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**NEARBY**



**O.P. Chautala released after 10 years in jail**  
 GURUGRAM  
 Former Haryana Chief Minister and Indian National Lok Dal leader Om Prakash Chautala was on Friday released from Tihar Central Jail on completion of a 10-year sentence in a teachers' recruitment scam case. Mr. Chautala told party workers he will soon visit the farmers at the protest sites to seek their blessings.

NEWS PAGE 9

**Two receive certificates without job in U.P.**

LUCKNOW  
 Mridula Mangalam, a PhD scholar in Allahabad University, received a certificate noting that she had been fully vaccinated even though she did not receive her second dose. In Mau district, Umda Rai, 65, received a provisional certificate for her first dose at the Doharihat Community Health Centre without even getting a jab. Official says the error could be due to a 'technical reason'.

NEWS PAGE 10

## Rawat resigns, BJP legislators to meet today to elect new leader

Uttarakhand Chief Minister steps down amid delay in holding byelection

**NISTULA HEBBAR**  
 NEW DELHI  
 Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat tendered his resignation to Governor Baby Rani Maurya late on Friday, ending his tenure just four months after he took oath, and paved the way for the appointment of a third Chief Minister for the State this year.

Mr. Rawat had been camping in New Delhi since Wednesday as he was caught in a legal limbo over his continuation as Chief Minister - while he is required to be elected as a member of the Uttarakhand Assembly within six months of having taken oath as Chief Minister, under the Representation of the People Act, bypolls are not held for vacant seats if the tenure of the Assembly expires within a year.

The Uttarakhand Assembly's term will expire in March 2022. Mr. Rawat is a Lok Sabha MP from Uttarakhand and had replaced Trivendra Singh Rawat on March 10 as CM after the latter quit. The BJP has called a meet-



**Churning again:** Tirath Singh Rawat speaking to the media in New Delhi on Friday. ■ ANI

ing of its legislature party in Uttarakhand on Saturday to elect a new leader, with Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar being appointed as observer for the meeting.

**Many contenders**  
 On a possible successor to Mr. Rawat, while many names are doing the rounds, sources said only someone who is already an MLA will be chosen this time round.

Sources told *The Hindu* that Mr. Rawat met BJP president J.P. Nadda on Friday - a second meeting in the three days he had been in Delhi - where he was asked to put in his papers. In a letter to Mr. Nadda, Mr. Rawat is believed to have said that due to the difficulties in holding a bypoll within the September 10 deadline for being elected to the Assembly, he was stepping down.

that Mr. Rawat's frequent courting of controversies and the scandal of fake RT-PCR tests during the Kumbh Mela earlier this year and mismanagement of the issue had also cost him dear.

Mr. Rawat did not speak on record about his intention to resign, while in Delhi, only stating that it was "up to the Election Commission of India to hold bypolls".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## LeT could be behind drone attack in Jammu, says DGP

BSF fires at drone; five militants, soldier killed in Pulwama

**PEERZADA ASHIQ**  
 SRINAGAR  
 Security agencies suspected the role of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in the twin drone-driven blasts on the Indian Air Force's technical airport in Jammu on June 27 and the possibility of it coming from across the border, Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbagh Singh said on Friday.

"The probe [into the blasts] is in progress. We haven't reached any conclusion as to who is actually involved. However, on the basis of the past history of the LeT using drones to drop weapons, narcotics and improvised explosive devices (IED), we suspect the outfit is involved," Mr. Singh said.

**Drone spotted in Arnia**  
 Meanwhile, five LeT militants and a soldier were killed in an operation in south Kashmir's Pulwama, while an unmanned aerial vehicle was spotted and fired at by the BSF on the International Border in Jammu's Arnia sector on Friday.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



**On guard:** A jawan keeps vigil near an encounter site in Pulwama in south Kashmir on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## India flags sighting of drone over mission in Pak.

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
 NEW DELHI  
 A drone was spotted over the Indian High Commission complex in Islamabad last week and Pakistan has been asked to investigate the incident and prevent recurrence of such "breach of security", the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

The Indian mission has also lodged a strong protest

with Pakistan over the incident through a note verbale, which is a diplomatic communication, people familiar with the development said. The incident came to light amid growing concerns in the security establishment in India after drones were used to carry out blasts at the Jammu Air Force station on June 27.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Goods exports touch record \$95 bn in Q1

47% rise in June despite second wave

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 NEW DELHI

With India registering its highest quarterly merchandise exports of \$95 billion during the first quarter (April-June) of 2021-22, the country is now eyeing a target of \$400 billion in merchandise exports in the current fiscal, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Friday.

As per the official data released, the exports rose by 47.34% to \$32.46 billion in June, following a strong growth in sectors such as engineering, gems and jewellery and petroleum products. However, India was a net importer in June 2021 with a trade deficit of \$9.4 billion.

"Despite the severity of the second wave of COVID-19, the highest ever merchandise export in a



India is eyeing a target of \$400 billion merchandise exports in the current fiscal.

quarter of \$95 billion has been achieved in April-June 2021, surpassing the previous record of \$90 billion in January-March 2020," the Minister said.

He said measures such as sector-specific interventions had resulted in the record performance of exports.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Akhil Gogoi to revive anti-CAA movement

No foreigner to stay in Assam, he says

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
 GUWAHATI

Sibsagar MLA and Rajior Dal president Akhil Gogoi has vowed to revive the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) movement that lost steam in Assam after a violent start in December 2019.

Mr. Gogoi slammed the leaders of the movement for 'betraying' the people while he spent 18 months in prison. He was released on July 1 after a special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) acquitted him and three others under charges of sedition, hobnobbing with Maoists and inciting violence during the anti-CAA movement.

"We will resume the anti-CAA movement and not allow any foreigner to stay in the State," Mr. Gogoi told journalists while on the way to his constituency. The MLA added that he would

mobilise support to oust the "anti-people" BJP and their allies from power in 2026.

He listed the big dams and the toll gates on highways across the State among the other issues the Rajior Dal and associate groups such as the pro-farmers Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti would take up.

**Against doctors' advice**  
 Mr. Gogoi had left the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital on Thursday ignoring the advice of the doctors, the hospital authorities said in a letter to the State's Home Department.

A copy of the letter was forwarded to the NIA, the Commissioner of the Guwahati Police and the Inspector-General of Prisons.

Mr. Gogoi was undergoing treatment at the hospital under security until his release.

## Kerala's houseboats get ready to sail

Robust vaccination drive and govt. support reboot the pandemic-hit industry

**PRIYADERSHINI S.**  
 KOCHI

The waters of the Vembanad lake are stirring once again. A robust vaccination drive underway has raised hopes of the Kerala houseboat industry to open for business as early as July.

As the latest lockdown eases, tourists and locals are being lured back with deals. Completely vaccinated guests can enjoy the backwaters at discounts up to 50%, while the partially vaccinated get a rebate of almost 40%, says Jobin J. Akkarakalam, vice-president, Kerala Houseboat Owners Federation. "Everyone is looking forward to resuming business, so we can maintain our staff and boats," he adds.

Last year's SOPs - temperature checks, mandatory



**Keeping steady:** The Kerala government provided aid to owners to maintain their houseboats during lockdown.

masking, sanitising boats and complete guest details on COVID-19 Jagratha Portal - which kicked in during two weeks of operations in December and January, will be invoked again.

Meanwhile, the Kerala government, which has added

sanitised and safe space, which makes it an attractive holiday option during a pandemic," says Mr. Jobin.

Abraham George, MD, Intersight Tours and Travels, has been inundated with enquiries about the reopening of Kerala. "Once we ensure complete vaccination, we should open unconditionally, not with riders attached such as need for quarantine. The industry has huge investments. Everyone is wanting to travel and the houseboat experience is private and safe," he says.

To jump-start tourism, the Kerala government has declared tourism personnel in the frontline category, eligible for the first round of vaccination.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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RISE 00:53 SET 13:40

SUNDAY, JUL. 04  
RISE 05:29 SET 19:24  
RISE 01:23 SET 14:32

MONDAY, JUL. 05  
RISE 05:29 SET 19:23  
RISE 01:53 SET 15:26

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	41	27
Safdarjang	41	27
Palam	42	30

**Delhi Palam Today**  
41°C Duststorm and thunderstorm with light rain may occur during early morning. A hot day with partly cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
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# 10 tested COVID positive every hour in June, 62% were men

As per govt. records, 7,804 individuals contracted the virus last month

JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

Six in every 10 people who tested positive for COVID-19 in the Capital last month were male while almost a third of the total men having contracted the virus during the period was aged between 30 and 60 years, according to the Delhi government records.

