

ANALYSIS 7 STOP VACCINE NATIONALISM

MONEY 8 MANUFACTURERS UPBEAT AS GOVT IMPOSES CURBS ON IMPORTS OF TVs

SPORTS 12 PLAYER LIKE STOKES IS EVERY CAPTAIN'S DREAM: SMITH

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# the pioneer



BUNNY TO BE SEEN AS STUDENT LEADER IN KORATALA'S NEXT? Page 11

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## SAJAD GANI LONE RELEASED FROM YEAR-LONG DETENTION

Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Conference (JKPC) chairman Sajad Gani Lone was on Friday released from nearly a year-long detention, officials said. Lone was released days ahead of the first anniversary of the Centre's move to revoke Article 370 of the Constitution in August last year, the officials said. Lone also confirmed his release by taking to Twitter "Finally five days short of a year I have been officially informed that I am a free man. So much has changed. So have I. Jail was not a new experience. Earlier ones were harsh with usual doses of physical torture. But this was psychologically draining. Much to share hopefully soon," he said in a tweet.



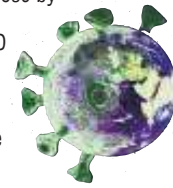
## MONSOON LIKELY TO BE NORMAL IN SECOND HALF OF RAINFALL SEASON: IMD

Monsoon is likely to be normal in the second half of the four-month rainfall season, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday. In its Long Range Forecast for the rainfall during second half (August-September) of the 2020 Southwest Monsoon, the IMD said August is likely to receive rainfall that is 97 per cent of the Long Period Average. "Quantitatively, the rainfall over the country as a whole during the second half of the season is likely to be 104 per cent of LPA with a model error of plus/minus 8 per cent," the IMD said. The Long Period Average (LPA) rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1961-2010 is 88 centimetres.



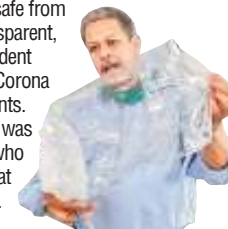
## OVER 292,000 CORONAVIRUS CASES IN ONE DAY ACROSS WORLD

The World Health Organization reported a record increase in global coronavirus cases on Friday, with the total rising by 292,527. The biggest increases were from the United States, Brazil, India and South Africa, according to a daily report. Deaths rose by 6,812. The four countries have dominated global headlines with large outbreaks. The previous WHO record for new cases was 284,196 on July 24. Deaths rose by 9,753 on July 24, the second largest one-day increase ever. Deaths have been averaging 5,200 a day in July, up from an average of 4,600 a day in June.



## BHOPAL HOSPITAL DEVICES "AIR BUBBLE" TO KEEP CORONA WARRIORS SAFE

To help Madhya Pradesh in its fight against the coronavirus, a doctor with a private hospital here has come up with a simple yet ingenious way to keep doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers safe from COVID-19 - an air bubble. The fully sealed, transparent, face covering - like a face suit - has an independent supply of virus-free compressed air so state's Corona Warriors can breathe safely while treating patients. Cardiologist Dr Skand Trivedi said this concept was specifically introduced for healthcare workers who look after coronavirus patients and was aimed at saving lives of doctors, nurses and technicians.



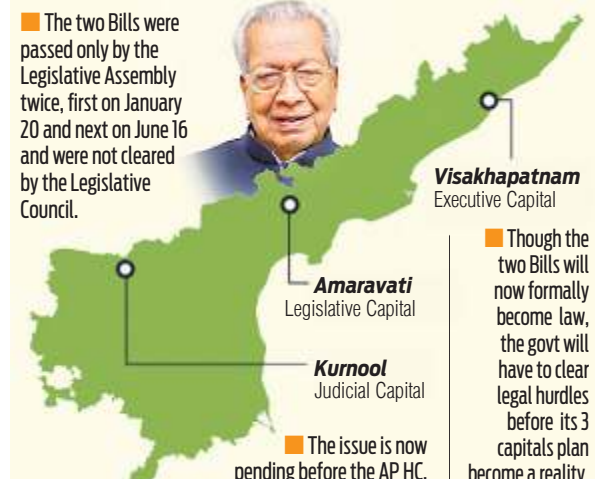
Mukesh Ambani calls for urgent policy steps to do away with 2G

# NOW, AP CAPITAL DIVIDED INTO THREE

AP's three-capital bills get Guv's assent

C PRADEEP VIJAYAWADA

Moving at a rapid pace, the YSRCP government on Friday issued Gazette notifications publishing Act No. 27 of 2020 repealing the APCRDA and Act No. 20 of 2020 of the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020, just hours after Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan gave his assent to the two Bills.



Though the two Bills will now formally become law, the govt will have to clear legal hurdles before its 3 capitals plan become a reality. The issue is now pending before the AP HC. The Gazette stated that to enable a decentralised model of governance and to provide an inclusive governance in the State there shall be three Seats of Governance in the State of Andhra Pradesh to called as Capitals. The Gazette defined three Capitals as:



K'taka may bring in law banning sale of tobacco, paan masala: CM

# Centre's position on GST payout rude jolt to States

Telangana govt set to lose Rs 14,000 cr this fiscal year

L VENKAT RAM REDDY HYDERABAD

The opinion expressed by Attorney General of India KK Venugopal that there is no obligation on the part of the Centre to pay the GST compensation shortfall to states and that it is for the GST Council to decide on ways to make good any shortfall has come as a rude jolt to Telangana government, which has been reeling under severe financial crisis from the beginning FY 2020-21.



Upon easing of lockdown restrictions, it lost Rs 2,000 crore in June and July additionally, at the rate of Rs 1,000 crore per month.

The TS government faced Rs 4,000 crore revenue shortfall due to lockdown in April and May, at the rate of Rs 2,000 crore per month, for which it had sought GST compensation from the Centre. Upon easing of lockdown restrictions, it lost Rs 2,000 crore in June and July additionally, at the rate of Rs 1,000 crore per month. The Finance Department estimated that the state government would lose another Rs 8,000 crore in the next eight months,

# 38 dead in Punjab from toxic liquor

PNS CHANDIGARH

At least 38 people have died in several districts of Punjab allegedly after consuming toxic liquor, prompting Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to order a high-level probe. Eight accused have been arrested in the case.

A government statement said the deaths reportedly took place in Amritsar, Batala and Tarn Taran districts after Wednesday night.

# 10 people die after consuming sanitiser in Andhra village

PNS VIJAYAWADA

At least ten alcohol addicts, including three beggars, died after allegedly consuming sanitiser as an alternative to liquor in a village under COVID-19 lockdown in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh, police said on Friday. The victims of Kurichedu village had been drinking sanitiser for the past few days, mixing it with water and soft drinks, Prakasam district Superintendent of Police

# GRAVE SITUATION Cremations double in Hyd due to Covid

PEOPLE IN DISTRICTS DON'T WANT BODIES TO BE SENT BACK

PNS HYDERABAD

The number of cremations in city graveyards has doubled since the outbreak of Covid-19. Highly placed sources in the government pointed out that 'as a precautionary measure' even non-corona victims were being cremated as per Covid-19 norms. Once a patient succumbs to coronavirus, the death audit report committee reviews the cause of the death and reports it to the government on a daily basis. Sources said, "In Telangana, even if a patient is infected with coronavirus, but has comorbidities, the deaths are registered as co-morbid condition. Only if the person dies due to breathing problems



and is infected with the virus, the audit committee registers it as Covid-19 death. This Covid-19 death is reported in the health bulletin." Sources said that the immunity of a person with co-morbidities becomes impaired because of which they get infected by Covid-19. The reason for death in such cases cannot be attributed to Covid-19 as the underlying co-morbidity may have caused the issue in the first place.

In TS, if a patient is infected with coronavirus, but has comorbidities, the deaths are registered as due to co-morbid condition

In other states, irrespective of co-morbidities, if the person is infected with Covid-19, it is reported as Covid-19 death

# 81% people are unaware of Covid infection: Eatala

NAVEENA GHANATE HYDERABAD

About 81% of people are blissfully unaware so to speak that they have Covid-19. Health Minister Eatala Rajender said that 81 per cent of people are unaware of being infected by coronavirus, without symptoms, but are getting cured. Speaking at Khammam, Eatala said "I have been observing this coronavirus closely for over four months. Today, we are putting out numbers of lakhs of tests in each state, 81 per cent don't have symptoms and remain unaware. Once they realise, they are being cured under home isolation. Only 14% are showing symptoms. Only 5 per cent are serious who are negligent towards or those whose



I have been observing this coronavirus closely over past 4 months. Today we are putting out numbers of lakhs of tests in each state, 81percent don't have symptoms and remain unaware. -EATALA RAJENDER Health Minister

immune system is suppressed. Even these people can be cured if they visit hospital at earliest." Minister Eatala Rajender said that Telangana was next to Kerala and Tamil Nadu in the field of medicine. The Minister appreciated doctors and sanitation workers in the state for their commitment to service

during the corona times. He praised government doctors working in Khammam. The Minister held a review with district officials in Khammam city on Friday. Eatala said it was the responsibility of the government to instill courage in people. "We are working for it."



# Gold worth Rs 1.66 cr seized from 11 air passengers in Hyd

PNS HYDERABAD

Smuggled gold weighing 3.11 kg and valued at Rs 1.66 crore was seized at the international airport here from 11 passengers, Customs officials said on Friday.

According to Customs officials, the passengers, who arrived here from Dammam (in Saudi Arabia) by a Vande Bharath Mission flight on Thursday had "concealed the gold" (bars) in the inner pocket of their trousers which they were wearing.

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Shravana & Shukla Paksha Panchangam Tithi : Trayodashi: 09:53 pm Nakshatram: Mula: 06:48 am Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work) Rahukalam: 09:10 am - 10:46 am Yamagandam: 01:58 pm - 03:33 pm Varjyam: 04:26 pm - 06:02 pm Gulika: 05:59 am - 07:34 am Good Time: (to start any important work) Amritkalam: 02:03 am - 03:39 am Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:56 am - 12:47 pm

### HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Drizzle Temp: 31/24 Humidity: 82% Sunrise: 05:55 am Sunset: 06:49 pm Current Weather Conditions Updated July 31, 2020 5:00 PM

# Sonu Sood comes to rescue of 3 orphaned children

PNS BHONGIR

After having helped a dalit farmer in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh with a new tractor and Software Sarada of Warangal in Telangana with a new job, Sonu Sood, who chooses to be a Good Samaritan in real life, has now come forward to help orphaned children in Atmakuru mandal of Bhongir district. A couple living in Atmakuru, Satyanarayana and Anuradha, left behind three children.



Satyanarayana died a year ago due to ill-health. After his death, Anuradha used to do small jobs to support the family. As fate would have it, she died a week ago due to ill-health, forcing the children to fend for themselves. The eldest son in the family now takes care of his younger brother and sister. Moved at the plight of the children, Rajesh Karanam posted the matter on Twitter and tagged Sonu Sood. The actor acted immediately responded, saying that the three children would no longer be orphans. He offered to take the kids under his wings. Sonu Sood has

previously helped thousands of stranded migrant workers, hundreds of nurses reach their native places during the lockdown and thereafter. He was also instrumental in helping Indians stranded in other countries get back home.

# KCR Govt has unleashed terror against Dalits, alleges Uttam

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president & Nalgonda MP Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has alleged that the TRS Government, headed by Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu, has unleashed terror against Dalits across the State. Addressing media persons on Friday, Uttam Kumar Reddy said several incidents of atrocities, violence and injustice against Dalits had surfaced in Telangana in the last two-three days. The 'horrifying' incidents had sent



shockwaves among people not only belonging to Dalit communities, but also Girijans, Backward Classes, minorities and other weaker sections.

