

# INDIA NEWS

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August 1-15, 2020, Vol 1 Issue 3

## GREATER SPRINGFIELD MEDICAL & OFFICE SUITES

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### India to reduce coal imports to zero, says Indian Home Minister

New Delhi/IANS: Indian Home Minister Amit Shah has said India is moving towards reducing coal imports to zero, and the central government has set an ambitious target of one billion tonnes in annual production of coal by 2023-24.

Continued on P 3



India's Home Minister Amit Shah

### Indian Army to grant permanent commission to women officers

New Delhi/IANS: The Indian Army has started the process to grant permanent commission to short service commissioned

women officers in 10 streams. The Ministry of Defence has issued the formal government

Continued on P 3

### Pakistanis and Indians sing 'Vande Mataram' in London protest against China

New Delhi/IANS: Pakistanis singing Indian national song is rare. But July 19 (Sunday) saw quite a few of them joining hundreds of Indians, literally hand-in-hand, in a protest organised outside the Chinese

Embassy in London.

Arif Aajakia, a Pakistani human rights activist who believes in speaking "bitter and naked truth" about his country, shouted "boycott China" and "down with China" along with the members

of several Indian diaspora groups protesting against China's expansionist policies.

"Today was also the first time in my life that I sang Vande

Continued on P 3

### Morrison promises 'targeted' economic support

Canberra/IANS: Prime Minister Scott Morrison flagged major changes to the government's coronavirus support packages, while pledging "targeted" economic backing.

Morrison told reporters recently that the "Jobseeker" and "Jobkeeper" schemes will continue in different forms beyond their planned end date in September, reports Xinhua news

agency.

"It will be targeted, it will be temporary, it will be effective as the first round has been, but we do know that this first round has been very important."

Both the wage subsidy and the boosted unemployment benefit were launched in March as COVID-19 restrictions took their toll on the Australian economy.

Continued on P 3



Prime Minister Scott Morrison

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**Dear India News team,**

With the Australia-India relationship growing from strength to strength, the timing of the launch of the India News platform could not be better. Not only is the bond between Canberra and New Delhi getting closer, but the Indian diaspora in Australia and stronger people-to-people connections can play a significant role in shaping the bilateral relationship in future years.

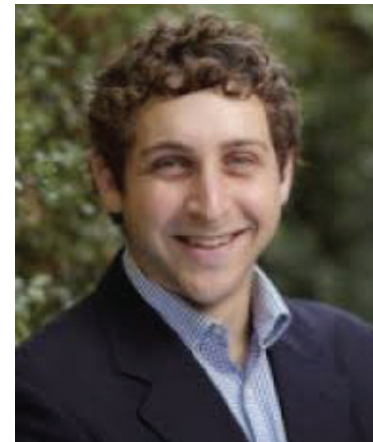
We are confident that India News will provide an avenue for journalists, scholars, and officials from Australia and India to provide fortnightly updates about India, the bilateral relationship, and the activities of the Indian diaspora in Australia.

The Centre for India Australia Studies also looks forward to contributing to this platform moving forward.

Wishing the Indian News team all the best.

**Shaun Star**

Executive Director  
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## India to reduce coal imports to zero, says Indian Home Minister

Continued from P 1

He said that coal Private Sector Units and captive miners have also launched steps to enhance production, while an investment of Rs 1,25,000 crore is envisaged under the Infrastructure Investment Scheme during 2020-24 for which 534 projects have been identified.

Shah was speaking on the occasion of launching the Tree Plantation Campaign 'Vriksharopan Abhiyan' of the Ministry of Coal in India, in the

presence of Indian Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi, in New Delhi. He said the coal sector in India is not only ready to fulfil the growing demand for coal but is equally sensitive towards environmental stability.

"The government is promoting Reclamation and Afforestation in the various coalbed regions. The (Indian) Prime Minister has set up the district mineral fund with a corpus of Rs 39,000 crore for the

development of the mining areas and 35,000 minor projects have been completed."

He said the coal sector is an important pillar of India's economy and will continue to retain its significance in the times to come. During the launch event at his residence, the Indian Home Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of six eco parks and tourism sites. The tree plantation campaign was conducted at more than 130

locations spread in 38 districts of 10 coal or lignite bearing states through video conferencing.

On the occasion, Shah said, "Climate change has impacted the world and only greenery is the solution to this crisis. Our culture has emphasised that one must not exploit nature but instead must support nature."

"The focal mantra of Indian heritage has been that we should harness natural resources and

not exploit them. We ignored this principle at our own peril, leading to depletion of the ozone layer and forming of ozone hole, which in turn resulted in global warming and climate change. There is only one solution to this problem and one that has been mentioned in the 'Puranas' by sages that trees are friends of mankind and only greenery can get us out of this crisis," Shah said.

## Indian Army to grant permanent commission to women officers

Continued from P 1

sanction letter for grant of permanent commission to women

officers in the Indian Army, paving the way for empowering

women officers to shoulder larger roles in the organisation.

The order specifies grant of permanent commission to short service commissioned women officers in all 10 streams of the Indian Army - Army Air Defence, Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, and Intelligence Corps in addition to the existing streams of Judge and Advocate General and Army Educational Corps.

In anticipation, the Army Headquarters had set in motion a series of preparatory actions for conduct of the Permanent Commission Selection Board for affected women officers. The Selection Board will be scheduled as soon as all affected

short service commission women officers exercise their option and complete requisite documentation.

It was after the Supreme Court ordered the Indian Army in February this year to grant permanent commission to women officers within three months, that the Army started the process to give serving women officers a bigger role.

A bench comprising Justices D Y Chandrachud and Ajay Rastogi, said, "Short service commission (SSC) women officers, both within the period of fourteen years' service and beyond, should equally be entitled to consideration for the grant of PCs." The court insisted on shaking off typical arguments founded on the physical strengths

and weaknesses of men and women and on assumptions about women in the social context of marriage and family that do not constitute a constitutionally valid basis for denying equal opportunity to women officers.

"To cast aspersion on their abilities on the ground of gender is an affront not only to their dignity as women but to the dignity of the members of the Indian Army - men and women who serve as equal citizens in a common mission," noted the top court.

The Indian Army then had stated that all women officers serving in the force from now on would be considered for permanent commission.



## Pakistanis and Indians sing 'Vande Mataram' in London protest against China

Continued from P 1

Mataram," said Aajakia.

Joining him also was Amjad Ayub Mirza, who hails from Mirpur in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), a few others from Karachi and many from Iran, all pretty upset with China meddling in their affairs too.

"I have travelled all the way from Glasgow for this protest. I am from PoK, an Indian living under Pakistani occupation. The Chinese are wreaking havoc across Gilgit-Baltistan through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the Pakistani government continues to work hand in glove with them," said Mirza, who has been quite vocal against oppression and injustice meted out to the people of PoK by

Pakistani authorities.

The Indians who've organised similar protests against China in the US, Canada and other parts of the world, carried posters and placards against Chinese President Xi Jinping asking him to control his overambitious power play.

The growing outrage against China is quite visible on the streets of London too. In fact, July 18 night saw an image reading 'Free Tibet, Free Hong Kong, Free Uyghurs' projected onto the Chinese Embassy building in central London.

With the US sanctioning the Chinese government and its officials for their connection to serious human rights abuse

against ethnic Uyghur Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, the world condemning China's 'brutal, sweeping crackdown' against Hong Kong's people, Indians boycotting Chinese products after People's Liberation Army intruded the Indian territory and killed Indian soldiers in Ladakh's Galwan Valley and countries from Japan till Australia up against the dragon, the noose is gradually tightening around the authoritarian regime.



## Morrison promises 'targeted' economic support

Continued from P 1

A total of 12,069 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Australia while 8,392 have recovered, according to the latest figures from the Department of Health.

The national death toll has risen to 123 after a woman in her 80s died in Victoria state.

Victoria authorities have confirmed 275 new cases

and reclassified 29 that were previously diagnosed, resulting in a net increase of 246 cases.

There were 20 new cases in New South Wales (NSW), all of which

were from known sources, and one in Queensland.

The NSW health authorities said recently that there have been 48 confirmed cases linked to

the Crossroads Hotel cluster in Casula, about 35 km southwest of the Sydney central business district.





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## India slams Pakistan for blocking all avenues in Jadhav case



**Kulbhushan Jadhav**

**New Delhi/IANS:** In a scathing admonition of Pakistan, the Indian government on June 23 said that Islamabad has blocked all the avenues for an effective remedy available for India in the Kulbhushan Jadhav case.

Jadhav is an Indian national detained by Pakistan since 2016 after he was kidnapped from Iran. Islamabad has alleged that he is an Indian spy and was involved in subversive activities in Pakistan.

During his weekly briefing, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said that Pakistan is not only in violation of the judgment of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), but also of its own ordinance.

"Pakistan has completely failed to provide the remedy as directed by the ICJ and India reserves its position in the matter, including its rights to avail further

remedies," he said.

India has so far requested consular access 12 times over the past one year. However, Pakistan has not provided an unimpeded consular access yet. The meeting of consular officers with Jadhav on July 16 was "scuttled by Pakistan authorities", Srivastava said.

The consular officers, he said, were instructed not to hand over any document to Jadhav. As a result, the Indian consular officers could not obtain a power of attorney from Jadhav.

India has repeatedly requested Pakistan for relevant documents related to the case of Jadhav. Pakistan advised India that the relevant documents could be handed over only to an authorised Pakistani lawyer. Thereafter, India appointed a Pakistani lawyer to obtain the relevant documents.

Pakistan, the spokesperson said, also created confusion over the last date of filing a petition. Initially, they indicated that a petition has to be filed by no later than July 19. Subsequently, Pakistan indicated that the time limit to file a review petition shall expire on July 20.

Knowing the inadequacies and shortcomings in the ordinance, India had already shared its concerns earlier in July, including a considerable delay in informing India about its promulgation, with the Pakistan authorities.

## US top cyber diplomat urges global telecom operators to follow Jio model

**New York/IANS:** The United States is urging telecom operators around the world to follow the Indian company Reliance Jio's template of developing homegrown 5G solutions, while delivering stinging criticism against Chinese telecom giant Huawei and the consequences of "untrusted" Chinese components in 5G infrastructure.

"I think the lesson of Reliance Jio is that there's nothing mystical about 5G technology. It has the same types of components that 4G technology has; it's just evolved to another level," Robert L. Strayer, a top US cyber diplomat, told IANS.

Strayer was offering the US assessment of Jio's 100 per cent Made-in-India 5G solution, announced July 15 by Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani at the company's 43rd AGM.

Strayer is the US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Cyber and International Communications and Information Policy. He leads development of international cybersecurity, Internet, data, and privacy policy and negotiations with foreign governments for the United States. A big part of Strayer's job involves getting allies and other countries over to the US side to invest in non-Huawei equipment and components for 5G networks.

Asked specifically what Airtel, Voda Idea, BSNL should do given dependencies on Chinese gear, Strayer spoke to the realities of technology life cycle and depreciation as a way to "migrate"

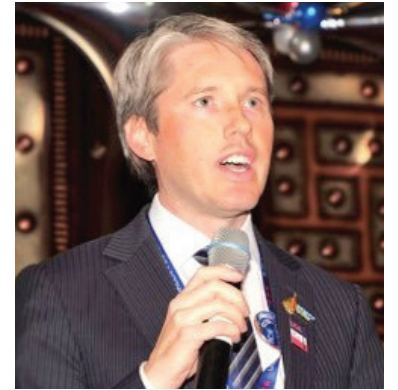
away from "untrusted vendors to trusted vendors".

"Our campaign is focused on the move to 5G, but we realize the legacy 3G and 4G infrastructure will underpin the move to 5G. So we do encourage governments and telecom operators just to look at how they can start moving, migrating away -- that is, from untrusted vendors to trusted vendors."

The US has praised Telefonica in Spain, Orange in France, Jio in India, Telstra in Australia, SK and KT in South Korea, NTT in Japan, and the telecom operators in Canada and Singapore for their decision to only use "trusted vendors" in their 5G deployments. Strayer's comments come on the same day that US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in London tore into China for its "untrusted" IT vendors, such as Huawei and ZTE, "broken promises" and what he called threats and bullying against India.

Speaking on the Jio model of zero Chinese inputs, Strayer laid out the market opportunities for indigenous production in India as a "global market" of components between the antenna, base stations, backhaul, core servers and management of the network itself.

"The consequences of 5G deployment choices made during the next year or so by government and by telecom operators will be felt for years, if not decades, to come," Strayer said.



**Robert L. Strayer, top US cyber diplomat**

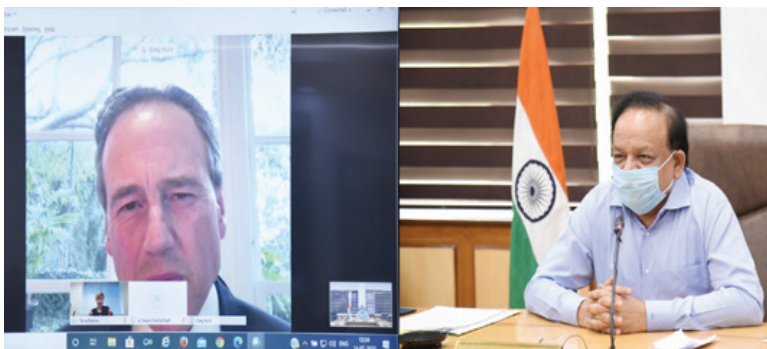
Echoing Pompeo's refrain, Strayer said "the tide is turning against Huawei". The world is waking up, he said, to the "dangers of the Chinese Communist Party's surveillance state and suppression of information.

Starting April 29, 2020, the US announced that it would require what it calls a "Clean Path" for all 5G network traffic entering and exiting US diplomatic facilities.

The US defines the 5G Clean Path as an end-to-end communication path that does not use any transmission, control, computing, or storage equipment from "untrusted IT vendors" such as Huawei and ZTE.

"Allowing untrusted, high-risk vendors such as Huawei and ZTE into any part of 5G networks makes critical systems vulnerable to disruption, manipulation, and espionage while putting sensitive government, commercial, and personal information at risk," Strayer said.

## Indian healthcare sector to reach \$275 billion mark by 2030: India's Health Minister Harsh Vardhan



**New Delhi/IANS:** Expressing readiness to work together with Australia in healthcare, India's Health and Family Welfare Minister Harsh Vardhan said recently that in India, this sector is expected to achieve the \$275 billion mark by 2030.

In a digital interaction with his Australian counterpart Gregory Andrew Hunt to discuss bilateral health cooperation, he noted that

"while Australia has one of the best healthcare systems of the developed world, healthcare in India is one of the fastest growing sectors expected to hit a \$275 billion mark in the next 10 years".

"India's domestic demand is expected to engine the growth regardless of any turbulence in the global economy. India also offers vast opportunities in R&D and medical tourism," he said.

Harsh Vardhan also noted that India's traditional holistic medical systems like ayurveda and yoga can help Australia curb obesity and related diseases.

Elaborating on "health as a social movement" approach of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said India's universal healthcare coverage (under Ayushman Bharat) covers a massive 100 million families and that 10 million individuals have benefitted in the last year alone.

"India is committed to eliminating TB by the year 2025 and has also undertaken efforts for mass screening of non-communicable diseases like hypertension, cancer of breast, lung, throat and mouth.

"India has also made strides in implementing the Digital Health Blueprint to modernise the health sector and enable streamlined

delivery of services to the last citizen; affordable medicines that treat cancer and cardio-vascular ailments and cardiac implants are made available to the poorest of the poor under the (Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) programme," Harsh Vardhan said. He also said that India's drug manufacturers have also enabled the country to supply hydroxychloroquine to 140 countries.

Hunt stated that Australia's Universal Telemedicine has helped tackle 19 million cases so far.

Acknowledging India's huge role in supplying inexpensive generic drugs supplying 60 per cent of the world's medicine, he expanded on how India could help Australia in researching new medicines for

rare diseases using genomics and stem cell technology.

Both the Health Ministers agreed to continue to jointly work in the area of health and other common interests.

India and Australia had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of health and medicine on April 10, 2017. Covering areas like the management of communicable diseases like malaria and tuberculosis, mental health and non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, regulation of pharmaceuticals, vaccines and medical devices and digitisation of health infrastructure, the MoU also covers response to public health emergencies like the present Covid pandemic.



# LAC: India prepares for fresh hostilities after Chinese troops pause pullback

**New Delhi/IANS:** The disengagement between India and China hit a roadblock in eastern Ladakh as Chinese troops have not moved back from the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in line with the consensus arrived at during the disengagement talks between both the countries. Seeing this, the Indian Army prepares for a long haul and harsh winter for the high-altitude region.

A massive logistical exercise has started to provide adequate rations and other supplies to its soldiers as the friction areas still remain volatile.

China is not complying with the roadmap for a complete pullback, which was drawn out during the Corps Commander level meet on July 14. The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops have not moved back.

The Indian security establishments said that the Chinese retreated a bit and then returned; so there is a need for "constant verification" of the consensus achieved during the meetings between the Indian and Chinese military delegates.

It has been found that the Indian and Chinese troops have pulled back at Pangong Lake by two km and Finger 4 is empty. However, the Chinese are still camping on the ridge line. This clearly indicates that the Chinese had camped at Finger 4 that had traditionally been under the Indian control.

The Chinese had come in eight km into the Indian territory, all the way till Finger 4 from Finger



8. India maintains that the LAC runs through Finger 8. Mountain spurs jutting into the lake are referred to as fingers.

In Galwan Valley, which is called Patrolling Point 14, distance between Indian and Chinese troops is three km. At Patrolling Point 15, the distance between troops is around eight km.

But in Hot Springs, that is Patrolling Point 17, 40-50 troops on both sides are just 600-800 meters apart. The Chinese Army had retreated as per the consensus, but again returned.

Seeing the Chinese approach, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh while reviewing the Indian Air Force's operational capabilities and deployments at forward locations on July 22 urged the force to stand ready to handle any eventuality on the border with China.

Singh had said during his address at the inaugural session of the three-day Air Force Commanders' Conference in New Delhi that started on July 22.

The minister, during his visit to Ladakh recently said that India wants peace but there is no guarantee of the final outcome of talks with China. Singh also reviewed the ground situation in the hostile border areas.

India and China are engaged in military and diplomatic deliberations to deescalate the tense situation in the border areas in Ladakh. The countries are locked in a 10-week-long standoff at multiple points, hitherto unprecedented along the border.

The Indian delegation's main agenda at the meet was the complete PLA pullback from the Pangong Lake, Depsang and other areas in eastern Ladakh.

China had changed the status quo on the LAC at various places, moving inside the Indian territories. India has objected to it and is taking up the matter with China at all levels.

On June 15, as many as 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops were killed in a violent clash in the Galwan Valley.

# No plans to expand 'strategic areas': J&K administration

**Srinagar/IANS:** The Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration in India said recently there had been no decision to either transfer any new land or declare areas outside cantonments or army land as strategic.

Stating that the transfer, both acquisition or requisitions, continues to be governed by the existing law, the administration said it was "the stated policy of the government to regulate and harmonize the requirement of land by the armed forces to meet the competing demands of development and internal security."

The clarification was issued to tackle the "misinformation being spread on regulating construction in 'strategic areas' for armed forces for their operational requirements."

The J&K administration said it

had recently approved a special dispensation for regulating construction in "strategic areas", required for direct operational and training requirements of the armed forces.

"Some misgivings have been expressed in the media. A few political parties are deliberately misleading people as if land is being transferred to armed forces and entire J&K is being turned into a military establishment," it said.

"All these are baseless comments, being made without reading facts," it said.

The decision simply meant that in the notified "strategic areas" within the existing armed forces land, the responsibility of ensuring construction as per the Developmental Control Regulation of the Master Plan and observing the environmental

safeguards had been delegated to the armed forces, the J&K administration said.

Adequate safeguards had been kept to prevent misuse of the provisions. Only an army authority, not below the rank of Corps Commander, could make a request to the government for earmarking such area as strategic only for direct operational and training needs of the armed forces, it said.

