it.

The information was shared by the Minister on Twitter. "Important to clear apprehension

of aspirants for jobs advertised by Jammu and Kashmir government."

"Had a detailed discussion with LG (Lt Governor) Sh Murmu and C S Sh Subrahmanyam. IB reservation for border area candidates will be available in these jobs. The UT Govt. will issue clarification accordingly," he added.

The present rules allow three per cent reservation for people living in areas along the International Border and Line of Control.



The UT has advertised around 8500 vacancies for class 4 employees and in April approximately 1900 posts were announced for Accounts Assistants.

## Overseas flights to stay suspended till July 31

**New Delhi/IANS:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued a circular on July 3 extending the suspension on scheduled commercial international flight operations to and from India till July 31.

The development comes exactly a week after the suspension on overseas air services was extended till July 15.

The regulator said the validity of the earlier circular has been extended till 11.59 p.m. IST of July 31.

"However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case to case basis," the circular read.

At present, healthy demand for evacuation flights have been witnessed in the North America-India sector.

Passenger air services were suspended on March 25 due to the nationwide lockdown to check the spread of Covid-19, although domestic air services resumed in a phased manner from May 25.

## Tablighi Jamaat case: Foreign nationals including Chinese released on bail

**New Delhi/IANS:** A Delhi court on July 8 granted bail to Chinese, Brazilian, Australian, Fijian, and Philippines nationals who participated in the Tablighi Jamaat congregation at Nizamuddin Markaz here in March.

They were granted bail on a personal bond of Rs 10,000 each. They have also moved a plea bargaining application before the trial court.

Plea bargaining is a pre-trial negotiation between the accused

and the prosecution where the accused agrees to plead guilty in exchange for certain concessions by the prosecution.

This came a day after the court granted bail to 122 Malaysian nationals in the same case. All the foreign nationals had participated in the congregation in alleged violation of visa norms and guidelines issued by the Indian government on Covid-19.

The Crime Branch of Delhi Police has named more than 900 foreign nationals in connection with the



case. They have not been arrested. The FIR was registered against Tablighi Jamaat leader Maulana Saad Kandhalvi and others on March 31.

The accused persons have been charged under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Epidemic Diseases Act, the Disaster Management Act, and also for violating the prohibitory orders under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

# IAF designs locust control system for Mi-17 choppers

**New Delhi/IANS:** The Indian Air Force has indigenously designed and developed a pesticide spraying tool for Mi-17 choppers -- the Airborne Locust Control System (ALCS) -- to save the country from locust attacks. "The Chandigarh Base Repair Depot indigenously designed and developed the ALCS for Mi-17 helicopters," said a top Air Force officer. Anticipating repeated locust attacks in various states across the country, the Indian Agricultural Ministry had signed a contract with a UK based company in May 2000 to modify

two Indian Air Force Mi-17 choppers for spraying atomised pesticide to arrest locust breeding. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK based firm was unable to manufacture and supply the modification kit to the IAF before September 2020 for system integration and testing. Seeing the delay and an unprecedented locust attack across states, the IAF decided to develop the pesticide spraying kit. The IAF tasked the Base Repair Depot located in Chandigarh to undertake the challenging task of indigenously designing and

developing the ALCS for Mi-17 helicopters. The nozzles used for the purpose are a mix of commercially available nozzles as well as nozzles developed by the CSIO, Chandigarh. The pesticide Malathion in appropriate concentration will be filled in the internal auxiliary tank of 800 litre capacity fitted inside the helicopter and will be pumped into the nozzles by using an electrical pump as well as compressed air, achieving nearly 40 minutes of spaying duration in the infected zones covering an area of approximately 750



**Mi-17 Chopper**

hectares in each mission. A team of test pilots and test engineers of the Aircraft and

Systems Testing Establishment, Bengaluru, has successfully carried out ground and airborne trials, the force said.

# Defence Minister inaugurates 6 critical bridges in J&K

**New Delhi/IANS:** Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveiled six critical bridges constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in Jammu & Kashmir on July 9, sources said. The six bridges were inaugurated through a video conference by Rajnath Singh in Delhi. Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat and Army Chief MM Naravane were also present at the virtual unveiling ceremony. The Defence Minister unveiled four bridges in Akhnoor sector and two in Jammu-Rajpura area constructed at a cost of Rs 45

crore. "All bridges are around 300 to 100 metres approximately," said a senior Defence Ministry officer. On July 7, Singh held a review meeting with BRO officials to discuss the improvement of infrastructure near Line of Actual Control with China and Line of Control with Pakistan. The review meeting took place amid the ongoing border tension with China. "Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the ongoing projects with Director General BRO and other senior officials at a meeting in South Block today," the

Ministry of Defence said. BRO has executed about 30 per cent more works in 2019-20 as compared to 2018-19. The officer said BRO have executed 1,273 kilometres formation cutting, 2,214 kilometres of surfacing, Rs 1,715 crore of permanent works, 2,979 kilometres of major bridges, Rs 689 crore in tunnel works and 2,498 kilometres of re-surfacing in 2019-20. In the last two years since 2017-18 there has been a surge of 44 per cent in formation cutting, 15 per cent in surfacing, 55 per cent in permanent works, 17 per cent in major bridges and 49 per cent in



resurfacing works. Further, amid escalated tension between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Lt Gen Harpal Singh had made a

visit to the under-construction 8.8-km-long Atal Rohtang Tunnel that is set for a September opening.

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## Solar manufacturing capacity to be tripled



Solar power plant (File Photo IANS)

**New Delhi/IANS:** The central government has proposed a major push to domestic manufacturing of renewable energy equipment in the country that would completely eliminate the need for imports, particularly from countries such as China.

As part of the plan, an accelerated manufacturing plan is being operationalised that is incentivising setting up of solar cell manufacturing capacity of 4,000 MW that would allow project developers to restrict import of this product completely.

Additionally, 3,000 MW of fresh solar cell capacity is being added under manufacturing linked bids for solar projects. This would incentivise power project developers planning

manufacturing in India.

The current capacity of solar cell manufacturing in India is about 2,500 MW. This is proposed to rise over three times in coming years.

In case of solar modules as well, 7,000 MW of capacity is being added in addition to existing capacity.

Power minister R.K. Singh had said that under 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission, domestic manufacturing capacities would be expended at a rapid pace for meeting goals towards import substitution.

The plan for renewable sector, he said, should not only be sufficient to meet the country's needs but would also support exports and earn the country valuable foreign exchange.

## No China origin, will invest and hire more in India: Zoom

**New Delhi/IANS:** Facing social media onslaught over it being a Chinese company, US-based video meet platform Zoom on July 6 said that they are clear about its identity and plan to significantly invest and hire local talent in the country over the next five years.

Velchamy Sankarlingam who is President of Engineering and Products at Zoom said India is and will continue to be an important market for Zoom.

"We do recognize that as we continue to introduce ourselves to the Indian market, there has been some confusion about the facts as it relates to Zoom. We want to work through these," said Sankarlingam who joined Zoom in May from enterprise software major VMware.

He said that some of the misconceptions are disheartening, especially those about Zoom and China.

"Zoom has been clear about its identity: Zoom is a US company, publicly traded on the NASDAQ, founded and headquartered in San Jose, California. And like many global technology companies, Zoom has offices in



China operated by subsidiaries of the US parent company," emphasized Sankarlingam who spent more than nine years at VMware.

The popular video conferencing platform Zoom was left stunned last month after the Indian intelligence agencies red-flagged it along with Chinese apps over safety and privacy issues of users.

Later, when the Indian government banned 59 Chinese

apps over national security concerns, Zoom was also targeted on various social media platform for being Chinese.

According to Sankarlingam, they look forward to engaging with more stakeholders in India in the coming months to support key priorities such as Digital India, Start Up India, and Skills India, as well as introducing them to Zoom.

## Let us code for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat: PM

**New Delhi/IANS:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, here on July 4, launched the Digital India Aatmaa Nirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge to identify the best Indian apps, already being used by citizens and have the potential to scale up and become world class.

The Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology along with the Atal Innovation Mission have come up with this challenge, which will run in two tracks -- promotion of existing apps and development of new apps.

"For the promotion of existing apps and platforms across the categories of e-learning,

work-from-home, gaming, business, entertainment, office utilities and social networking, the government will provide mentoring, hand-holding and support.

"Track-01 will work in mission mode for identifying good quality apps for the leader-board and shall be completed in around a month," said a statement issued the Prime Minister in his LinkedIn account.

For new apps, Track-02 initiative will work to help create new champions in India by providing support in ideation, incubation, prototyping and rollout along with market access.

This challenge will help create tech products to find solutions to tech conundrums with mentorship. Interestingly, the challenge comes in the wake of India banning 59 Chinese apps citing national security considerations.

"I urge all my friends in the tech community to participate and help create an aatmanirbhar app ecosystem. Who knows, I may also use some of these apps made by you," said the Prime Minister with a smiley.

The Prime Minister said India's tech ecosystem had made it proud and the pandemic had brought about disruption in the tech

world.

Connecting it with the 'self-reliant India', he said, "Today, when the entire nation is working towards creating an Aatmanirbhar Bharat, it's a good opportunity to give direction to their efforts, momentum to their hard-work and mentorship to their talent to evolve apps which can satisfy our market as well as compete with the world."

Stating that the goal is to Make in India for India as well for the World, the Prime Minister using the sectoral parlance said, "Let us code for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat!"



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

## Railways' PPP model to stimulate private investment: Report

**New Delhi/IANS:** India's first-ever public-private partnership (PPP) scheme in passenger rail operations rolled out by the Indian Railways will stimulate private sector investments in the country, the Acuite Ratings & Research said in a report.

The Rs 30,000 crore scheme will also boost the 'Make in India' programme.

The ratings agency said that the entry of private operators will provide the Railways with an opportunity to strengthen operating efficiencies over the long term.

"The PPP is likely to spur new private sector and even foreign investments in the railroad segment where many domestic and global players will be keen to

establish a foothold," the report said.

"We also expect it to give a significant push to the government's 'Make in India' initiative as the required locomotives and coaches are likely to be manufactured in the country," it said.

Besides, the report said the move



will address the long-standing demand for better quality customer services and also bridge the gap between demand and supply in the passenger segment. The report cited that private participation in train services

has worked well for advanced economies like the US and the EU, the two regions with the largest railway networks.

In countries like Canada and Brazil, the report pointed out that railway operations remain largely

with the private sector.

“The rail network in South America would have been a lot smaller than it is today had several governments not taken the bold step to invite private participation in the 1990s,” the

report said.

However, the report also cautioned that effective implementation of the programme will be the key to its success.

“Though currently a small step in

the right track of reform, well-drafted contractual agreements and adequate clarity in the sharing of risks will be important to sustain this initiative,” the report said.

## Chinese apps ban: JioMeet joins ‘local ke liye vocal’ call

**New Delhi/IANS:** In a filip to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call for local ke liye vocal amid the ban on 59 Chinese apps, Reliance Jio has launched a free video-conferencing application called JioMeet that takes on various other such apps which are growing in leaps and bounds as millions of people work from home in India.

The application that has already been downloaded more than 1,00,000 times on Google Play Store within no time comes with enterprise-grade host control and security, and can be used for 1:1 video calls and hosting meetings with up to 100 participants.

Other highlights include easy sign up with either mobile number or email ID, meeting in HD audio and video quality.

It offers support where the users

can click on a JioMeet invite link and join from his or her browser without downloading the application.

“Conduct meetings with your customers, partners and people outside your office. Join from laptop/desktop or mobile device or even your legacy video device as it supports the legacy conferencing devices,” according to Jio Platforms.

Back-end technology optimises experience with HD video quality even at lower bandwidths and intuitive and user-friendly interface enhances overall conferencing experience.

“All your meetings are encrypted and password protected, ensuring complete privacy and data protection,” said the JioMeet team.

Industry experts hailed the arrival

of a desi video meet app, at a time when onus is on the Indian corporate and enterprise world to create world-class apps that can reach global heights.

“The current market dynamics will potentially provide enough tailwinds to JioMeet to gain currency, on the back of its features, such as no limits on call durations, and seamless switching between devices,” Prabhu Ram, Head-Industry Intelligence Group, CyberMedia Research (CMR), told IANS.

JioMeet can be used for creating instant meetings to chat with friends and also to schedule a meeting in advance and share meeting details with invitees.

It offers unlimited meetings per day and each meeting can go uninterrupted up to 24 hours.

The application can be used on



Android, Windows, iOS, Mac, SIP/H.323 systems. Each meeting is password protected and the host can enable a “Waiting Room” to ensure no participant joins without permission.

Information and Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said this week that while Indians

download a lot of apps from Google Play Store and Apple App Store, it is time to upload some.

His comments came in the backdrop of India banning 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok, Helo, Likee, SHAREit, Mi community apps and UC Browser

## Making khadi the ‘fabric of empowerment’

The nationwide lockdown in home nation slumped demand in most sectors bringing the economy to a crashing halt. And the most deeply impacted there have been the daily wage workers. There is a large percentage of rural and semi-urban India that work in the handicraft and handloom sector which employs about 4.6 lakh artisans. This crisis has led to unemployment leaving the artisans struggling for their daily bread and butter.

A sustainable fashion social enterprise, Rewanta has launched the #PledgekhadiEmpowerWeavers initiative under the Reclaim Khadi Movement movement that aims to extend support to weavers and artisans by enabling them to earn a dignified living by creating a positive demand cycle for Khadi. IANSlife spoke to Ashwini Pable, co-founder of Rewanta, to know more about the initiative, the impact of the lockdown on the community and how Rewanta is working towards its upliftment. Read excerpts:

**Tell us more about the initiative.**

Pable: With Rewanta, we have been working with the khadi artisans of India to create contemporary fashion. With #PledgeKhadiEmpowerWeavers initiative, we aim to create an opportunity for artisans to earn a dignified livelihood to combat the setback of the lockdown and keep them from slipping back into the cycle of poverty. Our objective here is to create a positive demand cycle by addressing the nation to pledge one khadi garment in their wardrobes during this lockdown period.

Pledging one khadi garment will create multiple benefits—just one garment will support an artisan’s livelihood for a week. It will also help build adoption of the sustainable khadi fabric revealing its comfort and style quotient to newer users. Alongside, users will enjoy the good energy of these hand spun and hand-woven swadesi items.

**How are you working towards it?**

Pable: Khadi has proven that it has covered the journey from “Khadi as a fabric of freedom” to “Khadi as a fabric of fashion” now is featured on the clothes racks of most top-end designers in the country. Considering the vast ecosystem of artisans that work in the Khadi sector, with this initiative our endeavour is to establish it as a “fabric of empowerment” too.

Our solution aims to create opportunity for 10,000 artisans to begin with, which will expand to include more artisans as the campaign helps demand soar. The financial impact of this campaign is to weave 10 lakh meter khadi fabric that will be further designed to create 250,000 garments for customers. The objective is to not look for a stop-gap arrangement this time, but truly create self-reliant and sustainable artisan clusters which provide value to the customer while building business models that generate respectful livelihood opportunities for weavers.

**To what extent the community has been impacted by the pandemic?**

Pable: Most of these 4.6 lakh weavers are associated with Khadi certified institutions who provide



them work. 20 percent of these “A class” certified institutions could provide support to these artisans out of their surplus up until now which is now drying up. However the remaining 80 percent of them are struggling for survival already as the demand cycle has come to a halt.

It is a crisis situation in the smaller weaver dependent villages as these people work like wage earners weaving fabric and getting paid for it everyday. With all of it gone they literally have no cash in hand and may die of pure hunger and disease.

**How long do you think it will take to bring back businesses on track?**

Pable: This needs to be a sustainable activity and not a one time activity. If we are able to

restart the demand cycle which is what this initiative of Reclaim Khadi is targeting, then we should be able to generate demand and start the economic activity within two months times and sustain it for a long time.

**Tell us more about Rewanta and its role in the upliftment of the community.**

Pable: We have been working with khadi artisans of India for the last two years under our high-end fashion label PABLE. This has brought us in close contact with the weavers and artisans in the sector and working on the ground has pushed into deeper clarity the factors that impede this sector’s integration into the mainstream. Rewanta is the social initiative to spread awareness of the philosophy of good energy

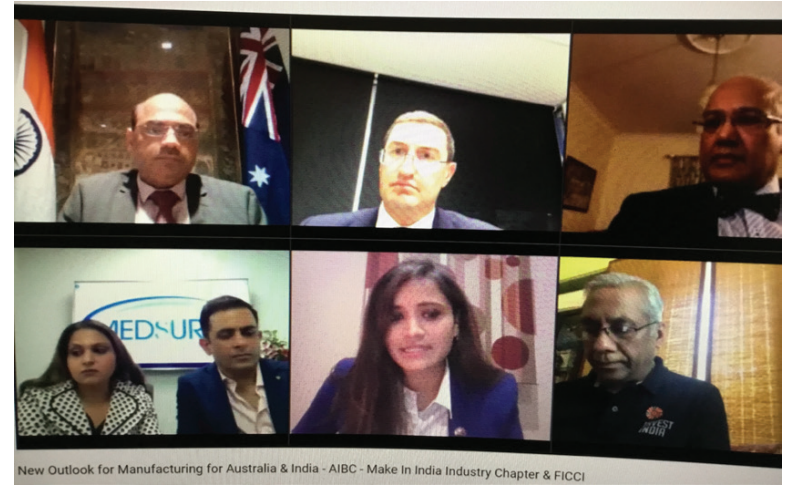
clothing, slow fashion as well as Khadi’s ability to be a climate-friendly, breathable, zero-carbon footprint fabric.

The positioning of Khadi has always been very traditional which hampers its widespread integration into the fashion arena. Rewanta aims to educate people on the possibilities of khadi in terms of style, fashion as well as empowerment of a sector that holds the potential to be a super Indian brand.

Through creating a deeper awareness, the intent is to build sustainable business models that allow for self-reliant artisan communities to spring up across the nation through consistently positive demand.

By Puja Gupta/IANSlife

# AIBC's Make in India chapter webinar on "New outlook in manufacturing"



A webinar on "new outlook in manufacturing between Australia and India" was organised 21 May, 2020 by the Make in India chapter of the Australia India Business Council (AIBC).

#### Webinar Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has heavily impacted many important sectors of the economy globally. The manufacturing scenario in Australia and India

will be changing and both the governments are in the process of implementing new strategies, mitigation measures and new policies. While Australia will be looking inwardly into increased local manufacturing, retooling current facilities and reducing heavy dependence on overseas services, India will be very actively promoting the self-reliance in manufacturing, the Small to Medium businesses and the "Make in India" projects and

programs.

Noted experts from both Australia and India deliberated on this critical subject which has gained currency in the wake of Covid-19's impact on the global economy. The objectives of the webinar were:

1. Create an awareness as how industries in Australia and India will be realigning their strategies in manufacturing in the post Covid scenario

2. Highlight emerging opportunities for Make in India for Australian industries and new opportunities for Indian businesses in Australia

3. Update on government policies aligned to the new outlook in manufacturing

It was also an occasion for the formal launch of AIBC's Make in India chapter for Victoria.

Mr. Jim Varghese AM, National Chair, AIBC Ltd moderated the proceedings of the Webinar.

The panellists included Mr. Manish Gupta, Consul General of India, Sydney; Hon. Mr. Julian Leeser MP, Federal Member for Berowra & Chair of Parliamentary Friends of India; Mr. Deepak

Bagla, Managing Director & CEO, Invest India; Mr. Manish Singhal, Deputy Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry - India; Ms. Preeti Daga, Victoria State President, AIBC Ltd; Ms. Clare Hobern, International Engagement Manager, Standards Australia; Mrs. Reet Phulwani, Director, Medsurge Healthcare; Mr. Kam Phulwani, CEO & Founder, Medsurge Healthcare; Mr. Michael Sharpe, Director, Advanced Manufacturing Growth Centre; and Mr. Vish Viswanathan, National Chapter Chair, Make in India.

