



the pioneer

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 12, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

RENU DESAI
BATS FOR
ELECTRIC CARS

Page 11

**JAIRAM RAMESH WRITES TO JAVADEKAR,
SAYS DRAFT EIA NOTIFICATION FLAWED**

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has accused Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar of "misrepresenting" the implications of the Draft EIA Notification on the country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on environment. In a letter to Javadekar, Ramesh reiterated his strong objections and said the notification is "fundamentally flawed". Ramesh, a former environment minister, said the Standing Committee met on August 7 and was apprised by officials on the Draft EIA Notification 2020. "I am compelled to say that you are misrepresenting the implications of the Draft EIA Notification, 2020, on our country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on the environment," Ramesh said.


**AI PILOT UNIONS DEMAND REMOVAL OF
DGCA CHIEF OVER KOZHIKODE CRASH**

Two leading pilot unions of Air India on Tuesday said DGCA chief Arun Kumar must be immediately replaced with a suitable candidate with substantial knowledge of the aviation sector and operational experience as his comments on news channels reveal a total lack of technical know-how and an "amateurish view" of the Kozhikode plane crash. According to the Indian Commercial Pilots' Union (ICPA) and Indian Pilots' Guild (IPG), Kumar said during one of the televised interviews that the plane's "landing was not smooth". On another news channel, Kumar stated that the "two fellows are dead...and the landing it seems was not appropriate", according to a letter jointly written by the two unions to Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday.


**NEW ZEALAND LOCKS DOWN BIGGEST
CITY AFTER FIRST CASE IN 102 DAYS**

New Zealand announced on Tuesday it was shutting down its largest city, Auckland, after four new cases of COVID-19 were discovered in the city, the first evidence of domestic transmission after being coronavirus-free for 102 days. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Auckland would move to level 3 restriction from noon on Wednesday as a "precautionary approach", which would mean people should stay away from work and school, and gatherings or more than 10 people are again restricted. The restriction would be applied for three days until Friday. Director General of Health Ashley Bloomfield said the four confirmed cases were within one family.


**INDIAN TRICOLOUR TO BE HOISTED AT
TIMES SQUARE ON INDEPENDENCE DAY**

A leading diaspora group in the US will hoist India's National Flag at the Times Square this week, the first time the Indian tricolour will be unfurled at the iconic New York City address. The Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) of the tri-state area of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut said in a statement that it "will be creating history" on August 15, 2020 by "hosting the first ever flag hoisting ceremony at Times Square" to commemorate India's Independence Day. "It will be the first time ever that India's tricolour will be unfurled at the iconic venue in all its glory," the organisation said, adding that Consul General of India in New York Randhir Jaiswal will be the Guest of Honour at the event.

'Industry-friendly
reforms in mining
sector shortly'

8

Russia claims 1st Covid vaccine 'Sputnik-V'

PNS ■ MOSCOW,

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday announced that his country has developed first vaccine that works quite effectively and "forms a stable immunity" against COVID-19 as he disclosed that one of his daughters has already been vaccinated.

Putin made the claim during a government meeting where he described it as "a very important step for the world", she feels good and the [anti-

the Sputniknews reported. He said that one of his daughters took part in the experiment and she was vaccinated against the coronavirus.

"After the first vaccination, she had body temperature of 38 degrees Celsius, while the following day it was slightly over 37 degrees Celsius, that's it. After the second injection, the second vaccination, her temperature also rose a little, and then everything cleared up,

body] titers are high, Putin said. It works quite effectively" and "forms a stable immunity," he said.

Putin thanked everyone who worked on the first-ever vaccine against the coronavirus and hoped that Russia will be able to start mass production of this medication in the near future.

"I hope

that our colleagues abroad will also move forward, and there will be quite a lot of products that can be used on the market, on the world

market for medicines and vaccines," Putin was quoted as saying by the agency.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko has said that the first Russian vaccine against the coronavirus will begin to be

"I hope that our colleagues abroad will also move forward, and there will be quite a lot of products that can be used on the market, on the world market for medicines and vaccines"

— VLADIMIR PUTIN, Russian President

produced at two sites - the Gamaleya Research Institute and the company Biopharm.

He said that a number of countries are already showing interest in the vaccine, and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) is investing in the production and promotion of the vaccine abroad.

The vaccine was developed jointly by the Gamaleya Research Institute and the Russian Defence Ministry. It has two separately-injected

components that together are expected to build a long-term immunity against the virus.

Clinical trials of the vaccine kicked off on June 18 and included 38 volunteers. All of the participants developed immunity. The first group was discharged on July 15, the second group on July 20.

According to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University, coronavirus has infected more than 20 million people worldwide.

Modi sidesteps KCR's call to ramp up medical infra

■ PM says TS needs to increase testing, skips mention of worst hit states

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on Tuesday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to focus on ramping up medical infrastructure in the country by drawing on the lessons from the country's experience in dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic.

Rao expressed his opinion during a video conference held by the Prime Minister with chief ministers and representatives of 10 states on the pandemic situation.

Briefing the PM on the COVID-19 situation in the state, the chief minister said the Corona virus spread has reminded everyone about the need to improve medical infrastructure in the country.

"Corona experience has taught us a lesson that there is an urgent need to step up the medical facilities in the country. A visionary outlook and thinking is necessary to take

proper and adequate measures in the medical sector for a better future. Strategic planning should be done to create comprehensive medical facilities in the country. Both the Centre and state should jointly implement this comprehensive strategy," said KCR, as the chief minister is popularly known.

"We never had any Covid-19 like experience in the past. We do not know how many days this pandemic will last. While dealing with the existing situation, we must focus on how we are going to deal with such a situation if it arises in the future and how are we going to offer better medical facilities to people if the need arises.

We have to initiate measures now so that whenever an emergency medical situation develops, we will be able to face it efficiently. In the past too, we have seen emergence of several viruses, and there is every possibility that a Corona-like virus may come up again in the future," he said.

2

Top Court backs daughter's right to property, retrospectively

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A woman can claim equal share in family property as a daughter, the Supreme Court reiterated today as it stressed that the Hindu Succession Act - that was amended in 2005 to give women equal inheritance rights - can have a retrospective effect.

A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Arun Kumar Mishra, today said, "Once a daughter, always a daughter... a son is still till he is married. The daughter shall remain a coparcener (one who shares equally with others in inheri-

tance of an undivided joint family property) throughout life, irrespective of whether her father is alive or not."

The question that urged the top court to make the remarks today was: "Does the Hindu

Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, which gave equal right to daughters in ancestral property, has a retrospective effect?" The top court was hearing a batch of appeals that raised the issue.

2

The daughter shall remain a coparcener (one who shares equally with others in inheritance of an undivided joint family property) throughout life, irrespective of whether her father is alive or not

invisible enemy and there is no letup in the Coronavirus situation for the past five months. The government is not able to give any guarantee when things will turn for the better.

Also, reports of hospitals extorting fees in lakhs of rupees is forcing people to save for medical emergencies.

Anil, a resident of Malkajgiri, said that he is preferring to buy only essential commodities like edible oils, pulses, tea powder, coffee powder, toothpaste and others as these are unaffordable.

2

interacting with other human beings.

Adding to the dismal mood is the fact that no cinema the-



atre is being allowed to function and parties with friends have been almost ruled out.

The people are fighting an

TS-AP 'water war' casts shadow on division of assets

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

The standoff between AP and Telangana over sharing of river water has cast a shadow on the amicable division of common institutions listed under Schedule IX and X of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

The division of these institutions, mostly located in Hyderabad, could not be completed even after the bifurcation of AP six years ago due to the political rivalry between Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and his then AP counterpart N Chandrababu.

As many as 91 institutions are listed under Schedule IX and 107 institutions are listed under Schedule X. Most of these institutions are located in Hyderabad by virtue of the city

being the capital of undivided AP for about six decades. These institutions have huge assets in the form of buildings, lands, bank deposits etc.

2
First phase of Covaxin human trials ends at NIMS
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The first phase of human trials of Covaxin, the vaccine candidate for Covid-19, has been successfully completed in the NIMS. The hospital is now getting ready for the second phase.

According to doctors, the vaccine candidate was administered to over 60 volunteers, who are being closely monitored by doctors at the NIMS.

As per the ICMR rules, Covaxin, a product of Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited, has been administered to 60 volunteers and later, blood samples of 50 were tested thoroughly.

2

Medtronic to set up Rs 1,200 cr med tech R&D centre in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Medtronic PLC, a global leader in medical technology, has decided to invest Rs 1,200 crore in scaling up and expanding the current R&D centre into a state-of-the-art engineering and innovation centre in Hyderabad.

Medtronic Engineering and

Why does AP need 3 capitals: Ram Madhav

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav on Tuesday wondered why three capital cities were needed for Andhra Pradesh when a state like Uttar Pradesh, four times more in population, had only one.

He warned that the three capitals should not become a means for "triple corruption" and exhorted the BJP rank and file in AP to fight against corruption and also be in the forefront of the fight to protect the interests of Amaravati farmers who gave up their land for the capital city.

Madhav maintained that the Centres role in the capitals issue was only limited.

2

TS unique record: 11K public toilets to be ready by Aug 15

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State is all set to achieve a unique distinction in personal hygiene space by August 15.

Nearly 11,000 public toilets will be ready for people across all municipal corporations and municipalities in the state by that date. Of this, 7,000 will be in Hyderabad and the remaining 4,000 in other urban local bodies (ULBs).

Of the total public toilets, 50 per cent are being exclusively set up for women.

MAUD secretary Arvind Kumar on Tuesday tweeted, "A silent empowering revolution in personal hygiene space in urban Telangana initiated & driven by Minister MAUD @KTRTRS. 11,000 Public toilets @ seat / 1000 population (7k Hyderabad & 4K-all other ULBs) with 50% for women, will be ready by Aug 15th.

Unique distinction! (sic)" In GHMC limits, almost 20 per cent — amounting to about 1,500 public toilets — are set up on BOT (build-operate-transfer) model and the remaining are based on clustering maintenance model.

Each toilet cost/ seat varies from Rs 60,000 to Rs 1.50 lakh depending upon particular design.

2

Interest on city water bills waived

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao on Tuesday exhorted the defaulters of water bill to pay the dues. As an incentive to get people to clear their HMWS&SB bill, the Minister announced a one-time settlement scheme exempting consumers from payment of interest on bill dues.

To publicise the scheme, KTR released hand bills, banners and posters at a simple programme held at Pragati Bhawan here.

2

With Covid-19 playing havoc with earnings across society, people are getting increasingly reluctant to spend. Most are getting ready to face any eventualities as they fear uncertain times ahead.

Part of their fear is of the unknown, as there is no precedent to Covid-19.

The fear is not allowing people to step out of their homes, let alone visit restaurants, attend weekend parties, undertake family pleasure trips or do anything that requires

interaction with other human beings.

Adding to the dismal mood is the fact that no cinema the-



atre is being allowed to function and parties with friends have been almost ruled out.

The people are fighting an

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IN BRIEF
Dr Kumarswamy Thangaraj appointed director for CDFD

Senior geneticist Dr Kumarswamy Thangaraj has been appointed as Director for Hyderabad-based Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD), an autonomous institute under Department of Biotechnology, effective from Tuesday. Renowned for his contributions in the field of population and medical genetics, Dr. Thangaraj, before becoming the Director of CDFD, was a senior scientist at Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB). Dr Thangaraj's genetic studies have shown that the enigmatic tribal populations of Andaman and Nicobar islands are the first modern humans who migrated out of Africa through southern coastal route about 65,000 years ago. Subsequently, he found out that the present day Indian populations descend from two diverse groups and they have admixed during the past 2000-4000 years followed by strict endogamy, hence likely to have population-specific recessive disease, a press release said. "I am humbled and honoured to be chosen to lead a truly great institution. It will be my endeavour to take CDFD further to greater heights," Dr. Thangaraj said.


ASPIRE- networking facility inaugurated at UoH campus

The ASPIRE-Networking Facility was inaugurated by University of Hyderabad (UoH) Vice-Chancellor Prof Appa Rao Podile on the university campus. The ASPIRE is a section-8 company, which has managed to create a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem by nurturing young entrepreneurs and early-stage start-ups. It manages three incubation centres viz., BioNEST, TBI, and TIDE, which together host about 40 start-ups in the fields of science, technology, and engineering. Located on the third floor of the School of Life Sciences, the facility is equipped with audio-visual facilities, Wi-Fi connection, a 15-seater boardroom and a cafeteria and can accommodate about 150 members for a meeting/conference setup. Appreciating efforts of the ASPIRE team, the CEO's of the start-ups hoped that the new facility will be useful for stimulating discussions with their teams, thereby contributing to enhanced performance of the start-ups.

Man arrested for cheating job aspirant

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 46-year-old person who cheated a 26-year-old job aspirant to a tune of five lakhs by falsely promising him job in Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC) was arrested by Malkajgiri police on Tuesday.

The accused identified as Mohammed Abdul Asif Ali Khan, 46, a contract employee of NFC and the complainant Mohammad Yaseen, 26, lives in the same locality RTC Colony, Malkajgiri.

According to the police the accused allegedly told the complainant that he enjoys a lot of clout in NFC and can arrange a job.

The accused told the complainant that he enjoys a lot of clout in NFC and can arrange a job

plaintain and later informed the complainant that he completed the filing of application and assured that he will get the job to the complainant definitely and he can join the job in April 2019" said police.

But when the victims visited the accused regarding the job he started asking him to wait for some more time. After realising that he got cheated the complainant pressured accused to return his money.

Consequently, two days ago the accused vacated house from the locality and escaped along with his family members.

A case has been registered.

Cops rescue 11 child labourers, arrest 3 for trafficking

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three persons were arrested here for allegedly trafficking 11 children from Uttar Pradesh and engaging them in work, police said on Tuesday.

Acting on credible information that some children were detained and exploited for work in two POP units at Hayathnagar on the city outskirts, police teams on Monday

conducted raids and rescued 11 child labourers, they said.

All the 11 children were trafficked by the owners of the two companies and detained in sheds located within the premises of the units, Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh M Bhagwat said.

In both companies, the accused persons manufacture the interior Plaster of Paris

(POP) sheets which are used for ceiling in the construction of all buildings, police said.