"The special dispensation neither gives any powers to the armed forces to acquire more land in J&K, nor does it allow them any unbridled powers, without observing environment safeguards and the Developmental Control Regulations of the Master Plan. It only facilitates fast-tracking of construction of strategic assets, while observing all norms," the J&K administration said.

# India's North East can become country's growth engine, says PM Modi

**Imphal/IANS:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 23 said that peace has been established in the country's northeastern region, asserting that the region has the potential to become India's growth engine.

"Road blockades have become a part of history in Manipur, the decades old violence in Assam has ended. In Mizoram and Tripura, youths also have deserted the path of violence and the Bru-Reang refugees (belonging to Mizoram) are now heading for a better life," the Indian Prime Minister said after laying the foundation stone of the Manipur water supply project via video link from Delhi.

He said that the Indian government has been making constant efforts to further develop the region and connectivity and other infrastructure, including highways, railways and airports. "The laying of the foundation stone for the vital water supply project is an example of the fact that despite the abnormal situation triggered by the novel coronavirus, the government has not stopped working for the development and growth," Modi said.

An externally-funded Manipur Water Supply Project is designed to provide Freshwater Household Tap Connections to remaining households in Greater Imphal planning area, 25 towns and to 1,731 rural habitations, covering 2,80,756 households in 16 districts. The Indian Prime Minister said, "Until a vaccine is developed to cure the COVID-19, we have to robustly fight against the infectious virus and the developmental works also to be carried forward vigorously."

Saying that better life is also directly linked to connectivity, he said that the connectivity of northeast is essential for a secure and sure 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. He said this would give a fillip to India's 'Act East Policy' and that it would also provide a gateway to the country's travel and tourism sector. The Indian Prime Minister said that modern infrastructures are being developed in the northeast along with roadways, highways, airways, waterways and i-ways as well as gas pipelines.

"In the last six years, thousands of crores of rupees have been invested in the development of infrastructure, in the entire northeast," Modi said.

"Efforts have been made to connect the four capitals of the northeastern states, two lane roads to the district headquarters and all weather roads to the villages. To achieve this, about 3,000 km of roads have been laid and projects are being implemented to lay another



**Indian PM Narendra Modi**

60,000 km of roads," the Indian Prime Minister added. He said there is a huge improvement in the area of rail connectivity in the northeast with projects to build new railway stations and convert the existing rail network into broad gauge.

"The work of connecting the capitals of every state of the northeast with a rail network is going on at a fast pace for the last two years. Apart from roads and railways, the air connectivity of the North East is equally important. Today there are about 13 operational airports in the North East. More than three thousand crore rupees are being spent to modernise the existing airports in the North East, including Imphal Airport," Modi said.

Modi also referred to the more than 20 national waterways, including the ones in the northeast region providing a seamless connectivity.

Funded by the New Development Bank, the Rs 3054.58 crore Water Supply Project is part of the Indian Central government's 'Jal Jeevan Mission' to provide safe drinking water to every rural household by 2024. The Indian Central government has provided funds under the mission to Manipur for functional household tap connections (FHTCs) to cover 1,185 habitations with 1,42,749 households. The Manipur government has planned to cover the remaining households through additional sources of funding, including funds from the Department for Development of North Eastern Region.

"The Manipur Water Supply Project is an important component of the state government's efforts to achieve the goal of 'Har Ghar Jal' by 2024," said a government statement.

The 'Jal Jeevan Mission' aims to create a 'Jan Andolan' for water, thereby making it everyone's priority. The official statement said that there are about 19 crore households in India out of which only 24 per cent have FHTCs. The Mission aims to provide 14,33,21,049 households with FHTC through partnership of all stakeholders, including the state governments, Panchayati Raj institutions and local communities.



SAVE A LIFE – JOIN THE STEM CELL REGISTRY!

WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTRY & WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

• Many people who have a blood cancer or other type of blood disorder rely on having a bone marrow transplant, also known as a stem cell transplant as their chance for a cure. This means they need to find a stem cell match.

• The Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR/blood stem cell registry) is a register that people voluntarily join, so doctors can search for lifesaving stem cell matches for cancer patients.

WHY IS MATCHING AND ETHNICITY IMPORTANT?

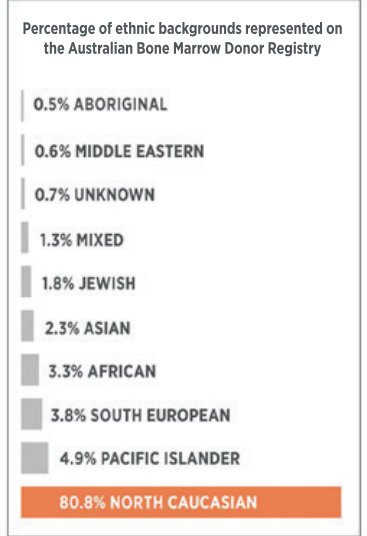
• A patient is more likely to find their match with someone who shares a similar ethnic or indigenous heritage as them.

• It is extremely difficult for a patient with an ethnic or indigenous heritage find their lifesaving match.

• It's difficult because 81% of people on the ABMDR are of North Caucasian background and the rest of the ethnic groups are split across tiny percentages.



• Only 30% of patients find their match with a family member, the other 70% rely on finding their match on the Australian or worldwide stem cell registries.



www.urthecure.com.au  
info@urthecure.com.au

UR the Cure Inc 2015  
ABN 77 318 048 582

In partnership with the ABMDR and Strength to Give



HOW TO JOIN THE BLOOD STEM CELL REGISTRY

Joining is easy & free - simply swab your cheek & your saliva sample will be tested & added to The Registry!

1. Order your cheek swab kit online:  
[www.urthecure.com.au/swab](http://www.urthecure.com.au/swab)



2. Once your kit arrives in the mail, swab your cheek. Fill in the forms and mail it back to The Registry.

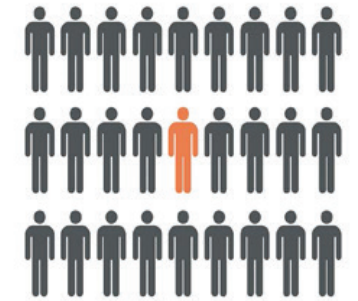
We need people to join who are:

- Aged between 18 to 35 (up to 45 is OK)
- Have a culturally diverse background
- Males are ideal (any background is OK)
- Females with a culturally diverse background

Learn more about why these characteristics make the best donors by visiting the website

HOW OFTEN WILL YOU BE SOMEONE'S MATCH?

• Only 1 in 1500 Australians are a match in any given year. Although the chance of being matched is low, by simply joining gives hope to many patients.



• You are not obligated to donate your stem cells when you are contacted. However once the patient receives their high dose chemotherapy, this is the "point of no return" as the patient would not survive without receiving the stem cells. You need to be prepared to show a level of commitment when you join as it's unfair for patients to receive false hope.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU ARE SOMEONE'S MATCH

• Donating your stem cells is made easy these days and is not as scary as it sounds.

• Stem cells can usually be taken straight from the blood stream, much like in a blood donation.

• A small daily injection is given 4 days prior to the stem cell collection day. It's safe and harmless and allows stem cells to flow through the blood stream.

• On the stem cell collection day, the non-surgical procedure takes 3-4 hours and you can often watch TV or read a book during it and return to normal activities afterwards.

• For more information about what's involved during the donation process please visit the website below.



The CURE to some blood cancers is in YOUR body! You just need to join The Registry to be searched and matched with a patient in need!

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# Kashmir's carpet industry faces decline, weavers opt for menial jobs

**Srinagar/IANS:** The iconic carpet industry of Kashmir is facing a sharp decline forcing most carpet weavers to take up odd jobs for earning their livelihood.

At Gada-khud village in Bandipore, 30 km from Srinagar, majority of the 400 households are carpet weavers. But with most handlooms shut the carpet weavers have taken up menial jobs.

The weavers say demonetisation, abrogation of Article 370 and the economic downturn due to ongoing pandemic have dealt a big blow to Kashmir's multi-crore carpet industry.

For years Nazir Ahmad with five of his family members have been weaving carpets at a handloom in their house. But with hardly any buyers during the last one year they have stopped making carpets.

"We are facing major losses and not able to earn anything. We haven't made a single carpet in the last one year," Nazir Ahmad said. "We don't get good rates



for carpets, so we have stopped making carpets."

The acute financial crisis has forced Nazir Ahmad's son Mohammad Hussain to move to Srinagar to work as a labourer.

"There is no other option for me. I earn Rs 400 daily as a labourer which is barely enough to meet the expenses of the family," says Hussain.

According to estimates one lakh people were associated with

carpet making in Kashmir.

"The COVID-19 induced lockdown following the abrogation of Article 370 caused a sharp decline in the number of tourists coming to Kashmir, which also impacted the carpet business," said Ghulam Mohammad, a carpet trader.

"The exporters are also telling us that there are no buyers for carpets. But we are hoping that things will improve," said Mohammad.

# Assam flood situation grim again, death toll rises to 89

**Guwahati/IANS:** After a marginal improvement the flood situation in the Indian state of Assam again deteriorated on July 22 while two more persons died in Barpeta and Morigaon districts, taking the death toll to 89, while around 26.32 lakh people in 26 of the state's 33 districts continue to be hit.

According to the Forest Department and the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) officials, at least 120 animals have been killed in floods and 147 rescued even as 90 per cent of the 430 sq km, world-famous Kaziranga National Park, home to more than 2,200 one-horned Indian rhinoceros, remained inundated.

ASDMA officials said that of the 26.32 lakh people currently affected, over 16.52 lakh are only in five western districts of Goalpara (468,460), Barpeta (381,522), Morigaon (308,571), Dhubri (278,041) and South Sakmara (216,207).

They said that the floods -- which have inundated the state for over a month now -- had claimed 89 lives so far in Kamrup (Metro), Baksa, South Salmara, Darrang, Sonitpur, Biswanath, Tinsukia, Lakhimpur, Bongaigaon, Kamrup, Golaghat, Sivasagar, Morigaon, Dhubri, Nagaon, Nalbari, Barpeta, Dhemaji, Udalguri, Goalpara and Dibrugarh districts, while



Assam's flood situation is grim again

26 others were killed in separate landslides since May 22.

The ASDMA officials said that besides the Brahmaputra, as many as seven more rivers -- Dhansiri, JiaBharali, Kopili, Beki, Kushiyara, Sankosh, Dharamtul -- are flowing above the danger mark in large number of places in 12 districts. Over 2,525 villages and 115,515 hectares of crop area in 26 districts have been flooded.

The district administrations have set up 391 relief camps and distribution centres in 26 districts, where around 45,300 men, women and children have taken shelter.

Of the 26 affected districts, 15 -- Dhubri, Goalpara, Barpeta, Morigaon, South Sakmara, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Darrang, Nalbari, Kamrup (Metro), Kamrup

(Rural), Nagaon, Golaghat, Majuli, Bongaigaon -- are the worst-hit.

Besides erosion of river banks at large number of places, roads, embankments, bridges, culverts and other infrastructure were damaged at many locations in 24 districts, the officials said, adding that hundreds of houses were fully or partially damaged due to the floods.

Around 14 lakh domesticated animals and over eight lakh poultry birds were affected. Besides Kaziranga National Park, located on edge of the eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspots of Golaghat and Nagaon districts, the Manas, R.G. Orang and Tinsukia national parks, the Pabitora and Tinsukia wildlife sanctuaries were also affected.



# Make in India: Emerging Opportunities

As world economies restart their engines in a bid to regain lost ground due to the Covid-19 pandemic, India too shows signs of economic buoyancy and promise. India's Make in India initiative holds a key to the global economic revival, something that should interest Australian government ministries, corporate sector, entrepreneurs, institutions seeking R&D collaborations and Australia Inc in general, among others. India assumes greater importance as several major world economies including American, Japanese, German, British and South Korean look to move out and diversify their businesses from China. 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). Over the following weeks WATCH THIS SPACE of India News for emerging opportunities across 30 sectors in India, starting with pharmaceuticals, biotechnology and health in this edition.

## Pharmaceuticals: Sector beholding immense opportunities for investors

India is a prominent and rapidly growing presence in global pharmaceuticals. It is the largest provider of generic medicines globally, occupying a 20% share in global supply by volume, and also supplies 62% of global demand for vaccines. India ranks 3rd worldwide for production by volume and 10th by value. India is the only country with largest number of US-FDA compliant Pharma plants (more than 262 including APIs) outside of USA. India has nearly 1400 WHO-GMP approved Pharma Plants, 253 European Directorate of Quality Medicines (EDQM) approved plants with modern state of the art Technology.

India is the source of 60,000 generic brands across 60 therapeutic categories and manufactures more than 500 different Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs). The API industry is ranked third largest in the world contributing 57% of APIs to prequalified list of the WHO.

The country is home to more than 3,000 pharma companies with a strong network of over 10,500 manufacturing facilities. The domestic pharmaceuticals market turnover reached \$20.03 bn in 2019, up 9.3% from 2018, growing as penetration of health insurance and pharmacies rise.

## The pharmaceutical industry was valued at \$36 bn (2018-2019).

Generic drugs, with 71% market share, form the largest segment of the Pharmaceutical industry in India. This is set to grow as exports of generics to the US rise, as branded drugs worth US\$ 55 billion will become off-patent during 2017-2019. In the domestic market by revenue, Anti-Infectives (13.6%), Cardiac (12.4%) and Gastrointestinal (11.5%) had the biggest market share.

- From 2018-19, India's pharmaceuticals exports were worth \$19.3 bn with a growth of 10.72% year on year

- India holds 12% of all global manufacturing sites catering to US market

- The cost of manufacturing in India is approximately 33% lower than that of the US

- 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield pharma

- 100% FDI is allowed in brownfield pharma; wherein 74% is allowed under the automatic route and thereafter through government approval route

## Biotechnology: Leading the charge in vaccine development

India is among the top 12 destinations for biotechnology in the world, with approximately 3% share in the global Biotechnology industry. India is also the leader in the global supply of DPT, BCG and measles vaccines.

The Biotechnology industry in India comprises of 2700+ Biotech start-ups and it expects to grow up to 10,000 by the year 2024. There are more than 2500+ Biotech companies in India.

India has the highest number of US FDA approved plants (665) outside of the US as well as 44% of global abbreviated new drug applications (ANDA) and over 1400 manufacturing plants compliant with WHO.

- By 2025, the Indian Biotechnology industry is expected to reach \$150 bn

- By 2025, the contribution of the Indian biotechnology industry in the global biotechnology market is expected to grow to 19% from 3% in 2017

- 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield pharma.

- 100% FDI is allowed under the government route for brownfield pharma in upto 74% FDI is under automatic route and beyond 74% is under the government approval route.

- FDI up to 100% is allowed under the automatic route for the manufacturing of medical devices

## Health: Towards a healthier India

Healthcare industry in India comprises of hospitals, medical devices, clinical trials, outsourcing, telemedicine, medical tourism, health insurance and medical equipment. The industry is growing at a tremendous pace owing to its strengthening coverage, services and increasing expenditure by public as well as private players.

Growing incidence of lifestyle diseases, rising demand for affordable healthcare delivery systems due to the increasing healthcare costs, technological advancements, the emergence of telemedicine, rapid health insurance penetration and government initiatives like e-health together with tax benefits and incentives are driving healthcare market in India.

- By 2020, India is expected to rank amongst the top 3 healthcare markets in terms of incremental growth

- By 2020, the healthcare information technology market is



expected to grow 1.5 times from current \$1 bn

- By 2022, the diagnostics market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 20.4% to reach \$32 bn from \$5 bn in 2012

- During 2015-20, the in-patient market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13%

- By 2020, the Indian telemedicine market is expected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 20% to reach \$32 mn from \$15 mn

- 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for greenfield projects. For investments in brownfield projects, up to 100% FDI is permitted under the government route

## Medical Devices: Leading innovation for improved health

The medical devices industry in India consists of large multinationals as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) growing at an unprecedented scale.

The current market size of the medical devices industry in India is estimated to be \$11 bn.

India's medical devices industry is poised for significant growth in the next five years:

- The market size is expected to reach \$50 bn by 2025

- 100% FDI is allowed under the automatic route for both brownfield and greenfield setups. Strong FDI inflows reflect the confidence of global players in the Indian market

- Since April 2000, \$2.1 bn in FDI
- Of this, \$600 mn was received in the last 5 years

- Singapore, United States, Europe, and Japan are key investors

- Equipment & Instruments, Consumables and Implants have attracted most FDI

**Imports: \$6.2 bn, Exports: \$2.1 bn (2018-19) India's expected export of medical devices will reach ~ \$10 bn by 2025. Overall**

## import dependency of 75 – 80% in India.

The Government of India has taken several steps to ensure the growth of a vibrant ecosystem of medical devices manufacturing in India over the past 5 years:

- Recognized Medical Devices as a sunrise sector under Make in India campaign, 2014

- The Medical Devices Rule of 2017

- Adopted risk-based

- All Implants including implantable electronic devices like Cochlear Implants and Pacemakers.

- Funding for Medical Devices Parks in the country, 2020

- Financing Common Infrastructure Facilities in 4 Medical Device Parks with financial implications of Rs. 400 crores.

- A maximum grant-in-aid of Rs.100 crore per park will be



## IANS

classification based on GHT guidelines: Classes A, B, C, D

- Perpetual licences for manufacturers

- The Medical Devices Amendment Rules of 2020 bring all medical devices in India under regulation as drugs

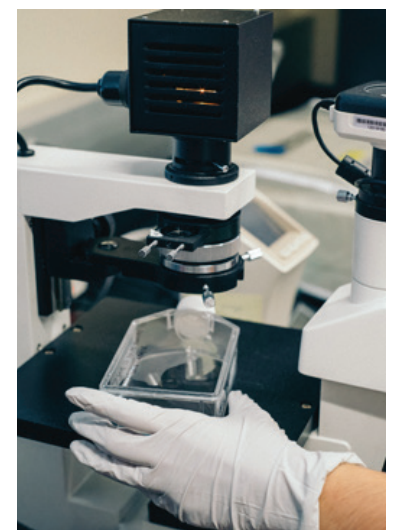
- A Productions Linked Incentives Scheme for Medical Devices, 2020

- Incentive @ 5% of incremental sales over the base year 2019-20 will be provided on the segments of medical devices identified

- Cancer care/Radiotherapy medical devices

- Radiology & Imaging medical devices (both ionizing & non-ionizing radiation products) and Nuclear Imaging Devices

- Anaesthetics & Cardio-Respiratory medical devices including Catheters of Cardiorespiratory Category & Renal Care Medical Devices



## Courtesy Unsplash

provided to the States

- Expected to reduce the manufacturing cost of medical devices in the country

**Source:** INVEST INDIA, Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India



# Despite hardships amid lockdown, Australia's Indian community exemplifies resilience, optimism and solidarity

*As Covid-19 cases began to surge again in Australia, parts of the country such as the state of Victoria had to enter a new phase of lockdown; but even in these trying times the Indian folks in Australia have kept up their spirits*

By Deepika Banerjee

Melbourne, Victoria, entered a six-week-long hard lockdown in the second week of July due to a sudden uptick in Covid-19 positive cases triggering a new phase of uncertainty for the inhabitants among whom there are many Indians. However, their resilience, positive outlook and enterprising attitude have helped many of them to brave this adversity.

## Close engagement with community and virtual adaptability for business sustenance



Melbourne-based fashion business "Deida" owner, Samita Bhattacharjee (right) with her daughter, Shilpi

Melbourne-based entrepreneur Samita Bhattacharjee is one who has taken the lockdown in her stride. Her fashion label "Deidaa" was one of the Australian fashion businesses selected to showcase at World Boutique, Hong Kong, in January 2014. Talking to India News recently she said, "We were on the verge of taking a big leap in 2020 with our business, when COVID struck. Some of our big clients put their orders on hold. We had to take stock of the situation, reinvent and reboot. One of our shipments was delayed. The client, a long time Deidaa regular, was patient and understanding about the delay. We nurture our clients and build strong relationships with them. The bonds we forge with our clients over a period of time stood us in good stead through COVID. There were no cancellations. All our invoices were honoured. Our clients are now coming back to us with wholesale orders."

