

CITY TALKS 2 BANKING & FINANCE 5 LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINMENT 12



**ALL PARTIES EXCEPT BJP TO ASK CENTRE NOT TO TINKER WITH MSP REGIME: AMARINDER**



**BANKS SANCTION ₹79,000 CRORE TO 19 LAKH MSMEs AND OTHER BUSINESSES**



**LIVING WITH 'SEXY' TAG OF AT YOUNG AGE FELT HORRIBLE, SAYS RIYA SEN**

## India Inc in a fix over Chinese checkers

**CHINESE IMPORTS MAY CONTINUE TILL FEASIBLE AND COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES EMERGE: INDUSTRIES**

**NEW DELHI:** Imports from China are expected to continue for the time being till other feasible and cost effective alternatives emerge, according to players in Indian automobile and pharmaceutical industries.

Days after a deadly border clash with China that saw 20 Indian soldiers losing their lives, there has been a call from various quarters to cut imports from the neighbouring country.

Indian auto and pharma industries import several critical components and raw materials from China. Currently, companies based out of China continue to be the leading suppliers of automotive components for the domestic industry.

In 2018-19, India imported auto components worth USD 17.6 billion, of which 27 per cent -- USD 4.75 billion -- were from China. Explaining the rationale behind the imports from China, Maruti Suzuki India Chairman R C Bhargava told PTI that the reason is "either the product



is not made in India, not available or what is made in India does not provide the desired quality, or the product made in India is too expensive."

When asked in today's circumstances, if importing components from China is inevitable, he said, "Yes, unless we can find alternative sources of imports and which do not raise the prices to a level that consumers get hurt".

Bhargava further said: "Remember the price of imports, ultimately who pays for it? Consumers. So, the same people who are boycotting have to remember that in some cases it may lead to their being asked to pay more for the same product".

Similarly, Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) Director General Vinnie Mehta said the industry has started to take steps towards "deep localisation" in order to de-risk business from Chinese imports.

"There is no denying that the industry needs to be 'Atma-Nirbhar' and the industry and the government should together define a roadmap and

deliver accordingly," he noted.

Ease of doing business, capital availability at lower rates and globally competitive logistics and energy costs are some of the prerequisites that the government should look into to ensure growth of

imports from China include drive transmission and steering parts, electronic and electrical items, cooling systems, suspension, and braking parts, among others. Lack of technological competence with domestic players in various

**Indian auto and pharma industries import several critical components and raw materials from China. Currently, companies based out of China continue to be the leading suppliers**

the domestic auto component industry, Mehta said.

He, however, stressed on continuing with the imports till other alternatives emerge for the industry. "Post the lockdowns, our value chains, including automotive, have been severely disrupted and are in a disarray, we are gradually piecing them together. Any further disruptions would only be detrimental to the interest of industry and the economy," Mehta said.

The major component

segments like electronics and BS-VI components and sheer price advantage are the two main factors which support Chinese imports, Mehta said.

When asked to comment on the pharma sector, India Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said India imports some critical APIs and intermediates from the neighbouring country, owing to competitive advantages set through incentivisation and subsidies in China.

## Indian economy in deep trouble: S&P



**NEW DELHI:** S&P Global Ratings on Friday said Indian economy is in deep trouble with growth expected to contract by 5 per cent this fiscal.

"India's economy is in deep trouble. Difficulties in containing the virus, an anemic policy response, and underlying vulnerabilities, especially across the financial sector, are leading us to expect growth to fall by 5 per cent this fiscal year before rebounding in 2021," S&P said in a report.

In its report titled "Asia-Pacific losses near USD 3 trillion as balance sheet recession looms", S&P projected the region's economy to shrink by 1.3 per cent in 2020, but grow by 6.9 per cent in 2021.

This implies a loss nearing USD 3 trillion output over these two years.

"Asia-Pacific has shown some success in containing COVID-19 and, by and large, responded with effective macroeconomic policies," said Shaun Roache, chief economist for Asia-Pacific at S&P Global Ratings.

"This can help cushion the blow and provide a bridge to the recovery. The recovery looks set to be weighed down by indebted balance sheets, however."

One risk now looming larger is yet another "balance sheet recession" in which at

## 3 Army teams to help Covid patients in Delhi

**NEW DELHI:** Three Army medical teams, each comprising one medical officer, two nursing assistants, along with an ambulance, will be assisting authorities in providing healthcare at COVID facility on wheels at a railway station here, officials said on Friday.

Coronavirus isolation coaches deployed in the city had received their first occupants on Wednesday, when two patients were admitted to the railways' COVID-19 care centre at the Shakur Basti station.

The Army Medical Corps will be in charge of their healthcare, Northwest District Magistrate Sandeep Mishra had said on Wednesday. Delhi recorded 3,460 COVID-19 cases on Friday, taking the tally in the city to over 77,000-mark, while the death toll from the disease mounted to 2,492, authorities said. The coaches at Shakur Basti station have been placed under a shed to block direct sunlight and fans have been provided in each coupe for optimum air circulation and better temperature control. A reception centre has been set up at the station for administration of the coaches and the patients. An emergency control room has also been set up at the site by the railways. This will be manned 24/7 by the railway officials for coordinating and providing railway-related assistance.

## Punjab to amend law to create jobs



**CHANDIGARH:** The Punjab government has decided to amend the law along with the rules to change the definition of large industrial units in the state.

The decision was taken to encourage the establishment of large manufacturing units and boost generation of employment opportunities in the state.

In a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, the state cabinet approved the necessary amendments in Section 45 (4) of the Factories Act, 1948 and in

the release.

For instance, under the existing Section 45 (4) of the Factories Act, 1948, an ambulance room is mandatory for factories employing more than 500 workers.

When such provisions were envisaged, the factories employing such a large number of workers were located away from the cities. Moreover, the modes of transport and communication were negligible.

Further, provisions of the Employees State Insurance (ESI) Act were not applicable to such factories due to non-implementation areas as per the ESI Act, and private hospital facilities were not available nearby.

This necessitated the provision of having an ambulance room on the premises, which is no longer the case in view of better means of transportation and communication that exist today, with a number of hospitals/nursing homes also available around such factories, it said.

## Sebi gives more time for board meeting



**NEW DELHI:** Markets regulator Sebi has eased compliance requirement on time gap between two board meetings for listed companies till July 31, due to coronavirus pandemic.

As per the norms, board of directors or audit committee need to meet at least four times a year, with a maximum gap of 120 days between any two meetings.

In a circular, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said, "The relaxation of maximum time gap between two board/audit committee meetings...is further extended till July 31, 2020".

However, the board of directors and audit committees of listed entities will have to ensure that they meet at least four times a year, it added.

This comes following requests from listed companies for relaxation. Earlier in March, the regulator had relaxed the requirement of the maximum stipulated time

to submit their fourth-quarter as well as annual results. Earlier, the deadline to submit the financial results was June 30. The development comes after Sebi received representations from listed entities, chartered accountants, industry bodies, seeking further extension of time for filing of financial results for the quarter /half year/financial year ended March 31, 2020.

The entities cited many reasons to seek the extension like the continuing lockdown, subsidiaries and associates situated in containment zones facing challenges in the audit process and other operational issues due to the pandemic. Consequently, the regulator has decided to further extend the timeline for submission of financial results by a month to July 31, 2020, for the quarter and the year ended March 31, 2020, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular.

Normally, listed companies are required to file their annual results within 60 days from the end of a financial year, while in the case of quarterly results, firms are required to file it within 45 days from the end of a quarter. Similarly, the timeline for submission of half yearly and annual financial results for the period ended March 31 for entities that have listed non-convertible debentures, non convertible redeemable preference shares and commercial papers has also been extended to July 31.

**"The relaxation of maximum time gap between two board/audit committee meetings...is further extended till July 31, 2020"**

## Coronil row: Patanjali says it broke no rules

**DEHRADUN:** Under flak over the launch of a drug it claims to be a cure for COVID-19, yoga guru Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved on Thursday insisted that it broke no law.

"There is no room for confusion," the herbal products company said in a tweet. "The

licence for the drug was obtained on the basis of the traditional knowledge and experience related to the medicinal virtues of Ashwagandha, Giloy and Tulsi," Patanjali spokesperson S K Tijjarwala said.

"The positive results of the clinical trials conducted

legally on corona patients were shared," he added. In another tweet, the company said no illegal claim has been made on the label of the medicine.

## ICICI Bank sells 1.5% stake in life insurance subsidiary

**NEW DELHI:** ICICI Bank has sold 1.5 per cent stake in its life insurance subsidiary for around Rs 840 crore with an aim to strengthen the balance sheet.

Last week, the lender had informed exchanges about selling a little less than 4 per cent stake in its general insurance subsidiary for Rs 2,250 crore. While announcing its results for 2019-20 on May 9, ICICI Bank had said it would look at further strengthening the balance sheet as opportunities arise.

"In line with this intent and pursuant to approval granted by the Board, the Bank has today divested 2,15,00,000 equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each of ICICI Pruden-

**INDIAN PLAYERS STRUGGLE HARD AS MOST COSTS ARE PAID IN US DOLLARS, SAYS VISTARA CHIEF**

**NEW DELHI:** Indian airlines are struggling hard as most of their costs like the ones related to aircraft leasing, plane's maintenance and fuel have to be paid in US dollars, a Vistara official said on Friday, at a time when rupee has depreciated by approximately 6 per cent since January.

"The reason why the airlines are struggling this hard is because a lot of our costs are all in USD. And with continually depreciating rupee, and as most of us (airlines) predominantly



operate in the domestic market, there is obviously going to be a mismatch," Vistara's Chief Commercial Officer Vinod Kannan said at a webinar organised by aviation consultancy firm CAPA.

While signing contracts with aircraft leasing firms or aircraft maintenance firms, airlines generally have to agree to make payments in USDs only.

In January, one USD was available for around Rs 71.

**"The reason why the airlines are struggling this hard is because a lot of our costs are all in US dollar. And with continually depreciating rupee, and as most of us (airlines) predominantly operate in the domestic market, there is obviously going to be a mismatch"**

On June 25, the exchange rate said one USD was of Rs 75.65.