The accused after paying an informal amount to their parents brought the children from Uttar Pradesh and got them engaged in the units where they were allegedly forced to work for 14 hours daily besides they were served rotten and stinky food, police added.

and GHMC commissioners to immediately stop such illegal construction if the report established the presence of the illegal temple construction in the site. The division bench also asked the two commissioners to submit an action taken report before August 18 of this month. The court passed these orders while dealing with a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by one Vazeer Prakash Goud, a resident of Kothapeta area in the city. In his petition, he alleged that the authorities concerned had failed to take action against the accused of the temple construction despite his complaint on February 2, 2020.

HC talks tough on land grabbers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court has taken a serious view of the issue involving grabbing of a public land and illegally raising a temple subsequently on it by seven people at Nagole in Medchal Malkajgiri district. A division bench of the Telangana High Court directed the district collector, the deputy municipal commissioner of Hayathnagar circle of GHMC, the Uppal Tehsildar and the SHO of LB Nagar police station to visit the site and report and submit their report of the temple was being constructed at the site. It also asked the HMDA

Cops go guns blazing against number plate violations in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a bid to evade traffic violation challans, people are taking extreme steps to the extent of folding the number plates so that traffic police is unable to read the number.

A number of two-wheelers in various parts of the city are now seen with disfigured number plates. Some resort to the use of radium stickers and also tamper with the numbers and also change them.

In special drive launched by the traffic police recently, several vehicles with no proper number plates have been seized and raiders were questioned.

Upon questioning, the raiders told the police to the dismay of later that they have been using improper number plates to avoid traffic challans. Criminals are also taking advantage of using improper number plates to prevent



themselves from being detected by police.

The tricks adopted by fraudsters is bending the number plate, having only three numbers on the number plate instead of four, changing one or two numbers on the number plate were some of the commonly detected offences.

During January-July period last year, the police with the help of special drives launched detected 28,508 offenders and fined them for not using proper number plates. During the corresponding period this year, the irregularities detected were 38,96.

Cyberabad traffic DCP Vijay Kumar has said that suitable disciplinary action has been taken against such offenders. If the offenders repeat the same

Traffic police officials launched a special drive recently and questioned several vehicle owners with no proper number plates.

The idea of the motorists is to avoid traffic challans if caught during electronic surveillance or enforcement drive.

mistake, the police warn the violators of traffic rules with severe consequences.

"The idea of the motorists is to avoid traffic challans if caught during electronic surveillance or enforcement drive. But usually unsocial elements do it to avoid getting caught by the police. So the public should not tamper with the registration number plate or cases under criminal provisions will be booked," he warned.

Green India Challenge trends No 2 on twitter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD


momentum is commendable.

This spirited movement has made millions touch soil and experience the magic of seed sprouting into a plant for the first time in their life. Many children celebrated their birthday by taking up Green India Challenge, many took it up on their wedding day!

Indeed it has become global as many NRIs across the globe participated in it and took the movement global as Green Challenge.

As they say, we might not be able to do great things, but each of us can do small things with great love.

JNTU students can appear for exams at parent colleges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD


Jawaharlal Nehru Technological university has instructed colleges to submit details of preferences by August 25

located close to the hometowns of students. To this effect, the university has instructed college principals to contact the students and take three options (order of preference) to appear for their final year exams.

The regions which students opt for, must have at least one JNTU affiliated college and

those who wish to appear for the exams at their parent college need not give options. If a student does not give any option, he/she will be allotted exam centre at the parent college. The university has instructed colleges to submit details of preferences of students by August 25.

Man suffering from virus ends life in hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 60-year old man undergoing treatment for Covid-19 in a private hospital allegedly ended his life on Tuesday out of fear about the disease, police said.

The man from Karimnagar district hanged himself in the washroom attached to his room in the hospital between 1 am and 2 am, a police official said.

A nurse noticed the man hanging and alerted the other hospital staff who in turn informed the police.

He was admitted to the hospital four days ago after testing positive for the virus.

A case has been registered.

'Prepare digital content for vocational subjects'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Due to the pandemic, many educational institutions have been looking at online and digital classes for the students as new medium of education. To ensure the education of vocational intermediate student goes on uninterrupted, the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) is looking at producing digital content for the students.

The board has now identifi-

ed subject experts ad review- ers identified for preparation of digital content course as well as subject wise and will convert the audio visual lessons to upload in the departmental website, departmental official YouTube channel and sent to T-SAT and Doordarshan for telecast. Each video consists of 30 minutes duration with five to seven minutes home work or assignment points. Only after the approval from TSBIE, it will be uploaded on the website and departmental YouTube channel and same will be forwarded to T-SAT and Doordarshan for telecast.

The stretchers include Residency Road, Hislop Road, Amherst Road, Gurbaksh Marg, Rajendra Singhji Road, Lake Line Ranges Road, Barr Road, Yaprak Road, Gough Road, Wellington Road, AOC Road, Mornington Road and Entrenchment Road.

The release further stated that ambulances, school buses, police vehicles, government officials on duty, State and dis-



Hyd police remove provocative banner

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabadi police has removed a controversial banner with provocative writing from a busy traffic intersection in the city after its display went viral on social media.

The banner was put up by an organization called Bhagat Singh Yuva Sena at MJ Market

Khan had raised strong objection to the silence of the authorities over the controversial banner saying this could disturb peace and communal harmony.

Khan alleged that the Hyderabad police which was very harsh in dealing with protests by Muslim organizations over various issues was silent and soft towards the RSS and pro-Hindutva elements.

He cautioned that this attitude may lead to communal disturbance in Telangana during the upcoming Muharram and Ganesh festival.

Burma rohingya refugee held for posing as Indian

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 37-year-old Rohingya man from Myanmar was arrested here after he allegedly impersonated as an Indian and secured voter and Aadhaar cards besides other ID documents, police said on Tuesday.

The man migrated to India in 2008 from Bangladesh after crossing over from Myanmar and stayed in Rajendra Nagar area here, they said. In 2012, he married an Indian woman and subsequently obtained voter card by suppressing his personal details and nationality, police said. Theman was arrested on Monday.

The stretchers include Residency Road, Hislop Road, Amherst Road, Gurbaksh Marg, Rajendra Singhji Road, Lake Line Ranges Road, Barr Road, Yaprak Road, Gough Road, Wellington Road, AOC Road, Mornington Road and Entrenchment Road.

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Sec'bad cantonment road closed for I-Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the enhanced security alert on the occasion of Independence Day, several roads in Secunderabad military establishment will be closed from 4 am on August 14 to 6 pm on August 16.

The stretchers include Residency Road, Hislop Road, Amherst Road, Gurbaksh Marg, Rajendra Singhji Road, Lake Line Ranges Road, Barr Road, Yaprak Road, Gough Road, Wellington Road, AOC Road, Mornington Road and Entrenchment Road.

The release further stated that ambulances, school buses, police vehicles, government officials on duty, State and dis-

Guv concerned about safety

HYDERABAD:

With 180 tonnes of ammonium nitrate being transported from Chennai customs to a Hyderabad firm, Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has said that she is concerned about the safety of the people.

The governor tweeted that she reached out to the concerned officials to assess the situation. She underlined the need to ensure the safety of the people.

Some Twitter users thanked the governor for raising the issue.

One of them urged her to block the transportation of ammonium nitrate. "Let's not make Hyderabad

another Beirut or India another Lebanon," he tweeted.

A huge explosion in the ammonium nitrate stored in the termial at Manali, near Chennai on August 4 killed over 200 people, injured more than 5,000 and caused widespread devastation in the Lebanese capital.

Following the news of the ammonium nitrate's transportation from Chennai to Hyderabad, some police officials from Rachakonda commissionerate visited the company and inquired if it had the necessary permissions for receiving the consignment.

10 containers of ammonium nitrate reach Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD


in Beirut of Lebanon causing severe loss to human life and property.

Meanwhile, the Medchal District administration inspected the storage facility of the Salvo Explosives. It is predict-

ed that another 20 containers of the combustible chemical is expected to reach here very soon.

Hyderabad is ranked No. 3 in procurement of ammonium nitrate for various purposes. The chemical was imported five years ago from South Korea but stored in the terminal at Manali, near Chennai. The chemical was stored in 37 containers there.

However, during the recent Chennai floods, 50 tonnes of ammonium nitrate was destroyed due to reaction of water and air on the chemical.

HC extends suspension of judicial work

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court has extended the ongoing suspension of judicial and administrative work in all the subordinate courts, tribunals, State Legal Services Authority, mediation and arbitration center and high court legal services committee and state judicial committee of the state till September 5, 2020.

The HC has taken the decision after taking into consideration the steep rise in the total number of Coronavirus cases in the state and health and safety of the stakeholders.

The registrar general of HC however said that the units of the heads of the district were at liberty to open the courts and in physical manner whenever there is a possibility after consulting the administrative judges of their respective districts and after taking into the member of the bar associations, judicial officers employees into confidence by following guidelines mentioned in the Standard Operating Procedure issued by the HC on June 8, 2020.

KCR revamps irrigation dept as water resources

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said that it was decided to revamp the Irrigation Department in the State in tune with the revolutionary changes that were brought in the irrigation sector.

He said there was a vast difference in the situation that existed before the formation of the state and after. The irrigation facilities have increased leaps and bounds now. The increase in the Ayicut due to construction of projects, canals, reservoirs, pump houses also increased the workload of the Irrigation department. In accordance with the change in the situation, Chief Engineers (CEs) of Irrigation department as Heads, more Territorial Jurisdictions will be created. The Irrigation department unlike in the past where it was divided among many wings will now work under one Umbrella, the Chief Minister said.

The Irrigation department unlike in the past where it was divided among many wings will now work under one Umbrella, the Chief Minister said.

The CM held a review meeting on Tuesday at Pragathi Bhavan here on revamping of the Irrigation department. It was accepted in principle to increase the existing territorial jurisdictions headed by CEs from 13 to 19. All the projects, tanks, IDC lifts, reservoirs,

- The CM decided to name Ghanpur Anicut in Medak Districts as Vana Durga Project.
- The Irrigation Department, which was divided as major, medium, small IDC wings, will now function as one department and it would be called Water Resources Ministry.



Active cases in Telangana now total 22,628, including 15,554 in home or institutional isolation.

A total of 39 testing laboratories and 323 rapid antigen testing centres conducted 18,035 tests as against the state's target of 5,600 as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 tests per million per day.

Test results of 959 samples are awaited. The state has so far conducted 6,42,875 tests.

Officials said 1,788 more corona patients recovered from Covid-19 during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative recoveries to 59,374.

1,896 new cases in TS, 8 more Corona deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 1,896 new Covid cases on Tuesday, taking the state's tally to 82,647, even as eight more fatalities pushed the state's death toll to 645.

Active cases in Telangana now total 22,628, including 15,554 in home or institutional isolation. More than 84 per cent of those put in home isolation are asymptomatic.

While the number of new cases in Hyderabad continue to decline, there has been a big spike in the daily count in several districts. The state capital saw 338 new cases during the last 24 hours ending 8 pm on Monday. It had reported 389 of the 1,256 new cases the previous day.

Rangareddy and Medchal Malkajgiri reported 147 and 119 cases respectively. Sangareddy, another district



which shares borders with the state capital, reported 49 new infections.

The steep hike in several districts continued to be a concern for health authorities. Karimnagar, for instance, saw 121 new cases followed by Warangal (95), Jogulamba Gadwal (85), Kamarayy (71), Peddapalli (66), Khammam (65), Siddipet (64), and

Bhadradri Kothagudem (60). According to the media bulletin released by the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, the new cases were reported from all 33 districts.

The Coronavirus fatality rate in the state stands at 0.78 per cent as against a national average of 2 per cent. Officials said 53.87 per cent of the deceased had comorbidities.

Test results of 959 samples are awaited. The state has so far conducted 6,42,875 tests.

Officials said 1,788 more corona patients recovered from Covid-19 during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative recoveries to 59,374.

Chandrababu slams AP Govt on Covid facilities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Jaganmohan Reddy Government, accusing it of giving Covid-19 patients a hellish time by not providing any facilities for them at hospitals.

Naidu said that it was "inhuman and pathetic" that the body of a deceased patient was left lying in the corridor at the Ongole General Hospital in Prakasam district for two days.

He condemned the Ongole hospital incident saying that the negligence was continuing even though tragic incidents involving Covid patients were taking place repeatedly across AP. Naidu slammed the YSRCP leaders, accusing them of putting all their focus on harassing political opponents instead of using the state's resources to rescue the people from the Coronavirus threat. He condemned the latest 'false cases' filed against TDP activist Rakesh at Chandragiri in Chittoor district.

Allocate sufficient funds to health department: Bhatti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



I was surprised to see the state with a budget of Rs 1.82 lakh crore have no concern about the medical staff and the lives of people

MALLU BHATTI VIKRAMARKA
CLP leader

about the medical staff and the lives of people," he said.

He demanded the government to take over 50 per cent of beds from private hospitals.

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aboutian grounds in these hard times. D Sridhar Babu alleged there were no ventilators in district hospitals. The government is not responding even after philanthropists coming forward to donate ventilators, he wondered. He demanded the state government to introduce new scheme to benefit daily wage workers staying in Hyderabad and urban areas.

He alleged that the government is not following guidelines issued by the Centre.

Health Minister Eatala Rajender says stringent action will be taken against private hospitals for looting common man, however, no action has been taken until now," he said.

As per the Chief Minister and his Ministers, Telangana is said to be the richest state but it is poor while allocating funds to the Health Department, he pointed out.

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SHORT READS


Pilot says there shouldn't be any vendetta politics

JAIPUR: Congress leader Sachin Pilot here on Tuesday said he has not demanded any post from the party and there should not be any vendetta politics as he returned to Jaipur nearly a month after his revolt against Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. On Monday, a meeting between Sachin Pilot and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had signalled an "amicable resolution" of nearly a month-long Rajasthan political crisis ahead of the crucial assembly session beginning August 14. The Congress leader told reporters that he did not make any statement against the party and had gone to discuss issues with the Congress high command in Delhi. I have not demanded any post from the party, he added.

Vikas Dubey's aide arrested in UP

LUCKNOW: An aide of gangster Vikas Dubey has been arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Uttar Pradesh Police from Chitrakoot district, officials said on Tuesday. The arrested aide, Bal Govind Dubey alias Lalu, carried a reward of 50,000. He was an associate of key accused of Bikru case gangster Vikas Dubey, an STF spokesman said on Tuesday. Lalu is a resident of Bikru in Chaubepur police station of Kanpur, the spokesman said, adding he was arrested from Parikrama turn under Karvi police station area of Chitrakoot on Monday. There were inputs that Lalu concealed his identity and was living in disguise, the spokesman said. During interrogation he has confessed that he was in Vikas Dubey's gang which had attacked the police party leading to the killing of 8 personnel last month, the spokesman added.