Regarding the innovative steps taken to safeguard "Deidaa" against the effects of the lockdown, she mentioned that they introduced and developed products that supported working from home, homeschooling children, and home bound activities like cooking. Some of their products double up as teaching and learning aids, and have been very popular with children.

About the strategy her business adopts to withstand crises, Samita said, "Deidaa interacts closely and

gives back to the community, be it the bushfires or the pandemic. We have revived Deidaa's YouTube channel, deidaasecogiftsonline. We are uploading videos that have a strong community focus. We record conversations with wellness experts, master chefs and stay at home mums and upload these videos on YouTube. We give tips on organic living, homeschooling children, COVID management, online conferencing and other relevant topics. I appear on Facebook Live every Sunday. This is an opportunity for my viewers and followers to interact with me personally, share comments and ask questions. At Deidaa we are inclusive. We urge our clients and followers to contribute to our various initiatives e.g., the Plastic Free July challenge, thus enhancing wellness and positive engagement."

As far as her family and friends are concerned, Samita says that her husband, who is a health professional, has to go for work physically but her daughter Shilpi and her partner, who are insurance and IT professionals, respectively, are working from home. They are maintaining their fitness levels through Yoga and exercises, while their dog Simba is a source of joy to all of them. Acknowledging the necessity of the current lockdown, Samita, however mentions that unfortunately some of her friends have been stood down from their jobs and many have had to put up with radical changes.

## UNITED SIKHS providing succour to those in dire straits

Ever since the Covid-19 pandemic created financial constraints for international students and those with temporary work visa permit in Australia, many Sikh volunteer groups have been at the forefront providing them free meals, grocery items and other essential commodities. One such non-profit organization, which epitomizes the Sikh concept of 'seva' that is "selfless community work, is UNITED SIKHS, which is affiliated to the United Nations Organisation. The social group has several chapters across USA, Europe and other parts of the world. It launched its Australia chapter of Guru Nanak's Free Community Kitchen and Pantry, a global initiative on 23 May, 2020 in West Melbourne, Victoria, in collaboration with Wyndham Park Community Centre and has been providing free meals and grocery items to the families which have been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis.

Gurvinder Singh, Director from Australia of UNITED SIKHS, has stated that the Free Community Kitchen is all about equality, sharing and loving, and it gives him and the other volunteers a feeling of contentment to see people from different religions, caste and creed coming and eating together. He also mentioned that since lots of people have either lost their jobs due to the Covid crisis or



UNITED SIKHS

have been compelled to work for reduced hours, their earnings have plummeted. Thus, there has been a rise in the demand for freshly cooked hot meals and grocery in the Wyndham community, especially among the vulnerable sections comprising international students, elderly people, aboriginals and homeless people.

Regarding the currently prevailing lockdown in Melbourne, Gurvinder Singh told India News, "We are distributing free PPE kits and facemasks which have become mandatory and those found without these

will have to pay a fine of \$200. Moreover, we are also adding Vitamin C supplements along with our grocery delivery which will help in boosting the immune system to fight coronavirus. Apart from this, free hand sanitizers are being given away at Gurudwaras and other public places. Also, we are educating people via our social media platforms about the need to maintain social distancing, use of sanitizers and hand-wash as well as staying at home unless it is absolutely necessary to step out and urging people to follow the government guidelines."

## Staying positive and embracing the trying times

Lockdowns are not easy to negotiate. However, if you are associated with providing healthcare services, your responsibilities increase manifold and go beyond your own personal wellbeing. In this regard Melbourne-based nurse Muskaan Puri who believes in keeping a positive outlook has observed that the experience of living and working through the pandemic has definitely been a scary one. Nevertheless she has a different take on the time she spent during self-isolation. She has utilized the period during the lockdown constructively by spending quality time in catching up with her leisure pursuits such as cooking, reading books and following up with the latest trends.

When asked about her personal take on the lockdown and her role as a healthcare professional, she said, "Being an essential worker, I would have to return to work sooner than I anticipated. There's a lot of psychological distress revolving around isolation from friends and family as well. At the same time, it's a great way to stay put and rise stronger with a more methodical approach. It is a matter of pride to be able to make a contribution in even the slightest way possible. The only way I have dealt with this is by keeping myself occupied. My only hopes are to stay positive and safe for the time being and embrace life as it goes by."



Melbourne-based nurse Muskaan Puri



## Utilizing time to invest in health and upgradation of skills



Sydney-based working professional Deepshikha Rana

Deepshikha Rana, based in Sydney, has somewhat similar views and believes in utilizing the time productively. She feels that Covid-19 is a dark reality and everyone has been impacted irrespective of where they live. However, she herself is blessed to be working in a multinational company and the Covid crisis has had no impact on her professional life. But she does miss her family in India with whom she was not able to reunite due to the indefinite closure

of the international borders. Deepshikha has utilized the time spent in isolation in a very resourceful manner by focusing on what she could not previously do because of a full working schedule.

About the current crisis she says, "I think every problem comes and goes away and using the time available in workouts and meditations helps relieve any negative thoughts. For me, my mental health is my priority. Other than that I am doing all the courses and certifications for improving my skills that I couldn't do earlier as I got tired after travelling back from work. The lockdown is giving me time and I am using it wisely to improve my health. Technologies like Skype, Whatsapp, etc. are a blessing as I video-call my parents almost everyday." She also feels that the current lockdown is not harsh as essentials can be bought easily. But she concedes that there are many people who have lost their jobs, including international students who are sadly having to struggle financially.

## Donning several hats with great panache

Dr. Tanya Unni is a successful General Practitioner (GP) who ventured into entrepreneurship and became the co-founder of the brand Amtan Medical, besides owning Skin Lab & Beauty clinics and a cosmetic brand called 'Dr Tanya'. She is the recipient of prestigious awards such as Indian Achievers Award for Entrepreneur of the year 2020', Business News Australia's Young Entrepreneur Australian Health & Business sector in September 2019, the 'Global Entrepreneur' Award by the Indo American Press Club, Houston, USA, in October 2019, and the Gold Coast Business Excellence Award in November 2019. In 2018, she and her husband, who is also a GP, were ranked 18th among the 'Top 100 Young Entrepreneurs' in Australia. She is also the Chairlady of AIBC's Healthcare Industry Chapter. In an exclusive interview with India News writer Deepika Banerjee, Dr Tanya talks about her initial venture into entrepreneurship, her multitasking abilities, the significance of awards as an inspiration to carry forward the good work, and the biggest turning point in her life.

Being a medical professional, what inspired you to venture into entrepreneurship and becoming the co-founder of Amtan Medical?

I was working as a GP in UK before moving to Australia. I started working as a GP here. But within three months, I decided to start my own medical practice. Along with my husband, who is also a GP, I started our first clinic. We shared the vision of building a medical centre which caters to the complete health needs of a family and the community. We built the brand Amtan Medical from the scratch, brick by brick. In hindsight, continuing as a GP would have been the safer option. We had no godfathers or relatives here to support and it was a huge risk. But we both had an enterprising attitude and we are essentially go-getters. Till this date, we continue to keep this attitude ignited within us. Today, Amtan Medical owns eight medical centers in different locations across Gold Coast. We have worked hard towards perfection day in and day out. I can vouch for the fact that we have never chased money

contributions to humanity has set an example to many and inspired a lot in these times of hardships, giving the hope of sunshine through humanity." Receiving the award, Mr Oberoi said: "I am honoured and humbled to receive this award. I thank community of Gold Coast, Multicultural community

and never considered it as the ultimate criterion of success. My motto is that if you invest in the present moment and do the task at hand perfectly, success will follow.

How do you manage the multiple responsibilities and challenges of being an entrepreneur, a medical professional and the Chairlady of AIBC's Healthcare Industry Chapter?

Multitasking has always been one of my fortes, right from my school days. When our first Amtan clinic was started, I was not only the doctor but also virtually handled every other department such as the front desk, administration, finance, etc. So this has given me hands-on experience in medical business. Along with Amtan Medical, I also own Skin Lab & Beauty clinics, which offer cosmetic services with evidence-based accuracy. I do own a cosmetic brand called 'Dr Tanya' which develops cosmetic products and devices. I am deeply involved in the research and development of the skincare products. As Chair of AIBC's Health chapter, I get to involve in the activities of the larger business community. As a businesswoman, it has been a great learning experience. I find time to take advanced medical courses and dance lessons too. Above all this, I am a mother of two boys. So I guess I manage time pretty well.

Over the years, you have been honoured with many prestigious awards. What significance do these awards have in your life?

Awards are very gratifying as they communicate with us in an inspiring way. They reaffirm our convictions and tell us that we are moving in the right direction. When awards come in difficult times, they give us extra joy. One such heartwarming news was when I recently received 'Indian Achievers Award for Entrepreneur of the year 2020' instituted by Indian Achievers' Forum. The year 2019 had been particularly rewarding for me. I was selected as 'Young Entrepreneur Australia' in Health & Business sector by Business News Australia in September 2019. I also received the 'Global Entrepreneur' Award by the Indo American Press Club, Houston, USA in October 2019. This was followed by the



Dr Tanya Unni

Gold Coast Business Excellence Award in November 2019. In 2018, my husband and I were ranked 18th among the 'Top 100 Young Entrepreneurs' in Australia.

What do you regard as the biggest turning point in your life which catapulted you to the dizzy heights of success?

There come some moments in our life which transform our entire perception. For me this remains a vivid memory. During my second pregnancy, I had developed some medical complications. I had a surreal experience during that time. I could say that it was a moment of self-realization for me. A realization dawned upon me that I had so much to do and there is not a single moment to throw away. We have to take in each moment and fill it with enthusiasm, hope and happiness. Ever since, I have tried to imbibe the spirit of that moment throughout my life. Though the experience in itself was traumatizing, I must honestly say that it became a turning point in my life.

Finally, what message would you like to convey to the Indian-Australian youth?

Indians are one of the most dynamic diasporas in Australia. There are innumerable Indians who have made it big here. Australia has embraced us all with love. This is a land of immense opportunities. We must learn to appreciate our strong points and choose a career most suited for our aptitude. I have met brilliant students from India who have come here for higher studies. I hope all of them will be able to go places. The post Covid-19 scenarioposes some uncertainties, but I believe that the younger generation is highly capable of overcoming these challenges and guiding the world to a new order.

mitigate the suffering."

WHD Chairman and founder Abdul Syed added: "Actions speak louder than words. The Covid stars serve as the best example for this phrase. These stars got into action and are helping humanity to fight against the deadly Covid-19."

## Queenslander Pushpinder Oberoi gets Global Humanitarian Award

Pushpinder Oberoi, Justice of Peace, President of GOPIO Gold Coast and Multicultural Ambassador of Queensland for Mental Health Foundation, has been honoured with Global Humanitarian Award for his work in Thurrock during the coronavirus lockdown, during which he worked to help ease the pressures of isolation and organised several 'treats' for local people and international students in need of food and financial assistance.

The award ceremony was organised by World Humanitarian Drive (WHD) to honour the individuals, organisations and community groups for their contribution

during the COVID-19 crisis. More than 1,600 nominations from all the seven continents were received and 100 individuals, organisations and community groups from 35 different countries were presented with awards in 12 categories.

The virtual ceremony was held on 28 June and was attended by Chief Guests H. E. Fatmir Sejdiu, former President of Kosovo and H. E. Madhav Kumar Nepal, former Prime Minister of Nepal. The chief guests congratulated the winners in their speeches.

Ms Sara Wilson, Director of Global Operations WHD, announced Pushpinder Oberoi's award and said: "Your selfless



## Wearing mask, social distancing important: Australian health minister



Health Minister Greg Hunt (L) with General Sir Peter Cosgrove at the Government House in Canberra, Australia in 2016

**Canberra (IANS):** Australian Health Minister Greg Hunt reiterated the importance of face masks and social distancing measures as the nation's COVID-19 cases have surpassed 13,000.

From July 23, about five million residents in metropolitan Melbourne and Mitchell Shire in

the state of Victoria are required to wear masks when leaving home, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Each one of us can help save a life or inadvertently, risk a life," Hunt told Sunrise, an Australian breakfast show program. "We're at that moment in our history where our individual actions are

perhaps more important than ever."

"Keeping the distance, practicing the cough etiquette, wearing the mask, but above all else, keeping your space and being at home if you have the symptoms or if you have been tested and you're waiting for a result."

As of July 23, there have been 13,306 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Australia and the number of new cases in the last 24 hours was 423, according to the latest figures from the Department of Health.

Of the new cases, 403 were in Victoria and the state authorities also confirmed five new deaths, including a man in his 50s, taking the national death toll to 133.

"So for Victoria, for Melbourne in particular, as we embark upon this new phase of the steps to protect ourselves and to protect our fellow Australians, the mandatory requirement of masks is confronting," Hunt also said in a press conference.

## Australia announces record high budget deficit



Treasurer Josh Frydenberg (Photo Twitter@JoshFrydenberg)

**Canberra (IANS):** The Australian government on July 23 announced the country's biggest budget deficit since World War II.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and Finance Minister Mathias Cormann delivered an update on Australia's economic and fiscal outlook in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, reports Xinhua news agency.

They revealed that the budget deficit for financial year 2019/20 was A\$85.8 billion (\$61.2 billion).

The deficit is projected to grow to A\$184.5 billion in 2020/21.

Australia's debt will grow to A\$677.1 billion, more than a third of the GDP by June 30, 2021.

However, Frydenberg said that the burden was "manageable" on account of record-low interest rates.

"Australia is experiencing a health and economic crisis like nothing we have seen in the last 100 years," he told reporters on July 23.

"Our economy has taken a big hit and there are many challenges we confront. We can see the mountain ahead and Australia begins to climb. We must remain strong.

"We will get through this and we will get through this together," the Treasurer added.

The government has delayed announcing the Federal Budget for 2020/21 until October on account of the pandemic.

According to Treasury projections, Australia's unemployment rate will be above 9 per cent by the end of calendar year 2020, up from 7.4 per cent in June, while the GDP will fall 3.75 per cent in 2020.

"These harsh numbers reflect the harsh reality we face," Frydenberg said.

"How we manage future cases of coronavirus will be absolutely key to the economic recovery, both the speed and trajectory."

According to an official update, the government has acted to provide economic support for workers, households and businesses of around A\$289 billion or the equivalent of 14.6 per cent of the GDP, including about A\$86 billion for the "JobKeeper" wage subsidy scheme.

Frydenberg said that the measures saved 700,000 jobs.

"Without the government's economic support, unemployment would have been 5 percentage points higher," he said.

Income from tax fell A\$31.7 billion in 2019-20 and are expected to fall a further A\$63.9 billion in 2020/21.

"We are in a challenging position, there is no sugar coating this. We did what we had to do given the economic fallout of this one in a hundred year pandemic," Cormann said.

## AIBC hosts webinar on opportunities for business and growth

The Australia India Business Council (AIBC) organized a webinar on July 17 to have an in-depth discussion on initiatives to fortify the bilateral ties between India and Australia by capitalizing on the nine Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreements signed by PM Morrison and Indian PM Modi during the virtual summit in June

The rapidly growing bilateral engagement between Australia and India in the recent months amid the Covid-19 crisis has indeed been a silver lining in the otherwise dark cloud looming on the horizon. The virtual meeting between Prime Minister Morrison and his Indian counterpart Prime Minister Modi in early June, which culminated in the signing of nine strategically significant agreements, exemplifies this fact.

On July 17, AIBC, an organization that has been playing a key role in fostering bilateral trade and investment opportunities between India and Australia ever since its inception in 1986, hosted a webinar which was attended by a panel of renowned speakers consisting of High Commissioner of India to Australia Gitesh Sarma; High Commissioner of Australia to India Barry O'Farrell AO;

“  
The opportunity is now! We must develop closer relations with India  
”

Ambassador Anil Wadhwa; Business Council of Australia CEO Jennifer Westacott AO; Export Council of Australia Chair Dianne Tipping; Event Partner Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Country Head Australia New Zealand (ANZ) Vikram Singh; Consul General of India NSW Manish Gupta; AIBC National Chair Jim Varghese AM; AIBC Chairman Emeritus Neville Roach AO; AIBC National Vice Chair Sanushka Seomangal; and moderator Sheba Nandkeolyar, Immediate Past National Chair of AIBC, Reference Group Member of IES 2035 and Chair of AIBC Women in Business. The agenda



AIBC Seminar on Virtual Summit

of the webinar was to analyze the outcome of the nine agreements and to emphasize the need to increase bilateral engagements as this is the most propitious time to do so.

**Digital Exchange Forum and task force to catalyze business**

**opportunities**

Jim Varghese, AIBC National Chair, announced AIBC's plan to publish a discussion paper on the decision to set up a strategic task force that will act as a catalyst in strengthening the relations between the two

countries, while AIBC's Digital Exchange Forum will provide a viable platform for discourse between partner organizations and other stakeholders.

**Lucrative avenues identified for Australian business sector in India**



Commenting on the revamping of the Australian economic strategy due to the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic, Ambassador Wadhwa enumerated 20 lucrative sectors where Australian business ventures stand to gain a lot by engaging with India. These key areas include minerals, mining, energy, defence, space, shipbuilding, vocational training, cyber security, infrastructure, online education technology, water resources, large scale supply chains, sports, technology and textiles.

#### Information technology sector to play a key role

Event partner TCS Country Head, ANZ, Vikram Singh, observed the growing significance of the IT sector in both India and Australia in fast-tracking business innovation and enabling wider accessibility

and equity in the society. He asserted the need to achieve autonomy in manufacturing and streamlining of supply chain distributions underpinned by a greater attention to digitization. He also hoped that TCS which has invested in cyber security in Australia gets the opportunity to capitalize other business opportunities through collaborative efforts in the near future.

#### Business and Trade bodies of Australia exhibit optimism and strong support

Showing optimism and robust support for the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement between India and Australia, Business Council of Australia CEO, Jennifer Westacott, underscored the pivotal role that stronger ties with India will play in ensuring that Australia's

economic and growth curve keeps inclining unimpeded and also expressed the Council's desire to keep working with AIBC. Export Council of Australia Chair, Dianne Tipping, commented on the necessity for Australia to widen and diversify its exports and echoed Ambassador Wadhwa by saying that there are several key sectors in India which could benefit Australian business especially after the materializing of the nine strategic agreements between the two nations.

#### Propitious time for augmenting mutual economic benefits

AIBC Chairman Emeritus Neville Roach urged the Business Council of Australia to devote more time in India in order to build strategic networks to give greater impetus to bilateral trade between India and

Australia, while Consul General of India NSW, Manish Gupta, recommended utilizing trade programmes like Access India by the NSW government for making bilateral business inroads into strategic areas in the vast Indian market.

Reiterating the core essence of the webinar, High Commissioner of India to Australia Gitesh Sarma remarked on the transformation of the Indian economic sector into a more conducive and open one to facilitate greater business and trade engagements with Australia with the precursor to this favourable development being the incorporation of the Comprehensive and Strategic partnership between the two countries. High Commissioner of Australia to India Barry O' Farrell said that the agreements on critical minerals, water

and vocational education and training were the most significant.

#### Constructive discussions paving the way for mutual advancement

AIBC National Vice Chair Sanushka Seomangal acknowledged the key role played by the engaging discussions among the distinguished speakers in laying down the roadmap to take forward the strategic relationship between the two countries with AIBC being a prominent frontrunner. Sheba Nandkeolyar, Immediate Past National Chair of AIBC, summed up the intrinsic message behind all the speakers' remarks by saying that the need of the hour was to keep building on the mutual ties by taking advantage of the momentum set forth by PM Morrison and Indian PM Modi.