Over 10 people tested positive for COVID-19 every hour with as many as 7,804 individuals contracting the infection from June 1 to June 30. Of these, 4,873 or 62.44% were males.

Accounting for 1,627 of the total cases, around 21% of the male patients fell in the 14 to 30 age group, followed by patients from the 60-plus and below 14 years categories constituting a little over 9% (713) and slightly over 2% (165), respectively.

In June, four out of five patients – irrespective of



A girl gets tested for COVID at GTK Road on Friday morning.  
\*SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

gender – were found to be aged between 14 and 60 years.

**Every second patient**  
Every second patient among them was male and fell in the 14 to 60 age group with the gender accounting for over 51% of the total infections in this category.

According to statistics, 1,318 female patients fell in the 30 to 60 age group and 1,019 in the 14 to 30 category.

Those found infected in the 60-plus category accounted for 465 and female patients below 14 for 129.

The category with the maximum number of infections – 30 to 60 years – saw the most cases at 596, being reported from the south-west district followed by 567 from New Delhi and 530 cases from the south district. The north-east district reported the least number of infections in this

category – 89. In the 14 to 30 age group, the most number of infections, 447, were reported from the south district followed by 396 from the south-west and 364 from the New Delhi district.

The north-east district reported the least number of infections, 75, in this category as well.

With 216, 148 and 140 cases, the highest incidence of infection among the 60-plus age group was reported from the south-west, west, and New Delhi districts as the north-east district accounted for 19 cases.

The south-west, New Delhi, and north districts, with 44, 43, 36 cases, respectively, reported the maximum number of infections among those aged below 14 years; at 12, the north-east district reported the least number of infections in this age group.

# Can't act against NGO for not submitting returns, Centre told

'Citizen can't be penalised for discrepancy in form by Centre'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has restrained the Centre from taking any coercive steps against an NGO that was unable to submit its annual return due to discrepancy in the new form prescribed for declaring foreign contributions.

"The citizen cannot be penalised for a discrepancy in the form prescribed by the respondent [Centre], which has resulted in the form being unable to be submitted even in the case of a law abiding citizen," said Justice C. Hari Shankar.

The court's order came on a petition by Arbor Charitable Foundation, an NGO, which receives foreign contributions in accordance with the protocol set out in the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA). The NGO's grievance arises out of the peculiarities in the new FC-4 form, in which returns, regarding foreign contributions received by it are required to be filed.

**The rules**

Section 18 of the FCRA requires the beneficiary of the foreign contribution to file an intimation before the Central government regarding the contributions received. The process for filing said intimation is set out in Rule 17 of the Foreign Contributions Regulations Rules, 2011.

These rules were amended with effect from September 28, 2020. By the amendment, the earlier Form FC-6,



**The difficulty being faced by the petitioners [NGO] appears, prima facie, to be genuine**

HIGH COURT

in which the intimation/return was required to be submitted by the beneficiary of the contributions, was replaced by an FC-4 form.

The FC-4 form is required to be accompanied by a copy of the statement of account of the beneficiary from the bank in which the beneficiary maintains the requisite exclusive Foreign Contribution Account, and is also required to be certified by an officer of the bank.

In September last year, the Centre made it mandatory for all NGOs to receive foreign contributions only at the New Delhi Main Branch of the State Bank of India (SBI). Prior to this there was no requirement of the FCRA account being in SBI.

**A peculiar situation**

The NGO submitted that this has resulted in a peculiar situation in which, though March, 31, 2020 would be the relevant date for filing of the return for the year 2019-

2020, the requirement of the account under the FCRA/FCR rules being in the SBI, New Delhi was introduced only in September, 2020 and the specific branch of the bank was notified only on October 7, 2020.

The NGO's accounts where foreign contributions were received were not in the SBI, till October 7, 2020. As a result, the NGO submitted that it has "become impossible" for it to submit the return under FC-4 form for the year 2019-2020.

The NGO submitted that though it made a representation to the Central government on June 15, this year the problem continues.

"The difficulty being faced by the petitioners [NGO] appears, prima facie, to be genuine," the court said.

"Till the next date of hearing, the respondent (Centre) is restrained from taking any coercive action against the petitioner for failure to file the requisite return under the FC-4 form before 30th June, 2021," the High Court ordered.

The court also dismissed the submission made by the Centre's counsel that the NGO can submit its return even after June 30, 2021, with appropriate penalty. "It [this order] would open a Pandora's box. Number of associations will come like this," the Centre's counsel argued.

"You said it will open Pandora's box. What was there in Pandora's box?" Justice Shankar asked while rejecting the plea.

# Court to hear traders' plea to make new excise policy public on July 5

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday posted the hearing on a petition by liquor traders' association seeking direction to the AAP government to make public the new excise policy 2021-22 on July 5.

Justice C. Hari Shankar said: "At request of counsel for petitioner, renotify before the roster bench on Monday" when the High Court will reopen after the summer vacations.

The Delhi Liquor Traders' Association has sought direction to the Delhi government to make public the new excise policy for the year 2021-22, which was approved in June. The petition said on June

**At request of counsel for petitioner, renotify before the roster bench on Monday when the HC will reopen after the summer vacations**

C. HARI SHANKAR  
HC Justice

28, the government floated tender inviting e-bids for grant of 32 zonal retail licenses for the 2021-22 through e-tendering process in the form of L-7Z/L-7V for sale of Indian and Foreign Liquor (except country liquor) in the Capital on the basis of the new policy. It said despite floating the tender publicly on the basis

of approved new excise policy 2021-22 for Delhi, the policy is yet to be made public or available on the Internet/ or government's website and as per the schedule of the tender, the last date for the pre-bid queries is July 5.

**Pre-bid meeting**

The plea said while the pre-bid meeting is scheduled to be held on July 6, and the submission of the e-bid is between July 12 to 20.

In order to prepare financially viable and attractive e-bids for the tender, it is necessary that the approved new policy should be made available to all prospective stakeholders and public in general, it said.

# City sees 93 new COVID cases with two deaths

Over 1.5 lakh vaccinated in 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Capital on Friday reported 93 new COVID-19 cases and two deaths in 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 14,34,374 and total fatalities to 24,983.

The health bulletin issued by the Delhi government said 73,565 tests were conducted with a positivity rate of 0.13%. There are currently 1,041 active cases in the city, of which, 313 are under home isolation.

Providing figures on number of people vaccinated on Thursday, the bulletin said 1,57,728 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in



People at a vaccination centre in north Delhi on Friday.  
\*SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

24 hours, of which, 1,25,769 received their first dose. So far, 80,57,875 beneficiaries have been vaccinated out of which, 18,37,720 have received both doses.

# Delhi court adjourns order for a month on Tharoor's trial

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday adjourned for nearly a month the order on whether to put Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on trial in a case related to his wife Sunanda Pushkar's death in a luxury hotel here.

Special Judge Geetanji Goel, who was scheduled to pronounce order framing of charges against Mr. Tharoor, adjourned the matter for July 27 after the prosecution sought a week's time to file written submissions.

"An application has been received on behalf of prosecution seeking one week's time to file written submissions. Copy be supplied to the counsels of the accused. The application is allowed. Put up for orders/ arguments if any, on July 27," the judge said in the order.

The court had earlier adjourned the matter for July 2 in view of the ongoing pandemic.

# AUD student fined for 'derogatory' remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

A final-year student of Ambedkar University here has been fined ₹5,000 for allegedly posting "distasteful remarks" online against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during the annual convocation held in December last.

The university's convocation was held on December 23 last year with Mr. Kejriwal as the chief guest.

In a statement, the university said people had joined its ninth convocation on YouTube. During the programme, the student started disrupting it using the YouTube chat room, it said.

"The comments made by the student were derogatory/slur/distasteful. The convocation is the most auspicious programme in the academic cycle of any student. The conduct... was unbecoming of a student and was against the values for which Dr. B R Ambedkar University stands.