**By Vish Viswanathan**

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# Australia to increase defence budget to counter China threats

**Canberra/IANS:** Australia recently said that it will significantly increase military spending and focus on the Indo-Pacific region amid rising tensions between the US and China.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison pledged A\$270 billion (\$186 billion) to Australia's arms budget over 10 years, a 40 per cent boost, the BBC reported.

The new defence capability budget, about 2 per cent of the GDP, replaces a previous decade-long strategy, set only in 2016, which had set aside A\$195 billion.

Morrison said that Australia would acquire long-range missiles and other capabilities to "deter" future conflicts.

It was necessary because the region was the "focus of the dominant global contest of our age", he added.

The Prime Minister named several areas of tension, including the border between India and China, and conflict over the South China Sea and East China Sea.

It follows deteriorating relations between Australia and China -



**Prime Minister Scott Morrison**

which are widely seen to be at their worst in decades.

Morrison said much spending would go to upgrading arms and equipment.

Australia will purchase from the US Navy up to 200 long-range anti-ship missiles, which can travel up to 370 km.

It will also invest in developing a hypersonic weapons system - missiles which can travel thousands of kilometres, said the

BBC.

Up to A\$15 billion would be spent on cyber warfare tools - which the Prime Minister noted "says a lot about where the threats are coming from".

Last month, he warned that Australian institutions and businesses were being targeted by cyberattacks from a "sophisticated state actor".

# Australia's tourism industry hit hard by Covid-19 pandemic

**Canberra/IANS:** Australia's tourism industry is facing about A\$55 billion (\$37.7 billion) downturn in the 2020/21 financial year as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a report from the Australian Trade and Investment Commission, tourism expenditure is forecast to fall from more than A\$130 billion in 2019 to about A\$80 billion in 2020/21, reports Xinhua news agency.

The report was based on the assumption that Australia's international borders will remain closed until at least July 2021 but that state border restrictions will be lifted.

"The issue at the moment is that the industry doesn't know where the bottom is. The market is very confused," Simon Westaway, chief executive of Australian Tourism Industry Council, told The Sydney Morning Herald.

It comes after Prime Minister Scott Morrison said recently that it was "not unreasonable" to assume that international travel



would not resume until July 2021, except to New Zealand, as the virus continues to spread around the world.

"But no one really knows. And that's the problem," he said.

A total of 7,686 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Australia, with 104 deaths and 6,993 recoveries, according to the latest figures of the Department of Health.

The number of cases in Victoria, which has had several outbreaks of the virus, has increased by 90 in two days, significantly more than the rest of the country combined.

The state government has announced that coronavirus testing for recently returned travellers in hotel quarantine would be made mandatory.

# Australian Parliament readies itself for virtual sittings

**Canberra/IANS:** The Australian Parliament is preparing for virtual sittings due to the fresh coronavirus outbreaks in the country, a media report said on July 7.

Nine Entertainment newspapers reported on July 7 that parliamentary officials have started working on plans that will allow MPs to debate and vote on legislation via video conference in March, reports Xinhua news agency.

The model is similar to a hybrid model adopted in the UK Parliament in April whereby MPs could participate in the legislative process both in-person and virtually using video conferencing software.

The governing Coalition and Opposition Labor Party in March voted in favour of Parliament being able to meet in "a manner and form not otherwise provided in the standing orders" including virtually in recognition of the difficulties likely presented by the coronavirus pandemic and border closures.

Attorney-General Christian Porter, who is also the leader of the House of Representatives,

said in March that the government must have flexibility to respond to challenges that arise from COVID-19.

In order for virtual sittings to go ahead Porter and Mathias Cormann, the leader of the government in the Senate, must reach an agreement with their Labor counterparts Tony Burke and Penny Wong.

A spokesperson for the Australian government told Nine that there were no current plans for Parliament to sit virtually.

"The implementation of a virtual Parliament would only be done with the agreement of the government and the opposition," she said.

However, with the border between New South Wales and Victoria closed indefinitely, some MPs will likely not be able to return to Canberra when Parliament resumes in August.

As well as border issues virtual sittings of Parliament could also face legal issues, with the government seeking advice on whether an MP has to be physically present to vote on legislation.

# Spike in Covid-19 cases forces closure of Victoria-New South Wales border



**Melbourne/IANS:** The border between Australia's two most populous states, Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), has been closed from July 8 onwards after a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in Melbourne.

The outbreak in Victoria's capital has seen hundreds of cases in the past two weeks - more than 95 per cent of the new coronavirus cases in Australia, reports the BBC.

Until now, the two states had maintained open borders even when others had shut them.

The new closure, restricts travel to permit holders.

Victoria's Premier Daniel Andrews said it was a joint decision with Prime Minister Scott Morrison and NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian.

"This is one of those precautionary measures - it is one of those things that I think will help us in broader terms contain the spread of the virus," Andrews was quoted as saying in the BBC report.

Victoria recorded 127 new infections on July 6 - its highest daily increase since the pandemic began.

Previously, most cases had involved returning overseas travellers in quarantine but now over 80 per cent were coming from within the community.

"This is unprecedented in Australia. We have not seen anything like this," said Berejiklian.

The country has so far reported 8,449 COVID-19 cases, with 104 deaths.

# WORLD THIS WEEK

Contributed by the Institute for Advance Studies, Bangalore, IIT Bangalore Campus, India

Harini Madhusudan, Sukanya Bali, Sourina Bej and Rashmi BR

## Taliban received Russian bounties to kill US troops, claims the New York Times

### What happened?

On 26 June, the New York Times published a report claiming that American intelligence has confirmed that the Taliban received bounties from the Russian military intelligence agency, for killing the US and NATO forces. They concluded so after recovery of large amounts of American cash at a Taliban outpost.

In response, President Donald Trump had claimed that he was never briefed about the intelligence report, denied any knowledge of Russian bounties, and has called it a 'hoax.' The communications director at the White House, Alyssa Farah, called the report "uncorroborated."

Representatives in the US Congress had however asked the President to, "immediately expose and handle this, and stop Russia's shadow war," and has also accused him of "ignoring" it.

The Russian embassy, in a series of tweets, has denied the same saying, "there is no evidence related to the claims about Moscow's collusion with the

Taliban" and are only 'groundless accusation' against them.

### What is the background?

First, an increase in Russian engagement in Afghanistan. The news report comes amid a background where Russia has been increasingly creating a role for itself in the conflict in Afghanistan. This was evident in May 2019, when the Putin administration invited senior members of the Afghan government and the Taliban to celebrate "100 years of Russo-Afghan friendship." Soon after the US-Taliban agreement, Russia along with the US issued a joint statement on not recognizing the Taliban's designation as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Second, Russia's apprehension on the rise of the Islamic State in Afghanistan. Russia doesn't want the presence of the Islamic State neither in Central Asia, nor near its southern borders through Afghanistan. This apprehension has been the ground pushing Russia to increase its strategic footprint in Afghanistan and also in its fight against the Islamic

State in Syria to prevent its spread elsewhere.

Third, the historical background. Russia seeks to re-evaluate its past experience of the 1980s when the US supported the Afghan-Arab mujahideen against the erstwhile Soviet Union.

### What does it mean?

First, the exit from Afghanistan will now be hard for the US troops, if the Taliban continues to receive support from Russia. This also means that violence in the country will only increase, making the US withdrawal all the more bloody.

Second, the news report has now led to increased tension within the US government. Trump's position against Russia and the rationale of the US-Taliban agreement will now be increasingly questioned.

Last, this will also bear an impact on the upcoming elections. If Trump fails to address the Russia-Taliban collusion, the US-Taliban deal may lose its significance as his upcoming election campaign strategy.



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks at the ceremony of presenting credentials at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Feb 5, 2020



## ALSO, IN THE NEWS...

### India and China decide to hold more talks over the LAC standoff

The third round of talks at the Corps Commander level this week, emphasized on the need for more talks between India and China, in order to resolve the tiff at the LAC. It was decided that the talks would continue, in accordance with the agreement between the external affairs ministers of both the countries. Meanwhile, PM Modi, along with the Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat, visited Ladakh and interacted with the Army, Airforce and ITBP personnel, and condemned the neighbour's 'expansionist policy' without taking China's name.

### WTO agrees for a dispute panel over India's import duties

The WTO agreed for setting up an adjudication panel to discuss India's import duties on ICT products. The panel was set up on the second request of the European Union after India blocked the complaints of Japan and Chinese Taipei over the issue. India had blocked EU's request for a panel in February and thus was unable to block it for the second time. China, the US, Russia, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Pakistan, Indonesia, Canada, Turkey, South Korea, Brazil and Norway have reserved rights to participate in the proceedings.

### India and Japan conduct a naval exercise in the Indian Ocean

The Indian Navy and the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force conducted a joint training exercise in the Indian Ocean. Aimed at promoting mutual understanding and trust, the exercise revolved around tactical training and communication training. INS Rana and INS Kulush from the Indian Navy, and JS Kashima and JS Shimayuki from the JMSDF participated in the exercise. The timing of the exercise coincides with the prolonged standoff between India and China at the LAC and ASEAN's statement stressing the role of international law in the South China Sea dispute.

### Setback for Macron in French

### municipal elections

The municipal elections in France witnessed a 'green wave', as the environmentalist Greens won big across major cities of the country. Even in Paris, La République en Marche (LREM) candidate was a distant third with 13 per cent of the vote. The result, in many ways, is a setback for Macron. General discontentment of the public expressed through protests, coupled with the manner in which COVID-19 was handled, showed clearly that Macron's popularity was dwindling.

### Protests engulf Hong Kong, first arrests made under the new National Security Law

Protests erupted soon after Beijing passed the new National Security Law for Hong Kong. On 1 July, a man was detained for holding Hong Kong Independence Flag in Causeway Bay. This was the first arrest under the new law. Since then, ten people were arrested for breaching the law, and 360 others were detained. The UK, on the other hand, has said that up to three million Hong Kong residents will be accommodated in the country and will be provided with a chance for applying for citizenship.

### Russia sends troops to Libya to support Haftar's forces

Russia has been sending more troops and reinforcements to support Khalifa Haftar's forces. According to European and Libyan sources, Russian private military contractors helped Haftar's forces to take control of the country's crucial oil field. The Libyan army and the US also stated that Russian planes transported personnel including Syrian mercenaries, Pantsir air defence system, ammunition and weapons to al-Ghardabiya Airbase in Sirte.

### About the Authors

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## 'Long Live the President': Russian constitutional reform votes allow Putin power till 2036

### What happened?

The era of strongmen politics now stands strongly consolidated as Russia votes in favour of the constitutional reforms, thereby allowing Vladimir Putin to nominally seek and secure office for two more terms till 2036. With these new changes, Putin is likely to surpass Joseph Stalin as the longest-serving head of the state. Along with allowing Putin to run for Presidency for two more six-year terms, the Russians in a week-long referendum overwhelmingly upheld the set of constitutional amendments like anti-gay rights and economic reforms. After the public voting, preliminary results released by the Election Commission showed that almost 78 per cent of voters endorsed the amendments, while 21 per cent voted against them and some 65 per cent voters had turned up to cast their ballots.

### What is the background?

First, the culmination of Putin's pursuit for legacy amid opposition. The Russian Constitution bars more than

two consecutive presidential terms. Since 2000 when Putin became the President for the first time, he started his pursuits to remain in power. After his first two presidential term he has swapped the Presidency with Dmitry Medvedv and remained the centre of power as a Prime Minister. After Medvedv stepped down in completing one term, Putin assumed his Presidency again. He is now into his second term that is set to expire in 2024. With an aim to be in power for life, Putin brought about the new constitutional changes that theoretically doesn't change the two-term limit but in practice resets the clock on Putin's terms so that after his term ends he can start afresh. Putin's desire to run again is not public yet, but if he chooses to run for Presidency, his political clout will let him remain in hegemony till 2036 when he will be 83 years old.

Second, the domestic show of Putin's power amid Coronavirus mishandling. The moment when Putin had announced his intention to reset the presidential

term limits, it was never in doubt that Russian public voting will make any difference. Hence this referendum was aimed at driving home a political purpose. It was aimed at a domestic audience who was fast losing its faith on a President who has mishandled the pandemic, led to the suicides of doctors, reduced political freedoms, high standard of living and degraded the rule of law. Putin's amendments did not secure a majority support in Moscow and St. Petersburg, two largest cities with a strong middle-class opposition to 'Putinism.' Rather this urban political discontent was balanced by the support for Putin from the suburban town and rural areas. Kremlin's campaign made a point of directing the attention of these Russians to the promises of an expanded social security net contained in some constitutional amendments.

### What does it mean?

First, with a likely scenario of Putin as the eternal President, the domestic political landscape looks at a strongman politics

Continued on P 26

# US and India discuss 'ongoing threats' to international order amid India-China conflict

**New York/IANS:** Meeting under the storm clouds of China's confrontation with India in Ladakh, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla and US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale have discussed the "ongoing threats" to the international order and agreed to "endeavour to support each other's objectives", the State Department said.

But the press release issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) after their virtual consultation on July 7 was silent on these elements -- discussions of threats and support to each other's objectives as well as an agreement to work with other Indo-Pacific partners.

The MEA said that the two diplomats, who held the US-India Foreign Office Consultations virtually because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, also discussed visas for students and professionals, which have come under restrictions imposed by President Donald Trump. But the State Department statement was silent on the visas.

Shringla participating in the

consultation from New Delhi and Hale from Washington agreed to work to strengthen the US-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, the US and Indian statements said. "The discussions included ongoing threats to the rules-based international order, bilateral and multilateral diplomatic cooperation, maritime security, and the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic," the State Department note on the consultation said. Hale and Shringla "agreed to consult closely on all challenges and endeavour to support each other's objectives," according to the State Department.

India's election to a two-year term starting in January on United Nations Security Council also figured in their talks. Washington has expressed support for India gaining a permanent seat on the Council. Shringla and Hale "discussed US-India cooperation on a full range of international issues and developed concrete steps to strengthen the US-India Comprehensive Global Strategic

Partnership established by their leaders," the State Department said. The partnership was laid out in February in a joint statement issued when Trump visited India and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

According to the Modi-Trump joint statement the partnership envisages greater defence and security cooperation, expanded joint military exercises and co-development and co-production of advanced defence equipment. The State Department said that Shringla and Hale "affirmed the US and Indian visions of a free and open Indo-Pacific region" and "agreed to work with other Indo-Pacific partners to bring these visions to reality".

The MEA release spoke of reaffirming the commitment to "a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific" but was silent about other partners. The main partners are Japan and Australia, which together with India and the US form the Quad that promotes joint consultations and joint military exercises.

On July 6 the Trump



India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla (middle)

administration ordered that foreign students who do only online courses will not be eligible for visas and this may affect a large proportion of the 202,000 Indians at US institutions of higher learning. In June, he suspended the issuance of most categories of H1-B visas issued to professionals citing the high unemployment caused by the economic shutdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Indians usually get about 70 per cent of the H1-B visas.

New Delhi and Washington are embroiled in trade disputes and a long-expected trade deal is on hold, while the US has scrapped the General Scheme of Preferences that gave concessional terms for some imports from India worth \$6.3 billion.

## Frequent and increasing duration of heatwaves in last seven decades: Study

**Sydney/IANS:** Scientists have found that heatwaves have been increasing in frequency and duration since the 1950s in nearly every part of the world.

The study, published in Nature Communications analysed the extreme temperature events at a regional level since the 1950s and found that nowhere on the planet experienced a significant decrease in heatwaves.

"Not only have we seen more and longer heatwaves worldwide over the past 70 years, but this trend has markedly accelerated," said study lead author Dr Sarah Perkins Kirkpatrick from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Climate Extremes in Australia.

"Cumulative heat shows a similar acceleration, increasing globally on average by 1 degree C-4.5 degree C each decade but in some places, like the Middle East, and parts of Africa and South America,

the trend is up to 10 degree C a decade," Kirkpatrick added.

For the findings, the research team had produced a new metric, cumulative heat, which reveals exactly how much heat is packed into individual heatwaves and heatwave seasons. As expected, that number is also on the rise.

According to the researchers, in Australia's worst heatwave season, an additional 80 degree C of cumulative heat was experienced across the country. In Russia and the Mediterranean, their most extreme seasons baked in an additional 200 degree C or more.

The study also identified that natural variability impacts on heatwaves can be large at regional levels. This variability can overwhelm heatwave trends, so regional trends shorter than a few decades are generally not reliable.

## Pompeo praises India's response to Chinese hostility



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

**New York/IANS:** India has done its best to respond to China's confrontation and the world must unite to act on Beijing's pattern of aggressive behaviour seen in Ladakh, Bhutan and around Asia, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on July 8.

"The Indians have done their best to respond" to China's "incredibly aggressive action," which fits a pattern, Pompeo said at a news conference in Washington.

He said that he had spoken to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar several times about the Chinese aggression in the

Galwan Valley of Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control in June.

He said that Beijing's attack on India has to be put in the context of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) "General Secretary Xi Jinping and his behaviour throughout the region, and indeed, throughout the world. I don't think it's possible to look at that particular instance of Chinese Communist Party aggression in isolation. I think you need to put it in the larger context".

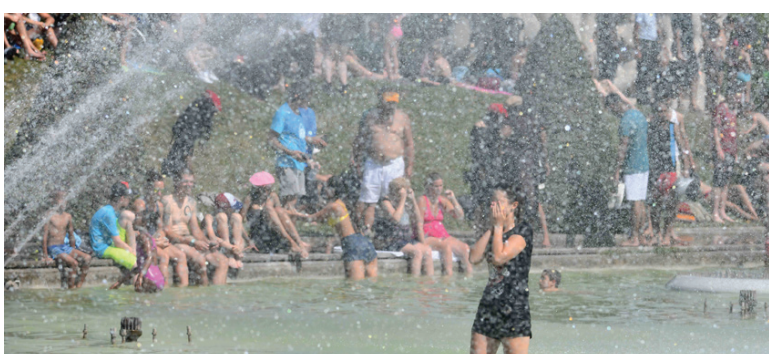
Pompeo referred to the boundary and maritime disputes launched by China

from the Himalayas "to the waters of Vietnam's Exclusive Zone, to the Senkaku Islands, and beyond, calling them "unequalled anywhere else in the world."

"There aren't many neighbours that could satisfactorily say that they know where their sovereignty ends and that the Chinese Communist Party will respect that sovereignty. That's certainly true now for the people of Bhutan as well."

"The CCP recently filed a boundary dispute with Bhutan at a meeting of the Global Environment Facility," he said. "The world should not allow this bullying to take place, nor should it permit it to continue."

He said that the US will soon start a dialogue with the European Union "on how we collectively can respond to this challenge from the Chinese Communist Party." Pompeo said that President Donald Trump has taken the global threats from China "incredibly seriously," which he said previous US administrations had not. "We will respond to this in a way that we think is appropriate, and we have attempted to communicate to the Chinese leadership that we are serious about this," he added.



# India Key to Global Economic Revival

As the world slowly flattens the COVID-19 curve and key economies around the world restart their functioning, India's Make in India initiative holds a key to the global economic revival. It assumes greater salience as several major world economies, such as American, Japanese, German, British, South Korean and Australian among others look to move out and diversify their businesses from China.

So why is India relevant?

India has jumped to 63rd rank in the World Bank's Ease of Development 2020 report, and has also been ranked as the 9th largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment destination in 2019 by the World Investment Report 2020 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The total FDI into India showed a 18% jump from US\$ 62 billion in 2018-19 to US\$ 73.45 billion in 2019-20, in the steel, digital and energy sectors. The report lists professional services and digital economy as some of the most sought-after industries in India for venture capital firms and technological companies. Since 2000, the highest cumulative investments have been recorded in the services sector, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading and construction development.