Kannan said, "Whether it comes to fuel, aircraft leasing, aviation maintenance organisations or aircraft overhauls, it is all in USD. You can push down your costs to the lowest level possible, all you need is a Rs 10 increase (in price of a USD), or a depreciation of the rupee by 1-3 per

cent."

"So, I think that is an important point. How do we address that? I am not sure...But I think it is very pertinent because you can be the slimmest, meanest organisation in the Indian context, but you still might not cut it purely because of factors that are outside your hands," he stated.

Calling the coronavirus pandemic a "black swan" event, Kannan noted that the airlines have a fundamental knock of ordering aircraft when the times are good, and getting the delivery when the times are bad.

"So that is an important reason why the airlines not just in India but around the world have to think twice about (aircraft) utilisation and see how we can improve aircraft utilisation than order more aircraft," he stated.

Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in India. After a gap of two months, the Indian government resumed domestic flight services on May 25 albeit in a curtailed manner and with limits placed on airfares.









## Poaching in politics needs to stop at earliest

The ruling BJP now has 86 members in the Rajya Sabha after elections to 19 seats across several States on Friday. This is the highest number for the party in the Upper House, though it is still short of the halfway mark. Of a total of 61 vacancies, 42 were filled unopposed earlier and of the 19 contests, the BJP won eight while the Congress won four. Of the 61 outgoing members, 17 were from the Congress and 15 from the BJP. With this round of elections, the BJP's tally increased by 11, from 75. The Congress now has 41. The Opposition benches will now have veterans such as H.D. Deve Gowda, Mallikarjun Kharge (both from Karnataka) Digvijaya Singh (from Madhya Pradesh) and Shibu Soren (from Jharkhand) and K.C. Venugopal (from Rajasthan). A noticeable addition to the treasury benches is Jyotiraditya Scindia, whose defection from the Congress in March brought down the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh, and brought the BJP back to power there. Bhubaneswar Kalita, the Congress's chief whip in the Rajya Sabha until August last year, is now returning as a BJP member from Assam. All this points to a pattern of the BJP's frenzied approach to increasing its Rajya Sabha strength. After the elections were announced, eight Congress MLAs left the party in Gujarat, and enabled the victory of an extra BJP candidate to the Rajya Sabha. In Rajasthan, the party fielded two candidates though it had the strength to elect only one, leading to speculation that plans were underway to poach Congress MLAs. The sight of political parties hauling in MLAs to luxury confinements ahead of the Rajya Sabha polls has become common. The poaching business needs to stop in the politics. Barriers shall be created for leaders of political parties who switch parties for the sake of power, abandoning their ideologies.



ASHWIN JAYANTI SAYS ONLINE LEARNING IS HURTING THE BENEFITS OF A PHYSICAL CLASSROOM

## Streamed education is a diluted one

There are broadly two kinds of helmets, namely, one which protects your head and the other which protects your wallet. These two kinds capture the difference between two artefacts which look the same and go by the same name, but cannot be more dissimilar. So what then is the difference between the two? The most significant is that of design intentions. One is designed keeping safety in mind, made of durable, impact-absorbing material that has been thoroughly tested to be so. The other, on the other hand, is designed to get by and is made of quality-compromising, low-cost material.

What we have here is a dilution in our conception of a helmet from its original meaning from being a gear to protect us in the case of an unfortunate accident to being a gear to protect us from being fined. Intriguingly, the act of fining riders without helmets has translated something valuable (an end-in-itself, in the service of safety) into the merely functional or instrumental (a means-to-an end, in the service of trickery).

This captures the conundrum facing the contemporary: all that is of value is diluting into the functional, and there seems to be no vocabulary to capture this dilution of meaning. Our conception of value itself has been diluted to mean just exchange 'value'. Here, I will relate this to the meaning of education.

Recently, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University Grants Commission had issued a circular to universities encouraging them to adopt massive open online courses (MOOCs) offered on its SWAYAM platform for credit transfers in the coming semesters. This sounds like a benevolent act during the national lockdown. However, it poses great danger since it is also being seen as an instrument to achieve the country's target Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education (envisioned to be 30% by 2021; it was 25.8% in 2017-18).

Here is yet another instance of a conspicuous dilution of meaning and subsequent flattening of the learning curve. Instead of expanding the network of higher educational institutions across the country and increasing seats, the government plans to make online degree programmes available for students to enrol and graduate from and add to GER. 'Education' is now being peddled as a combination of content and consumption, and this diluted meaning is being put to the service of achieving increased GER.

MOOC-based e-learning platforms tend to reinforce a top-down teacher-to-student directionality of learning



It is intriguing to see that the policymakers behind the SWAYAM platform have left out courses in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, agriculture, and physiotherapy on the grounds that they involve laboratory and practical work

whereby the teacher 'creates' and the student 'consumes'. This misses the point that teaching and learning are skills that are always in the making. The teacher is after all "an intellectual midwife" who facilitates in the birth of students' ideas and insights through engaging in critical dialogue. In a conducive classroom environment, this role is often switched and the student plays intellectual midwife to the teacher's ideas. Moving to a MOOC-based degree system would rob young teachers and students of these essential lessons in teaching and learning from each other.

Taking higher education online is much like taking up a sport such as cricket, football or boxing online. One has not actually learnt the sport unless one has engaged with it in one's gully, stadium, field, or ring. In education, the classroom acts as a space where skills such as dialogue, debate, disagreement, and friendship are learnt and practised. It is intriguing to see that the policymakers behind the SWAYAM platform have left out courses in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy,

nursing, architecture, agriculture, and physiotherapy on the grounds that they involve laboratory and practical work. Although this move makes sense, it seems to suggest that the pure sciences, the arts, the social sciences, and humanities curricula are largely lecture- and theory-based, and, therefore, readily adaptable to the online platform. Nothing can be farther from such a misconception.

Implicit in every curriculum is the tacit assumption that the classroom is a laboratory for hands-on testing of ideas, opinions, interpretations, and counterarguments. A diverse and inclusive classroom is the best litmus test for any theory or insight. Multidisciplinary happens more through serendipity — when learners across disciplines bump into each other and engage in conversations. Classroom and campus spaces offer the potential for solidarity in the face of discrimination, social anxiety, and stage fear, paving the way for a proliferation of voluntary associations that lie outside the realm of family, economy, and state. In the absence of this physical space, teaching and learning would give way to mere content and its consumption.

Without a shared space to discuss and contest ideas, learning dilutes to just gathering more information. This could also dilute norms of evaluation, whereby a "good lecture" might mean merely a lecture which "streams seamlessly, without buffering". This is not an argument from tradition. One could think of greater value-sensitive and socially just architectures and technologies that further foster classroom engagement and make it accessible for students of various disabilities and challenges, thereby adding more value to the existing meaning of education. But public education modelled on social distancing is a functional reduction and dilution of the meaning of education. It could add value only as an addendum to the classroom.

Such platforms must be seen only as stop-gap variants that help us get by under lockdown situations and complement classroom lectures. They will help us get by with the pandemic just as a "helmet" would help us get by with traffic police waving penalty slips. Our vocabulary has many terms for the loss of function — failure, malfunction, dysfunction, breakdown, etc. — but hardly any for the loss of value. 'Malpractice' is the closest that comes to mind. This malpractice of the dilution of education must be resisted, else we are asking for multiple concussions.

Ashwin Jayanti is an Assistant Professor at IIIT-Hyderabad. Views expressed are his own



GHADA WALY HIGHLIGHTS HOW ECONOMIC DOWNTURN MAY MAKE PEOPLE VULNERABLE TO DRUGS

## Drug abuse on rise amidst pandemic

More people are using drugs, and more illicit drugs are available than ever. The COVID-19 crisis has exposed our fragility, with health systems strained and social safety nets stretched to the limit. The economic downturn caused by the global pandemic may drive more people to substance abuse or leave them vulnerable to involvement in drug trafficking and related crime. We have been here before. In the global recession that followed the 2008 financial crisis, drug users sought out cheaper synthetic substances and patterns of use shifted towards injecting drugs, while governments reduced budgets to deal with drug-related problems.

Vulnerable and marginalised groups, youth, women and the poor have been harmed the most. Now facing the gravest socio-economic crisis in generations, governments cannot afford to ignore the dangers illicit drugs pose to public health and safety. All over the world, the risks and consequences of drug use are worsened by poverty, limited opportunities for education and jobs, stigma and social exclusion, which in turn helps to deepen inequalities, moving us further away from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While more people use drugs in developed countries than in developing countries, and wealthier segments of society have a higher prevalence of drug use, people who are socially and economically disadvantaged are more likely to develop drug use disorders. Only one out of eight people who need drug-related treatment receive it, according to the World Drug Report 2020. Some 35.6 million people suffer from drug use disorders globally.



Around 269 million people used drugs in 2018, up 30% from 2009, with adolescents and young adults accounting for the largest share of users. While the increase reflects population growth and other factors, the data nevertheless indicate that illicit drugs are more diverse, more potent and more available

One out of three drug users is a woman but women represent only one out of five people in treatment. People in prison settings, minorities, immigrants and displaced people also face barriers to treatment due to discrimination and stigma.

Around 269 million people used drugs in 2018, up 30% from 2009, with adolescents and young adults accounting for the largest share of users. While the increase reflects population growth and other factors, the

data nevertheless indicate that illicit drugs are more diverse, more potent and more available. At the same time, more than 80% of the world's population, mostly living in low- and middle-income countries, are deprived of access to controlled drugs for pain relief and other essential medical uses.

Governments have repeatedly pledged to work together to address the challenges posed by the world drug problem, in the

SDGs, and most recently in the 2019 Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. But data indicate that support has actually fallen over time, imperilling government commitment as well as regional and global coordination. Development assistance dedicated to drug control fell by some 90% between 2000-2017. Funding to address drugs may be provided under other budget lines, but there is little evidence of international donor attention to this priority. Assistance for alternative development — creating viable, licit forms of income to enable poor farmers to stop growing illicit opium poppy or coca — also remains very low.

Leaving no one behind requires greater investment in evidence-based prevention, as well as treatment and other services for drug use disorders, HIV, hepatitis C and other infections. We need international cooperation to increase access to controlled drugs for medical purposes, while preventing diversion and abuse, and to strengthen law enforcement action to dismantle the transnational organised crime networks.