# KCR not cooperating with Centre to solve water rows: Bandi

PNS HYDERABAD

Karimnagar MP and Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar has alleged that state Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu is not cooperating with the Centre when it comes to resolving water disputes between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states. Bandi Sanjay told the media here that Telangana State had

been getting only 200 tmc of water instead of 500 tmc from the Krishna river due to the negligent attitude of KCR. "He has no sincerity in protecting the people of Telangana. KCR is filling his coffers in the name of redesign of projects with commissions. KCR and (AP CM) Jagan are looting the Telugu States with internal agreement."



**IN BRIEF**

**CM, Governor extend Bakrid greetings**

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao on Friday conveyed greetings to the Muslim community on the eve of Bakrid (Id-Ul-Zuha). In a message, the Chief Minister has stated that it's a festival of sacrifice and reminds everyone to follow the noble teachings of the prophet and imbibe the spirit of sacrifice, compassion and tolerance for fellow beings during these days of Covid-19. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan also extended her greetings to the people of Telangana on the eve of Bakrid. The Governor appealed to all to celebrate the festival safely by staying home and taking all necessary precautions against Covid-19.



**Digital content for vocational Inter students**

Due to the Pandemic, many educational institutions have been looking at online/digital classes for the students as new medium of education. To ensure the education of vocational intermediate student goes on uninterrupted, the TSBE is looking at producing digital content for the students. In a letter to the Commissioner of Intermediate Education, Syed Omer Jaleel, has requested the District Intermediate Education Officers to nominate two subject experts, district wise, from each course before August 3. The step has been taken as the department desires to prepare digital content (video lessons) of 22 vocational which they are offering and want to constitute subject committee with subject experts from each course.

**SCR completes bridge strengthening work**

South Central Railway (SCR) has been implementing an extensive and well-planned strategy to efficiently utilise the current situation of reduced train movements to give long term benefits to the rail passengers. It identified some long-pending bridge repair work which requires strengthening. As a result, work was carried out over a record number of 23 bridges during April-June 2020. The selection of bridges was also done meticulously so that the bridges falling in the key and congested sections were given prime importance. Some of the bridges that were repaired are the bridges over Kazipet-Vijayawada section, Kacheguda-Dhone section, Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam section and Nadikudi-Macherla section. Gajanan Malhya, General Manager, SCR, has appreciated the efforts of the staff.

**SCSC conducts virtual interactive meet**

The Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC) conducted a virtual Orientation-cum-Interactive meeting of Infra and Developers with Cyberabad Police Commissioner and SCSC Chairman VC Sajjanar on Friday. The content setting of the meeting was done by forum leader Srikanth Badiga followed by the address of Sajjanar, who thanked the Infra and Developers community for their support by donating groceries, safety kits, meals, etc., and the support extended during the Covid-19 pandemic. He said though SCSC started with the Information Technology industry initially, collaboration with other industries also needed to improve safety and security of the society. Later in the question and answer session, suggestions came in about promoting the public transportation, organising blood donation camps in residential communities, etc., to which the commissioner responded positively.

**Auto-rickshaw drivers struggling to meet ends**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two months after the Delhi government relaxed restrictions amid coronavirus outbreak, auto drivers in the city struggle to keep afloat as they face weak demand and financial pressure. They rue that very few people are stepping out and availing their services, while private financiers are forcing them to pay back the loans taken by them to buy the vehicles. With people still keeping indoors due to the coronavirus scare, autorickshaw drivers are finding passengers with much difficulty these days. Most of these drivers are finding it hard to survive.



**They rue that very few people are stepping out and availing their services, while private financiers are forcing them to pay back the loans taken by them to buy the vehicles**

With the alleged harassment of the financiers, who are not hesitating to seize their auto-rickshaws, many left for their villages and bounced back and landed in Hyderabad as they find no work there also. For want of business, they defaulted payment of EMIs to financiers. There are 1.4 lakh autorickshaws in GHMC limits. Daily, 8-10 lakh people use the three-wheeler services. The public transport has come to a standstill and people are only using private transport. Autos, buses, MMTS and

train services are also affected due to the virus. Because of the virus, people are hesitating to use autorickshaws and cab services. Schools and colleges and other educational institutions have remained closed, robbing the autowallahs of their business. While people are apprehensive of contracting the virus if they board autorickshaws, the autowallahs are also apprehensive of contracting the virus from people. A driver who used to earn anywhere between Rs 800 and Rs 1000 per day is now currently earning Rs 200

a day is doubtful. Paying house rents and supporting families have become difficult. Besides, the harassment of financiers is unbearable, says an autorickshaw driver Sankar of Adikmet. Another driver Ramulu of ECIL says that he and other drivers are afraid of bringing out the three-wheeler onto the roads for fear of contracting the virus. But, it is inevitable. Otherwise, families of drivers would have to starve. He expressed concern over financiers seizing the autorickshaw. Generally speaking,

when bandhs are observed buses will go off the road. Then people will patronise autorickshaws. Because of the Coronavirus, there are no city buses playing, but people are also hesitating to use autorickshaws. The increasing number of cases of virus is prohibiting the people to step out of their homes. Even if the government asked the private financiers to stop recovery of loans, they are behaving high-handedly with autorickshaw drivers and seizing the vehicles, A Satti Reddy, Telangana auto-rickshaw drivers' association said.



**Coal mafia gang busted; 8 arrested**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Special Operations Team (SOT), LB Nagar Zone along with the Ibrahimpatnam Police nabbed eight persons who were involved in the adulteration of coal by mixing the inferior quality coal with the high grade consignment being imported from South Africa and Australia, as well as with the coal from Singareni collieries. Officials seized valuables worth Rs 1.62 crore from them. The arrested were identified as Gunde Raju (38), Katravath Soma (33), Challa Amarender Reddy (33), Kurathala Mallesh (27), Nizamuddin (25), Erukala Anjaiah (50), Sagarala Satyam (28) and Rizwan (20). Four other persons, Uttampalli Laxman (38), Ameer

**The police seized valuables worth Rs 1.62 cr from their possession**

Mohammad, Umakonda Purshotham Reddy (36), Karunakar Reddy and Ram Reddy are absconding, said the Police. During the early hours of Friday, officials raided both the coal yards and apprehended the arrested accused. Efforts are on to apprehend the absconding, the police said. Officials seized 1,050 tonnes of coal, 700 tonnes of coal ash, cash, land movers and JCBs and other evidence, all worth Rs 1.62 crore.

**Sudanese nationals held with sandalwood**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Five Sudanese nationals were intercepted at Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport on Friday while trying to smuggle sandalwood. According to officials, the men were part of a group that was travelling to Khartoum, Sudan, in a special relief flight.



**GHMC cracks down on illegal structures**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC Town Planning wing demolished illegal structures in Serilingampally Zone. So far, the Town planning wing demolished 130 slabs of 30 buildings from the last four days. The special drive of demolitions of illegal structures was taken up from 27 July in Serilingampally Zone. Earlier, in the special drive, GHMC has demolished 29 unauthorised

buildings in Ayyappa Society by deploying heavy machinery. To demolish the unauthorised buildings at present the GHMC is using gas cutters, compressors. GHMC is also demolishing the additional floor constructions, which are more than permitted. Further, GHMC appealed the citizens not to buy illegal/unauthorised constructions and buy only those who got GHMC construction permissions and occupancy certificates.

**Transport organisations unhappy with authorities**

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA ■ HYDERABAD

With very few people stepping out due to the pandemic, the transport industry has taken a huge hit. After reaching out to state authorities for help, various transport organisations plan to stage a protest in front of the RTA, Khairatabad, on August 4. The heads of various transport organisations held a meeting regarding the same.

**We have been trying to talk to the authorities concerned for a while now. But every time we reach out, the police blocks our way, said Shaik Salauddin, Chairman of Telangana State Taxi and Driver JAC**

"We have been trying to talk to the authorities concerned for a while now. But every time we reach out, the police blocks our way," says Shaik Salauddin, Chairman of Telangana State Taxi and Driver JAC, adding, "Most drivers haven't been earning anything for four months. No one from the government has even expressed their concern about the matter. The state gov-

ernment keeps extending the deadline for fines, taxes, insurance and other things, however we need a waiver. We want to talk about our grievances to the Transport Commissioner, if not we will stage a protest." Talking about the issues various drivers are facing, Manchireddy Rajender Reddy, the Working President of Telangana Lorry Owners' Association, says, "There are nearly 5 lakh 20,000 lorries in Telangana. The owners of these

vehicles haven't worked a day for the past four months. However, most of them were asked to for insurance, which ranges between Rs 1 lakh to 1.5 lakh. When they haven't earned anything, how can they pay such huge amount? Also, people who have already paid for the insurance have their vehicles parked at home. We demand the government pays a minimum of Rs 7,500 to these drivers, so they can at least run their kitchen."

**2 suspects arrested for burglary**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Crime Station, LB Nagar along with the Pahadishareef Police on Friday, apprehended two persons at Tukkguda, who were involved in burglary offences. Officials recovered valuables worth Rs 5.60 lakh from their possession.



**Rising Covid cases impact train occupancy**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the Corona cases are on the rise in Telugu states, people have stopped using public transport including trains. As such, the occupancy ratio of 23 special trains introduced by the Centre in May this year has come down to hardly 20,000 travellers a day as against the previous 25,000-30,000 per day. As the Centre declared Unlock 3.0, the people are not prepared to undertake travel. The lockdowns clamped in some cities for about week or fifteen has impacted the train travel. The Secunderabad-Kolkata Howrah Express is being run up to Bhubaneswar. Recently, some more train services have been cancelled. Two trains have been first introduced between Bengaluru and Delhi and Secunderabad and Delhi for

the benefit of those stranded in places like Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam and so on. Later, special trains have been run to places like Bengaluru, Delhi, Mumbai, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati and other areas. As such, 23 train services have been introduced. Reservation system has been introduced even for general bogies. Initially, there used to be a waiting list up to 100. As Covid cases are on the rise in Telugu states since July, the people have stopped undertaking travel. In SCR, over 10.50-lakh commute daily on 750-odd train services. About 220 train services are operated to various destinations from Secunderabad alone. The SCR daily income is put at Rs 12 crore. Currently, it earns only Rs 1 to Rs 1.5 crore.

**ADDED ATTRACTION**



In an attempt at making the ride along the Outer Ring Road (ORR) a pleasurable experience, authorities concerned have taken-up series of measures including dense tree plantation, lightning and landscaping

**Traffic cops advice against rash driving**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The traffic officials of Cyberabad issued an advisory against reckless driving, which includes driving without a helmet, insurance, or license, after two people lost their lives in road mishaps. Citing a case study, DCP of Traffic said that Hemalatha Rao died in an accident at the Moosapet Crossroads. She was on her way home from the flower market with her daughter Priyanka who was driving the scooter. However, she lost her balance and rammed into a lorry. "While Priyanka was wear-

ing a helmet, her mother was not. When they fell on the road, a rear wheel of the lorry went over Hemalatha's head. She died on the spot due to a major head injury. Priyanka, who received minor injuries, is at a local hospital," the police said. In another incident, a 14-year-old boy lost his life in an accident in front of the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate on Friday. Citing these two incidents, the Cyberabad transport deputy commissioner said families should not allow minors or those without a licence to drive.