As per the Global Innovation Index (GII) published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), India ranks 52nd in innovation, improving from 57th in 2018, and topping the list amongst the Central and South Asian nations. India also ranks 77th in the input pillar "Institutions" that measures political, regulatory and business environments; and 53rd in the input pillar "Human Capital and Research" which is based on education level, tertiary education and research and development. India ranks currently at 7th in the "Number of Graduates in Science and Engineering" and 35th in "Research and Development". When it comes to infrastructure measures which includes the performance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), general infrastructure and ecological sustainability India ranks 17th.

With regard to market sophistication India ranks 20th both, in terms of "Ease of Getting Credit" and "Market

Capitalisation"; 3rd in "Domestic Market Sale" and 6th in "Ease of Protecting Minority Investors". In business sophistication India has jumped from 51st in 2018 to 27th rank, and 23rd in University/industry Research Collaboration", something that should interest the academic stakeholders in Australia. India is a major success in Knowledge and Technology and ranks 1st in ICT services exports (as a percentage of total exports) and also ranks 22nd in the list of "Exporter of Creative Goods".

With an eye on kick-starting the economy after a battering from COVID-19, as a part of India's self-reliant pursuit, PM Modi's Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative saw a colossal a \$266 billion #VocalForLocal stimulus package, that constituted 10% of the GDP. The stimulus was aimed at supporting the cottage industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). PM Modi also emphasised on the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative in his address in the India Global Week 2020 summit on 9 July. The Modi government aims to make India a US\$ 5 trillion economy by 2025, an estimate announced before the COVID-19 outbreak, which appears very challenging now, but the government nonetheless remains steadfast in realising this objective. It provides a vast array of opportunities for global and Australian investors, particularly in infrastructure, energy and cost-effective manufacturing in automobile, electronics, telecommunications, white goods and pharmaceuticals to list a few.

From the Australia perspective, the stakeholders must remain alert in tapping into opportunities opening up rapidly across ten priority states in ten priority sectors, inter alia education, agribusiness, resources and tourism, energy, health, financial services, infrastructure, sport, science and innovation identified in the Peter Varghese's report, *An India Economy Strategy to 2035*. Perhaps, not many are aware that the state of Uttar Pradesh with over 200 million people, has been ahead of many of the India states, in engaging with global firms seeking diversion for their businesses from China. It is one of the ten key states listed in the report. India certainly holds the key to the revival of the global economy.

# Impact of COVID-19 on police: What do we need to know now and in the future?

Dr Jacqueline Drew

On March 11, 2020, a global pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO). It continues to spread, with a second wave, a real and imminent risk. World leaders continue to scramble to flatten the curve of infection, slow its progress, reduce fatalities and protect both, healthcare systems and economies from collapse. We have heard a great deal about health workers. The first group in a health emergency to be affected and experience stress are certainly intensive care physicians, doctors, and nurses. They are the ones on the initial frontline, and as in previous outbreaks, such as SARS and MERS that experience increased workload demands, increased exposure, and an elevated risk of infection. The circumstances and nature of this health pandemic demands that our attention to extended beyond health worker on the frontline and consider its impact on police.

What has become apparent is that the COVID-19 pandemic has created novel and unique circumstances that has seen significant implications for the role of police and how they serve their communities. We have seen increases in the prevalence of online child exploitation activities, increased cases of domestic violence and an explosion of online fraud. Just as police have worldwide, the police of India have been asked to enforce ever-changing and sometimes confusing lockdown laws. The increased interaction between police and critical nature of lockdown orders for public health have impacted on police-community relations, with some indicating that this had led to an exacerbation of over-policing. The pressure on police no doubt results in instances where compassion and empathy are sometimes lost, it has the potential to result in increased conflict and use of force. We must be cautious that the negative interactions created by COVID-19 do not have longer-term impacts on relationship between police and their communities and that police maintain high levels of integrity and performance.

Given the changing nature of policing during COVID-19, no doubt police in India, right from 12 March when the lock down in Delhi was announced, and across the globe have faced enormous stress that has implications for their own physical and psychological health and safety.

While law enforcement officers experience a comparatively large numbers of critical incidents or traumatic events due to the nature of their work, the dangers of COVID-19 are new. The stress for officers is real, a fear of contracting COVID-19 themselves and the risk of transmission to family and friends – the pandemic impacts on every frontline officer, on every shift.

COVID-19 is a threat that should be viewed as a 'critical' incident, like that experienced when an officer is involved in a shooting



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**Police agencies across India must invest in adequate support services to assist the mental health of police now and in the longer term**  
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or attends a fatal traffic accident. It is likely that COVID-19 will induce trauma responses. Given emerging statistics in the United States and some initial reports from India, the level of sickness and death amongst police will be high. News report from The Indian Express (3 July, 2020) reported that 64 police personnel have died so far of COVID-19. Worryingly, these figures are likely to exceed typical yearly rates of illness and death resulting from traditional trauma in policing.

When police are faced with circumstances that pose a risk to self, this is clearly linked to poor mental health outcomes. The stress and concern of officers that they may infect family and friends is likely to exacerbate psychological distress of police personnel. Further, the family unit is put under enormous pressure in circumstances where police are quarantined due to likely exposure or actual infection.

What we have learnt from events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina is that mental health concerns, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are evident in the direct aftermath of a critical

incident. Importantly, we need to recognise that they also persist in the months and years following.

A healthy and productive workforce of police personnel is a key pillar in effective, fair and efficient policing. As such, there is likely to be a large toll from COVID-19 for the foreseeable future on police personnel and their families. Police agencies across India must invest in adequate support services to assist the mental health of police now and in the longer term. Methodologies need to be developed to identify 'at risk' officers and in turn, access to support not only for police but also for their families must be remain a priority for police agencies and their leaders.

In sum, COVID-19 is a large-scale, pervasive event that has changed the nature, content and experience of policing for both the community and police. What its long-term impact will be in terms of police-community relations and well-being remains a guessing game. However, the first step is to clearly acknowledge that COVID-19 has changed policing, at least for now. Looking forward, we must plan investment in ensuring that police and communities work together for the sake of a harmonious future. We must also ensure that the human face of police, the police officers themselves are supported. We need to recognise that police do not have the option of self-isolating to protect themselves, they by the very nature of their job put themselves in harm's way, perhaps now more regularly and in more unpredictable circumstances than ever before.

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# Eco-resurgence: A bottom-up approach towards mainstreaming ecological sustainability in the Post-COVID economic recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic has been responsible for the largest number of human casualties in the 21st century, so far. It has not only exposed the health vulnerability of the global population but has also pointed to various environmental implications due to the economic lockdown. As the world is fighting the pandemic it is also important to realise that a carefully crafted plan is needed for economic recovery, keeping the ecological sustainability as the central pillar. Here, I introduce the concept of 'eco-resurgence', which encompasses an overarching emphasis on indigenous, ecologically sustainable activities for the resurgence of Asian economies in the Post Covid-19 world. The fact that learnings from indigenous knowledge, cultural traditions and philosophical richness are capable of setting the region on a sustainable pathway is the guiding principle of this concept.

As countries have been scrambling to bring their national economies to normal, several large-scale and small-scale initiatives to pump in financial resources have gained global attention. From the Global East to Global West fiscal stimulus packages are presenting opportunities for economic revival. Large-scale infrastructure projects, policy decisions prescribing economic restructuring at regional as well as a national level are adding

the momentum to the revival globally. The debates surrounding the Green New Deal in the United States and the Green Deal in European Union throw some light in this direction. However, the diversity of Asia in terms of governance structures, demographic differences and economic status demands an altogether different architecture for economic recovery than what is followed in the EU or the US. The EU is connected with a single currency which makes it easier to implement recovery plans. For US, being a single country, the Green New Deal may find favourable environment for implementation. The key point is that Asia may not necessarily benefit from a Green Deal model to design its economic recovery.

The diversity of the region has nurtured environmental consciousness for the past several millennia in varied ways. Though the vast Asian region never was under the rule of any single kingdom or ideology, common philosophical elements linked the region from time immemorial. Environmental consciousness always formed a key element in the cultural heritages that spread across the region. The concept of self-reliance reverberated in the Gandhian views of *Gram Swaraj* was rooted in the ancient Indian philosophies that placed environmental ethics at the highest pedestal of the man-nature relationship. The *organic holism* reflected in the Confucius

philosophies and the principles of *non-interference* or *wuwei* in the Taoist philosophies gave thrust to correctness of social relationships. Similarly, the perceptions of *Mizukara* (self) being integral part of *Onozukara* (nature) also questions the human domination over environment and portrays that ecological sustainability needs to be the key element in driving the world towards a state of wellbeing. By bringing in an alternative way to GDP based measurement of society's progress, through the approach of *Gross National Happiness* Bhutan has successfully highlighted that an Asian thinking plays a critical role in mainstreaming sustainability.

*Eco-resurgence* is an Asian collective initiative for incorporating the learnings from indigenous knowledge, philosophies and environmental values and ethics of harmonious living with nature, to further sustainable development at local, national, regional and global levels. While mainstreaming the elements of environmental sustainability, the concept does not advocate to sacrifice the benefits of modern scientific, technological and economic progress the global society has acquired over centuries using millions of man-hours of intense learning and research. Instead, it stands for integrating environmental sustainability as the core of strengthening local economies, making national level

policies and building regional level networks. It then aims for integrating the benefits of ecological sustainability ingrained in the indigenous philosophies in the global processes towards climate mitigation and sustainable development. Unlike the existing processes that guide climate mitigation and sustainable development through top-down global environmental governance, eco-resurgence presents an alternative global bottom-up environmental governance architecture.

The framework of eco-resurgence constitutes local, national, regional and global policy layers where the concepts of ecological sustainability are mainstreamed.

## Eco-resurgence Framework

- **Local:** At local level, the concept aims to promote self-reliant economy. Strengthening the self-reliance in agriculture, food production, healthcare and local industries will be critical.
- **National:** At national level, the economic policies need to be sensitive to ecological sustainability and indigenous philosophies that nurture harmonious relations between human and nature.
- **Regional:** At regional level, it is important for the governments to promote common objectives while having shared pathways to foster collective



responsibility towards sustainable development.

- **Global:** A global platform to mainstream ecological sustainability that is deeply founded in the learnings from indigenous knowledge and philosophies which can contribute to strengthening the global goals of climate mitigation and sustainable development.

The concept of eco-resurgence has special importance in the context of designing post-COVID economic recovery architecture. While the pandemic undeniably led to high human casualties, it also reminds us that the excessive push for human domination over environment has made significant impacts on the ecosystem.

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# Rise and smile: An ancient Indian practice inspiring technology enabled wellness innovation

"Early to bed, early to rise makes a person healthy, wealthy and wise". This saying communicates an important message of health and wellness. Waking up early can be an effective productivity method and wellness habit when it suits an individual's circadian rhythm and natural sleep pattern for their age. The early birds naturally tend to wake up early.

The time of dawn before the sunrise is a peaceful time. The ancient Indian practice calls this time as "Brahma Muhurta". This period of time approximately 1 hour 36 minutes before sunrise is considered an auspicious time for meditation, spiritual activities and all practices of yoga. The outdoor natural environment during the time of dawn and sunrise is calm and picturesque. The beautiful nature experienced outdoors during this time can provide motivation for mental as well as physical activities.

Research has found that this early morning time can be used to address some of the challenges

caused by lack of physical activity in today's modern life. We are living in a modern world where the demands of our modern life have negatively impacted our wellness. Lack of physical activity is a global health concern. We are living more sedentary life mostly indoors at home, work and commute. Our sedentary lifestyle and overuse of sedentary technology gadgets contributes to increased risks for lifestyle related health conditions. Physical activity especially outdoor physical activity such as walking, running, cycling has proven health benefits. However, one of the common causes reported by the individuals is the lack of motivation for outdoor physical activity.

Lack of time is also another common issue reported by the individuals. Early morning can be an effective time for outdoor physical activity. However lack of motivation and irregular late night sleeping patterns makes it difficult to realise the benefits of early morning outdoor exercise.

To solve this problem of motivation and deliver benefits of early morning outdoor exercise, technology can be useful. In today's modern life, Smartphones, smartphone cameras and content sharing via social media are very common. Smartphones are used by millions of users in Australia and India.

A lifestyle and wellness intervention called "Rise and Smile" was developed to integrate smartphone technology with outdoor nature during the early morning for consistent physical exercise motivation. The innovative use of technology suggests sleeping early approximately 8 hours before the time of dawn and waking up early around the time of dawn or Brahma Muhurta as per individual's requirements for a quality sleep. After wake up, go outdoors to nearby sunrise location with a smartphone and experience the sunrise. The outdoor location could be your balcony, terrace, nearby

hill or a location requiring some physical walking efforts. As a symbolic gesture of the sunrise experience, take a photo of the picturesque sunrise using smartphone camera. The photo can be simply stored on the smart phone or shared on social media with family and friends. Simply repeat this daily morning routine next day to establish a wellness habit. The experience of watching a sunrise is very uplifting and meditative. The "Rise and Smile" initiative identified proven health benefits especially mental health benefits as well as productivity benefits. The research findings were presented at Health Informatics Society of Australia's premier Health Informatics Conference in Australia and American College of Sports Medicine Conference in USA. The encouraging findings show that combination of ancient practice with modern technology can deliver wellness benefits. Rise and Smile is an initiative for establishing a simple daily wellness habit of experiencing



outdoor Sunrise. The experience of watching Sunrise is great way to practice daily mindfulness and connect with nature. It is very uplifting experience and certainly good for physical, emotional as well as mental health. This simple habit also suggests improved productivity and increased energy levels. It also improves quality of sleep as you automatically tend to sleep early at night to wake at the time of dawn. Watching morning sunrise is certainly a great way to start your day. Adopt this simple routine and make your life healthier, specially in the post-Covid-19 phase.

*Dr Amol Waghlikar a.k.a. "Doctor Sunrise" is the founder of the Rise and Smile initiative and Principal Program Director, Sports and Wellness, Institute for Australia India Engagement, Brisbane*

# Vikas Dubey saga: Reflecting on Lucknow's badmen in nicer times

The manner of Vikas Dubey's murder (encounter) would cause Joey the child in awe of Shane played by Alan Ladd to scream: "That's not fair -- I hate you." A kneejerk response to the Dubey saga would lead nowhere without picking up the thread of a perennially unjust system of which the police are the chosen cat's paw. It reflects on the rottenness of the system that the real puppeteers, who pull the strings, seek to heap the odium exclusively on the police.

Systemic injustice, the police and "badmen" figure in my experience in two clusters: the peaking of urban terror at the hands of Mumbai's underworld after the frightening 1993 pogrom and, of course, the badmen of Lucknow during my growing up years.

The badman of Lucknow was called Bakait or Badmaash which literally means someone who lives on "ill-gotten livelihood". That would suggest that they were thieves which they were not. Honour was an article of faith. They were mohalla or neighbourhood toughs, with clearly demarcated areas of operation. These notional lines, like all frontiers, could be pushed depending on the Bakait's personality and that of others holding contiguous terrains.

At a time when the feudal order was fading away nicely, noiselessly, selling their bungalows to builders and cramming themselves on a floor without fuss, the Bakait served a purpose. He became the unofficial middleman between the retiring gentry, for whom he had an old fashioned respect, and the lower judiciary, the kutchery, constabulary, and the hangers on, lounging on cane furniture in the unkept lawns of the new political

class.

My exposure to a Bakait was through our driver, Khan Saheb Nazir, whose protective instincts for the family came into play when he received word that in the course of growing up, I had audaciously exceeded my brief. I was seen in Royal Cafi½ with the well groomed students of Isabella Thoburn College, a revolutionary violation of Lucknow's gender segregation. This ignited jealousies, a class war -- English medium versus Hindu/Urdu medium, not communal, mind you. This was a crucial divide which amplified itself into two class streams which, believe it or not, in some ways defined independent India. One stream swelled the ranks of "boxwalas", Civil Service and other high-end careers. The other lot, with an ever expanding base, turned to political activism with a vengeance, not as a cause but a profession.

The second cluster became the Bakait's habitat. In retrospect, everything falls into place, but for a debutante saga-boy, what followed was intimidating. As I came out of Royal Cafi½, I was encircled by a group led by a boy named Atiq who lunged at me even as the menacing figure of Buddha Pahelwan, the Bakait from Nrahi near Hazratganj loomed in the background. Worse was in store but for the timely arrival of Khan Saheb, with Rasheed Ghosi (milkman) in tow. Rasheed knew "Buddhu" Pahelwan. The situation was thus defused. Other than supplying milk to our neighbourhood, Rasheed's claim to fame was that he faced murder charges. He acquired status because of the protection he provided to the poker-den run by the Heartwell

brothers in their mini mansion not far from Rasheed's buffalo shed.

Khan Saheb had a word of praise for "Buddhu" Pahelwan's valour -- "no one can attack him from front" -- but he romanticized "Nannhe" (Aslam Khan), a legend in Aminabad for his swift knife-movement, a slight, brooding man whose rendezvous was the hair cutting saloon opposite Royal Talkies, popular with Lucknow's underclass because it screened two Nadia-John Cawas movies, back to back, for the price of one ticket. Like swordsmanship, expertise with Rampur knives was considered manly. Revolvers were effete even though Pyarey Jaani, in his trench coat, had considerable aura in Nakkhas and Chowk, his one hand always on the revolver in his pocket. There was no recorded case of the revolver ever having been used. It was deterrence, Lucknow style.

Deterrence had given way to open warfare when I turned up in Mumbai to gauge the aftermath of the March, 1993 bomb blasts. The driver of the yellow taxi from the Cricket Club of India, obviously from my home turf, Pratapgarh or Rae Bareilly, was averse to giving me his name even though I spoke in his accents. Not a word by way of reaction to the blasts or the pogrom which preceded it. I put it down to my persistence, because quite abruptly he pulled up the taxi by the kerb and turned to me sharply. "Look, we were butchered in the riots, but after the blasts, things have changed."

"We are no longer 'dabey huey' or 'covering'", he continued. "Enter any suburban train and say 'Salam alae kum' and people give you the way."

The vengeance in his eyes



Vikas Dubey

was scary. "The state is too strong," I said. But it is, I said almost to myself, equally true that a community driven to hopelessness would extract satisfaction from the actions of anybody who gave vent to the community's choked anger.

In these circumstances, consider Vikas Dubey. In his list of alleged murders there were Brahmins too. But details recede when the larger than life figure of Vikas Dubey, a Brahmin, takes on the might of the state which is increasingly in non Brahmin hands -- indeed in Thakur hands. You may not register these facts but ask the Brahmins of Kanpur and they will read out their plaint: Chief Ministers of UP, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh are all Thakurs.

A community which basked for generations in the patronage

of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Kamalapati Tripathi, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna and Narain Dutt Tewari, must feel a little sidelined with the arrival of Mulayam Singh Yadav, Mayawati, Kalyan Singh and, now, Chief Minister Adityanath.

Bihar's Director General of Police, Gupteshwar Pandey, put his finger on something while criticizing on primetime TV a tweet which had gone viral: "Dubey was tiger for Brahmins." In doing so, Pandey was giving even wider currency to a dangerous thought particularly in the context of UP today.

(Saeed Naqvi is a senior commentator on political and diplomatic issues. The views expressed are personal. He can be reached on saeednaqvi@hotmail.com)

By Saeed Naqvi

## How New Delhi tamed China

A resolute, unruffled leadership and India's multi-pronged, hard stance, from the borders to financial markets, has forced China to tone down its aggression it had initiated since early May 2020. While India's military had been mobilised in equal measure to counter China's belligerence along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Leh visit last Friday was the clearest message to the Chinese. His emphatic assertion that India is ready to fight a bloody battle if it is required to defeat the expansionist Xi Jinping's China could not have been more candid. It showed the world India's resolve to fight and

overcome any challenge to its strategic interests.