# Hustle the way



Women carry bundles of firewood over their head on a hot summer afternoon in Delhi.  
\*SANDEEP SAXENA

# Govt. celebrates third anniversary of Happiness Curriculum

Students told Sisodia how the programme helped them perform better in academic activities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Friday celebrated "Happiness Utsav" to mark the third anniversary of the Happiness Curriculum. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the Happiness Curriculum has brought about a change in the lives of

children, their families and also teachers.

"If there has been any significant change amongst the children due to the Happiness Classes in just 2-3 years, in the coming 10 years, the children will adopt happiness in their life fully and it will grow to become an important component of their

everyday life. These are the real happiness agents and will bring a sea change in the society," Mr. Sisodia said.

Happiness Curriculum was launched in July 2018 by the Dalai Lama and has been running in all the classes from Nursery to 8th standard in the Delhi govern-

ment schools.

In an interaction with Mr. Sisodia, students shared how the curriculum had helped them become closer to their family, reduce stress and perform better in academic activities. Students also shared how they had encouraged their family members to practice mind-

fulness "Lakhs of children have practiced mindfulness and other activities learned in the Happiness Classes in their homes with parents and siblings during the pandemic. This has led to people feeling happier and stress-free even during difficult times," Mr. Sisodia added.

# Govt. holds interactive session for students with entrepreneur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Friday organised an interactive session as a part of its Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) with Sanjeev Bikhchandani – founder of Info Edge India Ltd. – the company that owns Naukri.com.

Mr. Bikhchandani told students whose successful businesses are built on deep customer insights and that they must study customer behaviour when they want to set up a business. "There

is no substitute for hard work. You will face hardships, especially in the initial years. Think of the long term and keep persevering... Dream big, start small is a mantra I have followed, and it really helped me."

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia speaking about the EMC and the government's initiative to give seed money to students with entrepreneurial ideas said the students would be given ownership of the profit from their venture, and the government would bear the losses if any.

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# Change, but no closure, in Plachimada

The defunct Coca-Cola building in Plachimada was recently converted by the Kerala government into a COVID-19 care facility. But it will take more than a transformation to appease the people of the village who won the battle against the multinational company but are still waiting for compensation, writes **Abdul Latheef Naha**

In Plachimada, a small Adivasi village in Palakkad district of Kerala, a building, once infamous, was lying derelict and abandoned until recently. Over-run by weeds and bushes, it was hard to imagine that this building was once the bottling plant of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, the Indian subsidiary of the Atlanta-based manufacturer of aerated drinks. Spread over 34 acres, the 35,000 sq ft 'Coke building', as it is referred to by the locals, used to look haunted. Winds would whistle through broken windowpanes and snakes would lie hidden in the thick undergrowth. People rarely loitered in the area.

Today, the sprawling single-storey edifice wears a fresh coat of paint. The 'Coca-Cola' logo has disappeared from the entrance of the building, which smells of disinfectants and paint. The contested site now serves an important purpose, to meet the challenges of the times. The Government of Kerala has spruced up and converted the building into a COVID-19 care facility. The company that had once caused grief to the locals closed the plant and left long ago, but the building remained a symbol of despair. While the government believes that it has now become a sign of hope for all those affected by the raging pandemic, the villagers of Plachimada are not as enthused.

## A transformed space

The miraculous transformation took barely six weeks. The local bodies, helmed by the Perumatty Grama Panchayat in Palakkad, led the efforts. The building had caught the attention of the local administrators during the peak of the second COVID-19 wave in May. Palakkad was seeing more than 3,500 infections every day on average and a test positivity rate of more than 30%. The State Minister for Power, K. Krishnankutty, who wields great influence in the eastern Chittur belt, including the Perumatty Grama Panchayat, is largely credited for converting the Coke building into a healthcare facility with a clear eye on a possible third wave of the pandemic sweeping across the district.

It was important for the administration to ensure that the building was swiftly transformed. In May, discussions on the project assumed a sense of urgency. In just a day, 200-odd volunteers under the leadership of the Perumatty Grama Panchayat president, Risha Premkumar, cleared the weeds and bushes in the compound of the plant. Eight neighbouring panchayats under the Chittur Block joined hands and offered to donate up to ₹10 lakh each when the District Disaster Management Authority and the Chittur Block Panchayat chipped in ₹30 lakh each. With ₹1.4 crore in their pocket, the authorities were excited to take up the work of the new COVID-19 care centre. Officials in Coca-Cola chipped in too, offering their corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds to renovate the building. According to sources in the government, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages has spent ₹60 lakh from its CSR funds in three phases, including to repair the building. Officials of the company refused to speak to this reporter.

With money flowing in, new toilets were built and water facilities arranged. Apart from electrical partitioning and plumbing work, the Nirmithi Kendra arranged cots, beds, and electrical fittings. A new spacious kitchen was set up with facilities to cater to more than 600 people. Engineers with experience in the medical field oversaw the setting up of a triage facility and sheds for biomedical waste disposal. With everyone working at a frenzied pace, the goal was accomplished in about six weeks.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan could barely conceal his excitement when he inaugurated the hospital virtually on June 17. He was all praise not only for the officials of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages but also for all those who worked to build the treatment centre. "Four weeks is record time in setting up such a huge facility. The Plachimada treatment centre will give us a fillip in the fight against COVID-19. The centre will be most suited for COVID-19 treatment as it is located quite a distance away from areas where people live," he said.

The care facility has 550 beds. Of them, 100 are oxygen beds, 50 are ICU beds and 20 have ventilators. It also has air-conditioned ready-made cabins, a portable X-ray console, a round-the-clock pharmacy, and a COVID-19 outpatient wing. The capacity of the oxygen tank set up at the centre can be enhanced from 1 KL to 2 KL.

At the time of going to press, 40 COVID-19 patients had sought admission at the facility. "The infrastructure is right. We can accommodate 400 patients now. Very soon, we will raise it to full capacity," said Nemmara Divisional Forest Officer R. Sivaprasad, the nodal officer of the centre. Doctors and nurses have been appointed to take care of 200 patients round the clock. The patients here are not as fearful and concerned about the virus as those in other parts of



An inside view of the new COVID-19 facility in Plachimada, a village in Palakkad district of Kerala. The building was the bottling plant of Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages until 2005. (Below): Adivasi women sit outside the Palakkad civil station on May 4, 2017, demanding compensation. ■K.K. MUSTAFAH



the State. For now, none of them is critically ill. At present, only B-category patients are being admitted.

## A water-guzzling plant

The unusual silence in the hospital is in contrast to the pitched struggle of the people in Plachimada some two decades ago. The people don't show the same excitement that politicians and the government authorities display about the COVID-19 care facility.

Santhi C.S., a 43-year-old Adivasi woman who was at the forefront of the agitation against Coca-Cola, said: "The people of this village are still suffering. We haven't been given a single paisa of compensation. So, how can we smile?"

Many who were part of the agitation echoed her sentiments. They said that applauding the transformation of a plant that had destroyed their water resources would amount to "making fun of the cause for which they stood". Santhi, an ASHA worker, had been jailed several times along with other leaders of the agitation. She had also undergone a week-long hunger strike. "They are cheating us. These political leaders have their vested interests," she said.

Wariness about official promises and initiatives stems from the events in Plachimada that grabbed global attention in the early 2000s. A few months after Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages began operation in Plachimada in 2000, the villagers in the neighbouring areas began to face problems. According to one study by Dr Sathish Chandran, the water in some open wells and shallow bore wells which the villagers depended on began to taste strong and bitter; according to another study by Jananeethi, an NGO, it started tasting salty and hard after the company began manufacturing.

The plant, the villagers realised soon, was a water-guzzler: it drew about 20 lakh litres of groundwater from six bore wells and two ponds in the area every day. As a consequence, local wells were slowly sucked dry. As the company had extracted excess groundwater, the villagers began to drink water with high levels of calcium and magnesium.

Studies conducted at a laboratory at the University of Exeter, U.K., found high levels of lead and cadmium in the sludge from the factory. The villagers had not been aware of the health threats posed by these metals until activists and scientists informed them about it. The sludge was initially sold to the farmers as fertilizer. Later, it was given free. When protests erupted, the sludge was dumped by the roadside.