No parade during I-Day celebration in Odisha this year

BHUBANESWAR: In view of the outbreak of COVID-19, the Odisha government has decided to keep the Independence Day celebration a low-key affair by not organising parade or march past this year. A letter written by the Home Department to the district collectors said, the state government is in favour of discouraging large gatherings to contain the spread of the disease. In a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary A K Tripathy on Monday, it was decided that participation of the general public would be restricted during the Independence Day celebration. Around 50 to 75 guests may be invited to the celebration using e-invites, the letter said. The guests should include around 15 to 20 COVID-19 warriors, it said. "Only one or two police contingent to participate in the ceremony for offering compliments to the Chief Guest during the celebration. There will be no parade/marchpast," the letter said. It is imperative that social distancing norms and mask wearing are to be followed strictly by those attending the function, it said.

PM discusses Covid situation with CMs of 10 states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi noted on Tuesday that 10 states account for over 80 per cent of active COVID-19 cases, and asserted if the virus is defeated in these states, then the country will also emerge victorious in its fight against the pandemic.

At a video conference with chief ministers and representatives of these 10 states, including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, Modi said the recovery rate has gone up which, he added, meant that government efforts have proved to be effective. The Centre and states have been able to work as a team in the fight against COVID-19, he said.

"Our experience so far is that

containment, contact tracing and surveillance are the most effective weapons against the pandemic with experts of the view that if positive cases are identified within 72 hours of onset, then infection slows down to great extent," the prime minister said

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Punjab, Bihar, Gujarat, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh were invited for the virtual meet.

Modi said it was a matter of satisfaction that the average fatality rate in India has been going down and noted that it has been very low compared to the world average.

Chief ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Maharashtra,

Pilot Deepak Sathe cremated; Maha govt accords state funeral

PNS ■ MUMBAI



Wing Commander Deepak Sathe (Retd), pilot-in-command of the Air India Express plane that crashed in Kerala last week, was cremated here on Tuesday with state honours. Several mourners lined up the road as the funeral procession started from his residence in Chandivli.

The last rites were performed at the Tagorenagar electric crematorium in Vikhroli in presence of some of his relatives.

Earlier in the day, Maharashtra Government decided to accord a state funeral to the pilot, and said his life shall inspire young pilots.

The flight from Dubai with 190 people, including a six-member crew, overshot the tabletop runway during landing at the Kozhikode airport in heavy rain on Friday, killing 18 people, including both the pilots.

Modi said it was a matter of satisfaction that the average fatality rate in India has been going down and noted that it has been very low compared to the world average.

My 'innocuous dissent' was seen as act of 'treason': Shah Faesal

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Shah Faesal, the first resident of Jammu and Kashmir who topped the civil services exam in 2009, on Tuesday said his decision to join politics last year had done more harm than benefit as his "innocuous act" of dissent was seen as an "act of treason". A day after announcing that he was quitting politics, the 37-year-old defended his decision saying "we evolve with time" and abrogation of the special status on August 5 last year brought forth a new political reality in Kashmir.

Faesal had brought glory to the erstwhile state by standing first in the civil services exam and was seen as a role model for youths. He, however, resigned from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in January last year.

"While in detention I thought a lot about it. And I realised that I am not the person who can promise to people that I can undo these decisions," Faesal said.

who was released after being kept under preventive detention and later booked under the draconian Public Safety Act (PSA), told PTI from Srinagar.

Faesal said he was clear that the 1949 national consensus kept Article 370 in the Constitution and the 2019 consensus abrogated it. "I told myself that I can't do politics by selling false dreams of undoing these decisions and it's better to quit and tell the truth to the people,"

he said in written replies.

The doctor-turned-bureaucrat's political career ended suddenly with the Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM), a party launched by him in February last year, announcing on Monday that he had stepped aside from its leadership and quit politics. The party's vice-president Feroze Peerzada was nominated as its interim president till formal elections can be held for the post.

Pranab Mukherjee remains critical, on ventilator support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to remain critical and is on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral (R&R) Hospital said on Tuesday, a day after he underwent a brain surgery.

The 84-year-old was admitted to the military hospital around noon on Monday, and had also tested positive for COVID-19 prior to the surgery.

doctors is constantly monitoring the health of the former president.

Mukherjee tweeted on Monday that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and urged people who had come in contact with him in the last week to isolate themselves and get tested for the novel coronavirus.

Soon after the news of his hospitalisation, wishes poured in from various quarters for his early recovery and a number of leaders sent their wishes on Twitter.

FIR on Sushant Singh's death lodged in Patna is legal, valid, Bihar govt tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The FIR lodged in Patna in relation to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide in Mumbai is legal and valid, the Bihar government told the Supreme Court on Tuesday and alleged that there was non-cooperation from Maharashtra Police in the case.

Even Rajput's postmortem report was not given to the state police by the Maharashtra police, the Bihar government said.

A bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy was told by senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for Bihar government, that no FIR has been lodged in Mumbai yet on Rajput's death.

He refuted the allegation of political pressure, bias and influence made by actress Rhea Chakraborty.

The hearing was being held on Chakraborty's plea seeking transfer of the FIR, accusing her of abetting the actor's sui-

cide, from Patna to Mumbai.

Singh strongly refuted the allegation that the FIR in Patna was lodged at the behest of Bihar Chief Minister, and referred to the quarantining of a senior police officer from the state in Mumbai.

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for Chakraborty, told the bench that the FIR lodged by Rajput's father against the actress has absolutely no connection with any offence in Patna.

He said there appears to be considerable amount of state interference and influence and

Sooraj Pancholi says he is being defamed in Sushant case

MUMBAI: Actor Sooraj Pancholi has submitted a complaint to Mumbai Police over him being linked to the case of death of fellow actor Sushant Singh Rajput, an official said on Tuesday. In his complaint submitted at Versova police station here on Monday night, Pancholi said he is being defamed on various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, by being linked to Rajput's death, he said. "We have received an application from Sooraj Pancholi and an enquiry is on," Versova police station's senior inspector Raghvendra Thakur said. So far, no offence has been registered, the official said.

therefore an apprehension of bias.

Divan referred to the timeline in the case and said that there was considerable delay of over 38 days in lodging of the FIR at Patna.

Referring to the complaint filed by Rajput's father to the police in Patna, he said that all averments made in the complaint are relatable to Mumbai.

He said Mumbai Police has recorded statements of 56 persons in the case and its probe has proceeded quite substantially.

DELHI VIOLENCE

HC grants bail to accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Delhi High Court has granted bail to an accused who was allegedly involved in the case of rioting and arson during the north east Delhi violence in February this year.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhamhani granted the relief to Mohd Anwar on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 50,000 with two sureties of the like amount from blood-relatives.

The high court directed him not to leave the National Capital Region (NCR) without permission of the trial court and shall ordinarily reside in his place of residence as per prison records.

"Another aspect which deserves attention is the effect that pre-trial detention has on an accused, especially on his right to brief and consult his lawyers and to prepare his defence, in order to afford to the accused a real and not merely chimerical right to fair trial, as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," the judge said.

The high court said till the time cognisance is taken on the

charge sheet and the accused is summoned by the trial court, he shall present himself on every alternate Saturday before the investigating officer of the case.

He shall not contact or visit or offer any inducement, threat or promise to the first informant or complainant or any of the prosecution witnesses and shall not tamper with evidence or indulge in any act that would prejudice the proceedings in the pending matter.

According to the plea, he was taken into custody on April 3 in connection with another FIR lodged at Dayalpur police station in north east Delhi for alleged offences of rioting and mischief by fire or explosive substance with an intent to destroy a house under the IPC. Subsequently, he was arrested in this case.

Besides this case, he is also accused in four other FIRs lodged by the Dayalpur police in relation to the Delhi riots in February this year. He was granted bail in two of the four cases.

As per the complainant, the incident took place on February 14, when a mob was engaged in rioting and destruction of property in certain areas of north-east Delhi.

During the rioting, the shop of one Mohd Shanawaz in Shiv Vihar area was burnt down and he filed a complaint with the police on March 4, around 10 days after the incident.

Toll in Idukki landslide rises to 52 as three more bodies recovered

PNS ■ IDUKKI (KERALA)

The toll in the landslip in Pettimudi in the high range Idukki district rose to 52 with three more bodies being recovered from the debris as rescue operations continued on Tuesday to trace those missing.

The bodies of two men and a woman were recovered, officials said.

Personnel of NDRC, Fire, Forest and police departments have expanded their search operations to the downstream of a river in their efforts to trace 19 more people who were still missing in the August 7 tragedy near Rajamala, they said.

Search is also being carried out at the site of the disaster to trace those feared trapped in the debris, the officials said.

Meanwhile, the water level at Mullaperiyar reservoir in Idukki district reached 136.85 feet on

Tuesday. The Idukki district Collector had held discussions with the Collector of Theni in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, with regard to the release of water through the tunnel to Vaigai dam in the areas of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts. There was no red alert warning in any of the state's 14 districts as the intensity of rains had decreased and the affected areas had started limping back to normalcy.

Vaigai Dam in a phased manner when the water level reached 136 feet in view of heavy rains in Idukki. With a let-up in the rains, water receded in many low-lying areas of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts. There was no red alert warning in any of the state's 14 districts as the intensity of rains had decreased and the affected areas had started limping back to normalcy.

EU to give 1.65 million to support victims of floods in South Asia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The European Union on Tuesday said it is providing 1.65 million euro in humanitarian aid in response to severe flooding that has affected South Asia—most notably Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The funding comes on top of the 1.8 million euro announced earlier this year to support families affected by a series of disasters, including Cyclone Amphan that ravaged India and Bangladesh in May. This brings the total EU support to 3.45 million euro, EU's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) said in a statement.

A further 500,000 euro will be used in India to provide food and livelihood assistance, emergency relief supplies, and

water and sanitation services, it said.

So far, this year's monsoon rains have impacted 10.9 million and has amplified people's vulnerabilities as they struggle to tackle the consequences of the global coronavirus pandemic, the statement said.

"The monsoon rains across South Asia have been particularly devastating this year and

this urgent contribution will help our humanitarian partners on the ground in providing crucial support to those who have lost their shelters, belongings and sources of livelihood," said Tahseen Thammannagoda.

The funding is part of the EU's Acute Large Emergency Response Tool (ALERT). Measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus will be incorporated in all programming, the statement said.

Let's not equate Hindi with nationalism, says SM Krishna

PNS ■ BENGALURU

"Not knowing Hindi will not make you less Indian", veteran politician and former External Affairs Minister, S M Krishna said as he expressed dismay over what DMK MP Karimozhi faced at the Chennai airport.

Hindi is another Indian language and nothing more, the BJP leader and former Karnataka Chief Minister said on Tuesday.

"Let's not equate Hindi with nationalism", added the former Maharashtra Governor. Karimozhi had said she was asked whether or not she was an Indian after she told a CISF official at the airport to speak in Tamil or English as she did not understand Hindi.

Nepal at it again

After Lord Ram, KP Oli wants to appropriate the legacy of Buddha in his continuing political tirade against India



That China has made inroads in our neighbourhood by debt-trapping our allies and is now muscling in politically to re-configure their equations with us isn't surprising. So far, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have worked out a "trade with China" and "historical ties with India" strategy to play the two Asian majors against each other and extract concessional gains in the process. But looks like Nepal wants to obliterate the civilisational ties and shared heritage it has had with India, overturn history and claim its independent standing, which is almost impossible given the origins of the sub-continent. In fact, Nepal

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli is now appropriating shared cultural icons of Nepalese origin and claiming an intellectual property right over their legacy. First, he tried to own Lord Ram, saying he was born not at Ayodhya but in Nepal. Nobody took him seriously in the absence of any historical evidence. Now he is trying to reclaim Buddha as distinctly Nepalese. The controversy followed External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's speech at CII where he referred to Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Buddha as two great Indians. Various Nepalese leaders, including Opposition leaders and former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, reacted immediately, terming the reference "objectionable." The official statement laid stress on historical and archaeological evidence, which prove that Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal. India though was quick to put the lid on the row, saying that no one could doubt that Buddha was born in Lumbini but the emphasis was on the Buddhist heritage shared by the two countries. India has never attempted a cultural takeover of Buddha at any time, religiously attributing his birth to Nepal. Similarly, Nepal cannot deny the fact that he spent most of his life in India, attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, delivering key sermons at Sarnath and ultimately leaving the earthly world at Kushinagar. Besides, someone like Lord Ram and Buddha cannot be defined by their geography but by their philosophy that the whole world has adopted. In that sense, anybody, anywhere can quote them as inspiration. Though, Lord Buddha made India his *karmabhoomi*, travelling through its length and breadth and preaching the true *dharma*, his followers and practitioners keep him fervently alive in most countries in Southeast Asia compared to India. Does that mean we can claim to be the fountainhead of the bigness of his vision? By that logic, poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore is as much ours as he is of Bangladesh, whose national anthem he wrote and where he spent much time. Having been a Hindu kingdom and given its contiguity with India, Nepal has had the strongest bond with us in terms of shared history, culture and people-to-people contacts. This commonality has been one of the reasons for the open borders between both countries. So now that Oli is putting up cultural barriers, looks like he is determined to eliminate any interdependent associations with India and is decidedly hawkish about China, willing to be its vassal State. In fact, China has upped its cultural diplomacy, too, in Nepal, helping it rebuild old temple complexes and shrines that were damaged in the earthquake of 2015.

