



# THE TIMES OF INDIA

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TODAY'S EDITION

Check out the playlist of cold-weather podcasts, some fiction and some non-fiction

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What are your weekend plans? Students review their favourite movie/ book

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Five game-changers to watch out for in the Ind vs Aus 3rd Test at the SCG

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STUDENT EDITION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 2021



WEB EDITION

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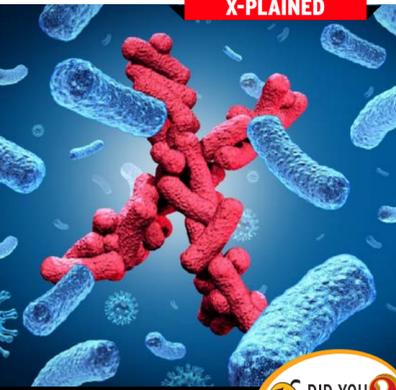
## Disease X

X-PLAINED

**WHAT** Jacques Muyembe Tamfum, the microbiologist, who helped discover the Ebola virus in 1976, has warned against an unknown number of new and potentially-fatal viruses that may threaten the planet in the near future—'Disease X' is one among them, he said. Disease X stands for an unexpected, unrecognised disease that is likely to follow the Covid pandemic, and cause worldwide trouble soon. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), Disease X is the possibility of an international epidemic that can spread from a pathogen unknown to the humankind. The disease has been included in the list of priority diseases by the health body.

**WHERE** Recently, a patient in a remote town in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was found infected by a pathogen that has not yet been identified, but had symptoms similar to Ebola. According to doctors, the woman showed early signs of hemorrhagic fever but as the patient tested Ebola negative, doctors fear that it could be signs of 'Disease X'.

**HOW** The disease is likely to be as fast-spreading as Covid-19, and as deadly as Ebola. According to Tamfum, these viruses emerging from the tropical forests of Africa could rapidly spread, and soon grow deadly for the human population. Muyembe expects many more zoonotic diseases to emerge in the future.



Zoonotic diseases such as the yellow fever, rabies, brucellosis and Lyme disease spread from animals to human beings and have caused epidemics and pandemics before. While the deadly HIV emerged from a type of Chimpanzee and then mutated into a fatal disease, SARS-CoV-2, along with SARS, and MERS are all coronaviruses that have suddenly jumped from animals to humans



## FACTOID

635 million

Or nearly a fifth of the world's population will be affected due to the sinking of the ground's surface or 'subsidence', mostly in Asia, by 2040, scientists have warned.

Subsidence is usually caused by the removal of local groundwater, and can be triggered by dry spells, the roots of the trees and shrubs, and human activities

## THE IMPACT

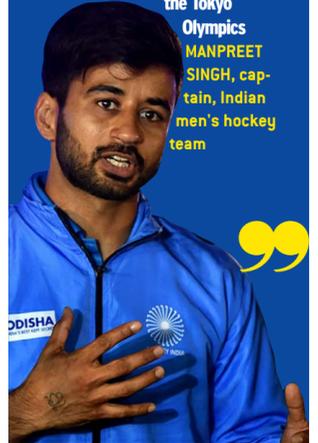
1 Experts warn that with the increase in the world population, there will be a surge in droughts in the future, leading to an increase in subsidence, which in turn will have a greater impact on the Earth

2 According to environmentalists, land subsidence typically hits hardest in regions with a high population density, greater demand for groundwater extraction, and areas undergoing water stress

## Quote unquote

The biggest learning from last year was to not let external factors affect our goal. There could be many uncertainties but we need to only worry about what's within our control, and that is to work towards giving our best. There could be several challenges leading up to the Olympic Games this year, but we have to be mentally-prepared for it. The next 200 days is going to be the most-important period of our lives. Each one of us have to give our 100 per cent in training to make a mark at the Tokyo

Olympics  
MANPREET SINGH, captain, Indian men's hockey team



## A car mask that can destroy 99.9% of virus droplets inside the vehicle!



Auto major Honda has announced a new air filter that not only prevents viruses from entering your car, it also destroys ones that get inside. Called Kurumaku, which literally means, 'car mask,' it acts like a face mask for your vehicle.

