



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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TODAY'S EDITION

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STUDENT EDITION

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WEB EDITION

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PLEA IN SC TO NULLIFY ELECTION RESULTS, IF MAXIMUM VOTES IN FAVOUR OF NOTA

A TIMELY MOVE?

A PIL seeking directions to the Election Commission to nullify the election results and hold fresh polls, if maximum votes have been polled in favour of NOTA (None of the Above) in a particular constituency, has been filed in the Supreme Court. The plea filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has also sought directions to restrict the contesting candidates from taking part in fresh poll, who have participated in the nullified election.

■ NOTA is a right given to the voters to stamp their disapproval for all the candidates, who are in the fray during elections. So, it needs to be seen how the apex court decides on nullifying an election altogether, as it would not only require an amendment in the People's Representation Act, but also the approval of the lawmakers.
S K DWIVEDI, Former HoD, Political Science, Lucknow University

■ It is a welcome move. Nullifying an election, if maximum voters vote for NOTA in a constituency, will serve two ends: It will be a wake-up call for the political parties to pull up their socks and choose deserving candidates from their parties to contest elections, and secondly, it will reflect the will and power of a democracy, and go a long way in strengthening the pillar of democracy.
ADRIAN PHILLIPS, teacher, Political Science, St Augustine's Day School, Kolkata



EXPERTS REACT

VIEWPOINT

ALL ABOUT NOTA

1. NOTA enables the voter to officially register a vote of rejection for all candidates, who are contesting
2. On Sept 27, 2013, the SC ruled that the right to register a "none of the above" vote in elections should be applied
3. The ECI introduced a particular symbol for 'None of the Above' option to allow the voters to exercise NOTA. This symbol appears in the last panel on all the EVMs
4. The main objective of the "NOTA" option is to enable voters, who do not wish to vote for any of the candidates, to exercise their right to reject without violation of the secrecy of their decision

WHICH OTHER COUNTRIES ALLOW NOTA?

Colombia, Ukraine, Brazil, Bangladesh, Finland, Spain, Sweden, Chile, France, Belgium and Greece allow their voters to cast NOTA votes. The US also allows it in a few cases. The state of Texas in the US permits the provision since 1975. The option, however, has faced opposition there

The petition contended that political parties choose contesting candidates in a very undemocratic manner without consulting the electors. That is why on many occasions, people in a constituency are discontented with the candidates who contest the election

CHALLENGES

▶ As of now, NOTA lacks teeth, as the second-best candidate is selected, if NOTA gets the maximum votes. Besides, re-polling is not a good idea, as it would not only cost the public exchequer significantly but also manpower, infrastructure and readjustments in various sectors for conducting fresh elections smoothly. So, instead of nullifying an election, strict criteria should be introduced

▶ Currently, NOTA signifies more of a protest vote, and less of rejecting a candidate. Besides, on one hand, while the government is talking about 'one nation, one election', it won't be feasible to implement this concept in principle. Secondly, it would be difficult to implement this provision for all the elections— Gram Panchayat to Lok Sabha. It can be done in a small village constituencies after evaluating all the other conditions. The candidate, should, however, not be allowed to contest election again from that constituency, otherwise this circle of rejection may not break at all.
ABHAY DESHPANDE, political analyst, Mumbai

▶ Since we do not have the proportional representation system, the candidate, who secures the highest number of votes in an election, gets elected in our political system. The Supreme Court would have to address larger systemic issues before it takes a decisive stand on this issue.
Dr M J VINOD, former chairman, political science dept, Bangalore University

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Spotlight

RAJA CHARI An Indian-American, who will be part of NASA's manned Moon mission

Raja Jon Vurputoor Chari, an Indian-American US Air Force colonel, is among the 18 astronauts, half of them women, who have been selected by NASA for its ambitious manned mission to the Moon and beyond. Chari, 43, a graduate of the US Air Force Academy, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and US Naval Test Pilot School, is the only Indian-American in the list. The selected astronauts will help NASA prepare for the coming Artemis missions, which begins next year, working with the agency's commercial partners as they develop human landing systems



The modern lunar exploration programme will land the first woman and next man on the Moon in 2024, and establish a sustainable human lunar presence by the end of the decade

FACTOID



31 species have been listed on the extinct list by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. The list includes the lost shark, listed as critically-endangered or possibly-extinct, as it was last recorded in 1934. The lost shark's habitat in the South China Sea, one of the world's most-exploited marine regions, has been extensively fished for more than a century.