Oli's latest tirade against India follows the ongoing cartographic war, where he questioned Indian claims around the Lipulekh Pass based on varied interpretations of British era maps. This despite the fact that the pass is an accepted Indian gateway, according to a 1954 treaty signed between India and China. Although the new road near it, built by New Delhi to facilitate pilgrim traffic to Kailash Mansarovar, is now one of the quickest links between Delhi and the Tibetan plateau, China had not objected to it. In fact, it recognised India's sovereignty by agreeing to expand trade through the pass. But overriding such precedents, Nepal released a revised map showing Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani under its territory. No political party opposed the resolution for reclamation. Yet India has been in possession of this territory for at least 60 years. Even the new road to Lipulekh does not challenge that status quo. Nepal says that the basis for demarcation, the Kali river, originates from a stream at Limpiyadhura, north-west of Lipulekh. Thus Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh are actually on its eastern bank and qualify to be its land. New Delhi has countered this, saying that Kali originates in the springs well below the pass and that while the old map does not demarcate the area north of these springs, administrative and revenue records of the 19th century show that Kalapani was on the Indian side and should be a part of Uttarakhand. China, as in Doklam, has taken advantage of the trijunction area to complicate the territorial confusion and push India backward. But if Nepal has gone so maximalist and nationalist, despite sharing Hindu origins and, therefore, more naturally inclined to the Narendra Modi regime, it means that China has an iron grip on it. India's over-dependence on historical, spiritual and geographical connect as a leitmotif of diplomacy is being tested severely. And though we are investing in bilateral relations on more favourable terms and pushing COVID-19 aid, we can't beat the Chinese, who make up over 90 per cent of Nepal's FDI and are moulding it as their frontier proxy warrior.

Muted festivities

The IPL might be taking place later this year but it is almost certain to be a less extravagant affair than before



No matter what your opinion about Lalit Modi, the fact of the matter is that with the Indian Premier League (IPL), he managed to create a globally competitive and recognised sports league. So much so that the IPL is the world's top franchise-based cricket league and one must keep in mind that China, for all its success in creating brands, has failed in creating a global sports league. That said, as sports have been ravaged, thanks to China's gift to the world, the Coronavirus, the IPL also fell a victim, missing its scheduled slot at the start of the Indian summer. But now sports — from Formula 1 to football — have returned to television screens and spectator-less formats. Even cricket has restarted in England in the safety of a "bio bubble." So the IPL is looking at playing its season in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this winter, or at least has plans of playing.

The UAE, thanks to its relatively compact size that eliminates the need for connecting flights, its close location to India — being away by just 90 minutes of flying time — and large availability of remote resorts, where teams can be sequestered between matches, as well as more than enough cricket stadia, should make the IPL pretty easy to manage. However, whether the IPL will be played with the audience in attendance remains to be seen. The UAE — despite its economy being ravaged by the pandemic and sending hundreds of thousands of expatriate workers from India home — still has a huge base of workers from the sub-continent. Tens of thousands of fans can easily be found to fill the stadia in the UAE replete with their IPL uniforms and tribal loyalties. But will the sponsors bite? The huge player salaries guaranteed by television revenues and on-field sponsors might make things difficult for the teams. Already, the principal sponsor of the IPL has withdrawn because of the ongoing anti-Chinese sentiment in India. While Baba Ramdev-promoted Patanjali wants to sponsor the IPL, will the brash cricket league want to associate with it? Teams will also find it difficult to find jersey sponsors and broadcasters might find it equally difficult to get sponsors on television broadcasts. Conversely, the IPL could be the firestarter the Indian market really needs. Maybe it will drive consumerism again and awaken our economy, which was waylaid by a poisonous scale of the Chinese dragon. The cricket bat can be more effective in beating back the dragon than a French fighter plane or five.

III-conceived decision

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Atmanirbhar raksha" (August 11). There is nothing wrong with the Government's call for "vocal for local" but actions such as those taken by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to impose import embargo on 101 items are ill-conceived and may prove to be detrimental in the long run. Instead, the Government should have come out with a clear picture as to how various sectors could reduce dependence on imports so that we gradually start producing world-class products in the country. Such a hasty decision will send the wrong signal to both our domestic suppliers as well as hostile neighbours. Our defence preparedness, too, is not upto the mark.

Bal Govind
Noida

Lessons from Beirut

Sir — The deadly explosion in Beirut is another instance of conscience-keepers of safety abdicating their responsibility.

This refers to the establishment of a ₹1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enhance post-harvest infrastructure in the country. The creation of a comprehensive post-harvest infrastructure can be a game-changer. As per Government data, 16 per cent of the fruits and vegetables and up to 10 per cent of cereals, oilseeds and pulses are wasted in the country due to inadequate storage and warehousing facilities. Most of the existing storage in the country is not owned by farmers. This also means that they are forced to sell their entire farm output at one go after the harvest is over and when the prices are low. Since the AIF is trying to rope in farmers' producers organisations (FPOs) to build such infrastructure, it will hopefully also address this asymmetry and allow growers to dispose of their produce in a phased manner and avoid better returns. This will go a long way in increasing the bargaining power of Indian farmers.

However, the economic challenge of boosting growth and incomes cannot be missed. Even before the pandemic struck, the economy was in a bad shape. Disruption caused due to the pandemic made matters worse. If the situation does not revive, it is unlikely

Military ammunition depots, inflammable gas and fuel stations in the energy sector and nuclear facilities exclusively rely on meticulous standard operating procedure manuals. The presence of 740 tonnes of ammonium nitrate at Chennai port is now suddenly remembered even as some consignments are missing. Universally, we seem to be short of inspired administrators with a grip on their jobs. It is such

drift that causes mishaps. The accident in Beirut is a reminder that despite the strict regulation of hazardous substances internationally, the risks remain.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Azhar A Khan
Rampur

The border challenge

The PLA has blemished the Modi Govt's muscular image created in the wake of Uri and Balakot responses against Pakistan, which won it an overwhelming political mandate



ASHOK K MEHTA

One's blood boils watching the way India and its Army are being pushed around by the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Roughing up soldiers, intruding/transgressing on the Indian side of the LAC at will and violating border protocols have become second nature to the PLA. And yet, many citizens keep harping that when it comes to joining the battle, Indians are six feet tall. The PLA has no experience to fight in high-altitude terrain; whereas Indian soldiers have been deployed in Sikkim, Ladakh and Siachen for decades. China lacks the regimental system of the Indian infantry and is composed mostly of short-term conscripts compared to India's wholly volunteer Army. The PLA has not fought a war since 1979. Neither have the Indian troops since the skirmish they fought "on our side of the Line of Control (LoC)" against a mixed bag of Pakistani frontier militia and hardcore terrorists at Kargil.

Because the PLA has done a sort of Kargil in east Ladakh, loud thinking can be heard about launching a land-air offensive *a la* Kargil, confined to our side of the LAC to vacate aggression in Ladakh. This comparison has many holes: It likens LAC to LoC, which is delineated with the maps exchanged in 1972 between the two militaries. The LoC is violated regularly by infiltration, cross-border firing and is a hot border. Not a shot has been fired along the LAC since 1975 and a no-shooting protocol exists. The Indian Air Force (IAF) has not carried out any joint military exercises for air support of ground troops along the LAC. Border protocols debar the use of force in settling the boundary question, which includes the LAC.

And yet, rogue actions of the PLA have continued periodically like the intrusions at Sumdorongchu (1988), Depsang (2013), Chumar (2014), Doklam (2017) and now across east Ladakh, stretching over 250 km. They have all gone unpunished. Instead, PLA raw recruits managed to thrash outnumbered Indian soldiers near the Pangong lake on May 17/18 last year so badly that 72 soldiers had to be hospitalised. PLA helicopters chased away an Indian helicopter in the same area around the same time. In short, India has been at the receiving end of PLA depredations except possibly at Galwan. The mystery is, why have Indian troops never done a tit-for-tat

counter intrusion?

That the disengagement and de-escalation process has ended in utter failure was recognised by the Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) on its website earlier this month but the admission was pulled down within 48 hours. Indian forces have been left with buffer zones at friction points where they have had to withdraw and dismantle their fortifications from the Indian side of the LAC. Worse, the PLA is not permitting these soldiers to exercise their patrolling rights upto established patrolling points, which when connected, roughly align with the Indian LAC.

Still worse is the stubborn refusal of the PLA and its commanders to even discuss the 18-km deep massive intrusion made in Depsang, a repeat of the intrusion in April 2013, from where the PLA withdrew after three months. Crowning the multiple intrusions is the PLA's construction of infrastructure on the Indian side of the LAC. Violative of border patrols, PLA activities are nothing short of acts of war.

Not only has China unilaterally changed the status quo but it has also shifted the LAC several kilometres westwards, attempting to conform to its 1960 claim line. It has also annexed several hundred kilo-

metres of Indian territory. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's in-denial statement of June 19 — "neither has anyone intruded across our border nor is anyone intruding" — has become the great enabler of PLA intrusions. Taking down the belated acceptance of intrusions on the MoD website is supportive of Beijing's actions.

China is rejoicing that Modi has kept the Wuhan spirit alive whereas it is an abysmal failure of summyry. By virtually condoning the Galwan clash, Modi seems to have done the reverse of Nehru's cavalier orders to throw out the Chinese from the Thagla ridge.

The joy and excitement exuded by Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh over the arrival of five Rafales reflected the dire and optionless situation at the LAC. Given the phenomenal spike in the COVID-19 pandemic in India, a debilitating decline in the economy and the military overstretched on two fronts, a Kargil-like response to multiple intrusions will lead to a war that India cannot afford.

India's continental strategy (if there is one) for border management has come unstuck because the PLA has changed the rules of engagement, both on the ground and at the negotiating table. Five rounds of military commander talks, four

rounds of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) dialogue and conversations between high ranking Special Representatives on border talks have hit a *cul-de-sac*.

With wholesale intrusions in early May, China delivered an initial *fait accompli*. This was followed by a Chinese-scripted DPP in July end that made cosmetic disengagement to ease tensions at friction points but was tantamount to quarantining Indian soldiers on their own territory. The PLA, on the other hand, dug down like it did at Doklam after disengagement and nobly proclaimed that disengagement is completed. This new *fait accompli* has imposed on India a new status quo without a hint of restoring the May 5 situation.

The Modi Government can pretend it is business as usual: Take down belated acceptance of intrusions from the MoD website, talk tough the virtues of Rafales and most of all, use diversionary strategies to focus on its spectacular political achievements like the grand ceremony at the Ram temple on the same day it erased Article 370 at Jammu & Kashmir a year ago.

In deference to Chinese sentiment, the new status of Ladakh has been played down. The setback at LAC has almost

disappeared from TV and media, reflecting India's acceptance of aggression by the PLA. The tragedy playing out along the LAC for 10 weeks, that was essentially concealed by the Government, is a reminder of India's colossal intelligence and operational failures.

It has blemished the Modi Government's tough muscular image created in the wake of Uri and Balakot responses against Pakistan, which won it an overwhelming political mandate. The Chinese PLA has changed that perception. That, too, 60 years after the 1962 war when China gave India a dressing down and withdrew unilaterally, vacating areas it now covets: Tawang and East Ladakh. India's failure to shape and maintain a deterrent has led to the loss of face.

Three days from now, on August 15, Independence Day, Modi will recount his Government's achievements, including the handling of the pandemic. How he will frame the situation along the LAC, where the Chinese PLA has altered status quo and annexed Indian territory, will be worth watching out for.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

SOUND BITE

I think there should be dialogue, decency and a *Lakshman Rekha* in public discourse and I haven't crossed that line in the 20 years of my political career.

Congress leader
—Sachin Pilot



Theatres would always overlook small films. That problem is solved now. Everything is equal on the OTT platforms. Not getting a show was a big problem.

Actor
—Radhika Madan

I'm much more inclined to do it (G-7 meeting) sometime after the election. ... We could do it through teleconference or we could do it through a meeting.

US President
—Donald Trump

I welcomed Soniaji's appointment as interim president last year. But I do believe it is unfair to her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely.

Congress leader
—Shashi Tharoor



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Big boost to agriculture

This refers to the establishment of a ₹1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enhance post-harvest infrastructure in the country. The creation of a comprehensive post-harvest infrastructure can be a game-changer. As per Government data, 16 per cent of the fruits and vegetables and up to 10 per cent of cereals, oilseeds and pulses are wasted in the country due to inadequate storage and warehousing facilities. Most of the existing storage in the country is not owned by farmers. This also means that they are forced to sell their entire farm output at one go after the harvest is over and when the prices are low. Since the AIF is trying to rope in farmers' producers organisations (FPOs) to build such infrastructure, it will hopefully also address this asymmetry and allow growers to dispose of their produce in a phased manner and avoid better returns. This will go a long way in increasing the bargaining power of Indian farmers.

However, the economic challenge of boosting growth and incomes cannot be missed. Even before the pandemic struck, the economy was in a bad shape. Disruption caused due to the pandemic made matters worse. If the situation does not revive, it is unlikely



that FPOs and other intended beneficiaries of AIF loans will be enthusiastic about committing to such investments. Economic experts say that the economy needs a massive fiscal push to boost economic sentiment as the consumer confidence has plummeted to an all-time low. The actual loan disbursal from AIF early this week was just ₹1,000 crore. This is yet another signal that the actual fiscal boost to the economy doesn't match the scale of the Government's big ticket announcement. This needs to change.

N Sadhasiva Reddy

Bengaluru

Breather for Congress

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Needed, full-time chief" (August 11). In a belated yet pragmatic move, the Congress leadership has succeeded in averting a fall of its Government in Rajasthan. Concerted efforts by the Gandhi siblings have yielded results. This new scenario has paved the way for truce, however fragile, between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot. Pilot is ready for an unconditional truce and Gehlot has agreed to follow the leadership line. Hopefully, the Rajasthan Assembly session scheduled for August 14 will pass without any hurdle. Grievances flagged by the Pilot camp should be addressed. Rahul Gandhi must now take charge and call for elections to the Congress Working Committee without any delay. Sans a permanent head, the grand old party looks like a rudderless boat.

Azhar A Khan

Rampur

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Modi the messiah of Hindus?

The BJP and the RSS are now convinced that the dream of Ram Rajya is possible with majoritarian dominance



KALYANI SHANKAR

Just like August 15, i.e. Independence Day and August 9, which is Quit India Day, a third date, August 5, 2020, has become a historic date for the BJP. While launching the construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "history was written today in golden letters." It is indeed a twin triumph for Modi that the colourful *bhoomi pujan* ceremony came on the first anniversary of the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Ram temple at Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370 were two divisive issues for the country. But for Modi it was a matter of fulfilling the BJP's promises to its core Hindu voters. At the *bhoomi pujan* Modi drew a parallel with the freedom movement and by this he has placed freedom from cultural subjugation on a par with the political freedom of India. "Just as August 15 symbolises untiring tenacity, millions of sacrifices and the fervent desire for freedom... similarly this day reminds (one) of the sacrifices made by several generations... for the Ram temple," Modi said and claimed that the "wait of centuries" for the Ram temple had ended. In fact, August 5 marks the demise of what the Congress and the other Opposition parties call "secularism."