Health-centred, rights-based and gender-responsive approaches to drug use and related diseases deliver better public health outcomes. As we seek to overcome and recover from the COVID-19 crisis, our societies cannot risk compounding illicit drug threats through inattention and neglect. We need drug strategies addressing the country-level, as well as regional challenges.

Ghada Waly is the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Views expressed are her own

### FIVE OBSERVATIONS

ON INDIA'S DOWNGRADING DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH PAKISTAN

- RECIPROCAL DIPLOMACY PREVAILS**  
India has told the Pakistani high commission in Delhi to cut its strength by half, on the grounds that officials were supporting 'cross-border violence and terrorism'. A reciprocation is likely in Pakistan too.
- FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND DECISION SINCE 2001**  
Since August, when India decided to change the constitutional status of J&K, the two don't have high commissioners in each other's country. New Delhi's action is first of its kind since 2001 Parliament attack.
- PAKISTAN'S TERROR LINK IS EVIDENT**  
It is a clear and well-recognised fact that Pakistan sponsors terrorism and engages in asymmetric warfare against India. It has given patronage to terror groups that have conducted attacks here.
- LOWERING TIES MAY BENEFIT CHINA**  
All said, Pakistan is a neighbour. Its alliance with China poses a threat as it can lead to an adversarial situation. This must be avoided at any cost. Thus, downgrading ties with it won't help at this time.
- MAINTAIN MINIMUM ENGAGEMENT**  
There are no easy solutions. But at the minimum, diplomatic channels of some sort must remain intact to handle unforeseen situations, as well as the other elements of the relationship.

### LETTERBOX

Readers' feedback adds value to the newspaper. Please email comments on reports, features and columns to fwletters@gmail.com. We will publish them on this page.

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### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Pak Army is also an industrial and business behemoth

One would think that the Pakistan Armed Forces' tradecraft was limited to securing its borders and creating military strategies to undermine India, but the Fauj is arguably the biggest industrial and business behemoth, also called Pakistani MilBus with over 100 independent businesses operated by subsidiaries of five Foundations of the military, viz. Fauji Foundation (run by the Ministry of Defence), Army Welfare Trust (run by Pakistan Army), Shaheen Foundation (run by Pakistan Air Force), Bahria Foundation (run by Pakistan Navy), and Pakistan Ordnance Factory Board Foundation (run under the Ministry of Defence).

The matrix of this gargantuan enterprise is all pervasive in Pakistan, from cement to cereals,

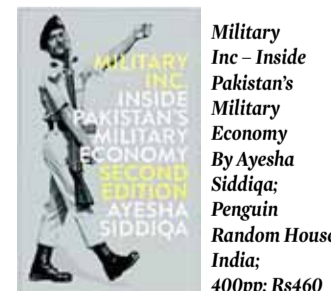
general insurance to gas, fertilisers to fish farms, seeds to stud farms, apparel to aviation, meat to medical equipment, name what you like — the Milbus in Pakistan markets a variety of products with little or no connection to its core duties of defending the borders.

Ayesha Siddiqi in her book "Military Inc — Inside Pakistan's Military Economy", describes Fauji Inc succinctly — "military capital that is used for the personal benefit of the military fraternity, especially the officer cadre, but is neither recorded nor part of the defence budget". She put the cost of this Milbus to at least \$20 billion.

Dawn reported how her expose created consternation in Pakistan. The government tried to disrupt the book's launch by refusing to allow Oxford University Press to

Originally conceived as strategic demi-military organisations, SCO, NLC and FWO have steadily diversified into civilian domains with the objective of making profits. They even bid for govt contracts

hold the function there at the last minute. This ham-handed reaction gave the book a cachet and an appeal it might not otherwise have gained. Dr Siddiqi informed that copies are not available over the counter in Karachi and Lahore. The assumption is that "agencies" have bought up most



Military Inc - Inside Pakistan's Military Economy  
By Ayesha Siddiqi  
Penguin Random House India  
400pp; Rs460

of the first print run. I am willing to bet that few of the book's detractors have actually read it. Indeed, I must confess that having just bought a copy, I am still going through it. Thus, this is in no sense a book review. But the introduction makes the book's seriousness of purpose abundantly clear. Dr Siddiqi has coined the term 'Milbus' (pronounced 'milbiz') as a shorthand term to refer to the military's business interests.

In its review, The Book Review — Literary Trust, the bare bones of how Fauji Inc dominates Pakistan society is revealed. "The spread of the military fraternity

in all important segments of the state, society and economy represents more than just a belief in the greater capacity of the armed forces. The military as a group has visibly graduated to become a class, and its serving and retired members are benefiting themselves from the organisation's immense power in relation to other domestic players."

The complex and intricate web rules then roost realising that money is the apex of the modern social construct. The Foundations operating these commercial enterprises are registered as charities or societies, and not as companies, under the laws of Pakistan. The Fauji Foundation, Shaheen Foundation and Bahria Foundation are registered under the Charitable Endowment Act of 1890. The Army Welfare Trust was established under the Society Registration Act of 1860. Each Foundation is administered by a Committee of Administration, chaired by the chief of one of the three defence forces. AGENCIES







ALSO READ | COVID-19 TABLET AVAILABLE AT RS 103 \* P11 | DIAGEO PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT BARS, PUBS \* P11

## NEWS BRIEF

## British police to quiz terror suspect

**LONDON:** British counter-terrorism police have been given until June 27 to question a suspect in an attack which saw three people stabbed to death in a park, officers said. "Detectives were granted a warrant of further detention until Saturday June 27, and the man remains in police custody," Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) said in a statement. A 25-year-old man, identified as Libyan Khairi Saadallah, was arrested near the scene of Saturday's attack in Reading, west of London. Detective Chief Superintendent Kath Barnes said the investigation into the attack was "continuing". **AGENCIES**

## Bolton memoir called 'misleading'

**ANKARA:** Turkey has denounced as "misleading, one-sided and manipulative" the explosive book by former U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton that describes interactions between Turkish and U.S. Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Donald Trump. In the book "The Room Where It Happened", Mr. Bolton contends that the U.S. leader was inclined to offer "personal favours to dictators he liked." Mr. Trump was said to be receptive when Mr. Erdogan mentioned a criminal probe into one of his country's largest banks over violating U.S. sanctions on Iran. **AGENCIES**

## Danish PM postpones wedding yet again

**COPENHAGEN:** Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen thought she had finally found a date for her wedding, but has now had to postpone it for a third time due to an EU summit, she said Thursday. Many a wedding plan has been upended by the COVID-19 pandemic and it seems not even world leaders are immune. "I am really looking forward to marrying this fantastic man," Frederiksen wrote in a Facebook post alongside a photo of herself and her fiance Bo. "But obviously it can't be that easy, and now there is a council meeting in Brussels called, exactly on that Saturday in July when we had planned to marry," she wrote. **AGENCIES**

## Covid-19 gets scarier in populous nations

CORONAVIRUS TAKES STRONGER HOLD IN THE US, OTHER COUNTRIES WITH HUGE POPULATION

**SEOUL:** While China moved closer to containing a fresh outbreak in Beijing, the COVID-19 pandemic took a stronger hold elsewhere, including the U.S., where surging infections across southern states have highlighted the risks of reopening economies without effective treatment or vaccines.

Another record daily increase in India on Friday pushed the country's case load toward half a million, and other countries with big populations like Indonesia, Pakistan and Mexico grappled with large case loads and strained health care systems.

South Africa, which accounts for about half of the infections on the African continent with 1,18,375, reported a record 6,579 new cases, as transmissions increase after it loosened what had been one of the world's strictest lockdowns earlier this month.

Mexico reported some of its highest 24-hour counts so far with 6,104 new cases and 736 additional deaths, as its treasury secretary began isolating at home after a positive test.



In China, where the pandemic originated in December, authorities have mobilised resources for mass testing and locked down parts of Beijing this month due to an outbreak that has infected 260 people. The 11 new cases reported in the capital on Friday continued a downward trend that suggests transmissions have been largely brought under control.

The U.S., which counts the most infections in the world,

is seeing daily jumps in COVID-19 cases nearing the peak reached in late April.

U.S. officials estimate that 20 million Americans have been infected with the coronavirus since it first arrived in the United States, meaning that the vast majority of the population remains susceptible. Thursday's estimate is roughly 10 times as many infections as the 2.3 million cases that have been confirmed. Officials have long

known that millions of people were infected without knowing it and that many cases are being missed because of gaps in testing.

The news comes as the Trump administration works to tamp down nationwide concern about the COVID-19 pandemic as about a dozen states are seeing worrisome increases in cases.

The administration also looks to get its scientific experts back before the pub-

**The Donald Trump administration works to tamp down nationwide concern about the COVID-19 pandemic as about a dozen states are seeing worrisome increases in cases**

lic more as it tries to allay anxieties about the pandemic while states begin reopening. Since mid-May, when the government began stressing the need to get the economy moving again, the panel's public health experts have been far less visible than in the pandemic's early weeks.

Twenty million infections means that about 6% of the nation's 331 million people have been infected. "It's clear that many individuals in this nation are still susceptible," Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said on a call with reporters Thursday. **AGENCIES**

## Imran Khan calls Osama bin Laden 'martyr'

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday called slain al-Qaeda chief and 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden a "shaheed" (martyr) and said that Islamabad faced "embarrassment" by taking part in America's war on terror.

Speaking in parliament during the budget session, Mr. Khan said the American forces entered Pakistan and killed bin Laden without informing Islamabad after which everyone started abusing his country.

"I don't think there's a country which supported the war on terror and had to face embarrassment for it. Pakistan was also openly blamed for U.S.' failure in Afghanistan," Mr. Khan said.

"For Pakistanis across the globe, it was an embarrassing moment when the



Americans came and killed Osama bin Laden at Abotabad... martyred him. The whole world started abusing us after that. Our ally came inside our country and killed someone without informing us. And, 70,000 Pakistanis died because of U.S.' war on

terror," he said.