"Many of us developed skin rashes and deformities. Although we stopped consuming the contaminated water in our wells, many of us had already fallen sick because of it," recalled Santhi.

M. Thankavelu, son of Mayilamma, the 'Plachimada Heroine' who stood at the forefront of the agitation until her death in 2007, was at the brink of death after he contracted psoriasis. "Like my mother, I too contracted this terrible disease from our exposure to toxic water. I could not move out of my house for about a year. I never thought I could survive to speak to you now," he said.

C. Murugan, a paddy labourer from Plachimada, said that at least half a dozen people had miscarriages because of the contaminated water.

With water rapidly depleting and giving them all kinds of health problems, the residents soon became parched. Many had to trek long distances for potable water. Their primary livelihood from farming was affected and agricultural production declined.

From April 2002 to March 2004, Plachimada witnessed fierce and protracted protests, under the banner of the Coca-Cola Virudha Janakeeya Samara Samithy (Anti-Coca-Cola People's Struggle Committee), demanding people's right to natural resources, especially water. Groups from different parts of the country joined the agitation. National activists like Medha Patkar and Van-

dana Shiva inspired the protesters. Hundreds of protesters, including women and children, were arrested and beaten up. Soon, the agitation turned into a long legal battle.

A world water conference organised near Plachimada in January 2004 adopted a declaration which stated that "it is our fundamental obligation to prevent water scarcity and pollution and to preserve it for generations... Water is not a commodity. We should resist all criminal attempts to marketise, privatise and corporatise water. Only through these means can we ensure the fundamental and inalienable right to water for the people all over the world".

The people won the agitation in 2005 when the company finally put up the shutters and left Plachimada. In 2017, Coca-Cola submitted to the Supreme Court that it had no intentions of resuming operations in Plachimada. Santhi, the joint convener of the protest body, said that it was not a mere victory of their agitation; "it was a victory of all such struggles to come".

## Waiting for compensation

However, the people of Plachimada remain disappointed. Governments have come and gone, but their promises have not been fulfilled. "The transformation of the building seems to be an effort to whitewash the actions of the multinational company. Governments have always been supporting the company. That's why our leaders have not given the villagers who suffered from water pollution a single paisa in compensation," alleged Arumughan Pathichira, State general convener of the Samara Samithy. "If the government is honest, let it give the victims their compensation. We have no objection to the COVID-19 hospital; it is very important. But the government should have confiscated

the property and compensated the victims," he said. Arumughan warned that the villagers would strengthen their agitation until the victims are duly compensated.

A government-appointed high-level committee headed by the then Additional Chief Secretary, K. Jayakumar, had assessed the degradation of the environment and damage suffered by the people of Plachimada and recommended a compensation of ₹216.24 crore to be paid to them. The committee had also recommended setting up a tribunal for proper distribution of damages. Although the State Assembly passed the Plachimada Coca-Cola Victims' Relief and Compensation Claims Tribunal Bill in 2011, it did not get the Centre's nod. And though the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government had assured the people that a tribunal would be formed, in its 2016 Assembly election manifesto, this promise has not been kept. The LDF has got a consecutive second term in Kerala but the people of Plachimada are not hopeful.

Coca-Cola has consistently opposed the setting up of a tribunal. It has claimed that the estimated losses were computed through a flawed process. According to Coca-Cola, its operations in Plachimada did not cause any water depletion or environmental damage as the company had followed the same process in the village as it did around the world.

The residents of the village scoff at this claim. "Everyone knows that the company has left leaving behind a trail of misery. We need compensation," said Sakthivel K., general convener of the Samara Samithy. Sakthivel was among the dozen-odd agitators who were arrested by the police on June 17 for protesting outside the new COVID-19 facility while the Chief Minister was in-

augurating it. Front-line leaders of the Samara Samithy – Vijayan Ambalakkad and Vilayodi Venugopal – also courted arrest along with Sakthivel.

## Preparing for a third wave

For the State government, this new facility is more than politics. Minister Krishnankutty, who has been involved throughout the process, said the Plachimada facility will go a long way in strengthening the district's preparedness to face another wave of COVID-19 infections. "We are thinking about how we can overcome the problems we faced in the second wave. Such a hospital in government control will help provide care for COVID-19 patients from all sections. We can ensure equity in treatment for everyone in the rural sector," he said.

Water for the facility will be drawn from a large pond within the compound. It will be used after UV filtering. Two tanks of 10,000 L capacity each have been set up and fresh pipelines have been laid for the purpose. Sivaprasad said that potable water was available and storage capacity would be enhanced when more patients come. Today, almost all houses in the village have pipeline connections and water is being pumped in from the Bharathapuzha river.

The facility is close to Kerala's border with Tamil Nadu. If the COVID-19 situation worsens during a third wave, the hospital can be opened for the people from Tamil Nadu as well. The Palakkad district administration has given consent for this.

"We are happy we could use the abandoned factory to gear up for the next phase of the pandemic," said Premkumar. "We had faced many shortcomings when we set up a first-line treatment centre for COVID-19 at the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Park at Kanjikode. Here, we have been able to address all of them," she said.

State Health Minister Veena George recently visited the Plachimada hospital and said that the State was prepared to face a third wave. Problems that the district saw during the second wave included a shortage of oxygen beds, ICU beds and ventilators. Some private hospitals refused to set aside beds for COVID-19 treatment. A recent assessment also found that a large number of category-A patients had occupied the beds, leading to a shortage of beds for category-B patients. Given the failure to treat non-COVID-19 cases, long distances from houses to hospitals, and non-cooperation of some private hospitals, cases shot up in Palakkad in recent months.

A committee of officials and people's representatives will be in charge of the Plachimada COVID-19 hospital. But the people still want closure for their past suffering. Kanniyamma, 75, said the early 2000s were a terrible time. "We lost peace, our drinking water, our sound health," she said. The State government may have seized an opportunity to heal Plachimada, but its residents are still far from being placated.



FROM PAGE ONE

## Uttarakhand Chief Minister steps down

He then departed for Dehradun on Friday and held a late night press conference there, where he spoke of his achievements since March 10.

While his press office handed over a five-page press note enumerating these “achievements”, Mr. Rawat again refused to confirm whether he was quitting. He then met with State BJP chief Madan Kaushik and other senior party leaders at his residence.

Following the meeting, close to midnight, Mr. Rawat reached the Raj Bhavan to

tender his resignation.

Sources in the BJP, however, said that Mr. Rawat's problem wasn't just whether bypolls would be held or not, but also the seat from which he would contend.

While the Gangotri seat has been vacant for some time with the death of sitting MLA Gopal Rawat in April this year, prospects of his victory were not convincing.

A couple of MLAs on safe seats were asked to vacate it for the Chief Minister but they reportedly refused to do so.

## Goods exports touch record \$95 bn in Q1

Further, Mr. Goyal said as per his discussion with stakeholders, he was confident that the services sector will achieve \$350 billion exports by 2025, and may even go up to \$500 billion very soon.

He added that the Commerce Ministry has decided that in collaboration with private sector, EPC, industry associations, MSME, engineering, agriculture, automobile, and steel sector, this year the country will be targeting to achieve merchandise exports of \$400 billion.

He also pointed out that India received the highest ever FDI inflow in 2020-21 of \$81.72 billion, up 10% compared to \$74.39 billion in 2019-20.

“The positive momentum continues with FDI inflow of \$6.24 billion during April 2021, which is 38% higher

than April 2020,” he said. Additionally, he said that the number of startups recognised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has crossed 50,000 and was spread across 623 districts in India. With these startups, nearly 1.8 lakh formal jobs have been created by over 16,000 recognised startups in 2020-21.

On remission of duties and taxes on export products, the Minister said it is at a very advanced stage of inter-ministerial discussion.

“It was a colossal task, there are about 11,000 items which need to be studied... We will shortly notify the rates. We will be very very soon coming out with more details of rates for different sectors. This is not a subsidy to any exporter, this is only a refund of taxes,” he added.

## ‘LeT’ could be behind drone attack in Jammu’

“Alert BSF troops fired at a quadcopter belonging to Pakistan on Friday morning at 4:25 a.m. as it was trying to cross the IB in the Arnia sector. Due to the firing, it returned back immediately,” a BSF spokesman said.

