



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

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STUDENT EDITION  
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 2020



WEB EDITION

## X-PLAINED



### HEATWAVE

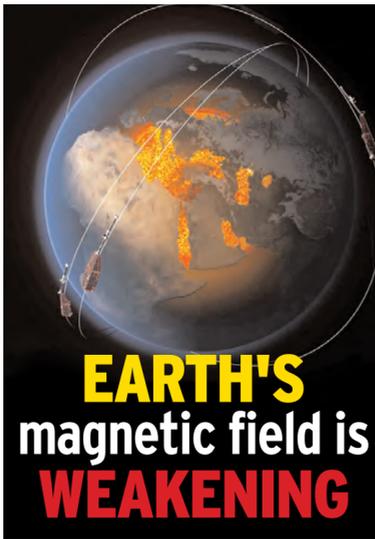
**WHAT** With the mercury going past 45°C across several parts in North India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday issued a 'red' heatwave alert for Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Rajasthan for the next two days.

**WHY** Heatwave is a period of abnormally-high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season. For the plains, a heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is 45°C or above. Severe heat wave is declared when



it is 47°C and above. The colour-coded warnings, in ascending order and depending on the intensity, are green, yellow, orange and red. Heatwaves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases, even extend till July.

**HOW** A heatwave occurs when a system of high atmospheric pressure moves into an area and lasts two or more days. In such a high-pressure system, air from upper levels of our atmosphere is pulled towards the ground, where it becomes compressed and increases the temperature. This high concentration of pressure makes it difficult for other weather systems to move into the area, which is why a heatwave can last for several days or weeks.



## EARTH'S magnetic field is WEAKENING

If scientists are to be believed, Earth's magnetic field is gradually weakening in an area stretching from Africa to South America, and resulting in technical disturbances in some satellites orbiting our planet. According to the European Space Agency (ESA), the area, known as the 'South Atlantic Anomaly', has grown and moved westward at a rate of around 20km per hour. Between 1970 and 2020, the magnetic field in this area has weakened considerably, they added.

### WHY IS IT SO

■ According to the ESA, one possibility for the current weakening is a sign that Earth's magnetic field is about to reverse – in which the north and south magnetic poles switch places.  
■ The last time a 'geomagnetic reversal' took place was 780,000 years ago, with some scientists claiming that the next one is long overdue. Typically, such events take place every 250,000 years.

### THE IMPACT

➤ The repercussions of such an event could be significant, as the Earth's magnetic field plays an important role in protecting the planet from solar winds and

harmful cosmic radiation  
➤ Telecommunication and satellite systems also rely on it to operate, suggesting that computers and mobile phones could experience difficulties

The Independent

## Students can now pursue two degree courses simultaneously

A student of mathematics in Delhi University can now choose to simultaneously pursue any other degree course, say English literature from Ignou or any other institution. In a move to improve their career prospects, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved a proposal to allow students



EDUCATION

to pursue two degree programmes at the same time. One of the degrees has to be in the regular mode and the other either in open/distance learning or online. A student can pursue two degrees in different streams as well as from different institutions. S/he may also opt for the same institution, provided it offers multiple mode of learning. The detailed guidelines are to be notified soon.

## WORLD'S FASTEST INTERNET DATA SPEED RECORDED

Scientists have achieved the world's fastest internet data speed, which is enough to download 1,000 HD movies in a split second, using a single optical chip – an advance that can help scale up the capacity of network connections across the world. According to the study, the new innovation could fast-track telecommunications capacity of countries struggling with demand on internet infrastructure.

In the record book

- The researchers recorded a data speed of 44.2 Terabits per second (Tbps) from a single light source
- This speed, scientists said, was achieved by attaching their new device to existing fibre-optic technology, like the one used in broadband internet network

## Ranveer Singh wants Indian sign language to be 23rd official language

Actor Ranveer Singh is on a new mission. He is campaigning for Indian sign language (ISL) to be declared as the official language of our country. Urging everyone to support him, the actor has started a petition drive that aims to increase awareness for the cause. He also released rapper-poet Spitfire's, 'Vartalap', a sign language video, as part of this effort under his own label, Inck.

➤ The sign language is a system of communication that uses gestures and signs, as used by those impaired of hearing  
➤ In March 2018, the first edition of the Indian sign language dictionary was launched  
➤ There are 22 official languages in India, and Ranveer's campaign is towards making ISL, the 23rd official language

FOR A CAUSE



## NEWS IN BRIEF

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### LIFE IN POST-COVID WORLD

#### NOW, 'CONTACTLESS' FOOD ON MENU AT DELHI AIRPORT

To minimise Covid-19 infection risks to passengers as mandatory under protocols announced by the Centre, Indira Gandhi International airport, New Delhi, is offering the first-of-its-kind 'contactless food orders'.

#### App for food navigation

■ The airport has partnered with HOI, an app that helps travellers navigate airports to safely order and pick up meals before the flights  
■ Contactless food ordering and payment services are the unique features of HOI  
■ The HOI app is helpful in identifying food outlets at the terminal for orders via smartphones.  
■ Passengers can download the app on their Android or iOS device, sign up, and add their flight details  
■ Apart from contactless food ordering, the app has other features, such as real-time flight status alerts, boarding gate and belt information, etc



#### 1,400-year-old rooms found under Jerusalem's western wall

Israeli researchers have unveiled mysterious underground rooms, carved out of the bedrock near the Second Temple, which is believed to have stood two millennia ago. The discovery was made when Israeli students from a pre-military college were excavating a large, lavish Byzantine-era structure from some 1,400 years ago, below the western wall plaza in Jerusalem's old city.