It is the second time during his tenure as Prime Minister that the Chinese have been pushed back -- first in Doklam in 2017 and now Ladakh. Aided by his colleagues, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, the Prime Minister appears to be evolving a China policy that aims to tackle Beijing's expansionist and predatory policies in almost every sector. From banning Chinese origin apps to preventing a free run for Chinese investors in India's tech and power sector, India appears determined not to

let China use its free market. By adopting an all-of-government approach to counter China's policies, Prime Minister Modi is taking the complicated task head on in military, diplomatic and economic sectors.

The withdrawal of the Chinese PLA soldiers from the Galwan Valley and other locations in eastern Ladakh is just the start of what is perceived to be a long-drawn, complicated process. India will ensure that it must end at complete disengagement and de-escalation across the Line of Actual Control. The breakthrough was achieved after several rounds of military and diplomatic parleys India and China had, particularly after the Galwan valley incident

which saw bloody clashes between two sides on June 15. NSA Ajit Doval's talk with Wang Yi, the Special Representative for boundary talks and China's Foreign Minister on Sunday, came on the back of intense negotiations between military commanders on the ground.

The two-hour long discussion between Wang and Doval appears to have convinced Beijing to cut its losses and agree to disengagement and de-escalation on the border. While the two press statements issued in New Delhi had points of divergence, both sides have agreed to continue negotiations and strategic level communication. The NSA is monitoring the

situation after an agreement that both sides should complete the Ladakh disengagement fast.

Both sides were engaged in intense discussions with India asserting that the disengagement process should be based on the consensus of June 6. The two special representatives agreed that both sides should take guidance from the consensus of the leaders that maintenance of peace and tranquility in the India-China border areas was essential for further development of bilateral relations and that two sides should not allow differences to become disputes. Therefore, they agreed that it was necessary to ensure complete disengagement of troops and



de-escalation at the earliest for full restoration of peace and tranquility at the borders.

The fact is India has made headway with China by standing firm. China realised that the level of intent and the intensity of purpose of India's determination to hit them back is at an all-time high. They have noticed

what has been happening over the last month and how India is countering and matching every move of Chinese aggression. Chinese miscalculated that India would be "soft" going by past precedents after decades of cautious engagement with Beijing. That's why, it seems, for now, they are not taking any chances and stepping back.

All it clearly shows is that India will not relent on Chinese pressure along the LAC and will be ready for any eventuality - be it a bloody skirmish or war. India not once agreed to negotiate on China's terms but instead it put all its diplomatic, economic and military might to fight back. India's rapid military build up by "mirroring" the PLA deployments,

with the induction of over 30,000 troops and heavy weaponry all along the LAC in eastern Ladakh certainly surprised the Chinese. Similarly, Sukhoi-30 MKI and MiG-29 fighters, Apache attack and Chinook heavy-lift helicopters are continuing with their round-the-clock operations after being inducted into the forward airbase.

India's military response, combined with intense diplomatic efforts, paid rich dividends and world leaders called out against China's antics and designs. India very effectively got the international community to understand New Delhi's perspective which resulted in both sympathy and support. Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar spoke to counterparts from the US, UK, France, Germany, Indonesia, Australia, Canada and Japan among others delivering India's view point on the standoff. There was an intense curiosity among them about the India-China clash, the causes and how India planned to deal with it. The international community was very receptive of what India had to say particularly in the light of Covid-19 and Chinese actions thereafter. India's strategy to degrade China globally worked and it made Chinese Communist Party leaders succumb to international pressure.

India's hardened stance would make China bleed economically.

Following the ban on 59 Chinese apps, the government has also announced that Chinese companies would not be allowed to take part in road projects. The Indian Railways cancelled a significant tender to a Chinese company. BSNL and MTNL have also been asked to stop importing Chinese equipment.

Following the Prime Minister's call for 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', traders associations have been calling to boycott Chinese products. The Indian government is now considering trade and procurement curbs targeting China in many sectors and weighing a decision to keep out Chinese companies like Huawei from the 5G trial. The moves could potentially cost Chinese companies billions of dollars. The combined estimated loss for these apps and Chinese companies is around \$50 billion. This number will only go upwards. The message from India is that it cannot continue trade and investment relations as normal, if China does not relent and pull back its troops along the LAC.

Lt. Gen Cherish Mathson, PVSM, SM, VSM, (retd) is a former army commander, South Western Command

By Lt Gen Cherish Mathson

## Notes from Bickram Ghosh: Technology changed classical music

Technology has been influencing Indian classical music for quite some time now, a series of changes that started with the simple microphone has come full circle into the digital realm, believes tabla maestro and music expert Bickram Ghosh.

"If one goes back at least 100 years, then we are looking at the invention of the microphone which you know changed the whole concept of Indian classical music. The fact that Indian classical music could be performed in an auditorium or in larger spaces and not just in mehfil, baithak concerts was with the microphone.

"The minute that happened the whole approach to the instruments changed. So, when one thinks of the microphone, one thinks of a certain type of instrument, some instruments are more microphone friendly than others even in the realm of tabla, that changed the whole concept of Indian classical music and it became a larger venue performance with the microphone," Ghosh told IANSlife in an interview. Ghosh dabbles in a vast repertoire of musical

genres, from classical, rock, new-age, fusion to film music and has scored for 36 feature films, one of which got him an Oscar contention.

Coming to the recording era of music performance, Ghosh notes the transition from analog to digital - LP records to CDs - which he says also led to the loss of a certain "warmth of sound" in ambient frequencies "which we all still deeply miss".

With digital communication of music now the order of the day, especially with the lockdown, what reigns is social media and digital platforms people have been performing on. "But now, more than ever, there has been a huge shift which is an important shift. It has at least allowed people, not just artists to be active during a global lockdown scenario".

"For classical musicians, yes we have been able to communicate, I am personally doing shows and they are picking up gradually, people are re-adjusting to a new technology, to a new mode of performance and also to a new mode of listening. So, there are two ends to this digital performance scenario, one is the

end where the artist gives a feed which is high end in terms of the video and the audio and on the other end is the consumer, the listener, the viewer who should have equivalent technology and a good viewing screen and a good sound output, good speakers. So, yes what is happening right now is a huge change and I think it is a positive change unlike the people thinking it is not positive," he shared.

According to Ghosh, at the end of the pandemic, artists are going to be left with two options, not just one. "We wouldn't just continue to be live performers, we will also do live performances and collaborations on the digital platform."

Ghosh has also been associated with HCL Concerts, whose series of live, virtual performances 'Baithak' is another chapter in technology advancing the stream of classical music. He performed for 'Baithak' on Friday. According to the music maven, "through the 'Baithak' series, HCL Concerts have really been able to bring in a pandemic scenario a lot of positivity," adding that people have been able to enjoy the depth of our culture and classical music



Bickram Ghosh (Photo Courtesy Bickram Ghosh)

at home.

Speaking on life during lockdown, the noted tabla player and son of tabla maestro Pandit Shankar Ghosh and well known vocalist Sanjukta Ghosh, calls the period interesting. "I saw the lockdown coming and within a matter of days I got all my technology in

place. I was working heavily creating videos and did a series called "Out of the box" which was an unique way of presenting percussion," he shared.

By Siddhi Jain/IANSlife

# India Global Week 2020: virtual summit focuses on a brighter future post Covid-19 crisis

United Kingdom based media house, India Inc. Group organized a three-day long virtual summit with the narrative "Be the Revival: India and a Better World" from 9th July to 11th July 2020 bringing together over 5000 global participants and 250 speakers across more than 75 sessions, writes Deepika Banerjee

India Global Week 2020, the most extensive international virtual summit on India's integration with the globalized world served as a platform to have invigorating discussions on the array of business, strategic and cultural avenues that India can offer to the whole world, comprehend the barriers to economic recovery and make constructive decisions as the world gradually emerges from the tenacious grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. The three-day long webinar, an initiative of UK-based media house India Inc. Group that has been working to foster India-UK business relations, held a plethora of sessions on diverse topics namely, geopolitics, business, art and culture, emerging technologies, banking and finance, pharma, defence and security, social impact and the Indian diaspora. The mega virtual seminar also featured dynamic country sessions on Australia, Japan, Singapore, the US and the UK.

Among its more than 250-strong panel of keynote speakers were Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister, Govt. of India; Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways and Minister of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India; Dominic Raab, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, UK Government; Priti Patel, Secretary of State for Home Department, UK Government;

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Leader of the Art of Living Foundation; Steve Waugh, Australian cricket legend and many other prominent personalities from the fields of politics, business, entertainment and culture.

## Inaugural Speech by Indian PM Narendra Modi

In his virtual inaugural speech on July 9, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi set the stage for the India Global Week 2020 summit by emphasizing on the natural convergence of global revival with Indian revival stemming from the powerhouse of talent possessed by the Indian human resource and India's inimitable ability to reform and rejuvenate. He also praised the invaluable contributions made by Indian doctors, nurses, lawyers, IT professionals and the hard-working labourers highlighting the two-way synergy created by the Indian diaspora across the world.

Commenting on the unique opportunities provided by India to the world, Modi went on to invite multinational companies to invest in India's agrarian, defence and pharmaceutical sectors along with the medium and small industries. Ingeminating India's heightened focus on public health, Modi reinforced India's resolve to focus equally on the health of the economy.

Hailing India's potential role in spearheading the global revival post Covid-19 and thereby justifying the theme "Be The Revival: India and a Better New World" of the international summit, he further stated that India's "aatmanirbhar" (self-reliant) stance should not be deciphered as a decision to close its portals to the global economy

but rather to be self-sustaining and self-generating.

## Special Address by the Prince of Wales

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles also joined the virtual summit from London and stressed on the imperativeness of sustainable development in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. In his special speech, he commented on the significance of Indian philosophies and values in building a congruous relationship between humanity and nature which is primarily necessary for a sustainable lifestyle. He also acknowledged the key role played by Indian diversity and resilience as a source of motivation to him in particular and encouraged everyone to draw valuable life-lessons from them.

## UK Foreign Secretary acknowledges India as a strategic partner

Leading an important UK delegation consisting of Home Secretary Priti Patel, Trade Secretary Liz Truss and Health Secretary Matt Hancock, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab appraised the manner in which India and UK are forging cooperation in research and innovation to overcome the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. He also mentioned the joint efforts of UK and India in launching the G20 Action Plan which facilitated the provision of a package of \$ 200 billion financial support to the most economically fragile nations of the world. On an optimistic note, Raab hoped that the collaborative efforts of the Oxford University and India's Serum Institute to develop a Covid-19 vaccine would bear fruit soon.

## Indian Minister raises concern about the post pandemic world

Participating in the Indian Global Week 2020 on 11th July, Indian External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar expressed his concern about the post pandemic world being a more challenging one with rising discordance and lack of faith between nations. Apart from this, he also laid emphasis on strengthening the resilience of strategic supply chains especially since the Covid-19 crisis has laid bare the lack of robust supply chains. With regard to the rising frictions across the Sino-Indian border, he said that both India and China have agreed on the necessity to disengage and that the de-escalation process has fortunately started. However, tracing the trend of growing ties between India and the US, the minister is hopeful that the bilateral ties between the two democracies will continue to grow even stronger.

Australian Cricket legend Steve Waugh reminisces India tours

From the sporting world, Steve Waugh, former Australian cricket team skipper joined the mega event and expressed his love for India reminiscing about the times when he toured India. He mentioned how he found India "interesting" and "fascinating". Hailing the Border-Gavaskar trophy-a Test series played between India and Australia- as being "equivalent" to the Ashes, a popular Test series held between Australia and arch-rival England, he said that this indicated the growing, healthy competition between the cricketing giants India and Australia. Waugh is all set to launch a book which captures the Indian people's near-religious ardour for the game of cricket and his primary

objective is to astound the world by showcasing the passion which Indians harbor for cricket.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking during the virtual summit



His Royal Highness Prince Charles also joined the virtual summit from London



Jaishankar during his India Global Week address

## Sikh Volunteers Australia serves free meals to residents stuck in Melbourne's housing commissions amid strict lockdown

Tenants in North Melbourne and Flemington Towers were left in the lurch without groceries and other supplies as the government ordered a hard lockdown after some residents tested positive for Covid-19

Sikh Volunteers Australia once again came to the rescue of people caught unawares by the imposition of a strict lockdown. The non-profit organisation's dedicated and selfless team of volunteers has been working tirelessly for the community ever since Australia went under lockdown in March and has provided free meals to thousands garnering the widespread gratitude from the community members.

On July 4, after some residents of North Melbourne and Flemington Towers public

housing commissions tested positive for Covid-19 the Victorian government was prompted to impose a sudden, harsh lockdown in order to prevent a further surge in cases. However, at that point with the lockdown expected to last for a few weeks, this left many of the residents in a predicament as they did not have sufficient groceries and supplies. The very next day volunteers from Sikh Volunteers Australia arrived with 1325 meals for the residents living in the housing blocks in Kensington and Flemington making them heave a sigh of relief.

In an interview with TRT World news channel, volunteer Jaswinder Singh remarked that they had received calls from desperate people stuck in the public housing towers and when they arrived on the spot on

July 5, they were helped by the police and representatives from the Department of Health and Human Services to set up a spot outside the building where they could place the meals. He also said that while the initial shock of the sudden lockdown had worn off, the residents were visibly relieved to have hot and freshly cooked meals and were vocal in expressing their gratitude to the volunteers.

The Sikh Volunteers team delivered 1325 meals on the first day and in the following days prepared as many as 700 to 800 meals each day. They were also vigilant in maintaining the social distancing norms as they left the meals on the tables set up in specific spots outside the buildings thus ensuring no direct contact with the residents.



The Sikh Volunteers team delivered 1325 meals on the first day of the re-imposition of the lockdown and in the following days prepared as many as 700 to 800 meals each day

Located in Devon Meadows, Victoria, Sikh Volunteers Australia came into existence in 2014 while its free food delivery service for the needy people was launched in 2017. Since then they have been working incessantly following the principle of "seva" that is, selfless community service and was also at the forefront during

the bushfire crisis. Funded and supported primarily by donations from community members, their volunteers diligently balance their social responsibilities along with their professional and personal commitments.

By Deepika Banerjee



# Tata group emerges sole bidder for Air India



**New Delhi/IANS:** The Tata group is the only bidder in the fray for national carrier Air India with just a month left for the final bidding date.

The Tata group, which already has a footprint in the airlines business, has shown interest in acquiring Air India, which at one point of time was under the Tata umbrella.

The other bidders will be known in due course as globally airlines are under severe stress due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant disruptions on air travel and tourism.

The Tata group is likely to go ahead with the bid while its joint venture airlines venture, Singapore Airlines, has declined

to join the Air India bid due to Covid-19 woes.

The group is currently doing due diligence for the airlines. The last date for bidding is August 31 and the government is not in favour of extending the deadline.

Air India has been passing through a critical financial condition from much before the Covid-19 onslaught. The crippling effect of the pandemic, especially in the aviation sector, has further plummeted its finances to a precarious position.

From Tata Airlines and Air India to Vistara and AirAsia India, the Tata group has been an important part of the growing aviation sector in India.

From Tata Air Lines and the

long-since nationalised Air India to strategic joint ventures with Air Asia Berhad and Singapore Airlines (SIA) for Air Asia India and Vistara, respectively, Tata has been present in the aviation sector.

The two joint venture airlines operate independently with their respective business models -- low-cost AirAsia India and full-service Vistara.

Vistara scaled up its operations significantly in 2019 by adding nine Boeing 737-800NG aircraft to its fleet and taking the final count of aircraft to 31 which helped the airline expand its network by more than 50 per cent.

# Banks' cyber threats surge as Covid drives digital transactions: Moody's

**London/IANS:** Banks face a growing risk of cyber-attacks as the coronavirus crisis accelerates the shift to digital banking and remote working, Moody's Investors Service said in a report recently.

"Social distancing has created a surge in demand for contactless payments, digital cash transfers and online banking, as well as remote working by bank employees," said Alessandro Roccati, Senior Vice President at Moody's.

Banks' digital customers are a natural target for fraudsters via phishing emails or social engineering scams. And if bank employees use devices at home to access office networks, they are more likely to become infected with malware or spyware; unsecure home Wi-Fi networks may use routers with weaker security.

Cyber-attacks are mostly financially motivated and seek easily monetised data stored by the victim organisations. Attacks

have various, and sometimes multiple, goals but the vast majority target personal data, with a minority focused on credentials and bank data, the report said.

Cyber-attacks in the financial sector are mostly perpetrated by external actors (64 per cent of data breaches), mostly through web applications and errors made by company employees, according to a recent report by Verizon. The major motivation is to get easily monetised data (77 per cent of

data breaches)

The report added that banks mitigate cyber risk in three ways. The first is strong corporate governance, including cyber-security frameworks, policy enforcement and reporting. The second is risk prevention and response, and recovery readiness. And the third is information-sharing with other banks, and adoption of international standards and regulatory oversight.

These measures combined mean banks' cyber-readiness exceeds that of most other sectors, Moody's said.

Corporate managers are well aware of the cyber threat. According to a recent report from the World Economic Forum, the fourth most worrisome fallout for companies from the spread of coronavirus is an increase in cyber-attacks and data fraud.

# Jio adds 46 lakh users in March, Airtel, Vodafone Idea see dip

**New Delhi (IANS):** Reliance Jio continued to lead the subscription race in March with an addition of over 46.87 lakh customers during the month, taking its subscriber base to over 38.75 crore, according to data from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

The other two private telcos, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, witnessed an erosion in their subscriber base.

Bharti Airtel's subscriber base at the end of March stood at over 32.78 crore with a decline of 12.61 lakh subscriptions.

Vodafone Idea lost the most number of customers during the month under review. It lost 63.53 lakh users taking its subscriber base to 31.91 crore.

State-run BSNL, on the other hand added just over 95,000 new customers in March and its total tally now stands at 11.97 crore

subscribers.

"Total wireless subscribers (2G, 3G and 4G) decreased from 1,160.59 million (116.05 crore) at the end of February 2020 to 1,157.75 million (115.77 crore) at the end of March 2020, thereby registering a monthly decline rate of 0.24 per cent," said the TRAI

statement.

Wireless subscription in urban areas decreased from 64.3 crore at the end of February 2020 to 63.8 crore at the end of March, but in rural areas, it increased from 51.7 crore to 51.92 crore at the end of March, it said.

# E-commerce companies asked to indicate country of origin on products

**New Delhi/IANS:** Consensus is building within the government that e-commerce players like Flipkart, Amazon will have to indicate the country of origin of the product on their merchandise.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is likely to tell e-commerce companies that it would be mandatory to provide information about the product on their platform, where the product came from or where it was made, or the country of origin. According to

sources, DPIIT has suggested the deadline of August 1 to e-commerce companies to kick off this exercise. That is, all the products will be sold / listed on the e-commerce platform from August 1, where information of the country of origin will have to be given.

However, e-commerce companies have asked the government for a little more time for this implementation.

According to the sources, e-commerce companies have talked about accepting

the government's move but have asked for some time to implement.

The move comes in the backdrop of a huge movement in the country to ban Chinese goods which is seeing a groundswell.

Accepting an earlier demand of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), the Union Government has declared to have mandatory inscription of all goods that are to be sold on Government e Market portal.

Earlier, intensifying its national movement for boycott of Chinese

goods, the CAIT had asked Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal that all products sold in India through e-commerce or offline shops or by any other method should mandatorily have to mention the country of origin and content of valued addition in the said item.

The CAIT said that in the wake of reports suggesting that several goods imported from China and other countries are being sold in India after pasting Made in India, it has prompted the CAIT to demand the Commerce Minister not to limit this provision only

for e-commerce but make it a mandatory provision for all the products that are sold in India either by e-commerce, offline shops, corporate showroom, direct selling or by any other method.

The CAIT further demanded that products not carrying the above description should not be sold in the country and in the event of violation of this provision, the manufacturer, producer, importer or marketer as declared on the packing of such product should be held responsible and action must be taken against them.