On the June 27 attack, Mr. Singh said the security agencies had a suspicion that the drones came from across the border. “But the second aspect [of being launched locally] can't be ignored.”

On the day of the twin attacks, he said, the police arrested a person, who was

tasked to carry out an IED attack at a public place to inflict maximum casualties. “We have captured a module, which delivered an IED from across [the border]. It was an RDX-fitted one and fabricated to fit on a drone. We are investigating if the two incidents are linked,” he added.

In Pulwama, the five terrorists killed include LeT's district commander Nishaz Lone, alias Khitab, and one Pakistani terrorist, said Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar.

## India flags drone over mission in Islamabad

“We expect Pakistan to investigate the incident and prevent recurrence of such breach of security,” MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing. It is learnt that the drone

was sighted within the complex when an event was being held at the mission.

Asked about the drone attack on Jammu airbase, Mr. Bagchi declined to comment.

## Kerala's houseboats get ready to sail

The government also rolled out a programme to provide a maintenance grant, ranging from ₹80,000 to ₹1,20,000 depending on boat profile, so owners can keep their boats water worthy through the inactivity of lockdown.

A boat's annual maintenance is a costly affair. “Every year the bamboo sheets on a boat's roof are changed. It is labour intensive and requires 50 to 60 men. Wages are high, ₹1,200 daily, since it is a skilled job,” says Mr. Jobin. “Add work on the engine, inverter, generator, air conditioners, furnishing, flooring... It is more expensive than maintaining a house,” he says.

Alappuzha-based houseboat owner Jose Abraham is applying for a grant as soon as he renews the Pollution

Control Certificate. He runs two boats under SKA Houseboats, one with five bedrooms while the second has eight bedrooms and an 80 X 20 feet convention hall that can accommodate 150 people. “The boat has hosted meetings of top corporates and clubs in the good old days,” says Mr. Abraham, explaining that boat trips are priced according to the boat category.

Migration of labour is one of the biggest disruptions the industry is facing. Manish Kumar E.M., a licensed boat driver who worked in the capacity for seven years has moved to painting and tile work at a construction site to earn daily wages. “The last 15 months have been very tough and I had to find work to keep the family going,” says Mr. Kumar, who has two children.

# Judges must look at facts of a case and its human aspect: CJI

A decision made by the court will echo through time, have repercussions'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

Judging is not an easy task, Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Ramana said on Friday.

On one hand, the Chief Justice said, a judge should focus on law, precedents and facts of a case and, on the other, the human aspect. Judges should use the “little discretion” law allows to keep sight of the human suffering and toll behind every case. A decision of the court would echo through time. It will have repercussions. A judgment becomes the law of the land. A judge has to keep all this in mind while dealing with a case, he said.

“Deciding cases is not an easy task. We not only have to focus on the law and pre-



cedents surrounding the issue before us, as well as the facts of the case, but also the repercussions of what we decide and the precedent we may be setting. The little discretion that is given to us, is the area in which a judge has flexibility to display his philosophy,” he observed.

The CJI was speaking at a farewell organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association for retiring judge Justice Ashok Bhushan.

He said Justice Bhushan, besides his “remarkable judgments”, had, as a “humanist judge”, left a mark in

the hearts and minds of the people of the country.

The CJI termed the Bar “the protector of the institution”.

He said, “Lawyers must respect the institution and protect the judiciary from any onslaught which is likely to affect the functioning of the judicial system. I know, the Supreme Court Bar is always a frontrunner when it comes to supporting the institution from motivated attacks. They always cherish the contribution of judges and appreciate their hard work. They never forget the efforts of judges”.

The CJI underscored that the strength of the institution lay in the unity of the Bar and the Bench.

## BJP MLAs disrupt Governor's speech in Bengal Assembly

They said there was no mention of deaths of party workers

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

The West Bengal Legislative Assembly witnessed noisy scenes on Friday, the first day of seventeenth legislative Assembly, with BJP legislators raising slogans during the address by Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar.

The Governor had to cut short his address. The eighteen-page speech was summed up by the Governor in a few minutes. Amidst the din and ruckus, it was not clear which portions of the speech was read and which were not.

BJP MLAs led by Leader of Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, stood up on their seats and held up photos of party workers allegedly killed during post poll violence as Governor Dhankhar read his speech.

Speaking to journalists, Mr. Adhikari said there was



Warm greeting: Mamata Banerjee and Jagdeep Dhankhar sharing a lighter moment on Friday. •PTI

no mention of the post poll violence in Governor's address, prepared by the State government. The BJP leader said the Governor had been sensitive to the issue of post poll violence and visited Sitalkuchi and Nandigram but had to read the speech which was approved by the State Cabinet.

Despite a bitter exchange

of words between Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Governor Dhankhar a few days ago, both exchanged pleasantries ahead of the Assembly session.

Earlier, Governor Dhankhar had objected to contents of the speech and said that certain portions of his address would not go well with the people.

## TMC demands removal of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta

Controversy after Suvendu Adhikari went to S-G's house

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI/ KOLKATA

A visit by the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari to the residence of the Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta created a political storm on Friday, with Trinamool Congress MPs writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking the removal of Mr. Mehta.

The Solicitor General, however, clarified that though Mr Adhikari had visited his house ‘unannounced’ on Thursday, he declined to meet the BJP leader.

“Shri Suvendu Adhikari did come to my residence cum office yesterday at around 3:00 p.m., unannounced. Since I was already in a pre-scheduled meeting in my chamber, my staff requested him to sit in the waiting room of my office building and offered him a



Tushar Mehta said that he did not meet Suvendu Adhikari.

cup of tea. When my meeting was over and thereafter my PPS [principal private secretary] informed me about his arrival, I requested my PPS to convey Mr Adhikari my inability to meet him and apologise as he had to wait,” Mr. Mehta said in a statement, adding, “The question of my meeting with Mr Adhikari therefore did not arise”.

Three Trinamool Congress MPs – Derek O'Brien, Mahua Moitra and Sukhen-

du Sekhar Roy – wrote a letter to the Prime Minister demanding the removal of the Solicitor General since the BJP leader is an accused in the Narada and Saradha scam.

Following the court's directive on June 18 to probe the violence, a committee of the NHRC visited the State, held meetings and hearings and submitted an interim report on June 30.

The next hearing is on July 13.

The court also

## House panel awaits States' surveys on learning losses

Only those with access to technology could take classes during pandemic

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

The Education Ministry told a Parliamentary panel on education that it is still collating information from the States on learning losses caused by COVID-19 school closures and students' access to digital education during the pandemic. At its meeting on Friday, the panel heard presentations on the use of satellite technology to bridge learning gaps instead, members said.

“Unless there is some assessment of the existing learning losses, and the im-

pact of the activities already being conducted, what is the point of simply listing more activities to be undertaken?” asked one member of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports.

“The School Education Department says more time is needed for the States to collect the data [on learning losses]. Hopefully, we will get it by the end of the month,” said another member, acknowledging that the Ministry had earlier promised to share such data by



Extending help: Some clubs and local libraries have given their facilities for students to access online lessons. •FILE PHOTO

the end of June. With regard to satellite technology, members said presentations were made by the Indian Space Research Organisation, Prasar Bharati and the Bhaska-

charya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics, which possesses the infrastructure used to beam the Centre's Swayam Prabha educational

television channels. School Education Secretary Anita Karwal and Education Department officials from Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Telangana and Bihar, also spoke on how such technology is already being used.

One member raised the concern that this was a “top heavy approach”, suggesting that the focus needs to be on ensuring community television sets are available for students to receive this content in each of the 2.6 lakh gram panchayats in the country.

“Swayam Prabha is not being utilised to its full potential by many States. There is some inertia,” said another member.

## Centre asks States to impose limit on stocking of pulses

Govt. says the move is to arrest the spiralling prices

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In an attempt to arrest the spiralling prices of pulses, the Union government on Friday directed the States to impose stock limit on all pulses except moong till October 31.

The Department of Consumer Affairs issued the Removal of Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits and Movement Restrictions on Specified Foodstuffs (Amendment) Order, 2021 prescribing the limits which have been imposed with immediate effect.