■ Out of the 17 freshwater fish species in Lake Lanao and its outlet in the Philippines, 15 are now extinct and two are critically-endangered or possibly extinct, the ICUN announced. The extinctions were caused by predatory-introduced species as well as overharvesting and destructive fishing methods

■ In Central America, three frog species have now been declared extinct. Another 22 frog species across Central and South America are listed as critically-endangered or possibly extinct — with the driver of the declines identified as chytridiomycosis disease, an infectious disease caused by a fungus that affects amphibians worldwide

■ In addition, all of the species of freshwater dolphin in the world are now threatened with extinction, with the addition of the tucuxi, a freshwater dolphin species found in the Amazon river system to the list, according to the ICUN. The tucuxi population has been "severely-depleted" by deaths linked to fishing gear, damming rivers and pollution

■ In the plant world, nearly a third of Oak trees around the world are threatened with extinction, with the highest numbers in China and Mexico

ERIC YUAN NAMED AS TIME'S BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR



Eric Yuan, the CEO of popular video calling platform Zoom, has been named as the Time's Businessperson of the Year. Zoom has been one of the most popular video conferencing apps that people have relied on, especially during this pandemic, which requires social distancing to curb any further spreading. Time said, Zoom was being used in "all sorts of unexpected places. It became a verb and prefix, a defining syllable of socially-distant era."

RECOGNITION

■ Yuan, 50, was born in China, where he studied computer science at the Shandong University, until he received an H-1 visa in 1997, and moved to the US, according to Time

■ Zoom's rise over the years has been phenomenal. On March 22 this year, it announced that it would go public. Its userbase skyrocketed from 10 million daily participants in December 2019 to more than 300 million in April 2020

CHRISTIAN BALE JOINS 'THOR: LOVE AND THUNDER' AS VILLAIN

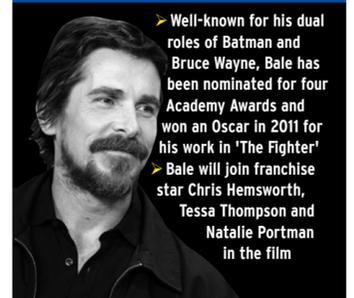
English actor Christian Bale and former star of Christopher Nolan's 'Batman' trilogy has joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe's (MCU) upcoming film, 'Thor: Love and Thunder'. However, don't expect Bale to play one of MCU's legendary good guys. He will be playing the flick's villain— Gorr, the God Butcher.

MOVIES

▶ According to Collider, the character Gorr had a tough life and lost his pregnant wife to an earthquake and the rest of his children to the difficult conditions of his nameless home-world



▶ After the tragedies, Gorr sets out to kill gods of all sorts, such as the titular Thor



▶ Well-known for his dual roles of Batman and Bruce Wayne, Bale has been nominated for four Academy Awards and won an Oscar in 2011 for his work in 'The Fighter'

▶ Bale will join franchise star Chris Hemsworth, Tessa Thompson and Natalie Portman in the film

Gwalior, Orchha in UNESCO world heritage cities' list

Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme, according to the state government.

■ Gwalior was established in the 9th century, and was ruled by the Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh dynasty, the Tomars, Baghels, Kachwahs and the Scindias.

■ The memorabilia left by them is found in abundance in memorials, forts and palaces in that area

■ Orchha is popular for its temples and palaces, and was the capital of the Bundela Kingdom in the 16th century. The famous spots in the town are Raj Mahal, Jehangir Mahal, Ramraja Temple, Rai Praveen Mahal, and Laxminarayan Mandir, among others

HERITAGE SITES

'WEAR MASK EVEN AFTER GETTING COVID VACCINE'

AS THE WORLD BRACES FOR COVID-19 VACCINE INOCULATION, EXPERTS HAVE WARNED AGAINST STOPPING OF WEARING A MASK EVEN AFTER GETTING VACCINATED. HERE'S WHY...

1 Experts say, the first coronavirus vaccines require two shots. For example, Pfizer's second dose comes three weeks after the first and Moderna's comes after four weeks. Besides, according to them, the effect of vaccinations generally aren't immediate. People are expected to get some level of

protection within a couple of weeks after the first shot. However, full protection may not happen until a couple weeks after the second shot.

2 It's also not yet known whether the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines protect people from infection entirely, or just from the symptoms. It means vacci-

nated people might still get infected and pass the virus on, although it would likely be at a much lower rate, they add.

3 Moreover, even though vaccine supplies start ramping up, getting hundreds of millions shots into people's arms is expected to take months, experts say.





Home bound during the lockdown! Many youngsters saw it as an opportunity to look beyond the boredom, skill up and use their talent in productive way. Here are some of the interesting things our NIEians did during the lockdown...

HOME-BOUND, YET PRODUCTIVE

EXPLORING THE CREATIVE SIDE

VOICE MODULATION IS FUN

During the lockdown, I discovered the interesting skill of mimicry. Now I can mimic not just actors and actresses, I can even imitate many of my friends, teachers, near and dear one. During the lockdown I had time on my hands to watch videos and finally got a hang of voice modulation. I've also been making videos of my mimicry acts and sharing them with friends.