## Opening of Parliament delayed



Photo taken on March 10, 2019 shows the Parliament House decorated with colorful lights during the Enlighten Festival in Canberra, Australia

**Canberra (IANS):** The opening of Parliament has been delayed by several weeks due to an increasing spread of the coronavirus in the country's two most populous states.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison asked the Speaker of Parliament

to cancel a two-week session which was due to begin on August 4, reports the BBC.

In a written statement, Morrison said: "The government cannot ignore the risk to parliamentarians, their staff, the staff within the parliament and

the broader community."

Victoria and New South Wales are currently experiencing a surge in cases.

On July 18, New South Wales recorded 15 more cases while Victoria saw 217 new infections.

On July 8, Victoria reintroduced stay at home orders across a number of affected regions, including Melbourne, Australia's second largest city.

In accordance with the laws, members of the public are only allowed to leave their houses to exercise, shop for food, provide care or seek medical treatment and for essential work and study.

Morrison described the situation in Victoria as "very concerning", but expressed hope that local health officials had succeeded in flattening the spread.

## Woman asked to remove 'tampon' in strip-search

**Canberra (IANS):** The Sydney Police have asked a young woman to remove her tampon during a strip-search, a law enforcement review has found.

It was among instances of police misconduct uncovered in an investigation into five controversial strip-searches across Sydney last year.

Most took place at music festivals and left those searched feeling humiliated and degraded, the report said.

New South Wales Police said it would consider the findings of the report.

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission report called on the police force to apologise to one of the young women involved, and noted in another case that an officer had been suspended from duty, the BBC reported.

The cases were reviewed either after parents of the women complained or they received coverage in local media.

Questions over the legality of the

searches - all targeting drugs - was a "recurring" issue, the report said.

It has added to public scrutiny of searching practices and calls for reforms.

In one instance in January 2019, police strip-searched two young women outside a Sydney casino - one was asked by an officer to remove her tampon.

A review of that incident "revealed a lack of clarity for [officers] regarding the lawfulness of such a request", the report said.

That prompted a review of other cases where complaints had been made and no drugs had been found.

In another case, a young performer at the Secret Garden festival was ordered to pull down her underwear and bend over before being spoken to unprofessionally and laughed at by male officers, the report said.

A woman strip-searched at another festival was made to squat and cough and wasn't given

adequate privacy.

The review found that in many cases, police reported not knowing what they could do in a strip-search. It noted a new manual was introduced last August to instruct officers correctly.

But the examples raised questions over the legality of police conduct, pressure to conduct searches, and poor communication and record-keeping, the report added.

Under Australian law, police can only carry out strip-searches if "the seriousness and urgency of the circumstances" means it is reasonable and necessary to do so.

They must also conduct the least invasive search possible. It is illegal to search genital areas or any body cavities.

In the case of minors, a parent or guardian must be present, unless an immediate search is necessary to protect the person or prevent the destruction of evidence.

## Sydney extends support for night-time economy

**Sydney (IANS):** Australia's Sydney city on July 17 provided further support for restaurants, bars and venues to get back on track, as businesses have slowly reopened after the COVID-19 lockdown.

In its latest round of business support grants announced on July 17, the City of Sydney has awarded A\$222,334 (\$155,100) to night-time and live music businesses, reports Xinhua news agency.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for Sydney's night-time economy, which was only just beginning to breathe again after the lockout laws were lifted in January," Lord Mayor Clover Moore said.

"Sydney's core night-time economy is not only critical to our city's future -- generating more than A\$4.2 billion in revenue each year and employing more than 35,500 people across nearly 5,000 businesses -- it is key to

our vision for Sydney as a thriving global city," she said.

Moore said businesses operating at night were hardest hit by the COVID-19 restriction measures, so it is critical to support these businesses to get back to normal as restrictions ease.

"We recently approved COVID-19 relief grants for 654 projects, worth a total of A\$8.85 million, which included 144 businesses operating at night," she said.

The latest round of grants will help to create a wide range of new events across the city, including literary dinners, live music, dance workshops and cooking classes.

A further 12 not-for-profit or members-based organizations have been awarded A\$350,000 to promote local economies and improve access to industry information, upskilling and networking.



Photo by Christopher Burns on Unsplash



## 77.3% agree government handling Covid situation well



IANS

**New Delhi (IANS):** As many as 77.3 per cent of people agree that the Indian government is handling the coronavirus situation well. The reaction from people gains significance in the backdrop of the recent unprecedented daily surge in the number of Covid-19 cases.

According to the latest IANS-CVoter Covid-19 Tracker with a sample size of 1,723, where people were asked how strongly do they agree or disagree with the statement -- I think the Indian government is handling the coronavirus situation well -- a whopping 77.3 per cent agreed, while 19.1 per cent disagreed.

Out of the 77.3 per cent, 54.1 per cent strongly agreed that the Indian government is handling the Covid-19 crisis well. According to the survey, in the period between March 16 and March 31, when people were beginning to exercise caution by staying indoors to contain the outbreak of the viral infection, the confidence on the ability of the government surged.

After the first week of lockdown, April 3 onwards, people's confidence in the government surged further. This indicated that many people were confident that the government is handling the crisis well.

The survey indicates that till the middle of May, nearly 80 per cent of people strongly agreed that the

Indian government is handling the coronavirus situation well. And data indicate that between 70 and 80 per cent of people in the period from March 31 to May 15 seemed confident that the government is taking effective measures to contain the outbreak.

But the confidence of the people plunged as the Covid-19 crisis started to explode, as hundreds of cases continued to pile up on a daily basis in the last week of May. A downward trend was registered on May 12, where nearly 70 per cent people felt confident that the government is handling this crisis well, and by June 11, this came down to nearly 60 per cent.

This is the period when Covid-19 cases were piling in thousands everyday and it seemed the health crisis was having a crushing effect on the healthcare system and the overall governance in the country.

Between June 14 and July 5, nearly 50 to 60 per cent of people agreed that the Indian government is handling the coronavirus well. And finally, between July 5 and July 20, less than 60 per cent of people agreed that the Indian government is handling the coronavirus well.

According to the survey, since the beginning of June till July 20, more than 75 per cent people say that they trust the government when it comes to handling the coronavirus crisis.

## Aussie university develops 20-minute COVID-19 blood test

**Melbourne (IANS):** A blood test developed by Monash University could detect positive COVID-19 cases in about 20 minutes.

Based on commonly used blood typing infrastructure, researchers at the Melbourne-based university developed a simple agglutination assay to identify antibodies generated in response to COVID-19, Xinhua news agency reported.

The test requires 25 microliters of plasma from blood samples and positive COVID-19 cases will cause agglutination or clustering of the red blood cells, which is easily identifiable to the naked eye.

“Detection of antibodies in patient plasma or serum

involves pipetting a mixture of reagent red blood cells and antibody-containing serum or plasma onto a gel card containing separation media, incubating the card for 5-15 minutes, and using a centrifuge to separate agglutinated cells from free cells,” senior lecturer in Chemical Engineering Simon Corrie said in a statement on Monday.

While the current swab tests are used to detect active COVID-19 infection, the antibody test can determine whether someone was infected in the past, thus helping high-risk countries with population screening, case identification, contact tracing and confirming vaccine efficacy

during clinical trials.

“This simple assay, based on commonly used blood typing infrastructure and already manufactured at scale, can be rolled out rapidly across Australia and beyond,” Corrie said.

“This test can be used in any lab that has blood typing infrastructure, which is extremely common across the world.”

The study has been published in the journal ACS Sensors.

Researchers said they were seeking commercial and government support to conduct full clinical evaluation of the test.

## Masks, Varanasi's new holy offering to God



**Masks granted as prasad in Kashi**

**Varanasi (IANS)** Everything is prohibited or curtailed during the ongoing corona pandemic as are congregations at religious places. However, masks as an offering to God at temples in the holy city of Kashi is the new normal.

It is believed that the way dupattas, clothes, etc are offered at the Devasthanas with a pure mind, similarly the masks given as holy offerings at temples will protect the devotees against coronavirus.

In Varanasi's Laksa Mangaleshwar Mahadev Missir Pokhara temple,

social worker Chandresh Narayan Pandey offers masks as obeisance to God and distributes 100 masks to visitors every day.

Pandey told IANS, “At present, the country is reeling under a pandemic. It is up to us to make people aware of the scourge until a cure is found. People revere the offerings to God based on mythological beliefs. The more you offer the more you are rewarded. We have, therefore, started the auspicious work of distributing 100 masks every day at the temple in the holy month of

Shravan.”

Till the pandemic is over, he added, masks would be distributed to the needy every day after offering them to the temple.

Those who pay obeisance to Lord Shiva in the temple are exhorted to wear masks. However, those who are not wearing a mask are provided one in the form of a holy offering.

Pandey said the distribution of masks as an offering to God is a good deed and gives one satisfaction. The mask is useful for breaking the coronavirus chain, but people are still negligent. The masks in the temple have now been linked to faith so that people take it seriously to overcome the coronavirus menace.

Shivam, a visitor to the temple, said he comes to offer prayers every day and gets the mask as ‘prasad’ (holy offering). Ashish Mishra on arrival at the temple said that after praying to God he, too, got a mask as ‘prasad’.

By Vivek Tripathi

## Global COVID-19 cases cross 15.1mn mark: Johns Hopkins

**Washington (IANS)** The total number of global coronavirus cases has surpassed the 15.1 million mark, while the deaths have increased to over 621,800, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

As of July 23 morning, the total number of cases stood at 15,166,401, while the fatalities rose to 621,890, 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 3,967,917 and 143,147, respectively, according to the CSSE.

Brazil came in the second place with 2,227,514 infections and 82,771 deaths.

In terms of cases, India ranks third (1,193,078), and is followed by Russia (787,890), South Africa (394,948), Peru (366,550), Mexico (362,274), Chile (334,683), the UK (297,952), Iran (281,413), Spain

(267,551), Pakistan (267,428), Saudi Arabia (258,156), Italy (245,032), Turkey (222,402), France (215,605), Bangladesh (213,254), Colombia (211,038), Germany (204,276), Argentina (141,900), Canada (113,790) and Qatar (107,871), the CSSE figures showed.

The other countries with over 10,000 deaths are the UK (45,586), Mexico (41,190), Italy (35,082), France (30,175), India (28,732), Spain (28,426), Iran (14,853), Peru (13,767) and Russia (12,726).



People wearing face masks are seen in a subway train in Paris, France, July 20, 2020 (IANS)



# WORLD THIS WEEK

Compiled by the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

Harini Madhusudan, Teshu Singh, Poornima B, Sourina Bej & Rashmi BR

## India and China into the fourth round: Dialogues, Agreements and Challenges of Disengagement

**What happened?**

On 14 July 2020, Commanders from the Indian and Chinese militaries held a 14-hour long meeting at Chushul for the fourth round of talks to facilitate the ongoing disengagement at the India-China border. The talks were consistent with the agreement reached between the two Special Representatives of India and China held on 5 July 2020. Reportedly, although both the sides insisted on complete disengagement during the talks Chinese side was adamant that they would not back off from Finger 4.

**What is the background?**

First, the agreements from the past and the India-China relationship. India and China share a border of 3,844 km and are divided by the Line of Actual Control (LAC). There is no consensus on both the side on the LAC, each side has its views and hence regular transgressions take place. The 15 June violent face-off took place is a violation of the agreement that the two sides had reached in 1993, 1996, 2013 that facilitated maintaining peace and tranquillity on the LAC. In 1996 both sides agreed not to use firearms in the volatile area. It is the deadliest stand-off in the last forty years and violates all the agreements reach until now.

Second, the multiple attempts at dousing the situation. At the Galwan Valley, as the Indian and Chinese troops were in the process of disengagement another face-off took place. The Chinese troops with iron clubs bristling with spikes hit the Indian soldiers. In the clash, 20 Indian army personnel and number of Chinese soldiers were killed. The Chinese government has not confirmed the number of casualties yet. As a follow up to the deteriorating situation at the LAC, the Special Representative from both the sides had a telephonic conversation on 5 July 2020 and agreed on a "complete disengagement" of the troops along LAC and "de-escalation" from the border area restoring peace and tranquillity. They insisted on a phased and stepwise de-escalation in the border areas.

Third, taking forward the "complete disengagement". The troops from both sides have moved back by 2 km each at the patrolling point 15 and the patrol

point 17. This has created a buffer zone in the region. The buffer zone is a temporary arrangement and calls for a short-term suspension of patrols by both sides to ensure that situation does not blow out of proportion leading to clashes as it happened on 15 June. The patrolling will start once the disengagement is complete.

## India and Iran: The Chabahar rail link issue exposes the bilateral challenges

**What happened?**

Indian daily The Hindu reported on 14 July that four years after India and Iran agreement to construct a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan the Iranian government decided to proceed on its own, citing delays from the India. Later, a deputy of Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran - Farhad was quoted to have stated the report as false, as there was no deal between India and Iran and railway link.

The official Indian spokesperson stated on 16 July, "IRCON was appointed by Government of India to assess the feasibility of the project and was working with CDTIC, an Iranian government company and completed site inspection and review of the feasibility report. Detailed discussions also took into account the financial challenges that Iran was facing. In December 2019, these issues were reviewed at the 19th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting and Iran was to nominate an authorized entity to finalize issues. This is still awaited."

**What is the background?**

First, Chabahar port as India's gateway to Central Asia. Chabahar, Iran's only deep-sea port open India's route to reach the Central Asian Republics (CAR) and Afghanistan. Inaugurated in 2017, this port is located strategically close to the China-Pakistan Gwadar port. The Chabahar rail link is part of the connectivity project to reach Afghanistan and further to the CAR. The rail track is proposed to be laid between Chabahar and Zahedan, extending to a distance of 628 km.

Second, India has been eyeing to clinch the contract of the Farzad-B gas field since 2009. The ONGC Videsh Limited was part of initial exploration in the gas field. After the discovery stage, the negotiations to proceed with the exploration was halted owing to US sanctions on Iran and inhibitions from both the Indian and Iranian sides. Last week, the head of the National Iranian Oil

Company announced the award of the contract to develop the gas field to a local operator.

## UK's 5G Plans: In a volte-face, Britain bans Huawei

**What happened?**

On 14 July, the UK banned the Chinese telecom company Huawei from future investments in the mobile infrastructure in the country. Under Britain's new 5G roll-out plan, the country's mobile network operators will now not be able to buy any new Huawei equipment for their 5G infrastructure after the end of this year. Also, all existing equipment supplied by Huawei will be gradually removed from Britain's 5G infrastructure by 2027. This announcement overturns a previous decision in January 2020 to allow Huawei up to a 35 per cent share in the non-sensitive parts of Britain's 5G mobile networks, which was made amid the Trump administration's pressure to block Huawei in major telecoms markets.

Welcoming Britain's decision, the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo said that Britain joins a growing list of countries who are standing up for their national security by prohibiting the use of "untrusted, high-risk vendors."

**What is the background?**

First, the privacy of data leading the reasons for a ban. The immediate reason to ban Huawei is undoubtedly the rising insecurities over data protection and privacy. However, Britain's decision follows the larger rhetoric that the Western democratic countries have been setting, which is putting up a front against the technological and data monopoly by China. In recent months, the British government has faced not only pressure from its political quarters but also one of its strongest ally, the US. The concern that has driven this pressure has been that of the national security risk posed by Huawei's equipment that could possibly allow Beijing to spy on the Western countries. This particular concern joins the recent measures taken by countries like South Korea to Australia in slapping fines on TikTok for mishandling data of its users.

Second, this delays the UK's own path towards 5G. The decision to ban comes at two pivotal points in Britain's political and economic history. First, economically, Britain is uncovering its plan to roll out a 5G. And moving away from Huawei definitely makes it an uphill task for the existing fiber broadband operators to look for different infrastructure. Second, this economic decision



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh witnesses para dropping and scoping weapons at Stankna near Leh on July 17, 2020

is politically motivated as Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been responding to pressures from his own party. The government suffered the biggest defeat in March when 38 Conservative MPs voted against the government in favour of an amendment to end the use of Huawei. Johnson will have to look out for replacing existing Huawei equipment which would either mean looking at Europe or the US. The post-Brexit trade deal is in doldrums, thus making techno-economic negotiations all the more difficult for Britain.

Third, China's tough response to the ban. Huawei responded to Britain's ban by calling it "bad news for anyone in the UK with a mobile phone" but also threatened that this would "move Britain into the digital slow lane, push up bills and deepen the digital divide." It is important to note that the UK revenues are less than one per cent of Huawei's global revenue, but Western Europe also serves as the leading technological ground where the 5G infrastructure could be implemented. The ban is a strategic and political statement that marks a continuation in the tension between China and the West.

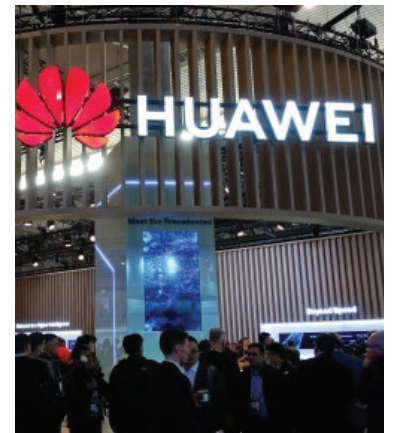
## Other News

### Trump administration to reduce US troops in South Korea

The US has planned to reduce the size of its troops in South Korea. The Pentagon has reviewed the deployment of the troops, in the wake of Trump's demand from Seoul to pay for the maintenance. This is one of the cases where Trump has repeatedly asked its American allies to significantly bear the cost for troop deployment, else leading to downsizing at strategic areas.

### UN at 75: ECOSOC dialogue on multilateralism

Commemorating the 75th year anniversary of the United Nations, The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held a virtual dialogue on "Multilateralism after COVID-19: What kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary?". Speaking at the dialogue, PM Modi put forward the need to reform the UN and



make multilateralism more representative. He also spoke in length about the steps India is taking, to deal with the pandemic.

### Pressure mounts on Mali's President, as demand for his resignation peaks

Mali's opposition has demanded President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's resignation in the wake of the economic crisis and continuing armed conflict. The efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and international mediators were channelized towards diffusing the crisis, but the demand for resignation remained unchanged. The 5 June Movement insisted upon a "republican transition", after dissolving the current Parliament.

### EU Leaders Agree on half-a-trillion Euros for economic recovery funds

After intense two day discussions on the plan for the stimulus package for the member nations affected by the pandemic, the 27 member delegation is said to have compromised to 500 billion euros. After failing to come to an agreement on 17 July 2020, on the proposed 780 billion euros, the leaders are said to have agreed to 500 billion euros as a cushion against the first hit of the crisis.

Harini Madhusudan, and Rashmi BR, PhD scholars, Sourina Bej, Project Associate NIAS; Teshu Singh, Research Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation and Poornima B, postgraduate student, Department of Geopolitics and International Relations, MAHE.

\*The report has been modified by INDIA NEWS due to space considerations.



## World now awake to China's threat, will confront it: Pompeo



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

**New York/IANS:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said that the world is waking up to the threats from China and it will be confronted as never before by democracies.

Referring to the threats from Beijing to countries around the world, Pompeo said on July 22, "So long as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to engage in the activities that it's been undertaking now for an awfully long time, you'll see them confronted in ways that they have not been confronted before, not only by the US but by freedom-loving democracies all across the world."

Speaking at the Economic Club of New York, he cited India banning Chinese apps and said, "They did it because they could see the threat to the Indian people from the Chinese Communist Party. "We've been working closely with the Indians across a broad spectrum of the - the full range of international partnership with them to assist them in making sure they had all the information they needed to make good decisions."

But he said India did not ban the apps because the US asked it to, but because it knew of the dangers it posed to its citizens.

In fact, the US has itself not banned any Chinese apps.

Pompeo said that the US had worked with India in building a coalition that included South Korea and Europeans to block China's candidate Wan Binyang from becoming the head of the World Intellectual Property Organisation and instead have Singapore's Daren Tang elected.

Leading the international

charge against Beijing, Pompeo carefully laid out a distinction between the Chinese nation and people, making the CCP the focus of criticism.