**Covid worries spike demand for used vehicles**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The demand for second hand cars is on the rise across the country as the people are still not ready to take public transport. The demand for second hand cars, which was 19 per cent prior to lockdown, has almost doubled to 37 per cent in the post-lockdown situation, according to a sample survey conducted by Cars 24. The organisation surveyed 100 dealers in metropolitan cities and over 10,000 customers and concluded that people are inclined to use of personal transport. People are not prepared to travel by buses, Metro Rail, shared cabs, car pooling, local trains and so on. On one hand the demand for used cars has increased, but on the other the market for new cars slumped from 81 per cent to 63 per cent. The



demand for used cars, of all metro cities, is more in Bengaluru. The second hand market in the garden city has increased by 81 per cent. Delhi ranked second with 35 per cent growth in demand. Hyderabad ranked number three with 10 per cent hike in demand. Pune

figured at the other end of the spectrum with only 5 per cent demand. Many people are opting to buy used cars, rather than used two wheelers, as the cars are safer to travel on highways. The survey identified that many prefer to buy cars in the

**Tapping into the accelerated demand for used cars, major automakers are now doubling down on organising this market**

price range between Rs 2 and 5 lakh. The car brands popular with second hand car buyers are Maruti Swift, WagonR, Volks Wagon, Hyundai i 10 and I 20 cars. Those who are using public transport hitherto on account of pollution and traffic congestion are preferring to

use private transport. The used cars business is picking up both online and offline. Services like contactless sales, door-step test drives, online documentation and digital payments, free ownership transfer, testing the car condition, easy finance at low interest rate are being offered to woo intending buyers. Meanwhile, automakers indeed are making the most of the opportunity. Tapping into the accelerated demand for used cars, major automakers are now doubling down on organising this market and are procuring vehicles not just of their won brand, but others as well. Volkswagen, for instance, said it is already selling as many used cars as new ones amid the pandemic -- a first for them in the country -- and the company hopes to double its used car sales this fiscal.





# Rajasthan mess

As Gehlot herds MLAs at Jaisalmer and the BJP plays behind the scene, tople games dilute the people's mandate



The Ashok Gehlot-Sachin Pilot standoff in Rajasthan shows no signs of abating with a new point of friction emerging as soon as an existing issue gets sorted. And it seems that the inter-generational war in the Congress is all set to worsen even if Gehlot aced the numbers game for now. It is not a matter of saving the Government but scoring points in an ego war that will ultimately not help the party. For even if Gehlot sails through, there will be no end to the discontent of the younger breed led by Pilot, who had staked their efforts to craft the party's return and relevance in the State as elders had failed, but were denied their right to rewards. If Pilot, no doubt a prize potential for the BJP, which makes no bones about a Congress-free heartland, does manage to get more MLAs to his side, he will still be a deliverer of power but not the Chief Minister. He will be just a pawn and not the embodiment of the cause he represents. No matter how flexible it becomes, the BJP can at best still keep him as a deputy that he was. In the end, the Congress would be the loser as it would be seen as dishonouring the people's verdict with its personality clashes instead of consolidating governance and insuring its house. So now that Governor Kalraj Mishra has agreed to call a House session on August 14, expecting the Chief Minister to seek the trust vote, which the rebels led by his ex-deputy Chief Minister will attend, Gehlot is again upping the perception game with a measure of bluster. Having cornered Pilot with sedition charges, saying he was colluding with the BJP to topple his Government, and sacking him, he was hoping the rebels led by his younger adversary would be disqualified for anti-party activities. The courts didn't allow it, so Gehlot decided to withdraw the legal case and mount a political campaign, claiming that the BJP had bought over Pilot. While he has been screaming "horse trading" since the Rajya Sabha polls, which incidentally the Congress won, he's now claiming that the Governor's 21-day window before the Assembly session will "increase horse-trading" and that the rates had been upped for crossing over. He has even accused Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati of siding with the BJP and questioning last year's merger of the six BSP MLAs into the Congress while overlooking the BJP's absorption of four TDP MPs (in Rajya Sabha) into it overnight. He has launched a direct missile against the Modi-Shah duo by calling out the Government for "misusing" the Income Tax Department, ED, CBI to "scare and threaten everyone." Will this pay off?

There's no doubt that the BJP, in no small part aided by its central leadership, is trying all methods, from inducement to intimidation, to wrest Rajasthan. Or that Gehlot is equally masterful, herding his MLAs with resort quarantine, and now taking them to Jaisalmer. But the political discourse is getting murkier with a return of money bags and power-broking, making a mockery of the mandate and diluting focus besides diverting limited resources in pandemic times. Gehlot's desperation stems from the fact that he has a narrow lead, one over the majority mark of 101 in the 200-member Assembly. Officially, the Pilot camp has 19 MLAs and now that they can vote, could destabilise Gehlot. And if the court case against the six BSP MLAs, who merged into the Congress, is pursued, then things could get uncomfortable. His desperation is symptomatic of the larger churning in the Congress, which was evident at a virtual meeting of the party presided over by Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh. Rahul Gandhi loyalist Rajiv Satav openly blamed UPA-II as the reason for the party's erosion in public life, claiming that "the stint of that Government ruined the Congress and so the accountability for the party's crisis must be fixed from that time." Yet the elders persisted with their line that "lightweight, inexperienced youngsters" were trying to "undermine thrive" by creating a generational divide. The old guards forget that some of them were given prime responsibility in their younger years, upsetting many seniors of their time. And in their advanced years, they have settled into inertia, continuing with what they have built for themselves rather than rebuilding the party. Yet there are younger leaders, who are driven by the desire to leave their mark and are ready to even work at the grassroots as Pilot has shown. For all its talk of devolution of power, the older lot in the Congress still relies on centralised thinking rather than empowering the grassroots functionaries or at least giving them a listen. Pilot had not been so persistent about the top post initially but wanted his stake in governance. Yet he was left out of every decision-making process. Gehlot allowed that rift to widen instead of closing it and strategically keeping him busy. He is a mature politician enough to be told what was needed to be done. But he let his ego and a chieftain's territoriality come in the way, one that has cost the Congress its Governments in Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Arunachal, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

# Payment problems

Digital payments are more popular than ever before but a Government audit has found glaring holes in the system



Individuals and companies may not like audits because they might expose some of their deliberate wrongdoings. But very often, audits are useful because they can help plug loopholes and gaps that many folks never knew existed. In some cases, an audit might bring up obvious flaws that in hindsight should have been noticed and be the result of an innocuous mistake. But as we all know, innocuous mistakes can have devastating results. And this is what a hitherto unknown audit of the national digital payments processor, the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), has revealed, including an encrypted file that stored names and card details of millions of individuals.

While the NPCI claims to have rectified the errors that were revealed in the audit, this highlights why it is important to have such technology audits for all major Government services. Huge swathes of our personal information reside with Governments — from the many panchayats and municipalities, districts, States to the Centre. Then there are medical, tax and payment records. It is important, more so among private companies, that information stays secure at all points. The new data privacy norms mooted by the Government have been described as a "nationalisation of data" by some commentators. While that is an extreme description, the norms on data protection are thin and punishment for violations as well. What will happen when Government data is breached? At the same time, it is important to realise that a majority of the frauds on the internet surround digital payments. Mechanisms have to be developed around them. Financial fraud has existed since the beginning of time and will continue to bother us. Mistakes will be made but we have to ensure that the digital payment ecosystem, vitally important in today's contactless day and age, stays as clean as possible.

# Hasty proposition

The timing, motive and the very structure of the five-member committee formed to make changes to criminal laws are questionable. Greater transparency is needed



AJOY KUMAR

There is a famous parable that is believed to have originated in the Indian sub-continent and finds a mention in ancient Buddhist, Hindu and Jain texts. The story is of a group of blind men, who encounter an elephant for the first time when the animal is brought to their village. Having no idea about its shape or size, the blind men decided that they must inspect the animal by touching it in order to paint a picture in their minds. One blind man put his hand on the trunk of the elephant and said that the animal was a thick snake. Another touched the elephant's ear and said that it seemed like a type of fan. A third blind man, who touched the leg of the elephant, said that it resembled a tree trunk while another felt its tusk and thought the animal was like a spear. The parable deals with how our subjective experiences, while they may be true and honest, have an inherent limitation. They fail to account for the truths and experiences of other people. The parable is an appropriate metaphor for the law-making process adopted by the BJP Government at the helm.

A recent example of this myopic approach to law-making is the constitution of a five-member Committee for Reforms in Criminal Law, which has been set up by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs at the National Law University, Delhi. The panel includes the Vice Chancellor and Registrar of the university as well as the Vice Chancellor of Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur, renowned criminal lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani and a former district and sessions judge from New Delhi. The committee's primary role is to recommend changes and reforms to the criminal laws of the country by examining the procedural, evidentiary and substantive rules.

Let me be clear, no one can deny the fact that there's an urgent need to reform our criminal laws. However, the manner in which the committee has been formed, the way it is expected to operate and the limited perspective that it will offer leave a lot to be desired. With regard to the formation of the committee, it has been established under the directions of the Union Home Ministry, which essentially has under its purview the very organs that have violated a number of criminal laws while carrying out their functions.

This is especially surprising because law reform is typically the domain of the Ministry of Law and Justice. This Ministry forms commissions, which consist of lawyers, bureaucrats and other relevant stakeholders. In fact, in the past, several law commissions have recommended changes to the criminal laws in their reports. So, it is not clear why this role was suddenly usurped by the Union Home Ministry.

The second issue relates to the manner in which this newly-formed panel was



constituted. While the need to reform criminal laws has been felt time and again, it is unclear why such a necessity arose at the time of a global pandemic, when every fifth case of COVID-19 is reportedly an Indian. The committee has commenced online consultations barring a few people who may not be able to participate through this mode. Thereby, it has automatically excluded the very people who are most affected by the abuse of criminal laws and the due process. Not only is the commencement of the consultation suspectible but the time given to the committee to prepare its report — six months — is reflective of a cruel sense of humour where unfortunately, the joke will be on everyday citizens, who are subjected to outdated criminal laws on a regular basis.

The third matter relates to the constitution of the committee itself. It is shocking how north India-centric and more specifically Delhi-centric the committee is. What is even more appalling is that the committee lacks diversity as there is no woman or any member from the minority or the marginalised sections of society on the panel. These are the very

UNFORTUNATELY, THE COMMITTEE IS A REFLECTION OF THE BJP'S APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE WHERE IT IS ASSUMED THAT INDIA IS NOT A DIVERSE, VIVID POPULACE BUT A HOMOGENOUS BLOCK; WHERE DISCUSSION AND DEBATE ARE AN UNNECESSARY TIME LAG

people who disproportionately are the victims of criminal laws.

For example, it is staggering that the committee will be debating on things like whether marital rape should be excluded from the domain of rape laws. However, women practitioners of criminal law have not been included in its panel. It is precisely for this reason that a number of retired judges, senior advocates and women lawyers from all across the country have written to the committee, expressing concern about its blinkered nature.

Unfortunately, the committee is a reflection of the BJP's approach to governance where it is assumed that India is not a diverse, vivid populace but a homogenous block; where discussion and debate are an unnecessary time lag. It is precisely this approach that was visible when a monumental disaster called demonetisation was inflicted upon us. While the well-to-do and the upper middle class managed just fine with easy access to funds, it was the poor and the unorganised sector that bore the brunt (and is still bearing) of perhaps the most ignorant policy decision in recent memory.

The fact that cash in the economy today is higher than it was even during pre-demonetisation levels is an embarrassing reminder of the Government's high-handed, rushed and negligent approach.

However, the Government does not appear to have learnt from its mistakes and looks to be sticking to its dogged approach. In some cases, however, there are institutions like the High Court of Karnataka, which, while examining a challenge to the draft Environment Impact Assessment notification, expressed displeasure on the Central Government's stand that it will not publish the draft EIA notification in regional languages and will consider staying the notification.