Bin Laden was killed by U.S. Navy Seals in Pakistan's Abbottabad in May, 2011. Mr. Khan's remarks drew criticism from the Opposition. "Osama bin Laden was a terrorist and our PM called him a martyr. He was behind

**"I don't think there's a country which supported the war on terror and had to face embarrassment for it. Pakistan was also openly blamed for US' failure in Afghanistan"**

massacre of thousands," said Khawaja Asif of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

In his address, the Prime Minister also defended his government's response to the coronavirus crisis, saying there has been no confusion or contradiction in official policies since the start of the pandemic. "They say again and again that there was confusion... if there was one country whose government did not have confusion, it was ours," Mr. Khan was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

People give the example of New Zealand when talking about social distancing, he said, adding that "New Zealand has social distancing already" with a low population density. "I said from day one we had a dual problem; we had to save the people from corona and hunger, and those dying from poverty," he added, acknowledging that his government had to face "a lot of criticism" at the start and there was pressure to implement a more strict lockdown as was done by India. **AGENCIES**

## ASEAN states warn of S. China Sea tensions



**HANOI:** Vietnam and the Philippines warned of growing insecurity in Southeast Asia at a regional summit on Friday amid concerns that China was stepping up its activity in the disputed South China Sea during the coronavirus pandemic.

Both Hanoi and Manila lodged protests with China in April after Beijing unilaterally declared the creation of new administrative districts on islands in the troubled waterways to which Vietnam and the Philippines also have competing claims.

"Even as our region struggles to contain COVID-19, alarming incidents in the South China Sea occurred," Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte told an online meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders on Friday.

"We call on parties to refrain from escalating tensions and abide by responsibilities under international law," he said.

China has been pushing its presence in the Exclusive Economic Zones of other countries while claimants are preoccupied tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting the United States to call on China to stop its "bullying behaviour" there.

In early April, Vietnam said one of its fishing boats was sunk by a Chinese maritime surveillance vessel.

**"The pandemic is fanning the flames of dormant challenges within the political, economic and social environment of the world and in each region"**

China said that Vietnam's claims in South China sea are illegal and "doomed to fail".

In his opening remarks at the ASEAN Summit, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said international institutions and international law had been seriously challenged during the global crisis.

"The pandemic is fanning the flames of dormant challenges within the political, economic and social environment of the world and in each region," the Prime Minister said.

"While the entire world is stretched thin in the fight against the pandemic, irresponsible acts and acts in violation of international law are still taking place, affecting the environment of security and stability in certain regions, including in our region," said Mr. Nguyen, who made no mention of China in relation to the comments. **AGENCIES**

## US lists firms 'backed' by Chinese Army

**WASHINGTON:** The Pentagon has published a list of 20 Chinese companies it says are backed by the military, in the latest instance of a running tit-for-tat economic battle between Washington and Beijing.

Telecom giant Huawei — which has been dogged by allegations of stealing American trade secrets and aiding China's espionage efforts — and video surveillance giant Hikvision are among the firms named in the list, according to Bloomberg.

"As the People's Republic of China attempts to blur the lines between civil and military sectors, 'knowing your supplier' is critical," said Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman.

The list covers firms "owned by, controlled by, or affiliated with China's government, military, or defence industry," Mr. Hoffman said in a statement.

"We envision this list will be a useful tool for the U.S. Government, companies, investors, academic institutions, and like-minded partners to conduct due diligence with regard to partnerships with these entities," he added.

U.S. President Donald Trump has pursued a bruising trade war with China, and warned last week of "complete decoupling" between the world's top two economies despite both sides pledging to move forward on a trade deal.

China last month warned it would take "necessary measures" to protect Huawei and others after the U.S. announced restrictions on the tech giant's purchases of semiconductor technology. **AGENCIES**



## Bhutan rejects media reports on blocking irrigation water to Assam

**THIMPHU:** Bhutan on Friday rejected media reports claiming that it has stopped the supply of irrigation water to farmers in Assam, terming them totally baseless and a "deliberate attempt" by vested interests to cause misunderstanding with India.

In a statement, Bhutan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that since June 24, 2020, there have been several news articles published in India alleging that Bhutan has blocked water channels that supply irrigation water to Indian farmers in Baksa and Udalguri districts in Assam adjoining the country's Samdrup Jongkhar district.

"This is a distressing allegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to clarify that the news articles are totally baseless as there is no reason why the flow of water should be stopped at this time," it said.

It is a deliberate attempt by vested interests to spread



misinformation and cause misunderstanding between the friendly people of Bhutan and Assam, the ministry said.

Bhutan's statement came hours after Assam Chief Secretary Kumar Sanjay Krishna, in a late night tweet, termed the media reports as incorrect and said that the actual reason was natural blockage.

Recent media reports about Bhutan blocking water supply to India has been incorrectly reported. The actual reason being the natural blockage of

informal irrigation channels into Indian fields! Bhutan has been actually helping to clear the blockage, Mr. Krishna said.

According to the statement issued on Facebook by Bhutan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Assam's Baksa and Udalguri districts have been benefitting from the water sources in Bhutan for many decades and they continue to do so even during the present difficult times when we are faced with the COVID-19 pandemic. **AGENCIES**

## Japan scraps 'costly' US missile defense system

**TOKYO:** Japan's National Security Council has endorsed plans cancel the deployment of two costly land-based U.S. missile defense systems aimed at bolstering the country's capability against threats from North Korea, the country's defense minister said Thursday.

The council made its decision Wednesday, and now the government will need to enter negotiations with the U.S. about what to do with payments and the purchase contract already made for the Aegis Ashore systems.

The council is expected to also revise Japan's basic defense plan later this year to update the missile defense program and scale up the country's defense posture.

Defense Minister Taro Kono announced the plan to scrap the systems earlier this month after it was found that the safety of one of the two planned host communities



could not be ensured without a hardware redesign that would be too time consuming and costly.

The Japanese government in 2017 approved adding the two Aegis Ashore systems to enhance the country's current defenses consisting of Aegis-equipped destroyers at sea and Patriot missiles on land.

Defense officials have said the two Aegis Ashore units could cover Japan entirely

from one station at Yamaguchi in the south and another at Akita in the north.

The plan to deploy the two systems already had faced a series of setbacks, including questions about the selection of one of the sites, repeated cost estimate hikes that climbed to 450 billion yen (\$4.1 billion) for their 30-year operation and maintenance, and safety concerns that led to local opposition.

Mr. Kono said Japan has signed contract worth nearly half the total cost and paid part of it to the U.S.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has steadily pushed to step up Japan's defense capability, said last week that in light of the scrapping the government would need to reconsider Japan's missile defense program and do more under the country's security alliance with the U.S. **AGENCIES**

## 'Wholesale recruitment' of child soldiers faces probe

**KARUNA AMMAN HAD CLAIMED THAT HE WAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE CORONAVIRUS AS HE HAD KILLED BETWEEN 2,000-3,000 TROOPS ON BEHALF OF THE LTTE IN ELEPHANT PASS DURING THE WAR**

**UNITED NATIONS:** The UN Human Rights Council has called for an investigation on former LTTE deputy

leader Karuna Amman over the "wholesale recruitment" of child soldiers for the Tamil separatist group.

The UN body's demand came as Karuna was being probed over his recent claims glorifying the killing of Sri Lankan soldiers during the brutal civil war.

Karuna alias Vinayagumthi Muralitharan was on Thursday questioned for over seven hours by the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) over his remarks that he killed over 2,000 Sri Lankan soldiers in the island's north during the LTTE's separatist

war which lasted for over three decades.

Addressing a public gathering in the East on May 19, Karuna had claimed that he was more dangerous than the coronavirus as he had killed between 2,000-3,000 troops on behalf of the LTTE in Elephant Pass during the war.

Following his revelation, a number of individuals, including politicians, had called for Karuna's arrest and an investigation to be launched into the matter.

"He should also be investigated for wholesale recruitment of child soldiers, a crime



**"Karuna Amman should also be investigated for wholesale recruitment of child soldiers, a crime under international law"**

under international law," the UNHRC tweeted.

Karuna, who is contesting the August 5 parliamentary elections through his own political party, was the LTTE deputy leader and its eastern province commander when they ran a parallel state in their bid to militarily create a separate Tamil homeland in Sri Lanka's north and east

regions. He was the deputy to LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.

In 2004, he walked out of the LTTE with his eastern province cadres and later formed his own political party.

Karuna's leaving the LTTE with his cadres severely weakened the LTTE, leading to its ultimate defeat at the hands of government troops in 2009. He was elected to parli-

ament in 2010 and became a deputy minister in the then Mahinda Rajapaksa government. Even after leaving the LTTE, the UN had accused Karuna of recruiting the under-aged to his own political outfit Tamil Makkal Viduthala Pulikal (TMVP).