DISCOVERED

➤ The rooms are dated to the early Roman period. While researchers have not yet determined the function of the rooms, it is believed that they could have been underground food storage for a building that didn't survive. They could also have been a separate facility for preparing food for the city's priests, or the temple's pilgrims and visitors

## VIEWPOINT

### SALIVA BAN CAN ENHANCE SKILLS OF BOWLERS: ROOT

England captain Joe Root feels the ban on using saliva to shine the ball to combat the COVID-19 threat might improve the skills of the bowlers, who will have to work harder to get something out of the pitch. Root said it could "up skill levels." "Not having the assistance that you might normally have means your accuracy has to improve," he said.

The Anil Kumble-led ICC committee has recommended banning the use of saliva to shine the ball when play resumes. The ICC has also barred the practice in its guidelines

➤ The issue has led to divided opinions

➤ While Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins has urged the game's custodians to come out with an alternative to strike a balance between bat and ball, spin legend Shane Warne has suggested that one side of the ball be made heavier to ensure that it doesn't need any shining

Share your views at [timesnie175@gmail.com](mailto:timesnie175@gmail.com)

### Novelist-turned-DJ Murakami's first-ever radio show, 'Stay Home' lifts spirits

Japanese novelist, Haruki Murakami, hosting a special radio show from home, painted a brighter side of the world with his favourite music, and said the fight against the coronavirus is a challenge in figuring out ways to help and care for each other. Murakami opened the two-hour late night show, 'Murakami Radio Stay Home Special' with 'Look for the Silver Lining' by the Modern Folk Quartet, followed by 18 other songs, selected from classical to jazz, pop and rock.



ENTERTAINMENT

■ "If love and compassion are lacking, the world after the corona will surely be an edgy and insipid place, even if masks and vaccines are abundantly distributed. Love is important" Haruki Murakami

## I RECOMMEND

### Social fun during LOCKDOWN



**Do anything with Discord**  
Book clubs, dance classes, study groups... anything is possible on Discord! This platform allows you to create semi-private, invite-only servers with a voice chat feature that remains active all the time. People can even share their screens, making socialising more fun. Many other fandoms, book lovers, culinary enthusiasts, and others have also started using this feature. Each server is allowed a maximum of 50 members.

**Chill with a Netflix Party**  
Thanks to the newly-added fun feature on Netflix, you can keep up with your list. The online streaming platform has facilitated a group chat alongside your favourite shows, which helps you go crazy over that 'OMG' moment. Some groups are using this platform to host movies at a given time.

OpenHousePictures, a group of promotional video creators, is using this interactive platform to host a 'party' at 7 pm every Thursday.

**Fun & games @ Houseparty**  
A video-chat application, Houseparty enables people in the 'house' or server to play games together, while talking to each other through the enabled video. Houseparty was #1 on the iPhone App Store in India, some time back.

(Remember apps may have privacy and security issues. Cross check before sharing your personal details)

## HOW TO CLEAN AND STORE YOUR FACE MASK?



Public health experts recommend wearing a mask made from cotton fabric, such as T-shirts or scarves and bandannas, when you are outside, and unable to maintain social distancing from others. The covering should be washed daily after use. It is best to clean your mask in a washing machine or with soap and hot water. The mask should be dried completely. Store the clean, dry mask in a new paper bag to keep it safe from germs.

## MANAGE GUILT OF being less productive IN PANDEMIC

Are you feeling guilty of not being able to complete your task in a stipulated time, or not being productive enough during these lockdown times? Remember, these are not normal times. If thoughts of being less productive still bothers you, then follow these steps to deal with it in a healthy way...

### STOP COMPARING YOURSELF WITH OTHERS

Just because your friend or someone on social media is doing something productive (like baking cakes and cookies every weekend), doesn't mean you need to compete with him or her. Whether quarantined or not, you should never compare yourself with others. Reason: everyone is blessed with one's own capabilities and potential. Believe in your strengths and work towards it.

### DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

While social media is one of the many things that has helped us during this tough time, it is also one of the reasons why you have this fear of missing out on things. Social media is the source that tells you about the things people are doing. So, reduce endless scrolling and focus on things that make you happy.

### KNOW PRODUCTIVITY IN REAL SELF

For each one of us, 'productivity' may mean different things. Someone else's idea of productivity may not be the same as yours. It is best to find out where your satisfactions lie. It can be something as simple as watching a movie, or cooking a nice meal for yourself.

### STAY POSITIVE

What we need to understand is that we are in a state of crisis. Not being productive shouldn't trouble us too much. The need of the hour is to focus on positivity — productivity will follow.

## Designer plastic pods attempt to make dining out safe

For restaurant owners worrying how they can welcome back customers but keep them safe from COVID-19, a French designer has created a cylinder of transparent plastic that hangs from a cable on the ceiling, much like a lampshade. A scoop cut out of the back allows diner to sit and stand up without having to bend over double. Christophe Gernigon, who invented the device, called the Plex'Eat, said the designs already on the market looked like booths in prison visiting rooms, so were not inviting for customers. "I wanted to make it more glamorous, more pretty," he said.