# Global COVID-19 cases near 12.9mn: Johns Hopkins

The overall number of global COVID-19 cases was nearing 12.9 million, while the deaths have increased to more than 568,000, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

As of Monday morning, the total number of cases stood at 12,872,434, while the fatalities rose to 568,296, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed in its latest update.

The US accounted for the world's highest number of infections and fatalities at 3,302,665 and 135,176, respectively, according to the CSSE.

Brazil came in the second place with 1,864,681 infections and

72,100 deaths.

In terms of cases, India ranks third (849,553), and is followed by Russia (726,036), Peru (326,326), Chile (315,041), Mexico (299,750), the UK (291,154), South Africa (276,242), Iran (257,303), Spain (253,908), Pakistan (248,872), Italy (243,061), Saudi Arabia (232,259), Turkey (212,993), France (208,015), Germany (199,919), Bangladesh (183,795), Colombia (145,362), Canada (109,348), Qatar (103,598) and Argentina (100,166), the CSSE figures showed.

The other countries with over 10,000 deaths are the UK (44,904), Mexico (35,006), Italy (34,954), France (30,007), Spain (28,403), India (22,674), Iran (12,829), Peru (11,870) and Russia (11,318).



Pedestrians with face masks walk past a store on Fifth Avenue in New York, US on July 4, 2020

## India records 28,701 Covid-19 cases, 500 deaths in 24 hours

India recorded its highest single-day spike of 28,701 coronavirus cases and 500 deaths in the last 24 hours, pushing the total tally to 8,78,254 cases with a total of 23,174 deaths, the Health Ministry's data stated on July 13.

According to the data, of the total cases, as many as 5,53,470 patients

have recovered, over twice the number of active patients which stand at 3,01,609.

The rate of recovery of the Covid-19 patients has touched 62.93 per cent. India, however, remains the third worst-affected country after the US and Brazil.

During the last 24 hours, 2,19,103 samples were tested, as the

testing lab network continues to expand. As on date, more than 1,194 labs have enabled people to undergo coronavirus tests.

Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state, with 2,54,427 cases and 10,289 casualties followed by Tamil Nadu with total 1,38,470 cases, including 1,966 deaths.

With 1,573 new coronavirus cases

and 37 deaths in the last 24 hours, the national capital recorded a total tally of 1,12,494 cases, including 3,371 deaths.

States with more than 10,000 cases included Gujarat (41,820 cases), Uttar Pradesh (36,476), Rajasthan (24,392), Madhya Pradesh (17,632), West Bengal (30,013), Haryana (21,240),

Karnataka (38,843), Andhra Pradesh (29,168), Telangana (34,671), Assam (16,071), and Bihar (16,642).

On the global front, the overall number of global Covid-19 cases was nearing 12.9 million, while the deaths have increased to more than 5,68,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.

## 'COVID-19 particles can remain infectious in air for over an hr'

Wendy Barclay, chairwoman in influenza virology at Imperial College London, has said that coronavirus particles can remain infectious in the air for more than an hour.

Speaking to the BBC on July 12, Barclay said: "It is the first time that the World Health Organization has acknowledged

that the airborne route contributes to the spread of this disease.

"Of course, there are other routes as well... But what this new acknowledgement means is that the route through the air probably also contributes in some circumstances."

Barclay said the virus could

remain suspended in the air and travel some distance away from the person who had breathed them out, with laboratory studies showing it could remain infectious in the air for more than an hour.

She added that replenishing the air in a room was important to avoiding spreading the virus, rather than recirculating the

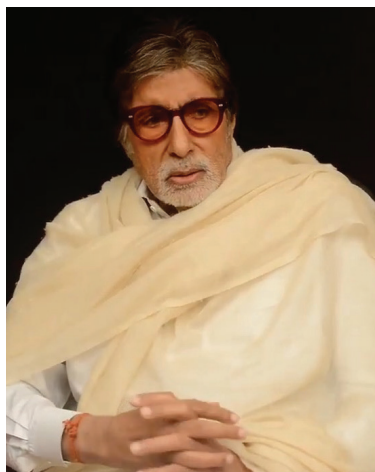
air like some air conditioning systems do.

Barclay's remarks come after the World Health Organization (WHO) last week acknowledged that there emerging evidence that COVID-19 can be spread by tiny particles suspended in the air, the BBC reported.

The airborne transmission could

not be ruled out in crowded, closed or poorly ventilated settings, a WHO official had said. WHO officials have cautioned the evidence is preliminary and requires further assessment. If the evidence is confirmed, it may affect guidelines for indoor spaces.

## After he tests positive for Covid-19, 26 of Big B's staff members test negative



Amitabh Bachchan

Twenty-six staff members of Bollywood veteran Amitabh Bachchan have tested negative for Covid-19.

Big B and his son, actor Abhishek Bachchan, tested Covid positive on July 11 night and were admitted to Nanavati hospital. While Abhishek's wife, actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, and their daughter Aaradhya were confirmed Covid positive the next day, Amitabh Bachchan's wife Jaya Bachchan has tested negative.

Around 54 people had come in contact with the Bachchan family, out of which 28 have been

quarantined. At the Bachchans' residence in Jalsa, 26 people were said to be at high risk. Their swab tests were done on July 12 and their Covid-19 reports have come out as negative. The 26 staff members have been kept in quarantine for two weeks, reported zeenews.india.com.

The actor has been keeping up with his daily routine of wishing members of his "extended family" on their birthdays. On Sunday night, Big B made a short blog entry.

He wrote: "Birthday - EF - Manoj Kumar Ojha .. Taran Ghantasala..

Monday, July 13 .. birthday wishes to you both and the greetings and wishes .. for happiness ever .. My dearest Ef .. your concern, your prayers and your wishes for Abhishek, Aishwarya, Aaradhya and me for a speedy recovery has filled me with unending gratitude .. I thank you all."

For location, it was mentioned "CoViD Ward, Hosp".

On July 12, the actor also took to Twitter to express gratitude to fans, well-wishers and colleagues for showering concern and prayers.

In a series of two tweets, Big B wrote: "To them that have expressed their concern, their prayers and their wishes for Abhishek Aishwarya Aaradhya and me .. my unending gratitude and love ...It shall not be possible for me to acknowledge and respond to all the prayers and wishes expressed by them that have shown concern towards Abhishek, Aishwarya, Aaradhya and me ...I put my hands together and say. Thank you for your eternal love and affection." His post was accompanied by a folded hand emoji.

# Living at work

Work from home...It has a nice ring to it. To start with, the commute is a three second walk to your study. No more hellish hours stuck in traffic and fumes. That's a win! Work outfits...What work outfits? Throw on a pair of yoga pants and maybe a nice top if you have a video call; another win.

And then of course all the quality time with the kids. Win, win, win! Those angelic children, their little arms full of big hugs, their sweet voices babbling interesting snippets. Mom guilt waived goodbye, as quality time with the kids was here to stay. I remember thinking I seem to have stumbled upon the perfect work-home-life balance.

The first two whole weeks of March were blissful. My husband, my children and I, seemed to have immersed ourselves in each other, our bodies and minds

and souls - revitalised and rejuvenated. But things started to slip from my seemingly Utopian haze, one slippery step at a time.

Quality time with kids quickly morphed into wheeling and dealing for more (or less) TV and screen time. Then came the negotiating. Fights and rights of 'first born' versus 'baby'. And the worst of them all, over energetic kids who missed their friends and the world outside our four walls.

Before we know it, May struck us with reality; the pandemic at our door steps, millions suffering, schools re opened in their new online avatar, somehow work had to resume, bills had to be paid. With trembling hands, we put one foot in front of the other and got on with this thing called 'New Normal'.

Now, our newly normal days go by in busy blurs...Waking up too tired

to homeschool, followed by home work, add to it working from home, with home grown babies and home dogs... it is a lot.

That with the constant housekeeping, meal planning, fire fighting (added for good measure), conference calls discussing the current financial quarter (clearly some people didn't get the lockdown memo) and what the next quarter holds, all the while as the kindergarten teacher earnestly broadcasts the daily alphabet, "A is for apple, B is for Banana, C is for..." Can't take this anymore! Oh and D-for Done with it.

It's been 3 months of Corona craziness but I've worked out a routine now... a delicate dance with time, the most important being 'ME' time. An hour before the kids are up I pray, meditate, do some yoga. It's my favourite time of day. I make my own



coffee, something I haven't done in over a decade because that was always my husband's department. I remember reading about 'Me time' and rolling my eyes thinking, 'what was wrong with these 'woman' who needed to rise with the sun so they could escape the sounds of the day?'. Well, I've just joined their cult and I love it.

And then the sun is up and the sounds begin their daily drum-home school, homework,

work from home, dogs of home, meal planning, maybe cooking, house keeping and let's not forget firefighting; I'm actually beginning to enjoy it...win it is! (The writer Rati Nehra is mother to two happy girls, two even happier Golden Retrievers and CO- Founder of Baby Jalebi)

By Rati Nehra/IANSlife

# Study reveals new strategies to control Covid-19 pandemic

Strategies for the safe reopening of low and middle-income countries (LMICs) in response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic must recognise that preserving people's health is as important as reviving the economy, say researchers, including one of Indian-origin.

In the study, published in the European Journal of Epidemiology, the research team examined three community-based exit strategies, and recommended their scopes, limitations and the appropriate application in the LMICs.

The three approaches considered are sustained mitigation, zonal lockdowns and rolling lockdowns. "Successfully re-opening a country requires consideration of both the economic and social costs," said study lead author Rajiv Chowdhury from the University of Cambridge in the UK.

"Governments should approach these options with a mind-set that health and economy both are equally important to protect - reviving the economy should not take priority over preserving people's health," he added.

The study also revealed that strategies need to be based on the local epidemic growth rate at the time, social and economic costs, existing health systems capabilities and detailed plans to implement.

Sustained 'mitigation-only' approaches such as those adopted in the UK, Switzerland and other European countries, involve basic prevention measures

such as mask-wearing, physical distancing and the isolation of positive cases after testing.

Zonal lockdowns approach involves identifying and 'cordon off' new outbreak clusters with a high number of cases, keeping contact between zones and containing the disease within a small geographic area.

However, the authors point out that any successful implementation of zonal lockdown requires regular data feedback operations in real-time to identify hotspots, including information on newly confirmed cases, updated region-specific reproduction and growth rates, and deaths by age.

Additionally, control of transmission within zones may be an enormous undertaking. For example, in India, where this approach has been employed, the infection size within a cordoned zone can be as high as 100-200 times outside the zone.

Intermittent rolling lockdowns are now advocated by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in various LMICs. These involve implementing strict social distancing for a set number of days before a period of relaxation. Rolling lockdowns may be particularly useful in LMICs with dense populations, where this is a high potential for contact, weak health systems and poor contact tracing.

"These three strategies should not be considered as one or the other. A country should further adapt and could combine them as needed," the authors wrote.

**COVID-19: VACCINE CANDIDATES IN CURRENT TRIAL STAGE**

**12 TOP CANDIDATES IN VARIOUS STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

As on July 9, 2020

Company/Institution	Development Stage
CanSino Biological Inc./Beijing institute of biotech, China	Approval*
AstraZeneca/Oxford University, UK	Approval*
Sinovac/Instituto Butantan, China	Phase III
Beijing institute of Biological products/Sinopharm, China	Phase III
Novamax, US	Phase II
Moderna, US	Phase II
Wuhan Institute/Sinopharm, China	Phase II
Vaxine Pty Ltd/Medytox, Australia	Phase I
BioNTech/Fosun Pharma/Pfizer, Germany	Phase I
Zydus Cadilla#, India	Pre-Clinical Testing
Bharat Biotech#, India	Pre-Clinical Testing
Imperial College London, UK	Pre-Clinical Testing

\*Vaccine approved for limited use  
#Indian vaccine makers have been approved for Phase I/II trials

Source: WHO, Milken Institute  
**IANS GRAPHICS**

## BCCI confirms Asia Cup cancellation

**Kolkata/IANS:** BCCI President Sourav Ganguly confirmed recently that this year's Asia Cup has been cancelled in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Asia Cup has been cancelled," Ganguly said during an Instagram chat with Vikrant Gupta.

"It's difficult to say which will be India's first international series. We've done our preparations but we can't do much till we know the government rules. We are not in a hurry because the health of players is of utmost importance. We are monitoring things monthly," the former India captain, who turned 48 on July 8, added.

IANS had earlier reported that

the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had made it clear that the window which suits the PCB doesn't suit the Indian board.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chief Executive Wasim Khan had said that the Asia Cup will be held either in September or October.

A BCCI functionary in the know of developments had told IANS that the PCB could also look at postponing the Pakistan Super League (PSL) next season and host the multi-nation event in that window. The BCCI can then look at adjusting the calendar accordingly and playing in the Asia Cup.

The Asia Cup was set to be held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)



Saurav Ganguly

in September this year before the PCB agreed to let the Sri Lankan cricket board host the tournament.

## Tendulkar, Kumble pay tribute to WI legend Everton Weekes

**New Delhi/IANS:** Former India cricketers Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble led the way in paying tribute to legendary West Indies cricketer Everton Weekes after he passed away, aged 95, at his Christ Church home in Barbados on July 1.

Tendulkar took to Twitter to pay his respects to Weeks and wrote: "Sir Everton Weekes is no more! Had heard many stories about his batting along with the other legendary 2Ws. You will be missed Sir. Rest in peace."

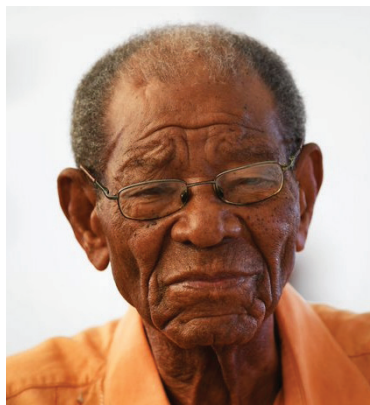
Kumble wrote on his Twitter handle: "Saddened to hear the passing of WI legend Sir Everton Weekes. Had met him during the ICC conference in Barbados. He remembered a conversation we

had during his time as match referee. Condolences to his family and friends."

Former India batsman V.V.S Laxman tweeted: "Heard about the passing away of West Indies legend Sir Everton Weekes. He was one of the greats of the game. My condolences to his family and loved ones."

Former England cricketer Michael Atherton also wrote on Twitter: "Very sad to learn about the passing of Sir Everton Weekes. A humble man who wore his greatness lightly."

Weekes made his Test debut at age 22 against England at Kensington Oval in 1948 under the captaincy of George Headley. His final match was against Pakistan



Everton Weekes

in Trinidad a decade later.

In his career, Everton Weekes played 48 Test matches and made 4455 runs at an average of 58.61 per innings.

## Kohli, teammates laud spirit of doctors and healthcare workers

**Mumbai/IANS:** Indian cricketers led by captain Virat Kohli paid their tribute to doctors on National Doctors' Day, at a time when many of them are working as frontline warriors in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Not just today but everyday we should celebrate the spirit of our doctors and health care workers. Thank you for your commitment towards helping so many people. I salute your spirit and dedication," Kohli said in a tweet recently.

"We all know the sacrifices & courage our doctors have shown in these difficult times. Words can't describe what their efforts mean to us. I just want to wish them the best. A humble request to all citizens to adhere to their protocols & make it easier for them," said India's white ball vice-captain Rohit Sharma.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya thanked doctors for helping him



Virat Kohli

recover from his injuries, with a video of him walking slowly with the help of a medical person.

"Thankful to all the doctors who've personally helped me recover from the injuries that come with being a professional athlete. Owe a lot to everyone that helps keep us in top shape," Hardik said along with the video on Twitter.

"Happy NationalDoctors' Day! With everything going on, it's an appreciation post to EVERY SINGLE PERSON in healthcare, sacrificing their health to save ours. To our doctors, trainers working tirelessly to help us get thru any challenge! This year, we are grateful now more than ever," veteran India batsman Suresh Raina said in a tweet.

## Melbourne lockdown must prompt ICC to take final call on T20 WC: BCCI

**New Delhi/IANS:** Australia's second largest city Melbourne has gone for another round of lockdown — for six weeks — from midnight on July 8 as the coronavirus has reared its ugly head in Victoria. And this has further confirmed that this year's T20 World Cup in Australia is practically not possible. Even as the ICC keeps delaying the announcement, BCCI hopes that the official call will now be taken with this latest development.

Despite ICC's Financial and Commercial Affairs Committee (F&CA) chief Ehsan Mani as well as Cricket Australia making it clear time and again that hosting a T20 World Cup in the October-November window is practically impossible, the ICC hasn't made an official announcement and that hasn't impressed the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Speaking to IANS, a BCCI official said that it is only the ICC which has kept speaking about delaying the inevitable — announcing a

postponement — even as Cricket Australia chairman Earl Eddings wrote to the international body that it looks highly unlikely that a T20 World Cup can be hosted in these trying times.

"As it is there were so many logistical difficulties and that is perfectly understandable. The Australian government has been addressing the public health issue efficiently and there are regulations in place which are crucial to address the challenges. In that background even Cricket Australia has been practical in their assessment of the situation.

"With this present situation where Melbourne is in lockdown, the ICC really must take the final call of closure on the issue if they have any concept of responsible decision making," the official said.

Not just CA chairman Eddings, but also Mani — who is also the PCB chief — recently told the media that the T20 World Cup cannot be held in a bio-secure environment.

## Helicopter 7: Dwayne Bravo's musical gift as Dhoni turns 39



MS Dhoni

**New Delhi/IANS:** West Indies all-rounder Dwayne Bravo had a special birthday gift for his Chennai Super Kings teammate MS Dhoni who turned 39 on July 7.

Titled 'Helicopter 7', the lyrics of the song, the trailer of which Bravo shared on his Instagram handle just hours ago before Dhoni's birthday, goes as follows: "MS Dhoni, number seven, MS Dhoni, number seven, all of Ranchi shouting Dhoni, all of India shouting Mahi, all of Chennai shouting Thala, MS Dhoni is a world-beater".

In the song, the West Indies all-rounder highlighted Dhoni's various achievements in the international cricket. It also captures the humble beginnings

of the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman who worked as a ticket collector in the Indian Railways before making inroads into the national team.

Regarded as one of the most successful captains of the Indian cricket team, Dhoni has been on a sabbatical ever since the semi-finals of the 2019 World Cup where India lost to New Zealand. It's been almost a year that he has been away from the cricket field, yet conversations about his return or future retirement have never died out.

Dhoni is the only international captain to have won an ICC 50-over World Cup, T20 World Cup and Champions Trophy.

## Black Lives Matter movement is about equality, says Holding



**Michael Holding**

**Southampton (IANS):** Former West Indies bowler Michael Holding on July 8 sent out a powerful message on racism and Black Lives Matter movement, saying the protest is about equality and not one-upmanship in society.

Holding and former English women's cricketer Ebony Rainford-Brent reflected on the much prevalent racism in the society.

"At protests years ago, even when Martin Luther King was marching, you would have predominantly black faces and a few white faces. This time a lot of white people are involved in these protests and that is the difference," said Holding.

"What they saw (happen to George Floyd) was disgusting and people thought to themselves 'enough is enough'. Everyone is recognising it, coming alive and seeing the difference in treatment of people.

"We are all human beings so I hope that people recognise that the Black Lives Matter movement is not trying to get black people above white people or above anyone else. It is all about equality.

"When people say 'all lives matter' or 'white lives matter', please, we black people know white lives matter. I don't think you know that black lives matter. Don't shout back at us that all lives matter. White lives matter, it is obvious, the evidence is clearly there. We want black lives to matter now. Simple as that," said Holding.

"Everybody has heard about this lady in a park in America who was asked by a black man to put her dog on a leash, which is the law," said the former West Indies pacesman.