Karuna's claim of killing soldiers has led to a political storm in the run up to the August 5 polls. He is being seen as an ally of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Mr. Rajapaksa's party, however, has publicly dissociated from Karuna after his claim of murdering soldiers. **AGENCIES**

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**NEWSBRIEF**

**App to help track Covid-19 symptoms among players**

**DHAKA:** In wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has come up with an app to help its players track symptoms related to contagious disease. Former captain Mashrafe Mortaza and two other former Bangladesh cricketers, Nazmul Islam and Nafees Iqbal have so far tested positive for the dreaded coronavirus and in its bid to help the players, the BCB has come up with 'Covid-19 well-being app'. "This app will help the players maintain their fitness and for the board to keep their records and track of their fitness and health status," BCB Chief Executive Nizamuddin Chowdhury told 'The Daily Star', informing that 70 players have installed this app. **PTI**

**Sports can help win Covid-19 fight, says PV Sindhu**

**NEW DELHI:** Asserting that sports can help win the battle against coronavirus pandemic in the absence of a vaccine, Olympic and World Championships silver medallist shuttler P V Sindhu on Monday urged everyone to make physical activity an integral part of their lives. The virus has infected over 8.5 million people globally with more than 450,000 people losing their lives. "Sports and other physical activities are very important to maintain a strong immune system and since there are yet no vaccine or treatment, sports can help win this battle," Sindhu said during the inauguration of 'Virtual Healthcare and Hygiene Expo 2020', a virtual exhibition and conference organised by FICCI from June 22-26. **AGENCIES**

**Rowing Federation grilled after 22 fail dope test**

**NEW DELHI:** National Anti-Doping Agency Director General Navin Agarwal on Tuesday said that those in charge of managing the rowing national camp will have to introspect what went wrong and take responsibility after 22 U-18 Indian rowers failed dope tests. All the athletes tested positive for probenecid, a drug used to treat gout that is also a masking agent banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency. "The rowing federation and its coaches need to introspect as to what went wrong. If so many players of a national camp test positive for one substance then they have to look at who was arranging all the supplements. Perhaps it was a food supplement that was wrongly taken," Agarwal was quoted as saying by IANS. "We have issued notices to all the rowers and they have said that they want to contest it. So after necessary formalities the hearings will be held." Rowing Federation of India (RFI) secretary general M.V. Sriram said that the federation is investigating the matter. He also said that he is perplexed that test results for samples taken in June 2019 are coming only now. "The samples were taken in July 2019 and the results we have got in June 2020. We are ourselves perplexed. Most of the athletes were from Khelo India. **IANS.**"

**Recognition of 54 NSFs withdrawn**

**SPORTS MINISTRY FOLLOWS DELHI HIGH COURT'S ORDER THAT WAS ISSUED ON FEBRUARY 7**

**NEW DELHI:** Following the Delhi High Court's order, the Sports Ministry has withdrawn the annual recognition granted to 54 National Sports Federations (NSFs).  
On Wednesday, the High Court directed the ministry to revoke the provisional recognition it had given to 54 NSFs on May 11. The court had said that the ministry by doing so has not complied with an order that was issued on February 7 this year. The order had required the ministry and the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to "inform the court in advance" while taking "any decision in relation to the NSFs."

Sports Ministry Deputy Secretary S.P.S. Tomar on Thursday wrote a letter to SAI Director General Sandeep Pradhan saying: "I am directed to refer to this Ministry's letter of even dated 02.06.2020 regarding renewal of annual recognition of National Sports Federations for the year 2020 and to say that in compliance of the order



dated 24.06.2020 passed by the Honble Delhi Court, the department's letter of even number dated 02.06.2020 granting provisional annual recognition of 54 NSFs stands withdrawn."  
The court in its order on Wednesday said that the ministry "shall issue a fresh notice within two days intimating all the 54 NSFs concerned that its order giving provisional renewal till 30.09.2020, stands recalled." The ministry usually provides

recognition until the end of the year but it has in this instance only given it provisionally until the end of the year.  
Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju had asked the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to look into appointing differently-abled coaches to train athletes with speech and hearing impairments. Rijiju was responding to a suggestion made by the All India Sports Council for Deaf (AISCD) during a virtual meet-

**"As an Indian, I understand that we need money for better purposes. (But) we can't lose a good talent. We didn't say anything about it at the time but this is my personal opinion,"**

ing on Thursday. A SAI official told IANS that Rijiju agreed in principle to the suggestion. He further asked SAI officials to look into the logistics of hiring a coach. The official however said that the ensuing lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic and a number of factors means that process could take at least six months to go through.

Members of 15 National Sports Federations were also present in the videoconference which was the second round of meetings that the minister is having with presidents and secretary generals of NSFs around the country. In the earlier meeting, Rijiju had asked the representatives of the NSFs if it was feasible for them to

reduce the salaries of foreign coaches. The suggestion was not agreed to by the officials in the meeting.

"As an Indian, I understand that we need money for better purposes. (But) we can't lose a good talent. We didn't say anything about it at the time but this is my personal opinion," Boxing Federation of India Secretary General Jay Kowli had told IANS on Wednesday. "Given a choice I would like to pay them in full. They have been staying away from their families in India. They must be more worried than all of us considering the situation also in the country. They chose to stay back despite all of it." **IANS**

**'Special' coaches for hearing and speech impaired athletes**



**NEW DELHI:** The Sports Authority of India (SAI) may soon appoint differently-abled coaches to work with hearing and speech impaired athletes after Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju "agreed in principle" to the recommendation of All India Sports Council for Deaf (AISCFD).  
In a virtual meeting with the Sports Minister, which was also attended by 16 other National Sports Federations (NSFs), the AISCFD on Thursday highlighted the need for differently-abled coaches for its athletes for clear communication. "The All India Sports Council for Deaf highlighted the communication problems of their athletes with able bodied coaches and requested the Minister to consider employing differently-abled coaches for hearing and speech impaired athletes," an NSF official who was present in the meeting told PTI.

"The Minister applauded the suggestion and agreed in principle. He asked the Sports Authority of India officials to look into the matter on urgent basis."

Thursday's meeting was the second round of virtual meeting of Rijiju with NSFs after he interacted with 15 federations on Tuesday to discuss the way forward in terms of training of athletes, participation in national and international competitions and organising sporting events in India.

Besides AISCFD, others present in Thursday's meeting were NSF officials from tennis, kabaddi, chess, basketball, bridge, billiards and snooker, equestrian, handball, kayaking and canoeing, squash, sepak takraw, volleyball, wushu, yachting, Special Olympic Bharat and Association of Indian University. During the meeting the NSFs discussed their short and long-term goals with

the minister and called for immediate resumption of training which has been suspended since March because of the coronavirus-forced lockdown.

"The NSFs shared their short and long term goals with the minister. They said their immediate priority is to resume training and assess whether small events can be organised without spectators in a controlled environment," an official present in the meeting said.

"The NSFs also discussed their long-term goals which is primarily preparing for big events. They said they are looking start their national training camps from September or October." The official said most of the NSFs said they are yet to finalise their Annual Competition and Training Calendar as they are still waiting for the finalisation of international calendar which has been disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. **AGENCIES**

**Either Lanka or UAE will host Asia Cup, says PCB**

**KARACHI:** The Asia Cup will go ahead as scheduled later this year in either Sri Lanka or the UAE, Pakistan Cricket Board CEO Wasim Khan has asserted.

Khan rejected speculation that the event could be scrapped to make space for the currently suspended Indian Premier League. "The Asia Cup will go ahead. The Pakistan team returns from England on 2nd September so we can have the tournament in September or October," he said at a media conference here. "There are some things which will only get clear in the due course of time. We are hopeful of having the Asia Cup because Sri Lanka has not had too many cases of the Coronavirus. If they can't do it, then UAE is also ready," he added.

Khan said Pakistan, the original host of the event, had agreed to let Sri Lanka conduct it in return for hosting the next regional event. He also confirmed that the Pakistan board is working on options to play cricket in the window for the T20 World Cup if it doesn't go ahead as planned in October-November. "We are to go to New Zealand in December after hosting Zimbabwe at home. South Africa are ready to tour in January-February to play two or three Tests and some T20 matches," he disclosed. Khan said the board was looking at a November window for completing the Pakistan Super League's remaining five matches. Asked about the steps being taken to criminalise match-fixing offences in Pakistan, the PCB official said he was surprised that until today no one from the board had gone to the government and tried to get a legislation against the menace. **AGENCIES**



**Must protect progress women's sport has made: Belinda Clark**

**DUBAI:** Continued investment in women's sports in the post Covid-19 period and creating inclusive environments for girls and women were the main points of discussion in 100% Unity, the final episode of the 100% Cricket webinar series held on Wednesday.

Former Australia cricketer and Executive General Manager of Community Cricket at Cricket Australia, Belinda Clark and Arijana Demirovic, head of FIFA's Women's Football Development, discussed the challenges ahead in the one-hour conversation moderated by commentator Mel Jones.

The two discussed the infrastructure and environment needed to encourage women in sports and felt the coming period was vital, especially after the successes of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019 in France and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 in Australia, as per an ICC release. Australia defeated India to claim their fifth T20 World Cup title in front of a record 86,174 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on March 8 and with the ICC Women's



**"I think it will be really important that we protect our investment, that we stay on the path, that we don't become a 'nice to have'"**

World Cup 2021 due to be held in New Zealand in another eight months, this period is seen as crucial for women's cricket. Clark, the first cricketer to score a double-century in ODIs, said it was important to continue the good work.

Belinda Clark said: "The biggest challenge is protecting the progress that we have made and not taking it for granted that the next steps will just flow without a similar amount of effort and

attention. Whilst financial belts are being tightened across the world with what we are experiencing at the moment, it is easy to include inclusion as a concept, females playing sports is part of that, but it is really easy for us to go backwards."

"I think it will be really important that we protect our investment, that we stay on the path, that we don't become a 'nice to have'." **AGENCIES**

**Clare Connor to be first female MCC president in 233 years**

**LONDON:** Former England women's captain Clare Connor is to become the first female president of Marylebone Cricket Club in its 233-year history.  
Current incumbent Kumar Sangakkara, the first non-British MCC president, nominated Connor via video link from his native Sri Lanka during an annual general meeting on Wednesday.  
Connor, now the England and Wales Cricket Board's head of women's cricket, is set to take up her new post on October 1, 2021, subject to the

membership's approval. Presidents of MCC usually remain in post for one year but Sangakkara's term is set to be extended by a further 12 months because of the coronavirus pandemic.  
It was not until 1998 that MCC, which owns Lord's Cricket Ground, voted to allow women to become members. Prior to that, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II was one of the few women allowed in the Lord's pavilion. "I am deeply honoured to be named the next president of MCC," said Connor in a state-



**"We often need to look back to see how far we've come. I made my first visit to Lord's as a starry-eyed, cricket-obsessed nine-year-old girl at a time when women were not welcome in the Long Room (of the pavilion)"**

ment. "Cricket has enriched my life so deeply already, and now it hands me this wonderful privilege."  
"We often need to look back to see how far we've come. I made my first visit to Lord's as a starry-eyed, cricket-obsessed nine-year-old girl at a time

when women were not welcome in the Long Room (of the pavilion)," she said.  
The 43-year-old Connor, now the chair of the International Cricket Council's women's cricket committee, added: "Times have changed. Now I find myself entrusted with this

remarkable opportunity — the opportunity to play a part in helping MCC, cricket's most influential club, to thrive and grow in an even more modern and inclusive future."  
"MCC does wonderful work for communities in the UK and overseas. It stages the most uplifting events. It brings people together. And as we take small steps to emerge from this uncertain and difficult time, we are going to need the power of sport and strong sporting organisations like MCC more than ever," she said.