The *bhoomi pujan* ceremony for the Ram temple is the beginning of a new cultural nationalism and dominance that was the dream of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for decades. The BJP and the RSS have rejected the idea of composite nationalism and favoured cultural nationalism. The BJP has been agitating for its core agenda since its inception in 1980 though its critics call it a majoritarian agenda. The party is jubilant as in the first year of Modi's second term, he managed to deliver two of the items on the agenda. He was able to do so because of three reasons. The first is that the BJP got a big mandate in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The second is the weak Opposition which has given a free hand to the saffron party. The third is that the BJP does not need to woo the Muslim votebank as the majority is with them.

Let us take Kashmir first. It was on August 5, 2019 that the State was bifurcated and Article 370, that gave special status to J&K, was abrogated. The decision attracted international attention and criticism and even after one year, things are yet to become normal. The entire political class has been under arrest at one time or the other in J&K and even one year down the line, some of the leaders, including former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti, remain incarcerated. There is a political vacuum on the one hand and an incapacitated political class on the other. As a result, there has been no political activity in J&K for more than a year. Many demand that the detained leaders should be freed and elections should be held. Since the PDP-BJP Government fell in 2018, J&K has been under continuous Governor's Rule. Former Minister Manoj Sinha took over as the Lieutenant-Governor last week, the second in a year. Militancy in J&K has reduced to an extent but not totally snuffed out. The people of Kashmir have been facing a double whammy, the Coronavirus-induced lockdown on one side and curfew on the other, for the past many months. The promised jobs are nowhere on the horizon and the industry, including shawl, carpet, dryfruit, fruit exports and so on have suffered. Tourism is dead. Communication has broken down and schools and colleges are closed.

In this regard Manoj Sinha's statement after the oath-taking ceremony is significant. "There should be peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir. The situation of uncertainty should end, terrorism should end. Achieving all this along with accelerated development will be our aim, our mission." The challenges before him include delimitation, Assembly elections, resuming political dialogue and restoring full statehood. The trust deficit should also be bridged and there should be a reconnect with the people.

As for the Ram temple, the Supreme Court's verdict has strengthened the Government's hand. With the law on its side and the Muslims reconciled to the fact that they will have a mosque on the land given to them elsewhere, not much problems are expected. The temple trust would have the support of the State and the Central Government as both are ruled by the same party. Money would be no problem as donations are pouring in. The big temple would be ready by 2023, perhaps just before the 2024 elections. BJP leader Vinay Katiyar has already claimed that major temples at Kashi and Mathura are on the BJP's agenda. Now only the Uniform Civil Code remains on the BJP's core agenda. The Modi Government might think of bringing a law soon when the pandemic is behind us. Along with that, there could also be some measures for population regulation. The BJP and the RSS are now convinced that the dream of Ram Rajya is possible with majoritarian dominance. Modi is their chosen messiah now.

(The writer is a senior journalist)



MONIKA S GARG

Uttar Pradesh (UP) organises a Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for B.Ed. every year, where students compete for almost two lakh seats. Conducting it this year was a challenge in more ways than one. The State had received 4.31 lakh applications for the examination that was initially scheduled for April 8 but got postponed thrice in view of the COVID-19 pandemic and was finally held on August 9.

Last year it was conducted in only 15 districts with 60 to 130 centres per district. This year there were the twin targets of least movement and ample social distancing. Hence it was decided to host the entrance test in all districts indicated by the

candidates. The number of districts was increased to 50 and later to 73. To reduce the number of students congregating in one place, the strength of candidates allotted to a centre was halved, as compared to earlier years. Thus, the number of centres also increased proportionately. Special care was taken to ensure that women and *divyang* candidates were allotted the district of their choice, while other candidates were accommodated at or near their first place of preference.

In the past, B.Ed entrance tests were conducted by the nominated university with the help of other State universities while the Department of Higher Education played a negligible role. This year, the nominated university, Lucknow University, had sought the department's help due to the special circumstances arising out of COVID-19. Ensuring compliance with the directive of the Chief Minister to ensure that there were no incidents of copying or other malpractices during the examination was the department's biggest challenge. This required a marked departure

from established practices and it was not easy to change the ways of the management accustomed to working in a particular fashion.

Formerly, 50-60 per cent of the centres were in private institutes and there was a suspicion of malpractices in some of them. To check the menace of cheating, it was decided that examination centres would be set up only in Government and Government-aided institutions. This turned out to be a daunting task. A screening committee was constituted in each district, comprising the district administration, the Secondary Education and Higher Education Departments and a coordinator from Lucknow University. Their task was to identify potential examination centres in the district, including State and Central universities, degree and intermediate colleges, engineering colleges, ITIs, polytechnics and even Government schools. Nevertheless, this was not sufficient. There was so much resistance to change that when requests and persuasions failed to yield results, the organising team ultimately had

to be convinced by those at the highest level.

The Deputy Chief Minister and Chief Secretary held a special video conference with the District Magistrates and finally, after a meticulous exercise, success was achieved and 1,089 centres were identified.

The mammoth task of organising the centres, informing the students and mobilising the district administration was done through virtual meetings over the next month. Centres had to be changed because of new containment zones and floods in a few districts. Care was taken to ensure that the candidates did not bear the brunt of any of this and were kept updated through e-mail and SMS. Battling time constraints and infection risks, a programme for training invigilators and superintendents was designed. They were educated in the best practices for infection prevention as well as new anti-cheating measures. The optimum use of technology was witnessed at all levels during the exam.

Ensuring the safety and health of candidates and staff was the highest

priority and adequate monetary allocation was made for sanitisation of each centre — a minimum of ₹4,000 plus an additional ₹20 per candidate if the number surpassed 200 at any centre.

Face masks and sanitisers were provided free of cost. Thermal scanners were used and proper social distance was maintained in and outside the centres. Lucknow University adopted an innovative method for taking the thumb impressions of the students. Instead of the routine common ink pad, an individual disposable ink strip, specially made for the JEE, was given to each student for the purpose.

On the day of the examination, static magistrates and flying squads were deployed and an effective face-detection system was used. The technology uses Artificial Intelligence (AI) to collect information of the candidate's face from 27 points and matches him/her with the profile photo on 13 indicators including hair, ears, spectacles and so on. Each candidate's biometric picture was taken on special phones with this app.

Other mobile phones and communicating devices were not allowed inside the centre. CCTV cameras that had been specially-installed in each examination centre were continuously monitored through live webcasting at the university's command centre, having 100 screens.

Before the examination was held, there were live debates in newsrooms and drawing rooms on whether this exam should be conducted at all. People argued that admissions to B.Ed could be made based on marks obtained in the final year of college itself and that this test could be done away with in view of the need for safety. However, the fact remains that this would be unfair to all stakeholders as final year exams are not standardised across universities.

Additionally, marking is often done on a bell curve based on the student pool of that university. Thus, the top few students from each university are expected to score higher, irrespective of how they compare with students across the State. Thus, a JEE was conceived years ago. Denying

this opportunity to a student body that has already suffered academically due to the Corona crisis would have been remiss.

The option of holding the test online this year was given due consideration, but the digital divide across the State and access issues, especially for the vulnerable sections, weighed against it.

Since this is a prestigious course with fierce competition, it was essential to give a fair and uniform opportunity to all. The result will be declared on September 5 and the new session will commence in October-November. Conducting this exam was an experience worth sharing. It showcased the sensitivity and caution of the State Government and set the trend for holding competitive exams during the outbreak. It is an example for others to emulate, right from the selection of centres to logistics. It shows how fair, safe examinations can be held, even in these testing times.

(The writer is Additional Chief Secretary, Higher Education Department, UP)

analysis

07

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE EIA 2020 DRAFT IS A DISASTER. IT WILL SILENCE THE VOICE OF COMMUNITIES WHO WILL BE IMPACTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IT UNLEASHES.

—CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI



WE HAVE GOT THOUSANDS OF SUGGESTIONS WHICH WE WELCOME. WE WILL CONSIDER THEM. THEN TAKE A CALL AND COME OUT WITH A FINAL (EIA) DRAFT.

—UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER
PRAKASH JAYADEV

Not a NEET situation

The International Youth Day is meant to reflect on one of the most serious issues concerning our young people and that is their growing number without employment, education and training



BALWANT MEHTA SIMI MEHTA ARJUN KUMAR

Each year, August 12 is celebrated as the International Youth Day (IYD) to raise awareness about the challenges and problems being faced by the young people of today. IYD, which was first observed in 2000, aims to endorse ways to engage the youth and help them participate in affirmative contributions to society. The theme of the IYD this year is 'Youth Engagement for Global Action.' It seeks to highlight the ways in which young people at the local, national and global level are enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as draw lessons on how to enhance their representation and engagement in formal institutional politics.

As per the United Nations (UN) population prospects, the youth segment (15-29 years) globally stands at 1.8 billion now. Out of the total number of young people in the world, every fifth person (20 per cent) resides in India (366 million) reflecting the importance of this segment in the country. The youth are faced with many challenges and one of the most serious issues concerning them is the growing number of idle youngsters or those who are not in employment, education and training (NEET in short).

NEET youth tend to experience a varying degree of social and economic marginalisation and are more likely to be left behind in mainstream development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030, adopted by the UN in 2015, also set the agenda specifically for target 8.6, which calls for the proportion of youth with NEET status to be substantially reduced in the next 15 years.

The Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020 noted that there has been a continued decline in the participation of young people in the labour force across countries. The population of the youth has increased from one billion to 1.3 billion in the period between 1999 and 2019, but the number of young people engaged in the workforce (either employed or unemployed) has seen a decrease from 568 million to 497 million during the same period.

The most disturbing pattern globally is that one young person out of every five (20 per cent) and 30 per cent of the girls and 13 per cent of the boys among them — those aged between 15 and 24 (which is the international definition of the youth) — are currently classified as NEET.

This means that a whopping 267 million out of 1.3 billion young people worldwide are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving income from work or enhancing their education and skills. This suggests that their labour remains under-utilised.

India, at present, is home to the largest population of youth in the world. The National Youth Policy of India, 2014 defines them as people belonging in the age group of 15-29 years.

According to the census data for 2011, the youth constitute 28 per cent of the total population in the country and contribute to over 34 per cent of India's national income. The latest estimates show that they comprise around 27 per cent of the total Indian population of 1.3 billion.

However, a major positive development has been their growing enrolment in the secondary and tertiary-level of education, which has resulted in better-skilled employees and prolif-

eration of decent employment in many countries around the world.

However, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2017-18 reported a significant increase in unemployment rates for the young segment of the population. A more serious concern is the increasing joblessness among educated youth (15-29 years), which went up nearly three times from 6.1 per cent in 2011-12 to 17.8 per cent in 2017-18. In particular, technical degree holders have been noted to fare the worst with their unemployment rate being pegged at 37.3 per cent, closely followed by those who are post-graduates and above (36.2 per cent), graduates (35.2 per cent), and youth with formal vocational training (33 per cent).

For young women, the unemployment situation is graver in terms of labour force participation as well as unemployment. Women are moving out of the workforce in greater numbers, but among those who remain, unemployment rates are higher than those among men. This holds true even for women who are educated or have received training, and this trend has worsened during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic.

One would imagine that the young population with "industry-relevant" formal vocational training would have better job prospects in India. But only 1.8 per cent of the population reported receiving formal vocational/technical training in 2017-18. Young people comprised more than half of those who received formal vocational/technical training, which is in sharp contrast to the 50-80 per cent participation in developed nations.

Around 33 per cent of the formally-trained youngsters were unemployed

in 2017-18. Nearly a third of trained young men and more than a third of trained young women were unemployed. Among those who did not receive such training, 62.3 per cent were out of the workforce.

Further, the growing number of NEET is also posing a serious challenge, as it has increased from 70 million in 2004-05 to 116 million in 2017-18. The Government has increasingly been wary of this and has taken steps to deal with this growing challenge. In recent years, it has launched the "Skill India" campaign, which includes an array of initiatives under its purview to bridge the gap between lack of skill training and joblessness. A key initiative under the campaign is the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme and so on.

The PMKVY was envisioned to impart employable skills and help the youth in securing better livelihoods. Although it intends to provide training free of cost, most of the youth who have received formal training have had to personally arrange the fees. The PLFS 2017-18 data shows that only 16 per cent of the youth who received formal training were funded by the Government. Around 73 per cent of the youth underwent full-time training. The coaching period for more than half of the youth exceeded a year and about 30 per cent of them underwent training for more than two years.

However, it was apparent as early as 2016 that there were several issues with the initiative, when a Government-appointed committee to rationalise Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and improve Skill India, led by Sharda Prasad, found that the programme's targets were too ambitious. Additionally,

it was discovered that the spending of the funds allocated for the programme was not subject to adequate monitoring mechanisms. On the whole, most of the youth in the country still remain outside the ambit of formal training and many of those who are able to personally finance themselves in order to undergo months of vocational training, remain jobless. The subsequent decline in budgetary allocations for PMKVY is an indicator that the Government itself is not convinced about its working.

In sum, as argued by economists and researchers, if the youth are properly skilled and absorbed in the labour market, they can contribute to higher economic growth of the country. We are going to have a larger youth population for the next two decades, which poses an imminent challenge as well — of leveraging the potential of the abundant human resource.

The spiral of the unemployed is posing some serious questions on higher education, skill development, demographic dividend and India's future. There are other concerns about quality of jobs, decent workplaces, upward mobility, wages, aspirations, competition accrued by limited supply of new jobs, contractual nature of jobs, mental health, opportunities for entrepreneurship and fostering innovations among the young minds.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the option of holding the test online this year was given due consideration, but the digital divide across the State and access issues, especially for the vulnerable sections, weighed against it.

Since this is a prestigious course with fierce competition, it was essential to give a fair and uniform opportunity to all. The result will be declared on September 5 and the new session will commence in October-November. Conducting this exam was an experience worth sharing. It showcased the sensitivity and caution of the State Government and set the trend for holding competitive exams during the outbreak. It is an example for others to emulate, right from the selection of centres to logistics. It shows how fair, safe examinations can be held, even in these testing times.

(Balwant is Research Director, IMPRI and Senior Fellow, IHD; Simi is CEO and Editorial Director and Kumar is Director, IMPRI)

UP B.Ed 2020 JEE a benchmark in many ways

It is an example for others to emulate, right from the selection of centres to logistics. It shows how fair, safe examinations can be held even in these testing times



MONIKA S GARG

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congregating in one place, the strength of candidates allotted to a centre was halved, as compared to earlier years. Thus, the number of centres also increased proportionately. Special care was taken to ensure that women and *divyang* candidates were allotted the district of their choice, while other candidates were accommodated at or near their first place of preference.