Ultimately, we can only hope and pray that the Government pays heed to these concerns raised by civil society and institutions, who wish to ensure representative law-making. If the Government fails to do so, you and I will be left holding the tail of the elephant while the Government calls it a rope.

(The writer is a former IPS officer, a former MP and currently a member of the AAP)

## SOUNDBITE

Chennithala is the son of an RSS sympathiser and it's no surprise that *Janmabhumi* advocated for him. He dons the uniform of RSS workers in Kerala better than them.

Kerala CPM secretary —Kodiyeri Balakrishnan

The platform (social media) is toxic because the world has become toxic. People take advantage of anonymity to find relevance and vent.

Actor —Richa Chadha

Claims that they have now made for real estate in Bhutan, the incursion that took place in India, these are indicative of Chinese intention.

US Secretary of State —Mike Pompeo

I wouldn't say I was the greatest but I was a better athlete than all three (Ian Botham, Richard Hadlee, and Imran Khan) put together.

Former cricketer —Kapil Dev

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Merits and demerits

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, proposes many structural changes and is aimed at fixing the mess in India's education system. However, it fails to address some of the ills plaguing this sector.

One of the main drawbacks of our present education system is that students, who pass out of educational institutions, do not possess the skills required to be employable. Second, the content of the subject remains irrelevant and is not in sync with present times. Third, our education system is too exam-centric. Fourth, students get typecast for life based on the subjects they study. The NEP 2020 does attempt to address this issue by allowing the students to choose from the subjects they like. Five, commercialisation and corruption still plague the education system. The NEP, 2020, does promise to treat education as a "not for profit" entity. However, this will lead to more corruption because institutions are not meant for charity. Merits of the NEP must,

### Omar strikes a chord

This refers to the editorial, "Omar's message" (July 29). The abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A last year in August was a decisive step towards mainstreaming Jammu & Kashmir into India. Such incremental steps have been happening since 1947 when Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession (IoA). National Conference (NC) founder Sheikh Abdullah became Jammu & Kashmir's first head to be elected in 1948. His refusal to have the IoA ratified by the Constituent Assembly as also his espousal of independent Kashmir, called "Kashmir conspiracy", resulted in his dismissal, arrest and replacement by Bakshish Ghulam Mohammad in 1953. The new incumbent, also from NC, had the IoA ratified by the Assembly in 1954, thus expanding the Union Government's role in the former State. The next milestone came in the form of the Indira-Sheikh Accord of 1975 under which the latter discarded the "self-determination" demand in exchange for his political rehabilitation. Jammu & Kashmir's new status since last August is the culmination of efforts of successive Governments since independence. Winning the Valley's hearts and minds, on abrogation, remains elusive as security forces remain stationed there in abundance. Militancy, too, is on the rise as people are ripped away from the mainstream like never before. While digital curfew is jeopardising the career of Kashmiri youths, job-



lessness is rising by the day. Let alone new opportunities, even traditional jobs have disappeared. NC leader Omar Abdullah offers a window that the Government can still use to reach out to the Kashmiris. NC, being the oldest party, has a deep connection with the former State. It is the NC that helped the Government in 1954 and 1975. It may still be helpful today. The Government must leverage Omar's logical stand and revive the political process. Omar's on-boarding and conclusion of delimitation exercise need to be expedited or we will lose the narrative.

SK Prabhakar Gurugram

Laying stress on scientific temper and mathematical abilities, the new NEP will help develop the objective and analytical faculties of the students. Taking three-year-old children under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme, too, is a laudable aspect of the NEP. But it is imperative that the necessary staff, who have the vision to implement the policy mandate, be made available.

Ayush Via email

### Defence boost

Sir — The arrival of the Rafale jets and the exuberance it generated are understandable. Known for its greater offensive capabilities and advanced weaponry system, the Rafales will significantly enhance India's strategic capabilities. But while taking concrete steps to augment our defence capabilities, we cannot be oblivious to the need of boosting our domestic defence manufacturing capacities.

Shrutika Via email

however, not be forgotten. It provides for the extension of the Right to Education to cover all children between three and 18 years of age. The plan to intro-

duce three-year and four-year undergraduate programmes, too, is welcome.

### Implementation hurdle

Venu GS Kollam

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31).

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Corona bug bites careers

It is vital that mothers who desire to have a career post-childbirth feel supported rather than judged and exhausted, with or without the pandemic



RUCHI SAINI

Now I understand why working mothers leave their jobs", said my friend, who has a son, over a phone call from India. She was one of my closest friends growing up and I was talking to her after more than half a decade. She used to be a very ambitious girl and naturally, I was rather taken aback by her statement. "What happened? How did your views change?", I asked, to which she replied, "Well, isn't it obvious, a baby happened followed by the pandemic." Due to the pandemic, Akriti (name changed) had been working from home for the last three months, while home-schooling her four-year-old son and performing additional domestic chores. Her husband, on the other hand, is both ill-equipped for and disinterested in performing domestic chores.

Even before the outbreak, women in India constituted an immensely small portion of the labour force and the pandemic is all set to widen this gap. A 2019 World Bank report revealed that only 21 per cent of the female population in India is a part of the labour force, compared to 83 per cent in Nepal, 60 per cent in China and 36 per cent in Bangladesh. And while many reasons exist for the abysmal representation of Indian women within the workforce, scholars have talked at length about how motherhood pushes scores of women unwillingly out of the workforce. Growing up in India, I came across various instances during social gatherings and even scholarly meetings where both men and women deemed this as a "natural" and "an unfortunate but inescapable" consequence of the choice to have a child.

However, it is not motherhood but rather the unequal division of labour inside the home after becoming a mother that pushes women out of the workforce. Post-childbirth, men can perform all the acts linked with child-rearing (cooking, cleaning, washing and so on) except breastfeeding, but are typically not conditioned to do so. According to a report released by OECD (Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development) in 2018, Indian women spend an average of five hours and 51 minutes daily on "unpaid" domestic work, the second-highest among the 31 countries surveyed. Indian men, on the other hand, spend an average of a measly 45 minutes daily and ranked among the bottom three countries in the table. Given the average Indian male's distaste towards performing domestic duties, women are shouldering the majority of household responsibilities during the pandemic. An online petition started by Subarna Ghosh (a working mother from Mumbai) urges Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "talk to Indian men about doing an equal share of care work within the household" in his next speech. The petition, which draws attention towards how the nationwide lockdown has forced families to confront the issue of unpaid care work done by women, has already gained 71,000 signatures. A 2018 report by Ashoka University, titled *Predicament of Returning Mothers*, revealed that after becoming mothers, 50 per cent of women in the corporate, media and development sectors leave their jobs before the age of 30 and only 16 per cent of senior leadership roles in these sectors are held by women. The report goes on to state that the pressure to play multiple roles of the "homemaker, mother and employee" post-childbirth often pushes even the most resolute of women out of the workforce.

The exodus of talented and intelligent women out of the workforce is catastrophic for both the individual and society and ought to be stopped. And the first step towards this direction is challenging the "gendered" division of household labour across Indian households. The real reason men do not perform household chores is that it is "unpaid" work. The fact that most of the famous Indian chefs are men proves that when paid for the same work, men do it just as well or even better than women. As a result, when raising young boys, parents should ensure that they, too, perform domestic chores instead of considering it a "woman's job." Second, India's inability to introduce an effective system of day care within the workplace, when coupled with the harsh judgment meted out to women (not men) who put their children in day care centres, has disastrous consequences for working mothers. And while the Indian Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 makes the creche facility mandatory in an establishment with at least 50 employees, it is rarely implemented. In the few cases where it is implemented, there is little to no quality assurance which dissuades parents from making use of it.

As the Indian economy is gradually reopening and the threat of the virus continues to loom large, the lack of good-quality day care centres is being felt even more acutely by working mothers. It is important that mothers who desire to have a career post-childbirth feel supported and encouraged rather than judged and exhausted, with or without the pandemic. Challenging the gendered division of household labour and providing good quality day care services within the workplace are two of the most effective ways to do that. And while the task is challenging, it is not impossible. Little steps taken by parents while raising their children and financial investment by organisations in setting up effective day care centres can go a long way in ensuring that society is not deprived of the contributions by half of its population.

(The writer is an educator and PhD scholar in Gender and Education from the University of Maryland)

**MUMBAI POLICE IS OBSTRUCTING A FAIR INVESTIGATION BY BIHAR POLICE INTO SUSHANT'S DEATH. THE BJP FEELS THAT THE CBI SHOULD TAKE OVER THIS CASE.**  
**—BIHAR DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER SUSHIL KUMAR MODI**

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



**THERE IS NO NEED FOR A CBI PROBE. MUMBAI POLICE IS INVESTIGATING THE MATTER ON THE BASIS OF EVIDENCE. WE EXPECT THE PROBE TO BE OVER SOON.**  
**—MAHARASHTRA WATER RESOURCES MINISTER JAYANT PATIL**

# Stop vaccine nationalism

Nations must learn from the experiences of past pandemics where hoarding has hardly delivered any advantage and has rather resulted in surplus stocks and their wastage



DEEPIKA BHASKAR



FEROZ SURI

The race for the vaccine for COVID-19 is in full swing across the world as more and more people fall victim to the pandemic and the number of cases globally reaches 17,505,564 and casualties touch the 6,77,465 mark. India, too, is one of the contenders in the race for the vaccine and desperately needs it to come out as soon as possible, given the fact that the community spread has begun in the country and the number of cases has touched 16,43,543 and that of casualties is 35,817. In fact, India reported a new record surge on July 31 with more than 55,000 fresh infections registered in 24 hours.

In the midst of the outbreak, the one big question uppermost on everyone's mind is, whoever wins the vaccine race, will the benefits permeate globally to the neediest or will they be restricted nationally? It is widely predicted that restricting the precious vaccine nationally is going to devastate public health and the world economy in equal measure.

Vaccine nationalism occurs when a country manages to secure doses of vaccine for its own people before they are made available to other nations. This is done through pre-purchase agreements between a Government and the vaccine manufacturer. The US has been attempting to secure priority access to doses of the Coronavirus vaccine. Other countries, including India and Russia, have taken similar stances recently.

A nationalist view for a vaccine may not just be for confining it to one's own people. There may be multiple angles to it. The concept exists since 2009, when, during the early stages of the H1N1 flu pandemic, some of the wealthiest countries entered into pre-purchase agreements with several pharmaceutical companies working on the vaccines. As a result, the distribution of the doses was based on high-income countries' purchasing power and lacked an epidemiological basis. However, the distribution dynamics took a different turn when the initial production was slow and the supply was inadequate for the target groups for whom the US Health Agency had recommended vaccination.

Moreover, the Live-Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) for H1N1 was contraindicated for the very young, for those with asthma and for pregnant women — among the target groups considered to be the highest priority. Further, many healthcare workers were reluctant to receive LAIV because of unfounded concerns about transmission to patients in healthcare settings and vaccine efficacy. On the other side, paediatricians and other healthcare providers were inundated by calls from large numbers of patients and anxious parents demanding the vaccine or asking where to go for a shot.

As dose supply started to increase, the incidence of 2009 H1N1 disease declined and the media frenzy quietened. By January 2010, patient demand for the vaccine had decreased to the point where many providers were left with the vaccine on the shelf. It is, therefore, evident from the H1N1 experience that vaccine nationalism hardly served any purpose and the approach resulted in surplus doses of vaccines on one side and deprived a large population that needed the vaccine on the other side.