Meanwhile Sangakkara said he was "thrilled" by Connor's latest cricket appointment, the Sri Lanka great adding: "The club has a significant role to play in cricket's global appeal and with her influence, I am sure she will make a considerable contribution to MCC."  
Left-arm spinner Connor made her England debut aged 19 in 1995 and went on to captain her country in 2000 before retiring six years later. Although MCC no longer runs English cricket, it has worldwide responsibility for the sport's rules. **AGENCIES**

**Paes works on 'new version' of himself**

**KOLKATA:** Tennis legend Leander Paes on Saturday said he has been working on a "new version" of himself during this Covid-19 induced lockdown period to keep himself ready for the rigours of the sport once it resumes.

Paes, who turned 47 on Wednesday, had earlier announced that 2020 would be his last season as a professional player but his plan to bid adieu on a high with a record eighth appearance at the Olympics, was stalled by the pandemic, which has wrecked the sporting calendar. The Tokyo Olympics is now slated to take place from July 23-August 8, 2021.

"If I can use this lockdown to enhance my physical fitness which is what I have done. If I can use this lockdown to take a rejuvenated break to take my mind fresh. Last year in September 2019 I looked to retire



because I was jaded from 30 years of playing this sport. So I had to reinvent myself," Paes, the winner of 18 majors, said during a webinar session organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce on Zoom platform. "I had to read, spend time with my father. I looked to enhance my individual being so that when the lockdown opens up and I do come back to my

community, there are many different age brackets and genders and also there are different vehicles that we can use." The 47-year-old said he would love to work on physical education classes in schools in India which he feels are "archaic". "Sports education is one of the things I love doing. In the physical education period in schools, I feel the classes are very archaic. I don't think physical education classes are dealing with mental stress of exams or mental pressure or depression."  
"It does not deal with emotional happiness. I believe that sports psychologists or sports educators like myself can go out there and through the PE classes work with local and private, government schools and sports departments in each state by state...make a difference to each one of our children's lives. **AGENCIES**"

profession, I am a new version of Leander. I am a new version of that 30 years (of playing) old athlete that's there," said Paes. He won India a singles Olympic medal in 1996 and has been Indian tennis flagbearer since then. Quizzed about his plans after he calls time on his illustrious career, the ever-passionate Paes said: "What moves me is the community. Now in the

# Covid-19 tablet available at ₹103

GLENMARK'S FAVIPRAVIR IS NO MAGIC BULLET FOR COVID BUT WILL HELP AMID RISING CASES, SAY MEDICS

**NEW DELHI:** As Glenmark Pharmaceuticals launched antiviral drug Favipiravir for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 cases, medical experts have cautioned against seeing it as a "magic bullet" to treat the deadly virus but said it will be helpful as it can be orally administered and reduce viral load.

They said the drug's real efficacy would be known in the coming months.

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals said it has launched antiviral drug Favipiravir, under the brand name FabiFlu, for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 at a price of about Rs 103 per tablet.

FabiFlu is the first oral Favipiravir-approved medication in India for the treatment of COVID-19, it said in a statement.

"This drug was already being used in Japan for influenza. They have been using it in COVID-19 patients also. Even China was using it and Russia had also given permission in May to use it. Antiviral drugs like Remdesivir and Favipiravir are not specific to COVID-19 but were being used for influenza," said Dr Vikas Maurya, Director, Department of Pulmonology and Sleep Disorders, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

He said studies found that there was some benefit of Favipiravir in COVID-19 treatment and that is why it has now been launched in India as well.

Maurya said with COVID-19 cases rising, the launching of the drug comes as a relief.

"It is not a magic bullet as it is not the only thing we have



to give. This is not a specific drug made for COVID-19 and has been found to be useful, but how much it will be useful we will have to see. Real efficacy will be known when administered on a large scale," he told PTL.

"Best thing is that it is an oral drug, while Remdesivir is an intravenous drug. It (Fa-

vipiravir) can be even taken at home. So even if it is giving some benefit, it will be quite useful," Maurya said.

Dr Rommel Tickoo, Associate Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, said the drug could be a "potential game-changer".

"We don't have much data, but whatever data we have

shows that it is promising. We will have clearer information about the efficacy of the drug in the next two months. The preliminary report is promising which means that they (Glenmark) know that it works," he told PTL.

"It has to be given at an early stage and is a potential game changer as it can be given in tablet form and thus is easy to administer, and is relatively inexpensive," he said.

Tickoo said the drug could reduce the viral load when given at an early stage and also has the potential to prevent stage progression so it could reduce the hospitalisation rate which in turn could reduce the burden on the health infrastructure. "With cases rising, at least we have something in hand," he told PTL.

Noted city-based lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar said

he does not believe that any of these antiviral drugs like Remdesivir or Favipiravir will be game changers.

"If at all 'game changer' can be used, it is for dexamethasone which has shown a significant reduction in mortality and is available cheaply," he said.

There are so many medications available and Favipiravir will also help some patients, added Kumar, who works at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here.

The Favipiravir drug will be available as a 200 mg tablet at a maximum retail price (MRP) of Rs 3,500 for a strip of 34 tablets, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals said.

It is a prescription-based medication with recommended dose being 1,800 mg twice daily on day one, followed by 800 mg twice daily up to day 14, it added. **AGENCIES**

## Generic remdesivir out for COVID-19 patients



**NEW DELHI:** Homegrown pharma major Cipla Ltd announced the launch of its generic version of remdesivir, which has been authorised for emergency use in treatment of COVID-19 patients by the USFDA, under its brand name Cipremi.

The USFDA had issued an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to Cipla to manufacture and market generic remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Remdesivir is the only USFDA approved Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) treatment for adult and paediatric patients hospitalised with suspected or laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection.

In May, Cipla Sciences Inc extended a voluntary non-exclusive license to Cipla to manufacture and market generic version of remdesivir called Cipremi. Cipla said it has been granted regulatory approval by the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) for restricted emergency use in the country as part of the accelerated approval process considering the urgent and unmet medical need.

"As part of a risk management plan, Cipla will provide training on use of the drug, informed patient consent documents, conduct post marketing surveillance as well as conduct a Phase IV clinical trial on Indian patients," the company said in a statement. To enable speedy and equitable access to this treatment and in anticipation of demand, Cipla will be commercialising remdesivir through its own facilities and partnered sites, it added. The drug will be supplied through the government and open market channels to ensure equitable distribution, the company said. Commenting on the launch, Cipla Ltd MD and Global CEO Umang Vohra said, "Cipla appreciates the strong partnership with Gilead to bring remdesivir to patients in India. We have been deeply invested in exploring all possible avenues to save millions of lives impacted by COVID-19 pandemic, and this launch is a significant milestone in that direction". The company will continue to collaborate with all stakeholders in the healthcare ecosystem towards providing access to such promising treatments in furtherance with the belief that no patient should be denied access to life-saving treatments, he added.

## Helpline set to find jobs for lockdown-hit workers

**NEW DELHI:** A group of students from IITs, IIMs and other reputed institutions on Sunday launched a pilot project and a helpline number to help workers, who lost their jobs during the coronavirus-necessitated lockdown, find work.

The students, who have created Students For Involved Governance and Mutual Action (SIGMA), are being assisted by Deputy Commissioner, Delhi, Abhishek Singh and bureaucrat Durga Shakti Nagpal in their endeavour.

The helpline -- 8800883323 -- "ekatra" was conceptualized by the students to help the hiring of the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers across Delhi-NCR, Singh said during the online launch of the pilot project and the helpline number. The helpline will be operational from 10 am to 7 pm everyday. Student volunteers will attend calls from potential employers and workers and take note of their requirements.

The lockdown has had a serious impact on the livelihoods of workers, many have been rendered jobless. The pilot project and the helpline



The helpline will be operational from 10 am to 7 pm everyday. Student volunteers will attend calls from potential employers and workers and take note of their requirements

number is an attempt by the student-led think-tank to help locals and migrant workers find employment, Nagpal, who is also part of the PMO's COVID-19 Response Task Force, said during the online launch.

India witnessed a mass exodus of migrant workers from cities during the lockdown due to their sudden unemployment. Since India's

rural economy is not capable of this scale of labour absorption, millions of workers will have to move back to cities in search of livelihood, the think-tank said.

There is a need to have a mechanism to help locals and migrant workers find work conveniently. It will also solve the problem of worker shortage in many industries, it said. **AGENCIES**

## Aurobindo Pharma eyes US for launch

**HYDERABAD:** Aurobindo Pharma is expected to launch 50 to 60 new products during the current year, N Govindarajan, managing director of the city-based drug maker has said.

"We are expecting to launch around 50 to 60 products this year including injectables... Out of the 50 to 60 products that we are talking about, 25 products have already been approved," he said during the latest earnings call earlier this month.

Aurobindo Pharma's US

business posted a growth of 27 per cent year-on-year to Rs 11,484 crore in FY20.

On a constant currency basis, it increased by 26 per cent year-on-year to around USD 1.62 billion led by improvement in volumes and new product launches.

The company has received final approval for six ANDAs (abbreviated new drug application) and launched four products in the fourth quarter of last fiscal.

For the full year, it has received approval for 22

ANDAs and launched 34 products across oral, injectable and OTC segments, Govindarajan said.

Replying to a query, he said the drug maker is planning to spend USD 150 to USD 200 million on capex in the current year.

Aurobindo spent Rs 958 crore towards research and development in FY 20 which was 4.1 per cent of its total revenues. Govindarajan said the R&D spend would be 5.5 per cent of the revenues for the current year. **AGENCIES**

## Bridgestone offers contactless tyre servicing

**NEW DELHI:** Tyre maker Bridgestone India on Wednesday launched its contactless tyre servicing platform keeping in tune with the requirements of social distancing norms in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

Customers can now take an online appointment through "Bridgestone Bookmyservice" and spend less time in outlets with pre-planned visits. Contactless servicing ensures minimum waiting and a sanitised environment at the Bridgestone outlets, the company said in a statement. "With the country unlocking gradually, tyre servicing will be a need for many,



due to the prolonged parking of vehicles. However, safety concerns may prevent customers from availing this necessary service, as they recommence the usage of their vehicles,"

Bridgestone India said. The company has developed this service to ensure that the safety of its customers and partners is not compromised, while they purchase or get the servicing of

tyres done, it added.