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from established practices and it was not easy to change the ways of the management accustomed to working in a particular fashion.</p

CAPSULE


Triumph Motorcycles drives in Street Triple R at Rs 8.84 L

MUMBAI: British superbike maker Triumph Motorcycles on Tuesday said it has launched Street Triple R, the mid-spec variant of the Street Triple RS, in India priced at Rs 8.84 lakh (ex-showroom). The Street Triple R is a more accessible and affordable model than Street Triple RS which is priced at Rs 11.33 lakh (ex-showroom). The 2020 Street Triple R features new bodywork, including fly screen, air intake, side panels, and rear unit for a sportier look. The premium middle-weight segment is growing in India and is becoming more competitive. With the introduction of the R we strengthen our position in this category," Triumph Motorcycles India Business Head Shoeb Faroq said in a statement.


Bajaj Electricals reports Q1 net loss of Rs 16.60 cr

NEW DELHI: Bajaj Electricals on Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 16.60 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2020, on account of lower income. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 13.70 lakh in the April-June quarter a year ago, it said in a BSE filing. Its total income during the quarter under review stood at Rs 615.34 crore, down 53.3 per cent, as against Rs 1,317.99 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. Bajaj Electricals said, due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the company's operations have also been impacted in the months of March 2020, April 2020 and May 2020 because of temporary suspension of manufacturing facilities, sales and distribution and execution of engineering, procurement and construction contracts following the lockdown.


Motherson Sumi Systems posts Rs 1,192 cr loss for Q1

NEW DELHI: Auto components maker Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd on Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,191.65 crore for June quarter 2020 hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The company logged a net profit of Rs 360.64 crore in the same quarter last fiscal, Motherson Sumi Systems Ltd (MSSL) said in a regulatory filing. Total revenue from operations during the quarter under review stood at Rs 8,503.89 crore. It was at Rs 16,792.53 crore in the year-ago period. "The group's operations and consolidated financial results for the quarter ended June 30, 2020 have been adversely impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown announced by governments in many of the jurisdictions," MSSL said.

'Rs 1L cr Agri Fund to be crucial in enhancing farm sector share'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Rs 1-lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund launched by the government will be crucial in enhancing contribution of the agriculture sector to the country's GDP, especially at a time when it is expected to add to economic stability amid the coronavirus-induced slowdown, according to farmers' body FAIFA.

The Federation of All India Farmer Associations (FAIFA) said the fund will be important for farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, agri-tech players and farmer groups looking to boost the country's agricultural infrastructure.

The federation claims to represent farmers and farm workers of commercial crops across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat.

"Agriculture currently contributes to over 14 per cent of

the national GDP and provides livelihood to over 40 per cent of the nation's workforce. In 2020-21, its contribution towards economic stability is expected to be even higher amid the COVID-19-induced economic slowdown," FAIFA said in a statement.

This fund will be crucial for farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, agri-tech players and farmer groups looking to boost

President Javare Gowda said, "This will help the farming sector plan medium-to-long term debt financing facilities for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and build community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support."

The fund will catalyse infrastructure development of modern cold storages and cold chain as well as warehouses in villages; it will also provide employment opportunities in rural areas, he added.

"The direct (beneficiary) of this critical infrastructure upgrade of the agriculture sector will be farmers," FAIFA said.

It added that they will be able to get greater value for their produce, store and sell their crops at appropriate pricing, reduce farm wastage, increase processing time and overall equip a farm-led New India to compete globally.

Debt MFs see Rs 91k-cr inflow in July, investors focus on profile

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Mutual funds focussed on fixed-income securities witnessed a multi-fold surge in investment to Rs 91,392 crore in July, with short duration funds contributing a major chunk of the infusion.

Barring credit risk funds, all the individual categories that invest in fixed-income securities or debt funds saw inflows, data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed. Given the current interest rate scenario, investors are largely focusing on fixed income categories having a relatively shorter duration profile.

In addition to that, funds with pristine credit quality, especially from categories such as money market, short duration, corporate bond and banking and PSU, continue to gain traction, highlighting investors' preference for safety in this segment.

According to the data, mutual funds (MFs) that invest

in fixed-income securities saw an inflow of 91,392 crore in July, as compared to Rs 2,862 crore inflow in June.

The inflow stood at Rs 63,665 crore in May and Rs 43,431 crore in April.

"This is the continuation of a trend wherein investors tend to make a comeback in the months following the quarter-end month. In June, given it was a quarter end month, the flows into fixed-income funds came down significantly, largely on the back of huge net outflows from the liquid fund cat-

egory.

"Expectedly, liquid fund category received the second-highest net inflow in July, after low duration category, which received the highest flows," said Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director – Manager Research at Morningstar India.

Joseph Thomas, head of research at Emkay Wealth Management, said the net inflows into debt funds show a healthy uptick, and a major chunk of these inflows has been into funds with a short duration.

Passenger vehicle wholesales dip 4% in July

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Passenger vehicle wholesales in India declined 3.86 per cent in July to 1,82,779 units as against 1,90,115 units in the same month of last year.

According to the latest data by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), two-wheeler sales were also down 15.24 per cent at 12,81,354 units as compared to 15,11,717 units in the same month last year.

Motorcycle sales were at 8,88,520 units as against 9,34,021 units in July 2019, down 4.87 per cent.

"After a few consecutive months of plummeted sales in a post-COVID scenario, there are signs of green-shoots in passenger vehicles and two-wheelers where the year-on-year growth is much lesser than the previous months," SIAM President Rajan Wadhera said.

'Covid may accelerate shift in trade relations, supply chains'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday said the coronavirus pandemic is likely to accelerate fundamental shifts in trade relationships and global supply chains.

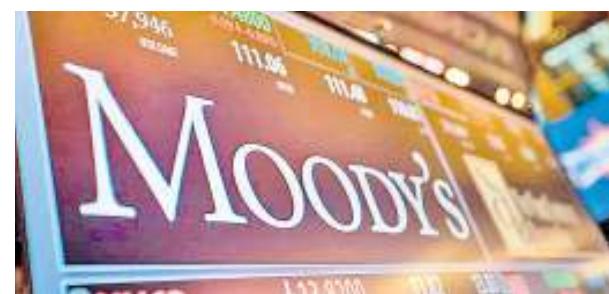
According to Moody's the trend toward a more fragmented and protectionist global economy will likely accelerate as a result of the pandemic, with restrictions on trade, investment and technology transfers.

"The pandemic will likely result in some fundamental shifts in trade relationships and supply chains globally, further 'hardening' attitudes toward globalization," it said and noted that the supply chain shifts will occur in a multi-year process, particularly as China will retain a number of advantages over other economies.

Some Asian markets excluding China will benefit from the supply chain shifts, particularly as companies look to diversify their sources of supply, it further noted.

"Asian countries ex-China will stand to benefit from diversification away from China provided that these countries have sound economic fundamentals, reliable infrastructure, sufficient human capital stock, and low geopolitical and supply security risk," Moody's said in a report.

However, localization of production or reshoring that moves productive capacity out of the region to the US or the



Virus surge makes US weak link in economic recovery

Frankfurt (Germany):

People in China are back to buying German luxury cars. Europe's assembly lines are accelerating. Now the global economy is waiting for the United States to get its coronavirus outbreak under control and boost the recovery, but there's little sign of that.

The United States' fumbling response to the pandemic is casting doubt on its economic prospects and making it one of the chief risks to a global rebound.

After springtime restrictions, many U.S. states prematurely declared victory over the virus and began to reopen their economies, leading to a resurgence in COVID-19 cases.

Confirmed infections are rising in most states, and many businesses have had to scale back or even cancel plans to reopen.

And while it does not dominate global commerce like it did 20 years ago, America is still by far the biggest economy - accounting for 22 per cent of total economic output, versus 14 per cent for No. 2 China, according to the World Bank. That makes it's handling of the pandemic and its economy crucial for companies like Officina del Poggio, a producer of luxury handbags in Bologna, Italy, that sells 60 per cent its vintage motorcycle-inspired satchels to U.S. customers.

European Union will have negative effects for Asian producers, notably those in strategic sectors. Moody's said as the global trade system becomes

more regionally focused, each major region - Asia, Europe and the US - will likely have its own suppliers for strategically important products.

HDFC raises Rs 10,000 cr equity capital in QIP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Environment clearance and forest clearance will be deliberated and suitable action as per the law will be taken in the due course of time.

The minister further said that 500 mining blocks would be offered through the open and transparent auction process.

Mining as a sector creates wealth and employment and strengthens the nation from within. Joshi said during a webinar on "Indian Mining Industry: Contribution Towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat" organized by FICCI.

"At this juncture I would also like to urge the industry stalwarts and stakeholders to share their insights to how collectively we can collaborate and innovate to make this sector self-reliant," he said.

The minister also invited investors, explorers and miners to come and explore the huge opportunities that the Indian mining sector offers.

The minister said that other issues like illegal mining, envi-

ronmental clearance and forest clearance will be deliberated and suitable action as per the law will be taken in the due course of time.

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"We wish to inform you that the committee of directors - QIP 2020 of the Corporation at its meeting held today approved the allotment of securities to eligible qualified institutional buyers pursuant to the issue," HDFC said in a regulatory filing.

Housing finance major HDFC Ltd on Tuesday said it has raised Rs 10,000 crore equity capital by issuing shares to qualified investors, including Government of Singapore and Invesco Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund.

Besides, the corporation has raised Rs 3,693 crore through an issue of non-convertible debentures. It also allotted 1,70,57,400 warrants at an issue price of Rs 180 per warrant, aggregating to around Rs 307 crore under the QIP issue, according to a regulatory filing.

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India is a mineral rich country producing 95 different minerals, including metallic and non-metallic and minor, he said adding the mineral sector therefore is the backbone of the country's economy.

HDFC said in a regulatory filing, "HDFC said it has issued 5,68,18,181 equity shares at an issue price of Rs 1,760, aggregating to Rs 10,000 crore.

India Inc goes slow on increments

● super-specialized profiles can expect over 15% salary growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jobs & Salaries Primer Report 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only impacted the employment landscape, it has disrupted the way India rewards its talent.

As per the report, across sectors and cities, employers are cherry picking super-specialized profiles, and are rewarding them with greater than 15 per cent salary growth.

According to TeamLease

Salaries, in general, grew between 4.26 per cent (minimum) and 11.22 per cent (maximum) across sectors and cities, it said.

"While businesses will stay conservative with salary increments, they have not shied away from rewarding specialized skills. In fact, the pandemic has amplified the importance of skilled profiles in the world

of work. It has brought to forefront the trinity between skills, performance and rewards," said Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder & executive vice president, TeamLease Services.

Chakraborty further said that the 15 per cent increment that companies are willing to offer to specialized profiles is a testimony of this.

The LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index shows that India's overall confidence is on a steady rise, with a composite score of 53, up from 50 in June 29 to July 26.

The latest online survey is based on responses from 2,899 members from 13 different industries across the weeks of June 29 to July 26.

The survey showed India's growing confidence towards personal finances, with nearly 1 in 3 professionals anticipating their personal savings to increase, while 2 in 5 expecting their personal spending to stay the same in next 6 months.

"With low cash reserves and on-off lockdowns across several cities, business sustenance for SMBs continues to be a challenging affair," the survey said.

The survey showed India's growing confidence towards personal finances, with nearly 1 in 3 professionals anticipating their personal savings to increase, while 2 in 5 expecting their personal spending to stay the same in next 6 months.

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Wednesday
August 12, 2020

INDIA'S LUNCHBOX PARADOX



Are you careless with your meals? Do you skip them often? Are you one that almost never makes a conscious effort to

watch what you eat? If your answer to even one of these questions is yes, you probably are one among the 60 per cent of people who care-less about what they eat, according to a survey by Nu-Shakti, a brand of Royal DSM, on India's 'Diet Paradox'.

Although, as many as 97 per cent Indians are aware of the essential nutrients and micro-nutrients required for their body, only 60 per cent 'rarely' or

'never' care to add nutritive elements or additional supplements to their diet, revealed the survey.

The report highlights the importance of a healthy immune system in protecting people from infections and ailments and stresses the role of adequate nutrition in building immunity. Based on a survey conducted with more than a thousand people across all age groups in Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, and Kolkata, it shows that unprecedented awareness levels in terms of health and nutrition are very often matched with a lax attitude in adopting healthy practices.

The findings say that even though nearly three-quarters of respondents know the connection between healthy eating and losing weight, more than half (55 per cent) of them admitted that they had not consumed leafy vegetables in the required quantity the previous day — meaning we're aware but rarely put what we know to use.

No wonder, the Global Burden of Diseases study ranked India 118 on its global index because poor dietary habits accounted for 310 deaths per 100,000 people. Despite awareness levels about proper nutrition and diet being high,

they have not necessarily resulted in the right action.

The survey revealed one of the reasons for this gap between awareness and action is because meals were being skipped regularly and most of them confessed they forgo a meal because of an important work meeting. 31 percent of Indians consider working timings the top barrier to a healthy lifestyle.

But things can change. Now that most people are working from the comfort of their homes, healthier eating habits and preferences can be made a reality and choice, so will you?

DEEPIKA TO PROMOTE 'MELANGE'

Window shopping while you lay on your couch, 'cause there's no way you can go out anytime soon? Well, Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone hopes to make you want to click that 'Buy Now' option!

In addition to launching its new collection, Melange by Lifestyle, an ethnic wear brand, announced actress Deepika Padukone as its brand ambassador. This collaboration, fans hope, will further strengthen the brand ethos of 'Rethink Ethnic' and epitomises the versatile, eclectic style of modern Indian women. Their most recent 'Work from Home' collection, featuring the Linen range brings together fashion and utility. Traditional paisley has been re-created into a contemporary version with an interesting mix of styles. Comprising key trends, quintessen-

tial season favourites, and contemporary styles and silhouettes, the curated collection is an absolute delight for customers. The ever-popular 'florals' has been re-imagined in new silhouettes and prints. They're also re-crafting one of the oldest forms of art, Lucknowi Chikankari is being showcased in a modern form with chic minimal embroideries and contemporary silhouettes.

