

**OPINION 6**  
UNENDING  
LADAKH STORY**MONEY 8**  
DEFENCE REFORMS TO STEER INDIA  
TOWARDS 'ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT'**SPORTS 12**  
LONDON  
DREAMS

HYDERABAD, MONDAY AUGUST 10, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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SATYADEV  
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
TO UMUR

Page 11

**KANIMOZHI SAYS CISF OFFICIAL  
ASKED IF SHE WAS INDIAN**

DMK MP Kanimozhi on Sunday alleged that a CISF official asked her if "she was an Indian" as she could not speak Hindi, following which the airport guarding force ordered an inquiry. The incident is understood to have taken place when Kanimozhi was at the Chennai international airport to take a flight to Delhi. "Today at the airport a CISF officer asked me if 'I am an Indian' when I asked her to speak to me in Tamil or English as I did not know Hindi," Kanimozhi said on her official Twitter account. "I would like to know from when being Indian is equal to knowing Hindi," she tweeted with the hashtag "hindiimposition".

**SALMAN KHAN SET TO  
RETURN WITH 'BIGG BOSS 2020'**

Superstar Salman Khan will soon return with the next season of the hit reality show 'Bigg Boss', the makers have announced. TV channel Colors shared a promo of the series Saturday on Instagram, writing that the "scene will change" as the show gears for its 14th edition. Shot at Salman's Panvel farmhouse, the promo features the 54-year-old actor farming. "The lockdown has become a speed breaker to everyone's normal life. Which is why I am growing rice and riding a tractor. But now the time has come for the scene to change," Salman says in the video as the logo of 'Bigg Boss' 2020 appears on screen. The 'Bharat' star has been hosting the reality show since its fourth season in 2010.

**SRI LANKAN DON POISONED TO  
DEATH BY REVENGEFUL WOMAN?**

The question whether Amani Thanji, who had been living with the Sri Lankan don Angoda Lokka, poisoned him to death to avenge the killing of her husband in the island nation, is doing the rounds among the police and public. The suspicion arose after a postmortem report revealed that the finger and toe nails of the deceased gangster were bluish indicating poisoning, police sources said. Police said they suspect the don was killed as media reports in Sri Lanka indicated that Lokka, wanted by the Interpol and the Lankan police for various crimes, was poisoned to death in India in early July.

**NOTEBAN, 'FAULTY' GST, LOCKDOWN  
'DESTROYED' INDIA'S ECONOMY: RAHUL**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that the Modi government's decision of demonetisation and its "faulty" implementation of GST and the lockdown have "destroyed" the economic structure of the country. His attack on the government came as the Congress' youth wing launched a 'Rozgar do' campaign with the objective to raise the voice of the youth against alleged unemployment prevailing in the country. "When Narendra Modi became the prime minister, he promised the youth of the country that he will give jobs to two crore youth every year".

**Covid impact:  
Funeral services  
become pricey**

3

**'Modi to present  
new outline for self-  
reliant India on  
August 15'**

5

**Purple aims at \$  
100 mn sales in  
FY'21, looks for  
acquisition**

8

TODAY

**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Shrawana & Krishna Paksha  
Panchangam  
Tithi : Shashthi: 06:42 am  
Nakshatram: Ashwini: 10:05 pm  
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)  
Rahukalam: 07:36 am - 09:11 am  
Yamagandam: 10:46 am - 12:21 pm  
Varjyam: 05:36 pm - 07:24 pm  
Gulika: 01:56 pm - 03:31 pm  
Good Time: (to start any important work)  
Amritakalam: 02:00 pm - 03:48 pm  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 am - 12:46 pm

**HYDERABAD  
WEATHER**  
Forecast: Light drizzle  
Temp: 28/22  
Humidity: 95%  
Sunrise: 05:57 am  
Sunset: 06:44 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated August 9, 2020 5:00 PM

# Centre eyeing grip over all river water management

KCR sees gameplan in AP-TS water dispute, shares with officials

**L VENKAT RAM REDDY**  
■ HYDERABAD

The Union Jal Shakti Ministry's directive on Saturday to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states, asking them to refrain from proceeding with irrigation projects not cleared by the Apex Council, has to be seen in the larger context of the Centre's gameplan to gain full control over the entire river water management set-up across the country.

This is the gut feeling of Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, who has been watching with consternation how the Centre has been collecting complete details of all irrigation projects and water availability in the Krishna and Godavari basins on its own, bypassing the official apparatus of the state governments of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Confirming KCR's suspicions in this regard, officials of the Union Jal Shakti Ministry have been directly calling project officials in both the states and gathering details.

**This is the gut feeling of KCR, who has been watching with consternation how the Centre has been collecting complete details of all irrigation projects**

ing details.

Having keenly watched the Centre's overt and covert moves, KCR on Sunday shared with top officials concerned his view that the Centre has been trying to exploit the

ongoing Srisailem water dispute between TS and AP to eventually take control over river

water management not only in Telugu States but across the country.

KCR discussed the implications of the Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat writing a letter to Chief Ministers of TS and AP on Saturday, stating that the Apex Council meeting to resolve water disputes between TA and AP would be held soon and that the agenda of the meeting would be decided by the Centre and the river management boards of Krishna and Godavari.

This in itself amounts to the Centre snatching away powers of the state governments on resolving water issues so as to take control over irrigation projects in states. He reportedly termed the Centre's move as 'anti-federal' and intended to dilute the federal character of the Constitution.

KCR reportedly cited the examples of the Centre's attempts to set up a 'Single Tribunal' for the entire country for resolving all inter-state water disputes by amending the existing the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act.

2

**Gandhi specs  
emerge at  
UK auction****PNS ■ LONDON**

A pair of gold-plated spectacles believed to have been worn by Mahatma Gandhi and presented as a gift in the 1900s have emerged on the UK auction circuit, estimated to fetch between 10,000 pounds and 15,000 pounds.

East Bristol Auctions in Hanham, south-west England, said on Sunday that they were pleasantly surprised to find that the spectacles, dropped through their letterbox in an envelope, may have such a rich history behind it.

It's a huge find of great historical importance. The vendor had presumed them to be interesting, but of no value and did tell me to dispose of them if they're not worth anything," said auctioneer Andy Stowe of East Bristol Auctions.

2

# 10 patients killed in fire at Covid facility in Vijayawada

**C PRADEEP KUMAR**  
■ VIJAYAWADA

In a ghastly accident, as many as 10 patients died on Sunday after fire ravaged through the Hotel Swarna Palace in Vijayawada, converted to a coronavirus treatment centre.

According to sources, 31 persons were undergoing treatment in the hotel for Coronavirus and 10 of them died due to suffocation as they were trapped in thick smoke.

Ramesh Hospitals had taken the Hotel Swarna Palace located in Vijayawada on lease and transformed it into temporary Covid Care Centre. The hotel was housing Covid-19 patients who were mildly symptomatic and those who did not require hospitalisation.

The sources said that flames erupted in the hotel at about 4.45 am and fire tenders started rescue operations at 5 am.



Rescue operations underway at Hotel Swarna Palace in Vijayawada on Sunday

The smoke swiftly spread through the three floors of the hotel, leaving patients gasping for air.

According to sources in the AP Disaster Response and Fire Services Department, the fire apparently broke out due to an electrical short circuit in the hotel's front lobby and spread to the first and second

floors. As there was only one main stairway, the panicked patients tried to escape to safety using the stairway after they noticed the smoke.

"They should have actually used a different stairway on the rear side and that would have saved their lives."

2

# Good ties with AP fine, but TS interests first: KTR

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Minister for Industries KT Rama Rao has hinted at yet another tranche of huge investments coming into the state and said that a formal announcement in this regard would be made soon.

In the course of his responses to Ask KTR on Twitter platform on Sunday, KT Rama Rao made it clear that the State Government would fight for its rights over Krishna waters. The Government had already filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court. The state government has cordial relations with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. The state government would not compromise when it comes to protecting the interests of the state.

**KTR made it clear that the State Government will fight for its rights in Krishna waters. The Government already filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court**

The Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the need for initiating several measures to update the medical and health sector in the state. The state government has initiated disciplinary action against two private hospitals for irregularities in Covid-19 treatment. He advised people to go to government hospitals for Covid-19

treatment as the state government has provided all amenities for treatment of the virus in government hospitals.

He appreciated the services being rendered by Gandhi Hospital personnel in treating Covid-19 patients. Currently, 23000 samples are being tested.

2

# State alerts 36 hotels serving as Covid centres

**NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA**  
■ HYDERABAD

In view of the Vijayawada fire incident, the Telangana public health authorities have issued a mandate to all hotels serving as Covid Care Centres in the state to take all precautions. They have been told to follow all fire-safety norms and warned that any violation of fire-safety norms would be viewed seriously.

Presently, there are 36 hotels functioning as Covid Care Centres attached to various hospitals in Telangana.

"It is to inform that many private hospitals are utilising hotels as "COVID Care Centres", where patients with mild symptoms are kept in iso-

lation. Yesterday a fire accident has occurred in a hotel (COVID Care Centre) in Vijayawada, which resulted in loss of lives," the notice mentioned, adding, "In view of this, as a mandated that all Hospitals/COVID care centres are instructed to see that the COVID Care Centres (Hotels), where their patients are kept in isolation, follow all fire-safety norms. Any violation of fire-safety norms will be viewed seriously."

Meanwhile, officials of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation officials revealed that 90 per cent of private hospitals in Hyderabad do not have No Objection Certificate.

2

# 743 TTD staffers test positive for Covid, 3 have succumbed

**PNS ■ TIRUPATI**

As many as 743 staff of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) including some priests of the Lord Venkateswara shrine at Tirumala have tested positive for COVID-19 and three have succumbed to the virus



since June 11, a top TTD official said on Sunday. Of the 743 infected, three

employees succumbed to the dreaded contagion and about 402 personnel have recovered so far from infection while 338 people were undergoing treatment at different COVID care facilities here, TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal told reporters here.

2

# 740 tn amm nitrate to be moved to Hyd

**PNS ■ CHENNAI**

Ammonium nitrate weighing 740 tonnes stored in 37 containers at a container freight station (CFS) here is being moved to Hyderabad in a phased manner, said an official of the CFS.

"The first 10 containers of ammonium nitrate have left the CFS on Sunday and the balance will be moved over the next two days. All one has to do is to load the containers onto a truck as the ammonium nitrate was imported in containers and impounded by the customs," an official told IANS preferring anonymity.

He said that as per the



plans, 10 containers will be sent out daily in order to avoid bunking and increasing the risk enroute.

A consignment of 740 tonnes of ammonium nitrate in 37 containers was imported in 2015 as fertiliser from Korea.

2

# Hindu, Muslim artisans cast 2.1-tonne brass bell

**PNS ■ JALESAR (UP)**

Dau Dayal has been making bells of varied shapes and sizes for more than 30 years, but what he and his team has pulled off this time has surprised everyone in Uttar Pradesh's Jalesar town -- a bell weighing 2,100 kg for the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Interestingly, the person who designed it is a Muslim craftsman -- Iqbal Mistri.

"Our Muslim brothers have expertise in designing, grinding and polishing," Dayal says. Dayal and Mistri say this is the first time they have worked on a bell of this size.

"When you work on a bell of this size, the difficulty levels increase manifold," Dayal, 50,



a fourth-generation bell maker, says. "It's really hard to ensure you don't make a single mistake in the months-long process."

"What excited us was that we were making it for the Ram temple, but fear of failure also remained at the back of our mind," he says.

**The bell is not just brass, but made of "ashtadhatu", a combination of eight metals -- gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, tin, iron and mercury**

Success in such tasks is by no means guaranteed. The whole effort goes to waste even if there is a delay of five seconds in pouring the molten metal into the mold, according to Mistri. "What's unique about it is that it is just piece, from top to bottom. It doesn't have multiple pieces welded together. This is what made the task much more difficult," the 56-

year-old says, revelling in his achievement.

The bell is not just brass, but made of "ashtadhatu", a combination of eight metals -- gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, tin, iron and mercury.

"This piece, which is one of the largest bells in India, will be donated to the Ram temple," says Vikas Mittal, the chairman of Jalesar municipal council in Etah district and the owner of the workshop where the bell has been manufactured.

The Mittals got the order to prepare a 2,100-kg bell from the Nirmohi Akhara -- a litigant in the Ayodhya title dispute -- immediately after the matter was decided last November, paving way for the construction of the temple.



# LESS OF SCIENCE, MORE OF EVOLVING ART



Many of my fellow journalists, friends in different spheres of life often confer with me about the political situation in the country in general and its nuances in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in particular, thinking that I get to know and have more 'inside' or insightful information. I often have to frankly admit that I know as much as they do.

Over a period of time, I have noticed the urge in people to know varied, interesting aspects of politics. Not many really know what politics is inside out. They think politics is all about change of power.

As all political parties and their members are strongly believing that coming to power and staying at the top

for as many years as possible is the sole motive, people too have started accepting that the ultimate goal of politics is power. Accordingly, political parties and leaders have evolved their strategies -- some populist, some divisional, some left, some right and so on. It is always intriguing to find out what theory (rather myth) would people accept in the election. Political leaders across the globe are struggling a lot to figure out what they can sell to people to win and keep their support.

As a journalist with over three decades of work experience, I feel I can throw some light on some of the important aspects of politics which is a science, according to Aristotle. He, who was considered as the 'Father of Political Science', considered Political Science as the master of all sciences. Here, science means a body of systematized knowledge arranged on certain principles. I would

**As a journalist with over three decades of work experience, I feel I can throw some light on some of the important aspects of politics which is a science, according to Aristotle. He, who was considered as the 'Father of Political Science', considered Political Science as the master of all sciences**

be sharing my experiments and experiences with readers, starting this Monday.

Unfortunately, may be after the advent of socialism in the 20th century, political leaders started to believe that it is not a science, but an art. Believing that, every political leader started 'performing' the art in their own style, forgetting the original dynamics of the politics. Of course, many of them had to conclude their careers abruptly, unlike some leaders like Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia, Sheik Hasina of Bangladesh, Vladimir Putin of Russia and Angela Merkel of

Germany, who showed the world the strength of being a student of political 'science'.

I strongly feel that it is a "science" because political scientists strive to derive answers through scientific reasoning and this is especially true today, where statistics are coming to fore to help find the currents of public mood.

The western democracies are older than ours and had experimented on quite a number of issues much before India could even think of them. For example Gallup surveys. An American analytics and advisory company

Gallup, Inc. founded by George Gallup in 1935, known for its public opinion polls conducted worldwide. Starting in the 1980s, Gallup transitioned its business to focus on providing analytics and management consulting to organizations globally. Now companies like Oxford Analytics have taken that to unbelievable levels in understanding the mindsets of different groups of people in a particular society.

Are any of you aware that people exposed to entertainment television and daily serials are more likely to vote for populist politicians? According to a new study co-authored by Queen Mary University of London, people who are older (55+) and viewers of entertainment stuff in TVs are more vulnerable to 'unrealistic' populist doses! This age group voted an average by 10 percentage points more to political parties whose manifesto is full of 'unrealistic' welfare promises.

es.

Another recent study confirmed the difference in voting pattern between residents of a big city and suburbs. The study displayed the clear ideological divide between urban and suburban areas. Same thing applies to India, where rural voting is different from that of the cities. And astonishingly, the suburban and rural population is increasingly moving towards 'right-wing' thinking! There is an increasing trend across the globe that people now detest 'globalisation', which was once touted as panacea for all human difficulties.

The latest thinking of people clearly exposes most of our political leaders' inability to update themselves to ground reality. How many leaders in India are aware that people are now thinking that immigrant workers are the reason behind their unemployment! They are supporting the leaders who

are propagating the 'divisional' theories. It may not be to your liking, but that exactly is what is happening at the ground level. And the political leaders who stopped learning anything after some time find it 'unruly' and 'undemocratic'. Wonder what is 'democratic', as the very word 'democracy' during its early days refused to extend voting rights to women? It is only after the First World War, that women suffrage could see the light in USA, the so-called heaven of democracy! As we are in the middle of an evolving democracy, there would be more changes, more surprises to political parties which refuse to 'unlearn' their old theories and 'relearn' the new dynamics that are influencing the present-day democracy.

When I wrote about changing perception of people and imminent fall of Chandrababu Naidu in 2003, after the Alipiri blast, everyone laughed at me. At that

time, Chandrababu was treated as equal to Bill Clinton and Bill Gates as both had visited Hyderabad and sat beside Naidu for photo-ops. My seniors in journalism cautioned me, saying that I must see the 'sympathy wave' born out of the Alipiri incident and picture of Naidu with a hand in sling. But Naidu bite the dust at the hustings in 2004 elections and could not win even in Hyderabad city which he claims to be his brainchild. Same thing was repeated in 2019, when Telugu Desam Party lost most of the seats in Amaravati capital region, despite the fact that his govt made the area as AP capital region and started building many structures. Political tapestry is vivid, complex, ruthless and everchanging. So, to stay afloat, all political leaders should be ready to update themselves.

— B Krishna Prasad

## No respite for TS as cases rise in dists

PV KONDAL RAO  
WARANGAL

Since the past few days, the numbers of Corona positive cases are on the rise. Even as Hyderabad registered a dip in the number of Coronavirus cases, the state's single-day tally revealed a further spike in districts. Although the Greater Hyderabad area continues to contribute to Telangana's daily tally, recent updates show a substantial dip in the capital region.

However, the rise in numbers of positive cases in districts is sending shivers down the spine of people. Districts across the state continued to register positive cases, thanks to the people who returned to



their native places. Following rumours of another lockdown in Hyderabad, many people returned to their native places. Some have even completely

shifted their base from the city to their native places.

About 700-odd villages in the erstwhile Warangal, Karimnagar and Khammam

districts registered rise in cases subsequent to the return of migrant labourers from Gujarat, Maharashtra and other states. Some labourers, most of them from Hyderabad have tested positive for the virus, the tests which were conducted at Primary Health Centres and Community Health Centres spread across the regions.

In Jangaon district, about 70 villages registered rise in positive cases during the past one week and people, especially the elderly have started showing virus symptoms. Mandals like Station Ghampur, Zaffargadh and Chilpur have started registering rise in numbers of positive cases. A cursory glance at the PHCs and the rapid test-

ing process reveal that asymptomatic cases are on the rise and the home isolation kits distribution process has been undertaken on a large scale.

In Chilpur mandal in Jangaon district, the PHC located in the Malkapur village has started to register double digit numbers and a panic like situation has prevailed in this part. Sources say that the increase in the rapid antigen test in the next few days may witness more number of cases occurring in the rural parts and if such a situation arises, voluntary lockdown may be clamped in many parts.

In the urban and semi urban parts too, the situation is slowly but steadily reaching alarming levels.

## 740 tn amm nitrate to...

Continued from page 1

However, as the importer did not have the necessary licence, the Customs Department confiscated the entire consignment and had it stored in Sattva CFS, Manali, here.

It may be recalled that 2,700 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored at the Beirut port in Lebanon exploded on Tuesday, killing 135 persons and injuring thousands.

Following that concerns were raised about the safety risk of storing 740 tonnes of ammonium nitrate at the CFS.

The Customs had auctioned off the ammonium nitrate.

## Precious metals on cloud nine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amidst the hot and cold relationship between the US along with its allies including India on the one side and China on the other, all the precious metals have been on cloud nine since apart from overt investors, covert-ones too, have taken a big jump to grab the maximum of these metals.