The platform will also allow Bridgestone channel partners to implement appropriate social distancing measures at the outlets, which are necessary in times of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company said.

"As the economy reopens, our customers would be more reliant on personal mobility, and therefore, this becomes an essential service for them. The safety of our consumers and channel partners is our top priority, and we aim to provide the right solutions, with the utmost ease," Bridgestone India Managing Director Parag Satpute said. **AGENCIES**

## NEWSBRIEF

### IndiGo offers flexible payment option

**NEW DELHI:** IndiGo has announced a flexible payment scheme called 'Flex Pay' under which passengers will have to pay only 10 per cent of the total fare amount at the time of booking. Passengers can defer the 90 per cent remaining payment "for a period of up to 15 days either from the date of bookings or before the date of departure" under this scheme, IndiGo said in a press release. If a passenger has paid 10 per cent of the fare amount to get a ticket, and if he or she cancels the booking without paying the remaining 90 per cent, he or she will not be refunded this 10 per cent amount. **AGENCIES**

### IHCL launches home delivery platform

**NEW DELHI:** Hospitality major Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL) on Thursday announced the launch of its home delivery platform Qmin to address a growing consumer demand for on-line gourmet food delivery service. Initially, the service has been rolled out from eight restaurants in Mumbai. It will cover the top 10 markets in the country, including Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru, over a period of five weeks, the hospitality arm of the Tata group said in a statement. The Qmin mobile application will be launched on July 25, followed by gourmet Qmin Shop in August and a loyalty platform in September, IHCL added. **AGENCIES**

### Growthcode launches 4 e-learning apps

**NEW DELHI:** E-learning platform Growthcode on Sunday launched four apps for training and skill development of workforce across sectors. Prolear, Prolear Institution, Prolear Tutor and Opportunity Triangle are the four apps launched by the company. "We have launched four learning applications under Growthcode. Our aim is to make a purposeful, strategic and a long-term industry-academy-individual partnership possible through our virtual platforms," Growthcode Technology Solutions co-founder Ravi Krishnamurthy said in a statement. The Bengaluru-based education technology company provides virtual platforms to individuals and companies to train its employees. **AGENCIES**

## Diageo programme to support bars, pubs

**NEW DELHI:** Liquor maker Diageo India on Wednesday announced a Rs 75-crore programme "Raising the Bar" to support bars, pubs and restaurants serving alcohol to help them recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Raising the Bar" is a two-year programme to support the revival and recovery of bars, pubs and restaurants across cities including Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, Diageo India said in a statement.

Diageo designed this programme following a global survey of bar owners to identify key priorities to support reopening.

Their top priorities included hygiene measures, digital support and practical equipment and training to transform how their outlets will work when they reopen, Diageo said.

Following resumption of business operations and the sale of alcohol in bars, pubs and restaurants, outlets will be able to register their interest



'Raising the Bar' is a two-year programme to support the revival and recovery of bars, pubs and restaurants across cities

for the programme, it said. It will provide hygiene kit, sanitiser and personal protection equipment and also help bars, pubs and restaurants serving alcohol to establish partnerships with online reservations and cashless systems.

Diageo India Managing Director Anand Kripalulu said: "The revival of this sector is vital to the economy and to the success of our business. 'Raising the Bar' is our commitment to qualifying pubs, bars and restaurants that serve alcohol." **AGENCIES**

## IOC sets up battery swapping unit for recharge of EVs

**NEW DELHI:** India's top oil firm IOC on Friday launched a battery swapping facility for electric vehicles (EVs) at its petrol pumps, offering to replace discharged batteries with fully charged ones in just couple of minutes.

Indian Oil Corp (IOC) will begin with a pilot of battery swapping at one of its outlets in Chandigarh and gradually scale it up to 20 stations, company chairman Sanjiv Singh said at the launch.

Battery swapping technology offers the best alternative to slow charging and helps the drivers make optimum use of the operational hours, he said adding the battery swapping model is initially targeted at the commercial vehicles such as electric autos, rickshaws and electric two-wheelers and EVs that are either factory fitted or retrofitted.

IOC is the country's top fuel retailer, controlling close to half of the market. But, it is now making a foray into EV charging.



It has partnered with Sun Mobility for setting up battery swapping facility, called Quick Interchange Station (QIS). Any EV can drive into IOC's QIS pumps, insert fully discharged battery into a dispensing station and get a fully charged one in just 1-2 minutes, he said. All three/four batteries of EVs can be replaced with fully charged ones at the QIS.

At the end of the process, a bill for charging the batteries will be generated. The Pilot QIS

has 14 batteries, a touch screen for swapping preloaded cards, and an electricity sub-meter. These QIS will play a pivotal role in providing an alternative energy solution to the 3-wheeler segment, he said. Singh said only 4,000 out of 35 lakh vehicles sold last year were EVs. And time taken to charge batteries is one of the reasons for low sales.

"While users may be receptive to switching to EV, they may not want to struggle through

the cumbersome recharging process. This is where battery swapping comes into the picture," he said. "Not only will battery swapping eliminate the unnecessary waiting time for battery recharging, but it will also help with better land use, reduce the size of batteries in vehicles, and ensure an increased run time." IOC has signed a non-binding strategic cooperation document with Sun Mobility to explore setting up energy infrastructure for EVs through a battery swapping model across its petrol pumps in select cities. Three more QIS - one each in Chandigarh, Amritsar, and Bengaluru - will be set up under the pilot project.

New Delhi, Gurugram, and other cities will also be covered under the pilot. Speaking at the launch, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan called for scaling up the EV ecosystem. "We must leverage modern technology to enable electric mobility to scale up in India and make it more affordable." **AGENCIES**

## Bajaj Finance starts online fixed deposit facility for clients

**PUNE:** Bajaj Finance Limited, the lending & investment arm of Bajaj Finserv and one of the most diversified NBFCs in the Indian market, has now launched online Fixed Deposit facility for customers. Using this convenience, new and existing customers can invest in Bajaj Finance FD from the comfort of their homes.

Servicing more than 2.5 lakh happy FD customers with a deposit book of more than 20,000 crores, Bajaj Finance Fixed Deposit is a preferred investment option, owing to its assurance of lucrative returns.

Despite recent repo rate cuts and reduction in interest rates, Bajaj Finance is offering lucrative FD interest rates of up to 7.85%, which are one of the highest in the market. These high returns don't come at the cost of stability or convenience, as deposits by Bajaj Finance are accredited with the highest ratings of FAAA by CRISIL and MAAA by ICRA. Along with these high ratings, Bajaj Finance is also one of the only NBFCs to have '0 unclaimed deposits' - which indicates the measures taken by this company to ensure safety of

depositors' money. In today's times of high market volatility and falling interest rate regime, customers can lock into the prevailing high FD interest rates by filling Bajaj Finance online FD form and reap these benefits: Quick online process: When investing in this online FD, investors need not worry about visiting Bajaj Finance branches, as this end-to-end online process enables them to book an FD immediately, without any hassle.

Easy online and paperless process: With this online FD



facility, customers can carry out the entire process online, from start to finish. This saves them the trouble of multiple

The lending & investment arm of Bajaj Finserv and one of the most diversified NBFCs in the Indian market is servicing more than 2.5 lakh FD customers with a deposit book of more than Rs 20,000 crores

visits to branches or the need to submit documentation. While existing FD customers need not even submit their documents again, new customers can verify themselves through the eKYC repository, and complete the documentation process without any hass-

le. Invest anytime, anywhere: Bajaj Finance online FD facility also enables investors to invest from any device with an internet connection. This offers them with the flexibility to invest in a Fixed Deposit from their office desk, or from their homes. **AGENCIES**



# Living with ‘sexy’ tag of at young age felt horrible: Riya

“I FOUND MYSELF VERY UNEASY, VERY UNCOMFORTABLE. IT WASN'T ME. I COULDN'T GO ON SET EVERYDAY, GET MY HAIR CURLED FOR HOURS AND SIT WITH ALL THAT MAKE-UP”

fit into that,” Riya told PTI in an interview.

The 39-year-old actor said that labels such as “sexy” and “bold” made her feel terrible. “Getting those tags, it was just terrible, horrible. Living with that... I was in school when the tag of ‘sexy’ started coming way. There was so much pressure to always look perfect, a certain way. “Even when I went out, people had this perception that ‘Oh Riya Sen’ because they feel what you’re on screen, you’re the same in real life.”

With time, the discomfort of fitting in the stereotype of a ‘Hindi film heroine’ started to get on her nerves. So, despite featuring in multi-starring, including ‘Apna Sapna Money Money’, ‘Shaadi No 1’ and ‘Love Khichdi’ between 2005-2010, the roles and the overarchiving emphasis on “looking glamorous” became increasingly tough to handle. “Everyone wants to be glamorous, no doubt, but I

was so young when I came here. I was doing all these roles, wearing a mini skirt, running around and acting ‘cute’. When I’d watch myself on screen I’d be like ‘eeks, I can’t believe that’s me.’ “I found myself very uneasy, very uncomfortable. It wasn’t me. I couldn’t go on set everyday, get my hair curled for hours and sit with all that make-up. It just didn’t do it for me. I took a conscious decision to stop working in Bollywood movies at that time.”

But what was a loss for Bollywood, turned out to be a gain for Bengali cinema. The actor found acclaim in filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh’s 2011 period drama ‘Noukadubi’, based on Rabindranath Tagore’s 1906 novel of the same name. She went on to work in other Bengali films, including Srijit Mukherji’s musical drama ‘Jaatishwar’ and the romance-action ‘Hero 420’ in 2016. AGENCIES

Actor Riya Sen says being sexualised in films and music videos at a young age made her so uncomfortable that she decided to stop working in Hindi movies. Riya hails from a family of artistes that includes her grandmother Suchitra Sen, mother Moon Moon Sen and sister Raima Sen. She was just 16 when she got her breakthrough in 1998 after she featured in the music video of Falguni Pathak’s song ‘Yaad Piya Ki Aane Lagi’.