He said that the US was working with India on issues relating to China because it and countries like Japan, Australia, South Korea and European countries, "are significant economies in the world with true national security capabilities who have a shared understanding of how nations ought to participate on the global stage and want the CCP to understand the expectation that they'll participate with the same rules and reciprocity".

President Donald Trump's administration has been trying to turn US businesses away from China, especially having witnessed the supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic originating there.

Pompeo said, "American businesses understand the political risk of operating in places like Hong Kong, and they're seeing that their supply chains are potentially being poisoned by the human rights violations - literally the stain of the century in human rights violations is taking place in western China today".

"I think American businesses are saying this is not a place that we are comfortable with, and I'm watching as they're making different decisions about how to allocate capital inside of their business and inside of their supply chains as well."

Earlier at a news conference, Pompeo said he was confident that the world's free nations will join together to face the

challenges from China to India and other countries in Asia.

"I think that the whole world is coalescing around the challenge that we face (from China), I am confident that democracies, the free nations of the world will push back on these," he said while replying to a question about Chinese confrontation with India in the Ladakh region.

He said that India was "an

important partner of the US" and "I have a great relationship with my Foreign Minister counterpart (S Jaishankar). We talk frequently about a broad range of issues. We talked about the conflict that they had along the border with China, we talked about the threat that emanates from the Chinese telecommunication infrastructure".

On China's claims to the maritime territories of Asian countries and aggressive actions there, he said that the US "will use the tools we have, we will support all countries across the world that recognise that China has violated their territorial claims, their maritime claims as well. We will provide them with assistance".

## George Floyd murder suspect now accused of tax evasion

**Washington/IANS:** Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer accused of killing African-American man George Floyd under custody, has been charged with multiple felony counts of tax evasion.

Chauvin, who was filmed pressing his knee on Floyd's neck for almost nine minutes leading to the latter's death on May 25, and his estranged wife, Kellie, are accused of failing to report income from various jobs, and allegedly owe nearly \$38,000 to the state of Minnesota state, the BBC reported.

They were each charged in Washington County on July 22 with six counts of aiding and abetting filing false or fraudulent tax returns and three counts of aiding and abetting failing to file state tax returns.

They are accused of underreporting their joint income by \$464,433 from 2014 to 2019. This includes money Chauvin made doing off-duty security work and weekend shifts at a



restaurant.

Chauvin is already in jail in connection with Floyd's death but his wife, who filed for divorce following Floyd's death, is not, the BBC reported.

He was fired from his job after the

incident and now faces charges of second-degree murder and manslaughter.

Three other officers were also fired and charged with aiding and abetting murder.

## Singapore hopes US can stabilise relations with China



Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong

**Singapore (IANS):** Singapore hopes the United States can stabilise its relations with China,

since Asia depends on the stable US-China ties to have a "secure" and "predictable" environment, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong has said.

Loong made the remarks on July 28 in an online interview hosted by Washington-based think tank Atlantic Council, reported local English-language newspaper the Straits Times on July 29.

The Singaporean Prime Minister also voiced hope that the coming US President, be it Republican or Democratic, can develop a bipartisan consensus on US-Asia relations so that the US foreign policy will be consistent and last beyond one administration, Xinhua news agency reported.

"If you can establish a stable, predictable policy with bipartisan consensus, I think it would be a

great help to all your friends and partners who want to be able to depend on you and to rely on you, without the risk that one day the big power may suddenly decide its interests lie elsewhere," he said.

Loong noted that Singapore will not exclude Chinese tech-company Huawei from its 5G networks bidding process, although Huawei was not chosen this time round.

"The bidders did not choose Huawei. But in some of the other aspects of the 5G networks, Huawei will be figured in, and in future bids I have no doubt it will be participating again," added the Prime Minister.



# National Mental Health Symposiums

National Mental Health Month is an initiative of the Mental Health Foundation Australia (MHFA) to advocate for and raise awareness of Australian mental health. It is an important time where Australians come together to support the MHFA's motto of 'better mental health for all.'

The theme for 2020's National Mental Health Month Awareness Campaign is 'Mental Health Matters.' This theme encapsulates and highlights the gravity of the topic of mental health, and how important it is to address in the Australian community.

This year, the Foundation is organising 6 National Symposiums on key mental health associated issues in the local region to raise awareness about mental wellbeing among the community and to remove the stigma associated with it.



## LIVE VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON TEACHERS' MENTAL HEALTH

6<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Free Registration



## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON FARMERS' MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

8<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Newcastle City Hall, 290 King St, Newcastle

Registration: <https://www.trybooking.com/BHYVF>

\*The event is subject to COVID-19 restrictions



## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

13<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Hobart Town Hall, 50 Macquarie St, Hobart

Registration: <https://www.trybooking.com/BIFJC>

\*The event is subject to COVID-19 restrictions



## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MINERS' MENTAL HEALTH

30<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre

Registration: <https://www.trybooking.com/608071>

\*The event is subject to COVID-19 restrictions



## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES' MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

26<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace

Registration: <https://www.trybooking.com/BHYXA>

\*The event is subject to COVID-19 restrictions



## NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SPORTS PERSONS' MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

16<sup>th</sup>  
October  
2020

Time: 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Location: Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

Registration: <https://www.trybooking.com/BIPNN>

\*The event is subject to COVID-19 restrictions



## The Three Cs need a New Formulation

The historic virtual summit on 4 June between the Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not only come at the highly significant juncture in world affairs, but also proven a shot in the arm for the Strategic Partnership, now upgraded as “comprehensive”. As both sides exude immense energy and buoyancy in deepening business, trade, diplomatic, defence and cultural engagements, policy-makers must be mindful that the engagements needs legs to go the distance. The future of the comprehensive strategic partnership hinges on reinventing the old 3Cs (curry, cricket and commonwealth) with a new 3Cs approach: nurturing Constituencies of Country Champions, which requires investing in people and institutions.

First up, Ken Henry was delegated by former PM Julia Gillard to develop the ‘Australia in the Asian Century White Paper 2012’ which recommended engaging with India and the 2018 Peter Varghese *An India Economic Strategy* laid down a detailed business and trade road map for engaging India. Importantly, both reports highlight that governments alone cannot realise the full potential of strategic engagements and need to build partnerships with people and institutions outside the government circles.

In this context, becoming ‘Asia literate’ is of paramount importance which requires creating **Constituencies of Country Champions** to begin with. United States and Singapore are key examples where country champions have shaped strategic thinking, lobbied on critical matters and built a vibrant and well-informed constituency of advisors. In the immediate term engaging people and institutions with the requisite

country expertise, lived experiences and professional linkages is important. Then, in the long-term encouraging and supporting schools and universities introducing courses and programs on India.

Most Australian universities do not offer India studies in their curriculum, an indication of their priorities of sorts. Asian literacy is not just language proficiency. It is about understanding values, customs, traditions, socio-political and cultural nuances to decode how a nation thinks and acts in one way or the other. It requires familiarising oneself with Asian history, values and culture early in school, alongside developing language skills and undertaking country visits as a part of immersion programs or other study visits. Unfortunately, a steady decline across Australian primary and secondary schools in Asian language and history teaching has made Australia knowledge-deficient on Asia, especially, India and Indonesia.

The disconnect between the national and institutional visions need to be fixed now! The New Colombo Plan and Australia-India Youth Dialogue are two major programs slowly building the next generation of India Champions, but the task must begin much earlier in schools, through emersion programs in Hindi. The Australia India Council grants, Australia-Indian Strategic Research Fund and Endeavour Leadership grant also fund research projects on India-Australia issues, but they develop subject expertise, not necessarily country expertise. Rise in Indian students’ enrolment in Australia is good news for Australian literacy in India, but not the other way round.

Hope state and federal governments value and engage those individuals and institutions that possess India literacy across multiple sectors.

## India Resists Stimulus Model of the Developed Economies

Prof Dipankar Sengupta



The bulk of the package were in the form of enhanced credit, with guarantees by the government considering reluctance of banks to advance credit—lifeline of most business enterprises. The government assumed the role of an enabler both in terms of laws that free up the economy especially for the marginalised segment, along with credit guarantees. It also committed to spending money for migrant labour and investing in rural infrastructure and development to stimulate economic growth.

Quite rightly, what the government has avoided is creating an artificial demand in a situation where because of the lockdown, supply would not be forthcoming. In this context it has rejected the economic stimulus model adopted by many developed economies. India has avoided sector-specific packages that generally create distortions or give widespread tax concessions that are rarely passed on to consumers.

The idea is to revive India’s growth story with agriculture initially as the driver, followed by the MSMEs before the rest of the economy joins in to take advantage of an India whose freer laws make it easy to do business and transform the Indian economy.

*The authors is based at the Department of Economics, University of Jammu. The views expressed are personal.*

COVID-19 forced the government of India to impose a lockdown which meant that most economic activities except the “essential” ones would cease. The impact on employment, in particular, has been profound. Questions also emerged on the post-Covid demand scenario and survival of firms (especially small ones). Therefore, with an eye on both sides of the pandemic, the Finance Minister announced a Rs 1.7 trillion (US \$22 bn) economic package on 26th March aimed at supporting the most vulnerable economic groups and was a combination of modest cash transfers and free cereals and pulses for 800 million people for a period of three months. Additionally, it targeted the provident fund contributors in the organised sector whose monthly pay was less than Rs 15,000. The aim was to save the most vulnerable from starvation and help those at the bottom rung of the organised sector from defaulting in their provident fund contributions due to Covid-19.

Other world economies including Australia also announced large packages aimed largely at stimulating demand, helping businesses retain some of the workforce. The obvious fallout was that for the year 2020 fiscal rectitude would require relaxation. For India, the matter was slightly complicated. While some commentators argued for a similar package, others advocated restraint pointing out that as long as the lockdown continued, such packages would be ineffective and also the world financial markets would disfavour such policies which could lead to a flight of capital from India.

In contrast, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the crisis created by the pandemic is an opportunity to transform the Indian economy into a *self-reliant* one (Atmanirbhar Bharat) and outlined the broad contours of the US \$ 220 bn (10% of the GDP) package, the details which were left to the finance ministry to roll out. The focus of the first component was on MSMEs,

NBFCs and liquidity. The second, focused on migrants, the street vendors, affordable housing and micro-credit. The third, catered to agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry sectors. The fourth on mining (coal), power reform, airports, PSE restructuring and foreign direct investment (FDI) limits. And the fifth on rural employment guarantee schemes and insolvency postponement etc.

The *self-reliant* package takes into cognisance supply chains of India’s global trade and economic stability have been disrupted and needed an inclusive strategy where MSMEs and the informal sector replaced India’s new supply chain aided by institutions and very importantly the supply of credit from both conventional sources as well as new institutions. Agriculture too experienced its 1991 moment

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India has avoided sector-specific packages that generally create distortions or give widespread tax concessions that are rarely passed on to consumers  
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(the start of liberalization) in the sense that farmers became free to sell their produce to anyone and the interstate barriers removed making India a single agricultural market. This aimed at a more efficient and dynamic agricultural sector with better supply chains, cold storage leading to price stability and higher agriculture incomes. Power reforms too, the basis of any robust industrial growth received attention in these announcements. The government has also been mindful of a social safety net in the Indian context and has focussed on rural employment guarantee schemes.

## Cops, Corona and CoVidiots

The coronavirus pandemic has created new challenges for policemen and women across the world.

Punitive methods such as fines, force and detention are commonly used to deal with those who flout Covid restrictions in their area. We see footage of American police using lung and eye irritants and rough treatment even of journalists, Indian policemen using batons and Chinese, Brazilian and Russian police forcing people into detention.

In some countries like India, police have also used novel non-violent methods such as giving roses and making people do squats and pushups in public. The most unusual was in the northern Indian town of Rishikesh where

a group of police were filmed making international tourists write ‘I am sorry’ 500 times as punishment after breaching coronavirus lockdown rules! We don’t know who provided the paper and how effective these methods have been but they have made entertaining viewing in these grim times.

In many parts of the world police are using traditional and modern forms of song and dance to educate, entertain and assist those in need.

Mexican police use traditional Mariachi, one of the country’s most iconic musical genres.

With more employees heading back to the workplace in Queensland, Hendra police have put together a catchy tune to demonstrate social distancing

measures its officers have put in place.

New Zealand Police have collaborated with Wellington Paranormal to create a series of light-hearted videos addressing the importance of locking down properly. In the most recent instalment, the “Acclaimed World Hit Two Metres Please” is performed by Officer O’Leary, played by actor Karen O’Leary. “Two metres please, two metres please, I don’t want to breathe your Covid, if you start to wheeze,” she sings.

In the United Kingdom, more than four million people have watched PC Tim Jones perform a song from The Rocky Horror Picture Show, while dressed in his police uniform. Interestingly, Tim could not make it into his school

choir as a child and only returned to singing at the age of 30.

A Crosswell-Lexington school resource officer is using his voice to help others in need during the coronavirus pandemic. Erik Wurmlinger is producing online concerts to raise money for either a family in need or another charitable organization, such as a food pantry.

Police in other countries have also helping those in need.

These are good points to remember, keeping in mind police are also at risk of contracting the virus. Sometimes they also face violence from annoyed citizens, including one policeman in India who had his hand cut off by a sword-wielding citizen objecting to the hard lockdown. Fortunately, the

officer’s hand has been reattached and the assailant arrested.

Sometimes the public gives back. Bollywood stars have donated their luxury trailers - equipped with baths and beds, soaps, sanitisers, sanitary pads and also biscuits- where they relax and prepare for movie shoots to provide relief to female police officers on coronavirus lockdown duty in India’s financial hub Mumbai. Very essential given the heat and shortage of toilet facilities for women in general and the policewomen in particular, given some of them are on duty for 24 hours at a stretch!

Dr Indrani Ganguly



# The China (Dis)Connect in India-Australia Partnership

Dr Jagannath Panda



China has continued to capture the foreign policy imagination of India and Australia for long. Both New Delhi and Canberra had been pursuing a “China appeasement” policy for the last one decade or so, if not for longer, primarily with a view to stay connected with Beijing whose global economic influence was growing in the fast-changing global order. But recently this notion has witnessed a serious setback. The COVID-19 pandemic and China’s increasing military posturing in the India-China land border as well as in the South and East China Seas have forced the two countries to revisit their respective national thinking and ask: Is there really a need for a “China connect” policy that is drawn on an appeasement outlook?

Staying connected with China is a strategic prerequisite for India and Australia in a globalised and interdependent world. However, this should not compel them into an appeasement mode. Even though China is the largest trading partner of Australia, and a ‘developmental partner’ for India, such economic connection should not induce any compromise or appeasement on part of India and Australia. Beijing have failed to address the rising trade imbalance with India while it has penetrated to Australia’s educational and strategic environment through non-transparent investment and stronger economic connection. Therefore, rather than appeasement, the new terms of engagement must be based on transparency, reciprocity and respect for sovereignty and free-thinking—something would make China wary. And two recent events—China’s military clash

against India in the Galwan valley in Ladakh and its threats in the grab of economic coercion to Australian response to Australia demanding an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19—seems to have induced an alternative thinking in New Delhi and Canberra for newer forms of engagement.

Though New Delhi and Canberra are yet to have a shared outlook on China, their respective China policies, of late, have offered glimpses of anti-China tendencies: potential expansion of the Group of 7 (G-7) with India as a member and acceptance of the “Quad Plus” format and revisiting its “power-partner” contention with China, all signal towards a major security-driven shift in New Delhi’s China outlook. Meanwhile, Sino-Australian ties are at an “all-time low”, with China placing tariffs on Australian barley and banning beef from major Australian exporters. This trajectory has served as a “wake-up call” for Canberra with Prime Minister Morrison stating that the country will not be “intimidated” by China, its largest trading partner.

Xi Jinping’s China is a business-oriented neo-mercantilist power that prioritizes its own national interests. The values of freedoms, critical thinking, respect for others’ sovereignty and territorial integrity have little relevance in Chinese foreign policy calculations under Xi Jinping. China’s aggressive maritime-military posturing in the Indo-Pacific region is a manifestation of this view point. Beijing has also been successful to some extent in constraining the respective maritime interests of both India and Australia.

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The values of freedoms, critical thinking, respect for others’ sovereignty and territorial integrity have little relevance in Chinese foreign policy calculations under Xi Jinping.  
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In this context, the rapidly transforming strategic scenario in the Indo-Pacific should be enough to encourage India and Australia to develop a common or shared outlook on China. For that purpose two questions need answer: What is the common thread that binds India and Australia vis-a-vis China in the Indo-Pacific? And, is it necessary that China be the common bridge connecting the two countries in the Indo-Pacific?

First, China could well emerge as a key driver for galvanizing India-Australia ties. Yet, the India-Australia partnership does not necessarily have to be China-centric. That is, they could enhance their partnership without necessarily invoking China. India is already Australia’s “significant security partner”. At the June 2020 virtual summit, India and Australia initiated a “process of comprehensive reforms” covering issues such as cybersecurity, maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, education and vocational training, as well as signed two major defence arrangements—namely, the Australia-India Mutual

Logistics Support Arrangement and the Defence Science and Technology Implementing Arrangement. The two arrangements and their “Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific” reflect the countries’ strong commitment to practical global cooperation”.

Another second, strong bilateral complementarities are emerging in military modernization, particularly in the areas of defence cybersecurity and military infrastructure building. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s “Atmanirbhar Bharat” (self-reliant India) initiative that encourages self-reliance in the defence sector could provide impetus to Australia becoming a defence partner through collaborative ventures with Australian defence firms. In the economic sphere, both have agreed to renew negotiations on the Australia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). They could also collaborate on developing the Blue Economy projects for the Indian Ocean littoral states.

And *third*, in spite of practising diplomatic correctness, both sides cannot assuage Beijing’s own beliefs that the emerging Indo-Pacific stratagem has a dominant China factor driving it. For instance, India and Australia have recently also decided to upgrade the existing “2+2” dialogue to the ministerial level, lending political heft to the strategic talks. In addition, due to increasing Chinese coercive activities in the South China Sea, India is also planning to invite Australia for the Malabar exercise, which would expand the maritime ventures of the Quadrilateral Strategic Dialogue (or Quad)

comprising India, Australia, Japan and the US. Further, if India decides to join the US-Japan-Australia led Blue Dot Network (BDN)—perceived as a counter to China’s Belt and Road Initiative—it would promote an alternative global supply chains and quality infrastructure network in Asia. The BDN will strengthen a “free and open” Indo-Pacific outlook that Quad countries promote, while the conjectural “Quad Plus” grouping will help bolster the alignment structures.

Thus, the new momentum in India-Australia ties based on common interests, shared values of democracy and the rule of law. Trilateral and quadrilateral mechanisms with “like-minded” partners and policy convergence marks their emerging “comprehensive” nature. Not only that, it may further help synergize a common action-oriented outlook vis-a-vis China in the Indo-Pacific.

**Dr. Jagannath Panda is a Research Fellow and Centre Coordinator, East Asia at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. He is also Series Editor for “Routledge Studies on Think Asia”.**

By Syed Muzammil Butt

## Towards a New Dawn in Kashmir

After winning over 300 seats in the May 2019 general elections, the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government of India abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution on 5 August 2019 annulling the special status to the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).

A year has passed since then and the trends available from the ground need to be analysed to predict the nature of changes appearing on the horizon.

For one thing, the government’s decision to bifurcate the state and separate out the Ladakh region was received with most enthusiastic welcome in Ladakh. It was interesting to note that the member of parliament from Leh, Jamyang Tsering, commended the government for taking this step and said that it was a long-standing demand from the people of Ladakh who were struggling to get their developmental aspirations met under the administrative structure put in place through Art 370 in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

As regards the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the response from the separatists was predictably unfavourable. Given the fact that the overall political and security situation in the erstwhile state was vitiated by sponsored terrorism from across the border, there was a need to take adequate counter-terrorist and security measures to ensure peace and stable administration in the newly formed UT of J&K. The following table suggests that the incidents of terrorism has not gone up as much as pessimists and critics would have had us believe.