The stock limit of 200 tonnes has been imposed on wholesalers provided they do not hold more than 200 tonnes of one variety of



Wholesalers can stock 200 tonnes of pulses.

pulses, the Ministry said in the order. On retailers, the stock limit will be 5 tonnes. In case of millers, the stock limit will be the last three months of production or 25% of annual installed capacity whichever is higher. For importers, the stock limit will be the same as that of wholesalers for stocks held or imported prior to

May 15, 2021. And for pulses imported after May 15, stock limit applicable on wholesalers will apply after 45 days from date of customs clearance, the order said.

If the stocks of entities exceed the prescribed limits, they have to be declared on the online portal of the Department of Consumer Affairs and have to be brought within the prescribed limit within 30 days of the notification of the order.

“Since the entire country has been reeling under the impact of the pandemic, the government has been committed to adopting timely measures and has substantially alleviated the concerns and anguish of the common man,” a statement said.

## Anganwadi workers struggle with Centre's order on 'Poshan'

They seek phones to download mandatory mobile app

JAGRITI CHANDRA  
NEW DELHI

Anganwadi workers in several States, including Punjab and Haryana, are up in arms after a government order threatened them with a pay cut if they did not download the government's mobile application called ‘Poshan Tracker’ to record delivery of services by them. They demanded to know who would give them the mobile phones and bear the expenses for recharge.

The application and the use of technology for real-time growth monitoring and tracking of beneficiaries is the mainstay of the government's Poshan Abhiyaan, which aims to improve nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

In Punjab's Gurdaspur, several thousand anganwadi workers and helpers held a demonstration on Friday. “There are nearly 30,000 anganwadi workers affiliated to our union and none of them have downloaded the Poshan Tracker application because the government has neither given us mobile phones, nor money for recharge,” says Usha Rani, president, All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers.

“We are not opposed to the Poshan Tracker, but we need a mobile phone, expenses for recharge as well as training to use smartphones as the application is

compatible with mobile phones that are Android 6 or above. Many workers only know how to use the keypad mobile phones,” says Shakuntala Devi, general secretary, Haryana Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union.

In Himachal Pradesh, anganwadi workers are faced with a different challenge. Veena Sharma, general secretary, Himachal Pradesh Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union, says, “Many anganwadi centres are situated in remote locations and often don't have Internet connectivity. As a result, we have to walk 500 metres to 1 km to a spot where we can get some network coverage.”

Uddhav writes to Governor on OBCs' data

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday asked Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to join his government in seeking empirical data on OBCs from the Central government, which is essential for maintaining political reservation for the community in local civic bodies. He also said his government had requested the State Election Commission to postpone bypolls to local bodies' seats that fell vacant following the SC verdict on scrapping political reservation for OBCs.









Former magazine editors and journalists are taking their skills and roster of contacts to e-tailers like Amazon, Myntra and Nykaa. Will it prove to be the Promised Land?

# Fashion editors' e-commerce switch



VARUN RANA

You don't have to be a fashion insider to know that the past few years have not exactly been easy on print publications. Within this segment, lowered ad budgets and dwindling subscriptions (with social media bringing brands and designers closer) have hit fashion magazines the hardest. Over the past two years, this has led to a few shutting shop in India, with veteran editors and journalists out of jobs.

Amid all the gloom, those who once set trends and could make or break brands with their editorial power have found an unlikely refuge in e-commerce. Multi-brand e-tail destinations like Nykaa, Tata CliQ, Myntra, Amazon and Ajio, among others, now employ many whose bylines once populated the pages of *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, *Marie Claire* and *L'Officiel*, to name a few.

But what could mass e-retailers want from people whose sole job it was to select audiences who would rarely, if ever, shop from such portals?

The answer is simpler than the question makes it seem.

For years, fashion editors and journalists have been walking a tightrope between their responsibilities to their advertisers and their readers. In an ideal scenario, readers would take precedence. But in the real world, where fashion titles in India came to rely heavily on ad-sales, their allegiance shifted to those paying the bills and salaries. They had to survive.

Now, these writers who grew up knowing and understanding the Indian fashion industry and customer inside-out find themselves free from that insane balancing act. It is not surprising that the top people at India's fast-growing e-commerce sites turned to them. Their reasons range from the social and cultural legitimacy that comes when on-boarding respected names, to utilising their clout and roster of contacts to expand retail categories. Former journalists also bring an editorial edge to the way such e-commerce giants talk about the products they sell.

**Bringing in some heft**

This isn't new. Back in 2012, I was offered the post of fashion editor at Myntra when its founders were still running the com-

pany. Apart from overseeing the almost daily shoots for both clothes and accessories, one of my main roles was to suggest cool, young brands to on-board for the then-emerging category of homegrown designer labels with accessible price points. I was no path-breaking forerunner; it was too early in the day for that category to exist – no matter how farsighted the founders may have been.

Besides, once there, I realised that I wasn't ready or trained enough to bridge the divide between luxury fashion and e-retail. I also found it challenging to fit my style of working into the kind of detailed, structured way a corporate office is run. Used to taking decisions, and being responsible for them, it was hard for me to run my images and copy past the desks of those who specialised in data analytics and SEO/SEM, and had literally no connection to my dreamy world of fashion.

For our recently-liberated friends, though, it could be said



Digital campaigns, and a couple of editors who made the switch – Rochelle Pinto, editor, Tweek India; and Nonita Kalra, editor in chief, Tata CliQ Luxury

a beast that never sleeps.

A recent chat room on Clubhouse – that wonderful new app making audio addicts of us all – reminded me of the conversations I used to have with my peers at various fashion weeks. We spoke about designers, retailers, our editors and publishers, and the future of fashion in India. Too soon, it seems, the future is here, standing in front of us. *Mais ou sont les neiges d'antan?* Where are the snows of yesteryear, it asks, mockingly.

It is here that I tell myself to have more faith in an industry that has become a major player in the world economy. In India, the domestic textiles and apparel industry contributes 2% to the GDP, 7% of industry output in value terms, and 12% of the country's export earnings, according to government figures.

In these significant numbers, all set to climb in the future, shines a silver lining. Former journalists may yet invent new forms of expression to meet growing necessities. Maybe the voices of my peers will come out stronger for having been honed by the needs of homegrown brands, labels, and companies that can no longer be ignored. The talk of locally-relevant material has been growing louder over the years; owned content that does not rely on inaccessible tastemakers is already being spoken of as the way forward. Who knows, we could even see new magazines coming out, funded by successful e-retailers. Perhaps this is the deep breath before the much-awaited plunge?

Varun Rana is a fashion commentator.

better. E-tailers are now more responsive on social media, and take an interest in regional festivals and cultural high points, too. Ideas like inclusivity – in size, shape, gender and race – are coming to the fore, however tenuously. Ironically, even sustainability is being discussed, though we cannot be certain to what extent it is being inculcated. And this signifies that if not directly, these former magazine editors have definitely helped e-retail giants develop a new understanding of our very unorganised fashion industry.

**Tackling the grind**

But like anything that's too good to be true, it raises the question: how long will these marriages last? Already there are murmurs within the inner circles that the hierarchical, corporate structure is proving difficult to navigate on a day-to-day basis, that editorial creativity may have taken a back seat to the realities of the retail cycle. Keep in mind that many of the former editors and journalists come from a monthly publishing cycle. E-commerce, by stark contrast, is



that they have trained for this. And it shows. Myntra has launched a successful video series with famous fashion and celebrity stylists; something I wouldn't have thought they'd ever do because of the mass-oriented price points their merchandise represented earlier. NykaaFashion has an expanding array of brands as well as designer labels on one platform.

Already, shoots, videos, and captions on social media, emailers, website banners, and even digital ads have begun looking

FOOD SPOT

## The charm of chholey bhaturey!

Neither light nor heavy is what the writer loves about Anandji's chholey bhature in Lajpat Nagar



Delicious Anandji's plate of chholey bhaturey  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



RAHUL VERMA

It all started with a trip to a doctor. I was touched when two of my dear friends said they'd come along with me. After the consultation, though, they didn't go their respective ways back home – instead they went looking for a well-known chholey bhature wallah in Rajinder Nagar. I was a little unhappy that they could think of the all-time favourite dish when I was not feeling well. And I must say I sniggered a bit when I heard that the *chholey bhaturey* shop was shut when they went there.