The case for the COVID-19 vaccine is yet to unfold. How emerging vaccines will be distributed to those who need them is as yet unclear. Moreover, each vaccine candidate is likely to have a different safety and efficacy profile and it would be premature to say that the vaccine candidate for which a nation would have secured supply

**“ DURING THE H1N1 PANDEMIC, OUT OF THE 162 MILLION DOSES OF THE VACCINE PRODUCED FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ONLY 90 MILLION DOSES WERE USED. THIS IS A CLEAR INDICATOR OF POOR SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION PLANNING AND COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER ADDRESSED WITH A SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT-BASED APPROACH RATHER THAN A HOARDING-BASED ONE ”**



through a pre-purchase order would be the most optimum vaccine for its population.

Most vaccine development projects involve several parties from multiple countries and there are very few instances in which a single country can claim to be the sole developer of a vaccine. Moreover, in a global economy, infection does not respect international borders and inequitable access to vaccines during a pandemic is likely to defeat the purpose of vaccination altogether.

Vaccine nationalism is not only posing a challenge to vulnerable populations with inequitable access but is also resulting in scientists opting for riskier approaches to the vaccine development process. The urgency for the development of a preventive has given rise to a global tendency to take risks and cut corners. It has led to disparate efforts like a Chinese vaccine company engaging the People's Liberation Army (PLA) epidemiologist, Major-General Chen Wei, to oversee its vaccine hunt. Chen Wei herself took one of the first shots of the experimental vaccine to display nationalistic fervour.

Similarly, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), along with the National Institute of Virology (NIV), is trying for an early COVID-19 vaccine release in the market with Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL). There are instances wherein the countries are moving away from a collective and equitable global strategy for combatting the pandemic. European nations, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Wellcome Trust committed over \$8 billion to finance the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT), dedicated to rapid deployment of new Coronavirus-related health technologies.

Yet the US, Russia and India have chosen not to participate in this initia-

There are better ways in which national interests can be safeguarded without compromising on equitable global access to vaccines. One such initiative is the 70:30 approach at the time of launch, wherein 70 per cent of the produced vaccine doses are reserved for captive consumption of a producing/sponsoring nation and 30 per cent of the doses can be allocated to global health organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) for equitable access to vulnerable populations of the world.

Customised strategies for using the available vaccine may be deployed in different countries when the vaccine first becomes available in limited quantities. These strategies may depend on the prevalence of the virus, the degree to which testing can identify all infected people and how the infected patients are geographically distributed. Public health leaders can integrate key lessons on allocation and distribution from previous experiences with H1N1 flu, polio and smallpox vaccination efforts.

For such strategies to be implemented, a global coordination mechanism may be devised with global health governance bodies like the WHO, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Global Fund, Gavi, representatives of the respective health ministries and the private sector. This will not only result in effective and equitable distribution of vaccines globally but will also result in optimising the return on investments on vaccine development, which till now, remains uncertain.

The strategy may also rest on where the dire need is. This will keep the humane angle alive with the trust of a global approach while satisfying local needs. (Bhaskar is Registrar and Suri is CEO-Office of Connectivity, Regional Centre for Biotechnology)

# Why ignore an old friend for a new one?

The relationship between India and Israel should be sustained but not at the expense of our traditional loyalty to the Palestinian cause



EDUARDO FALEIRO

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently spoke to his Israeli counterpart over telephone and strengthening bilateral defence ties was the focus of the conversation. Both Ministers expressed satisfaction at the progress of strategic cooperation between the two countries and discussed possibilities of further strengthening defence engagements.

Narendra Modi had visited Israel in July 2017 and was the first-ever Indian Prime Minister to do so. Indo-Israeli relations have witnessed a sharp upswing since the present

Government came to power and there has been an unprecedented level of bilateral visits by senior Ministers from India to Israel and vice-versa. India is now the largest purchaser of Israeli military equipment.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is an unresolved one, dating from the end of World War-I. Palestine was a part of the Ottoman Empire and during World War-I, the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and was defeated. It was then dissolved. Its successor, the Republic of Turkey, transferred Palestine to the British Empire. In 1917, British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour issued what is known as the Balfour Declaration for the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. In 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved a plan to partition Palestinian land and proposed a Jewish State and an Arab State on it. The Arab State of Palestine included the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the

Gaza Strip and some other territories. The Jewish State of Israel was established in 1948 and several wars between the Israelis and the Arabs followed.

Mahatma Gandhi wrote then, "The cry for a national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. Why should they not, like other peoples on Earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood? Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be delivered to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home. The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The

Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians and Hindus born in France are French."

It has been more than 50 years since Israel annexed the Palestinian territories of West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip following the six-day Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. Thereafter, Israel tightened its hold over these territories, crushed Palestinian resistance and created hundreds of thousands of refugees. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has condemned repeatedly Israeli depredations in the occupied territories. Last year, a UNSC resolution directed Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlements in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. Amnesty International has held Israel guilty of war crimes and demolition of homes.

India was the first non-Arab country to recognise the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the

sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. A PLO office was set up in New Delhi in 1975 and full diplomatic relations were established in 1980. In 1991, during my tenure in the Ministry of External Affairs, I was asked by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to ensure the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel so that India could assist the Palestinian cause in a more efficient manner.

I met with the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at his headquarters in Tunis. Arafat told me that he was confident that India would not vacillate on its commitment to the legitimate demand for an independent Palestine and that he had no objection if we established diplomatic relations with Israel. I then held a meeting with the Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at the UN in New York and diplomatic relations with Israel followed. India continued its unstinted support to the Palestinian people in their quest for a strong and viable State and provided

material as well as technical support to the Palestinian Government in their efforts at nation-building.

At present, most countries of the world recognise the State of Palestine with the exception of the US and some of its Western allies. Even in the West, support for the Palestinian cause is increasing. It is ironic that while the West, the architect of the Palestinian plight, is finally trying to reach out to the Palestinians, India, the old supporter, has almost vanished from the scene.

The international community has been closely observing the growing defence and strategic cooperation between India and Israel, since the present Government assumed office. Israel has in the last couple of years provided the Indian armed forces with radar and border monitoring systems. Israeli companies have been making millions of dollars upgrading MiG-21s and other Soviet-era aircraft. They have recently bagged a contract to pro-

vide the avionics for the Indian Air Force MiG-27s.

For the first time, in 2015, India abstained on a United Nations Human Rights Council resolution calling for a probe by the International Criminal Court into war crimes by Israel. It continued to abstain on this resolution in 2016 and thereafter. Israel ought to comply with international law and the UN resolutions and vacate the occupied Palestinian territories. All future agreements between India and Israel should explicitly exclude Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

The relationship between India and Israel should be sustained but not at the expense of our traditional loyalty to the Palestinian cause. India should not dither on its long-standing and unequivocal support to the struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation and for an independent State.

(The writer is a former Union Minister)





## 'HYD, GREAT CITY TO NURTURE YOUR TALENTS'



People moving here have apprehensions driven by stereotypes of South India. Although Hyderabad resides in the heart of Southern India, I think it nullifies most stereotypes of it. As a Hindi speaking household, my family to-date has never faced any hate or issues for not knowing Telugu or not being fluent in it. Hyderabad is also filled with genuinely caring.

Belonging to a marwadi community, Disha Methi Khandelwal established herself in the Zumba community and is now one of the top instructors in the city! She's also been an ace event choreographer, co-founder of Youek.in & takes active part in social work around Hyderabad. Disha spoke exclusively to *The Pioneer* revealing how the city of Hyderabad helped her progress in her career

### CAN YOU SHARE YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH HYDERABAD?

With Hyderabad being such a culturally diverse city, my parents & I never truly felt out of place despite belonging to a Rajasthani community. Hyderabad is a very welcoming city, accepting everyone with open arms. Besides being a happy and welcoming city, it is also a very safe place. This encouraged my parents to build a family in here, which ultimately led to me calling Hyderabad my home now.

### HOW HAS THE CITY BEEN TREATING YOU?

Strongly believing in the city of adherent champions, whether it was my career as a fitness trainer or a zumba instructor or a choreographer, the city and its people have always been kind and supportive to me. It is a great city to nurture your talents and let's you grow both personally and career-wise. It carries a cosmopolitan culture having friendly netizens.

Whenever travelling with your friends or family to Hyderabad, it's a surity that you will be carrying tonne loads of memories back home. I met some really cool people here.

### FOR EVERYONE WHO IS MIGRATING FROM OTHER CITIES, HAVE APPREHENSIONS OR PRE CONCEIVED NOTIONS ABOUT THE CITY THEY ARE GOING TO LIVE, WHAT KIND OF THOUGHTS YOU HAD ABOUT HYD BEFORE MOVING HERE AND HOW DO YOU FIND IT NOW? WERE YOUR APPREHENSIONS WERE RIGHT?

According to my experiences, I have witnessed people who are moving to Hyderabad having apprehensions driven by stereotypes of South India. Although Hyderabad very much resides in the heart of Southern India, I think it nullifies most stereotypes of it. It's one of the few cities in the country which is lingual as diverse as it is. So as a Hindi speaking household, my family to-date has never faced any hate or issues for not knowing Telugu or not being fluent in it. Hyderabad is also filled with genuinely caring people who will often sympathise with you before passing any judgements. In a way, I comply by the fact

that this city is the one that helps break stereotypes of all kinds.

Kolkata, Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, Bengaluru, Kerala to Vizag, yet my heart lies here. The people of Hyderabad are what makes my home complete here. Having such a lovingly diverse population is what makes Hyderabad so unique. Also, Hyderabad is emerging as the new hub of IT attracting big names like Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon,

### HAVE YOU LIVED IN OTHER CITIES IN THE COUNTRY? IF SO, HOW IS HYDERABAD DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS?

I have travelled to a lot more cities from Pune, Mumbai,

Uber, etc.

### ONE THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF HYDERABAD AND WHY?

While the obvious answer to this question is the biryani. It's the most storied food of our city and Paradise is one restaurant that is known for celebrated biryanis. Every minute 95 biryanis are ordered via food apps, that's the love for it. It's no more a delight for just the elites!

Apart from that, we have an iconic and an extravagant monument built right in the heart of the Old City which is always a pleasure to visit. Visiting Charminar needs to be always done in a true Hyderabad style. The streets around the four-pillared legend are always bustling with people and glistening with shiny bangles. I kid you not, you will take home the most beautiful bangles along with a ton of memories from these narrow streets.

### HOW IS THE CITY HELPING YOU IN YOUR CAREER?

I'm a very career-oriented independent woman. I believe this was truly possible only because of my parents and how supportive Hyderabad is. I went from switching careers wanting to be a chartered accountant and then following up on my passion for dance. Today, I am a known zumba instructor and a fitness trainer. This was only possible because of all the opportunities this city gave me. Not to forget, switching career paths was almost a breeze for me because I was presented with the best facilities and zero judgment! Hyderabad is filled with energy and enthusiasm which allowed me to take on 10,000+ students and about 1,700 sessions. The city's growing IT sector, busi-

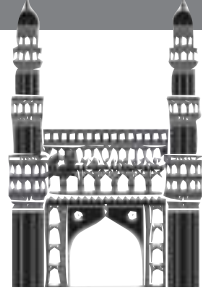
ness world and the academic side of me, have also transformed me into a budding entrepreneur. I've also further expanded into founding startups — Youek and Coded Coffee — and this city is the one that keeps me going! My career's transparent shifts, highs and lows along with its growth have all been in the arms of Hyderabad.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT HYDERABAD?

I'd like to reiterate my love for Hyderabad, I will forever call this place my home. Every person is so diverse and accepting in their own way. In many ways, I feel like this city is a reflection of our country! The one thing I don't particularly like about my city is the traffic, because I'm someone who lives a very fast-paced life. I jump from session to session and absolutely hate driving. So the Hyderabad traffic is a little taxing but acceptance is what Hyderabad has taught me and I swore to accept to this hindrance too.