"She threatened this black man with her whiteness, saying that she was going to call the police and tell them there was a black man threatening her.

"If the society in which she was living did not empower her or get her to think that she had that power of being white and being able to call the police on a black man, she would not have done it.

"It was an automatic reaction because of the society in which she lives. If you don't educate people they will keep growing up in that sort of society and you will not get meaningful change."

## Dier banned for 4 games for jumping into crowd in FA Cup

**London (IANS):** Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Eric Dier on July 8 was banned for four matches after he jumped into the stands and chased a supporter following the team's defeat at the hands of Norwich in the FA Cup.

Dier was also fined 40,000 pounds for the incident which took place at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium before the enforced break put forward by the coronavirus pandemic on March 4.

After Spurs' defeat in penalties at the hands of Norwich, Dier jumped into the crowd and tried to confront the fan, who

reportedly had said something to the Englishman's brother present in the stand.

"The Tottenham Hotspur player admitted that his actions at the conclusion of a fixture against Norwich City in The FA Cup on 4 March 2020 were improper but denied that they were also threatening," FA said in a statement on their Twitter handle.

"An independent Regulatory Commission subsequently found Eric Dier's actions to be threatening."

## Kohli can break Tendulkar's record of 100 centuries, says Hogg

**New Delhi (IANS):** Former Australia spinner Brad Hogg believes that current India skipper Virat Kohli can break cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar's long-standing record of 100 centuries on the international arena.

Hogg was asked by a fan if Kohli can surpass Tendulkar's mark and he said on his YouTube channel: "Of course he can. Fitness levels today are a lot better when Sachin Tendulkar started.

"Plus they get a lot of help with quality fitness trainers. They have also got a lot of physios and doctors on board. Any niggle that is starting to happen people can get on top of it straight away.

"Therefore players miss less games and of course there is a lot more cricket being played these days. So yes, he can break that record," Hogg added.

Hogg was also asked by a fan as



**Brad Hogg**

to which bowling attack he thinks is the best in the world currently and he gave his vote to the Indian team.

Pointing towards the statistics during their victorious tour of Australia last time, Hogg stated Indian bowlers have been a dominant force in world cricket for a while now.

"I am going to go with the start of

the series between Australia and India in November 2018. Indian bowling attack has dominated world cricket," Hogg said.

"India's pace attack take wickets quicker than any other team and they have played against some good teams... Australia... South Africa...they played against Bangladesh as well and couple of other good teams.

## Important to give 100% and have self-belief: Defender Kothajit

**New Delhi (IANS)** Indian men's hockey team defender Kothajit Singh Khadangbam has revealed that his biggest learnings from the COVID-19 induced lockdown were to value the importance of patience and the requirement of believing in oneself in every situation.

Kothajit utilised the time during the lockdown to ponder about his long international career, spanning over 200 matches for his country.

"It was a difficult time during the lockdown period. Staying away from the hockey pitch is always tough. However, I got a chance to hit the pause button during that time. I have been in the Indian team for around seven years and therefore I could utilise the

lockdown period to think about how I have progressed in my career," said the 28-year-old.

"I have certainly realised that being patient and continuing to persevere are the key elements in any sportsperson's life. Opportunities will come and go, but the important thing is to keep giving my hundred per cent and believing in myself every time I am on the pitch," he added.

While speaking about the things that kept him motivated during the lockdown, Kothajit said that regular fitness training at the Sports Authority of India campus in Bengaluru was a huge blessing for him.

"Maintaining our physical fitness was our biggest goal during the



**Kothajit Singh Khadangbam**

lockdown. Consistent exercise certainly helps one to be mentally and physically fresh. Carrying out the fitness schedules was the best part of my day. It helped me to stay motivated during a difficult time.

## Aussie snowboarding champion dies while spearfishing near Gold Coast

**Melbourne (IANS):** Two-time snowboarding world champion Alex Pulling of Australia on July 8 passed away after he drowned near a Gold Coast beach, as per local media reports. He was 32.

Pulling, who was the flag bearer for Australia at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, was found on the ocean floor by a snorkeller after he went spearfishing around the area.

A Queensland Ambulance Service officer confirmed the news that they had received a call on

Wednesday morning regarding a person being found at the bottom of the floor.

"The resuscitation attempt was for approximately 45 to 50 minutes, with CPR the entire time. Unfortunately, the patient (did not) survive."



## Sports Ministry asks Hockey India president to resign

**New Delhi / IANS:** Hockey India (HI) President Mushtaq Ahmed has been asked to stand down from his post by the Sports Ministry, declaring that his 2018 election violated the 2011 National Sports Development Code.

The Ministry stated that the National Sports Federation (NSF) is to conduct new elections for the post by September 30 this year and that the new president will remain in the post for the remainder of the tenure which is until September 30, 2022.

In a letter to HI's Secretary General Rajinder Singh, under secretary Raju Bagga said that Ahmed is currently serving his third consecutive tenure as an office bearer with HI.

"... it has been observed that

Mustaqe Ahmed had earlier served as Treasurer in Hockey India (HI) from 2010-2014 and Secretary General from 2014-18. The instant term 2018-22 of Mustaqe Ahmed as President of HI, is his third consecutive term as an office bearer in HI. Thus his election as President of HI is not in consonance with the Government guidelines limiting the age & tenure of office bearers of National Sports Federations," Bagga said in his letter dated July 6.

"Accordingly, HI is directed to advise Mustaqe Ahmed to demit the post of President and to conduct fresh election for the post of President by 30.09.2020 for the remaining term, i.e., up to 30.09.2022 and inform the same to the Department," he added.

## Guidelines for reopening of monuments, museums issued

**New Delhi / IANS:** The Central government on July 2 issued a slew of directions for reopening of monuments and museums, protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, from July 6.

Only those monuments and museums which are in the non-containment zone will be open for visitors, according to the standard operating procedure.

There is a cap on the number of visitors in select monuments. Taj Mahal will accept 2,500 visitors, while Qutub Minar and Red Fort will allow 1,500 visitors in two slots each.

Entry tickets shall be issued by

e-mode only. No physical tickets will be issued. At the parking, cafeteria etc, only digital payment will be permitted.

"The visitors shall follow social distancing. The use of face cover and mask is mandatory. Entrance to have mandatory hand hygiene and thermal scanning provisions," it read.

There will be designated routes for entry and exit and movement within the monument. The ASI has the authority to restrict access to vulnerable and interior parts of any monument.

"Visitors shall be asked to stick to time limits inside the monument,

**New Delhi / IANS:** The 13th edition of the Indian Premier League is in all probability headed to foreign shores with UAE and Sri Lanka in the race to host the 2020 edition of the cash-rich league. The final announcement is expected soon as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is still awaiting an official decision on the fate of the T20 World Cup which was to be held in Australia in October-November.

Speaking to IANS, a BCCI official in the know of developments said that while the idea was to play the league in the country, the situation with regards to the coronavirus pandemic might force the board to ultimately take the tournament to either UAE or

Sri Lanka.

"We are yet to decide on the venue but in all probability it is going outside this year. The condition in India doesn't look suited to have so many teams come in at one or two venues and then create an atmosphere which will be safe for the players as well as the general public even though the games may be played behind closed doors.

"The race is between UAE and Sri Lanka and we will need to decide on where we host the league depending on the situation there with regards to the coronavirus pandemic. Logistics also need to be looked into, so we will decide soon," the official said.

While the mood was initially in favour of hosting the league in the country, the current situation has almost made it certain that the tournament will have to be taken outside India.

IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel has also been vocal that location shouldn't be a concern if the league is being played behind closed doors. "They (Emirates Cricket Board and Sri Lanka Cricket) have informed us that they are prepared to host the IPL. But our first preference is India, if we get the government's permission.



**A security guard seen wearing a mask as a precautionary measure against COVID-19 outside the Red Fort on March 17, 2020 (Photo IANS)**

Guides and photographs who have valid license are allowed to work. No food and eatables are allowed inside the premises.

"The cafeteria and kiosk inside the monument shall only serve bottled water on digital payment and shall follow all the

protocol. All the staff shall be well protected as per health protocol."

Last month, the Culture Ministry had reopened 820 monuments out of the over 3,000 ASI-maintained monuments.

## Rohit Sharma to lead over Kohli in Moody's World T20 XI

**Kolkata (IANS)** Former Australia all-rounder turned coach Tom Moody picked Rohit Sharma over Virat Kohli to lead his World XI side, also leaving out Mahendra Singh Dhoni and handing the wicket-keeping gloves to West Indies' Nicholas Pooran instead. But he clarified that it was a current team and not one from the recent past.

Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit has won the most number of Indian Premier League (IPL) titles and is Kohli's deputy in India's white-ball sides.

"I am picking a team to play

in a tournament in the next three weeks," former Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Moody told Harsha Bhogle in the latest Cricbuzz interview.

"David Warner, Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers. "I am keen to go with Jos Buttler but I need a left hander so I am going with Nicholas Pooran at five. I need a left hander in the middle order to give me the balance."

On Dhoni, Moody said since the former India captain has not played competitive cricket after the 2019 ODI World Cup semi-

final where India lost to New Zealand, he did not pick him.

"That's why I wanted to clarify that (this team) is (for) today (playing now). Dhoni is a no-brainer otherwise. I am his number one fan and what he's done from a captaincy point of view and otherwise." Moody's World XI: David Warner, Rohit Sharma (C), Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Nicholas Pooran, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Mitchell Starc, Rashid Khan, Jasprit Bumrah, Jofra Archer; 12th man: Ravindra Jadeja



**Rohit Sharma**

## Scientists develop air filter to kill Covid-19 virus instantly

**New York/IANS:** Scientists have developed a “catch and kill” air filter that can trap the virus responsible for Covid-19, killing it instantly.

A study, published in the journal *Materials Today Physics*, found that 99.8 per cent of the Covid-19 virus was killed in a single pass through a filter made from commercially available nickel foam heated to 200 degrees Centigrade (Celsius), or about 392 degrees Fahrenheit. It also killed 99.9 per cent of the anthrax spores in testing at the Galveston National Laboratory, which is run by the University of Texas Medical Branch in the US.

“This filter could be useful in airports and in airplanes, in office buildings, schools and cruise ships to stop the spread of Covid-19,” said study co-author Zhifeng Ren from the University of Houston in the US.

“Its ability to help control

the spread of the virus could be very useful for society.” Medistar executives are also proposing a desk-top model, capable of purifying the air in an office worker’s immediate surroundings, he added.

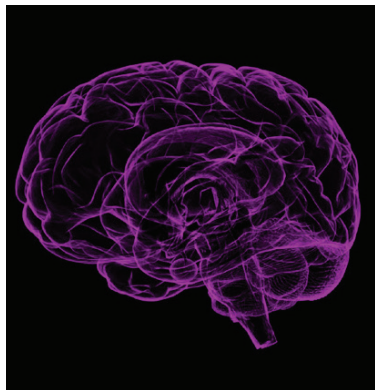
The research team knew the virus can’t survive temperatures above 70 degrees Celsius, so the researchers decided to use a heated filter. By making the filter temperature far hotter – about 200 degrees C – they were able to kill the virus almost instantly. Ren suggested using nickel foam, saying it met several key requirements: It is porous, allowing the flow of air, and electrically conductive, which allowed it to be heated. It is also flexible. But nickel foam has low resistivity, making it difficult to raise the temperature high enough to quickly kill the virus.

The researchers solved that problem by folding the



foam, connecting multiple compartments with electrical wires to increase the resistance high enough to raise the temperature as high as 250 degrees Celsius. By making the filter electrically heated, rather than heating it from an external source, the researchers minimised the amount of heat that escaped from the filter, allowing the air conditioning to function with minimal strain.

## Covid-19 brain complications found globally: Lancet



These include confusion, stroke, inflammation of the brain, spinal cord, and other kinds of nerve disease.

“It is really important that doctors around the world recognise that Covid-19 can cause encephalitis and other brain problems, which often have potentially devastating, life-changing consequences for patients,” said study co-author Ava Easton, CEO of the Encephalitis Society in the UK.

A recent Liverpool-led study of Covid-19 patients hospitalised in the UK found a range of neurological and psychiatric complications that may be linked to the disease.

To get a sense of the wider picture, the researchers brought together and analysed findings from Covid-19 studies across the globe that reported on neurological complications.

The review, which included studies from China, Italy and the US among others, found almost 1,000 patients with Covid-19-associated brain, spinal cord and

nerve disease.

The study found that strokes, delirium and other neurological complications are reported from most countries where there have been large outbreaks of the disease.

“Whilst these complications are relatively uncommon, the huge numbers of Covid-19 cases globally mean the overall number of patients with neurological problems is likely to be quite large,” said study researcher Suzannah Lant.

According to the researchers, one of the complications found to be linked to Covid-19 is encephalitis, which is inflammation and swelling of the brain.

“We are currently pooling data from individual patients all around the world, so that we can get a more complete picture. Doctors who would like to contribute patients to this analysis can contact us via the Global Covid-Neuro Network website,” the study authors wrote.

**London/IANS:** Cases of brain complications linked to Covid-19 are occurring across the globe, according to a new study, published in the journal *The Lancet Neurology*.

According to the researchers from the University of Liverpool in the UK, Covid-19 has been associated mostly with problems like difficulty breathing, fever and cough.

However, as the pandemic has continued, it has become increasingly clear that other problems can occur in patients.

## 9 new imported Covid-19 cases reported in mainland China

**Beijing/IANS:** The Chinese mainland reported nine new imported Covid-19 cases on July 8, bringing the total number of imported cases to 1,958, the National Health Commission said on July 9.

Of the nine imported cases, Liaoning and Shanghai each reported three cases, Guangdong saw two and Sichuan reported one, the commission said, Xinhua reported.

Among all the imported cases,

1,884 had been discharged from hospitals after recovery, and 74 remained hospitalized, with no one in severe condition, the commission said.

No deaths had been reported from the imported cases.

## WHO launches initiative to help 1.3bn people quit smoking

**Geneva/IANS:** The World Health Organization (WHO) announced on July 10 that it was launching an initiative to help 1.3 billion global tobacco-users quit the habit during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco will help people freely access the resources they need to quit tobacco, like nicotine replacement therapy and access to a digital health worker for advice, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said at a briefing on July 10.

According to the UN health body, smoking kills 8 million people a year, and evidence reveals that smokers are more vulnerable than non-smokers to developing a severe case of COVID-19, reports Xinhua news agency.

“But if users need more motivation to kick the habit, the pandemic provides the right incentive,” said Tedros.

The initiative is led by WHO, together with the UN Interagency Task Force on Non-communicable Diseases (NCD).

The initiative brings together



tech industry, pharmaceutical, and NGO partners like PATH and the Coalition for Access to NCD Medicines and Products.

As the first manufacturing partner of the initiative, Johnson & Johnson Consumer Health said Friday that it has donated nearly 40,000 nicotine patches.

Tedros said the WHO is in the final stages of adding more partners and encourages pharmaceutical and tech companies to join the initiative.

WHO will first launch the initiative in Jordan and then roll it out globally over the coming months, he added.

## Hot flushes, night sweats associated with heart attacks in women

**Sydney/IANS:** Women who suffer from hot flushes and night sweats after menopause are 70 per cent more likely to have a heart attack, angina or stroke, say researchers, including one of Indian-origin.

The study, published in the *American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynaecology*, found women of any age who experience hot flushes and night sweats, also known as vasomotor symptoms or VMS, are more likely to experience non-fatal cardiovascular events.

“This research helps to identify women who are at a higher risk for the development of cardiovascular events and who may need close monitoring in clinical practice,” said study senior author Gita Mishra, Professor at the University of Queensland in Australia.

For the findings, the research team used data from InterLACE, a

major collaboration of 25 studies of more than 500,000 women around the world.

The findings showed that the risk of cardiovascular events was more related to the severity of the hot flushes and night sweats rather than the frequency or duration.

The study found that women with severe VMS were more than twice as likely to experience a non-fatal cardiovascular event compared with women who had no symptoms.

“Until now, it’s been unclear if VMS is associated with cardiovascular disease, but now we know it to be true,” said study lead author Dongshan Zhu from the University of Queensland in Australia.

“Further, VMS before menopause increases a woman’s chance of cardiovascular events by 40 per cent,” Zhu said.

# 239 scientists urge WHO to alleviate airborne spread of Covid-19

**Sydney/IANS:** It is time to recognise and mitigate airborne transmission of COVID-19, says a plea to the World Health Organization (WHO) issued by 239 scientists from around the world.

The scientists suggest that while measures like washing hands and maintaining social distance are important, they may not be enough to arrest the rapid spread of the disease.

The measures that need to be taken to mitigate airborne transmission include providing sufficient and effective ventilation -- supply clean outdoor air, minimise recirculating air -- particularly in public buildings, workplace environments, schools, hospitals, and aged care homes, they said.

Supplementing general ventilation with airborne infection controls such as local exhaust, high efficiency air filtration, and germicidal ultraviolet lights can be useful, according to the plea set to be published in the journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

They said that it is important to avoid overcrowding, particularly in public transport and public buildings.

Led by air quality and health expert Lidia Morawska, Professor

at the Queensland University of Technology in Australia, the appeal is to address the overwhelming research finding that an infected person exhales airborne virus droplets when breathing and talking that can travel further than the current 1.5 metre social distance requirement.

"We are concerned that people may think they are fully protected by following the current recommendations, but in fact, additional airborne precautions are needed to further reduce the spread of the virus," Morawska said.

The WHO has maintained that Covid-19 infection is primarily transmitted by respiratory droplets expelled by infected people.

In its update on June 29, the UN health body said that in the context of Covid-19, airborne transmission may be possible in specific circumstances and settings related to Covid-19 treatment.

So the current WHO recommendations emphasise the importance of rational and appropriate use of all personal protective equipment, not only masks, which requires correct and rigorous behaviour from health care workers.

# Delhi govt. formulates policy for Delhi Plasma Bank

**New Delhi/IANS:** The Delhi government has ordered the Delhi Plasma Bank at ILBS to collect replacement convalescent plasma against the plasma issued to patients suffering from COVID-19.

While the official order came on July 9, the plasma bank had started asking for replacement from July 5 after it received the direction from the office of Deputy Chief Minister, informed Dr Shantanu Dubry, in-charge of issuing plasma at the bank.

Dr Meenu Bajpai, head of transfusion medicine department, said that the replacement donor will be arranged by the hospitals. "The hospital where the patient is being treated would arrange for the replacement donor," she said.

She also said that more than hundred plasma have been issued and almost the same number of donors has come forward. "However, to maintain the stock, it is necessary to have a system of replacement donors," Dr Meenu added.

The order mentioned that the move was taken "keeping in view the projected requirement



**Delhi Plasma Bank**

and scarce availability of this (convalescent plasma) meagre resource".

Besides, the order also asked all the hospitals to appoint a nodal officer that will coordinate with ILBS for requisition and issuance of the convalescent plasma. "A few hospitals have appointed the nodal officers. The communication regarding issuing and donation will be made only with the nodal officers," said Dr Rahul Borkar, resident medical officer in the plasma bank.

The Delhi Plasma Bank is the

first in the country to store and provide plasma to patients of COVID-19. The bank was inaugurated by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on July 2.

To donate plasma, a donor needs to complete at least 28 days post the treatment of COVID-19. A donor can re-donate the plasma after 14 days.

Besides, those aged between 18 and 50, without co-morbidities and weighing not less than 50 kg can donate their plasma for COVID-19 patients.

# High blood sugar ups Covid-19 death risk: Study



**Beijing/IANS:** Covid-19 patients with abnormally high blood sugar are at an increased risk of severe complications and more than twice as likely to face death, warn researchers.

Previous studies have established that hyperglycaemia (abnormally high blood sugar) is associated with an elevated risk of mortality in community-acquired pneumonia, stroke, heart attacks, trauma and surgery, among other conditions.