Bhavya Gulati, class XII, Bhavan Vidyalaya, Panchkula



STITCHING IS THERAPEUTIC



As part of a school project, I had to make cloth masks. I watched several videos to learn how to make them. I did not know how to stitch. My mother taught me how to do a running stitch. At first, it was difficult to get it right. However, as I continued doing it, I became better and it turned into a therapeutic activity. I was able to make fifteen masks, and I enjoyed doing so. Had it not been for the lockdown, I would never have tried this.

Hina Naela, class XII, G D Goenka Public School, Lucknow



PENCIL PAINTING TECHNIQUES

Being home for five months and not getting bored is a mammoth task. So, I decided that it was time to brush the dust off my art books and watercolor pencils which I couldn't have done in my routine. I turned to YouTube and managed to learn many new techniques of painting with watercolor pencils. Now, I've gained quite a lot of proficiency in their usage!

Aarya Rajesh Bhanushali, class X, S V D D English Medium Secondary High School, Mumbai



BONDING WITH FAMILY AND BEYOND

ECO-FRIENDLY BRIDGES

Nature is intrinsic to all things associated with life: During this lockdown I indulged in some eco-friendly activities with my family. I helped my mother clear out plastic and transformed an old water bottle into a pen stand. I helped my grandmother renovate our garden area by seedling seasonal veggies. I also learned to make cloth bags and masks with my cousins. Not only did I cultivate hobbies that are close to nature but I also got a chance to bond with my family without the influence of technology. This period of lockdown helped most of us to realize the importance of taking care of each other.

G Darshan, class VI, San Academy, Chennai



ONLINE MEETS AND PEALS OF LAUGHTER

Having grown up with my grandparents around, I have always considered myself lucky. But my parents' stories about their boisterous childhood often made me feel deprived.

Voilà! I decided to revive the family group. I got each of them to join an online meet. Over sessions of small talks, peals of laughter, and silly fights, magic happened! The meetings have become a Sunday ritual now and I find myself engrossed in an enchanted world, loved and adored by a gaggle of grandparents and a band of cousins.

Ishika Padhy, class IV C, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad



PHOTOS AND WISHES

My aunt who lives in Japan was to visit us, but had to cancel her trip due to the pandemic. So, I decided to surprise her with a compilation of all her childhood photos and memories. I collected and put together photos. I also added clips of other family members wishing her. Using these I created a film highlighting some of the key events in her life in chronological order. I sent her this video on her birthday to convey our love and wishes for her. It helped not only bond with her, but brought other members of the family together as well.

Likhith L Gowda, class X, Delhi Public School North, Bengaluru



RECYCLING AND UPCYCLING

GREAT WAY TO REDUCE WASTE

I recycled and upcycled a lot of trash during this lockdown. Recycling is a great way to reduce waste



and save money. Making flowers out of pencil shavings, cloth leaves and vases from trash cups was fun. I upcycled plastic bottles into plant pots, watering cans, snack boxes, charging docks and trash cans. I recycled old paper into new notepads, bookmarks, wrapping paper and bags. It helped me destress and gave me satisfaction.

Gouri Theertha, class XI, KV Pattom, Thiruvananthapuram



PAINT ON, CRACK GONE

A week ago, I recycled my favorite tea cup. It was a present which I received on my 10th birthday. But last week, it fell from my hands and developed a crack. I knew I could not use it to drink but I did not want to throw it away. But an idea struck me on how I could upcycle it. I coated the rim and handle with glass paint. That way the crack marks



were covered. Then I gave it a designer look with some decorating beads and the cup was successfully converted into a pen stand. The cup which primarily found a place in my kitchen-shelf, is now proudly sitting on my study table. My very beautiful "DIY" pen-stand made with my broken birthday present,

Jyotirmoy Chatterjee, class XII, Central Modern School, Kolkata

LENDING A HELPING HAND

BAGS & POTS PAYING FOR MASKS

When the pandemic hit the country not everyone could afford sanitizers and masks, which were the basic needs to stay safe from the virus. So we decided to distribute masks among the needy people. We raised funds to buy the masks by selling hand painted pots and paper bags which

we made. So far we have distributed more than 500 masks to people living on roadsides, children in orphanages and elders in old age homes. Apart from distributing the masks we also created awareness among them regarding safety precautions to be followed to stay safe from Covid-19.

It is our father who taught us the importance of being compassionate and kind to people around us. We grew up seeing him serve the needy in the society.

Mahaswetha and Madhulekha Unnikrishnan, class V, AKR Academy, Tirupur



GIVING SHOWS WHO YOU ARE

With job loss and unemployment rate rising during this lockdown, I wanted to do my part in healing the world of the scar that Covid 19 has left. My family and I collected clothes and distributed food packets in the slum areas. The blessings we got and the happiness



that I felt cannot be justified in words. Keeping our humanity in such difficult times and not ignoring others' sufferings is important. One of the biggest lessons I learned during the lockdown is to do things for others not because of who they are or what they do in return but because of who you are.

Sakshi Panwar, class X, The Indian Academy, Dehradun