But since then I have been thinking of this delicious street food that gladdens most hearts. I was in particular thinking of Chacha di hatti. Now Chacha, as many of you may know, is an iconic shop in Kamla Nagar in North Delhi. Generations of students have written their tutorials or found their life partners while munching on Chacha's *bhatureys*. I was feeling rather nostalgic about his fare when a close friend who lives in the university area promised to

bring some over. He did, and we had a happy breakfast the next day. The *chholey* (chickpeas curry) in particular had been well cooked with just the right amount of spices. Still, I thought, it wasn't what I had eaten in the 80s and 90s. But that was largely because a day-old *bhatura* (fried Indian bread) doesn't give you the kind of pleasure that a freshly fried *bhatura* just off a hot *kadai* does. All in all, though, I enjoyed my brekker.

The stomach still yearned for more. So, a couple of days later, I ordered some *chholey bhaturey* from Anandji's in Lajpat Nagar. I would say this signature dish at Anandji's is among the best you get in south Delhi. His is a 25-year-old shop in Lajpat Nagar 1 (shop number 3, Krishna Market). I had placed my order on Zomato an hour before lunch time, and the food came dot on time.

This time, I had no regrets. The *bhatura* was soft, a bit moist, and not the least bit rubbery. The *chholey* had been cooked with some small pieces of

potatoes, which blissfully added to the taste. There was a pickled piece of carrot on the side, and a sharp green chilli. I didn't have their onion rings, but cut some chunks of a red onion at home. I tore off a piece of the *bhatura*, rolled it around the dark, aromatic *chholey* and popped it into the mouth, and then took a bite of the pickle, the chilli and onion. And what a delicious mouthful that was!

There are some great *chholey bhaturey* places in Delhi – among them Nagpal's in Amar Colony and Nand in Sadar Bazar, where the *bhatureys* are fried in desi ghee. But I like Anandji's because despite the fact that you can't make *bhaturas* without deep frying them, you don't get a heavy feeling after eating a plateful. I had one *bhatura* with a bowl of *chholey*, and some homemade curd, and thought it was a delicious lunch, indeed. Not light, no, but not heavy either.

I think I have had my fill of *chholey bhaturey*. Till the next craving, that is.

The writer is a veteran food critic



## Barbara Sturm: growing her empire



Dr Barbara Sturm  
CHRIS SINGER PHOTOGRAPHY

The German skincare specialist talks about bringing her products to India, her bestsellers, and why they are pricey

**DIVYA KALA BHAVANI**

At the mere mention of retinoids, Dr Barbara Sturm is aghast, her crystal blue eyes wide with disappointment. During a virtual event ahead of the June 8 launch of Dr Barbara Sturm products on the Global Store on Nykaa's mobile app, the internationally-acclaimed inflammatory doctor and skin specialist tells a virtual room of influencers and journalists that retinol is inflammatory and can do more harm than help.

A deep appreciator of Ayurveda, she tells *The Hindu Weekend* in an email interview that her love for skincare and holistic beauty comes from – like most people – her mother, who was a chemist, and her grandmother, who was a pharmacist.

"They both loved milk baths and dry brushing, and would mix creams for us as children. We would often go into the forest during my childhood and pick medicinal herbs and roots," she recalls.

"I was taught early on to use ingredients found in nature for their healing properties, and to treat the skin gently. This is something that is deeply rooted in my skincare philosophy and skincare line."

**Science of ingredients**

But the framework of Dr Sturm's Germany-made line sits in that sweet spot between nature and science. "Advanced ingredient science is what I build my skincare solutions around – potent, key ingredients that have been widely, clinically studied for their properties and efficacy."

That is why she has created so many 'white

**According to Nayar**

The Dr Barbara Sturm launch on the Nykaa Global Store is one success among many for Nykaa CEO-founder Falguni Nayar. The platform already has big names such as Evolve, Rodial and Cosmedix, showcasing the shifting demands for luxury beauty. "We show brands the opportunity that India presents as a fast-growth, evolving market, and spend considerable time and effort to assist them in bringing operations to the country. Seeing the overwhelming response we receive around these brands, we continue to work to build further access for the Indian consumer," says Nayar.

T-shirt' products such as the Hyaluronic Serum (₹10,660), Sun Drops SPF 30 (₹5,050), etc – all in her trademark sand-blasted glass bottles and tubs. One of her more novel and pandemic-ready inventions is her reusable Nano Silver Mask that both protects and cares for the skin (price TBC).

She is also known for her Darker Skin Tones products that aim to even out and brighten rather than lighten the skin of melanin-active Indian consumers. Dr Sturm's products are also geared towards women's needs, such as her V Collection specifically for intimate skin care.

Yes, the products are

pricey. But she says such price tags on skincare are attributed to their development and ingredient concentrations. She explains, "It is inevitably going to be 'luxury' because it is so expensive to make it that way. I do think people are beginning to appreciate and understand that process."

**The great equaliser**

The skincare luminary has worked with some famous faces such as Jennifer Lopez, Venus Williams and Kim Kardashian, but she says skin health is an equaliser for her. "Skin is skin," she insists, "there is no difference between a celebrity's skin and yours. My fundamental advice never changes: protect and boost your skin barrier function, provide it with essential nutrition and hydration, and combat inflammation with skincare ingredient science. Avoid make-up, irritating and aggressive ingredients, acid peels and lasers. Heal and protect your skin and it will glow."

When the coronavirus pandemic hit the beauty and skincare industry hard, Dr Sturm found she and her teams had to pivot hard to a new normal.

"For me, it caused an emergency acceleration [product development, expansion, etc] of the things that I intended to carry out anyway at my company to improve the customer experience."

One of the more popular ventures is Skin School, a series of free-to-attend, monthly live digital classes via Eventbrite, focussing on the needs of young adult and teen skin; the series (on YouTube) features celebrities such as model Hailey Baldwin and actor Colton Haynes, among others.

Dr Barbara Sturm's products is available on the Global Store on Nykaa's mobile app.







**TV PICKS**

**Wimbledon 2021:** SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**England Women vs India Women:** 3rd ODI: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**Tour de France:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.  
**FI:** Austrian GP (Qualifying): SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.  
**Euro 2020:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)  
**Copa America 2021:** Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 a.m. & 6.30 a.m. (Sunday)  
**NBA:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m. (Sunday)

**COPA AMERICA**

**TODAY'S SCHEDULE**

**QUARTER FINALS**

**Uruguay vs Colombia,** 3.30 a.m. (Sunday)  
**Argentina vs Ecuador,** 6.30 a.m. (Sunday)  
Live on Sony Ten 2 and Sony 6 (SD & HD)

**IN BRIEF**



**Toni Kroos retiring from German national team**

**BERLIN**  
Toni Kroos said on Friday he was retiring from Germany's national squad. "I had already made the decision to retire after this tournament for some time. It had been clear to me for a while that I will not be available for the World Cup 2022 in Qatar," tweeted Kroos. AFP

**PSG, Ramos agree on two-year deal: report**

**PARIS**  
Paris St. Germain has struck a deal to sign Spanish defender Sergio Ramos, French radio network RMC reported on Thursday. The report said Ramos had agreed a two-year contract with PSG. REUTERS

**UEFA suffers setback in Super League case**

**MADRID**  
A Spanish court on Thursday ordered European soccer's governing body UEFA to cancel all legal sanctions imposed on Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus for planning the creation of the breakaway European Super League. REUTERS

**Lahiri in a tough spot; Thompson leads**

**DETROIT**  
Anirban Lahiri carded a one-under 71 in the opening round to tie tied 87th at the Rocket Mortgage Classic here on Thursday. Davis Thompson matched a Detroit Golf Club record with a nine-under 63 to take the early first-round lead. PTI

**Aditi recovers from slump to be T-71**

**DALLAS**  
Aditi recovered from a mid-round slump to card an even par 71 and tie tied-71st in the Volunteers of America Classic here on Thursday. Aditi, who dropped a bogey and a double bogey in her opening round, was just outside the projected cut line. Ko Jin-Young of South Korea was in the lead with a 63. PTI

**Hurdler McNeal's ban upheld, to miss Games**

**LAUSANNE**  
American Olympic 100m hurdles champion Brianna McNeal will miss the Tokyo Games — and even the 2024 Paris Olympics — after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) dismissed her appeal against a five-year ban for an anti-doping rule violation. REUTERS