Deepika Padukone, Brand Ambassador, Melange by Lifestyle said, "Melange by Lifestyle has managed to beautifully capture the essence of the modern Indian woman. I am delighted to be announced as the brand ambassador for Melange by Lifestyle and look forward to the journey ahead!"

The brand hopes their ambassador Deepika Padukone captures this bold and individualistic style that Melange represents.



Her debut Telugu show *Hitler Gari Pellam* (HGP) has been making the right noise in the industry since the trailer of the serial dropped on Zee Telugu, actress Gomathi Priya aka Bhanumathi is already receiving much-deserved applause for her bubbly, cheerful character in the trailer. She has made everyone go gaga over the cute smile she carries and the innocence in her face. Gomathi speaks to K Ramya Sree about her journey to acting, love from Telugu audience, and more.

Telugu industry is more glamorous, luxurious

W AS A GOOD STUDENT...

I like acting since my childhood. But because of my family, my entire focus was on my education. I was a good student and was a topper at school and college. My dream was to become an IAS officer but somehow, my interest shifted towards acting. Initially, I took up modeling contracts during my college days followed by advertisements. I worked for a film, a remake of Arjun Reddy. Later, I auditioned for a project in Colours Tamil and did about 390 episodes for a serial there. While I was shooting for Udaya itself, I got a few offers from Zee Telugu but I wasn't sure if I should take it up, since I didn't know the language and the place too was new to me. As an artist, I then decided that I needed to explore all markets. The channel convinced me to do *Hitler Gari Pellam* and gave in.

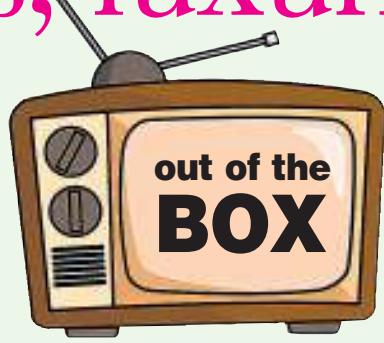
HYDERABAD HAS BECOME MY SECOND HOME TOWN...

It's been 40 days since I moved to Hyderabad and I'm still learning the language. Speaking of Tamil and Telugu industries, the Telugu industry is more glamorous and fancy. It is also luxurious. I wasn't very comfortable here initially, as I felt like I don't fit in here. I was more com-

fortable in Tamil since I know the language, culture, etc. As time passed, I began falling in love with the Telugu industry more. My producers are taking good care of me here. They don't make me feel like I'm away from home. Hyderabad has become my second hometown within a short span. The climate too is really pleasant. I liked the festivals here, the Varalakshmi Vratam and all of these traditional ones, oh and not to forget the cuisine.

NOT TELLING PARENTS ABOUT MY ACTING...

I was 21 years old when I started my journey in this field of glamour. I am an engineering graduate, and since I was good with studies, my parents were not okay with me acting. I haven't told my parents that I was doing a serial until the promo of it aired. My father was offended - since I am the elder one in the family, my father feels I must be a role model for the younger generation. They were surprised as to how I got into this profession, as I was always a very quiet and shy kid. Very few people know the jovial side of me. Initially, they were hesitant, later they gave me their nod and supported my work. When I agreed to a Telugu project, they were worried about my safety since I will have to move to an all-new city,



but I managed to convince them.

LOVE FROM TELUGU AUDIENCE...

Within a few days of the promo release, the number of followers on my social media platforms shot up. They've been messaging me, wishing me luck, and appreciating my looks and work. They tell me they can't wait to watch Nirupam garu and me on screen. A lot of YouTube videos have already been made on me. Although I am happy with the kind of response I'm receiving, I'm surprised with fake content being put up in those videos about my age, etc. I was born in 1996, but all these videos say I was born in 1993. They created all my previous

interviews and photographs and made videos. It is overwhelming to see such kind of response from the Telugu audience. All said and done, I'm thrilled by the responses within just two days of the release of my promo.

SHOOTING IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT...

I was always inspired by many people, especially child artistes. Being so young, they act so well. I would think if they can act so well being so young, why can't we grown-ups do better? I enrolled myself in an acting workshop in Tamil Nadu. The shooting is being done in a safe environment. Since Nirupam garu, the hero and producer of my serial knows Tamil, he is patient enough to explain the scenes and how I can bring out emotions.

(The *Hitler Gari Pellam* concept is inspired by Zee TV's *Guddan Tumse Na Ho Payega*, which has pioneered and revolutionized the television industry and continues to win the hearts of people.

Hitler Gari Pellam will start from August 17, every Monday to Saturday at 6.30 PM on Zee Telugu and Zee Telugu HD)

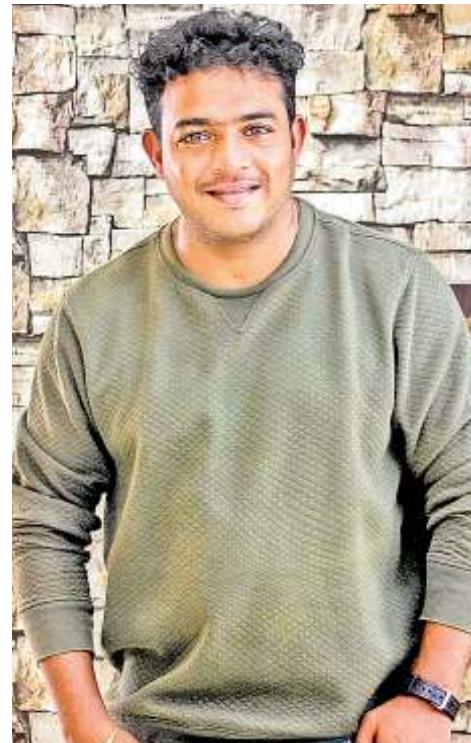
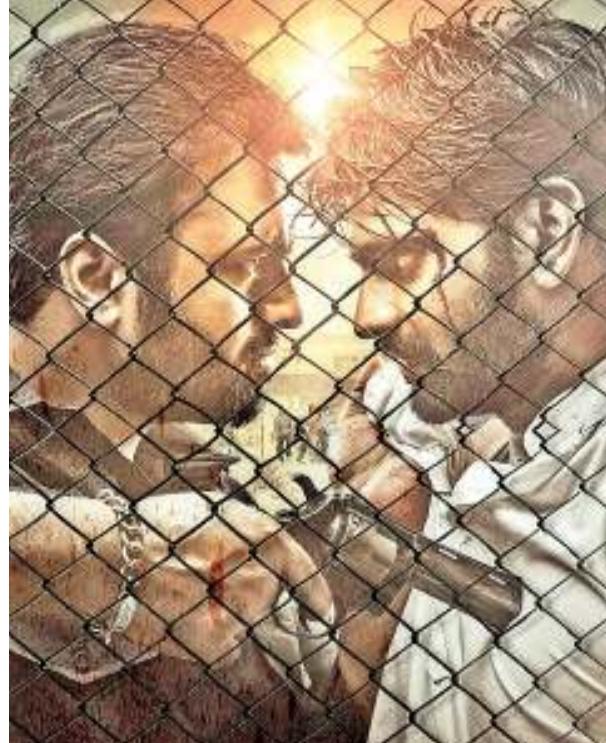


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Now, *Appatlo Okadundevadu* SET FOR HINDI REMAKE

Impressed by the film's rich content and visual palette, a couple of prominent production houses have shown interest to remake the film in Hindi and even approached Saagar, who owns the rights along with Rohith and Vishnu, finds NAGARAJ GOUD



The list of Telugu films going to Hindi is on the ascent day by day. After Jersey, Duvvada Jagannadham, Mathu Vadala, HIT, Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya, Arundhati and Vinayakudu, the latest film that is Bollywood-bound is Nara Rohith and Sree Vishnu-starrer super hit *Appatlo Okadundevadu* (2016). Although murmurs about Hindi remake have swirled around three years

ago, nothing concrete surfaced. Now though, *The Pioneer*, from multiple sources, can confirm the Hindi remake, with original director Saagar K Chandra attached to direct.

One source close to the development tells us, "Impressed by the film's rich content and visual palette, a couple of prominent production houses have shown interest to remake the film in Hindi and even approached Saagar, who owns the rights along with

Rohith and Vishnu, besides offering a carte blanche to narrate the story the way he fancies. The Naxalite angle will be tweaked to suit the needs of a wider audience. The cast will be determined by the production house that chooses to associate with the film in the end but Saagar will bounce off his preferred names."

The other source informs us that Saagar will take up the Hindi remake only after he wraps up the filming of his next still-untitled

Telugu assignment, an official remake of Malayalam super hit *Ayyappan Kosiyum* it. Fronted by Ravi Teja and Rana Daggubati, it will be a production venture of Naga Vamsi under Sithara Entertainments. "As of now the tentative production date for *Ayyappan Kosiyum* remake is in January, so Saagar will mostly begin *Appatlo Okadundevadu* remake in May or a little late," the source suggests.

Appatlo Okadundevadu, which made Rs 7 crore on a budget of Rs 2.30 crore, narrated the story of an aspiring cricketer (played by Vishnu) mistaken for his ties with a Naxalite group and its repercussions.



Akhil, Suri project is on!

Akhil Akkineni's next after he wraps up *Bommarillu* *Basar's Most Eligible Bachelor* (MEB) has been firmed up, at last! Although the suave actor was in talks with filmmakers like Prashanth Varma and Tamil director PS Mithran, it seems he has made up his mind to go ahead with Surender Reddy.

Known for his popcorn entertainers with a high dose of action and comedy, Reddy, points out a source, prepared a similar subject for Akhil. "The film will be a slick action-enterainer that will be high on romance and comedy. It will be a perfect follow up to Akhil after a rom-com like MEB and one that will put the actor on the action star map. The script



work is going on and in another couple of months, it will be locked," adds the source. The source further mentions

that Krish and Rajeev Reddy's First Frame Entertainments and Mythri Movie Makers are in contention to produce it.

Deva Katta and Vishnu Induri at loggerheads

On Monday evening, news broke out that producers Vishnu Vardhan Induri and Thirumal Reddy were set to make a two-part fictitious web series based on beloved Telugu political heavyweights YS Rajasekhara Reddy and Nara Chandrababu Naidu, narrating how their friendship began, the challenges they confronted and how they turned rivals over their illustrious political careers.

Chadarangam web series director Raj was attached to the project as a director.

However, filmmaker Deva Katta took strong objection to this piece of news and leveled plagiarism charges against the makers by taking to Twitter. He noted that he has penned a fictional story imagining YSR/CBN political life as a three-part film which he converted into web series format and that the idea is now being hijacked. "In 2017, I have written a script paying homage to the iconic YSR/CBN political life imagining a fictional friendship/professional rivalry between them and registered it under the copy rights act. I have also registered multiple versions of this script since 2017. The 'idea' is being hijacked by some ppl here over several 'party talks' but hope they limit their fiction to the public domain and don't invite any legal action by copying any of my registered

Filmmaker Deva Katta is furious with reports of a fictitious web series based on popular Telugu leaders YSR and NCBN, leveling plagiarism charges against one of the producers, Vishnu Induri, for hijacking his own idea, whose multiple versions of this script he has been registering since 2017



themes/scenes! This script was first written as 3 part film inspired by Godfather, which I later converted into a web series format. Our team have pitched this idea to some major OTT platforms and our legal team is closely following up with this news!! (Sic)" Katta, known for his groundbreaking work Prasthanam, wrote in a series of tweets.

with whom he had held NTR biopic discussions in 2015 December. The issue snowballed into a bigger controversy after this post of Katta. Giving his version that it was he who narrated the basic idea of NTR biopic to Katta, Induri wrote on Twitter, "I would like to clear it once and for all. I met Deva katta for a Remake I selected in December 2015, I also narrated the idea of NTR Biopic to him with basic screenplay. He liked My idea of NTR and I would like to clear that he never narrated anything to me about NTR Biopic (sic)."

This certainly didn't go down well with Katta who tried to jog Induri's memory that there was a witness when he pitched the biopic idea to him. "My dear friend I think you forgot there was also a witness when I pitched the biopic idea to u in our first meeting itself in 2015!! There are many more in the industry to speak for ur lies, so take it easy don't try too hard!! (Sic)"

tollywood

A chocolate cake or an ice cream is Rashmika's cheat meal

One of the fittest actress' around, Rashmika Mandanna taking to her Instagram space recently dropped hints that while following a daily fitness routine, there are days where she slips into a cheat meal as well. She revealed that she eats chocolate cake or ice cream on her cheat days. "My healthy but satisfying meal is a healthy pancake... And my cheat meal is a chocolate cake or an ice cream... what are yours?" the actress wrote addressing her fans, while

simultaneously sharing a photo of her fruit bowl.

On the work front in Telugu,

the actress, who is right now in her home town Coorg, will be next seen in Allu Arjun-starrer *Pushpa*, where she plays a role who speaks in Chittor accent. The film's shoot had to be suspended due to COVID-19 outbreak.



Renu bats for electric cars

Deeply disturbed by the oil spill in Mauritius recently, actress-filmmaker has appealed to her followers to start looking for electric cars and bikes instead of vehicles that run on petrol/diesel. Taking to her popular Instagram page, she revealed that she has recently purchased an electric Hyundai Kona by selling her fuel guzzling imported cars, Audi A6 & Porsche Boxter. "It truly was a difficult decision to sell both my cars but I sincerely want to reduce my carbon footprint as much as pos-

sible," she wrote.

She added, "Also important part is that my petrol/diesel bills used to be more than 15k a month but now because of my electric car the current bill is hardly 700-800, so I am saving a lot of money while saving the planet."

Stating that humans are a cancer to the planet and other species, she further noted that in the future, she will live on a farm away from city life and try to reduce her contribution to the destruction of the planet. "Till then trying to do my best to reduce the existing damage," she pointed out.

Most Read

NEWS



Industrialist installs late wife's statue at residence

Industrialist Shrinivas Gupta, celebrated house warming function in Karnataka's Koppal with his wife Madhavi's silicon wax statue, who died in a car accident in July 2017. Commenting on the ceremony and installing the silicon statue of his deceased wife, Shrinivas Gupta said it is a great feeling to have my wife again at my home, as this was her dream home. "An artist Shreedhar Murthy from Bengaluru took a year to prepare my wife's statue," Shrinivas Gupta said, adding "Silicon was used for the statue for durability." The statue was built inside Madhavi's dream house with the help of architect Ranjananavar. "Our artist suggested me to have silicon statue instead of the wax statue as we live in Koppal which is a hot place, and an AC can't be open all the time to maintain the wax. So as per the suggestion, we got the silicon statue prepared," Gupta added.