Year	Incidents of Killing	Security Forces	Terrorists/ Insurgents/ Extremists	Civilians	Total
2016	112	14	88	165	267
2017	163	54	83	220	357
2018	205	86	95	271	452
2019	135	42	78	163	283
2020	85	17	34	154	205

The people of Kashmir were disgusted with the corruption in

the governance system as was the case under the government enabled by the Art 370. The local political leadership had made a fetish of the article and its provisions and kept the people misinformed about the cost of non-integration or half-integration with India. They wove false notions of autonomy and separateness around J&K’s status as a state with a separate constitution and separate flag and insisted on perpetuation of such a condition. The local leaders filled their coffers and established a system of patronage and nepotism and cleverly put

the onus of responsibility of efficient and effective governance

on New Delhi. This resulted in a perverse system of representative governance in the name of democracy where the local leaders fed on manufactured popular disaffection towards New Delhi, and deemed it necessary to constantly widen the gulf between New Delhi and the people in the valley. They forgot that Art 370 was a temporary provision which had to go one day.

The current BJP-led government blew their cover by abrogating the article and in a fit of frustration they criticised the move and predicted doomsday in Kashmir immediately after the reorganisation of the state. However, lot of water has flown down the Jhelum and Chenab during the last one year and there is little sympathy for such leadership in J&K.

The issue of terrorism is a function of cumulative popular frustration with misgovernance by a self-obsessed local leadership. Sooner or later, the people will get to see the benefits of joining the Indian mainstream as another important federating state (province) of India enjoying equal autonomy privileges like other states of India. Many

Kashmiris would like to be part of such kind of a close-network of states where provincial autonomy is guaranteed in a manner that unthreatens the unity and integrity of India at one level and brings unprecedented prosperity to the people of Kashmir at another.

The developmental outcomes of the current administration are sure to convince the people of Kashmir about the sincerity of the government in implementing its new policy in J&K. The sinister influence of forces from across the border is expected to wane once the people wholeheartedly shun violence, participate in democratic process and vote into power a new crop of people who would place the interests of the people above their own narrow selfish interests. On the anniversary of the momentous decision made by the government, it is hoped that the people of Kashmir will make pragmatic choices for their future and usher in a new dawn for themselves and India.

**The author is a freelance writer from Kashmir, now based in New Delhi.**



# A sporting fightback against COVID-19 and beyond

Dr Sarah Kelly



**C**an we survive months without live sport? Short answer is yes, we can. We'll survive and come out the other side and still be strong fans of the sports we follow, but sport – and life – will look very different post-COVID-19.

Sport has always been a game-changer with the agility and speed to innovate and acclimate to new conditions, as demonstrated by enshrined traditions and long history. As a socio-cultural institution, it reflects our values and shared ideals. And right now, sport is very visible and visceral platform of social and economic change, moving the goal posts of how society will adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future global events of this scale. The sports sector, like many other sectors, is being forced to evolve rapidly to a new economic structure on the other side of COVID-19. The new face of sport will include cost reductions in professional sports, possibly revised ownership and investment and rapid innovation to develop new growth opportunities and ensure contactless experiences.

We know sport is the big unifier and leveller in society and plays an important economic, social and cultural role. With every major sporting league on the global schedule on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is limited live sport around

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**The recent re-launch of some professional sports seasons and community sports to very limited or non-existent stadia crowds has been well received and signals a new need for sport to ensure pandemic-friendly, virtual experiences and contactless stadia ticketing and catering are provided.**  
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the world to follow for the foreseeable future, which has created a massive vacuum in our lives. Many tragic sports fans (myself included) prior to the reinvention of some professional competitions, were resorting to debating “best of” highlights, team picks and grand finals online in an attempt to fill this huge void. The recent re-launch of some professional sports seasons and community sports to very limited or non-existent stadia crowds has been well received and signals a new need for sport to ensure pandemic-friendly, virtual experiences and contactless stadia ticketing and catering are provided.

## Championing Social and Mental Challenges

And that's a major concern given the role sport plays in promoting positivity and bringing people together in times of turmoil. From soldiers finding solidarity playing sport during World War I and II, to the 1995 Rugby World Cup which South Africa hosted and won, uniting the nation at the end of the apartheid era and, more recently in Detroit, USA, where new stadiums brought hope to the city after the economic downturn due to the decline of the automobile manufacturing industry, history has demonstrated how sport is the heartbeat of countries and cities. In India, the Isha Foundation uses community sport to unite rural communities and eliminate caste-based inequality. The growing mental health issues associated with COVID-19 induced economic downturn can be ameliorated to an extent by community sport and the tribal belonging affiliated with professional sports. Sport, in essence is a social connector that drives community wellbeing and resilience, particularly during tough times.

Sport and athletes have always been important role models and right now, athletes and sport brands are using their social media profiles and personal platforms to communicate critical messages around COVID-19.

NBA and EPL athletes and brands stepped up quickly, using their online clout to deliver key messages and fundraise for charities. Iconic sports celebrities and clubs have addressed issues such as social distancing and isolation as well as the aggression and fear that sparked the panic-buying frenzy. Ex-rugby league great in Australia, Johnathan Thurston used his influential platform to encourage people to protect our nation's health by highlighting concerns about the vulnerability of Australia's indigenous communities and is now working to keep indigenous kids studying during school closure in remote communities.



More recently, athletes around the world have rallied around the #BlackLivesMatter social justice cause, demonstrating the evolved and evolving roles that athletes play in a world where sport is a universal language and powerful platform for social change.

## Transformations in Sports

In terms of fan engagement, the lack of access to live sport is the biggest marketing problem sport has ever faced. Fans are pivotal players in the business of sport – they are the audiences that underpin broadcast rights and sponsorship valuations, and provide the atmosphere in live attendance. When players recently experienced playing in empty stadiums, it was an odd arena, for both the home audience and the players. It's a huge problem to solve, but sport is pivoting to create innovative social media content to fill the void and adopt new technologies to engage a global audience. Esports, fantasy sports and branded content are emerging as winners for engagement, in addition to complimenting the live spectacle of sport in future, as a form of hedging in the sport business model that must adjust to inevitable pandemic, security or natural disaster disruption in the future.

Traditional sport has also diversified into esports, and with the cancellation of live sport, these video game competitions are more relevant than ever. The uncertainty of watching live sport is something everyone enjoys, and the excitement of competitive gaming replicates many of these attributes with those of traditional sport, as showcased by Formula One's morphing into e-racing. Many athletes are now also asking fans to join them in playing these online games.

## Managing Social Media

Social media is polarising and quite negative in many ways, but I'd argue that sport has the ability to bring people together online in a positive way. With the insatiable demand for online content, athletes and sporting



codes are sharing sporting highlights, memes and authentic off-field interviews with key players, sponsors and clubs via TikTok, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, and fans are very receptive to this organic content and access. On TikTok especially, athletes are sharing their off-field personalities in an authentic way, which is particularly attractive for the next generation of sport consumers.

## Healthy Body Healthy Nation

One of the key roles of sport has always been to ensure participation in activity, effectively driving a healthier and socially connected economy. During this lockdown phase, the fitness and mental health of professional players, sport employees and the wider community is of concern, and sport has a powerful ability to deliver messaging in a positive way. Many athletes are doing online training programs and encouraging everyone to participate in sport, testament to the positive role sport can play in times of uncertainty. They can also play a role in supporting rising mental health in our communities in the face of economic downturn through their gravitas and many are. This is the real power of sport. And this won't change.

## Future of Sports



Every sector will change after the

COVID-19 crisis and sport is no exception. We know the structure of sport and competition will look different, and now is the time to look at how we adapt and change to survive. The relationship between fans and sport might evolve, to be even closer than before. Sports are grateful for the support pre-COVID-19, but will be more so than ever post, with many supporters offering immediate re-deployment to sports staff and sticking as sponsors through the crisis. In many professional codes, staff and players have sacrificed their freedom to bunker down in isolated hubs across the nation, in efforts to roll out a full season, against all odds, effectively saving some sports. For the fans, sports have been revealed as vulnerable, not invincible as previously perceived, and this will bring them closer, as we all want sport to survive.

*Sarah Kelly is an associate professor (law and marketing) University of Queensland, Deputy Chair of the Brisbane Lions AFL Football Club and Tourism and Events Queensland and board member Institute for Australia India Engagement. She is a global expert on sports marketing and law and influences national policy and practice in these fields.*



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## Modi talks 'rashtra rakshaa' as 5 Rafale jets touch down in India



**New Delhi (IANS):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted a video of the first set of Rafale aircraft landing on Indian soil with a Sanskrit phrase where he welcomed their arrival on July 29 and connected it to "rashtra rakshaa" or national defence.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also retweeted it. Interestingly, the BJP had used the same Sanskrit phrase with an additional statement in English that read, "A Terror Free Resurgent India", in a tweet from its official handle last year in February when the Rafale purchase issue had created a massive political storm ahead of the 2019 general election. The party had also used the hashtag, 'For the first time', as a dig at previous governments, back then.

The Sanskrit phrase talks about "rashtra raksha" or national defence. If loosely translated, it means, "I don't see any 'punya', 'vrat' or 'yagya' like that of a nation's defence".

The first five of the 36 medium multi-role Rafale fighter jets being built by French aircraft manufacturer Dassault landed safely at the IAF airbase in Ambala on July 29 afternoon. Significantly, the frontline IAF airbase is likely to be used in case of a conflict at the northern or the western borders.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in a tweet, "The Birds have landed safely in Ambala." Of the two squadrons of the Rafale fighters, one would be based in Ambala for the western borders with Pakistan, while the second squadron would be based at Hasimara in West Bengal. It will be dedicated for the China border where Indian and Chinese People's Liberation Army troops are engaged in a border standoff, which left 20 Indian and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers dead following a bloody clash on June 15.



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## Took right decision at right time to fight Covid: Modi

**New Delhi (IANS):** India has become the second largest personal protective equipment (PPE) kits manufacturer in the last four months, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday while inaugurating the three more high tech state of the art testing labs for the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

Modi said that the right decisions taken at the right time led India to be in a better position as compared to other countries to fight coronavirus.

Modi inaugurated Covid-19 testing labs in Noida, Mumbai and Kolkata on July 27 through video conferencing.

Speaking on the occasion, he said, "Crores of people are fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Today we launched three high tech testing labs, which will help West Bengal, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh."

He said that Delhi-NCR, Kolkata and Mumbai are big economic centres and here youths come to make their careers and fulfill their dreams. Modi said that with the launch of three more throughput testing labs, India will test 10,000 more samples everyday.

India on Monday recorded the highest single day spike of 49,931 cases in 24 hours with the total tally of the Covid-19 reaching 14,35,453 cases, out of which 9,17,568 have been cured.

The Prime Minister said, "These high tech labs will not be specific for Covid-19 and in future it will

be for Hepatitis B, Dengue, HIV. These tests will also be done here."

Hailing the decisions of his government to combat the spread of the Covid-19, Modi said, "It is because India took right decisions at the right time that it is in a better position as compared to other countries."

"The fatalities in India due to Covid-19 is less as compared to other countries and the recovery rate is much higher and it is improving day by day," Modi said.

Despite crossing the 14 lakh mark on Monday, recovery rate in India is 63.92 per cent.

Modi said that the number of people getting cured from Covid-19 is almost 10 lakh. "That is why in the beginning the central government announced Rs 15,000 crore package, for isolation centres, Covid-19 centres, testing and tracing. India has improved its facilities," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said that now India has more than 11,000 Covid-19 facilities and more than 11 lakh Covid-19 beds. "In January we had only one centre in India for Covid-19 testing and now we have 1,300 labs across the country. More than five lakh tests are being done every day. And in the coming days we are trying to get 10 lakh tests," he said.

Modi emphasised that the government focused on saving the lives of every Indian getting infected with Covid-19 and "this



**Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends India-EU Virtual Summit 2020 via video conferencing from New Delhi on July 15, 2020 (Video Grab IANSPB)**

has given a good result".

Pointing out at the production of PPE kits and face masks, Modi said, "what India has done is a big success story".

"Now India is the second biggest manufacturer of PPE kits. Six months ago not a single PPE manufacturing unit was there and now today we have more than 1,200 manufacturers who are producing more than 5 lakh kits," Modi said.

He also said that earlier India imported N95 masks from other countries and now three lakh masks are being manufactured in India daily. He also said that earlier India was dependent on other countries for ventilators and now we have developed the system for manufacturing of three lakh ventilators in India.

## Pfizer, BioNTech start late stage clinical trial of Covid vax

**New York (IANS):** US-based Pfizer and German biotech firm BioNTech have announced the start of a late stage clinical trial of a Covid-19 vaccine jointly developed by the two companies.

The Phase 2/3 study will involve up to 30,000 participants between 18 and 85 years of age, the two companies said on July 27.

The vaccine candidate, BNT162b2, recently received US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Fast Track designation, encodes an optimised SARS-CoV-2 full length spike glycoprotein (S), which is the target of virus neutralising antibodies.

"The Phase 2/3 study protocol follows all the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidance on clinical trial design for COVID-19 vaccine studies," Kathrin Jansen, Senior Vice President and Head of Vaccine Research and Development, Pfizer, said in a statement.

"Our selection of the BNT162b2 vaccine candidate and its advancement into a Phase 2/3 study are the culmination of an extensive, collaborative and unprecedented R&D program involving Pfizer, BioNTech, clinical investigators, and study participants with a singular focus of developing a safe and effective COVID-19 RNA vaccine."

Pfizer and BioNTech last

week announced that the US government had agreed to pay \$1.95 billion for 100 million doses of a potential Covid-19 vaccine jointly developed by them.

"The initiation of the Phase 2/3 trial is a major step forward in our progress toward providing a potential vaccine to help fight the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to generating additional data as the program progresses," said Ugur Sahin, CEO and Co-Founder of BioNTech.

During preclinical and clinical studies of four BNT162 RNA vaccine candidates, BNT162b1 and BNT162b2 emerged as strong candidates based on assessments of safety and immune response.

Pfizer and BioNTech selected BNT162b2 as the candidate to progress to a Phase 2/3 study based on the totality of available data from its preclinical and clinical studies, including select immune response and tolerability parameters.

Monday marked the beginning of another late stage Covid-19 vaccine trial as pharmaceutical company Moderna announced the start of a phase-3 clinical trial to evaluate an investigational vaccine known as mRNA-1273.

This trial will also include 30,000 participants.

## Men more likely to endorse Covid-19 conspiracy theories

**New York (IANS):** Men are more likely than women to endorse coronavirus-related conspiracy theories, say researchers. The study builds upon research from earlier this year that revealed Republicans were more likely than Democrats to believe Covid-19 conspiracies.

But the new research, published in the journal *Politics and Gender*, shows that gender is more of a factor than party affiliation. According to the researchers, the Covid-19 pandemic is an easy target for conspiracy theories. Most of us are engulfed in worries over health, finances, jobs or our children's education and feel a lack of control.

"During a global pandemic, it's kind of the perfect storm of uncertainty. And so when we feel a lack of control, uncertainty

or powerlessness, we seek out explanations for why the event occurred that's causing us to feel that way," said study author Joanne Miller from the University of Delaware in the US.

"It can lead us to connect dots that shouldn't be connected because we're trying to seek out answers. And sometimes those answers are conspiracy theories," Miller added. To find out, the research team ran a survey of 3,000 people using 11 popular conspiracy theories.

It included claims that China or the US accidentally released the virus; that 5G cell towers are causing the virus; that Bill Gates is plotting to somehow inject us with a vaccine; and that scientists are trying to make Donald Trump look bad by exaggerating the seriousness of the pandemic. The

researchers found that women were "significantly less likely" to endorse the 11 theories in comparison to men.

According to the study, gender differences were notable. The results were surprising, given that past work has not found a consistent association between gender and conspiracy theory beliefs. "So why men? Two dispositional factors are connected to the gender gap," the research team said.

One is Learned helplessness, which is a feeling like everything's out of your control and any actions that you try to take are basically pointless. Second is conspiratorial thinking, which is a tendency to think about major political events and problems in conspiratorial terms without having any connection to, in this



case, Covid-19.

"The resulting general sense of learned helplessness can lead to conspiracy theory beliefs. What we're finding in this research is that men are more likely to score

higher on learned helplessness," Miller said.

The research team hope to use their findings to affect positive change in public health.



# Q&A session with our migration expert

## Question 1: A Vincent

I am working in middle east as a welder for the last 6 years. Can I immigrate to Australia? My CV is attached.

**Ans:** Thank you for the email. After going through your CV, we find that at this stage you may not reach the points needed for Australian skilled migration under subclass 189. Currently you need 95 points, which is difficult to get in your case. You may be eligible to seek state sponsored migration or employer sponsored visa. To initiate the process, you have to get IELTS (7 each) or PTE (65 each) in the English proficiency test.

## Question 2: Thomas DS

I am forwarding my CV along with the email. I have experience in commercial and private banking and international trade, having expertise in export negotiations and payments. Currently, I am undertaking PG in Business and Enterprise System in Australia. With my previous experience, what are my options for PR?

**Ans:** We have checked your work experience mentioned in the CV.

Please note you have to complete PG studies in Australia before exploring PR options. You will get stay-back options after successful completion of the course you are currently pursuing. The Australian experience in banking sector will enhance your chances for migration to Australia. But with the current qualification and experience, you may not have much options at this stage.

Regarding the query on regional study, you need to undertake two year study in a recognised institution in a regional area for an approved course. Also, you must live in a regional post code. You have to check with the university site if the requirements satisfies with the current course undertaken.

## Question 3: Nath AS

I am sending my CV and my relative's bio data for PR application. Please advise.

**Ans:** We have gone through the three CVs sent in. Your occupation as the HR Manager is not on the main skilled occupation list. But it is on the state sponsorship and employer sponsored migration

list. You need to get proficient level English score and satisfy participating states' requirements for state migration.

For employer sponsored migration (TSS and 494 Visas) you have to get employment offer from a prospective employer in Australia. Other conditions must also be satisfied.

The others' occupations Mechanical Engineer and Software Engineer are in the skilled occupation list. They need 95 points to get invitation for main visa application lodgement under subclass 189 visa. With the information provided, they need to get superior level English score (IELTS 8 each / PTE 79 each or equivalent) to initiate the process.

## Question 4: M Thomas

I am MSW holder and working in a rehab organisation overseas. Attached is my CV. Please advise me of the migration chance to Australia? Which English test is needed?

**Ans:** Your nominated occupation, Social Worker, is in the main skilled occupation list, but at this stage you need 95 points to

get invitation to submit main application under skill select migration.

We advise to get superior level English score (IELTS Academic-8 each) before initiating skilled migration application to Australia. Please note this language score is needed to start the process in your individual circumstance.

The skills assessment body for Social Worker (AASW) will accept only IELTS (Academic) version of the language test. For more details visit: <https://www.aasw.asn.au/document/item/139>.

## Question 5: George A

I am doing PG in IT in Australia. I am currently working part time as nursing assistant. My question is if I am changing my course to nursing studies, will that generate any problems vis-a-vis visa status? Am I eligible to get sponsorship from a restaurant?

**Ans:** Thank you for the email. We understand you don't have much experience in IT sector in overseas. You are advised to complete the current course and move to 485 visa first. Thereafter, you may get more avenues to



Solicitor Prathap Lakshmanan

go with migration process in Australia.

Regarding course change, it is a bit tricky as you have to contact the university where you would like to join nursing graduation to confirm eligibility for admission to the course. Secondly, you should change the student visa with the level of the new course with a fresh visa application.

As your qualifications are entirely in a different sector, you would not be eligible for sponsorship from a restaurant with the information provided.

Send all your queries and doubts on migration to us on:  
[info@indiannewsqld.com.au](mailto:info@indiannewsqld.com.au)

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## If you're pregnant and COVID-19 positive, you're not the first one



Photo by Ryan Franco on Unsplash

Being a nurse for over a decade and having worked with over a thousand patients, my experience has taught me that when doctors and nurses work together, we are able to provide the best possible care to a patient.