Consequently, the markets witnessed a mad race among precious metals. New York gold broke the psychological barrier of US \$ 2,000 and finally closed at US \$ 2,034.80 (per ounce) while, silver followed suit and closed at \$ 28.32 (per ounce). Platinum and Palladium also marched forward and closed at \$ 960 (per ounce) and \$ 2,031 (per ounce) respectively.

Other economic parameters remained strong. Brent closed at US\$ 44.40 (per barrel), while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs.3,095 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.54,789 (per 10 gms). The

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities continued to remain strong.

Rythu Bazaars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthiyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir AlamMandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally, General Bazar are slowly but steadily returning to normal business activities. The NECC wholesale egg-price in Hyderabad recorded an increase of Rs.10 and closed at Rs.345 (per 100). The highest price of Rs.430 was recorded at Asansol.

## State alerts 36 hotels...

Continued from page 1

Before issuing NOC, the fire safety department looks into means of escape in case of a fire incident, setback space, and fire safety equipment, duly following the Fire Safety Act. The source also revealed that these hospitals also deviated from the building plan. Before the lockdown, notices were issued to these hospitals, but only a few responded. Talking about the safety precautions being taken by various hotels-turned-COVID Care Centre, Sampath Tumalla, Joint Secretary of Telangana State Hotels Association, says, "Initially the state's tourism department was connecting major hospitals to good hotels. However, later many hospitals started contacting the hotels individually. The star-hotels which have been tied by big hospitals are safe. However, there are a few smaller hotels and OYO rooms too, which are acting as COVID care centre, there I am not sure how the facilities would be."

## Good ties with AP fine, but TS interests...

Continued from page 1

The number of tests will soon increase to 40,000 per day, he added. He refused to draw a parallel between Telangana and other states on the number of tests being done in Telangana to diagnose Covid-19.

Compared to the Ayushman Bharat Scheme of the Centre, the Arogyasri being implemented in Telangana was a better health scheme, he said. He predicted that the maiden vaccine for Corona would be from the soil of Telangana. However, he said, he would be happy even if other countries invent the vaccine first.

The state government would give additional incentives to industries that provide jobs to locals. KTR said. The Telangana State Building Permission Approval and Self Certification System (TS-bPASS) would stand out as a benchmark in urban reforms, he said. It was indeed a matter of pride for Hyderabad to

get recognition as the city with the highest number of CCTV cameras, he said. There was a need to increase CCTV cameras in the city to bring down the crime rate. The cable suspension bridge across Durgam Cheruvu would be inaugurated in the third week of August, he said. He said that the fatalities due to Covid was less than 1 per cent. The recovery rate of Corona patients was 72 per cent in Telangana --the best in country, he said.

He wanted the people to give recognition to the good work being done by government health institutions apart from paying attention to the negative publicity against these institutions. In spite of the pandemic, the state government implemented many more programmes and succeeded in reducing infant and maternal mortality rates. Five new medical colleges have been started and ICU units have been set up in many Area Hospitals. In fact, the government established over 40 dialysis centres.

## 10 patients killed in fire at...

Continued from page 1

Unfortunately, they used the main one in a moment of panic and were trapped in the fire," a fire official said.

The fire department entered the room by breaking open the window panes and rescued 21 persons by bringing them down using ladders. They were

shifted to Ramesh Hospitals for treatment.

Since there was no other option, fire and NDRF personnel used ladders to bring down other people, stranded inside the hotel, to safety.

Meanwhile two persons jumped from the second floor to save their life. Their condition was said to be stable as

they sustained minor injuries.

As the hotel is situated in the centre of the city, the news about the fire mishap spread swiftly and relatives of the patients rushed to the hospitals to know about the condition of their beloved. Krishna District Fire Officer Sreenivasa Reddy said, around eight to 10 people are feared dead.

## Gandhi specs emerge at UK...

Continued from page 1

I think he nearly fell off his chair when we presented our valuation. It's a really great auction story and one that we all dream of, he said. The glasses, which have already attracted an online bid for 6,000 pounds, are said to have been in the family of the unnamed elderly gentleman vendor in England, who was told by his father that they were a gift to his uncle when he was working for British Petroleum in South Africa between 1910 and 1930.

## Centre eyeing grip over...

Continued from page 1

A bill to this effect "Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019" was introduced and passed in the Lok Sabha in August 2019 and is awaiting Rajya Sabha approval, which is being opposed by the opposition parties.

Normally, States do not seek any permissions from the Centre to build irrigation projects unless it requires the Centre's financial assistance to mobilise huge funds or for constructing inter-state projects.

However, the Centre's unusual practice of collecting details of all irrigation projects directly, without consulting the state governments concerned, has fuelled suspicions that it is trying to take control of all irrigation projects in the country and things may come to such a pass in future that all the States would have to take the Centre's permission to construct any irrigation project.

Shekawat, who wrote separate letters to KCR and Jagan, expressed his displeasure over the river water disputes. He

directed that no state should take up new projects on Krishna and Godavari rivers without the approval of the Apex Council constituted under the AP Reorganisation Act to resolve the inter-state water issues.

The Union Minister said that the Apex Council would call for another meeting soon to resolve pending issues. The meeting was supposed to be held on August 5, but KCR expressed his inability to attend the meeting due to prior engagements, including a cabinet meeting.

## 743 TTD staff test positive ...

Continued from page 1

The famous Lord Venkateswara temple in nearby Tirumala governed by the TTD had re-opened on June 11 for public after being close for two and a half months owing to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, he said.

Singhal denied reports in sections of the media and on social media that TTD had reopened the hill shrine after the coronavirus lockdown for the public with an intention to fill its coffers.

## PM launches Rs 1 lakh cr...

Continued from page 1

Legal hurdles are being removed and major push for agri-reforms are being given to encourage investment in rural India for creating post-harvest linkages, he added.

Modi launched the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund through a video conference on 'Balram Jayanti'. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and farmers from some states also participated in the video conference. The prime minister reiterated that India has a huge opportunity to invest in post-harvest management solutions like warehousing, cold chain and food processing, and build a global presence in areas such as organic and fortified foods.

Some have unfurled the battle flags while others have undertaken the fire-fighting exercise following the apex court taking suo motu cognizance of the contemptuous tweets by the celebrated public-spirited advocate of the Supreme Court Prashant Bhusan. Surprisingly, this is not the solitary instance of the apex court hauling up an advocate for his contemptuous behaviour. Even in the past, several advocates, including a sitting judge of the High Court, have had the taste of the severe provisions of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971. Some of them were reprimanded and let off, while other less fortunate ones had to pay through their nose heavy fines and even be the guests of the prison.

Obviously, not many eyebrows were raised at all these instances, then one wonders whether heavens have fallen all

## COURT AND CONTEMPT: STORM IN A TEA CUP!

of the sudden now only after the initiation of contempt proceedings against Prashant Bhusan! If the Contempt of Courts Act is the main culprit, then nothing would have stopped the protagonists of freedom of expression and beholders of the rule of law to register their concern all these years since the passing of the said Act in 1971. Even if some small fries attempted their bit to voice their concern against the statute of contempt of courts, they did not receive any support from any elite quarters for the reasons unknown to them.

Now, a hue and cry has been raised against the so-called 'dreaded' provisions of

**Even in the past, several advocates, including a sitting judge of the High Court, have had the taste of the severe provisions of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.**



LEGAL ROUNDUP

the contempt law. In fact, Courts in India are so much lenient towards the contemnors that in the name of the freedom of expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India, even the sworn enemies of the country like Tukde gang and jihadis go

scot-free. Had it been in some other country, the judiciary would have taken to the task such people, including those who showed disrespect to its verdicts such as on the issue of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

Unfortunately, the elite lobby with obvious hidden agenda in order to weaken judiciary through brow-beating methods has been by and large emboldened by the soft and sympathetic attitude of the judiciary

towards them. Otherwise, how dare the veteran lawyer Shanti Bhusan could file the impleading petition in the Supreme Court sermonising the apex court about the virtues, honesty, integrity and what not. He must be at least aware that the contempt proceedings are concerned only with the contemnors and the third party cannot implead in such proceedings.

This is such a simple thing which even the fresher at the court knows very well. However, nobody can stop any father to go to the rescue of the son who is in the soup. Branding some of the former judges, including the Chief Justices of India, as 'corrupt' by Shanti Bhusan cannot be taken lightly and he should be

made to clarify as to why he kept mum all these years even when he was the Law Minister of the country and a responsible senior advocate of the Supreme Court.

Considering the prevailing situation, wherein some vested interests are hell bent upon deriding the judicial system and insulting the coveted positions of judges, it is high time that about 50 years old law on contempt of court is revised and made more stringent against the contemnors. In particular, the maximum punishment of 6 months of imprisonment should be enhanced to at least 3 years for the first offence and 5 years for subsequent offences besides the fine of Rs.50,000/- for the first offence and Rs.1 lakh each for

the subsequent offences without any exception. Indeed, 'unbridled' legal horses need to be controlled effectively if the real rule of law has to prevail.

■ Can't barter land for job: TSHC

In a remarkable judgment delivered on August 4, Justice P.Naveen Rao of the Telangana High Court held that a contract between a Village Panchayat and a citizen to provide job to the latter against the land given/gifted to the Panchayat is illegal and null and void ab initio.

In a case on hand, the Court was dealing with the grievance of an employee of the Gram Panchayat who had secured the job against the donation/gift of his land to the Panchayat.



IN BRIEF

## EFLU VC Suresh Kumar appointed UGC member

The Union government has appointed Prof. E Suresh Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, as a member of the University Grants Commission (UGC). A gazette notification to this effect was issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development on August 7. According to the notification, Prof. Kumar is appointed as a member of the UGC with immediate effect, for a term of three years or till further orders, whichever is earlier.



## FLO holds plantation drive as part of Haritha Haaram



As many as 25 members of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) Hyderabad Chapter participated in a tree plantation programme held at Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad on Sunday, in partnership with GHMC. It was planned as part of Haritha Haaram, a large-scale tree-planting program implemented by the state government to increase the amount of green cover in the state. Haritha Haaram is the biggest green initiative taken up by the state government. Over the

three years since its inception, 87 crore saplings have been planted in and around the twin cities. Chairperson of FLO Hyderabad Usharani Manne said, "FLO is very happy to take part in this drive that too in these times of pandemic. As an Organisation with members spread out across India, we feel it is our responsibility to participate in social initiatives such as this. Telangana was the first State in the Country to embark on such a flagship greening program to rejuvenate the degraded green cover in urban spaces and forest areas." As members of FLO, we are happy to pledge our support to this meaningful endeavor", Usharani Manne added.

## IIIT Hyderabad to start online pedagogy course

As educational institutions embrace online teaching, the approaches, pedagogy models, techniques, tips and tricks are still elusive. IIITH's certification course on introduction to online pedagogy addresses all these challenges. Based on experiences in the last few months, enriched by insights from the various IT in education initiatives at IIITH. This short course, which will take place between August 17 and 23, will cover basic models for online pedagogy. IIITH will go through approaches for preparing and delivering engaging online lectures. Tools and skills required for recording lecture videos and creating interactive content on popular Learning Management systems will be covered. One of the most important aspects of online teaching is evaluation and grading, for which various options will be presented. Taken by IIITH faculty Vishal Garg, Aftab Hussain and Lalitha Vadlamani, will take the participants through pedagogical principles in an online setting, delivering engaging classes and tutorials, selecting hardware tools for online teaching: simple home setup, simple classroom setup and creating and sharing course material in a structured fashion on LMS, among other things.



# Corona impact: Funeral services become pricey

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Coronavirus has impacted various sectors of economy adversely, including the funeral services sector too.

The performance of last rites has become a big business during the current turbulent period of Corona pandemic.

Before the Coronavirus situation, the funeral expenses of a normal death have never exceeded Rs 15,000. But the agencies performing funeral services have now increased them to Rs 25,000.

The near and dear attending funeral services of a person are attending them only to catch the last glimpse of the person. They are not even staying at the burial ground till the last rites are completed.

The funeral services agencies shift body to burial ground. One has to pay Rs 5000 more in burial ground to the agencies for cremation.

The 15 square feet of land as the final resting place of a loved one may cost anywhere more than Rs 25,000. If the departed soul wished to be buried close to his relative's grave, the kin would have to shell out much more.

In the family of a trader, two persons died within a gap of one week. If the funeral was



conducted for them separately, it costed the family Rs 80,000. In rural areas, the funeral costs are aggregating to Rs 50,000.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is conducting the cremation of those who die of Coronavirus. It is asking the families not to pay anything to the burial ground personnel. However, the personnel at burial grounds are demanding huge sums from the bereaved families. The personnel at

burial grounds are demanding between Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 after showing the face of the dead person on the funeral pyre.

There are many complaints about personnel at burial ground in Erragadda extorting huge sums from the bereaved family members. On the other hand, the coronavirus pandemic has fundamentally altered the way funerals are being held. No longer are they elaborate grieving affairs, with funerals

being held with little or no families, even when the victim has not died of Covid-19.

The guidelines permit only 20 people with physical distancing for non-Covid funerals and only five people for the rituals of those who have died of Covid-19.

They also prohibit bathing or embalming the corpse of a Covid-19 victim and ban relatives from kissing or hugging the body. There are strict norms for the process itself involving Covid-19 victims.



## Mayor: Expedite works at Begumpet graveyard

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mayor Bonthu Rammohan on Sunday instructed the GHMC officials to expedite and complete the development and beautification works under progress at Begumpet graveyard.

The Mayor along with MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao, GHMC zonal commissioner S Srinivas Reddy, inspected the works which were being taken up at a cost of Rs 2 crore. The graveyard is spread over five acres and the municipal cor-

poration is providing amenities like bathrooms, toilets, parking, internal approach roads and avenue plantation. About 150 lorries of debris is cleared apart from 50 loads of wild growth and bushes under progress at Begumpet graveyard.

As part of development works, four platforms are to be built and there is a proposal to construct an electric crematorium at a later stage. Works pertaining to planting of avenue plantation, aromatic plants, roads and toilets are already completed.

## Hyd's street food business in jeopardy due to Coronavirus

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad's popular street snacks, which used to be relished by people cutting across community and class barriers, have no takers now during the pandemic, throwing street food vendors and roadside stalls out of business.

Till some time back, street food was a thriving business, but since the coronavirus outbreak, many vendors have returned to their native places while others are staring at an uncertain future.

The Coronavirus has brought problems to street vendors and tiffin vendors in the city. The street food points, mushroomed all over the city, have been facing rough weather as no one is buying anything from outside. Also the tea and tiffin centres that used to func-



tion from 6 am have lost business because of poor customer turn out. Some of the street vendors have closed their shops, while others converted them to grocery shops.

Some vendors are somehow pulling on their business hoping that their businesses would be back on rails soon.



## 'JNTU-H lenient with college managements'

■ No uniform service rule for all affiliated colleges, says TTIEA

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA  
■ HYDERABAD

Despite much hue and cry from education and teachers' association, many teachers working for Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad (JNTU-H) affiliated colleges are yet not being paid properly. Some of the teachers have nothing received as their salaries since April.

Various technical college associations feel that JNTU has been very lenient with the college management, which has resulted in the teachers being harassed. Dr V Balakrishna Reddy, Founder President of TTIEA shares, "The University doesn't have a uniform service rule for all the affiliated colleges. Before February this year, each college had its own service rules and submitted these documents to the university. Of more than 200 colleges affiliated to JNTU, 74

never submitted any service rules documents. As many as 7 are closed and 67 have not to-date submitted anything. The university on the other hand is still in the process of drafting a uniform rule for all."

He further adds, "These service rules cover everything from salaries to termination conditions including leaves. Since the JNTU management is least interested in looking into these things, many colleges are harassing them and not paying them peanuts. Even during the pandemic, teachers are suffering to keep their kitchens running."

A Santhosh Kumar, state President of TSTCEA, shares, "The service rule should not just be shared with the university, but also the employees. At least four to five copies of these documents should be made available in college library for the entire teaching and non-teaching faculty."



## IIT Hyd to resume campus activities in phased manner

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As the unlock process started across the country, the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IITH) is also preparing to resume academic activities on campus - albeit in very measured steps.

The decks have been cleared for the first batch of 70 doctoral scholars to return to the campus from August 10.

IITH Director Prof BS Murthy said, "It is the 'thrust on research' which has placed IIT Hyderabad as one of the prominent and promising institutions in the country. To enable our PhD students to carry out their experimental research amid this pandemic situation, we have decided to invite them, particularly those in their final year, to the campus."

The PhD students whose work is mostly computational have been advised to work from home. In view of transportation curbs due to the Covid lockdown, faculty have initially identified students hailing from Telangana and nearby states. Only students willing to reside on campus are being allowed to return.

As per IITH plans, the first batch will initially spend two weeks in self-quarantine in designated quarters on campus before moving to their own hostel rooms.

## Bank staffer goes missing

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A bank employee has been reported missing from his house in Chandanagar since Saturday. Shiva Naik who works for a private bank is suspected to have left the house on his will without informing his family.

Based on the complaint from his family on Sunday, the police booked a case and took up investigation. "We checked his tower location and call data record. His last location found was the lake in Gopi Nagar. Our team which went to the lake found his chappals at the water body," police said.

## KTR to open Bairamalguda flyover today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bairamalguda RHS flyover constructed as part of the Strategic Road Development Programme (SRDP) will be inaugurated by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao on Monday.

Constructed at a cost of Rs 26.45 crore, the Bairamalguda RHS flyover will help in one-way traffic flow from LB Nagar end towards Owaisi junction end. The flyover is 780 metres long and 12 metres width with the length of viaduct portion being 400 metres.

The structure was constructed to facilitate smooth flow of traffic at Bairamalguda junction where the peak hour



Passenger Car Unit (PCU) prior to Hyderabad Metro was recorded as 11,875 in 2015 and after Metro, it was 7,481. The volumes of traffic is expected

to increase considerably in the coming years and is estimated to be 18,653 PCU by 2034.

The facility will enable free flow of inner ring road traffic from Secunderabad to Owaisi and Srisaillam road ends. GHMC officials said precast and post tensioned technology was adopted in major elements of substructure and super structure by casting them in a yard and installing them at the site. RCC technology was used in minor elements of structure.

This helped in limiting the work at the site to installation and stressing activity. This apart, form work and staging were avoided at the site for pier, pier cap, deck slab and crash barriers, officials said.

## Property offender killed due to previous enmity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A property offender was murdered at Chaderghat due to previous enmity on Saturday.

The victim Sajid, a resident of Chaderghat who was previously involved in several property offences, was sitting along with his associates at the railway tracks near Azam function hall when few persons approached him to resolve a dispute between them. Soon the two groups clashed during which Sajid was attacked with surgical blades, the police said.

The man sustained bleeding wounds in the incident and

## Special teams were formed to nab the culprits suspected to be property offenders

was rushed to a private hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. The body was shifted to Osmania General Hospital mortuary.

The Chaderghat police registered a case and are investigating. The police formed special teams to nab assailants who are also suspected to be property offenders.

## Firms drawing up strategies to attract consumers amid Covid

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The rural economy will recover within six months leading to consumer goods improving their market soon.

Studies undertaken by various marketing agencies have indicated that several changes have taken place in markets due to the Covid-19 fear and subsequent lockdown.