### WHAT'S HYDERABAD TO YOU?

When lockdown began, I assumed my career would be done and dusted in dance and fitness, because personal interactions are it's a necessity. I then launched a 14-day FITWOM-ENCHALLENGE, to increase awareness about fitness and clean eating amongst women. I had 130 women join in this challenge, and 119 were from Hyderabad. Soon after this successful programme, I converted it into "24 Day Challenge by DMK" (concentrating on fat loss and muscle toning) programme to online sessions. My fellow brothers and sisters of Hyderabad showered me with massive support! I am about to kick-start my season 3 now and need credit given to Hyderabad. Hyderabad is everything to me now.



## HYDERABOND



## 'Benefits of breastfeeding outweigh risk of COVID transmission'

The rapid transmission of COVID-19 has instilled fear in everyone, but more for breastfeeding mothers. And to those who test positive for the virus, they're more questions than solutions. Dr. Anita Rego, a Perinatal Counsellor talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL on the benefits and importance of breastfeeding infants amidst the pandemic



**B**reastfeeding is the cornerstone of an infant. However, concerns have been raised about whether mothers with COVID-19 can transmit the virus to their infant through breastfeeding. Responding to this, Dr Anita Rego, Perinatal Counsellor and a psychiatric social worker says the fear of infecting a child amidst a pandemic is bewildering for a mother, it induces guilt pangs in her eventually leaving her traumatised. She also adds that in many circumstances, there have been cases where the cultural context prevents a mother from revealing her COVID status, even after WHO recommended that mothers with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be encouraged to initiate or continue to breastfeed. "The excessive focus of clinical on prevention and treat-

ments is demotivating mothers from breastfeeding. There is a lack of understanding about policy documents and the underlying conceptualisation around lactation. Most of the clinicians are aware that there are substitutes for infant feeding that can lower their immunity yet they continue to advertise them. Breastfeeding must be based on not just potential risks of contracting the infection but also on morbidity risks and mortality associated with it," appends Dr Anita. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh the potential risk of transmission. According to reports, the transmission of COVID-19 would need replicative and infectious virus being able to reach target sites in the infant and also to overcome infant defense systems. The implications of transmission risk need to be framed in terms of COVID-19 prevalence in

breastfeeding mothers. "The mother and her infant should be enabled to remain together while rooming-in including that the mother should wear a surgical mask and wash her hands regularly for preventive measures. She can also feed the baby with a sterilised bottle. Come to think of the positive phase of breastfeeding, a lactating mother's milk produces antibodies that can ultimately enhance her child's immunisation. Not feeding can lead to risks of allergies and asthma in infants," informs Dr. Apoorva Rawul, M.D. Anaesthesiology, and a critical care physician. At present, data is not sufficient to conclude the transmission of COVID-19 through breastfeeding. In infants, the risk of COVID-19 infection is low, the infection is typically mild or asymptomatic while the consequences of not breastfeeding and separation between mother and child can be significant leading to stress for which the perinatal counsellor suggests seeking therapy. "The importance of therapy in the perinatal space is fairly a new specialisation and it needs to be further strengthened. The perinatal mental health professionals will be able to guide the mother on how to deal with stress and also educate her about the need to continue breastfeeding. They may also provide psycho-education using the knowledge base that is available from various researchers, practitioners, and guidance documents. Most

importantly, the mother needs to relax in such distressing times ahead and practice meditation or participate in mindful programs. Coming to the government regulations, the state government must amend the regulation of the production, supply, and distribution act for infant milk substitutes and feeding bottles ensuring more effectiveness," voices the counsellor. A community of lactation support empowering and educating women on breastfeeding across India-Breastfeeding Pumping India run by Hannah Grace who is a certified lactation expert shares her final thoughts on breastfeeding amidst pandemic. "Women are often prevented from breastfeeding in public, this topic never interested media. The concern lies in the lack of public support for normalisation of feeding the baby in open spaces rather than conducive ones apart from other generic problems already persisting like restricted milk flow, inverted nipples, increased stress levels, lack of access to information on lactation, etc." Her personal experiences of having feeding problems led to her creating the support group for mothers on breastfeeding to uplift mothers in achieving their optimum levels of breastfeeding through natural means. Let's all come together to push the need to make decent baby feeding spots where mothers have comfort and privacy.

The mother and her infant should be enabled to remain together while rooming-in including that the mother should wear a surgical mask and wash her hands regularly for preventive measures. She can also feed the baby with a sterilised bottle. Come to think of the positive phase of breastfeeding, a lactating mother's milk produces antibodies that can ultimately enhance her child's immunisation. Not feeding can lead to risks of allergies and asthma in infants.

DR. APOORVA RAWUL, M.D. ANAESTHESIOLOGY



# Sushant was not a depressed guy, he had passion for life: ANKITA

**B**ollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput's former girlfriend, TV actor Anikita Lokhande says the actor had an admirable zest for life and she can never believe that he committed suicide because of depression.

Ankita and Sushant met on the sets of popular TV serial *Pavitra Rishtra* and dated for over six years till 2016.

In her first interview post Sushant's demise on June 14, Anikita said the actor was a happy guy who never let success or failure affect him to the extent of getting depressed.

"When the news came and it was everywhere that he committed suicide, it took me a lot of time to accept it. I want to tell everyone that Sushant was not the kind of guy who will get into depression. He was not somebody who will commit suicide because he is sad. He was a happy guy. Sushant and I have been through worse situations. I don't know what position he was in and what was he doing, but as time passed I started trying to understand how somebody's death is labeled as suicide. But as much as I know Sushant he was not a depressed guy," the actor told *Republic TV*.

Anikita said it is heartbreaking when people call Sushant a depressed man because he was

somebody who knew how to dream big and work towards making them into a reality.

"I have not seen a person like Sushant, a guy who used to write his own dreams. He had a diary... He had his five-year plan — what he wants to do, how he will look, etc. And exactly after five years, he had fulfilled them. And when things like 'depression' are used after his name... it is heartbreaking. He could be upset about a few things. We all get anxious, he could be anxious. But depression is a big word. Calling someone 'bipolar' is a big thing," she said.

Anikita said it is hard for her to accept the narrative that he was not happy because of a few box office failures as Sushant had a lot of patience and always believed in bouncing back.

"He used to say if anything doesn't happen I will make a short film. I have seen him working so hard for himself. He was doing theatre and chose *Pavitra Rishtra*. He was one of the biggest stars on TV. He left the show when he was at his peak because he wanted to do something else."

"He did films. He was someone who knew what he wanted to do. To get into films, he waited for three years. He was sitting at home and waiting for that one break. Everybody doesn't have so

much patience," she said.

Asked about claims of financial instability leading him into depression, Anikita said money was never on Sushant's agenda.

"Money was a small thing for Sushant, his passion was way bigger than anything else. He always used to say, 'If everything ends I will build my empire again. Money was never an agenda for him. His passion for life was bigger than anything. Success and failure never affected him. He believed in bouncing back. He used to find happiness in smaller things. He cannot die for this,' she said.

"I'm saying he was not depressed and if somebody is saying it's suicide, I want to know why. If somebody is saying he was murdered, I want to know who did it? I am standing with Sushant's family. I also want to know what happened. One thing I am sure is that depression, is impossible for me to believe that it happened," she said.

The actor said while she is unaware about Sushant's relationship with Rhea, she shares a good equation with his family.

"I can't comment on Sushant and Rhea's relationship. I was not there. As for Sushant's family, I want to take a stand for them. They must have something to prove and show people," she concluded.



**MONEY WAS A SMALL THING FOR SUSHANT, HIS PASSION WAS WAY BIGGER THAN ANYTHING ELSE. HE ALWAYS USED TO SAY, 'IF EVERYTHING ENDS I WILL BUILD MY EMPIRE AGAIN'. MONEY WAS NEVER AN AGENDA FOR HIM. SUCCESS AND FAILURE NEVER AFFECTED HIM. HE BELIEVED IN BOUNCING BACK. HE USED TO FIND HAPPINESS IN SMALLER THINGS.**

## ED files money laundering case in Sushant case

In a major development, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a case of money laundering over transactions worth Rs 15 crore related to the alleged suicide of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput. A top ED source said that it has registered a criminal case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The development comes amid the complaint of K.K. Singh, father of Sushant Singh Rajput to Bihar Police against actress Rhea Chakraborty.

The ED on Thursday sought details of the FIR registered against Rhea by the Bihar Police and the details of two companies owned by Sushant Singh Rajput and Rhea's family from the banks.

The ED has also sought details of the financial transactions of the *Vividra Rhealityx*, in which she is a director, and *Front India For World*, in which her brother Showik is a director, the source added.

Sushant's father lodged an FIR against Rhea in Patna, accusing her of cheating and threatening his son. Sushant and Rhea were in a relationship before the actor's death. Sushant's father has levelled various allegations against Rhea, including taking money from his son and also threatening to disclose his medical reports to the media. Sushant's family has also accused her of keeping him away from his family.



## Bryan reveals recovery from Covid, donates plasma

**E**mma-winning actor Bryan Cranston has revealed his recovery from mild symptoms of Covid-19, and said he donated his plasma with a hope that his antibodies would help others fight the disease.

The *Breaking Bad* star opened up about his diagnosis via Instagram with a two-minute video, in which he takes his followers through the

plasma donation process, reports *variety.com*.

"I wanted to announce that I had COVID-19 a little while ago. Very lucky, very mild symptoms," Cranston said, adding: "So I thought maybe there's something I can do, so I started a program (at UCLA Blood and Platelet Center) so hopefully the plasma donation can help some other people."

Along with the video, he wrote:

"Hi. About now you're probably feeling a little tied down, restricting your mobility and like me, you're tired of this!! Well, I just want to encourage you to have a little more patience. I was pretty strict in adhering to the protocols and still... I contracted the virus. Yep, it sounds daunting now that over 150,000 Americans are dead because of it. I was one of the lucky ones. Mild symptoms. I count my blessings and urge you to keep wear-

ing the damn mask, keep washing your hands, and stay socially distant. We can prevail - but ONLY if we follow the rules together. Be well - Stay well." Cranston was able to donate 840 milliliters of plasma to coronavirus research, and said that he plans to return soon to make another donation. The actor encouraged his followers to donate plasma if they have had Covid-19, saying that the process takes only an hour.