1 Available for Honda Japan's N-Box Kei micro-car, it's fitted on the top of the vehicle's regular filter and catches virus droplets in microscopic spikes, reducing their shape and damaging them in the process

2 It uses a zinc phosphate conversion system, the same technology carmakers employ to prevent rusting

3 The mask is an environmentally-friendly product, according to Honda, with less risk of fostering resistant viruses, as it does not use chemicals

4 The carmaker said the new Kurumaku filter can remove 99.8 per cent of virus droplets within 15 minutes of turning on a car's air recirculation system, and 99.9 per cent after 24 hours

## Priyanka Chopra Jonas announces sequel of 'We Can Be Heroes'

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas on Tuesday announced the sequel of her recently-released superhero film 'We Can Be Heroes'. Written and directed by Robert Rodriguez, the film is a spin-off of his 'The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl in 3-D' and the 'Spy Kids' franchise. It released on Netflix on December 25 in the US.

### ENTERTAINMENT



■ Around 44 million households viewed 'We Can be Heroes' in the movie's first 28 days on the service

■ Chopra Jonas said, a follow-up

to the movie is in development at Netflix, with Rodriguez set to return

■ Billed as an action-adventure, 'We Can Be Heroes' features Chopra Jonas as a nemesis to a group of children, who team up to save the planet and their superhero parents, who are kidnapped by the aliens

## For the first time since 1966, no foreign guest at R-Day event?

The UK PM, Boris Johnson, the chief guest for this year's Republic Day's parade has cancelled his visit to India, citing fresh lockdown in England and the rapid spread of the new Covid strain. His decision has left New Delhi with hardly any time to look for a new guest for the curtailed celebrations this year.



■ India may not have any guest at all for this year's Republic Day parade. If that happens, this will be the first time since 1966 that there will be no invite to a foreign leader for the R-Day

■ The name of the R-Day guest is generally finalised and announced months in advance.

■ The only time it got delayed in recent times was in 2018, when the suspense ended only in early December, with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa accepting the invite for the 2019 celebrations, after it was declined by the US President Donald Trump



## Missions to Mars, the Moon and beyond... await Earth in 2021

In a month's time from now, three rovers will pull into the vicinity of Mars. These explorers, which were launched in July last year, will herald a busy year in space exploration, launches and astronomical occurrences. A preview of some of 2021's most-notable expected events. Read on...

### DEEPER INTO DEEP SPACE

The most-scientifically important mission of 2021 would be the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope, the successor to the Hubble telescope. Two other NASA explorers will also head into the solar system.



### ODYSSEYS TO ORBIT

Human spaceflight was transformed in 2020, as SpaceX successfully launched a pair of crews to the space station. The company is likely to send more astronauts to the orbit in 2021, and not all of them may be working for NASA and other government space agencies. Multiple companies are working with the SpaceX to launch paying customers on the Crew Dragon capsule.



### MARTIAN MEETUP

The United Arab Emirates, China and the United States launched robotic missions to Mars last summer, seeking shortened voyages during the period that occurs every two years, when the Earth is closest to the Red planet. The spacecraft will join a bustling community of explorers either in the orbit or on the planet's surface. The first to arrive will be the Emirati Hope orbiter, the first deep space explorer of the Arab country's small but ambitious space programme.



### LOCKING ON TO THE LUNAR SURFACE

While China has landed a spacecraft on the Moon thrice in the past seven years, NASA has not landed there since 1972. Well, that may change in 2021, deepening the commercial transformation of American space efforts. NASA has in the past decade relied on private companies to build and operate spacecraft that could ferry cargo, and send people to the International Space Station. It is now trying a similar approach with Commercial Lunar Payload Services. The first company, Pittsburgh's Astrobotics, is scheduled to launch its Peregrine lander to the Moon in June. NASA and ISRO are eyeing human landing on the Moon, this decade.



### SOLAR SYSTEM SHOWTIME

If 2020 taught people anything, it was to expect the unexpected. While Covid-19 darkened the world, humanity was surprised by views of Comet NEOWISE in the summer months and enthralled with the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn during the winter solstice. It's a big universe, and there is so much of it to be seen. On May 26 this year, the world will witness a lunar eclipse, which will overlap with a period, when the Moon is closer to the Earth than usual, what some call a "super blood moon."



# ICY PODCASTS TO WARM YOUR COLD, COLD HEART

As the holiday season retreats and the long slog of the winter months looms, you can fight the mood or embrace it. Here's a playlist of cold-weather podcasts, some fiction, some non-fiction, all well told and produced, and all set in the snow...