Several companies who have lost their market are trying to regain the consumer confidence by bringing out various products that improve hygiene and health. The producers of various consumer goods have been adopting to changed environment with drawing up new strategies.



On one hand the companies have been providing permanent security to their shopping complexes, offices, warehouses and so on and on the other, strengthening ties with third-party e-commerce industries.

Even the villagers are focussing on products used to sanitise their houses, maintain personal hygiene and improve

their health especially boost their immunity. Therefore, the marketing agencies say that the rural economy will revive soon. The festival season will improve marketing prospects of various consumer goods, it is predicted.

The purchase pattern and taste for goods have undergone sea change due to impact of Covid on people's lives.

The Earnst and Young India conducted a survey recently on future consumer index revealing various aspects of consumer behaviour in the backdrop of Covid-19. The companies have been bringing out various products in tune with the changing tastes of consumers.

## RGIA steadily gaining back passengers, flights

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The world is steadily opening up and battling the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. While all human efforts are on for a vaccine, the focus of every nation is also to revive the economy.

Civil Aviation sector being one of the key drivers of economic growth, the Central government is opening up the sector in a calibrated manner with domestic being the first to get opened up on May 25. The government has also allowed domestic flights to be increased to up to 45 per cent of pre-covid numbers.

Since, its recommencement of domestic operations on May 25, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is providing a fully sanitised and touch-less boarding experience for passengers right from the departures ramp



till boarding gate for safe travel of passengers.

Giving the details, a source from RGIA says, "Hyderabad recommenced its domestic operations from May 25 onwards after a gap of two months of Covid-19 infused nation-wide lockdown. The airport is operating with a safe

and healthy environment offering a robust contact-less boarding experience for the passengers flying out of the Hyderabad. The airport has witnessed more than five times growth in daily passenger footfall from around 3,000 domestic passenger footfall (arrivals and departures) during first

few weeks starting to around 15,000 + passengers in July 2020."

Not just has the passengers travelling from RGIA increased, the number of flight operating out of the airport is also more than when the flying recommenced.

"The airport has also seen more than four times growth in daily domestic Air Traffic Movement from around 40 domestic air traffic movement (arrivals and departures) during first few weeks starting 25th May (the day of recommencement of domestic operations) to around 160+ domestic Air Traffic Movement in July 2020," the source says.

He further adds, "We are steadily gaining back its domestic connections across the country. We have re-con-

nected with 47 destinations across the country out of the 55 domestic destinations Pre-covid times." This corresponds to more than 85 per cent reconnect compared to that of Pre-covid times.

The airport is operating with a safe and healthy environment offering a robust contact-less boarding experience for the passengers flying out of the Hyderabad.

"We have contact-less self check at departures forecourt, airport entry, check-in, security check, boarding and retail and F&B options. We are trying to take as much precaution as we can to enhance passenger experience while keeping them safe and abiding by the mandatory protocols announced by the Central government amid the pandemic outbreak."



SCATHING ATTACK

# Cong to up the ante against govt over Corona situation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy exhorted the people to get inspiration from the Quit India Movement to reject the tyrannical and anti-people regimes. Speaking on the occasion of 78th anniversary of Quit India Movement at Gandhi Bhavan on Sunday, Uttam said that the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and the path adopted by him to dethrone the British were highly relevant in the present circumstances. He said that the Quit India Movement, also known as the August Movement, was launched at the Bombay session of the All India Congress Committee by Mahatma Gandhi on 8 August 1942 demanding an end to British Rule of India. He said this movement united the people and played a crucial role in getting freedom for the country from British Rule on August 15, 1947.

It was the Congress party which granted statehood for Telangana as it wanted the people of this region to prosper without any hindrance. However, he said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has shattered the dream of Telangana. "KCR has ruined all the resources of Telangana and pushed the State in debts of over



**TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy announced that the Congress party would 'expose' the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and fight against the injustice to people**

Rs. 3 lakh crore in the last six years. He is silent on Andhra Pradesh stealing 11 TMC of water every day from Pothreddypadu Project. He is helping the AP government execute expansion of Pothreddypadu Head Regulator and construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme which will deprive Telangana of 6.3 TMC of Krishna River water," he alleged. He announced that the Congress party would expose

KCR and fight against the injustices being done with people of Telangana. Uttam said that KCR government has completely failed to handle the Coronavirus situation. He blamed the negligent attitude of KCR for the rise in the number of cases and deaths. He expressed concern over the spread of the deadly virus in rural areas and demanded that the State Government take measures on a war-footing basis to save people's lives.

## KCR mortgaging TS interests: Bhatti

**HYDERABAD:** CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Sunday alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is mortgaging Telangana state for his personal needs. He lamented that South Telangana will turn into desert if Andhra Pradesh goes ahead with Pothreddypadu project. Speaking to the media on Sunday after CLP meeting through Zoom app, Bhatti said that they will explain in detail about the irrigation situation in both states by meeting Union Jal Shakti Minister and for it Congress representatives will go to Delhi. He also said that the Congress team will meet Union Social Justice Minister to explain about the alleged attacks on Dalits in the state. The team will lodge a complaint with the President Ram Nath Kovind and SC Commission, he said. The CLP leader also demanded the government to close belt shops immediately or else the Congress will launch a movement against belt shops. The government has to include Corona treatment in Arogyasri scheme, he demanded urging the government to set up at least one isolation centre in each Assembly constituency.

## Mount pressure on govt: Jagga

**HYDERABAD:** Congress MLA from Sangareddy Jagga Reddy urged CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka to make Congress MLAs and MPs visit all government hospitals to know the ground reality in the state and to chalk out an action plan to mount pressure on the Governor to solve the problems prevailed in hospitals. While participating in CLP meeting held on Sunday through Zoom app, Jagga Reddy said that the people are facing severe financial troubles in the state. He suggested the CLP meeting to mount pressure on the government to include corona treatment in Arogyasri scheme besides waiving off house tax, power bill and house rent. He said that there is a need to the Congress MLAs and MPs to take up one day deeksha to mount pressure on the government. The Congress has to give a call for state bandh in case the government fails to respond in this regard. He asked CLP to address letters to Chief Minister, Governor and Chief Secretary asking them to include Corona treatment in Arogyasri scheme.

# Telangana reports 1,982 new cases, 12 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 1,982 new Covid-19 cases, taking the overall infection tally to 79,495, while the death toll mounted to 627 with 12 more fatalities. The declining trend in new positive cases (observed during the last several days) continued in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) with 463 fresh cases being reported.

Medchal-Malkajgiri (141), Rangareddy (139), Karimnagar (96) and Jogulamba Gadwal (93) were at the top in positive cases, a state government bulletin said on Sunday, providing data as of 8 pm on July 8. The GHMC has been the epicentre of the virus spread in the state. Districts, including Rangareddy, Medchal-Malkajgiri, Karimnagar have also been reporting a considerably large number of cases in the state.

According to the bulletin, the case fatality rate in the state was 0.78 per cent, while it was 2.03 per cent at the national level. The total number of people who have recovered from the infectious disease so far was 55,999, while 22,869 were under treatment. The recovery rate was 70.44 per cent in the state, while it was 68.32 per cent in the country.

The number of individuals in home/institutional isolation was 16,112. The number of asymptomatic cases (of those under home isolation) was 84 per cent, it said. The



bulletin said 22,925 samples were tested on August 8. Cumulatively, the number of samples tested was 6,13,231.

The state government last week decided to increase the number of samples to be tested daily to 40,000. On age and gender wise COVID-19 positive details, it said 65.6 per cent were male, while 34.4 per cent were female. The highest percentage of positive cases among various age groups continues to be in the 31-40 group which was 25 per cent (male-17.7 and female-7.3).

On comorbidities status among deaths, it said the percentage of deaths due to comorbidities was 53.87 per cent. The percentage of deaths due to COVID-19 was 46.13 per cent. The number of vacant regular, oxygen and ICU beds were 11,643 and 4,352 and 1,889 respectively, the bulletin said. It said RT-

PCR/CBNAAT/TRUENAT testing facilities in the government were 16 and 23 in the private sector. It also said 323 rapid antigen testing centres have been set up by the government.

The bulletin provided a list of laboratories, rapid antigen testing centres, details on the status of beds in government and private hospitals, the lists of containment zones in GHMC and in different districts. The bulletin said the government has made elaborate arrangements for treating COVID-19 patients and that sufficient beds are available in government hospitals. The call centre number for helpline, telemedicine and grievances is 104. People can contact 9154170960 on WhatsApp for any grievances pertaining to private hospitals/laboratories, the bulletin added.

# KCR indirectly helping AP, alleges Revanth

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TPCC working president and Malkajgiri MP A Revanth Reddy on Sunday alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is extending his support indirectly to the illegal projects of Andhra Pradesh state and writing letter for the postponement of Apex Council meeting scheduled for August 5, is the best example for it.

The Congress MP alleged that the TRS government is not even constructing legal projects though the Andhra Pradesh government is trying to construct illegal projects. He pointed out that



there is no matter in the case filed by the TRS government against Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme. Revanth questioned the TRS government to reveal as to why it stopped Narayanpet-Kidangal Lift project.

# Keshav Rao assures HMT Praga Tools workers of all help

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Malkajgiri Lok Sabha Constituency TRS in-charge Marri Rajasekhara Reddy on Sunday exhorted chairman of the parliamentary committee on industries K Keshav Rao to take steps to save HMT Praga Tools division here. He along with the union leaders of the HMT Praga Tools Division called on Keshav Rao and informed him that the management served notices on workers to move to the company units in other states. They told him that the future of the workers would be in peril if they were to be relocated elsewhere.

They urged Keshav Rao to take the issue to the notice of



the Centre. The HMT Praga Tools Division is located on a sprawling 195 acre site with a total work force of over 100, he said expressing concern over relocating the unit to elsewhere.

At a time, many world class industries are looking towards

Hyderabad to set up their units here, he questioned the relocation of the unit elsewhere in the country.

How the workers accustomed to life style here can adjust to conditions in other states, he wondered. He said that the problems were taken to the notice of the TRS leaders and appealed to them to come to the rescue of the workers. In case, relocation is necessary they should be given the option of the VRS. Keshav Rao responded to the issue addressed a letter to the concerned ministry and assured the delegation to take measures to ensure that injustice is not done to any worker.

## COURTESY CALL



Hyderabad Cricket Association president Mohammad Azharuddin with Sports and Cultural Minister V Srinivas Goud, in Hyderabad on Sunday. Azharuddin thanked the Minister for restarting sporting activities in the State and also discussed on the new phased re-opening protocols for playing cricket

# TS ramped up testing, says CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Dr Vinod Kumar Paul, Member, Niti Aayog along with senior officials of the Government of India interacted with the Chief Secretary of Telangana Somesh Kumar and other officials of the state government on the management of Covid 19 situation in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary informed that the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has been monitoring the situation pertaining to the pandemic daily and under his guidance the state government has achieved considerable progress on all parameters.

The state has ramped up



testing facilities, hospital infrastructure, and availability of oxygen beds. Further adequate stock of all key consumables and equipment has been ensured. About 4,000 posts of health care professionals have been sanctioned since March this year to address the issue of human

resources, he added. Home isolation of the patients is being monitored through the Home Isolation Telemedicine and Management app. The health department is being assisted by a team of senior officers for support on key thematic areas of pandemic management.

# Two children drown in Sangareddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two children drowned in a fish pond in an agriculture field at Potlappally village of Jharsangam Mandal on Sunday. The victims were identified as Harshavardhan (10) and Vishalbabu (11). The boys, residents of Potlappally, ventured into the agriculture field in a playful mood. Harshavardhan and Vishalbabu got into the pond unaware of the danger. Since they did not know swimming, they drowned. A case has been registered.

# Ministers not accessible to common people: Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy on Sunday asked IT Minister KT Rama Rao to share his office address, along with the timings, where people could meet him to express their grievances on the problems being faced by them. Reacting to the #AskKTR campaign undertaken by Minister KTR on social media platform Twitter on Sunday, Narayana Reddy said that the campaign was a publicity stunt to grab a headline in the newspapers. While most of the questions were posted from fake IDs, KTR gave the replies were selective and pre-decided.

"A minister should be available for people at his office and home all the time or he/she should have fixed timings when common people can meet to make representations. But no TRS minister has a permanent address. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao lives in a palace called Pragathi Bhavan where no one, including Ministers and MLAs, has no access. There is no Secretariat. Some Ministers are operating on a part time basis from temporary offices in different parts of Hyderabad. There is no way people could

connect with the ministers to get their problems solved," he alleged.

He said that KTR was handling several important portfolios including Municipal Administration & Urban Development, Industries and Information Technology. Therefore, KTR must start acting in a matured manner and provide easy access to the common people, he demanded. "Instead of connecting with the people, KTR is focused on doing some stunts on social media which could get him some cheap

publicity," he said. The Congress leader pointed out that not all citizens were capable of using Twitter or other social media platforms. "Not everyone knows how to post their complaint in a limited number of characters. The poor people look for someone who could listen to their grievances and resolve them. But the KCR Govt has deprived the people the opportunity to express their grievances. They have no option but to suffer in silence. On the other side, KCR, KTR and other Ministers make one-sided tall claims that their government was doing fine," he said. He advised KTR to learn to behave like a public representative and not as an actor.

# Rs 30L worth ganja seized

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

The police arrested a person and seized ganja worth about Rs 30.60 lakh from his possession at Bhadrachalam in the district on Sunday.

Bhadrachalam Inspector of Police (CI) K Vinod Kumar informed that the town Sub-Inspector of Police Mahesh and team intercepted a car moving suspiciously on Kunavaram road. When they inspected the car they found dry ganja weighing around 204 kilograms.

The accused identified as Vankudoth Bala Kumar of Kolkata thanda in Gudur Mandal of Mahabubabad district was transporting the substance to Hyderabad after procuring it from Chhatti in Odisha state, the CI said.

# Search for WFH jobs up 442% in India

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Job searches for remote work or work from home in the country have increased by over 442 per cent between February and July, the highest globally, according to a report. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, many jobs have rapidly become work-from-home jobs at least temporarily and with the flexibility and a variety of career options, it has become more popular than ever, global job site Indeed said in a report.

Earlier, IT employees and employees of other sectors used to search Google for work from home options. Because of Covid-19, employees working in every other sector are wishing to work from home. Unable to predict the cycle of the virus in the country, many industries are allowing their employees, especially the IT units, to work from home even for a short duration.



During February-July this year, Indians searched Google for working from home opportunities. Because of increased productivity, good results and active participation of employees, the managements and top executives of companies are bent on increasing work from home opportunities, the report said.

Therefore, the work from home opportunities in software, health care, marketing

sectors have increased manifold, the Indeed study said. It identified that the opportunities for delivery persons and IT managers have increased manifold.

In July, the number of jobs in software, medical and health sector, marketing has increased. If the same trend were to continue in future, the job opportunities are likely to increase in other sectors too.

**Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, many jobs have rapidly become work-from-home jobs at least temporarily and with the flexibility and a variety of career options, it has become more popular than ever, global job site Indeed said in a report**

Following cyber attacks on individuals and firms, the job opportunities for cyber security personnel have increased enormously. Therefore, the number of job notifications in this regard has increased and the job searches for cyber security expert posts increased by 30 per cent.

# States taking cue from TS: Puvvada

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

As part of the Integrated Fisheries Development Scheme (IFDS), Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar on Sunday released fishlings into a tank at Raghunathapalem in the district. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that Telanagana is leading by example in 'Blue Revolution' and thus changing the lives of fishermen by improving their financial status.

"The State government has been implementing many schemes for the welfare of fishermen. No other state in the country is implementing schemes especially for fishermen. Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao's initiatives meant to promote caste based vocations has been appreciated by many states in the country," the Minister said. "This year, the state govern-



ment has planned to release 82 crore fish seeds by spending around Rs 52 crore and it would generate an income of around Rs 1,100 crore. In Khammam, it about 3.45 crore fish seeds would be released in around 963 tanks," he said.

Similarly in Kothagudem district 1.78 crore fishlings would be released into 691 tanks. In all 5.24 crore fishlings would be released into around 1,694 water bodies in erstwhile Khammam district at 100 per cent subsidy, he added. The Minister, along with the District Collector RV Karnan inspected the construction works of Rythu Vedika, which was being built by him with an expenditure of Rs 40 lakh at Raghunathapalem Mandal headquarters.



SHORT READS



Kiran Bedi: People's representatives must follow Covid norms

**PUDUCHERRY:** Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi on Sunday said political leaders and people's representatives should follow norms for safety from COVID-19 and set an example to the public. She said there were photographs and reports in the media that some of the people's representatives were seen violating the guidelines introduced to fight the pandemic. "There are umpteen pictures daily in the media showing social distancing being violated by people's representatives themselves and this is despite being few of them having tested positive for the virus," she said. In her whatsapp message, Bedi said unless political leadership shows respect for whatever they want the public to do, the war against COVID-19 would be a case of taking two steps forward and three steps backwards.

Actor Natasha Suri tests positive for Covid

**MUMBAI:** Actor and former Miss India World Natasha Suri on Sunday said she has tested positive for COVID-19 and is currently quarantining at her home. Suri, 31, said she had gone to Pune earlier this month and fell sick on her return to Mumbai. "I had gone to Pune taking all the necessary precautions. When I came back, on August 3, I fell sick. I had fever, sore throat so I got myself tested and it turned out COVID-19 positive," the actor said. Suri, who made her big screen debut with the 2016 Malayalam comedy "King Liar", said her sister and grandmother have also been tested. "My family members also started feeling sick so I am strictly quarantining at home, taking medications. They have also undergone tests, their reports are awaited," she said.

12 Naxals surrender in C'garh, 5 of them carrying cash rewards

**RAIPUR:** Twelve Naxals, five of them collectively carrying a reward of Rs 6 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Sunday, police said. The cadres turned themselves in before police and the CRPF officials in Dantewada town saying that they were impressed by the rehabilitation campaign being run by the local police and disappointed with the hollow Maoist ideology, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said. Dantewada MLA Devti Karma was also present on the occasion, he said. Of these ultras, Chanduram Sethiya, who was active as a member of platoon no. 26 of Maoists, was allegedly involved in three Naxal attacks, including in Bhusaras-Chingavarm in 2008, wherein 23 policemen and two civilians were killed, he said. Sethiya was carrying a reward of Rs 2 lakh on his head, Pallava said.