As nurses we fade into the background, the common misconception being we aren't as important as doctors; but we are who the patient turns to when they feel overwhelmed, the ones they seek out to take care of themselves when they are at their most vulnerable and the ones who

make patients feel optimistic even in the most trying of times.

Early this year when the pandemic hit, healthcare workers like myself from every state braced ourselves, we knew that the storm was coming, and we were prepared. While the nation went into lockdown, healthcare facilities began stocking up on ventilators, oxygen masks, PPE kits and other necessities which would prove useful in the fight against COVID-19.

It was frightening waiting for the inevitable influx of patients

that would test positive once the lockdown was lifted. There were apprehensions that the infection would spread to us, that the system would get overburdened and that things will not end well.

For me was the added fear of the wellbeing of my baby. I was pregnant and scheduled to go on maternity leave when the lockdown came into force. My family is in Kerala, my husband in Kuwait and I was alone in Delhi, at home and on compulsory paid leave. I am not going to lie; it was slightly daunting. It's not the best of positions to be in when you are expecting a child.

The day before I was due, I was tested for COVID 19; unexpectedly I tested positive. I had shown no symptoms at all. There was nothing wrong with me. I was completely asymptomatic.

The first thought that went through my head was - will my baby be fine? The second - will I be fine? The psychological impact as soon as you know you are COVID-19 positive, even if you are asymptomatic, is immense. However, I did not allow the fear

to get the better of me and was focused on the tiny human who was about to enter the world, stayed safe and virus free. I was scared for my baby.

Thankfully at the hospital they had arranged everything for me. My chief nursing officer immediately informed the Zonal director of the hospital, and they arranged an ambulance and a bed for me. I was brought to the hospital and admitted immediately. The support from the entire administration overwhelmed me. With new guidelines being issued every day, I could see that they were stressed. At the time, information about the virus was limited, its progression and the character it takes on was larger than life.

I was fortunate to have one of my peers tend to me twenty-four seven. Doctors' Nympha and Umesh helped me give birth to a beautiful girl, who is two months old today.

Thankfully, my baby tested negative, but to ensure she was not at risk, the nurse who took care of me, whisked her away

and tended to her for the next 14 days, till I tested negative. After that, the hospital moved me to a hotel to complete my quarantine period, at their cost.

The team was my family through this happy but fearful time. I was one of theirs and they were rallying for me, helping me stand on my feet when I was at my most vulnerable.

I am now in Kerala, with my family. I wrote this so that every woman who is expecting, who may or may not be Coronavirus positive, might find comfort in my story. My role as a nurse is to support you, as a patient, and while I may not be able to do so physically, I hope my experience gives you the strength you need. After all, I am not the only one who is giving birth in the midst of a highly contagious virus.

(Nurse Nigritto works at the Fortis Hospital in Shalimar Bagh, NCR region)

(IANSlife)  
By Nurse Nigritto



# Switzerland opens doors to global tourists sans Indians

With the panic surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic starting to subside in Europe, Switzerland has opened its doors for global tourism, but not for India, an official said in Mumbai on July 23.

From July 20, in tune with European Union guidelines, Switzerland lifted restrictions for travellers from 21 countries, besides the European nations, though India -- currently ranking third on the world Corona dashboard -- has been excluded. However, travellers from certain regions will be quarantined for 10 days after entering Switzerland, one of the few nations in the world which has managed to control the impact of the pandemic.

"We have not finalised any date for India yet. As for the isolation, the travellers will have to go into self-paid quarantine," said a spokesperson for Switzerland Tourism in Mumbai.

Besides opening the borders and gradually relaxing the rules, the country's tourism board has initiated a 'Clean &

Safe' campaign with tourism establishments joining to create a 'Clean & Safe Label' indicating they are committed to complying with the protection plans, said Switzerland Tourism India Deputy Director Ritu Sharma.

She said a total of six industry-specific labels are available for hotels, restaurants, navigation companies, cable cars, public transportation and meeting facilities.

Earlier on June 15, Switzerland had opened itself for travellers from the Schengen zone and others, and it now includes a total of nearly four-dozen big and small countries around the world, with plans to further open up gradually.

These include: Schengen Zone: Austria, Hungary, Norway, Belgium, Iceland, Poland, Czech Republic, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Latvia, Slovakia, Estonia, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Finland, Lithuania, Spain, France, Luxembourg, Sweden, Germany, Malta, Greece, the Netherlands.

The other countries are: United Kingdom, Algeria, Andorra, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia,



Cyprus, Canada, Georgia, Ireland, Japan, Monaco, Morocco, New Zealand, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, South Korea, Tunisia, Thailand, Uruguay and The Vatican.

With a population of around 8.50 million -- roughly equivalent to

the number of daily commuters in Mumbai suburban trains -- Switzerland has notched 34,000 Covid-19 cases, including 1,972 fatalities, as per the Worldometer dashboard.

Switzerland Tourism, a federal public corporation formed in

1994, opened its first branch in India in Mumbai (1977) followed by Delhi (2000), and has operations in 28 countries.

IANS

# Why tourism must revise priorities during pandemic

Contributed by National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the factors that make a country's travel and tourism sector competitive. Certain parameters such as healthcare capacity and digital travel offerings, are increasing in importance during the pandemic.

"COVID-19 has had a severe impact on the travel and tourism sector, with some parts of the sector effectively shut down completely. Considering that tourism accounts for nearly 10 percent of the world's jobs, it's important that countries take serious measures to ensure their tourism is competitive and ready to bounce back as COVID-19 measures are rolled back and countries begin to reopen," said Christoph Wolff, Head of Mobility at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Analysis from the WEF shows that some regions and countries may need to review tourism from a whole new point of view - especially with health infrastructure in mind.

The current downturn is having a major effect on economies heavily dependent on tourism. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimates that the travel and tourism industry accounts for 10.2 percent of GDP in the Latin

America and Caribbean region. In some countries, such as Jamaica, tourism accounts for a much higher percentage of GDP.

"Tourism slowdowns give policy-makers and business leaders in the region a chance to reassess their tourism practice and policies, especially in infrastructure and unsustainable tourism development, which are particular risks to the region's long-term tourism resilience," WEF said.

In the light of the pandemic, travel competitiveness in Latin America may have taken a hit.

Europe and other countries with more ample health resources have a better chance of containing and managing COVID-19 cases than other countries with less-developed health resources, potentially speeding up a safe reopening of their travel sector.

"Similarly, higher ICT readiness will allow tourism companies and their supply-chain partners to provide more services digitally - a growing advantage when person-to-person interactions are constrained. Competitiveness components such as a favourable business environment and labour markets can also act as supply-side stimuli, generating relief and accelerating the recovery.



Photo - Unsplash

"Latin America and Caribbean countries can use this time to re-evaluate their tourism development projects and build for a better sector in the future. For example, opportunities exist within their infrastructure gap. Good air transport is critical to Latin America's travel

competitiveness, especially considering the region's hard-to-traverse terrain. Pandemic shutdowns have further slowed infrastructure projects but also offer an opportunity for countries in the region to reassess their ongoing projects and direct attention to the most critical

areas. Building infrastructure for a better balance between tourism and local demand will be particularly important," WEF said.

IANSlife  
By Siddhi Jain



## Two-week mandatory quarantine for Indian cricket team in Australia



**T**he Indian Cricket team which is most likely to tour Australia for the four-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test series in December will have to undergo quarantine for 14 days in Adelaide Oval, Cricket Australia Chief Executive Nick Hockley has confirmed

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the whole world to a standstill and in the past few months many major sports tournaments have been either cancelled or postponed indefinitely. However, there is a strong possibility that the Indian cricket squad will be visiting Australia to contend for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in December.

Although Australia is looking forward to welcoming the Indian team, the schedule for the series will have to be accordingly planned in order to adjust the compulsory

two-week quarantine which the visiting team must undergo immediately following their arrival on Australian soil. Laying stress on the necessity of stringently following the mandatory 14-day quarantine, Cricket Australia Chief Executive Nick Hockley remarked that the protocol is well-defined and has been formulated as per the current guidelines of the government. He went on to assure that while the primary motive behind the compulsory quarantine was to have a bio-secure environment in order to ensure minimal risk of infection, maximum efforts will be made so that the players have all the requisite amenities for optimum preparation prior to the matches.

The four test matches will be played at Gabba, Adelaide Oval, Melbourne Cricket Ground and Sydney Cricket Ground with the first match scheduled for December 3. The Indian team will most probably spend its quarantine period in an on-venue hotel at Adelaide Oval and carry on with their preparations for the matches. BCCI chief, Sourav Ganguly while confirming the December tour expressed his concern about the 14 day quarantine being too long and potentially depressing; and hoped that it could be of a shorter duration. But Hockley stated that that would not be possible as a lot was at stake and creating a bio-secure environment was their chief priority.

## Schedule for India tour of Australia needs tweaking: Cricket Australia

**New Delhi/IANS:** While India is set to play their first major international series in the post-COVID-19 era against Australia at the end of the year, the schedule for the same may need slight tweaking as Cricket Australia is looking for a window to fit in the three-match T20I series which was earlier set to be played in October prior to the now postponed T20 World Cup.

Cricket Australia Chief Executive Nick Hockley made it clear that the '14-day quarantine period is well defined' for the visiting Indian team keeping in mind the government regulations, the schedule has seen a bit of a tumble as there seems to be no space for the T20I series in the current scenario.

Speaking to IANS, a BCCI official said that the matter is being discussed and considering that the 14-day quarantine is a must as per Cricket Australia and the government there, it is getting difficult to fit in the T20I series.

"The protocols in place in Australia are necessary on account of the pandemic and it's perfectly understandable. There are no two ways about that. We are all dealing with the challenges that the pandemic poses to us and the commitment with other boards regarding dates is a challenge that will prove difficult to meet in these



### Cricket Australia and India

circumstances and accordingly the dates and length of the tours may need to be tweaked and that may mean amending the number of matches. A 14-day quarantine means it would get reduced from the total length of the tour," the official explained.

"We were apprised that work is being done on the schedule before it is finalised. They are looking at fitting in the T20I series. India also play England after returning from Australia and that schedule is also being worked out while the pink-ball Test is fixed for Ahmedabad. We need to see how the other venues are placed and the distance from hotels to the grounds and things like that with an eye on the current scenario due to the pandemic. Hopefully we will have further clarity before the end of the year as working in tandem with the government is a must."

Explaining the gap between the Australia tour and the England team arriving for the Tests in India and also sandwiching in the T20Is, the official said: "The ODI series in Australia at present ends on January 17 and even if the teams get a two-day breather before starting the T20I series, that would mean that the first T20I can only be played by January 20. Having games on alternate days at the same venue would mean the T20I series ending on January 24. That would see India heading home on January 26 at the earliest.

"Even if we imagine that quarantine rules won't exist in India till then, you cannot have a Test series without at least a gap of 7-10 days as the boys need a minimum time to adapt back not just from white-ball to red, but also the change in timing. So, the England series moves into February."

## Cricket Australia to appoint mental health expert

**Melbourne/IANS:** Cricket Australia (CA) is set to appoint a mental health expert after the high-pressure nature of the game forced three of its active players, including star all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, into taking breaks last year.

CA had put out an advertisement for the new position of a 'Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead', who will report to the board's head of sports science and medicine Alex Kountouris.

"The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead will give a greater focus on mental health at Cricket Australia, giving us an individual resource dedicated to this area," CA's high performance chief Drew Ginn told ESPN cricinfo.

"The role will also provide broader case management support for CA contracted players. It's a great chance to prioritise mental health. It will provide further reinforcement

to our current psychologists working with our teams," Ginn said.

"To have a dedicated leader in a national role and having them focus on a national strategy, policy, future partnerships, critical case management and support for players and states is a positive step forward for the sport," he added.

Maxwell took a break to deal with his unspecified issues followed by Nic Maddinson and Will Pucovski.

"This role is more important than ever, particularly in a world where mental health issues continue to be prevalent, particularly with the demands of elite cricket, Covid and all of the uncertainty.

"It's crucial for us to provide the right support and environment for our players, coaches and staff, and this builds on fantastic work being done by Michael Lloyd and Peter Clarke," Ginn added.

## Nanda 1st Indian to take part in a competition amid COVID-19



### Srabani Nanda

**New Delhi/IANS:** Sprinter and Tokyo Olympics hopeful Srabani Nanda has become the first Indian athlete to return to competition since the coronavirus pandemic put a full stop on training and competitions in March.

The 29-year-old, who is training at the MVP Track Club in Jamaica,

ran in a meet in the country and managed a time of 11.78 seconds. The Velocity Fest also featured some of the biggest stars from the country and Nanda's event featured double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson Herah and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

The qualifying standard for

the women's 100m event is 11.15 seconds but it wouldn't have mattered if Nanda had managed to surpass that time anyhow as World Athletics has suspended Olympic Qualification tournaments till November 2020.

Thompson was the winner in the 100m event, clocking 11.19 seconds while Fraser-Pryce won the women's 200m event with a time of 22.74 seconds. 2011 World Championships gold medallist Yohan Blake won the men's 200m event with a time of 20.62 seconds.

Nanda first broke into the international scene in 2008, winning a team gold medal in the 4x100 metres relay at the Commonwealth Youth Games in Pune. She represented India at the Rio 2016 Olympics as well, finishing sixth in her heat.



# Hockey Pro League ideal for Olympics preparations, feel India coach, skipper



Manpreet Hockey Captain

**New Delhi/IANS:** Indian men's hockey team chief coach Graham Reid has said that the tough competition against top nations in the 2020 FIH Hockey Pro League season will help his team prepare best for the Tokyo Olympic Games.

"It's very encouraging to have international competition restarting and the Hockey Pro League will give us that tough top level competition as a lead-up to the Olympic Games next year," Reid said.

The Indian team had made an emphatic start to their maiden Hockey Pro League campaign earlier this year with a 5-2 and 3-3 (3-1) win against the Netherlands, followed by a 2-1 win and 3-4 loss against World Champions Belgium and 3-4 loss and 2-2 (3-1) win against Australia before the COVID-19 pandemic halted the competition.

They will now resume their

campaign in the 2020 season when they play Argentina on April 10 and 11 next year in the revamped schedule. They will then face Great Britain away from home on May 8 and 9 before travelling to Spain to play matches on May 12 and 13. The team will take on Germany in away matches on May 18 and 19 before finally playing a home tie on May 29 and 30 against New Zealand.

"We are also working at the moment to ensure that we have enough competition throughout the latter part of 2020 and the early part of 2021," stated Reid adding that the team will be preparing for the Asian Champions Trophy that is scheduled for November this year.

"We have the Asian Champions Trophy still planned for November 2020 and a trip to Malaysia to play the Netherlands and a 4 Nations Tournament in New Zealand in February 2021 which are all in the planning stage at the moment as part of our ACTC," he said.

With a continued rise in the number of COVID-19 cases in India, India skipper Manpreet Singh feels the scheduling provides enough time for the team to prepare for a major tournament like the Hockey Pro League.

"We were delighted by the news of a revised schedule for Hockey Pro League. With the rise in number of cases in India, it may take a while before travel restrictions

are lifted for international competition."

"Our travel this year for any tournaments will purely depend on the government guidelines, so under these circumstances, we need to be sensitive towards what's happening around us and channel our focus on preparation. We will use this time to revisit our goals and areas that we need to improve," Manpreet opined.

He emphasised that the weather in Europe in April and May would suit the Indian team.

"Also, I think the weather in Europe in April and May would be ideal for us as the winter months would have ended. April in Argentina is also supposed to have the best weather to play hockey and it won't be hot and humid," reckoned the midfielder.

The Indian skipper further stated that back-to-back matches will be the right litmus test for the team before the Tokyo Olympic Games. "I feel after the 4-week gap between our matches against Argentina and Great Britain, we will play back-to-back matches almost every weekend right until the end of May and that's the kind of momentum we are looking for ahead of the Olympic Games."

"We will test our body and mind during this time to see how we can cope the pressure of playing back-to-back high intensity games and manage the load well. This will be ideal test for us before the Olympics," he said.

# 2018 Asian Games: India's mixed relay team's silver now upgraded to gold

**New Delhi/IANS:** The silver medal that the Indian 4x400 mixed relay quartet of Mohammed Anas, M R Poovamma, Hima Das and Arokia Rajiv won at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta has been upgraded to gold. Additionally, Anu Raghavan moved from fourth place to bronze medal position in the women's 400m hurdles. This after the Bahrain squad, which finished first in the 4x400 mixed relay final, was disqualified with Kemi Adekoya of Bahrain being handed a four-year ban by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) for failing a dope test.

India's initial tally of 69 medals has thus now improved to 70. The new breakdown of medals from the 2018 Asian Games for India is now 16 gold, 23 silver and 31 bronze. Eight gold, nine silver and three bronze make up the 20 medals that have come from athletics.

"The news comes as a fillip to us as we are aiming to build on the Asian Games showing and make a mark at the global level in the Olympic Games in Tokyo next year," Athletics Federation of India (AFI) President Adille J. Sumariwalla said.

"The 4x400m relay squad will be

particularly pleased that it now has two gold and a silver from Jakarta. We are confident that under coach Galina Bukharina's guidance, the relay squad will perform well."

The 4x400m mixed relay team of Mohammed Anas, M R Poovamma, Hima Das and Arokia Rajiv had finished in 3:15.71 after Hima Das was obstructed by Oluwakemi Adekoya, who was sprawling on the track after the second baton exchange. India now is the first winner of the event introduced in the Asian Games in 2018 in keeping with the international bid to find gender balance.

Anu Raghavan had clocked her fastest time of 2018, 56.92 seconds in finishing fourth in the hurdles final while her teammate Jauna Murmu's second fastest (57.48) gave her the fifth place. Adekoya's disqualification saw them move to higher places.

The Athletic Integrity Unit (AIU) on July 19, 2019 had said that Adekoya's results since August 24, 2018 would be struck out after she had tested positive for an anabolic steroid.

# Mohun Bagan way more than just a club, says FIFA

**Kolkata (IANS):** Football's global governing body FIFA on July 29 added a cherry on top of Mohun Bagan's foundation day cake as they termed the iconic football team as more than just a club after it became the country's first sports entity to feature on the NASDAQ billboard in New York's Times Square.

"When you make a billboard of skyscraping prestige and dazzling beauty at @TimesSquareNYC, you know you have become way more than just a club. Happy #MohunBaganDay2020 to one of the most passionately-supported clubs on the planet," FIFA said in a tweet from their official Twitter handle.

The Mohun Bagan Day is celebrated every year on July 29 to commemorate the team's IFA

Shield triumph in 1911, when they beat East Yorkshire Regiment 2-1 to become the first Indian club to end the British stranglehold on the tournament.

The 131-year-old club scaled new heights on Wednesday when the American stock exchange paid glowing tribute to Mohun Bagan by displaying the club's logo and colours on its billboard.

"The pictures from NASDAQ are testimony to the fact that Mohun Bagan belongs to a different league. Huge day for all the Mariners!! Happy Mohun Bagan Day Mariners!!" a statement said on Mohun Bagan's official Twitter handle.

The century old club's footballing rights were recently acquired by the RP Sanjiv Goenka Group which holds a majority stake of

80 per cent. The new entity is called ATK Mohun Bagan FC and will take part in the Indian Super League (ISL) from this season.

Ashok Kumar, a key member of India's 1975 World Cup-winning hockey team, was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award on the occasion of its foundation day. This year's Mohun Bagan Ratna was presented to hockey legend Gurbux Singh and former cricketer Palash Nandi.

Due to the global pandemic situation, the club management conducted the Mohun Bagan Day celebrations in digital platforms of the club.

The Awardees: Mohun Bagan Ratna: Gurbux Singh (Hockey) and Palash Nandi (Cricket); Lifetime Achievement: Ashok Kumar (Hockey), Pranab Ganguly



(Football), Monoranjan Porel (Athletics); Best Footballer: Joseba Beitia (Senior); Best Youth Player: Sajal Bag (U-18 team);

Best Administrator: IFA Secretary Joydeep Mukherjee.