### FOR SPORTS FANS: '30 FOR 30: ON THE ICE' AND 'OUT OF THE WOODS'

When it comes to cold weather athletics and a beautifully sound-designed story, most podheads likely think of audio-maker Rose Eveleth's 'On the Ice' episode for ESPN's '30 for 30' podcast series. In this classic piece of sports journalism, Eveleth shares the story of the women who led the first all-female trek to the North Pole in 1997 ("No expedition experience necessary," read the classified ad that drew them). While the challenge at the centre of the story seems the cruel conditions of the Arctic, the beauty in it comes not just from the women's journey to the top of the world but also from the lives they left behind.

### FOR TRUE-CRIME FREAKS: 'COLD'

Wonderly became a major podcast player by churning out bingeable series, and it has one thing down pat: true crime. And as all good true-crime fans know, there is nothing quite as enticing as cracking open a cold case. With Wonderly as a partner, Salt Lake TV station KSL did just that in the case of Susan Powell, a Utah mother of two who vanished on a blizzard evening in December 2009. After her husband, Josh, killed himself and their sons in a fire two years later, the local police declared the case closed. But with the help of Wonderly, KSL reporter sifts through the evidence, conducts new interviews and unearths the dark legacy of psychological and emotional abuse.

### FOR KIDS: 'SIX MINUTES'

Children (and their adults) who love the X-Men and other tales of youths with innate powers will get lost in this fictional saga. 'Six Minutes' tells the story of Holiday, an 11-year-old with total amnesia who is found adrift in icy Alaskan waters by the Anders family. They adopt her immediately, telling Holiday that she is their own. But her shrouded past slowly reveals itself, along with some superhuman abilities. The story is told in six-minute-long increments and adds up to an epic, 200-episode adventure.

### FOR MUSICAL-THEATRE NERDS: 'IN STRANGE WOODS'

Audio dramas — podcast-industry lingo for fictional podcasts — can sometimes get in trouble if a show is too well done. If a work of fiction presented in the style of true crime is too perfect in its mimicry, audiences can feel duped (see: the furious reviewers of the 'The Heads of Sierra Blanca'). While 'In Strange Woods' starts with your standard true-crime reporter's narration of the disappearance of a teenage boy in the snowy woods of Minnesota,

within a few minutes any question of *vérité* is completely removed when the characters break into song. If you don't love musical theatre, you may want to skip it. But the vocal performances are beautiful; the songs add drama in a way that manages not to be annoying; and the show's protagonist, a little sister grieving for her brother, makes for a compelling story that is still unfolding — so far, three 'chapters' of the five-episode limited series have been released.

### FOR STORYTELLING LOVERS: 'DARK WINTER NIGHTS'

The magic of live-storytelling podcasts like 'The Moth' and 'Snap Judgment' lies in the way they collapse the space between your headphones and the speaker onstage. 'Dark Winter Nights' began in 2014 with the goal of bringing Alaskan stories to whoever would listen. These live-event recordings are designed to transport you into "the stories we tell

up here in Alaska, on dark winter nights," according to the host and creator, Robert Prince, a professor of documentary filmmaking at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The tales range from the magnificent to the mundane, like a blind Alaskan finally "seeing" a whale on a trip with her family, or another running from unseasonably awake bears.

# GET A BUZZ OUT OF YOUR GARDEN



Gardening helps us reconnect while we're planting, weeding, watering or "Planting certain species". The task is all consuming and allows us to forget our woes, even if just for brief moments.

And it's so satisfying to grow edible produce or flowers — the feeling of nurturing and creativity helps alleviate issues which can overwhelm.

In the past few days we've just begun a new calendar year and a new gardening year.

Outside things are still. Before the days get noticeably longer and before the soil warms and plants grow we can take time to consider how to make our plots more beautiful in a way that's better for our environment.

Gardening is changing. We share our growing spaces with all types of other life forms. And we're waking up to a realization that our gardening practices need to accommodate the whole ecosystem rather than just our need for order, tidiness, bountiful pretty blossoms and perfect produce.

This year my emphasis through these pages will be an exploration of how we can garden for the greater good. And

there are a few headline topics which would be great to consider as we start out.