INDUS WATER TREATY MEETING

# India suggests video-conf, Pakistan insists on meeting on Wagah border

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has suggested to Pakistan that the talks for discussing pending issues under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) be held through video-conferencing in view of the coronavirus pandemic, but Islamabad has been insisting that the parleys be conducted at the Attari check post, sources said on Sunday. In a letter last week, the Indus Commissioner of India told his Pakistani counterpart that it is not conducive to hold the meeting at the Attari Joint Check Post due to the pandemic. On Pakistan's request, a meeting was scheduled in last week of March to discuss pending issues under the Indus Water Treaty. However, it was deferred due to current pan-

# Record 7 lakh Covid tests conducted in a day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Scaling up testing capacity, over seven lakh samples have been examined for COVID-19 in a day taking the cumulative tests conducted so far to 2,41,06,535, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday. The number of recoveries too has surged to 14,80,884 with 53,879 coronavirus patients having recuperated and discharged in 24-hours, the highest in a day so far, pushing the recovery rate to 68.78 per cent. The fatality rate has further dropped to 2.01 per cent, it said. The ministry said the number of single-day tests has been growing exponentially and India has been testing over six lakh samples daily for several days. "A record 7,19,364 samples have been tested on Saturday, the highest in a day so far. India is conducting around 500 tests for detection of COVID-19 per minute and



the per-day testing capacity has increased over five lakhs," Scientist and media coordinator at ICMR, Dr Lokesh Sharma said. Such elevated level of testing will also lead to high number of daily positive cases, the health ministry said, adding states have been advised to firmly focus on comprehensive tracking, prompt isolation and effective treatment, following the Centre-led strategy of 'test, track and treat'. The number

of recoveries has surged to 14,80,884 with 53,879 coronavirus patients having recuperated and discharged in 24-hours, the highest in a day so far, pushing the recovery rate to 68.78 per cent. The fatality rate has further dropped to 2.01 per cent, the ministry said. "The number of recovered cases has touched another high of 2.36 times the active cases. All patients are all under medical attention either in home

**The number of recoveries too has surged to 14,80,884 with 53,879 corona virus patients having recuperated and discharged in 24-hours**

isolation or in hospitals," the ministry said. From 7.69 per cent on April 5, the recovery rate improved to 26.59 per cent on May 3, 48.37 per cent on June 7 and to 68.78 per cent as on date, it said. "The widening gap between recovered and active cases, indicative of the higher number of recoveries as compared to those either in hospitals or in home isolation, is 8,52,137 at present," the ministry said.

## PM releases Rs 17,000 cr to 8.5 cr farmers under PM-KISAN scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday transferred Rs 17,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of 8.5 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme. He said the scheme has been successful in its objective to provide financial support to farmers without any involvement of middlemen. The Centre provides Rs 6,000 per year in three equal instalments under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme that was launched in December 2018. The prime minister "released the 6th installment under the PM-KISAN scheme of Rs 17,000 crore to nearly 8.5 crore farmers. The cash benefit was transferred directly to



their Aadhaar verified bank accounts with the press of a button", an official statement said. The amount was transferred to farmers at a function organised through video conference to launch financial facility of Rs 1 lakh crore under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund. "No middlemen, no commission. The amount was transferred directly to farmers," Modi said.

## Congress must find full-term president, says Tharoor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress must expedite the process of finding a full-term president to arrest the growing public perception that the party is "adrift and rudderless", senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said on Sunday. Tharoor also said that he certainly thinks Rahul Gandhi has the "mettle, capability and aptitude to once again lead the party", but if he does not wish to do so then the party must "take action" to elect a new chief. His comments assume significance as they come just ahead of Sonia Gandhi completing one year as interim chief on August 10, with the party yet to find her successor. "I certainly believe we should be clear about our leadership going forward. I welcomed Sonia ji's appoint-



ment as interim president last year, but I do believe it's unfair to her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely," Tharoor said. "We also need to arrest the growing public perception, fuelled by a dismissive media, that the Congress is adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition," the former Union minister said.

## 'Modi to present new outline for self-reliant India on August 15'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will present a new outline for a self-reliant India in his address to the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday. The defence minister said various departments and ministries of the government are working seriously to implement Modi's initiative for a self-reliant India and that it is an attempt to give a fresh dimension to Mahatma Gandhi's push for 'Swadeshi'. Singh was speaking at an online event organised to pay tributes to revolutionary freedom fighter Udhham Singh. Talking about the 'Atmanirbhar' initiative, the defence minister said that the coronavirus pandemic has shown that a country may not be able to effectively protect its sovereignty if it is not self-reliant. "Our government will not allow any harm to India's self



respect and sovereignty at any cost," he said. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi will present before the nation a new outline for a self-reliant India in his address from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the Independence Day," Singh said. Referring to the defence ministry's decision to ban import of 101 military weapons and platforms, Singh said major and tough decisions are being taken to promote self-reliance in defence pro-

duction. He said big weapons systems will now be produced in India and the country will look for their export to make it a hub for defence manufacturing. In a major push to promote the domestic defence industry, Singh on Sunday morning announced restrictions on import of 101 weapons and military platforms including light combat helicopters, transport aircraft, conventional submarines and cruise missiles by 2024.

## 'Agri Infra Fund to benefit farmers, create jobs, develop rural economy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for launching a Rs 1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and said it will generate new employment opportunities and strengthen the rural economy. In a series of tweets in Hindi, Shah said agriculture is the foundation of the Indian economy and the Modi government has been striving to strengthen it for the last six years. Shah said many unprecedented steps have been taken to double the income of farmers and for the development of the agriculture sector. "I am confident that due to the untiring efforts of PM Narendra Modi, Indian agri-



culture will become world class in the times to come," he said. The home minister said the agriculture infrastructure fund will accelerate creation of many infrastructure projects such as cold storage, collection centres, processing units so that the hardworking farmers can get the true value for their produce.

## Patna's R-Block flyover opens for traffic after inauguration by Nitish

PNS ■ PATNA

The R-Block flyover in Patna opened for traffic on Sunday after its inauguration by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The 960-metre-long flyover in the heart of the city was built for Rs 106 crore in five years, officials said. The R-Block flyover connects Hardinge Road with Veerchand Patel Path and Mithapur flyover and it will reduce traffic near the state Legislative Assembly, they said. The R-Block-Digha Road will be connected with the new flyover near the GPO, Additional Chief Secretary of Road Construction Department, Amrit Lal Meena, was quoted as saying in a release.



Commuters will be able to access the Digha Bridge and the Ganga Path via the new flyover once it's linked with the R-Block-Digha Road, he said. Ganga Path is a 20.5-km-long driveway being built along the river to connect Digha Patna to Didarganj. The chief minister asked the officials to connect the R-Block-Digha Road with the new flyover through an elevated road, the release said.

## ED grills Rhea Chakraborty's brother overnight in money laundering case; calls her again today

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) questioned Showik Chakraborty, brother of actor Rhea Chakraborty, for about 18 hours in connection with a money laundering case linked to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, officials said on Sunday. Showik left the central investigative agency's office here in the Ballard Estate area around 6:30 AM after an overnight questioning session that began around noon on Saturday. Officials said Showik's statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and he was asked about his personal businesses, income, investments and financial dealings with his sister and Rajput. He was grilled by the agency

for a few hours on August 7 as well. On the same day, his sister and prime accused in the case Rhea (28) was questioned by the agency for the first time for about eight hours. Rhea and her father Indrajit Chakraborty have been summoned to appear before the agency again on Monday. On Friday, the ED had questioned Indrajit, Rhea's chartered accountant (CA) Ritesh Shah and business manager Shruti Modi, who also worked for Rajput. The agency is understood to have questioned Rhea, who stated in her petition to the court that she was in a live-in relationship with Rajput, about her friendship with the late actor, business dealings and the developments that took place over the last few years between them. The ED's line of questioning, officials said, is revol-



ing around Rhea's income, investments, business and professional deals, and links. Also under the ED's scanner is a property located in the city's Khar area and another in Navi Mumbai, both linked to Rhea, for the source of purchase and ownership.

## Politicisation of Sushant case a conspiracy against Maha: Raut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday claimed "pressure tactics" were being used in the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death and the issue was being politicised as part of a conspiracy against Maharashtra. It is wrong to see the unfortunate suicide of the actor from a political angle, Raut said in his weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana'. Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.



The CBI recently took over the probe in the case, based on a Patna police FIR related to alleged criminal conspiracy and abetment to suicide against Rajput's girlfriend and actor Rhea Chakraborty.

## Shekhawat slams Gehlot over deaths of 11 migrants from Pak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Sunday slammed the Rajasthan government over deaths of 11 members of a Hindu migrant family from Pakistan, saying the incident reflects the "working style" of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Eleven members of a Hindu migrant family from Pakistan and belonging to the Bhil community were found dead at a farm in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district on Sunday. "The deaths of nearly a dozen refugees from Pakistan put a question mark on @ashokgehlots working style. "The deceased include two men, four women and five children. One after other, very frightening incidents reflecting the deteriorating situation of the state, are coming to the fore.



The government should swing into action and clear the picture, Shekhawat tweeted. One member of the migrant family, however, was found alive outside the hut they lived at Lodta village of Dechu area, an official said in Jodhpur. "But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which believed to have happened in the

**"The deceased include two men, four women and five children. One after other, very frightening incidents reflecting the deteriorating situation of the state, are coming to the fore. The government should swing into action and clear the picture," Shekhawat tweeted**

night," said Jodhpur's Superintendent of Police (Rural) Rahul Barhat. "We are yet to ascertain the cause and means of death. But apparently, all the members appeared to have committed suicide by consuming some chemical in the night," Barhat said.



PAPER WITH PASSION

## Tragedy in Kozhikode

The crash of an Air India Express Boeing 737 at Kozhikode is an unfortunate disaster but could it have been avoided?



Indian air crash investigators examining the wreckage of Air India Express flight 1344, a Vande Bharat Mission flight from Dubai to Kozhikode, are likely to have witnessed similar scenes just a few short years ago. Another Air India Express Boeing 737-800 overran a runway at Mangalore airport, just a few hundred kilometres north of the current site. Thankfully, while that crash saw few survivors, it appears that, at the time of writing, a large majority of the passengers on board this plane survived the slide down the end of the runway.

This is probably because the pilot turned off the engine to avert fire. Investigators will have several tools at their disposal from weather reports, radar displays and even the plane's own Cockpit Voice Recorder and Flight Data Recorder. However, the similarities between the two accidents bring to mind the risks of operating at such "tabletop" airports. Both Kozhikode and Mangalore airports are carved into the Western Ghats, leaving pilots little room for error. The information available at this time has revealed that the pilot had already made one missed approach to the airport. Landing in the monsoon in India, when runways are wet, is always a risk and runway "excursions" are common due to the lower braking action available on the slippery tarmac, as any motorist on the roads would be quite aware of. While Kozhikode airport's runway was clearly long enough at 9,000 feet for a Boeing 737 to land safely in most conditions, the distance needed for a landing in extremely wet conditions with a tailwind might have been an ask too far for the aircraft. And unlike Cochin airport, a hundred or so kilometres to the south, this one, by its very layout on the top of a plateau, had little runoff area and no soft concrete surface at the end of a runway for planes to sink into. Now that the crash has happened, every oversight and lapse is being called into account. As it turns out, civil aviation experts had warned of the airport's risk factors about nine years ago. In a letter sent on June 17, 2011, to the then director-general of civil aviation, Capt Mohan Ranganathan wrote, "An aircraft landing on runway 10 in tailwind will experience poor braking action due to heavy rubber deposits ... All such flights ... are endangering the lives of all on board." While no accident happened until now, the report got buried. Even now the Government has claimed that hundreds of flights have landed there in the recent past, overlooking the need to reassess the lay of the land.

There are six tabletop runways in India where landing flights is somewhat difficult as there is no additional space on the runway. Since there are many issues pertaining to safety of aircraft, crew and passengers, many international flights and Airbus A330 and Boeing 777 do not land at these airports. The Kozhikode airport's runway end safety area was expanded in 2018 to accommodate wide-body aircraft. Though it meets United Nations international civil aviation requirements, the agency recommends a buffer that is 150 metres longer than what exists at Kozhikode airport. Some reports also suggest a laxity about routine tests. Apparently no friction test was done at the airport, as is mandatory on runways and taxiways, especially those affected by rains. Flying in India has been incredibly safe over the past decade even as air traffic has exploded with hundreds of new aircraft and millions of first-time passengers. But air travel, while being inherently safe, does have an ability to shock us when something goes wrong. One expects this accident to be thoroughly investigated and faults if any to be rectified, even if that means closing down of certain airports in India or restricting large jet aircraft from flying there. Ranganathan has flagged Patna and Jammu airports as accident-prone and sitting ducks that need immediate upgrades. Aviation is a vitally important transportation option in a country as large as India where millions make their living outside Indian shores. The safety and security of this industry is not only of paramount importance but also a strategic necessity for this nation.

## Breaking stereotypes

UPSC toppers come from fairly modest backgrounds and have shown how the ordinary can manage extraordinary feats



The recently published results of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) civil services examination, 2019, have thrown up some powerful stories of triumph, surpassing gender, caste, economic and religious barriers. Stories of grit and inspiration abound as most candidates who have made the cut have done so under challenging circumstances and modest means. While some never gave up despite repeated failures, there are others who had to overcome physical as well as family limitations to prove that courage is the only mark of success. The topper, Pradeep Singh, though already an IRS officer, is the son of a farmer from Sonipat. Surprisingly, Jatin Kishore and Pratibha Verma, too, not satisfied with their earlier results, reappeared for the exams and have now become the second and third rankers and the top scorers among women. Overall there are three women candidates in the top 10 list. But setting a new record are 12 candidates from Jammu and Kashmir, including Nadia Beig, the youngest officer from Kupwara, at a time when young people in the blacked out State are suffering on account of lost opportunities. In yet another example of perseverance, a son of a petrol pump worker from Madhya Pradesh has bagged the 26th position. Neither financial struggles nor a missed opportunity last year, when he failed to make it to the list by just one slot, could deter this young officer. Aishwarya Sheoran, who bagged the 93rd position, has become a classic example of beauty with brains. A former Miss India finalist, she has broken the stereotype that models aren't smart enough by clearing the exams in her first attempt. A former child actor, too, is an inspiration for he is a COVID warrior and is ready to become an officer. And Purana Sunthari, a 25-year-old visually impaired woman from Madurai, has proved just how no vision can be out of sight.

Caste and gender barriers continue to be broken. Of the total qualified candidates, 304 belong to the general category and 78 from the reserved (SC, ST and OBC) quotas. The gap is still wide but there is some progress. Women have pushed their way creditably into the top 10 list but overall, the number of women joining the services is still less than 25 per cent, according to Government data. This year, it is 23.7 per cent women, an improvement on the 2018 figures. The biggest takeaway is that the young and hard-working achievers have broken many myths surrounding one of the toughest examinations in the country — that it is meant for the intelligent, those who have excellent academic records, that it is easier for those from engineering and medical fields to clear the exams, that one needs to devote more than 16 hours of the day to do so and that one needs to spend money and time on coaching classes. Yet everybody on the toppers' list this year is a regular youngster. Each has been high on motivation, effort and focus. The mindset has won in the end.



# Unending Ladakh story

The Modi Govt is in a fix today, not because of the negligence of previous regimes but because of its own deliberate neglect of the military. We have failed to learn lessons



DEEPAK SINHA

An interesting anecdote doing the rounds among military veterans' groups on social media pertains to an incident just after the 1971 war. A young officer performing duties of the Regimental Adjutant, the principal staff officer to the Commanding Officer, was approached by an extremely engaging and popular ex-serviceman — who was employed by a well-known corporate — for an authority letter to continue drawing canteen stores from his unit. This was a common occurrence in those times when smart cards were yet to make an appearance. However, on a hunch, the officer decided to obtain verification of his antecedent prior to signing the certificate from the office that maintained departmental records.

Surprisingly, it turned out that the individual was a deserter from the Army and had absconded from his unit during the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962 while his unit was deployed in the combat zone. On receipt of this information, as was expected, the ex-soldier was apprehended and questioned. He accepted his guilt and explained that after his unit was overrun by the Chinese, he successfully evaded them and escaped to Bhutan where he got himself a job. One thing led to another and he settled into civilian life and never rejoined the Army. As is customary, he was brought before a court-martial; was found guilty and sent off to serve time in jail. However, the commanding officer being a kindly soul and displaying immense empathy for the convict, convinced his company to retain him on the rolls, while also arranging to look after his family till he had served his sentence. Thus, on his return, the former soldier not only got his job back but was also able to finally shed his sense of guilt and apprehension that had haunted him all those years.

This is a simple straightforward tale of being held to account for one's misdeeds, which fortuitously ended well for the soldier and his family, despite all the trials and tribulations that he must have faced. A contrarian view would suggest that in all likelihood, he had probably been traumatised by his world collapsing around him when his unit disintegrated in battle, leaving him to fend for himself. Given his experience and mental state — where there was no sufficient ground for mitigation — should he not have been absolved of all wrongdoing? Of course, while this question may draw differing conclusions, depending on one's point of view and interpretation of the law, what cannot be disputed is that he was guilty of fraudulently attempting to obtain benefits authorised only to military veterans. He deserved to be held to account. Ironically, the account does not make clear whether the latter aspect was glossed over or even considered.

But here is the thing that the young soldier was undoubtedly an insignificant cog in that vast military machine and yet, he was held to account for the error he had committed.



One wishes that those responsible for derailing the military and forcing it and this country to live through years of ignominy of defeat had also been meted out justice in a similar manner. The sad truth is that they got away without being held accountable as neither resignations — like that of Krishna Menon or General Thapar, the Army Chief — nor deprivation of further promotion, as some others faced, can be called punishment enough. At the minimum, those responsible should have certainly faced disciplinary proceedings, maybe even have had their pensions stopped, as was the case with General AAK Niazi after he surrendered in Dhaka. After all, surrendering 37,000 square km of the territory that we claimed as ours to the Chinese was no small matter. Yet, how did we respond to this humongous disaster? Shamefully, to say the least, the Government did transfer the individual entrusted with the defence of India, the then Defence Secretary O Pulla Reddy, but subsequently nominated him as the founding Vice Chancellor of Andhra Pradesh Agricultural University. Talking of second chances.

Our unwillingness and inability to fix the blame for acts of commission and omission at the highest levels have ensured that no lessons are ever learnt. We have also gone on to perfect the art of deflection as the Kargil dis-

aster clearly showed. There was no reason why Atal Bihari Vajpayee's attempts at engaging Pakistan should have led to complacency on the part of either the intelligence or the security establishment. It was all very well to have blamed it on "systemic intelligence failure" but why nobody thought it necessary to ask the question: While the intelligence agencies may have failed to discern Pakistan's intentions, how was it that the latter occupied our territory without detection by the Army? Instead of taking it to task, we made much of our top military brass, treating them as heroes for reclaiming — at great cost one might add — what we should not have lost in the first place. Of course, the Government of the day could not have acted in any other manner as that would have been seen as a blemish on its performance as well.

Naturally, we are again witness to this sordid cycle as the Chinese once again make fools out of us. The same cliched excuses are being trotted out that unfortunately, the "Wuhan-Mamallapuram spirit" made our security establishment complacent and we were, thus, caught wrong-footed as intelligence agencies were unable to detect Chinese movers or gauge their intentions. The security establishment hopes to save itself the blushes by pushing the blame on its favourite whipping boy, "sys-

tem failure." In this case, the current border management practice that ensures a rather opaque division of responsibilities between the Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

One can be certain that they will manage to avoid being held to account this time as well. Not least because of the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attempted to change the narrative by denying any ingress or loss of territory and instead promoting through his minions "differing perceptions of the LAC between both sides" to fudge the issue. He hopes — and not without good reason given the blind support he enjoys — this will allow him and his Government to carry on as if it is business as usual. Unfortunately for him, the unexpected appearance in the public domain of the Ministry of Defence report on the ingress by the PLA — though now withdrawn — does suggest that there are those within the Government who have serious reservations about his actions and have no compunction in showing him up for dissembling.