## Chetan Bhagat says Vidhu Vinod Chopra drove him close to suicide



Chetan Bhagat

**Mumbai/IANS:** Author Chetan Bhagat claims producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra had publicly bullied him.

Chetan took to Twitter recently to urge critics to write sensibly while reviewing late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's forthcoming and last film "Dil Bechara".

"... I want to tell the snob and elitist critics right now, write sensibly. Don't act oversmart. Don't write rubbish. Be fair and sensible. Don't try your dirty tricks. You have ruined enough lives. Now stop. We'll be watching," he tweeted.

However, Chetan's tweet did not go down well with a section of social media users, including popular film critic Anupama Chopra.

"Each time you think the discourse can't get lower, it does!," Anupama, wife of producer Vidhu Vinod Chopra, responded.

Reacting to Anupama's tweet, Chetan called out Vidhu Vinod Chopra and blamed him for driving him close to suicide in the past.

"Ma'am, when your husband publicly bullied me, shamelessly collected all the best story awards, tried denying me credit for my story and drove me close to suicide, and you just watched, where was your discourse?," Chetan said.

In his recent tweet, Chetan was referring to Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 2009 film "3 Idiots", starring Aamir Khan, R Madhavan and Sharman Joshi.

The movie is based on Chetan's book "Five Point Someone". Post the release of "3 Idiots" in 2009, Chetan had reportedly posted a blog and slammed the makers for not giving him adequate credit in their film.

## First list of artists for Kochi-Muziris Biennale announced



Shubigi Rao

**New Delhi/ IANS:** The Kochi Biennale Foundation has announced the first list of participating artists for the upcoming Kochi-Muziris

Biennale, slated to open on December 12 this year.

Artist Shubigi Rao will be curating the fifth edition of the biennale titled 'In Our Veins Flow Ink and Fire'.

Those whose names have been announced in the first list include Ali Cherri, Cecilia Vicuna, Colectivo Ayllu/ Migrantas Transgresorxs, DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency), Daidadallu, Gabrielle Goliath, Iman Issa, Joan Jonas, Marta Tuomaala, Mithra Kamalam, Pio Abad and Frances Wadsworth Jones, Priya Sen, Richard Bell, Samson Young, Seher Shah, Slavs and Tatars, Thao Nguyen Phan, The u-rami-li project, Thuma Collective, Vasudevan Akkitham, Yinka Shonibare and Zina Saro-Wiwa.

## Lockdown diaries: Wisdom from authors in quarantine

Life in lockdown and the pandemic has made people go through a whole spectrum of emotions, they may have never expected. While some people are going through rough patches, others are dealing with stress and anxiety. There is a need to escape the rut of everyday life, and a need for some wisdom to keep our sanity.

Many people are taking out time for books, picking their favorites off of dusty bookshelves or trying some new genres. Some are busy creating lockdown diaries and penning their thoughts through these difficult times - all to keep their mental wellbeing intact. Budding authors take about how they are keep their sanity during this crisis.

### Meditation as a way forward

For some authors, meditation and writing are the way to cope with the crisis. Nitish Bhushan, author of 'Love Swipe Blackmail' talks about how meditating and writing bring peace during the hustle. "Since the lockdown started I have made it a point to meditate every single day. It helps me keep my mind at peace and it also helps me focus on the positives; eliminating negative thoughts to a very large extent. I have also been writing and working passionately on my upcoming ideas and trying to keep my days as productive as I can. I do read stories where people struggled and fought back; it also gives me inspiration and ideas for my future works. Writing has helped me a lot alongside reading to help not lose my perspective. At the close of my day I pick up something for light read," he told IANSlife.

### Planning brings relaxation

R.K. Mohapatra, author of 'Mutual Funds', shares that planning for the future and writing during the pandemic puts him at ease.

"It gives new ideas and outlook and creates a parallel reality of intellect, sometimes tuning off the depressing talk around the pandemic as there is constant stress that needs to meddle."

"The fear of contracting the virus is always going to be on our minds. Planning for the future is another way to keep ourselves busy, and it's good for the mind too. As the world is battling with an uncertain and unprecedented crisis, personal finance planning and reading more about it a good activity to indulge in sometimes. The future is uncertain, and so is life; it is good to plan for the future," he advised.

### Experimenting with writing style

Clinical psychologist, Pulkit Sharma, who is also a spiritual counsellor and author of the book 'When The Soul Heals' has tweaked with his style of writing and shifted from long pieces to short ones during the lockdown.

"I have been re-reading some great classics to keep my motivation levels up. 'Man's Search for Meaning' by Viktor Frankl, a book based on his journey from a Nazi concentration camp prisoner to an evolved psychotherapist; 'Siddhartha' by Hermann Hesse, a novel that chronicles self-discovery and spiritual enlightenment of a monk; and 'Ramayana', the great Indian epic which focus on human perseverance, total surrender, divine grace and the ultimate victory of good over evil are the books that I find truly inspiring.

"Besides this, I have been writing short pieces to help my readers understand and deal with the gamut of emotions and challenges they are facing during the pandemic. I end my day with a short entry of gratitude in my diary. During difficult moments,

I simply pick up this journal and read these entries," he shared.

Writing journals for healing

Aarti V. Raman, author of the book 'The Worst Daughter' shared an excerpt from her book talking about how the pandemic has taken over our sanity.

"The opening scene from 'The Worst Daughter Ever' has the heroine, LJ Raghavan, locked up at home for the New Year. Voluntarily! This is because she has serious self-esteem issues, possibly undiagnosed anxieties and definite body positivity issues; ½ all of which lead her to choosing to spend the first day of the New Year alone. Eating pizza. Feeling really bad about how alone she is."

With the global pandemic, this lockdown is now more of an enforcement, with lots of us, stuck within the four walls of our homes - working, living, doing all the chores while dealing with the fear of the pandemic. "With no end in sight. And we didn't volunteer for it like LJ!" reiterates Raman.

According to Raman, writing down your thoughts and feelings in a journal or diary helps gain perspective.

"That is what I have been doing and it really relaxes the mind and prepares it for future. Mental sanity, much like physical sanity, requires a lot of care, whether from professionals or ourselves and our existing support systems. The bottomline is: Do what makes it easier. This is a pandemic, not a productivity contest. So, when we see friends or family baking up a storm, knitting, taking up yoga or crafts, posting on social media about how kickass they are feeling; you do what's your daily best and that is enough."

IANSlife





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**UPDATE: VANDE BHARAT MISSION PHASE -5**

Under Vande Bharat Mission, we have already brought back more than 2.5 lakh stranded Indians from 53 countries.

We will be soon announcing a host of additional flights under Vande Bharat Mission Phase 5 starting from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020.

Flights for USA, Canada, Qatar, Oman, UAE, Australia, Germany, Thailand, Singapore, UK, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, New Zealand, Philippines & several other countries are planned.

Details regarding bookings will be shared shortly.

Jai Hind  
26<sup>th</sup> July 2020

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Video contest results from Australia  
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Mansi Pujari	First Prize	Aditya Pujari	First Prize	Anya Malhotra	First Prize
Pushpa Velagapudi	Second Prize	Andrew Redfern	Second Prize	Naomi A Reddy	Second Prize
Mohini Singh	Third Prize	Prabhakar Mohan	Third Prize	Amyra Malhotra	Third Prize

Male Youth		Female Professional		Male Professional	
Akshit Prasanna	First Prize	Nayan Sarda	First Prize	Amit Kumar	First Prize
Suprajith Wuntakal	Second Prize	Imelda Turner	Second Prize		
Vivaan Shah	Third Prize	Bharani Bussari	Third Prize		

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myLife myYoga  
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## Amitabh Bachchan denies news report claiming he is Covid-19 negative

Amitabh Bachchan on July 23 tweeted to refute a news reports claiming he has tested Covid-19 negative.

On his verified Twitter account, Big B shared a video clip of a TV news channel that claims "Amitabh Bachchan tests negative for COVID" as "breaking news".

".. this news is incorrect , irresponsible , fake and an incorrigible LIE !!" Big B tweeted on his official account, @SrBachchan.

The Bollywood icon seems quite disturbed by the fake news surrounding his health. He also retweeted a tweet posted by a fan that reads: "That's playing with someone's privacy. Why



do media play with people's emotions? Take Care Sir Ji."

Big B -- along with son Abhishek Bachchan, daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and granddaughter Aaradhya -- is currently hospitalised with coronavirus infection.

## Dharmendra, Johnny Lever remember Mehmood on 16th death anniversary

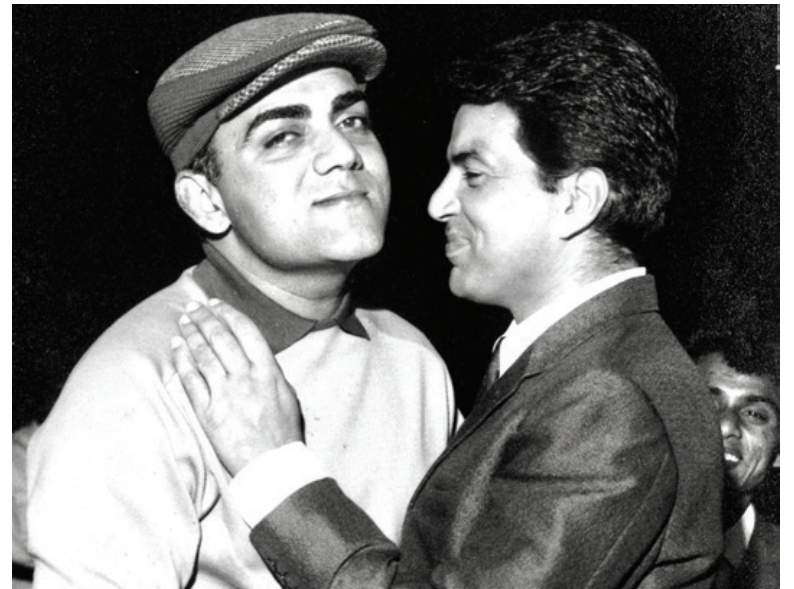
Iconic Bollywood comedian Mehmood passed away on this day 16 years ago, and fans and friends miss him till date.

Remembering Mehmood on his 16th death anniversary, veteran actor Dharmendra tweeted: "Jab bhi milta tha ...Mahaul khill uthta tha ..... teri yaad mein MEHMOOD ....mann bhar aata hai (He would lighten up the milieu whenever he met... the heart is heavy thinking of you, Mehmood)."

Along with his tweet, Dharmendra shared a black and white picture, in which he is seen hugging Mehmood.

Dharmendra and Mehmood worked together in several memorable films including "Ankhen", "Naya Zamana", "Jugnu" and "Chandan Ka Palna".

Mehmood was hailed as one of the kings of comedy in Bollywood of the fifties, sixties and the seventies. Among his numerous unforgettable performances



are "Kunwara Baap", "Padosan", "Gumnaam", "Pyaar Kiye Jaa" and "Bombay To Goa". He breathed his last on July 23, 2004 in Pennsylvania.

Comedian Johnny Lever, too, paid tribute to Mehmood on July 23.

"Remembering Mehmood bhaijaan today on his death anniversary, he was my idol growing up and even today he is a superstar for us comedians," he tweeted.

## Kapil Sharma resumes shooting, shares video

Comedian Kapil Sharma has resumed shooting for his popular comedy show after spending 125 days at home owing to the lockdown.

Taking to Instagram Stories, Kapil posted a few videos of his co-stars arriving at the sets of "The Kapil Sharma Show", amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Taking all precautions. #Staysafe #Staysanitised," Kapil captioned one of the videos, featuring

Sumona Chakravarti.

In another clip, we can see comedian Bharti Singh being sanitised while entering the shooting premises. Her body temperature was also tested.

The actors happily cooperated with the staff. Bharti even broke into a jig while the security staff sanitised her.

Reportedly, actor Sonu Sood will be the first celebrity to shoot for Kapil's show amid pandemic.



Taking all precautions  
#staysafe  
#staysanitised  
@sumonachakravarti

## Anushka Sharma pouts it out with a floral twist

Actress Anushka Sharma is flaunting her pout on Instagram, but with a floral twist.

The actress shared a boomerang video in which she is seen chilling on the couch at home and having fun with Instagram filters. She has picked a floral filter to cover her face with colourful flowers as she pouts for the camera.

Recently, the actress-producer highlighted the need to regularly practice the ancient Ayurvedic method of oil pulling. She shared a few photos on her verified Instagram account where she can be seen sitting beside her pet dog while performing the "morning

ritual".

"My morning ritual of oil pulling in the company of my sweet-smoosh-doggo Dude! Oil pulling is an ancient Ayurvedic practice known as 'kavala' or 'gundusha', a dental technique that involves swishing little oil in your mouth on an empty stomach for few minutes and then spitting it out. This action is excellent for dental hygiene and health and also draws out toxins in the body. As we are all using this time to take better care of our health and improve our immunity I thought of sharing this. Hopefully, it will be as beneficial to you too," she captioned.

Anushka has had a great year so far as a producer, with the success of her web series "Pataal Lok" and the digital film "Bulbbul".



## Kareena reveals Saif, Taimur all she ever needs



Bollywood diva Kareena Kapoor Khan says her favourite boys, husband Saif Ali Khan and son Taimur Ali Khan, are all that she ever needs.

Kareena has shared a picture on Instagram where she is seen hugging Saif while her hubby holds Taimur.

"All I ever need is ½ #FavouriteBoys #TakeMeBack," she captioned the image, which currently has 118K likes on the photo-sharing website.

Recently, Kareena shared a post where she mentioned that she is

done with this year and is waiting for 2021.

On the work front, Kareena, who was last seen on screen in "Angrezi Medium" starring Irrfan Khan, will next be seen in the Aamir Khan-starrer in "Laal Singh Chaddha", which is an official Hindi remake of the Hollywood film "Forrest Gump".

Kareena has also been roped in to be a part of Karan Johar's multistarrer "Takht", which also stars Ranveer Singh, Anil Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, Vicky Kaushal, Bhumi Pednekar and Janhvi Kapoor.



## Priyanka Chopra imparts words of wisdom among fans

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas on last month shared a motivational post on Instagram for her fans.

"Don't let the challenges of today stop us from achieving our dreams of a better tomorrow! She captioned the post as, 'You got this!'," Priyanka wrote.

It seems several fans were waiting for such motivation to inspire them.

"I needed this kind of motivation. Thank you for sharing," a user commented.

"Your journey has always inspired me. You are an idol for so many people," another one wrote.

Priyanka will soon complete 20 years in show business.

A few days ago, she shared a video



in which she spoke about her plans of sharing "20 monumental moments" of her career in the coming days to "celebrate 20 years in the entertainment

business".

Currently, Priyanka is spending time with her husband Nick Jonas in Los Angeles.

## Sonu Sood to help repatriate over 1,500 Indian students from Kyrgyzstan

Actor Sonu Sood will help repatriate over 1,500 Indian students from Kyrgyzstan over the next two months.

"Feeling so happy that the first flight from Kyrgyzstan to Varanasi took off today. All thanks to @flyspicejet for making my mission successful. The second flight from Kyrgyzstan to Vizag will fly Tom 24th July. Would request students to send your details asap. Jai hind," he tweeted on July 23.

Sonu has been helping migrant workers reach their hometowns during the Covid lockdown. He is now all set to come up

with a book talking about the experience.

"The past three and half months have been a kind of a life-changing experience for me, living with the migrants for 16 to 18 hours a day and sharing their pain. When I go to see them off as they begin their journey back home, my heart is filled with joy and relief. Seeing the smiles on their faces, the tears of happiness in their eyes has been the most special experience of my life, and I pledged that I'll keep on working to send them back to their homes until the last migrant reaches his

village, to his loved ones," Sonu said.

"I believe I came to this city for this -- it was my purpose. I want to thank god for making me a catalyst in helping the migrants. While my heart beats in Mumbai, after this movement I feel a part of me lives in the villages of UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Uttarakhand and various other states, where I have now found new friends and made deep connections. I have decided to put these experiences, stories that are embedded in my soul forever, in a book," he added.

## Shilpa Shetty is grateful to her 'OG constants'



Actress and fitness enthusiast Shilpa Shetty Kundra has thanked her mother and sister for standing by her and encouraging her, professionally and personally. Shilpa took to Instagram to share a special appreciation post along with pictures of the three together.

"#AppreciationPost... Same pose... just another day... There's so much that we see changing every day. Professionally... personally...

physically... emotionally..." she began.

"But, even amid all these changes, we still crave for that one set of constant people in our lives who stand by us, encourage us, cheer the loudest, and make us feel special in times when we don't value ourselves. Just want to say that I'm really grateful for my 'OG constants'... @sunandashetty10 & @shamitashetty\_official for being who you have been to me... Love you both," she added.

## Urvashi Rautela goes vocal for local

Actress and former beauty queen Urvashi Rautela is happy to be vocal for local, with actor Ajay Devgn.

"I'm glad and exhilarated that Ajay Devgn sir and I support a campaign by Narendra Modiji, which is vocal for local. This simple principle, if followed, will help the country to rebuild its economy and become self-reliant. Be Indian buy Indian," Urvashi said.

On the work front, Urvashi is seen in "Virgin Bhanupriya". In the film, she essays the role of Bhanupriya, who is a college going conservative girl who decides she has to lose her virginity. She thinks it should be the easiest thing in today's world. However, all her attempts go in vain and a soothsayer predicts it won't happen in her life.

"For the character of Bhanupriya I gained seven kilos, which is 15.432 pounds, and I would say preparation is as much as an actor's job as a performance itself, because Bhanupriya's physicality, speech or persona are vastly

different from my own. As an actor my challenge was primarily physical, mental, emotional and even vocal," Urvashi said about her role.

"Virgin Bhanupriya" also features Gautam Gulati, Archana Puran Singh, Delnaaz Irani, Rajiv Gupta and Brijendra Kala, Niki Aneja Walia and Rumana Molla.



## Tamannaah Bhatia's 'pawfect' puppy love

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia is an ardent animal lover and says there is no love like puppy love.

Tamannaah took to Instagram, where she posted a motley of pictures of herself along with stray puppies.

She captioned the image, which currently has 349K likes on the photo-sharing website: "There's no love like puppy love #DogsAreTheBest #furryfriends#doglover #pawfect."

Meanwhile, Tamannaah is excited about the Telugu remake of the Kannada superhit "Love Mocktail".

Director Nagashekar has roped in the actress along with Satya



Dev as protagonists of the untitled remake. The makers are hoping that the film will go on floors in mid-September and will be shot in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad.

The original film was released in January, 2020. Directed by Krishna, "Love Mocktail" follows the story of Aadi and his quest for love.



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Mater applauds Springfield City Group for the establishment of the specialist suites adjacent to Mater Private Hospital Springfield. The hospital is looking forward to productive conversation and partnerships with doctors who move into this facility.

**Justin Greenwell**  
Director, Mater Private Hospital Springfield

**Sale | Lease | Invest**



**Be part of Australia's largest integrated health and wellness precinct.**

Purchase or lease your own medical suite in the heart of Health City in Springfield Central at the new Greater Springfield Specialist and Office Suites.

Now open, this brand new facility is directly adjacent to the Mater Private Hospital Springfield, AVEO Springfield, Quest Apartments and childcare.

With areas from 34m<sup>2</sup> to whole floors of 474m<sup>2</sup> over five levels (above ground floor retail and car parking), don't miss this unique opportunity to grow your patient base in the heart of South East Queensland's growth corridor.

**To book an inspection or to request a brochure contact  
Uma Ranchigoda on 0412 470 882 or visit [gssuites.com.au](http://gssuites.com.au)**

 **HealthCity**  
Springfield Central

**GREATER  
SPRINGFIELD**  
By Springfield City Group

[www.gssuites.com.au](http://www.gssuites.com.au)