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



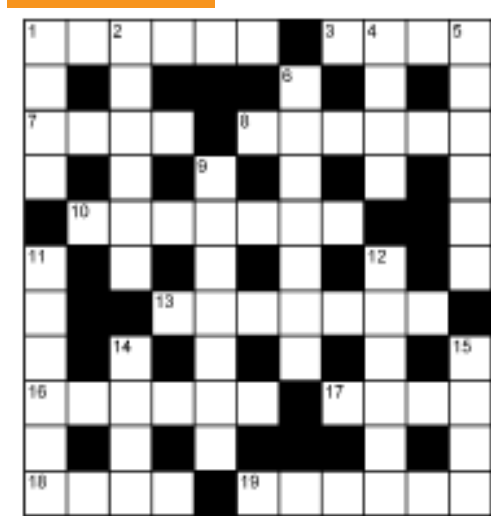
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- One of the continents
  - Opposite of false
  - A short letter
  - Repairing
  - Went red in the face
  - A game with bat and ball
  - A king's son
  - Come to an halt
  - Sprinkle this on food
  - A bird that can be trained to race
  - Four times twenty
  - You need this to be allowed to drive a car
  - The world's largest bird
  - Wine is made from these
  - Middle
  - Young woman
  - Twirl
- DOWN**
- A female relation
  - A baby's toy
  - Water from the sky
- SOLUTION 7**
- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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| W | A | L | L | E |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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	9	6		2	1			
3		5			2			
	4						3	
	1	3		5	6			
6					4			
	5			1			2	
	7	4		9	3			
		7					4	8

**Yesterday's solution**

7	1	6	4	2	3	9	5	8
9	2	3	5	8	1	4	6	7
4	8	5	9	7	6	3	1	2
1	7	8	6	9	4	2	3	5
6	9	2	3	5	8	7	4	1
3	5	4	2	1	7	8	9	6
2	3	1	7	4	5	6	8	9
5	6	9	8	3	2	1	7	4
8	4	7	1	6	9	5	2	3

**Rules**

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### GINGER MEGGS



# BUNNY TO BE SEEN AS STUDENT LEADER IN KORATALA'S NEXT?



Allu Arjun and Koratala Siva have been waiting to team up for a long time and it seems they finally decided it's time. The untitled film will mark Koratala's close buddy of years, Mikkilineni Sudhakar, debuting as a producer under his production house Yuvasudha Arts, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

**A**fter Allu Arjun's confident Bunny was confirmed that the actor's slate for the next couple of years includes a film with hit machine Koratala Siva during an interview with a web channel more than six months ago, the combination was officially announced on Friday. Both the actor and the director have been waiting to team up for a long time and it seems they finally decided it's time. The untitled film will mark Koratala's close buddy of years, Mikkilineni Sudhakar, debuting as a producer under his production house Yuvasudha Arts.

The film is tipped to be a signature social Koratala entertainer, with Allu Arjun loosely attached to essay the role of a student leader. The



actor was full of the joys of spring declaring the project with the director. "Very much elated to announce my next film #AA21 with Koratala Shiva garu. Been looking forward to this for quite a while. My best wishes to Sudakar Garu for his 1st venture. Sandy, Swathi & Nutty this is my way of showing my love for you guys," he



tweeted along with a poster where two men (presumably him and Koratala) can be seen standing near a shore and gazing at a village. Sandy, Swathi and Nutty are his friends who will act as co-producers for the project, representing his in-house production house GA2 Pictures.

The film will flag-off after

Arjun and Koratala wrap up their respective projects *Pushpa* and *Acharya*. The release date though has been indicated as early 2022 — making one deduce that the makers are targeting a Pongal theatrical roll out. Arjun-starrer *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* — released during Pongal earlier this year — set the box-office on fire, emerging as his biggest grosser till date.

Earlier in the day, Arjun paid a tribute to his grandfather Padmashri Allu Ramalingaiah on the latter's death anniversary. "I remember this day when he left us. I know more about him now



than on that day. The more I experience many things in life the more I connect to his efforts, struggles, and jour-

ney. We all are here today in this position because of this poor farmer's passion for cinema," the actor wrote.



## Quality matters

**E**ven before their maiden production, SR Kalyanamandapam, is half-way through with its filming, production house Elite Entertainments, last month, announced another venture, Sebastian P.C. 524, with Kiran Abbavarav playing the titular role. For its founders Pramod and Raju, it has always boiled down to quality — a factor which drove them to enter the construction sector first followed by the restaurant sector. "We want to tell stories of diverse genres with emphasis on superior quality. In this journey I've met Kiran Abbavarav who comes from Rayachoti, Kadapa. In fact, I've known him for the past four years from his short film days. I noticed a spark in him back then itself and after he proved himself with his debut film *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru* last year, we decided to associate with him as producers. He will be the Vijay Sethupathi of the Telugu industry in the coming years," Raju, who comes from Anantapur, exults.

Pramod chimes in, "Kiran is not just good in front of the camera but has a deep understanding of other crafts of filmmaking as well." After a pause, Raju is quick to mention that besides passion for cinema, another important objective of their banner is to promote and nurture new talent. "As much as we can, we want to introduce talent from 24 crafts of filmmaking with each of our productions," he notes, adding that as a duo, they've done their research before stepping foot into the industry. "We've already locked some theatres for SR Kalyanamandapam. We have a plan 'A', 'B' and 'C' for the film. We have a team which is working on the

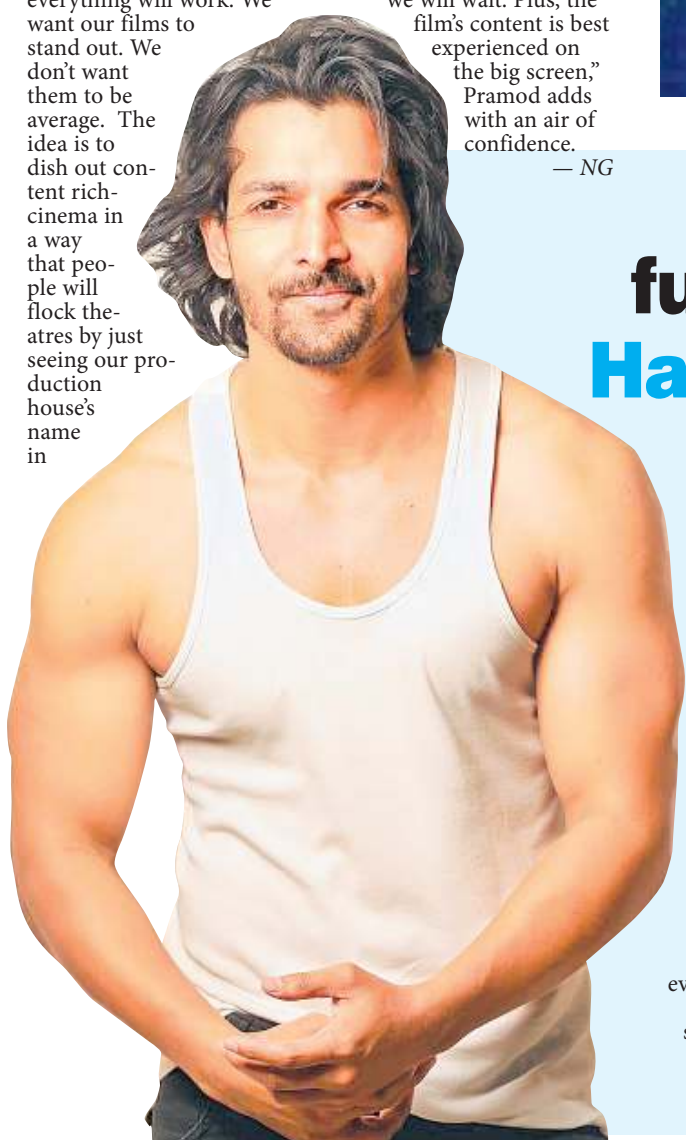
marketing side. We are extremely confident about the film and we are planning to kick-start promotions by releasing a song this month."

Years of watching countless films growing up means that Raju understands that it is the script that is the king. "More than the actors, we believe in the script. Aspiring talents with a good story are welcomed to knock on our doors. If the script is good, we believe everything will work. We want our films to stand out. We don't want them to be average. The idea is to dish out content rich-cinema in a way that people will flock theatres by just seeing our production house's name in

the promotional materials," Raju points out gleefully.

With theatres continuing to remain shut, many small to medium-budgeted films are looking at OTT platforms to drop their films and recover their money back. Is it the way for them as well with their debut production? "As SR Kalyanamandapam is our first venture, we are looking at a theatrical rollout. We don't have a problem if cinema halls take time to open; we will wait. Plus, the film's content is best experienced on the big screen," Pramod adds with an air of confidence.

— NG



## Jersey picked for screening at International Indian Toronto Film Festival

**I**n a rare honour, one of the best Telugu films of last year, *Jersey*, starring Nani and Shraddha Srinath, has been picked for screening at the prestigious International Indian Toronto Film Festival, 2020. The festival will begin from August 9th and conclude on August 15. Naturally, production house Sithara Entertainments is overjoyed with the honour. "It is great to celebrate Indian Independence Day in Canada

with a film that we are really proud of," read a statement from the production house on Friday.

*Jersey*, which won the appreciation of audiences and critics alike, told the story of a failed cricketer (played by Nani) who decides to revive his cricketering career in his late 30's despite everyone being skeptical of his ability to do so. It is being remade in Hindi with Shahid Kapoor stepping into the shoes of Nani. Gowtam Tinnanuri is directing the Hindi version as well.



## Life comes full circle for Harshvardhan Rane

**T**elugu-Hindi actor Harshvardhan Rane recently realised how life comes full circle.

The actor, a biking aficionado, was shooting for a commercial when he remembered how, a decade ago when he had shot for a commercial, his face was not shown. "This is how life comes full circle, I guess. I shot for an ad 10 years ago, where my face wasn't even visible. Now, I shot an ad as a leading man for one of the biggest motorcycle brands in the country," Harshvardhan said.

"It's nothing less than surreal." The Avuna actor shot for the advertisement in Mumbai during a three-day schedule.

He said, "These are tough times and everyone is extra careful while venturing out of their homes. I'm glad that all the necessary precautions regarding sanitisation and social distancing were taken on the set. It was a smooth and refreshing experience."

## Nikhil signs a film for Asian Cinemas

**A**lready a part of Chandoo Mondeti's *Karthikeya 2* and Palnati Surya Pratap's 18 Pages—both of whose shoot had to be suspended due to the outbreak of COVID-19 — Nikhil Siddhartha has agreed to topline a new movie, the announcement of which was made on Friday. He is teaming up with producers Narayan Das K Narang and Puskur Rammohan Rao for the untitled film, which will be his 20th as an actor. Rainbow Reels will execute the project on the production front, while no director is attached to it to helm as of now. "Happy to sign with you Asian Movies... With your trust and backing we can make better and bigger films," Nikhil, who bounced back to winning ways with Arjun Suravaram, posted on his Twitter page.

Most Read NEWS

First dog that tested +ve for Covid in US dies

A German shepherd in New York that had the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in a dog in the US has died. Robert and Allison Mahoney of Staten Island told National Geographic that their 7-year-old shepherd, Buddy, developed breathing problems in mid-April after Robert had been sick with the coronavirus for several weeks. A veterinarian tested Buddy in May and found him positive for the virus. The US Department of Agriculture reported in June that a German shepherd in New York state was the first dog in the country to test positive for COVID-19, but did not identify the owners. Buddy's health declined steadily after he developed breathing problems and thick nasal mucus in April. He was euthanized on July 11 after he started vomiting clotted blood, the Mahoneys told National Geographic. It's unknown if the coronavirus played a role in his death. Blood tests indicated Buddy likely had lymphoma, a cancer of the immune system, veterinarians told the family. A spokesman for the New York City Department of Health said arrangements were made to take the dog's body for a necropsy but when the instructions were shared with the veterinarian, the body had already been cremated.



12-year-old Giraffe declared world's tallest

A 12-year-old giraffe named 'Forest' at an Australian Zoo in Queensland has been honoured with the title of the world's tallest giraffe, standing at 5.7 m (18ft 8in) by the Guinness World Records. In a blog post on its official website, the authorities wrote that towering as tall as the 'stack of four MINI cars from the ground' Forest is a statuesque specimen among the Australian male Giraffes or the 'Bulls' that can measure between 4.6 and 5.5 m (15-18 ft). Further, she urged the public to visit the Giraffe on their next trip to the zoo. Australia Zoo's Kat Hansen reportedly said that Forest was born in the Auckland Zoo as part of the regional breeding program. She added that there were nine such classified subspecies of giraffe which are vulnerable to extinction, and important for the genetic diversity, as per local media reports. She was quoted as saying that Forest arrived at Australia Zoo when he was two years old and a 'lot smaller' in height than he is today. She added, the 12-year-old giraffe, father of 10 calves, was still growing up. According to the Guinness World Records' statement, the giraffes grew up to a height of 4.6 metres to 5.5 metres generally.