Normally, in a bureaucratic and hierarchical system such as ours, it is often the case that those left holding the baby, so to say, are not necessarily the ones responsible for its procreation in the first place. We would certainly not have found ourselves in the present situation if the previous Government, and this one, had

shown even a modicum of interest in national defence and kept their eye on the ball. Modi finds himself in an extremely difficult situation, not because the Manmohan Singh Government was negligent, which it certainly was, but because of his own deliberate neglect of the military since 2014. He made all the right noises but had no time for the military, except for where it helped his own political fortunes.

Similarly, General Rawat would not have found himself caught in this controversy today if he had not been appointed the Chief of Defence Staff after pandering to Modi's wishes. He cannot escape responsibility for having sabotaged the Mountain Strike Corps (MSC) midway through its raising while he was Chief of Army Staff. One may recall that it was after the ingress by the Chinese in the Depsang Sector in 2013 that the dysfunctional Manmohan Singh Government understood the seriousness of the issue and sanctioned the raising of the MSC. Its raising was given full attention by the Army Chief and was of immense concern to the Chinese because they clearly understood the shift in the intent of the Indian armed forces from a purely defensive posture to a more pro-active one. It changed the concept of Sino-Indian conventional deterrence.

Thus, one can imagine their utter joy when the Modi-Doval-Rawat combine put the MSC into forced hibernation. This was allegedly done because of budgetary constraints, something that apparently had no impact on the unbridled expansion of the Central Armed Police Forces. It is obvious that purely defensive actions on our part will never restore the status quo ante, which we are insisting upon, in the foreseeable future. If we do nothing, the loss of territory will be a body blow to our reputation in the region and internationally.

In the long run, as happened with Nehru, it will be the ruination of Modi. His reputation will suffer, his ability to stay in power will be constrained and he will be reduced to a caricature. Ironically, while Nehru continues to shoulder much of the blame for problems that afflict us today, Modi and his minions will not have that advantage. They will have to bear the consequences for their actions. There is something to be said for poetic justice and that old adage, "As you sow, so shall you reap."

(The author, a military veteran, is a consultant with the Observer Research Foundation and a Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation)

## SOUNDBITE

There have been no significant reforms in education for the last many years. As a result, our society started promoting herd mentality instead of imagination and curiosity.



Prime Minister  
—Narendra Modi

If a new actor is launched today, even if in a small film, they (public) should support them, write good comments on their posts and stop crying nepotism, nepotism.



Actor  
—Gurmeet Choudhary

If Democrats continue to hold this critical relief hostage, I will act under my authority as President to get the American people the relief they need.



US President  
—Donald Trump

With MS Dhoni in the IPL, I don't see much difference. In fact, the conditions that we have are just perfect for Dhoni, where it's going to be about the mind and not just power hitting.



Former India batsman  
—Sanjay Manjrekar

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### China cannot be trusted

Sir — Despite several rounds of talks between India and China, no solution appears to be in sight with regard to the border crisis along the Line of Actual Control. Clashes at Galwan were proof enough that China cannot be relied upon. It attacked Indian soldiers without any provocation. To top it all, China's expansionist tendencies and greed for grabbing weaker landlocked territory through unfair means are a never-ending phenomenon. India's relationship with Russia, though on an even keel, cannot be ignorant of the former's support to China. It is doubtful if Russia will extend us any help in case of conflict. It is, thus, imperative that India forges a military pact with the US to keep a check on China's assertiveness, aggressiveness and other nefarious activities.

Rashmi  
Via email

### Debt restructuring

Sir — In view of the COVID-19 pandemic having battered the economy, it was expected that the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) would come up with another rate cut but it left it unchanged at four per cent. Instead, the Central bank has allowed financial institutions a special one-time dispensation to restructure loans which

are stressed due to the pandemic. Indeed, a rate cut at this juncture would have meant little. Unless demand is generated, units will continue to gasp for survival despite the repayment breather.

The Monetary Policy Committee has also called for the appointment of an expert committee to frame a window under the prudential norms for speedy resolution of stressed loans. Besides, the gold loan-to-value

### Raging rainforest a climate threat

The rainforest region of Brazil, Amazon, recorded 6,800 incidents of fire in July, up from 5,318 last year, the same month. Amazon has been a talking point for most experts because it comprises more than half of the world's wetlands. Continued dry spells are a threat to the forests. Raging fires in the region may not entirely be attributed to natural causes such as lightning, heatwave or the eruption of volcanoes. Cattle ranching is the largest driver of deforestation. In the months between July and September, farmers are known to clear their lands for cattle farming and soil fertilisation. Illegal mining in Amazon rainforest, too, has become an "epidemic." Artisanal mining for gold and other minerals in Amazon forests and rivers has been a problem for decades and is usually illegal.

Critics of President Jair Bolsonaro have placed the blame at his doorsteps and his "anti-environment," "pro-agriculture" and "pro-industry" policies. The pro-development image of Bolsonaro has angered conservationists, who feel he is not doing enough to save the forests from man-made disasters. Species of plants and animals in the rainforests slow down global climate warming. Rainforests contribute to a healthy maintenance of the ecosystem. In contrast, wildfires emit a high con-



Ganapathi Bhat  
Akola

tent of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and ozone precursors let alone nitrogen oxides and organic materials — all of which are detrimental to the climate. In 2019, the forest fire was termed as a "global crisis" by world leaders. President Bolsonaro's attempt to crack a whip on "offenders" was too late to bear fruit. This season in Brazil is expected to be drier than the corresponding period in 2019. The fires may only get worse in the months ahead.

ratio has been increased to 90 per cent. This will pave the way for a robust rise in the quality and quantity of loans. While extending forbearance, it is imperative for the banks to be diligent and cautious to prevent good money from turning into NPAs.

Shivansh  
Via email

### Deal with compassion

Sir — The Kashmir problem needs to be tackled with sensitivity. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have suffered enough. All possible aid should be provided to them. Kashmir should be transformed into a world-class tourist destination. Establishing good colleges and other technical institutes will help the Kashmiri youth compete equally with the rest of the nation as they are talented and given to innovation. By setting up good medical colleges and hospitals, public health needs can be taken care of, too.

Ashok Malik  
Via web

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com





FIRST COLUMN

October surprise awaits the US?

Maybe Trump will arrange the premature certification of a COVID-19 vaccine, so he can roll it out just before the Nov 3 election



GWYNNE DYER

An “October Surprise” in the US is now almost inevitable, because that will be US President Donald Trump’s last chance to get re-elected legitimately. Trump might try to cling to office even if he loses the vote, but it would be a lot easier and neater if he actually won a majority in the Electoral College on November 3. In US political jargon, an “October Surprise” is a news event deliberately created or timed to influence the outcome of an election, particularly one for the US presidency and usually involves foreigners or a threat to the nation. It is planned such that all other issues are forgotten, Americans rally around the flag and the incumbent wins on a surge of patriotism. Or that’s the theory, at least.

The same thing happens elsewhere, too, of course and not necessarily in October. That’s when it needs to happen in the US to win a presidential election. For instance, a “July Surprise” happened recently in Belarus because of the August 9 presidential election. Alexander Lukashenko, the strongman who rules Belarus, “discovered” Russian mercenaries in his country. It matters little that they were unarmed and on their way to Istanbul, but President Lukashenko told his people that there was a plot. “So far there is no open warfare, no shooting, the trigger has not yet been pulled, but an attempt to organise a massacre in the centre of Minsk is already obvious. Only I can save our country. Vote for me,” was Lukashenko’s impassioned plea to his citizens.

Trump will need something like that because otherwise the Coronavirus is going to kill him politically. This was not true as recently as early June, because up until then the US was not performing especially badly in dealing with the pandemic. It looked a lot worse because of Trump’s bizarre behaviour — the endless, shameless lies, the narcissism, the suggestions that people should inject bleach and so on — but in terms of COVID-19 deaths per million people, the US fatality rate was still lower than other major Western countries, except for Germany and Canada.

The US was late to go into the lockdown, but so were they all, at least compared to most Asian countries. Until recently, if you were a Trump supporter, you could still believe he was doing a good job. It was Trump’s rush to end the lockdown, not all the earlier nonsense, that did the real damage. He believed that he would lose the election if the economy didn’t revive, but by opening up too fast he managed to revive the pandemic at the same time.

The numbers tell the tale. This week the US will record its 1,65,000th death from COVID-19. That’s almost a quarter of all the Coronavirus fatalities in the world. Much worse, US deaths are still going up while casualties elsewhere in the developed world have fallen steeply. That’s almost entirely due to Trump.

Take Canada, for example. It is very similar to the US in its economy and demography but different in social and political terms. Canada has universal healthcare and a much less drastic divide between the rich and the rest, for example, which probably explains why the US’ cumulative death rate per million is 484, while Canada’s is only 237. The history is, therefore, an American death rate twice as high as Canada’s: Not great but structurally inevitable. By now, however, Canada has managed to get its casualties down to ten a day, whereas the US is back up to around a 1,000 fatalities a day.

Even allowing for Canada’s much smaller population, that is ten times worse. This is what coming out of a lockdown too early did to the US, and it is all down to President Trump. The pandemic is raging once again in the US and there may be a quarter-million deaths there by election day in November. US “deaths per million” are going up three per day, which means that the US will overtake Chile (now at 509 casualties) in less than one week, Italy (582) in a month, Spain (609) in five weeks. It might even catch up with the UK (682) by election day.


Most of those newly-dead Americans will be over 60, so probably they would have been Trump supporters. Their relatives and friends are bound to notice eventually. As it is, Joe Biden’s lead over Trump in the polls has already widened to 10 per cent. How could Trump turn that around in the remaining 82 days? His only hope is to manufacture an “October Surprise” involving China, a restaged “Tonkin Gulf Incident” i.e. the one real and one phantom firefight that embroiled the US in the Vietnam War.


Or perhaps he could manufacture a terrorist “threat” so humorous that it would give him a pretext to declare martial law nationwide. Or maybe Trump will arrange the premature certification of a COVID-19 vaccine so he can roll it out just before the November 3 vote. If it kills a lot of people later on, who cares? He won. Trump knows that if he loses the November election, he will spend the rest of his life in court, possibly even in jail. He will do whatever it takes to win. It isn’t over yet.

(Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.’)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

JAMMU AND KASHMIR WAS A BROKEN STATE. NOT A SINGLE SOUL CRIED OVER THE DETENTION OF POLITICAL AND SEPARATIST LEADERS IN AUGUST LAST YEAR.  
—J&K CHIEF SECRETARY  
BVR SUBRAHMANYAM





SUBRAHMANYAM AND HIS TEAM ARE LEAST EXPECTED TO KNOW HOW THE PEOPLE FEEL. TO QUOTE GANDHI, THEY ARE RULING J&K FROM THE 500TH FLOOR.  
—PDP LEADER AND FORMER J&K MINISTER  
NAEEM AKHTAR

Nip the NPA crisis, now

The Govt and the RBI must urgently reassess the moratorium policy and limit it only to the hardest-hit, address the delays in IBC resolution and not drive away depositors



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

After the release of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) half-yearly Financial Stability Report (FSR) on July 24, shares of banks and finance companies were battered at the stock market. Though the private banks (PVBs) like ICICI, HDFC, Axis Bank, Bandhan Bank got seared, the public sector banks (PSBs), too, bore the brunt of the bloodbath on the bourses. The mayhem exposed the structural weaknesses of the Indian banking system and the severity of the Non-Performing Asset (NPA) crisis looming over them.

As the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised (and his sentiment was echoed by the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission) the soaring NPAs and the consequent capital erosion of the banks would need immediate recapitalisation of both PVBs and PSBs.

To alleviate the pandemic-created stress on borrowers, the RBI has already placed a moratorium on the payment of loan instalments and deferment of interest payments till August 31. However, the banks are fearing — as articulated by the HDFC Chairman — that even solvent borrowers may take advantage of this relaxation and not repay their loans. This would further worsen the financials of the banks.

The FSR has also acknowledged that there is a major risk that the moratoriums may have serious implications on the financial health of the banks. Overall, about 50 per cent of all loans — 65 per cent of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) borrowings and 56 per cent of retail loans — were under moratorium as on April 30, against only 39 per cent of corporate loans. The PSBs have a larger share — 58 per cent, 82 per cent and 80 per cent respectively for corporate, MSME and individual loans, as against 20 per cent, 43 per cent and 34 per cent respectively for the PVBs.

As far as Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) are concerned, 56 per cent, 61 per cent and 46 per cent of the loans are under moratorium respectively for these categories. The scenario is really disquieting. The RBI has assumed a contraction of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 4.4 per cent, gross fiscal deficit of 10.9 per cent and Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) of 4.1 per cent as the baseline scenario assuming steady recovery from the second-half of the current fiscal. The GDP contraction and fiscal deficit numbers may be a tad too optimistic, given the severe economic disruptions with no end in sight.

The FSR has stated that the Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) stood at 14.8 per cent while their Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio stood at 8.5 per cent in March. But it projected that the GNPA ratio may worsen further to 12.5 per cent by March 2021 under the optimistic baseline scenario and may escalate to 14.7 per cent under a severely-stressed scenario.

The implications of these numbers are indeed very serious. As of March, the total NPAs of SCBs stood at ₹8.62 lakh crore; at the baseline scenario which seems a bit hopeful, this would rise to around ₹13 lakh crore and at the worst case scenario to ₹15 lakh crore, at which level, all undercapitalised and overleveraged banks would cease to be going concerns.

In fact, the pandemic has wiped out all the work done so far by the SCBs by using a large part of their capital to correct their balance sheets

“THE RECAPITALISATION BOND ROUTE BY WHICH THE GOVERNMENT ISSUES BONDS TO THE BANKS, WHICH PROMPTLY INVEST THEM IN GOVERNMENT SECURITIES, IS NOTHING MORE THAN AN ACCOUNTING TRICK. APART FROM INCREASING THE GOVERNMENT’S INTEREST LIABILITIES, IT RARELY ADDRESSES THE DEEPER STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS OF THE BANKS. WITH LOW CREDIT OFFTAKE AND HIGHER NPAs, BANKS WILL BE FORCED TO FURTHER LOWER THE DEPOSIT INTEREST RATES — ALREADY AT THE ROCK-BOTTOM — AND DRIVE DEPOSITORS TOWARDS THE EQUITY MARKET OR GOLD. THIS IS HARDLY A RECIPE FOR REVIVAL”



— which was so assiduously pursued by the RBI during the last few years. This has seen a steady decline in their GNPA ratio from 11.5 per cent in March 2018 to 8.5 per cent in March this year. Though this reduced their CRAR, however, it still remained above the Basel III-compliant RBI norms. Now, the loans are likely to rise to a 20-year high as a result of the crisis triggered by the pandemic.

As the RBI Governor said in the foreword to the FSR, “The financial system in India remains sound. Nonetheless, in the current environment, the need for financial intermediaries to proactively augment capital and improve their resilience has acquired top priority. In the evolving milieu, while risk management has to be prudent, extreme risk-aversion would have adverse outcomes for all.”

Under the current crisis, risk aversion, both by banks and borrowers, is only to be expected as evidenced by the banks parking their excess liquidity with the RBI instead of lending. Credit demand has not picked up despite the easing of the lockdown and financial vulnerabilities are likely to be amplified, leading to a further deterioration in the asset quality of the banks due to the piling up of mountains of bad loans.

As a 90-day window is given for paying the loan instalments to keep the loans from being classified as NPAs, the exact position would be known only in December after the expiry of the moratorium on August 31. But there is an urgent need to recapitalise the banks — both PSBs and PVBs — for building stronger buffers for them to be able to absorb the losses.

The recapitalisation bond route by which the Government issues bonds to the banks, which promptly invest them

in Government securities, is nothing more than an accounting trick. Apart from increasing the Government’s interest liabilities, it rarely addresses the deeper structural problems of the banks.

While the GNPA ratio of PSBs may increase to 15.2 per cent under the baseline scenario (16.3 per cent under the worst-case scenario), the ratios of the PVBs and even the foreign banks are likely to increase to 7.3 per cent and 3.9 per cent, respectively. Erosion of the capital will shrink the system-level CRAR of the banking sector as a whole from 14.6 per cent in March to 13.3 per cent by next March under the baseline scenario and to 11.8 per cent under severe stress conditions.

Five banks will fail to meet the minimum prescribed CRAR level of nine per cent by March 2021 — five more will be close (under 10 per cent) without merger or recapitalisation which might increase their systemic resilience. However, mergers of PSBs, now practically stalled because of the lockdown, have their own problems. The NPAs of the State Bank of India (SBI) worsened after its merger with associates two years ago, with write-offs and persistent slippages eating into profit and capital both, besides impeding the growth of credit.

Other mergers — Bank of Baroda (BoB) with Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank and Punjab National Bank’s (PNBs) 1993 merger with the New Bank of India also faced many problems. It is unlikely that the current mergers of healthy banks with weak banks will improve the health of the banking system as a whole; in any case, they will not cause any significant reduction of the NPA ratios of the amalgamated banks. Then there is the added danger

of spillover effects from the NPAs of NBFCs, which are still unable to recover from the IL&FS shock of 2018. Bank lending to NBFCs had increased dramatically from ₹3 lakh crore in December 2016 post-demonetisation to ₹8 lakh crore in May this year. Any increase in their NPAs will automatically trigger a contagion, leading to further deterioration of the banking system. The gravity of the situation cannot be overemphasised.

The structural problems with the recovery of bad loans have remained unresolved even after operationalisation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). Of the total claims of ₹3.52 lakh crore from 190 companies (till December 2019), ₹1.52 lakh crore (43 per cent) has been recovered, which of course was a significant improvement over the earlier recovery rate of 10 per cent. But only two cases — Bhushan Steel and Essar Steel — accounted for 49.5 per cent of the overall recoveries.

Given the huge number of case-loads — 1,961 as of December 2019 — and the time taken for disposal by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), the system is already getting clogged like never before. With low credit offtake and higher NPAs, banks will be forced to further lower the deposit interest rates — already at the rock-bottom — and drive depositors towards the equity market or gold. This is hardly a recipe for revival. The Government and the RBI must urgently reassess the across-the-board moratorium policy and limit it only to the hardest-hit, address the delays in IBC resolution and not further alienate and drive away the depositors.

(The writer is a former Director General at the office of the CAG of India and an academic.)

# Did an Islamic State ever exist?

## The modern State is a fairly recent European construct and has been borrowed to project a retrospective interpretation about what an Islamic State meant



NADEEM PARACHA

The roots of the concept of the State lie in the political ideas formulated in ancient Greece and the Roman Republic. Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle write of the “polis” (the city State) as an ideal form of association, in which the religious, cultural, political and economic needs of the citizens can be satisfied. The ancient Roman idea of *res publica* is more similar to the modern concept of the State. The *res publica* was a legal system, the jurisdiction of which extended to all Roman citizens, securing their rights and determining their responsibilities.

However, it wasn’t until the 16th century that the modern concept of the

State fully emerged in Europe. Between the 17th and 19th centuries, the idea was expanded and developed in the works of philosophers like John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Jeremy Bentham and Karl Marx. By the 19th century, the concept of the State as we know it today, had been practically established in various regions of Europe.

According to the noted political anthropologist Professor Irfan Ahmad, till the 17th century, “the State governed by not governing.” Seldom did it interfere in most affairs of its subjects. Its main interest was to extract levies and taxes. Its administrative scope was limited. The French philosopher, Michel Foucault, claimed that the scope of the State began to expand from the 16th century. The idea of the State in non-Western regions was no different. According to Irfan Ahmad, the nature of the State in Muslim-majority regions and in regions being ruled by Muslims was also static. It was only interested in gathering taxes and aiding the monarch and his vassals to

retain their wealth and power.