Films naturally followed, with director Bharathiraja’s Tamil romantic drama ‘Taj Mahal’ in 1999 marking her big screen debut. Riya went on to star in Hindi films, including the 2001 sleeper hit comedy ‘Style’, Sujoy Ghosh’s musical drama ‘Jhankaar Beats’ (2003) and Ajay Devgn’s ‘Qayamat: City Under Threat’ (2003). The actor said when she began her Bollywood journey, she was excited how her choices were paying off at the box office. But with commercial success, the tag of being “bold” caught up. “I realised some of the films I did, after a few hits that I did, after weren’t working for me because I wasn’t comfortable in the roles I was playing. That’s why probably people thought I was a bad actress and I don’t blame them. “At that point when I did a lot of Bollywood movies, it was about being sexy, the clothes that you wear, the makeup that you do. I didn’t

# Always wanted to show strong, independent women through cinema: Anushka

Actor Anushka Sharma says as a producer she will continue to champion stories like ‘Bulbbul’ that show strong and independent women on the screen. “Bulbbul”, which started streaming on Netflix from June 24, is Anushka and brother Karnesh Ssharma’s second production to garner rave reviews after the success of ‘Paatal Lok’ on Amazon Prime Video last month. The film marks the directorial debut of lyricist-dialogue writer Anvita Dutt and also completes her trilogy of supernatural stories with female protagonists in central roles after ‘Pari’ and ‘Phillouri’.

I felt that as an actress and I decided that I will correct this as much as I can through my productions,” Anushka said in a statement here. The 32-year-old actor, who decided to turn producer at the age of 25, said she is happy with all the love for ‘Bulbbul’ as she and her brother “really put our necks on the line to make projects that we hope will be clutter-breaking”. To be called “daring and adventurous” for their efforts has been a real validation as producers, said Anushka.

“Karnesh and I aren’t scared storytellers. We make each project thinking we have nothing to lose. We are non-conformists and that’s what has really, really helped us to explore and create. It is a huge milestone moment for us at Clean Slate

Filmz because both ‘Pataal Lok’ and now ‘Bulbbul’ have got great reviews and janta ka (public) appreciation,” she said. Anushka, whose credits as an actor include films like ‘Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi’, ‘Band Baaja Baraat’,



“NH10”, “Sultan” and “PK”, said she will continue to back talented filmmakers like Anvita, Sudip Sharma, Prosit Roy, Avinash Arun, Anshai Lal as their “bold cinematic voices need to be heard.” AGENCIES

# Shruti Haasan misses being on the stage

Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, actress Shruti Haasan is missing being on stage and performing. “I miss this,” she wrote on Instagram while sharing a clip that captures her giving an intense performance on stage. Recently, Shruti also shared that she is a fan of glitches. The actress took to Instagram, where she shared two hazy photographs of herself. She is seen posing with the camera. “Glitches are good,” Shruti, who scored a following of 14 million on the photo-sharing web-site. Shruti recently made a “weirdo checklist” and has ticked off all the boxes. In a post on social media, Shruti shared a photograph where she turns up in a black ensemble and red lipstick.

emojii) random red goth palette Access(tick mark emoji) insomnia (tick mark emoji) share on socials for no real reason (tick mark emoji) chocolate cravings (tick mark emoji) Amid lockdown, Shruti, who is the daughter of veteran actors Kamal Haasan and Sarika, has been cooking, cleaning and spending time with her pet cat, going by her social media posts. Shruti made her debut in Bollywood in 2000 with the film ‘Luck’. She was later seen in Hindi films like ‘Dil Toh Baccha Hai Ji’, ‘Ramayya Vasthavayya’ and ‘Behen Hogi Teri’. In South, she has worked in hits like ‘Gabbar Singh’, ‘Yevadu’ and ‘Puli’ among others films. She will next be seen in Telugu movie ‘Krack’ and ‘Laabam’, a Tamil film. AGENCIES

“I miss this,” she wrote on Instagram while sharing a clip that captures her giving an intense performance on stage”



# Manushi Chhillar: Proud that Yoga is India’s gift to world

Actress and former Miss World Manushi Chhillar says she feels extremely proud that Yoga is India’s gift to the world and that it is benefitting people worldwide. “Yoga has invaluable and innumerable health benefits and I’m proud that it is India’s gift to the world. Yoga has become a sanctuary for so many people across the world and helped them in so many ways,” Manushi said

on International Yoga Day. She urged everyone to include Yoga into their daily life. “I recommend everyone should add yoga to their routines to understand the benefits that one can unlock for themselves,” says the former Miss World. Manushi credits Yoga for her svelte figure. “Yoga has been a part of my life since school. More than what it does physically, I feel it has made me more aware, more conscious and

I can say, in a way, yoga has made me stronger. I’ve enjoyed adding it to my rest days as it helps me maintain my flexibility,” she said. The actress added that it has enhanced her sense of focus. “Yoga has taught me patience, taught me to discard things from my mind that’s unimportant. It’s helped my outlook towards life, made my focus sharper and helped me take better life decisions.” On the work front, Manushi is all set to make her Bol-

lywood debut opposite superstar Akshay Kumar in the upcoming film ‘Prithviraj’. Directed by Chandraprakash Dwivedi, ‘Prithviraj’ is based on the life of king Prithviraj Chauhan. It stars Akshay as Prithviraj, while Manushi will play the role of the Sanyogita, the love of his life. AGENCIES



# Sreelekha claims superstars govern casting in Bengali film industry

Bengali actor Sreelekha Mitra has claimed to have suffered professional setbacks due to the power play in the Bengali film industry. Mitra’s allegations come in the wake of the untimely demise of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, which brought Bollywood under radar for making it tough for “outsiders” to survive. In a video shared on her YouTube channel, Mitra claimed that during the ‘90s and early 2000s she was denied lead roles in Bengali films at the behest of a superstar. “I was asked to play second lead or feature in the role of sister of big hero but was overlooked for playing the female



the superstar was adamant on working with another female actor. The 44-year-old actor said she had struggled with a lot of negativity and has tried hard to not lose her sanity. “There have been difficult times, but I have been fighting it out. I have been struggling against injustice for many years,” she added. When it comes to casting a female lead, Mitra said heroes in Bengali film industry always have their preferences set and don’t let any other actor get a chance to perform opposite them. “As a female actor with lots of potential, I regret I was never considered a contender for a lead role. I was never given the chance,” she said. AGENCIES

# BE ORIGINAL, NO ONE’S COPY: KAJOL’S ADVICE TO BUDDING ACTORS

Bollywood actress Kajol has shared some tips for new actors, saying that they should be original. Kajol treated her fans and followers with a chat session on her Instagram Stories, where a user asked her “a tip for upcoming actors”. The actress replied: “Please be original and no ones copy!” A fan asked Kajol about how she deals with hate. “Hate cannot be dealt with. You can only keep shining brighter! And be more positive,” Kajol said. “DDLJ (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge)” or “Dilwale”, a user asked Kajol to choose one. She chose: “DDLJ (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge)”. Kajol agreed, when a user said superstar Shah Rukh Khan is the best. Does she plan on launching her daughter Nysa in Bollywood? Or does Nysa want to be a part of the industry, asked another. Kajol simply wrote: “No.” The “Fanaa” actress described late actor Sushant Singh Rajput’s death as “Tragic”, when she was questioned about him. Asked if she likes actress Rani Mukerji as an actor, Kajol said: “I think she is a very very fine actor.” A fan of Ajay Devgn and Kajol asked about the best dish she has prepared for her actor husband. She replied: “Kichda.” On the work front, Kajol will be seen making her digital debut with the film ‘Tribhanga’, which is directed by Renuka Shahane. AGENCIES



# Online searches for ‘Nepotism in Bollywood’ rise 1993%

The death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput has initiated a wide discussion on ‘nepotism in Bollywood amongst people. A recent study has revealed that on June 14, the day Sushant died by suicide, and June 15, searches with keywords “nepotism in Bollywood” spiked by almost 2000 per cent. The study by SEMrush tracked how often the word “nepotism” was searched from May 2019 to June 2020. It shows that during this period, it was searched an average of 62,458 times each month. Those who search for the word “nepotism” may not be looking for results that link their search to the film industry. Nepotism is a widely used word, and the practice of favouring insiders is standard in every industry. However, those who do searches using

IT WAS SEARCHED AN AVERAGE OF 62,458 TIMES EACH MONTH the keywords “nepotism in Bollywood” are trying to link nepotism to the film industry. The study shows these searches spiked dramatically with Sushant’s sudden death. Following the spike, there was a dramatic fall in the number of times the keyword “nepotism in Bollywood” was searched. On the June 15, 16, the number of times this keyword was searched fell to only 153 per cent higher than average. It also tracked data on Twitter to understand what impact Sushant’s suicide had on the microblogging site. It found a massive surge in the number of

times tweets were added to #NepotismBollywood, #BollywoodBlockedSushant, #JusticeForSushantRajput, and #KaranJoharIsBULLY. By the end of the June 17, the total number of tweets on #NepotismBollywood, #BollywoodBlockedSushant, #JusticeForSushantRajput, and #KaranJoharIsBULLY stood at 3,961, 10,520, 36,292, and 10,230 respectively. In contrast, on June 14, the number of tweets made under each hashtag was just 1, 0, 32, and 0, respectively. The study highlights that many feel the film industry is tilted in favour of insiders. Speaking about the results of the study Fernando

Angulo, Head of Communications, SEMrush said: “Our study should serve as a caution to Bollywood. Many who love its movies secretly aspire to stardom, when these aspiring stars feel they have no chance of realising their hidden ambitions, their enthusiasm for Bollywood’s fare may

wane. For Bollywood to be seen in the best possible light, it must not allow for a repeat of what happened to Sushant. It should give outsiders

who are talented the same chance as that given to insiders. When the masses see that outsiders with no links to the movie industry are making it big, they will view Bollywood’s productions in a more favourable light. As a result, the receipts earned by the box office will increase.” AGENCIES