Strange, giant clouds reappear on Mars

The European Space Agency's Mars Express, a camera-equipped Mars orbiter, is keeping close tabs on a mysterious 'elongated cloud' appearing over the 20 kilometer tall Arsia Mons volcano near the Red Planet's equator. The spacecraft, and other ones like it, have been following the strange cloud's evolution since 2009. Now, new images revealed this week by the ESA show that the cloud has persisted. Scans suggest that the mystery cloud is not linked to volcanic activity in any way - the last time Arsia Mons was active was about 50 million years ago, according to NASA. Instead, scientists suspect it's a cloud made up of water ice flowing down the sloping sides of the volcano. The cloud, as spotted in the latest images taken on July 17 and 19 by Mars Express's VMC, appears to be up to 1,800 kilometers in length. And it doesn't last long. Each Martian year, around the time of Mars' southern solstice - the equivalent of December 21 here on Earth - the cloud grows for a few hours each day and quickly fades away again. 'This elongated cloud forms every Martian year during this season around the southern solstice, and repeats for 80 days or even more, following a rapid daily cycle,' said researchers.



Pune Police's tweet a treat for Potterheads

If you identify yourself as a Potterhead, chances are you know what's special about today. For the uninitiated, read muggles, July 31 is considered a special day since it's Harry Potter's birthday. Pune Police's Twitter handle has not only acknowledged the day but also referenced it to share an important message in their latest tweet. In a bid to share a message about cyber security, Pune Police shared a deleted scene from Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban in which Professor McGonagall expresses her shock over a student (Neville Longbottom) who wrote down all the passwords and left the note lying around. 'The most magical way to keep cyber threat at bay - keep your passwords to yourself. Always,' says the tweet posted along with the tiny clip. Mumbai Police also shared a similar Harry Potter themed tweet to remind people to stay home with a scene from Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets in which Harry visits the Weasley's home for the first time. If you're a fan of the books and films of this magical universe, chances are these tweets have hit you right in the feels and may have even inspired you to binge watch the entire series all over again. What do you think about these Harry Potter-themed tweets with important messages?



PLAYER LIKE STOKES IS EVERY CAPTAIN'S DREAM: SMITH

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ben Stokes' intent of wanting to be in the midst of tough situations makes him a player that every captain wants in his team, said Rajasthan Royals skipper Steve Smith about his team's premier all-rounder. While Smith is sincerely hoping that Stokes doesn't bring in his A game during Australia's white ball series in England, he wouldn't mind one bit if Stokes saves his best in the Royals jersey during upcoming IPL in the UAE. "It will be great to be able to play some competitive cricket against a quality England side which has few of my Royals teammates (Jofra Archer, Ben Stokes and Jos Buttler). "Hope they don't score too many runs or take too many wickets and can save that for the IPL," Smith told PTI during the screening three-part docu-series, Inside Story: A Season with Rajasthan Royals. The series has been produced by Red Bull Media House and would be aired on Jio TV and Jio Cinemas. Smith was all praise for Stokes who has been in dream form across formats in the past year. "I have seen Stokes go from strength to strength. He had an incredible World Cup and recently played in Test matches. He bowled beautifully and got some wickets as well," Smith said. "He is a player who wants to be involved whether he is batting, bowling or fielding. He wants to be in hotspots. You want these players in team as they want to deliver in tough situations." Australia will resume their international calendar with a white-



ball series against England and Smith said that nothing better than getting to play some quality cricket after nearly seven months. "It will be great being back to playing some cricket. We haven't played a game since February and like most of the world, our country was also shutdown, had to find way to get through this Covid experience which has been incredibly differ-

ent for everyone." On a different note, Smith admitted that staying in a bio-secure environment away from "loved ones" for extended periods is difficult but people try to make relationships work as it's the way of life for elite cricketers. The IPL is expected to start from September 19 in the UAE and all teams will have to follow the protocols of a bio-secure environment which might force

cricketers to be away from wives and partners for more than two months. "It will be difficult for anyone to be away from their loved ones for extended periods of time but you kind of get used to it playing international cricket, quite often staying apart for long times and trying to make it work," said Smith. The biggest challenge for Smith is to get things in order

Emirates board plan to have some crowd for IPL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Emirates Cricket Board is eager to fill up 30-50 per cent of the stadiums with spectators when the IPL is held in the UAE provided the government there approves, its secretary Mubashshir Usmani told PTI on Friday. While announcing the dates of the IPL, its chairman Brijesh Patel had told PTI that the decision on letting in fans during the September 19-November 8 event will be taken by the UAE government. Having announced the dates, the BCCI too is awaiting the final approval from the Indian government to host the IPL in the UAE. "Once we get the confirmation from the BCCI (on Indian government's approval), we will go to our government with the complete proposal and SOPs which will be prepared by us and the BCCI," said Usmani over phone. "We will definitely want our people to experience this prestigious event but it is totally the government's decision. For most events here, the number ranges from thirty to 50 per cent capacity, we are looking at a similar number. "We are hopeful of getting our government's approval on that," he added. The UAE has little over 6000 active cases of COVID-19 and the overall situation around the pandemic is under control. However, the 2020 Dubai Rugby Sevens event, scheduled in November, has been cancelled for the first time since 1970 due to the coronavirus threat. Usmani allayed concerns over the safety of the IPL. "The UAE government has been very efficient in bringing down the case numbers. We are almost living a normal life with certain rules and protocols to be followed. "And with the IPL still some time away, we will be in an even better place than what it is right now." The IPL Governing Council will meet on Sunday to finalise the logistics and SOP for the world's biggest T20 league. Usmani said the UAE is ready to host the event and is only awaiting the Indian government's approval, "which should come through



soon", going by what Patel said at the time of announcing the tournament dates. "We are still waiting to hear from the BCCI on the Indian government's approval. Having said that, we are ready," Usmani said. "We have plug and play facilities here and have informed them (officials at Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah stadiums) to be ready and they are fully aware of it." Teams will be arriving in the UAE three-four weeks in advance for training. Most players have not had proper training in India since the lockdown was enforced in March. Asked if managing the training schedules of eight teams will be a challenge, Usmani said: "UAE is blessed with the support of private infrastructure. We are able to deliver such events and have delivered before. Last year, we hosted the T20 World Cup qualifier which had 14 teams." The UAE had partially hosted the IPL in 2014 due to the general elections in India. "Last time also, it contributed significantly to the UAE economy. With the full tournament taking place this time, it will be a much bigger boost," added Usmani.



'Happy to have experience and young blood in our pace attack'

PTI ■ KARACHI

Skipper Azhar Ali said he is lucky to have young pacers like Shaheen Afridi and Naseem Shah at his disposal and the right balance of experience and youth in their pace unit will hold Pakistan in good stead in the Test series against England. The three-Test series begins in a bio-secure environment at Manchester with the opening Test on August 5. "The way Naseem and Shaheen have bowled in recent Test series, I as captain feel very lucky to have them in my squad," he said during a podcast organised by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The 35-year-old said that the young pace bowlers in the extended squad are benefitting immensely from the presence of experienced pros like Wahab Riaz, Sohail Khan, Muhammad Abbas and Imran Khan in the squad. Experienced left-arm pacer Muhammad Aamir has also now joined the squad in Derbyshire with another young pacer Haris Rauf set to join the team after finally clearing his COVID-19 tests. "I am happy we have experienced

and young blood in our pace attack and then there is Yasir Shah a proven performer in tests," he said. "The good thing is that players like Muhammad Abbas, Sohail Khan, Wahab are also on this tour and they are also sharing their experience with the youngsters. I think our bowlers will get a lot of advantage." Azhar said Yasir's presence was a source of comfort for him as the experienced leg-spinner has done well in English conditions on his past tours. The senior batsman said the players were a bit rusty at the start of their training but have been making steady strides towards regaining their form after coming out of quarantine in the first week of July. "Because of coronavirus we have been in lockdown for quite some time and it was a challenging experience for all of us but it helped us get rid of our rustiness and now the bowlers are also doing well and are in rhythm. The workload for the fast-bowlers has been good," he said. "Our players seem to be in good touch. The balance of the side is also very good and the good thing is in the past we have done well in England in Tests."

Eng cruise to victory against Ireland

AP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

David Willey celebrated his return to the England team with a maiden one-day international five-wicket haul as the world champions drew first blood in the Royal London series against Ireland at the Ageas Bowl. Willey was dropped from England's World Cup squad last year to make room for Jofra Archer, but with several regulars absent due to their test commitments the left-armer took centre stage on his international return. In England's first home ODI since winning their first 50-over World Cup, Willey's 5-30 restricted Ireland to 172 all out in 44.4 overs, a total the hosts overhauled with six wickets to spare. England had lurched to 78-4 but Sam Billings, included after Joe Denly's withdrawal due to a back injury, settled the team's nerves with a 67 not out off 54 deliveries in an unbroken 96-run stand with Eoin Morgan. England got over the line with 22.1 overs still remaining at the start of a three-ODI series that marks the start of the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League, forming part of the qualification process for India 2023. But, on a surface where timing proved troublesome for a number of batsmen, the day belonged to Willey, who was chiefly responsible for Ireland teetering on 28-5 after being invited to bat first under sunny skies. After the players took a knee to support Black Lives Matter, Ireland were saved from free fall by international debutant Curtis Campher, a South African-born all-rounder who qualifies through his mother's passport. The 21-year-old showed no lack of patience and fortitude in his 59 not out from 118 balls in front of the vast swathes of empty seats, before Willey returned to the attack and ended the innings.



Denly out of Ireland ODIs

IANS ■ SOUTHAMPTON

England batsman Joe Denly has been ruled out of the Royal London Series against Ireland after suffering back spasms in training on Wednesday, a statement on England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) website said. The Kent batsman has been replaced in the 14-man England ODI squad by Lancashire's Liam Livingstone. Livingstone has represented England in two IT20s and would make

his ODI debut if selected in one of the final two matches against Ireland. In the first match, David Willey's maiden five-for, followed by an unbeaten half-century from Sam Billings helped England beat Ireland by six wickets. Earlier, Morgan won the toss and chose to bowl first in what was England's first ODI match since their dramatic tied match against New Zealand in the World Cup final on July 14, 2019 which led to them winning the title for the first time in their history.

My best is still to come: Willey

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

David Willey had "fallen out of love for the game" following his last-minute ouster from England's World Cup squad but after announcing his comeback with a maiden five-wicket haul against Ireland, he said his best is still to come. The 30-year-old pacer, who has taken 57 wickets in 47 ODIs, was ignored for the World Cup last year with England preferring Jofra Archer over him. He was also left out of the limited-overs tours of New Zealand and South Africa last winter. Willey said he was at his lowest during his stint at Abu Dhabi T10. "I just didn't want to be there. I didn't want to go to the ground. When I was at the ground, I didn't want to be there, and I wanted to get back to the hotel. I'd fallen out of love with the game, I think," he was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. Willey said the coron-



avirus-forced break actually helped him as he made a successful return to guide England to a six-wicket win over Ireland in the first ODI on Thursday. "It was just special to be out there playing for England again. I've gone away and worked quite hard to get back near my best. It's been a roller-coaster, but I was just out there enjoying my cricket today. I'm moving in the right direction and I feel like my best cricket is still to come," he said.

NRAI postpones shooting camp for core group

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The national shooting federation has postponed the compulsory training camp for its Olympic core group planned here from Saturday after taking into account the situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic. On Thursday, a shooting coach at the camp's venue -- Dr. Karni Singh Range -- tested positive for COVID-19 but the development will not force a closure of the facility. Delhi's COVID-19 case count is over 1 lakh.