Through the seasons we'll look at each topic in detail but for now these are my 2021 garden resolution headlines:

### Plant for pollinators

Bee numbers have been declining for years due to a combination of reasons, including our increased use of pesticides, climate change and parasites.

We need bees, moths and other pollinators to ensure that our ecosystem is healthy and that we can grow food. By planting species which produce plenty of pollen which is easily available to our pollinators we will

ensure that our garden buzzes with life.

A varied ecosystem in your garden will enhance your enjoyment of the space and will attract beneficial insects and pollinators.

### Compost your green waste

Rather than shipping out your garden waste to let someone else take care of it, turn it into rich soil-nourishing material by creating a compost heap.

Grass cuttings, blossoms which have been dead headed, leftover salad leaves and even eggshells will break down and in time form a nutrient-rich material which can be dug directly into the ground or used as a mulch around the base of plants.

This will feed the soil and help it to retain moisture, and reduce the need for chemical or other artificial feeds.

### Use less or no peat

As gardeners in these islands we've become far too reliant on peat as a base for planting and growing. It's an excellent gardening aid but it's a finite resource which comes from valuable bogs that deserve protection.



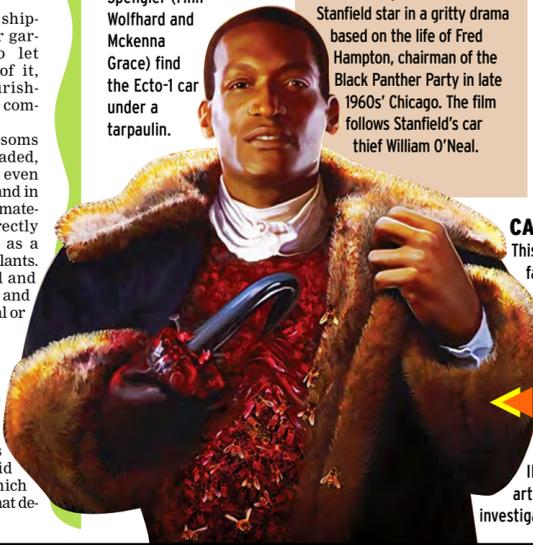
### GHOSTBUSTERS: AFTERLIFE

**JUNE 11**  
A new installment of the spooky series imagines 2016's reboot never even happened, something I've been trying to do for the past four years. This direct sequel to the 80s' films is set in the modern day. Grandchildren of the late Ghostbuster Egon Spengler (Finn Wolfhard and McKenna Grace) find the Ecto-1 car under a tarpaulin.



### JUDAS AND THE BLACK MESSIAH

**RELEASE DATE TBA**  
Daniel Kaluuya and Lakeith Stanfield star in a gritty drama based on the life of Fred Hampton, chairman of the Black Panther Party in late 1960s' Chicago. The film follows Stanfield's car thief William O'Neal.



### THE KING'S MAN FEB 21

Director Matthew Vaughn decided to make the third film in his Kingsman spy series a prequel. Set during the First World War, the plot sees Rhys Ifans' mad monk Rasputin recruiting the world's worst criminals to help him take over the planet. Ralph Fiennes is our new dapper hero, a former Army officer who inducts a young recruit into a secret society.

**ETERNALS NOVEMBER 5**  
Marvel's superheroes return this year with six movies. Scarlett Johansson goes solo with Black Widow. Tom Hardy stars in Venom 2 while Tom Holland takes Spider-Man out for a spin. Jared Leto gets his teeth into the vampiric Morbius and Michelle Yeoh makes her debut in Shang-Chi And The Legend Of The Ten Rings. But 2021 will be all about Eternals with Angelina Jolie, Kit Harington, Salma Hayek and others.



### CANDYMAN AUGUST 27

This is the one that horror fans have been screaming about. Co-writer and producer Jordan Peele has brought Tony Todd's hook-handed ghoul back to life for a sequel to the 1992 original. Yahya Abdul-Mateen II plays a Chicago artist who decides to investigate a local legend.

### TOP GUN: MAVERICK JULY 9

After nearly a decade in development, the sequel to Tom Cruise's 1986 hit will finally land in cinemas. Cruise's Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell is now a flight instructor at the Top Gun fighter pilot academy where he's taken Bradley Bradshaw (Whiplash star Miles Teller), the son of his late pal Goose, under his wing.