The State as we know it today, is thus a comparatively recent construct and a product of political and economic modernity. So what do concepts such as “Islamic State” or “*Riyasat-i-Madina* (State of Madina)” really mean? Such terms are often used by ideologues and politicians in Muslim-majority regions. The thinking behind them is that Islam is inherently political and its sacred texts lay out a blueprint for a State run by laws prescribed by Allah. Those who hold this view insist that such a State came into being with the arrival of Islam that actively regulated every political, economic and social aspect of the community.

Irfan Ahmad writes that till the 16th/17th century, the working of the State, even in powerful Muslim empires, was as limited as it was in non-Muslim realms. He adds that the idea of an Islamic State is actually not more than a 100 years old. According to the works of Egyptian scholars Ali Abdel Raziq and Sa’id al-Ashmawi, theologically, Islam treats faith and the

concept of State separately and, in fact, puts more emphasis on faith and how it can operate as a moral guide. Ahmad writes, “to impose the modern concept of the State on 7th century Arab society is misleading.” Because of infrastructural weaknesses, the State could not have expanded its scope beyond a handful of duties, even if it wanted to.

The Syrian academic and historical Aziz Al-Azmeh, in a widely-debated 1990 essay *Utopia and Islamic Political Thought*, demonstrates that there is no political theory (about a State) in classical Islamic political thought. Fact is, those who insist that there is, are simply projecting the modern concept of the State on ancient and medieval Islamic polities, reimagining these polities as Islamic states which influenced almost every aspect of the lives of their citizens. According to Ahmad, such projections are the result of ideas that first emerged in the early 20th century.

One of the pioneers in this respect was the prolific South Asian ideologue

and Islamic scholar Abul Ala Maududi. Ahmad writes that, as a young man, Maududi was associated with *The Muslim*, a daily that took an anti-British, pro-Congress Party position and promoted Muslim-Hindu unity and a secular set-up in India. However, after 1937, Maududi changed his stance, especially when Jinnah’s Muslim League began to press for a separate Muslim-majority State. Ahmad writes that all major political players in British India had become smitten by the concepts of the State and nationalism introduced in the region by the British colonialists. The Muslim League began to speak about a Muslim State, the Congress about a post-colonial secular Indian State and the Leftists about a socialist State.

Rejecting all these concepts as ungodly, Maududi came up with the theory of Government of Allah or Islamic State. He then set out to formulate a new political theology, by interpreting Islamic scriptures in the context of the State. In a 1941 essay, he writes, “In reality, the classical Arabic

word *deen* approximately has the same meaning which the word State has in the contemporary age.” Noting that the modern State regulates almost every facet of people’s lives, he contemplated the creation of an Islamic State that would regulate every aspect of its citizens’ lives according to laws laid down by the Islamic scriptures.

Maududi understood the Muslim League as a secular Muslim nationalist organisation. So, to neutralise Maududi’s criticism, Pakistan began to borrow his ideas. Yet, Maududi’s own party could not gain much traction among voters. This was probably due to the aforementioned ploy by the State and, more so, because from the mid-1970s, even non-religious parties began to adopt ideas from Maududi and fused them with their secular outlook. His ideas in this context reached completion as an elaborate theory in his 1979 magnum opus, *Four Fundamental Concepts of the Quran*.

The theory suggested that an Islamic State existed during the early days of the faith because the sacred

scriptures were treated as an all-encompassing political constitution and that such a State fell away because of corruption and needs to be re-enacted. Interestingly, this is the narrative popularised by the Imran Khan Government. Though Maududi’s thesis was inspired by largely European ideas of the State, this does not bother those who take the revisionist historical claims of his theories as fact.

Ever since the 1980s, whenever there are claims and promises made by a variety of ideologues and leaders in the Muslim world, about working towards an Islamic State, it is assumed that it is rooted in the workings of a 7th century Islamic realm. According to Ahmad, objective history does not support this. As Egyptian scholar Nasr Abu Zayd says, “Religious scriptures are at the mercy of the ideology of its interpreter. For a communist, they would reveal communism, for a fundamentalist they would be fundamentalist text, for a feminist it would be a feminist text, and so on...”

(Courtesy: Dawn)





CAPSULE



'Amazon Easy' stores now in all-new avatar

**BENGALURU:** Online retailer Amazon on Sunday launched an upgraded 'Amazon Easy' store format that integrates its multiple services through a single touchpoint. The format would offer a touch-and-feel product experience through a physical product display, the company said in a statement. Customers can also place an order on Amazon.in with guided assistance from the store staff and either pick up the order from the store or get it delivered at their doorstep, it said. The store owners can now leverage Amazons last-mile delivery program 'I Have Space' to deliver packages to customers in their area as well as facilitate pickups. The first such exclusive Amazon Easy store is now operational in Mahalakshmi layout here.



Micro enterprises confident of recovery

**NEW DELHI:** Despite several businesses remaining closed during the lockdown, 81 per cent of micro enterprises polled are confident of a recovery post COVID-19 whereas 57 per cent reported not having any cash reserves to survive, according to a survey. Initial results of a six-month survey that is underway by GAME (Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship) in association with LEAD at Krea University covering 1,500 micro enterprises also reveal that 40 per cent tried to borrow money to cover expenses. However, only 14 per cent of the overall borrowing was from formal borrowing sources. As per the revised criteria, any firm with investment up to Rs 1 crore and turnover under Rs 5 crore is classified as a "micro" enterprise.



Lupin, Sun Pharma recall drugs in the US market

**NEW DELHI:** Leading drug makers Lupin and Sun Pharma are recalling different products in the US, according to the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). The Mumbai-based drug maker Lupin is recalling 11,688 bottles of Lisinopril tablets USP, 10 mg, which is used to treat high blood pressure, in the US market, as per the latest Enforcement Report by the US health regulator. USFDA said the company is recalling the specific number of bottles due to presence of foreign tablets. Lisinopril tablets USP, (20 mg) were found in a 1,000 count bottle of Lisinopril Tablets USP (10 mg), it noted. The tablets have been manufactured at Lupin's Nagpur facility.

# Defence reforms to steer India towards 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India Inc on Sunday said the Centre's decision to impose restrictions on import of 101 weapons and military platforms, and creation of a separate budget for domestic capital procurement in the current financial year is a 'path-breaking' reform towards becoming self-reliant and will boost indigenous defence manufacturing.

In a major reform initiative to boost the domestic defence industry, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday announced restrictions on import of 101 weapons and military platforms, including artillery guns, assault rifles and transport aircraft. "The Ministry of Defence is



now ready for a big push to #AtmanirbharBharat initiative," Singh said on Twitter while making the announcement.

He said the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has prepared a list of 101 items for which the

embargo on imports is planned to be progressively implemented between 2020 and 2024.

"MoD has also bifurcated the capital procurement budget for 2020-21 between domestic and foreign capital procurement routes. A sepa-

rate budget head has been created with an outlay of nearly Rs 52,000 crore for domestic capital procurement in the current financial year," the Defence Minister tweeted.

Welcoming the initiative, CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said the defence minister's announcement of negative import list of defence systems and platforms marks the launch of a new glide path for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

"Announcement of Rs 52,000 crore for domestic capital procurement coupled with the list of 101 items for import embargo gives a tremendous boost to Atmanirbhar Bharat and indigenous defence manufacturing," he added.

## IBBI lists out potential red flags to detect avoidance transactions

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pre-dominance of cash transactions, independence of directors and frequent changes of auditors are among the potential red flags for insolvency professionals in detecting avoidance transactions during insolvency proceedings, according to an IBBI document.

Under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, resolution professionals and liquidators are required to determine whether corporate debtors concerned were subject to avoidance transactions.

The Code provides for a time-bound and market-linked resolution of stressed assets. In case, the resolution does not materialise, then the entity concerned goes for liquidation.

Resolution professionals and liquidators can also facilitate claw-back or disgorgement of value, if any, lost through



avoidance transactions.

Against this backdrop, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has come out with the detailed document titled 'Avoidance Transactions - Red Flags'.

IBBI Chairperson M S Sahoo told PTI that the insolvency law frowns on alienations of property prior to the commencement of the insolvency proceeding, if it vitiates the sanctity of equitable distribution and maximisation of the value of the assets of a corporate debtor. Such alienations, which vitiate an insolvency proceeding, are called avoidance transactions, he noted.

The 22-page document lists out various factors, including

the need to look at whether the corporate debtor is present at the address that is given in the corporate affairs ministry records. It also noted that non-existence of an office of the corporate debtor at such an address is also a red flag.

"Predominance of cash transactions generally undertaken by the entity is a potential red flag indicator. According to the document, an insolvency professional should assess the independence, capability and competence of the directors as well as under whose instructions they are usually accustomed to act, and that presence of name-sake directors might also be a red flag.

## Chingari attracts \$ 1.3 million

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Indigenous short video-sharing app Chingari has attracted a funding of USD 1.3 million in a seed round.

The round was led by venture capitalists, including AngelList India, Utsav Somanis iSeed, Village Global, LogX Ventures, and Jasmin Singh Gulati of NowFloats, said a statement from Chingari.

The funding, said the company officials, would be used to hire more talent to accelerate product development, ramp up the platform and make it more engaging and consumer focused, and engage a larger consumer base by offering a seamless short video entertainment experience. "Were delighted that investors saw the immense potential in our vision and chose to join the Chingari journey," he said.

## ArcelorMittal resort to cost-reduction measures

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, global steel giant ArcelorMittal is focussing on cost-reduction initiatives to protect profitability in view of an uncertainty around pace of recovery. The world's largest steelmaker had logged a net loss of USD 559 million for the second quarter ended June 2020 and termed it as the most difficult period in its history.



The company continues to focus on cost reduction

**The world's largest steelmaker had logged a net loss of USD 559 million for the second quarter ended June 2020**

initiatives to protect profitability as it navigates the evolving demand backdrop.

Moving forward, as economic activity recovers the company will respond by increasing production, leading to the return of some fixed cost," the company said in its latest report.

The easing of lockdown measures has seen activity levels improving, nevertheless the demand remains significantly below normal and the pace and profile of recovery is uncertain, it said.

## DGTR recommends CVD on certain steel product imports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Commerce Ministry has recommended imposition of provisional countervailing duty (CVD) on certain steel products from Indonesia to guard domestic manufacturers from subsidised imports.

The ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) in its preliminary findings has recommended the duty after concluding in its probe that 'Flat Products of Stainless Steel' have been exported to India from Indonesia at subsidised prices.



The domestic industry has suffered material injury due to subsidisation of the product and therefore it is necessary to recommend imposition of provisional countervailing duty on these imports, the DGTR has said in a notification.

It said that the directorate is of the view that imposition of provisional countervailing duty is required to offset subsidisation

and injury, pending completion of the investigation. "The authority recommends imposition of provisional countervailing duty on the imports...originating in or exported from the subject country (Indonesia)," it said.

The duties recommended are 22.31 per cent, 22.65 per cent and 24.83 per cent on different producers of Indonesia. The finance ministry will take the final call to impose these duties. In October last year, the directorate initiated the probe into an alleged subsidised export of certain steel products by Indonesia, following complaints by domestic industry.

## Lockdown hits UltraTech hard

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading cement maker UltraTech Cement expects a "subdued performance" in the wake of weak real estate and overall slowdown in the economy coupled with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The nationwide lockdown, amid the coronavirus outbreak, will have a significant near-term impact on the cement industry, however, the Aditya Birla Group firm is "confident of its ability to weather the storm" and come out stronger given its healthy credit profile.

## Unichem: Need to boost local API production for India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Unichem Laboratories has called for measures to step up local production of raw materials to produce drugs in order to reduce the country's dependence on imports, especially from China.

Sharing information with shareholders in company's annual report for 2019-20, the drug firm said the ongoing coronavirus pandemic calls for concentrated efforts to build upon capacities for active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in the country.

"Our country is heavily dependent on China for import of most of its APIs. India needs a healthy and financially strong ecosystem to boost manufacture of APIs to remain self-reliant in the years to come," Unichem Laboratories Chairman and Managing Director Prakash A Mody said.

The present health crisis calls for proactive measures to step up economies of scale in production of intermediates and other key materials, with focus on research and development for APIs, he added.

The procrastination syn-



drome surely calls for prompt treatment, Mody noted.

"Over-dependence of the Indian pharmaceutical industry on imported APIs exposes it to raw material supply disruptions and pricing volatility," Mody said.

While the government is working on developing bulk drug manufacturing parks to boost local production and reduce dependence on imports, the company, at its end, is focusing on efficiency and backward integration by ramping up its capacities in APIs and intermediates, he added.

The company is looking to use these APIs for captive consumption, which will give it an edge in the global gener-

ics market, Mody said.

The drug firm's strategic investments in two pharmaceutical companies engaged in research and development, marketing and distribution of APIs will help meet the demand of exports for incremental growth, he noted.

Unichem offers a broad portfolio of APIs across various therapeutic areas. It has three manufacturing facilities to cater to the segment.

The Mumbai-based firm also has a sizable presence in finished drug formulation segment.

The global API market is projected to reach USD 268 billion by 2026 from USD 182 billion in 2019, growing at a CAGR of 6 per cent.

## ONGC cuts debt by 35 pc to Rs 13,949 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has cut its debt by more than one-third but faces an uphill challenge to meeting planned expenditure during current fiscal due to oil and gas prices falling below sub-optimal levels, according to company officials and regulatory filings.

ONGC's outstanding debt of Rs 21,593 crore as on March 31, 2019 has come down to Rs 13,949 crore as on March 31, 2020, as it used revenue from better operations to retire some of the borrowings, according to the company's regulatory filings.

Out of this debt, long-term borrowings account for Rs 2,245 crore which are due for maturity in December 2029. The company had cash and cash equivalent (including



other bank balances) of Rs 968 crore as on March 31, 2020, up from a record low of Rs 504 crore a year back.

Standalone debt-equity ratio at the end of March 31, 2020 is only 0.07 which is considered comfortable.

"While we ended the 2019-20 fiscal year with a comfortable financial position, we face an uphill challenge during the current 2020-21 financial year. The pandemic has played havoc on oil prices and government mandated gas price is way below cost of production," a senior official said.

## Purple aims at \$ 100 mn sales in FY'21, looks for acquisition

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Online beauty and personal care platform Purple is looking to double its sales to USD 100 million during the current fiscal, as it is bullish on growing demand in the e-commerce space in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, a company official said.

The e-commerce firm, which has raised USD 35 million of funds from global investment bank Goldman Sachs and other investors, is exploring opportunities for acquisition in brands, technology and content space to fuel growth, Purple co-founder and CEO Manish Taneja told PTI in a telephonic interview.

"The coronavirus pandemic had worked in our favour. In the short term, demand will continue to be robust as people prefer to stay indoors and online purchases. Given the economic situation, we may



Manish Taneja

see some speed breakers in the long term," he said.

Purple achieved USD 50 million in gross merchandise value in 2019-20.

"In the current fiscal, we expect USD 100 million sales, out of USD 7 billion beauty industry in the country," he said.

Taneja said the consolidation in the online beauty and personal care segment is

**The e-commerce firm is exploring opportunities for acquisition in brands, technology and content space to fuel growth**

expected to happen in the second half of the current fiscal. "Consolidation will happen in this industry in the second half of the year. Some small firms and start-ups will find difficulties to tide over the crisis, and raising money is getting difficult now. We are open for acquisitions," he said.

The company concluded a mega sale programme on Saturday.

## Smartworks takes over 6 lakh sq ft office space on lease

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Co-working player Smartworks has taken a total of over 6 lakh sq ft of office space on lease in Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad to set up new centres as part of its plan to expand business despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Founded in April 2016, Smartworks Coworking Spaces Pvt Ltd, currently has 31 co-working centres, comprising about 60,000 seats and 40 lakh sq ft area, across nine cities.

According to sources, Smartworks has taken on lease



over 2 lakh sq ft area each in Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad since March this year to set up three new large co-working centres, targeting big corporates.

The centre at Times Square building in Mumbai is likely to start from next month with

3,000 desks. The co-working facilities at Pune and Hyderabad are slated to be launched within this fiscal year. A Smartworks spokesperson declined to comment on the leasing transactions.

In October last year, Smartworks had announced raising of USD 25 million (about Rs 175 crore) from Singapore's Keppel Land Ltd to fund its expansion plan and touch 1 lakh seating capacity.

The company's founder Neetish Sarda had said that it was the first round of external funding.

## Plan to convert Reliance into new energy firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has a 15-year vision to build itself as a new energy company that aims to recycle CO2, create value from plastic waste and has an optimal mix of clean and affordable energy, analysts said.

While the oil-to-chemical conglomerate has in recent times seen focus on consumer business, RIL's core oil-to-chemical (O2C) business is well placed to generate sustained free cash flow, BofA Securities said in a report.

"Until demand normalises, RIL is looking to maximise



**RIL has a 15-yr vision to build itself as one of the world's leading new energy company**

throughput, focus on cost by leveraging deep petrochemical integration and continue to focus on domestic fuel marketing," it said.

Future of O2C is new energy company and partnerships.

"RIL has a 15-year vision to build itself as one of the world's leading new energy and new

material companies. It also intends to be a net carbon zero company by 2035. To achieve this, the company is open to work with global financial investors, reputed technology partners and start-ups working on futuristic solutions," it said.

This new energy business based on the principle of car-

bon recycling and circular economy is a multi-trillion opportunity for India and the world.

The brokerage said a key focus for RIL is renewable energy, and for that it intends to build an optimal mix of clean and affordable energy with hydrogen, wind, solar, fuel cells and battery.

"It intends to use proprietary technology, recycle CO2, create value from plastic waste; RIL is also looking to make its operations cleaner and more customer-centric," it said.

Reliance has the largest single site refinery at Jamnagar in Gujarat with crude processing capacity of 1.24 million barrels per day.

The brokerage said RIL is looking to make CO2 as a recyclable resource, rather than treating it as an emitted waste.

While the company will remain a user of crude oil and natural gas, it is looking to embrace new technologies to convert CO2 into useful products and chemicals.

"One viable application RIL has found for such 'end-of-life-cycle' plastic waste is in road construction. Road constructed with post-consumer, non-recyclable plastic waste ensures enhanced durability, higher resistance to deformation, increased resistance to water induced damages and improved stability and strength," it said.



## NEP 2020 A STEP TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION OR BAD EXECUTION?

When the Union Cabinet had, on July 29, 2020, approved the National Education Policy 2020 that represents a major service of teaching processes in Indian education, from the pre-primary level to higher education, Twitterati went berserk with some heaving a sigh of relief, and others, raising several doubts and issues. *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL attempts to address a few of these by talking to eminent people from different walks of life in the city.

**W**hen the NEP 2020 was announced, the draft came under criticism for proposing a three-language formula. Some believe this new policy is an urban-centric approach and while others feel it's going to bring approximately 2 crore children back to schools! There will be more e-courses in regional languages and virtual labs will be developed, according to this new draft.