**Wrestler Malik handed two-year ban**

**NEW DELHI**  
His hopes of competing in the Olympics over, Indian wrestler Sumit Malik was on Friday banned for two years by the sport's world governing body UWW after his B sample also returned positive for a prohibited stimulant. The 28-year-old has one week to decide if he would accept the sanction or challenge it. PTI

**Mixed fortunes for Bhullar, Shubhankar**

**KILKENNY**  
Gaganjeet Bhullar shot a one-under 71 and was tied 73rd on the opening day of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open. Shubhankar Sharma carded two-over 74 to be T-123. PTI

# 'I now know the art of running better'

Sprinter Dutee Chand says her first objective is to make it to the semifinals at Tokyo

**ATHLETICS**

**V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM**  
HYDERABAD

At 25, Dutee Chand has every reason to feel proud. She is the first Indian athlete to make it to the Olympics for the second straight time in the 100m (she will also compete in the 200m), having made the cut for next month's Tokyo Games by virtue of her world rankings. "I am delighted even though, honestly, I was a bit worried whether I would make it because there were not too many competitions for me to protect the world rankings," Dutee said in a chat with *The Hindu*.

"It will be great if I can realise my ultimate dream of an Olympic medal which is not that easy. To make it to the Olympics for the second straight time is itself a huge thing for me," said an elated Dutee.



**Optimistic:** Dutee Chand's coach N. Ramesh says his ward is capable of pulling off a surprise at the Tokyo Olympics. • V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

For the 'pocket dynamo', at 4 feet 11 inch, it has been a fairytale success story given the kind of adversities she has had to face both in the sport and in life. "I owe everything to Ra-

mesh Sir (SAI athletics coach N. Ramesh), Gopi Sir (P. Gopi Chand) for being with me in 2014 when everyone had written me off. "I am also grateful to the federation, Odisha Govern-

ment and the Government of India. "They gave me a second life in athletics," said the two-time Asian Games silver medalist. "In Rio, I was very ner-

vous, overwhelmed by the big names around. Now, I am more confident and know the art of running better," said Dutee.

**No change in methods**

"I don't think there is any need to be different in my training methods. What I need to produce the expected results is well taken care of by Ramesh Sir," added Dutee. Asked about her prospects, the sprinter said "you need a little bit of luck and good weather to start with. My first objective is to make it to the semifinals and I know it is not going to be that easy."

"I think Dutee is more mature as compared to Rio, better understands on how to run the race and how to stay away from distractions before the Games. She is capable of pulling off a major surprise," said coach Ramesh.

## FINA confirms Maana's spot

SPORTS BUREAU

**Backstroker Maana Patel's** universality spot at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was confirmed by FINA, the Swimming Federation of India announced on Friday.

The 21-year-old from Gujarat will compete in 100m backstroke and will be the third Indian swimmer in Tokyo alongside Sajjan Prakash and Srihari Nataraj.

**Best performance**

Maana is the current National record holder in the women's 50m, 100m and 200m backstroke events and also has the best Indian performance across all three distances.

## Richardson's 100m dreams upended

REUTERS  
KINGSTON

American sprinter Sha'Carri Richardson has accepted a one-month suspension after testing positive for cannabis, the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) said on Friday, ruling her out of the 100 metres in Tokyo although she may yet be able to run in later relay events.

The positive test came at the U.S. Olympic trials last month where Richardson established herself as a gold medal contender by winning the 100m in 10.86 seconds.

Richardson said in an NBC Interview on the *Today Show* on Friday that her ac-



Sha'Carri Richardson. • AFP

tion came during the trials while she was dealing with the news of the death of her mother.

A 30-day ban backdated to the time of the adverse result could leave Richardson clear to race in the 4x100m relay at the Olympics in the first week of August, if she is selected by USATF.

## Mariyappan to be the flagbearer at Paralympic Games

K. KEERTHIVASAN  
CHENNAI

T. Mariyappan, who will defend the men's high jump (T-42) gold at the Tokyo Paralympic Games, said he is thrilled to be the flagbearer of the Indian team.

"I am very happy to be nominated as the captain of the Indian Paralympics Team at Tokyo. I take this opportunity to thank my coach Satyanarayana and all my friends for their support. I am happy to have qualified for the Tokyo Games [with a jump of 1.86m at the selection trials in New Delhi] and promise that I would do my best and if possible win a gold with a world record. I also take this opportunity to thank the Tamil Nadu Government, Government of India, Sports Authority of India and the Paralympic Committee of



Mariyappan. • FILE PHOTO

India for their continuous patronage," he said in a video message.

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Friday, Satyanarayana said Mariyappan has been training diligently since last October at the SAI Centre (Bengaluru). "There is still time for the Games which begins on Aug. 24. I feel he can still improve," he said.

## Warholm sets 400m hurdles world record



**On the fast track:** Norway's Karsten Warholm blazes away to a new men's 400m hurdles mark. • AP

REUTERS  
OSLO

Norway's Karsten Warholm broke Kevin Young's 29-year-old 400m hurdles world record when he completed the race in 46.70 seconds at the Diamond League meeting in Oslo on Thursday.

Warholm beat 1992 Olympic champion Young's mark of 46.78secs, which was set

four years before the Norwegian was born and was the longest-standing record in men's track.

Twice world champion Warholm raced to an early lead and never let up as he was roared on all the way to the finishing line, which he crossed ahead of 2019 Pan American Games champion Alison dos Santos by more than six tenths of a second.

## Harika in final

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOZHIKODE

D. Harika reached the final of the Women's Speed chess championship, stunning the reigning World blitz champion Kateryna Lagno of Russia in the semifinals. The Indian, who came to the main draw through the qualifiers, won a thrilling match via the tie-breakers.

Harika won 14-13, after the scores were level 11.5-11.5 at the end of three segments.

## Sandhu backs Rajound for Dronacharya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Former national boxing coach Gurbax Singh Sandhu has recommended two-time Commonwealth Games medal-winner Manoj Kumar's personal coach Rajesh Kumar Rajound for the Dronacharya award for a second successive year.

Being a former awardee, Sandhu is entitled to recommend names for the National sports awards.

Rajound has played a key role in shaping Manoj's career.

## 2022 CWG events in India cancelled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Commonwealth archery and shooting championships, which were scheduled to be held in Chandigarh before the 2022 Birmingham Games, have been cancelled due to the "uncertainty" posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken by the Commonwealth Games India (CGI) Executive Board with the support of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).

## Advanced equipment: Sindhu gets quick nod

**BADMINTON**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

World champion and 2016 Olympic Games silver medalist P.V. Sindhu's request to buy advanced recovery equipment was approved by the Government of India within 24 hours, according to a media release.

"I am happy that it did not take even a day for the Sports Authority of India to approve my request for the recovery system. The clearance was really quick, and I will be able to place an order and procure it in time to

take it with me to the Olympic Games," Sindhu said on the administrative sanction to procure the Game Ready recovery system on Friday.

"It will help me immensely after each long training session or match as it is a portable cold and compression recovery system," Sindhu said of the system that is rated better than conventional Rest-Ice-Compression-Elevation methods of recovery.

"Sometimes one gets exhausted and experiences stiffness after matches. This will help in a quick and systematic recovery," she said.

## Bucks take series lead



**Hey guys, watch!** The Hawks defenders are left mere spectators as Bucks' Brook Lopez goes for a basket. • AP

**NBA**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

Milwaukee Bucks dominated Atlanta Hawks on way to a 123-112 win in game five of the NBA Eastern Conference finals on Thursday.

Brook Lopez had a season-high 33 points, Jrue Holiday had 25 points and 13 assists and Khris Middleton finished with 26 points and 13 rebounds for the Bucks, who grabbed a 3-2 series lead and are one win away

from reaching the NBA finals for the first time since 1974.

Milwaukee won despite playing without two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Giannis Antetokounmpo, who is out with an injured knee.

He watched the game from the sidelines, standing with his teammates almost the entire game.

**The result: Eastern Conference finals:** Milwaukee Bucks 123 bt Atlanta Hawks 112 (*Bucks lead series 3-2*).

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