However, a direct correlation between fasting blood glucose (FBG) level at admission to hospital and clinical outcomes of Covid-19 patients without diagnosed diabetes has not been well established.

"This study shows, for the first time, that elevated FBG at admission is independently associated with increased 28-day mortality and percentages of in-hospital complications in Covid-19 patients without a previous diagnosis of diabetes," the study authors from Huazhong

University in China, wrote.

For the findings, published in the journal *Diabetologia*, the research team examined the association between FBG on admission and the 28-day mortality of Covid-19 patients without previously diagnosed diabetes in two hospitals.

The retrospective study assessed all consecutive Covid-19 patients with a known outcome at 28-days and FBG measurement at admission from January 24 to February 10 in two hospitals based in Wuhan, China.

Demographic and clinical data, 28-day outcomes, in-hospital complications and CRB-65 scores of Covid-19 patients in the two hospitals were analysed.

The CRB-65 score is an effective measure for assessing the severity of pneumonia and is based on four indicators: level of confusion, respiratory rate, systolic blood pressure or diastolic blood pressure, and age.

A total of 605 Covid-19 patients

were enrolled, including 114 who died in hospital.

The results showed that patients in the highest FBG group were 2.3 times more likely to die than those in the lowest, a statistically significant result.

Those in the middle (pre-diabetic) FBG group were 71 per cent more likely to die than those in the lowest group, although this result only had borderline statistical significance.

The data also showed that men were 75 per cent more likely to die than women and patients with higher CRB65 scores (and thus worse pneumonia) were also at higher risk of death.

When looking at FBG and CRB65 scores together, the patients in the highest FBG group had an increased risk of death compared to the lowest, the study revealed.

The risk of complications was also found to be four times higher in the highest FBG group compared to the lowest, and 2.6 times higher in the middle (pre-diabetic) group compared to the lowest.

"We have also shown that FBG of 7.0 mmol/l or higher is associated with increased mortality, regardless of whether the patient has pneumonia that is more or less severe," the authors wrote.

"Patients with conditions not related to diabetes, such as severe sepsis, systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS) and traumatic brain injury tend to have abnormally high blood sugar," they added.

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## Kritika Pandey bags Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2020

**London/IANS:** India's Kritika Pandey was on June 30 awarded the 5,000 pound Commonwealth Short Story Prize 2020 for "The Great Indian Tee and Snakes" in a virtual ceremony here. The Asian Regional Winner beat challengers from four other contenders in the final round.

"This is an incredible moment; I don't know what to say. The award is so reassuring. It really makes up for the struggle I went through (to become a writer)," the 29-year-old from Jharkhand, who is currently a final year candidate in the Masters in Fine Arts programme at the University of Massachusetts, said after the jury chair, Ghanaian writer Nii Ayikwei Parkes, named her as the

winner.

He described Pandey's work as a "gut-punch of a story, all the more shocking in its charged conclusion given that most of it is set at a tea seller's and its energy derives from a few looks between a boy and a girl".

Pandey said her parents, whom she described as "very conservative", wanted her to become an engineer "so I became an engineer" (from BIT Mesra). They then wanted her to get married and have children, "but I said no; I wanted to become a writer".

This year's competition received 5,000 entries from 49 countries. These were whittled down to a



**Kritika Pandey**

shortlist of 20 from five regions, with the other four regional winners being "When a Woman Renounces Motherhood" by Innocent Chizaram Ilo (Africa/Nigeria); "Wherever Mister Jensen Went" by Reyah Martin (Canada and Europe /United Kingdom); "Mafootoo" by Brian S. Heap (Caribbean/Jamaica) and "The Art of Waving" by Andrea E. Macleod (Pacific/Australia).

## Abulhawa pens a revealing insight into the soul of a tormented Palestinian girl

**New Delhi/IANS:** Susan Abulhawa was born to refugees of the Six Day War of 1967, when her family's land was seized and Israel captured what remained of Palestine, including Jerusalem. Now, this Palestinian American writer and activist has come out with a powerful, furious, beautiful book on sex, power, persecution, violation, survival, and resistance.

"Against The Loveless World" (Bloomsbury), which has been shortlisted for the Palestine Book Award, is about Nahr, who has been confined in an Israeli prison named the Cube: nine square metres of glossy grey cinderblock, devoid of time, its patterns of light and dark nothing to do with day and night.

Journalists visit her, but get nowhere; because Nahr is not going to share her story with them. The world outside calls Nahr a terrorist, and a whore; some might call her a revolutionary, or a hero. But the truth is, Nahr has always been many things, and had many

names.

She was named for the river her pregnant mother crossed when she fled from Palestine, but her feckless father called her Yaqoot, Ruby. For a time when she came of age she was Almas, Diamond, a girl who went to hidden parties in Kuwait with powerful men, who sold off parts of herself to keep her family together.

She was a girl who learned, early and painfully, that when you are a second class citizen love is a kind of desperation; she learned, above all else, to survive.

She was a girl who went to Palestine in the wrong shoes, and without looking for it found what she had always lacked in the basement of a battered beauty parlour: purpose, politics, friends. She found a dark-eyed man called Bilal, who taught her to resist; who tried to save her when it was already too late.

Nahr sits in the Cube, and tells her story to Bilal. Bilal, who isn't there; Bilal, who may not even be



**Susan Abulhawa**

alive, but who is her only reason to get out.

It's a revealing, albeit surrealistic, journey into the mind of a lost and tormented soul.

Abulhawa moved to the US as a teenager, graduated in biomedical science and established a career in medical science. In July 2001, she founded Playgrounds for Palestine, a children's organisation dedicated to upholding The Right to Play for Palestinian children, and her essays and political commentaries have appeared in print and international news media.

## A nomad's excursions reminisced through bright watercolours

**New Delhi/IANS:** An interesting visual travelogue showcasing the histories and cultures of various lands came alive as an online exhibition by the India International Centre (IIC), featuring the works of a talented self-taught artist and illustrator. An exhibition to celebrate and

remember Premola Ghose (1953-2019), the Centre's programme division chief for four decades and a prolific author, this online show titled 'A Nomad's Journey: Travels with Premola' was free to view till July 12.

An avid traveller, with curiosity about the histories and cultures

of the people and countries she visited, Ghose made friends easily with the locals, getting lost in little bookstores and discovering cafes and lesser known sites along the way. A wonderful storyteller, travel tales were always linked with vivid memories of food.

Her bright paintings - which have

## Charminar, Golconda Fort close down again after brief re-opening



**Charminar**

**Hyderabad/IANS:** The Charminar and the Golconda Fort, two of Hyderabad's most famous monuments, were re-opened for visitors on July 6, only to be shut again as authorities took a U-turn.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), which is responsible for the upkeep of the centrally protected monuments, went back on its decision after the Telangana government opposed their re-opening as both were located close to areas witnessing a spike in Covid-19 cases.

A few people had booked their tickets online and were allowed entry but sale of tickets was stopped after local authorities expressed the apprehension that re-opening of the monuments could lead to violation of social distancing and other Covid-19 norms.

It was brought to the notice of the ASI's Hyderabad Circle officials that both the monuments were located in densely populated areas witnessing a surge in

Covid-19 cases.

Sources said lack of coordination between the ASI and the local authorities led to the embarrassing situation.

The municipal authorities and police brought to the notice of ASI officials that entry of visitors to the Charminar could lead to overcrowding as the monument has a narrow staircase. Similarly they raised the apprehension that allowing entry into the Golconda Fort may create problems as they have barred the devotees from participating in Bonalu celebrations in the historic fort in view of the pandemic.

While announcing re-opening of protected monuments previously, the ASI had stated that those in containment zones would remain closed.

Though both the Charminar and the Golconda Fort don't fall in containment zones, they are located near densely populated areas with some of the neighbourhoods witnessing a spike in Covid-19 cases.



**A nomad's journey**

at their core a 'gang' of animals - takes viewers through the simplicity of a calm waterbody, as well as the grandeur of a magnificent palace. From vast landscapes to intricate architectural details, and a glimpse of the people she saw around herself - the late artist has something for everyone.

Her paintings on display reflect a keen sense of observation for details, colour, texture and light. The exhibition presents a selection of thirty watercolour paintings on travel created by her from 1996 to 2018. Most of the works on view have not been exhibited before.

# Chef Kunal Kapur finds gourmet-style cooking at home



**Chef Kunal Kapur**

Celebrity chef and restaurateur Kunal Kapur, who became a household name in the home nation after hosting MasterChef India, says that the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic may have hit the food industry, but looking on the bright side, one finds people increasingly whipping out 'gourmet-style food' at home. "One of the worst-hit industries is

the food industry, specifically the restaurants and hotels, but on the flipside what it has given rise to is the local, superstar chefs at home - where the pattern of eating has changed slightly. People obviously cannot go out, and are cooking gourmet-style food at home, which is very welcoming and encouraging especially for me given the background I come from," Kapur, 40, told IANSLife over phone.

He recalls his beginnings about 23 years back, when he decided to become a chef and told his family that he would like to cook in hotels and restaurants. "My grandmother said, 'beta aise kaam karega Kapur khandan ka beta hokar'," he laughs. Fast forward to now, he finds the acceptance of food has grown immensely. "I quite revel in the fact that the best practices are being followed at home when it comes to hygiene,



there's a lot of cleaning and sanitising. People have realised that their source of nutrition is the home kitchen, one tiny room in the big house that provides for everyone," he observed.

Kapur, who is the face of ITC Nimwash, a vegetable and food cleanser, also recalls the common motherly advice and norm we all have heard - wash anything before eating or cooking. Speaking about eating clean, he shares: "It was understood that water will wash away everything but now that times have developed, there's an unseen danger - pesticides and germs - that is stuck on the fruits and vegetables that everyone is having."

The top chef also points to a common sight seen on Indian roads and vegetable mass-markets, that of delivery vendors' 'chappals' touching fresh produce during transportation and little care to keep it from dirt and germs. Even in the agri spaces, "pesticides are being used as a standard to ward off crop-eating pests and to get a good quantity of produce," he says. In these scenarios, the culinarian recommends using a natural vegetable and fruit wash. Use it on your uncut and unpeeled vegetables and fruits and then place it in your refrigerator, he advises.

By Siddhi Jain/IANSLife

# Chef Sanjeev Kapoor: Home-cooking is the healthiest cooking

Indian home-cooking saw the turn of a new leaf when celebrity chefs like Sanjeev Kapoor created lip-smacking recipes on a unique format of cooking shows on television. With the stay-at-home orders infusing new energy into the country's home kitchens, the celebrated chef and Padma Shri recipient feels happy seeing people cook at home.

"Home-cooking is the healthiest cooking. Even when people cook so-called junk food, I advise cooking it at home, which will be much healthier. Anyone who is usually cooking at home - mothers or wives - want to make sure that element of health is there. If we have to make ourselves healthy, home-cooking is the way to go, and I'm happy people are cooking at home."

Kapoor, 56, told IANSLife over phone.

Kapoor is the face of ITC Nimwash vegetable and fruit wash, and suggests cooking enthusiasts to clean germs and pesticides off their fruits and veggies as any recipe's first step. "We are what we eat. That's something we have started to understand as a direct, cause-and-effect relationship. Now we have time to reflect and act on it. The superficiality of anything and everything we were consuming - that is diminishing, and a beginning has been made," he said.

Speaking about the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, he notes "two distinct things" that have happened during this time.

"Everyone was home so home-cooking has grown exponentially,

and eating out - the service industry - is hit and has gone down - not just in India but globally. Similarly, what we were eating earlier, we are more careful with that. We want to be sure about the quality of ingredients. Hygiene is paramount. What we were taking for granted, the world has sit up and is taking note of that. We are looking at bettering us for our own selves, not for the world. We're breathing right, cooking right and eating right."

The culinarian, who is among the most prominent faces of Indian cuisine, shared what life in lockdown looked like for him.

"Despite a few relaxations now in Mumbai, we have taken a call that unless absolutely essential, we will not go out. In all these months, I have only been out twice. Managing was not that

difficult, I didn't have much time to watch movies and web series. My whole family is home, and they naturally expect me to cook, which I enjoy, that has increased definitely. Food content is being consumed more across platforms. Across our social media platforms, it is an all-time high with engagement being up by 250 percent," the 'Khana Khazana' star shared.

Kapoor also shared that early in the lockdown, he decided on an initiative to feed doctors and staff in hospitals in Mumbai and beyond. "We worked closely towards that. I am also involved with Akshay Patra Foundation and served over 70 million meals in the lockdown," he concluded.

By Siddhi Jain/IANSLife



**Chef Sanjeev Kapoor**

that is here to stay. It also marks a continuation of a global trend that of rubber stamp exercise of extending the rule of strong leaders as single seats of power. In 2018, the National People's Congress amended the Chinese constitution to remove a two-

term cap on the Presidency allowing Xi Jinping to remain President forever thereby returning to the world the era of Lenin, Stalin and Chairman Mao. Second, this likely Presidency will not be devoid of challenges. Putin faces global criticism

on his leadership and global strategic footprints. From its alleged role in Afghanistan, Libya to the fights in Syria, the position of Putin as a deep-seated proxy leader has been criticized heavily. Russia's relation with West Europe has

also come under the scanner for its role in expanding its energy footprint beyond the Baltic. Within the domestic audience, the disconnect between the polity and the public demands will be a challenge for Putin to address. Just like the post-Soviet

Russia, these constitutional amendments create an illusion of a modernized, law-based state, but it is as detached from Russian reality as was the 1993 constitution of the then Soviet life.

# The bucket list of an Adventure junkie

*With easing lockdown rules, adventure junkies can look forward to adrenaline-pumped activities in the coming days*

The worldwide lockdown due to coronavirus has brought every industry to a screeching halt, including the travel and hospitality. With restrictions on international travel and practice of social distancing, the travel bunnies across the world are less than excited as most of their activities are restricted. But with easing lockdown rules, the adventure junkies can again look forward to adrenaline-pumped activities in the coming days.

Here are some of the activities that are a 'must-do' for those who seek adventure.

## Jet boat in Interlaken

Enjoy a unique and thrilling jet boat ride on the beautiful lake of Brienz. Jet Boat is a super-fast boat which can do sudden stops and 360-degree spins leaving you exhilarated and sometimes drenched. Perfect ride with your friends and family.

## Lake Zurich

Lake Zurich has many options for sports for adventure lovers. You can swim, paddleboat, try paddling or try wakeboarding or water skiing for the ultimate thrill.

## Toboggan Run Lucerne

If you love high speeds head to Mt. Pilatus in Lucerne for yet another fun filled toboggan experience. You can find your adrenaline fix here while navigating the crazy curves of Mt. Pilatus. Get on board the Switzerland's longest summer toboggan run on Mt. Pilatus, the home mountain of Lucerne. On the way up to Mt. Pilatus, you can get off at

fräkmüntegg which has two options for fun – a rope park and a summer toboggan run.

## Cliff Walk – Mt Titlis

Experience the ultimate thrill at 3041 meters above sea-level. Titlis Cliff Walk is Europe's highest suspension bridge! Crossing this bridge requires nerves as strong as the steel cables that support it, open all year around, this thrilling activity promises you breath-taking views of snow-capped mountains and lush green valleys.

## Paragliding and sky diving in Interlaken

If you want to experience postcard-perfect Switzerland from an exclusive birds-eye view, go paragliding in Interlaken. The two lakes, the town in between and the majestic mountains will make this thrilling experience extra memorable. Want to do something even more thrilling, try Skydiving from a helicopter. The experience begins with a 10-minute scenic flight in a helicopter, when you reach 14000 ft, then you stand outside the helicopter with your instructor and then jump into a

freefall until the parachute opens at 5500 ft taking you into a gentle flight over Interlaken.

## Alpine Coaster Glacier 3000

Ride on the alpine coaster at Glacier 3000. 520° circles, 10 steep curves, 6 waves and 3 jumps promise of an action-packed speed of up to 40 km/hour on a one-kilometer stretch: The Alpine Coaster will quickly raise your adrenaline level and get your heart beating hard!

## First flyer Grindelwald

Air, nothing but air – above, below, to the right & to the left! Adrenaline kicks and speed thrills are virtually guaranteed on the 800 metres long First Flyer. You can glide freely through the air on the First Flyer – suspended on a rope and at a top speed of 84 km/h. Grindelwald First Flyer gives you a magnificent view to the Eiger North Face.

## E-biking in St Moritz

Want a natural high? Mountain biking in the Engadin is in a class of its own. Twisting trails to thrilling tours through forests and valleys, to mountain lakes and glaciers... You will surely be spoilt for choice!

## Devil bike Zermatt

If you like to make your adrenaline pump and want to add excitement to your Switzerland trip, then devil biking is a must do. You can try this in Zermatt from Furi down into the village. The thrilling ride downhill with twists and turns will make this ride a memorable part of your trip to Switzerland.

## Bungee jumping in Stockhom

The Stockhom bungy located in the Swiss Alps in one of the most breathtaking and unusual bungy sites in the world. You are lifted 134m up in a mountain gondola, the doors open, and you take the plunge; leaping and freefalling towards the pristine mountain lake Stocksee. Enjoy the rush of a lifetime and remember to smile for the camera.

IANSlife



Jet boat



Cliff Walk Interlaken



Adventure junkies in Switzerland

# A sustainable future for travel

*Conscious travellers will find a lot of activities in countries like Switzerland that have been designed to protect the environment*

Sustainable travel has been gaining a lot of popularity in recent times and is touted to be the future of travel as per the "new normal" with the Covid-19 pandemic acting as a catalyst for this change to come sooner.

Switzerland has been one of the countries pioneering in providing opportunities to the travellers in this direction. There are a plethora of initiatives taken by the alpine nation to lure tourists who are looking forward to enjoying a sustainable, guilt-free vacation.

Conscious travellers will find a lot of activities in Switzerland that have been designed to protect the environment and that use the resources of the country, judiciously. For example, a 450m Solar Ski Lift in Saline Valley is used to transport snow sports enthusiasts to and fro the mountain peaks and simultaneously used to produce solar power. Using the power required for the operation of the

Ski Lift, the excess production of power is sold to environmentally conscious parties in the region.

A major reason for the reduced carbon footprint is the Swiss Travel System. It has the world's most effective public transportation system -- a fully-integrated air, train, and bus system -- powered majorly by clean hydroelectric power sources. The country is an active advocate of public transport for citizens as well as tourists not only because it is fast and reliable but also to minimize negative impact in Alpine areas.

A train journey generates 20 times less CO<sub>2</sub> than a car journey on a comparable route. And with SBB's eco-friendly transport solutions and its drive to move major traffic onto the railways, Switzerland saves five million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-emissions per year, equivalent to 10 percent of the country's overall emissions.

As eco tourism takes precedence, Switzerland has been promoting businesses, academic initiatives, as well as other enterprises, determined to make bio-friendly use of resources for the entire world's benefit.

The alpine country has a number of "Green Accommodations" that include farm stays, hotels, and campsites equipped with plenty of ecologically sound facilities like proper recycling of waste, usage of a heating system devoid of oil or wood, and optimized resource planning further boost their ratings of eco-consciousness.

According to the federal forestry law, forests must occupy at least thirty percent of the nation's land. As a result, Switzerland has numerous places filled with clear, fresh air coming from the forests that abound in a variety of flora and fauna.

Surveys like the Environmental Performance Index have ranked



Switzerland as a sustainable nation. They cite both air quality and water quality as being the best in the world, and Switzerland ranks exceptionally high on

biodiversity and ecosystem vitality.

IANSlife

# IRW gears up for 2nd Instagram edition

Indian Federation for Fashion Development's (IFFD) will be holding the second Instagram edition of the fashion event India Runway Week from September 17-20.

The first edition of the event on Instagram was held on September 12-15, 2019 and witnessed 35 designers including veterans like Nikhil Thampi, Siddharth Tytler, Ashima Leena, Poonam Dubey, Nikhita Tandon, Kaisha by Shalini, Niki Mahajan, Anjalee Arjun Kapoor and Manish Gupta, among others.