Pair of Mahatma Gandhi's iconic glasses go on sale

A pair of Mahatma Gandhi's glasses will go on sale after staff at the East Bristol Auctions, the largest auction house in South West England, found them in a plain envelope. Auctioneer Andrew Stowe said: "Someone popped them into our letterbox on a Friday night and they stayed there until Monday - literally hanging out. One of my staff handed them to me and said there was a note saying they were Gandhi's glasses. I thought 'That's an interesting one' and carried on with my day." Upon investigating, Stowe said he almost 'fell off his chair' to discover the circular rimmed, gold-plated glasses, had been worn by the Indian civil rights leader. "I phoned the guy back and I think he nearly had a heart attack," said Stowe. The glasses are expected to raise more than \$19,600 and was the most important find in the company's history. The glasses are going to be sold as part of an online-only auction on August 21.



Triassic reptile's neck was 3 times longer than torso

One of the most remarkable Triassic reptiles, *Tanystropheus* is characterized by an extraordinarily long and stiffened neck that is almost three times the length of its torso, despite being composed of only 13 hyper-elongated vertebrae. It was first described as a single species, *Tanystropheus longobardicus*, in 1852, and it's been puzzling paleontologists ever since. For a long time, scientists weren't sure whether this reptile lived on land or in the water. Its bizarre body didn't make things clear one way or the other. "Tanystropheus looked like a stubby crocodile with a very, very long neck," said Dr. Olivier Rieppel, a paleontologist at the Field Museum. In the same region where many of the big *Tanystropheus* fossils were found, in what's now Switzerland, there were also fossils from similar-looking reptiles that were only about 1.2 m (4 feet) long.



Jupiter's big moon may have impact scar in Solar System

Scientists have discovered what they believe may be the largest impact crater in the entire solar system, with scars covering a vast portion of Jupiter's biggest moon, Ganymede. The scientists behind the new research wanted to revisit observations from a host of past NASA missions that studied the massive moon, which is larger than Mercury, the smallest planet in our neighborhood. In particular, they were intrigued by a set of features dubbed furrows, which appear on some of the moon's oldest terrain. Previous researchers had pointed to these furrows as evidence of a large impact powerful enough to leave scars across an entire side of Ganymede. But on revisiting the structures, the scientists behind the new research believe that's an underestimate, and that the furrows represent an impact so large as to affect the entire moon. The researchers began by gathering data collected by NASA's twin Voyager missions, which each flew past the Jupiter system in 1979, and by NASA's Galileo mission, which spent eight years over the late 1990s and early 2000s studying the massive planet and its neighbors.



SINGLES

KUBO JOINS VILLARREAL ON LOAN

MADRID: Villarreal have signed Japanese playmaker Takefusa Kubo on loan from Real Madrid for 2020-2021 season. The 19-year-old impressed last season in his debut campaign in the top-flight on loan at Real Mallorca although was unable to prevent the team from being relegated a year after winning promotion.

KUZNETSOVA WITHDRAWS FROM US OPEN

MOSCOW: Former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova has joined a growing list of players who have decided not to play in this year's tournament due to concerns over the Covid-19 pandemic. The Russian world number 32 on Monday announced her decision on Instagram where she also said she would skip the Western & Southern Open which is being held in New York this year instead of Cincinnati as a lead-up to the Aug 31-Sept 13 US Open.

TSIMIKAS JOINS LIVERPOOL FROM OLYMPIAKOS

LIVERPOOL: Premier League champions Liverpool signed Greece defender Kostas Tsimikas from Olympiakos for a reported fee of £11.7 million (\$15 million) on Monday. Tsimikas agreed a five-year contract with Liverpool and is expected to provide back-up for first-choice left-back Andy Robertson at Anfield.

LAWRENCE EXITS BIO-SECURE BUBBLE

SOUTHAMPTON: Uncapped England batsman Dan Lawrence, who was one of the reserves in the ongoing Test series against Pakistan, has left the team's bio-secure bubble due to a family bereavement. "Lawrence, who has yet to make his Test debut, was named as one of the reserves in the #raiseabet Test series against Pakistan. He will not be available for selection when the second Test starts on Thursday at the Ageas Bowl," the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement.

SABALENKA ADVANCES IN TOP SEED OPEN

LEXINGTON: World No 11 Aryna Sabalenka made a winning return at the WTA's resumption in the United States as she battled past America's Madison Brengle to enter the second round at the inaugural Top Seed Open. The No 2 seeded player from Belarus defeated Brengle 6-1, 6-7(5), 6-2 after nearly two-and-a-half hours of play on Monday. But world No 15 Johanna Konta failed to enter the second round as she lost to unseeded Czech Marie Bouzkova 6-4, 6-4.

UTT POSTPONED INDEFINITELY

NEW DELHI: The fourth edition of Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT), scheduled in India from August 14 to 31, has been indefinitely postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. With sporting events yet to start in the country and the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) itself still not certain about the resumption of professional tour, the postponement was inevitable.

FSDL TEAM REACHES GOA FOR INSPECTION

PANJIM: A 9-member delegation of ISL organisers, Football Sports Development Ltd (FSDL), reached Goa on Tuesday and will be there for the next few days to take stock of the venues and training ground readiness. It is expected that a final announcement of the single-state venue, where the seventh edition of the ISL is scheduled to be played, will be made by the end of this week. The team will visit the three identified playing venues (JLN Stadium in Fatorda, Tilak Maidan in Vasco and Bambolim Stadium), about 10 training grounds and have also lined up meetings with the local authorities on their agenda.

MCA APEX COUNCIL MEETING ON AUG 14

MUMBAI: Resumption of cricketing activities in the megapolis will top the agenda of the Mumbai Cricket Association's (MCA) Apex Council meeting to be held on August 14. Cricket in the megapolis has come to a grinding halt since mid-March due to outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and Mumbai is one of the worst affected cities in the country. "We will discuss resumption of cricketing activity and also the Standard Operating Procedures sent by the BCCI to all the state associations in this regard," an Apex Council member Agencies

Lukaku scores in ninth consecutive Europa League game to take Inter in semis; Red Devils needed extra time to beat Copenhagen

United effect

AFP ■ COLOGNE

Bruno Fernandes scored a penalty in extra time as Manchester United scraped past FC Copenhagen 1-0 on Monday in the quarter-finals of the Europa League, reshaped into an eight-team straight knockout tournament in Germany due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Portugal international notched his competition-best seventh goal of the season as United set up a semi-final clash against Sevilla or Wolves, joining Inter Milan in the last four following the Italian side's 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in Dusseldorf.

"Third time this season we've been to the semis, every competition we've been in. Delighted we've gone through,

Romelu Lukaku celebrates after scoring Inter Milan's second goal against Bayer Leverkusen during Europa League quarterfinal clash AP

we deserved to win tonight," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told BT Sport.

"Their keeper was fantastic, unbelievable. We hit the post a few times, there were a couple of VAR decisions against us. It could have been one of those nights that you end up with penalty shoot outs. They made it hard for us."

All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season's Europa League are being played behind closed doors as one-offs across four venues — Cologne, Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Gelsenkirchen — in a unique format following a five-month interruption.

Solskjaer recalled Fernandes, Paul Pogba, Marcus Rashford, Mason Greenwood and Anthony



Bruno Fernandes scores Manchester United's first goal from a penalty kick AP

Martial but the 2017 competition winners struggled early, and 18-year-old Copenhagen forward Mohamed Daramy was twice involved as the Danish underdogs threatened a creaking United backline.

Greenwood looked to have put United ahead as he drilled in via the far post moments later only for the teenager to be ruled offside following a VAR review.

He again went close early in the second half when he slammed against the upright, with Fernandes promptly smacking the opposite post with a dipping 20-yard drive.

The Portugal international, who scored five times in the group stage with Sporting, stung the palms of Johnsson with another hit from distance — shortly after Aaron Wan-Bissaka made a desperation block to thwart Bryan Oviedo after a mesmerising dribble from Rasmus Falk.

OUTSTANDING JOHNSON

Appearing in their first European quarter-final, and the first Danish club to reach this stage since 1997, Copenhagen continued to frustrate United as they sought a repeat of their 1-0 win when the clubs last met in the Champions League group stage in 2006.

Martial nearly won the game in normal time but again a sprawling Johnsson tipped away his curling attempt that appeared destined for the top corner.

The France striker was once more repelled by Johnsson at the start of extra time, but Martial won a penalty as United kept the attack alive and the striker was upended by Andreas Bjelland.

Fernandes blasted home from the spot on 95 minutes but

Solskjaer's team were left to sweat until the end as Johnsson pulled off sensational stops from the Portuguese and substitute Juan Mata, with Victor Lindelof the third United player to strike the post.

United though ultimately ensured their 2019-20 campaign will extend into a second year, having started the season 365 days ago with a 4-0 Premier League win over Chelsea.

Awaiting them on Sunday will be Sevilla — who have won the Europa League and its precursor, the UEFA Cup, a record five times — or domestic rivals Wolves.

Former United striker Romelu Lukaku grabbed the decisive goal for Antonio Conte's Inter against Leverkusen as the Serie A runners-up moved a step closer to adding to their titles from 1991, 1994 and 1998.

Inter struck first as Nicolo Barella guided in from the edge of the area on 15 minutes, with Lukaku bundling in a second six minutes later.

Kai Havertz reduced the deficit in possibly his final game for Leverkusen on 25 minutes after exchanging passes with fellow Germany international Kevin Volland, but Inter held on to seal their place against Shakhtar Donetsk or Basel in next week's semi-final.

"The defence did a tremendous job again tonight. We are growing but we have to learn to kill games off when we have the chances to do it, and we didn't tonight," said Lukaku.

"Now we have time to recover physically and prepare for another great game. We will have to be ready."

Sarfraz should retire from Tests: Ramiz

PTI ■ KARACHI

Former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja believes wicket-keeper-batsman Sarfraz Ahmed should retire from Tests and focus on white ball cricket.

Sarfraz, a former captain, was seen performing the duties of 12th man in the series opener between England and Pakistan in Manchester.

"In my book I am clear once you have been captain and remained on a pedestal then it is very difficult to come down and be on the bench," Raja said on the YouTube channel, Cricket Baaz.

"I would advise Sarfraz to think about it and retire from Test cricket and just focus on white ball cricket, a format in which he is very good and known for his aggression," he added.

Raja, who featured in 57



Tests, said a former captain and senior player of Sarfraz's stature carrying drinks, although not rare in cricket, is frowned upon in Pakistan.

"There is nothing wrong with that because even James Anderson carried drinks when he didn't play in the second Test against West Indies. But in our cricket culture these things are not looked upon nicely and if they involve a former captain," Raja said. "I don't see him getting a chance in the Test format soon so he should focus on white ball cricket where he will play and be respected as well," he added.

Raja feels the presence of Sarfraz in the squad also adds pressure on Muhammad Rizwan, who kept the wickets for Pakistan in the first Test.

"He being in the Test squad also adds pressure on Muhammad Rizwan who knows there is a former captain keeper breathing down his neck and that is not good for him. I think Sarfraz should not be on the bench. He should call it a day from Test cricket," he added.

White added that women's team will tour Trans-Tasman rivals Australia in September with the reverse fixture slated for February.

"The White Ferns will tour Australia in September and then the Australia Women's team will tour New Zealand in February," White said.

"We are making tremendous progress. I was just on the phone

Inaugural Lanka Premier League postponed

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has postponed the inaugural edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) due to unavailability of top foreign players who would have had to undergo 14-day compulsory quarantine owing to rising cases of Covid-19 in the island nation.

The T20 League was scheduled to start on August 28, subject to approval from the Government and Ministry of health but the 14-day compulsory quarantine period turned out to be an issue with regards to foreign players.

"We had a discussion with the health authorities and the 14 day quarantine period for anyone entering the country is compulsory. So it's difficult to play the tournament at the end of August," SLC President Shammil Silva told NewsWire.

"We will play the tournament in mid November after IPL," Silva's information indicated that they are looking at roping in the best T20 freelancers.

A total of 23 matches were scheduled in LPL which was supposed to end on September 20.

According to reports, a total of 93 international cricketers, including England's World Cup-winning pacer Liam Plunkett and New Zealand seamer Tim Southee, were also listed for the tournament.



IPL teams to carry exclusive net bowlers to UAE

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League shifting its base to the United Arab Emirates for the practice sessions. They will be accompanying the team and will remain till the tournament starts," Chennai Super Kings CEO Kashi Vishwanathan said on Tuesday.

The Kolkata Knight Riders also confirmed that they will also have 10 net bowlers in their roster, likely to be handpicked by former Mumbai captain and their academy coach Abhishek Nayar.

"It will be a blend of players who have played Ranji Trophy while some of have played U-23 and U-19 national level tournaments," someone who is privy to developments in the KKR camp informed.

The Delhi Capitals are also taking around six net bowlers who will be a part of the team's "big bubble".

"They will be staying with the squad and will travel with the team for the net sessions," a franchise source said.

The Rajasthan Royals are also on course to finalise the number of net bowlers they will carry. Royals as well as Royal Challengers Bangalore can fly out bowlers from their own respective academies.

Nieve seeks 7 more boxers at national camp

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Resumption is done and expansion can now follow, said Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieve, revealing that addition of seven more boxers has been proposed at the ongoing national training camp for the Olympic-bound in Patiala.

Nine male boxers and a few of their women counterparts are training at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala, taking the first step towards a restart amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These include world Silver-medallist and top Olympic medal hope Amit Panghal.

"We are looking to add

seven more boxers, two coaches and a support staff member to this list in the next few weeks. Approval has been sought (from SAI). We are assessing things one month at a time," Nieve said.

"The boxers who are here are training under the strict health safety protocol given to us and things have been smooth. I can't give you names but the ones we want included next are second in rankings of their respective categories," he said.

The camp started in the first week of this month after boxers, willing to take the trip to Patiala were quarantined, tested and then allowed to enter the NIS.

In between, a controversy

flared up when the Olympic-bound duo of Vikas Krishan and Satis Kumar "unknowingly" broke the quarantine protocol.

The two have since made Bengaluru's Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS) their training base and won't be coming back, despite getting a SAI go ahead, due to the travelling involved.

"We are currently able to do 70 per cent of the things that we used to