### PRIOR ATTENTION TO MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY

This policy will unfold an immense opportunity for the new generation. Having a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect of future uncertainty, education for a new generation of learners will be necessarily engaging with the increasing dematerialisation and digitalisation of our economies. Navin Mittal, the commissioner collegiate education and technical education for the Government of Telangana, believes the due

encouragement towards start-ups and blend of technology with education will help promote free thinking along with flexible entrepreneurship courses. "There is a lot of focus on developing soft skills among students. All of this will greatly encourage start-ups. Establishing National Education and Technological Forums will bring in technological convergence and encourage the use of technology in education. It aims at equitable and inclusive education for every child in the country with a special focus on socially and economically disadvantaged groups," adds Navin Mittal. A free education system cannot flourish without a free society!

### TERMINATION OF MPHIL PROGRAMME

Among several proposed changes, one provision that stands out is the discontinuation of the MPhil programme. What does this mean? "NEP is a revolutionary movement towards streamlining the entire education pattern and practices in India that were untouched for the past 34 years despite the constantly changing scenario of global education. The decision to scrap M.Phil. which was a bridge between Masters and the Ph.D. program comes as an exorbitant measure by the

Government. For those who want to get into teaching, M.Phil. has been an important medium to shape their research mind and further an important qualifying asset to apply for teaching jobs. But I believe the 'research' part which is supposed to be the crux of the entire NEP program, will be taken care of by the four-year, research-oriented UGC program. Now, it is for the educational institutions to ensure the students complete their research projects in core areas that significantly contribute to innovations and inventions," explains Rini Anweshi, SI for Excise department and a Ph.D. aspirant. If the NEP provision applies to all MPhil programmes, regardless of a researcher or practitioner's focus, there will be important implications to it.

### EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION

Member of a Hyderabad's student association, Ram Kumar asserts that this new policy indeed wants to increase the GDP percentage by six units, however, the policy doesn't aim to focus on enhancing existential resources like skills of unemployed youth, better training support for athletes, increase in the number of platforms to showcase the creativity

of developing artists, etc., and that's just not enough. "Of course there's an aspect of a policy encouraging extracurricular activities but do we have the necessary resources for it? As a local citizen associated with student association for a long time now, I have witnessed that a majority of the educational institutions here run on commercial profits. Students are pushed into a singular class like a flock of sheep having bare minimum facilities. It's an over-ambitious policy — there's greater centralisation probably going against the federal policies. If we want to become a developed nation, we must increase our allocation for education substantially. The centre will have to convince states that it's going to be a beneficial one," adds the TDP student wing member.

### 3-LANGUAGE POLICY, CODING & BLUE-COLLAR INTERNSHIPS

What about those who graduated already? What do they have to say about these changes to the education system? Let's hear it from Avinash Denduluri, Mass Communication and Journalism graduate who considers the new education policy a blatant attack on classism and casteism despite having vision-

ary goals for students. "It's an approach towards elitist audiences. Exclusion of the English language until 5th grade can create barriers for vocational education. The affluent are anyway going to hire a tutor for their ward, but guess who's going to suffer amidst all this? The destitute, causing further imperialism. Coming to the aspects of inclusion of coding from the sixth standard, how do you expect a child striding onto regional languages to understand coding? A student with an established English background may land job prospects globally. There are blue-collar internships available too, poor students may get inclined towards those, hence it comes back to the same old circle of educational likelihood. In an ideal world, if properly implemented, the freedom to choose subjects flexibly without the restriction of streams is a healthy move. But with the present infrastructure, only ICSE schools and elite CBSE schools can do that," opines the graduate.

### MULTIPLE EXIT OPTIONS

College is the stage where young people drop out or change track. The exit options sound good - a certificate after year 1, a diploma after year 2, and a multidisciplinary degree after four years. The NEP has envisioned the combination of sciences and humanities. This will undoubtedly improve the calibre of graduates if they are permitted to study subjects of their choice rather than the rigid combinations imposed by colleges. Anupama Dalmia Barnwal, an influencer parent from the city of Hyderabad feels positive about one of the newly added steps with the help of which, students can take a break from the undergraduate course and come back again within a specified period without missing the credits earned during the previous session. "Our education system was in dire need of an overhaul and I personally think that the new education policy is definitely a step in the right direction. I am extremely happy with the talk of more

libraries and the reduction of school drop-out rates by means of volunteering and peer-to-peer teaching. I believe, that in some ways, there is an addition of 'contemporary' to our traditions and the idea to use these traditions and folklore in teaching is actually progressive and a great way to keep children connected to the Indian heritage. A fine balance here would ensure a comprehensive and all-embracing learning experience for students. The only thing I'm unsure about is the suggestion of using the regional language as a mode of teaching and in text-books as this may pose challenges in many cities. The demand for education is yet to be channelised into an institutional change," adds the Karmaveer Chakra awardee!

We should be grateful for an admirable draft for focussing on the right questions. There sure is much to discuss, but the hope is that with this, our education policy can be transformed into a treat and not another trick.



Anupama Dalmia Barnwal



Avinash Denduluri



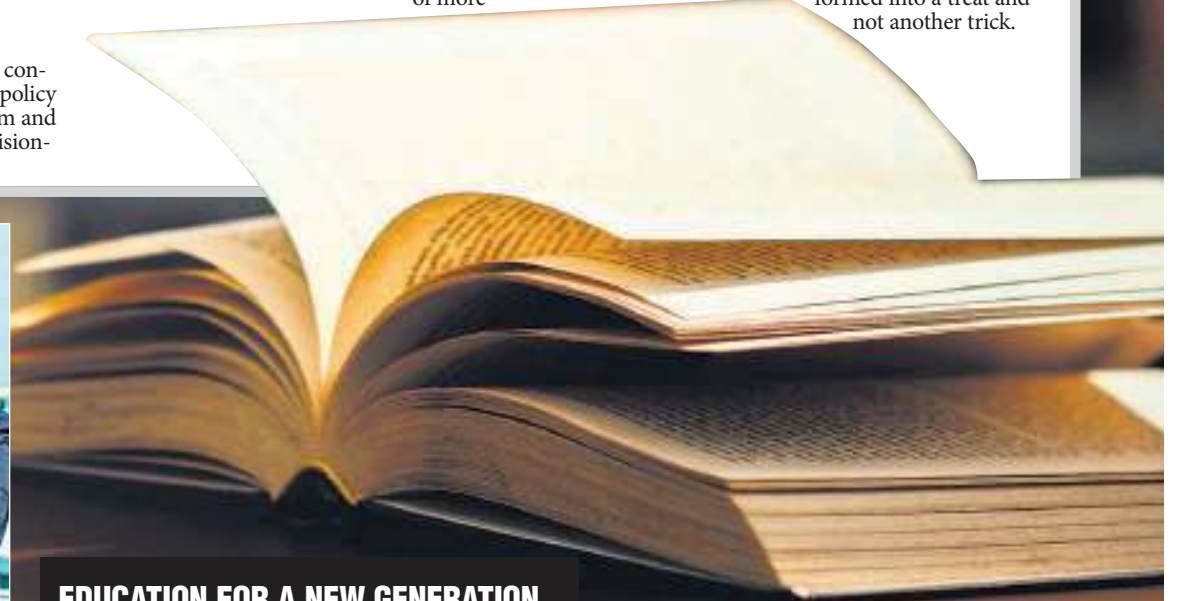
Mrs Rini Anweshi



Navin Mittal



Ram Kumar



EDUCATION FOR A NEW GENERATION OF LEARNERS WILL BE NECESSARILY ENGAGING WITH THE INCREASING DEMATERIALIZATION AND DIGITALISATION OF OUR ECONOMIES.



**T**o fan one of the most important discussions needed today, FICCI FLO Hyderabad Chapter organised a conversation on the topic 'Women in Political Leadership - Then to Now' with noted politician and academician Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, MP, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh and Swetha Kesineni, Mayoral candidate for Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh as a part of the Power Hour series.

The discussion captured the emergence of women in politics in India spanning decades to today's context where a growing number of women leaders are working towards influencing the political agenda and the laws to improve the lives of millions. The free-wheeling conversation that captured the personal and political journeys of Rita Bahuguna Joshi was laced with many personal anecdotes on the challenges faced and successes achieved.

Prof. Rita Bahuguna Joshi,

## WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



Usharani Manne



Prof. Rita Bahuguna



Swetha Kesineni



Priya Gazdar

as part of the discussion, said, "I have seen several decades right from the conservative phase then came the phase of the struggle when women were going through a kind of emancipation, then I saw the empow-

erment phase. Today's women are empowered. As far as politics stands, women still have to prove themselves a lot more than men to be considered worthy of the job. Political mentoring is essential to prepare women. We

can start with social activity and local-level positions that can equip women with the skills necessary for higher levels of public office and careers in regional and national politics. Women need support and encourage-

ment. I am happy to note that the activities of FICCI FLO are aimed at the empowerment of women at all levels."

Swetha Kesineni, TDP mayoral candidate for Vijayawada, with her work in

the political domains in both US and India, dwelt on the differential aspects of the two. She also spoke about her understanding of the current political climate for youth leaders.

Speaking on the occasion,

Usharani Manne, Chairperson, FLO Hyderabad Chapter and Founder-Director Polmon Group of Companies said, "It was enlightening to hear the views of veteran politician Rita Bahuguna on how we can carve out a positive enabling environment alive with gender equality in terms of access and opportunities, distribution of resources to ensure we create, encourage and empower women politicians. It has been 100 years since the first woman could vote. The number of women active in politics globally and in India is growing significantly. Mentoring and training programs prepare women for political work and enhance their skills. FICCI FLO is working to imbuing leadership qualities in women."

Manne outlined FLO Hyderabad's Incubation and Mentorship activities in collaboration with WE Hub & IIIT-Hyderabad's CIE. FLO Hyderabad's active participation in the Ministry of Textiles' Handloom Day promotion and Government of Telangana's 'Haritha Haram' program too, were brought to the fore by her.



## SWEET NUTRITION WHICH PACKS A PUNCH

2020 is unlike any year we have seen and in parts of the country this monsoon is unlike any we have seen. Staying healthy is essential to staying happy; and while we are well versed with the power of the mind for wellness, or the 'top-down' approach as some call it, however, one shouldn't underestimate the 'bottom up approach' either. With the rains comes the common cold and cough, flu and viral fevers, in addition we have COVID-19 to deal with as well. If you get sick, your immunity is lowered making you more susceptible to virus. Our mood, health, energy and reactions are heavily influenced by our second brain; our gut, which is a result of what we eat. Try these simple recipes to help get super charged with the nutrients you need.



### OVERNIGHT CHIA PUDDING

I call this a pudding because it truly tastes like one. Chia seeds are filled with fiber, antioxidants essential fatty acids and good quality protein; add to this the humble curd and you have a good dose of probiotics, protein and fats. Fruit adds fresh sweetness and flavour along with phytonutrients and essential vitamins. Cinnamon adds flavour and you get its medicinal properties too—antioxidants and anti-inflammatory.

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- ❑ Chia seeds: 2 tbsp
- ❑ Curd: 6-8 tbsp
- ❑ Chopped mango: 3/4 cup
- ❑ Cinnamon powder/vanilla essence (optional): 1/2 tsp
- ❑ My seed powder (optional): 1tsp
- ❑ Coconut ( optional): 6 - 7 thin slices

#### HOW TO MAKE:

- ❑ Mix all the ingredients together the night before and you are good to go in the morning
- ❑ The yogurt / curd mixture should be runny like a milkshake or dosa batter.
- ❑ Store it overnight in the fridge
- ❑ Before serving top with the chopped mango and the coconut slices

#### FLAVOUR OPTIONS

- ❑ One small banana + half an apple chopped small
- ❑ One small banana + half mango + coconut meat
- ❑ One small banana + 1 tsp instant coffee powder 1/2 cup strawberries
- ❑ One small banana + 1 tbsp cocoa powder + toasted almond slices
- ❑ Pina colada - Coconut Milk + Pineapple

### HOT CHOCOLATE

- ❑ Chocolate has long been known for its antioxidant properties and magnesium. This helps fight free radicals, however one can't say the same for commercial chocolate which is mostly sugar. Using cacao gives us the myriad benefits this super food has to offer, in addition to how comforting it is to hold a hot cup of chocolate.
- ❑ This simple hot chocolate tastes like molten chocolate in a cup. Try this low calorie version every time you crave chocolate and you'll thank me. I prefer to use unsweetened cocoa powder as this helps control the amount of sugar you want to add. You can use any sweetener of your choice. If you just keep boiling this down slowly you get a chocolate sauce. If you want to make the sauce more indulgent, just add a tiny bit of butter at the end.

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- ❑ Unsweetened cocoa powder: 1 heaped tbsp
- ❑ Jaggery (or sweetener of choice): 1 inch square
- ❑ Water: 1 cup

#### HOW TO MAKE:

- ❑ Mix the cocoa powder into room temperature water
- ❑ Mix till there are no lumps remaining
- ❑ Add the jaggery or sweetener and simmer on low heat for about 5 minutes
- ❑ Once it starts to boil down, reduce to about 3/4 cup
- ❑ Switch off when you think its thick enough
- ❑ Sprinkle with Chocolate Powder and serve hot



### SUPER SEED POWDER

- ❑ Seeds are a nutritional powerhouse and a must include for everyone. Especially for vegetarians and vegans, due to their plant based protein and omega 3. They are a brilliant source of protein, healthy fats, fiber, minerals and vitamins. Each seed has its unique benefits which is why my recipe uses a mix to ensure we get a little of all the important ones. I grind the to ensure max absorption.
- ❑ **How to use it?** Just add it to your overnight oats, atta dough or sprinkle on your curd. This is a versatile recipe you should make ahead and use daily for everyone in the family. Think of it as your multi-vitamin.

#### WHAT YOU NEED:

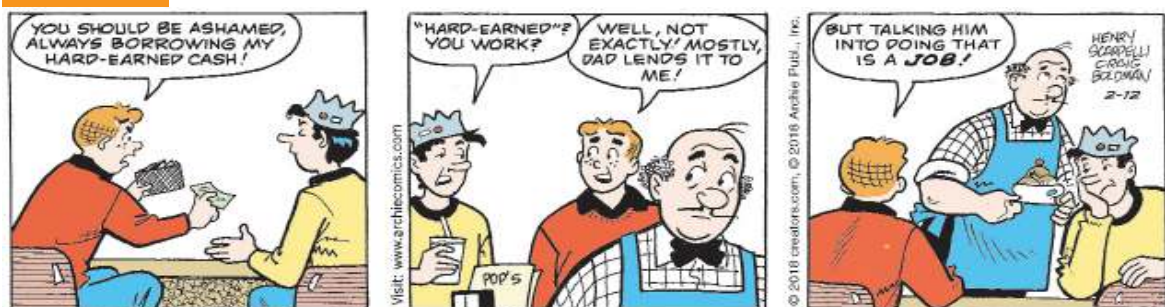
- ❑ Flax seed: 3/4 cup
- ❑ Hemp seeds: 1/2 cup
- ❑ Mixed seeds (pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, watermelon): 1/2 cup
- ❑ Cacao nibs: 1/4 cup
- ❑ Turmeric (haldi): 1 tsp
- ❑ Ground pepper: 1/2 tsp

#### HOW TO MAKE:

- ❑ Mix all the seeds
- ❑ Use the chutney jar of the grinder
- ❑ Ensure its completely dry
- ❑ Do a quick pulse, open and mix
- ❑ Do short pulses to reach a powder consistency. Do not over grind or it will turn into a clumpy mess
- ❑ Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



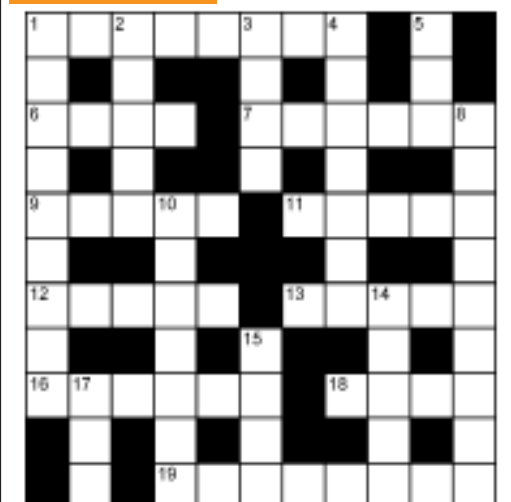
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

- 1 Blew up with a bang
- 6 Part of the foot
- 7 Baby cows
- 9 Beneath
- 11 Wool-covered animals
- 12 Melodies
- 13 A garden ornament like a small person
- 16 Leave
- 18 Wound someone with a pointed weapon
- 19 A person who controls the making of a film

#### DOWN

- 1 Completely tired out
- 2 Beg



### SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution								
4	3	8	2	1	6	7	5	9
9	2	5	7	4	3	8	1	6
6	1	7	8	5	9	2	3	4
3	5	4	6	7	1	9	8	2
8	6	2	3	9	5	4	7	1
1	7	9	4	8	2	3	6	5
2	9	6	1	3	8	5	4	7
7	8	1	5	2	4	6	9	3
5	4	3	9	6	7	1	2	8

#### 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.



# RANA AND MIHEEKA TIE THE KNOT IN A PRIVATE WEDDING



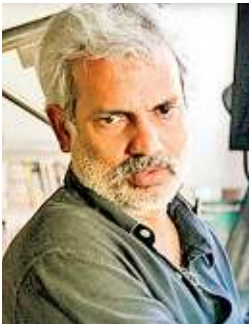
**A**ctor Rana Daggubati tied the knot with fiancée Miheeka Bajaj in a close-knit ceremony held at Ramanaidu Studios, Hyderabad on Saturday night. With COVID-19 scare all around, the guest count was kept minimal with only immediate family and close friends of the actor and Miheeka gracing it.

While Rana cut a dash-opting for a South Indian light gold *pancha* with a pattu border and a full-sleeved *lalchi*, Miheeka Bajaj looked glittering in a Anamika Khanna ivory lehenga, pairing it with a piece of heavy Polki jewellery, *matha Patti*, nose ring and traditional kalirey worn with the bangles.

Besides members of the Daggubati clan, including Rana's aunt Lakshmi who flew down from Chennai, the Baahubali star's best friend Ram Charan and his wife Upasana, and actor Allu Arjun, were among the 40 guests who received invites. Sharing a picture with the bride and groom on his Twitter profile, Ram Charan wrote, "Finally my hulk is married wishing @ranadaggubati #miheeka a very happy life together!! (Sic)." Celebs like Akshay Kumar, Mahesh Babu and Nani too congratulated the newly-weds.

One notable absentee from the event was Venkatesh's eldest daughter Aashritha, who is married to Vinayak Reddy, the grandson of Hyderabad Race Club Chairman R Surender Reddy. Commenting on a wedding post of Samantha, Aashritha wrote, "Picture perfect! I'm going to Photoshoot me and V (her husband Vinayak Reddy) in this at some point."

## Madhie steps in for PS Vinod



on Sunday as Mahesh rung in his 45th birthday. In the poster, the actor is seen flipping a one-rupee coin and wearing a thread which has an 'Om' locket, as the title track plays in the background. The poster doesn't have the actor's face but for his fans, the 44-second long video was enough to make them happy.

at his home in Hyderabad. Thanking TRS MP Santosh for the initiative, he posted on Twitter, "There couldn't be a better way to celebrate my birthday #GreenIndiaChallenge I pass this on to @tarak9999, @actorvijay& @shrutihaasan. Let the chain continue and transcend boundaries I request all of you to support the cause. One step towards a greener world! (Sic)."