With its second edition, 'Virtual Fashion Week by India Runway Week' aims to create an ecosystem to promote a digital platform of fashion week that is "inclusive to everyone and as it's safe to be indoor during Covid19."

The event will have an interactive digital reach along with creating an ecosystem where designers, media and buyers can interact virtually with a focus on 100 percent #MadeDigitally. The model auditions will also be on Instagram using #tag #CastMeIRW.

Avinash Pathania, founder, Indian Federation for Fashion Development said: "We are happy to launch the second edition of Virtual Fashion A week and this time it will be much bigger and better with more creative ideas to support it and make it different from all the other new entrants in the same kind of platform due to COVID-19 pandemic."

By Puja Gupta/IANSLife



## Vocal for Local

"Why do we need to have yet another beautiful outfit?" asks fashion designer Rahul Mishra at the beginning of the fashion film he presented earlier this month at the digital edition of Paris Haute Couture Fall 2020. The first Indian designer to be invited to present at Paris Haute Couture, Mishra then answers his own question, "To give work to craftspeople, to be able to utilise their schools, to be able to employ them." Spot on, Mr Mishra.

Covid-19 is the biggest crisis to date for the apparel and fashion industry, globally. In India, the problem is even more acute as the textile industry is India's second largest employer. Its health is critical to the country's welfare. The artisans (kaarigars) who create these beautiful pieces are at the heart of the trade.

Just a few days before the start of the Fall 2020 edition of Paris Couture Week, I interviewed the co-founder and creator of the British label, Ralph and Russo (Priyanka Chopra, Sonam Kapoor and Isha Ambani have been spotted in their glamorous gowns) Tamara Ralph, who mentioned that this time around she was unable to use any artisans from India due to the lockdown. From Armani to Valentino, European luxury houses have turned to this country's rich and diverse legacy of unique artisanship for their creations; no other country can match up to India's savior-faire and pricing. Yet, India's role is too often talked down in the global arena.

At the other end of the garment market, India's factories have been sourcing hubs for brands like Zara, Gap and H&M, many of whom have been cancelling orders lately, putting the livelihood of 60 million textile workers under a question mark; most leading factories have been running at half of their normal

capacities.

The plight of craftsmen, many of whom are migrant workers, means leading industry thought leaders are now stressing on the virtues of #MakeinIndia. A reason why it also makes sense to go vocal for local. Let it not be a mantra for this moment but a permanent part of the way we dress.

Saif Khan, Chief Operating Office of SAKS India, a Mumbai-based embroidery house with a client list that boasts Giorgio Armani, Valentino and Christian Dior, says, "Look at the city of Como in Italy, for example, why did Banaras or any of the South Indian manufacturing cities not become that? It is much because there is no proper governing body or structure in India to formally represent this type of art to the Western world."

The only entity that can ensure that the craftspeople's voices are heard is us, the consumer. By wearing something crafted in India, you are growing the economy and ensuring native creativity flourishes. It is an ethos that one of India's most noted fashion designers Sabyasachi Mukherjee has spoken about for a while. The designer, who has collaborated with Paris-based luxury shoe maker Christian Loubutin and whose jewellery is currently retailing at New York's Bergdorf Goodman, has often emphasised, "Customers worldwide are already realising the new awakening through hardship, and introspection will just hammer in the truth."

Leading fast fashion brand H&M is partnering with the designer for a collection, which will mostly be "Made in India" and includes a sari, taking an Indian textile tradition to major high streets and malls all over the world.

During these times, many

homegrown fashion houses have had to shut stores and some labels have even had to exit the business altogether. After 20 years of being India's most celebrated resort designers, Malini Ramani announced she was closing her label. Let's not forget most Indian labels do not have corporate backing, like their European counterparts. Yes, Made in India can be expensive, but this lockdown has made us realise we have too many clothes. Follow a simple mantra buy better, make it last.

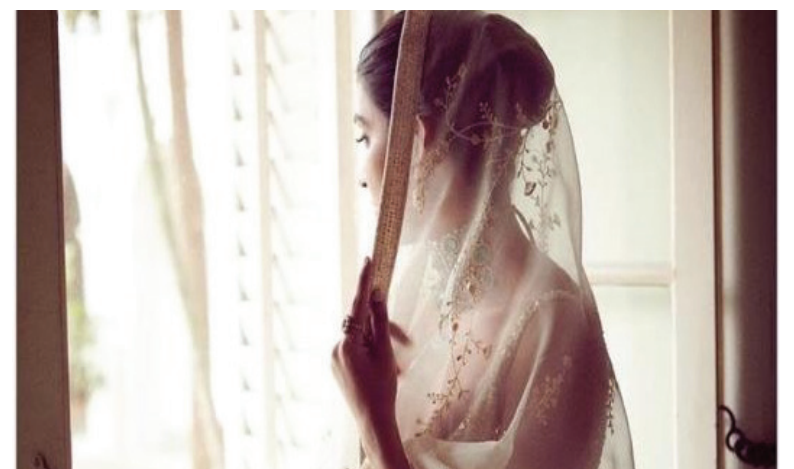
Not all news has been bad during the pandemic, though. Slow fashion label 11.11, known for its use of handwoven textiles and its menswear was picked up by one of the world's leading high fashion e-tailers Matchesfashion.com. Its founder Shani Himanshu says, "It's the time to invest in them and rebuild the model for future." He is confident that even with the setback of the pandemic, if we all take pride in wearing Indian, we will see a global Indian brand appear within the next five years.

As Mukherjee puts it, "It is time for Indian designers to stop being back-end manufacturers and become front-end brands. It is time for the chorus girl to step up to centre stage and become the star." It is time for us to proudly be Indian and wear homegrown... and yes, be vocal for local.

The writer Sujata Assomull is the author of "100 Iconic Bollywood Costumes" and was the Founding Editor In Chief of Harper's Bazaar, India.

*The writer Sujata Assomull is the author of "100 Iconic Bollywood Costumes" and was the Founding Editor In Chief of Harper's Bazaar, India.*

By Sujata Assomull/IANSLife



# Choreographer Saroj Khan dies at 71

**Mumbai/IANS:** Bollywood choreographer Saroj Khan passed away after a cardiac arrest early on July 3. She was 71.

Khan was diabetic and had complained of breathing problem last month, following which she was admitted to Mumbai's Guru Nanak Hospital. Over the past few weeks, she had been experiencing multiple health issues, though she had tested negative for Covid-19. She breathed her last at around 1.30 am on July 3, family sources said.

The last rites were performed at Malad burial ground. Few members of her family were allowed at the burial owing to social distancing norms.

Khan won the National Award thrice in her lifetime. In 2003, she received the honour for the song "Dola re dola" in "Devdas", picturised on Madhuri Dixit and Aishwarya Rai-Bachchan. In 2006, she was a recipient of the award for all the songs she

choreographed in the Tamil film, "Sringaram". In 2008, she won the award for the song "Yeh ishq haaye" filmed on Kareena Kapoor in "Jab We Met".

One of the most prolific choreographers of the Hindi film industry, Khan, fondly called 'Masterji' in Bollywood, had called the shots in over 2,000 songs spanning over four decades.

Although Khan started out in the early seventies, she really became a household name in the mid to late eighties, first directing some memorable dances for Sridevi and then Madhuri Dixit, the reigning superstars of the era.

Khan started out choreographing with the 1974 film, "Geeta Mera Naam". She directed songs for the Tamil film "Thai Veedu" in 1983, and also worked in Subhash Ghai's superhit "Hero" the same year.

It was the 1986 film, "Nagina" that made her a household name. Sridevi's iconic dance "Main



**Saroj Khan**

naagin tu sapera" in that film continues to be a popular number even today.

Her choreography for Sridevi the next year in "Mr India", particularly the song "Hawaa hawaa" then scaled popularity.

Khan has also given Madhuri Dixit some of her most iconic hits including "Ek do teen" ("Tezaab"), and "Dhak dhak" ("Beta") among numerous others.

Her last major assignment has been directing Madhuri's moves in last year's release, "Kalank".

She is survived by her husband, son and two daughters.

# SRK asks wife Gauri to renovate his office ceiling

**Mumbai/IANS:** Superstar Shah Rukh Khan wants his wife Gauri Khan, a successful interior designer, to refurbish the office room ceiling of his production house, Red Chillies Entertainment.

On July 3, Gauri wrote a post stressing about the importance of ceilings when it comes to design. Reacting to Gauri's post, SRK had a special request.

"Can you now please refurbish my Red Chillies office room with a new ceiling I have been asking you to do! I want something nice to look upto when we restart work," wrote SRK.

To this, Gauri has formally replied: "@iamsrk our team is on



**Shah Rukh Khan**

it sir!"

The B-Town power couple's brief banter sure worked as smart advertisement for Gauri, but SRK

fans are not surprisingly gushing.

A fan commented: "So cute."

Another one wrote: "Couple goals forever."

# Sushant Singh Rajput death: Sanjay Leela Bhansali's statement recorded by Bandra Police



**Sanjay Leela Bhansali**

**Mumbai/IANS:** Mumbai Police on July 6 recorded the statement of filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

The director arrived at Bandra Police Station on the morning of July 6 to give his statement.

As per reports, late actor Sushant was approached by Bhansali for his 2013 film "Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram-Leela". However, Sushant could not take up the offer reportedly due to his contract with a production house. Later Ranveer Singh was signed for the role. The female lead was played

# Ranveer Singh's fans launch an anthem dedicated to the star



**Ranvir Singh**

**Mumbai/IANS:** Bollywood star Ranveer Singh's fans have come out with an anthem for the actor. It goes, "Bollywood ka king, Ranveer Singh".

The rap song is inspired by Ranveer's avatar as a rapper in last year's "Gully Boy". The number, created by the actor's fan club in Ahmedabad, talks of Ranveer's journey from his debut film "Band Baaja Baraat" to "Gully Boy".

"The fans of Ranveer are really inspired from him. They relate to his journey, his story and they feel that Ranveer is one of them who has made it big in Bollywood through his sheer acting talent. They wanted to celebrate him on his birthday and came up with the idea of the anthem. This is the first anthem composed for any young superstar ever and it has been

sung in Ranveer's 'Gully Boy' style," a source said, adding that the anthem was planned in a span of four months.

"Despite India being in lockdown mode, the fans sang and composed it to meet the deadline of the launch -- which was Ranveer's birthday," the source added.

Ranveer turned 35 on July 6.

Popular for his outrageous flamboyance, Ranveer ventured into Bollywood with the 2010 romantic comedy film "Band Baaja Baraat". He went on to star in films like "Goliyon Ki Rasleela: Ram-Leela", "Lootera", "Dil Dhadakne Do", "Bajirao Mastani", "Padmaavat", "Simmba" and "Gully Boy".

The actor will next be seen in "83" and "Jayesh Bhai Jordaar".

by Deepika Padukone and the film turned out to be a superhit.

Meanwhile Mumbai Police has, over the past weeks, also recorded statements of Sushant's family, staff, a few of his friends, and rumoured girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, besides filmmaker Mukesh Chhabra and actress Sanjana Sanghi who worked with the late actor in his upcoming last film "Dil Bechara".

Sushant Singh Rajput was found hanging in his Mumbai residence on June 14. The actor's postmortem report stated his death was a suicide.

Within a few days of the actor's death, a complaint was filed by advocate Sudhir Kumar Ojha in the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate in Bihar's Muzaffarpur. The case filed regarding the actor's death was against eight Bollywood personalities including Bhansali, Salman Khan, Karan Johar, Aditya Chopra and Ekta Kapoor.

Mumbai Police is investigating the death of the actor, though many fans on social media have been demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the case.

## Vidya Balan begins shooting amid Covid-19 pandemic



**Vidya Balan**

**Mumbai/IANS:** After Taapsee Pannu, actress Vidya Balan shared that she has resumed shooting amid the ongoing Covid pandemic.

On July 8, Vidya took to Instagram Stories and posted a picture that shows her sitting in a vanity van. She sits with her crew while getting her make-up done.

The crew members have taken proper safety precautions, wearing PPE suits and masks. "back to work," Vidya captioned the image, adding a praying emoji.

On the film front, Vidya will be next seen in "Shakuntala Devi". The film casts her in the title role of mathematics genius Shakuntala Devi and will premiere digitally on July 31.

Actors Sanya Malhotra and Amit Sadh are also a part of the project.

Recently, Vidya turned producer when she co-produced the self-starring short film, "Nathkat", which addresses patriarchy and toxic masculinity. The film had its world premiere at the We Are One: A Global Film Festival on June 2.

## Varun Dhawan garners 30mn Instagram followers

**Mumbai/IANS:** Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan's followers on Instagram have risen to 30 million. The actor made the announcement sharing a fan-made video on the photo-video sharing platform.

"30 MILLION #varuniacs... Thank u for believing in me Keep moving on the beat. Thank u @

stevenroythomas for this edit," he posted with the video.

Over the years, Varun has used social media to connect with his fans, sharing tidbits about his professional as well as personal life. During the lockdown amid the Covid outbreak, the actor used the platform to send positive vibes and spread awareness about

the deadly virus.

On the film front, Varun was last seen in dance movie "Street Dancer 3D" this year. His next film is "Coolie No 1" is directed by his father, filmmaker David Dhawan.

"Coolie No 1" is a remake of the Govinda-Karisma Kapoor original the director made in 1995.

## Toronto Film Fest 2020: Priyanka Chopra, Anurag Kashyap invited as ambassadors

**Los Angeles/IANS:** Actress Priyanka Chopra and filmmaker Anurag Kashyap are among global celebrities who have been invited to be ambassadors of the 45th Toronto International Film Festival, slated to take place from September 10 to 19.

"Throughout my career @ TIFFF\_NET has been a second home for me, with many of my films, as both an actor and producer, making their world debut at the festival," Priyanka tweeted with a video with moments of her journey with TIFFF. Even more than that, one of the most exceptional parts of the festival is the fans of cinema who congregate to celebrate the magic of the movies, and who have always embraced me with so

much warmth and love. I am very proud to serve as an ambassador this year, and I look forward to continuing a relationship that I value tremendously."

Other ambassadors include Ava Du Vernay, Darren Aronofsky, Taika Waititi, Nicole Kidman, Martin Scorsese, Nadine Labaki, Alfonso Cuarón, Tinto Goldfine, Riz Ahmed, Rian Johnson, Jason Reitman, Isabelle Huppert, Claire Denis, Atom Egoyan, Viggo Mortensen, Zhang Ziyi, David Oyelowo, Lulu Wang, Rosamund Pike, Sarah Gadon, and Denis Villeneuve.

Amid the pandemic, the fest will have physical screenings and drive-ins, digital screenings, virtual red carpets and press conferences.



**Priyanka Chopra**

"The pandemic has hit TIFFF hard, but we've responded by going back to our original inspiration -- to bring the very best in film to the broadest possible audience," said Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director and Co-Head, TIFFF, in a statement.

## Udaipur Film City turning into a reality

**Jaipur/IANS:** Udaipur, it seems, will finally be getting a Film City in its vicinity. The Rajasthan Chief Minister's Office has written to the Revenue Department requesting suggestions and proposals regarding land allotment in Gogunda, Mukesh Madhwani, Udaipur Film Sangharsh Samiti chairperson, told IANS.

He said Laxman Singh Shekhawat, Joint Secretary, recently wrote to the Principal Secretary, Revenue to provide information regarding the land. The letter was received on July 9, he added.

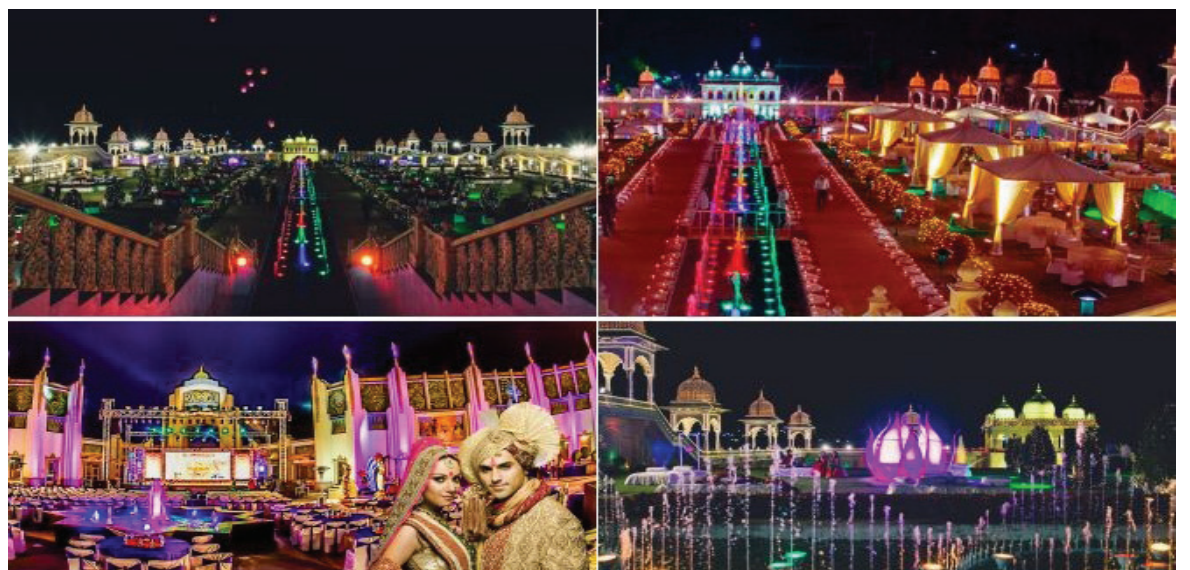
The demand for the Film City in Udaipur has been raised under Madhwani for the last ten years. Initially, there was a challenge

to get the land for the Film City in Udaipur, however, with his persistent efforts in collaboration with the Udaipur administration, the land was finally identified in Gogunda near Udaipur.

The proposal for this land was sent to the state government a few months back and the latter has now renewed its interest in the matter, he said.

"The government is showing a positive attitude and we are just waiting for the announcement", said Madhwani adding that they have investors ready to invest money in the Film City.

Once the project is ready, it will boost tourism and will also generate employment for one lakh people, he said.



The upcoming official Film City in Udaipur will have space to host royal weddings and parties

## Veteran comedian Jagdeep passes away at 81

**Mumbai/IANS:** Veteran Bollywood comedian Jagdeep is no more. He passed away here on July 8 owing to age-related health problems at the age of 81.

Bollywood star Ajay Devgn confirmed the news on social media.

Born on March 29, 1939 as Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed Jafri in Amritsar, Jagdeep acted in over 400 films.

He is best known for his role of SoormaBhopali in Ramesh Sippy's blockbuster "Sholay" (1975). New-generation Bollywood buffs would recall him as Salman Khan's father in Rajkumar Santoshi's "Andaaz Apna Apna" (1994).

Jagdeep started his career as a child artiste in BR Chopra's 1951 release, "Afsana", starring Ashok Kumar, Veena and Pran. As a child artiste he also worked in the Raj

Kapoor-produced "Ab Dilli Door Nahin", KA Abbas's "Munna", Guru Dutt's "Aar Paar", Bimal Roy's "Do Bigha Zamin" and the AVM-produced "Hum PanchiEk Dal Ke". Later, he would make a mark with roles in films such as "Bhabhi" (1957) and "Barkha" (1959).

Jagdeep's golden patch would begin with GP Sippy's 1968 film "Brahmachari", starring Shammi

Kapoor. His comic role in the film was widely appreciated. Through the seventies, eighties and the nineties, he became a familiar face in Hindi films, essaying the goofy funnyman in film after film.

His last-released film is "MastiNahiSasti" in 2017. The Ali Abbas Chaudhary-directed comedy also featured Kader Khan, Shakti Kapoor, Johnny Lever and Prem Chopra.



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