On Sunday, Mahesh also participated in Green India Challenging initiative and planted a sapling

**I**n a fresh development, ace cinematographer PS Vinod, who was initially signed on for superstar Mahesh Babu-starrer *Sarkaru Vaari Paata*, has made way for Madhie. The new poster of the film indicates the change. While there's no official word from the unit on what led to the change, reports suggest that Vinod's other commitments prompted him to exit the project on good terms. It is believed that with no production date

attached to the project despite it being announced more than two months ago, Vinod was left with no option but to consider other offers. Madhie, who has shot Mahesh-starrer *Srimanthudu* five and half years ago, was immediately approached and as he had not committed to other projects, he said yes. Meanwhile, the motion poster of *Sarkaru Vaari Paata*, a joint production venture between Mythri Movie Makers, 14 Reels Plus and GMB Entertainment, was unveiled by the makers



**A**ctor Naga Shaurya is the latest Tollywood celebrity to have participated in the Green India Challenge. He planted a sapling at the premises of his house in Hyderabad during the weekend before praising and extending his thanks to MP Santosh Kumar for thinking of such an initiative. He nominated actors Jagapathi Babu, Nara Rohith and director Nandini Reddy to take the challenge forward.



## Here's how Johaar landed at aha

**T**eja Marni's debut film, *Johaar*, which drops on *aha* this Independence Day, was initially acquired by prominent distributor and producer Abhishek Nama for an outright price after he saw the film. "The deal was signed before COVID-19 outbreak. But the scenario changed post pandemic, with Nama later dissolving the agreement. Marni understood it. The director put his father's savings into the film and his father's business too was reeling under the effects of coronavirus, he started looking for OTT platforms to recover money. He initially landed a good offer from *Netflix* but as the streaming giant wanted to release it after a theatrical roll out, the deal couldn't move forward. With theatres continuing to remain shut and lack of clarity in sight, Marni later approached *aha*. The think-tank of *aha* liked the film and decided to purchase it. Marni is happy with the way it is being promoted," said a source close to the development.

Featuring Subhalekha Sudhakar, Easwari Rao, Rohini, Naina Ganguly and Esther Anil in the lead roles, *Johaar*, inspired by real incidents, narrates how five lives are affected due to the construction of a statue. Filmed across Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Visakhapatnam and Varanasi, Priyadarshan Balasubramanian has composed the film's music.

## Haven't thought of working with my family in a film: Shruti

**A**ctress Shruti Haasan says that working with her family in a film will not necessarily make it a great film. Shruti is the daughter of veteran actors Kamal Haasan and Sarika. Her sister Akshara is an actress, too. She says she has not thought of working with all of them together.

"I tell you why because that doesn't determine that it will make a great film. Everybody from the same family. That's absolutely not what's going to determine that at all," Shruti said.

The actress believes that a "great film is that a film chooses to be great and the people working on it".

She added, "I think films have a life of their own, which is really wonderful and then we kind of become a conduit to the energy and destiny of the film, and that can be with anybody. I don't necessarily think that it would be with my family."

The actress, who will be next seen in Ravi Teja-starrer *Krack*, recently signed Pawan Kalyan-starrer *Vakeel Saab*.



## Actor Satyadev 'humbled' with the acknowledgement to UMUR

**A**s soon as it dropped on Netflix more than a week ago, Uma Maheswara Ugra Roopasya (*UMUR*) fronted by Satyadev and directed by Venkatesh Maha, received acclaim from audiences and critics alike. With industry personalities too giving it a thumbs-up and praise especially going to the way Satyadev enacted the part, the actor, one of the brightest talents, couldn't have asked for more. Extremely glad with the reception that is coming his way, the actor, in a statement, said, "Thank you! Although I do say that phrase often I feel I have under-used it in the last few days. All the kind words and appreciation we have been receiving ever since the movie was released have not only been overwhelming but also brought us echoes of joy and delight that are truly endless."

Further stating that he is left with a feeling of gratitude, the actor, addressing the people who've embraced the film, added, "I'm humbled by this entire acknowledgement and the manner in which all of you have owned the film. All I am left with is a feeling of gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose."

*UMUR* — an official remake of Malayalam hit *Maheshinte Prathikaaram* — tells the story of an Araku-based studio photographer owner (played by Satya) who publicly vows that he will not wear his slippers again until he has avenged the humiliation that he has been meted out to by a neighbouring village resident who suffers from anger management issues. Maha has tailored the original to suit Telugu nativity.





Most Read NEWS

## Museum on RK Narayan's fictional town opens

The Indian Railways has brought RK Narayan's fictional town of Malgudi to life by developing a railway station in Shivamogga in Karnataka, where the popular television serial 'Malgudi Days' was shot into the 'Malgudi Museum'. The museum developed at the Arasalu railway station was opened on Saturday and an inauguration was held with Union Minister of State for Railways, Suresh Angadi appearing via weblink. "Iconic TV series Malgudi Days shot in Agumbe, Shivamogga district comes to life with 'Malgudi Museum' at Arasalu station. Thank you Piyush Goyal ji for immortalising the legendary work of RK Narayan, Shankar Nag and for reviving memories of millions," Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa tweeted. The television series was directed by the late actor and director Shankar Nag based on the heartwarming short stories written by novelist RK Narayan. The stories were set in the fictional town of Malgudi and Shankar Nag decided to shoot the television adaptation in Shivamogga. The series was an adaptation of the heartwarming short stories set in the fictional town of Malgudi. Shankar Nag chose Agumbe and nearby areas in Shivamogga as the locations for the serial due to the rustic ambience.



## Cops return wallet stolen in a train 14 years ago

A man, who lost his wallet containing ₹ 900 in a local train in Mumbai, Maharashtra, in 2006, was contacted by the police who said they have found it after 14 years. They returned part of the amount to him. Hemant Padalkar had lost his wallet while travelling in a Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus-Panvel local train in 2006, a Government Railway Police (GRP) official said. In April this year, he received a call from GRP, Vashi, informing that his wallet was found. However, he could not go to collect it because of the lockdown amid coronavirus pandemic. After the easing of restrictions, Mr Padalkar, a resident of Panvel in neighbouring Navi Mumbai township, recently went to the GRP office at Vashi where he was given part of the money. "My wallet at that time contained ₹ 900, including a ₹ 500 note which was later demonetised (in 2016). The Vashi GRP returned ₹ 300 to me. They deducted ₹ 100 for stamp paper work and said the remaining ₹ 500 would be returned after exchanging the scrapped currency note with a new one," Mr Padalkar said.



## Russia unearths its largest ever color diamond

The stunning gem aged from 120 to 230 million years was mined in Arctic Yakutia. The precious discovery was made by workers of remote Ebelyakh mine on river Anabar in the extreme north of Yakutia, not far from shores of Laptev Sea and some 1,211km north-west from Yakutsk. The mine belongs to Diamonds of Anabar, part of ALROSA Group. The rough diamond is of deep amber colour, its dimensions are 47x24x22 mm. The decision hasn't yet been made as to whether it'll be sent to Alrosa's in-house cutting and polishing division, or sold rough. "Such a large natural color rough diamond is a unique discovery. 'Now, the stone is at ALROSA's United Selling Organization being studied and evaluated by our specialists. After that, we will decide whether to give it to our manufacturers for cutting or sell it as a rough. 'Of course, cutters in any country will be interested in such a diamond, as it has the potential to give several high quality polished diamonds," said Pavel Vinikhin, head of ALROSA's cutting and polishing division. The Ebelyakh mine has produced several brightly-coloured rough diamonds in the past several years. In summer 2017 alone a crimson, a pink and an intense yellow stones were found within a month.



## Naked man chases laptop stealing wild boar

A naturist in Germany got much closer to nature than he bargained for after a wild boar ran off with his laptop bag. According to the BBC, there is a strong tradition of naturism in Germany, where it is common in the summers to strip in parks and other public places. The back-to-nature movement is known as Freikörperkultur - or "free body culture". One nudist, however, left fellow sunbathers in splits after he was filmed running after the laptop-stealing boar and her two piglets. The incident took place on Wednesday in Berlin, reports The Local. Photos of the naked man chasing the boar were shared on Facebook by Adele Landauer, an actor and life coach. She said they were taken at Teufelssee, which is a popular bathing spot. While sharing the hilarious pics on Facebook, where they have gone viral, Ms Landauer said that she had shown them to the nudist and had his permission to share them online. "I then showed the photos to the man, he laughed soundly and authorised me to make them public," she said. The post has gone viral with nearly 10,000 'shares' and hundreds of amused comments. In the comments, Ms Landauer revealed how the chase finally ended. The man "made some noise, then the sow dropped the bag," she wrote.



## London dreams

Lewandowski scripts another dominating Bayern win over London club, this time against Chelsea to set up Barca clash

Bayern's Robert Lewandowski celebrates with teammate Leon Goretzka after scoring his team's first goal from penalty spot - AP

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi scored a brilliant solo goal as Barcelona saw off Napoli on Saturday but they are likely to need something even more special from their captain to beat Bayern Munich in the Champions League quarter-finals. Messi's weaving run and finish came between an early Clement Lenglet header and a Luis Suarez penalty, also won by Messi, as Barca stormed into a 3-0 lead in the first half at Camp Nou. But Lorenzo Insigne gave Napoli hope just before the interval and an unconvincing second period from Barcelona

left them hanging on for a 3-1 win on the night, 4-2 on aggregate. "A second goal would have given them a feeling of euphoria that can hurt you," said Barca coach Quique Setien. "It's normal to get a little nervous." In winning the penalty, Messi took a heavy kick from Napoli's Kalidou Koulibaly and needed treatment. "It was a heavy knock," said Setien. "It will have to be treated but I don't think there is a problem." After finishing five points

behind Real Madrid in La Liga, Barca resumed in the Champions League with doubts hanging over the form of the team and the future of their coach. And victory against Napoli eases the pressure but the performance will not inspire confidence, even with Messi seemingly rejuvenated after three weeks rest. Napoli, whose own league season only finished last weekend, should have had the advantage of rhythm but a disastrous opening half an hour left them with too much to do.



Barcelona's Lionel Messi, right, embraces Napoli's goalkeeper David Ospina after the end of Champions League round of 16, second leg soccer match - AP

Koulibaly, linked with a move to several elite European clubs this summer, endured a particularly disappointing night. Yet Barcelona will have to improve significantly to match Bayern, who advanced after putting seven past Chelsea over two legs and are arguably favourites to win the tournament. "It's going to be very complicated," admitted Setien ahead of the quarter-final on Friday. Messi now has four goals in his last three games and in a one-off match in Lisbon, the Argentinian is capable of anything. But Bayern have their own trump card in Robert Lewandowski and a more complete team that makes them heavy favourites to reach the semis.

Leading 3-0 from the first leg at Stamford Bridge in February, before the coronavirus pandemic halted the competition, Bayern progressed 7-1 on aggregate. "We can be pleased, it was our first game for a month and it's not easy to keep the rhythm," added Alaba. "We have prepared for this for the last two weeks and you could see the result." Lewandowski netted a penalty with just 10 minutes gone at the Allianz Arena. Winger Ivan Perisic then doubled Bayern's lead before England striker Tammy Abraham tapped home a loose ball to give Chelsea brief hope. However, replacement midfielder Corentin Tolisso put the result beyond doubt when he fired home a Lewandowski pass with 14 minutes to go. "I am really happy with how we played over the 90 minutes, the first 30 minutes we shut Chelsea out," said Bayern head coach Hansi Flick. This was a world-class display from Lewandowski who added a late header to his pair of assists. He is now four goals short of



Champions League's top-scorer, bagged his 12th and 13th goals in Europe this season and played a part in all four Bayern goals in Munich on Saturday.

## NUMBER GAME

**66** With a brace against Chelsea, Robert Lewandowski is now the outright fourth-highest scoring player in Champions League history, with 66 goals

**7** Chelsea's 7-1 defeat on aggregate to Bayern Munich was the second-heaviest inflicted on an English team in CL history, behind only Arsenal's 10-2 aggregate defeat in the last 16 in 2016/17, also against Bayern Munich

**7** Robert Lewandowski was involved in all seven of Bayern's goals against Chelsea this season (3 goals, 4 assists). He was the first player to register 3+ goals & assists against an opponent in a season since Luis Figo in 2004/05 vs Roma

**35** Lionel Messi has scored against 35 different clubs in the CL; two more than the next best Cristiano Ronaldo

**53** Robert Lewandowski has scored 53 goals in 44 appearances in all competitions this season, finding the net in 36 of those 44 matches (82%)

**1** Lorenzo Insigne is the first Italian player ever able to score at least one goal at Bernabeu vs Real Madrid and one goal at Camp Nou vs Barcelona in the UCL history

Cristiano Ronaldo's record of 17 Champions League goals in 2013/14.

"It's not a goal of mine," said Lewandowski when asked about Ronaldo's record. "We have a few more games in the knock-out round and I am just as happy creating goals as scoring them." The Poland star was also coy when asked about a rivalry with Barcelona star Lionel Messi. "We have to perform well and show our quality as a team against a good Barcelona side, it's a big game for everybody."

## Pirlo is new Juve boss

AFP ■ TURIN

Former Italy and Juventus star Andrea Pirlo was appointed the Italian champions' new coach, just hours after Maurizio Sarri's sacking with the club promising a "new chapter in world football". Sarri, 61, leaves Juventus after just one season, a day after the Italian giants crashed out of the Champions League in the last 16 to French club Lyon.

The 41-year-old Pirlo, with no previous top-level coaching experience, recently took over the Juventus U-23 side and arrives on a two-year contract.

"The choice is based on the belief that Pirlo has what it takes to lead from his debut on the bench, an expert and talented squad to pursue new successes," Juventus said.

"Today, begins a new chapter of his career in the world of football: from Maestro to Mister."

Pirlo's swift appointment, a day after their Champions League exit, is again a bold choice for club president Andrea Agnelli.

Other former players have turned to coaching such as Zinedine Zidane, Frank Lampard and Gennaro Gattuso, but Pirlo does so without experience.

The former midfielder does, however, know Juventus and its players well after an impressive four-year spell from 2011 to 2015.

"Pirlo has had a legendary career as a player. In his four years at the centre of the Juventus midfield, he won as many league titles, a Coppa Italia and two Italian Super Cups," Juventus said. He also won two Champions Leagues and two league titles with AC Milan.

At Juventus, Pirlo will now find himself coaching some of his former teammates such as Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, a year older at 42.



## Verstappen wins Silverstone race

AFP ■ SILVERSTONE

Max Verstappen delivered Red Bull's first victory at Silverstone since 2012 on Sunday when he made the most of a superior strategy in sizzling conditions to beat both Mercedes and claim victory in the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix. It was the Dutchman's first victory of the season and the ninth of his career and the first time a race had been won by a driver who did not start on pole position in seven races since last year's Mexican Grand Prix. Verstappen owed his victory to a team decision to start the race on hard compound tyres while his main rivals all launched from the grid on mediums, the two Mercedes men struggling to manage tyre-wear throughout the race. During the race, Red Bull asked him to ease off, but he replied saying "I don't want to drive like a grand-ma" before the team relented.



## BCCI may start domestic season from Nov 19

**NEW DELHI:** The BCCI is mulling November 19 as tentative date for start of domestic season with Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament but Indian players in various IPL teams won't be able to play first few rounds due to quarantine protocols in place. The delay in the beginning of the domestic season due to pandemic means that only Mushtaq Ali trophy and Ranji Trophy (Dec 13 - March 10) comprising of 245 games (across formats with 38 teams) will be played. There will be no Vijay Hazare Trophy, Duleep Trophy or Challenger Series this year and as of now there is no provision for Irani Cup also. "This is a tentative list that has been prepared and it has gone for approval of president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah," a senior BCCI official told PTI. While this is a draft schedule, it is being asked how the Indian players, who will return from IPL, will play since they will have to be in a 14-day quarantine as per Government rules.



"That's an issue primarily for the uncapped players, who would be with the squad and would like to play some cricket. Now even a player's team is knocked out before play-offs, he won't be back before November 3 and till Nov 17 will be in quarantine. "For those whose teams are in play-offs and may reach finals, they will have to miss the first few rounds in that case. But again this is a draft proposal and there could be some tweaks in it," the official said.

## Root hails Poms mental strength after 'brilliant chase'

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

England looked all but beaten when they stumbled to 117-5 in their pursuit of a 277-run target set by Pakistan at Old Trafford but captain Joe Root felt confident about his team's battling qualities. "We knew it would take something special but after last summer it is very hard to stop believing. It's a real strong trait of ours," he said. Almost a year on from Ben Stokes' heroic batting display to stun Australia in the 2019 Ashes at Headingley, Jos Buttler and Chris Woakes combined to deliver a counter-attacking display in a 139-run sixth-wicket stand. Buttler (75) was trapped leg-before with 21 runs still required and the second new ball due, but Woakes (84) stuck it out, edging the winning boundary down to third



Chris Woakes returns to pavilion after he guides England to win in 1st Test at AP

man to seal a famous victory. "It was a brilliant chase. I couldn't be more proud of the

## Stokes out of series for 'family reasons'

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

England's star all-rounder Ben Stokes will miss the remainder of the three-match Test series against Pakistan due to family reasons, the country's cricket board announced on Sunday. The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), however, did not specify the exact reasons for his pull-out. "Stokes will leave the UK later this week and travel to New Zealand. He will miss England's two Test matches against Pakistan at the Ageas Bowl starting on Thursday 13 August and Friday 21 August," the ECB said in a statement. He will be flying to Christchurch — where his parents Ged and Deb live. Stokes' father — a former rugby league international — was hospitalised days ahead of England's Boxing Day Test against South Africa in December last year, and has since been recuperating at home in New Zealand.



of it, calculating risks, manipulating the spinner, brilliant innings, and Chris was magnificent too.

## Akram criticises Ali's captaincy

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Fast bowling great Wasim Akram has come down heavily on Pakistan captain Azhar Ali for his decisions during the first Test against England, saying he "missed a trick quite a few times" in the visitors' three-wicket defeat here.

Akram was particularly critical of Ali's decision to under-bowl pacer Naseem Shah, who was used for just 13 overs out of 82 in the second innings while defending a target of 277. "It will hurt. It will hurt the Pakistan team and the cricket lovers in Pakistan," Akram was quoted as saying by Sky Sports.



"Winning and losing is part of cricket, but I think our captain missed a trick quite a few times in this game, as far

as his leadership is concerned," the former Pakistan captain said. Akram felt with England reduced to 117 for five, the need of the hour was to put pressure on Buttler, who was fighting for his Test spot, and Woakes, who averaged just 5.22 with the bat in his previous six Tests.

## Serena fit & ready to play

**LEXINGTON:** Serena Williams on Saturday said that she is pressing ahead with plans to play in the US Open despite a wave of player withdrawals from the upcoming Grand Slam event over coronavirus fears. The 23-time Slam winner returns to tennis next week at the inaugural Top Seed Open WTA event in Lexington, Kentucky, relaunching her season after a

six-month hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Williams, who was one of the first players to commit to the US Open despite the pandemic, said her plans remain unchanged, adding that she was tentatively planning to go to Europe for the rescheduled French Open. "I see myself doing it all if it happens," Williams said when



asked about her schedule during a virtual press conference.

"But I am not planning for the future, as tournaments got cancelled I was just like, 'Let me just work on today and see what happens.'" Williams revealed that she had been practicing on her own court, built with the same hard-court surface used at the US Open. She has also stayed fit with construction of a home gym.